

Trump administration ordered TSA to provide passenger travel lists to immigration Gestapo

Jacob Crosse
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The Transportation Security Administration (TSA), which conducts airport security screening, has been forwarding the names of all expected air travelers to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to assist in the Trump administration's mass deportation operations.

The program, which has been operating since at least March 2025, includes lists of people flying both within the United States and into the country. The *New York Times*, which first reported the existence of the passenger data-sharing operation on December 12, wrote that ICE is using the TSA-provided lists to match names "against its own database of people subject to deportation." ICE agents are dispatched to airports to seize anyone on its lists who is attempting to travel.

The TSA was created in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to conduct airport passenger screening. It was incorporated into the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS), along with ICE, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Coast Guard and other internal security agencies, all except the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The agency employs roughly 60,000 people and, using biometric data, facial recognition and full-body scanners, screens an average of approximately 2 million people per day at US airports. The size, reach and daily contact with the population make the TSA an especially powerful data collection apparatus for the capitalist state.

While the TSA has long collaborated with federal police agencies, including the FBI, in enforcing so-called "no-fly" lists, this is the first confirmed instance in which the agency has gone beyond airport security functions to directly serve as an arm of the deportation

apparatus.

Although the total number of people kidnapped by ICE using this program remains unknown, at least one case has already come to light. On November 20, Any Lucia Lopez Belloza, a 19-year-old freshman at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, studying on scholarship, was seized by ICE while attempting to fly home to Texas for Thanksgiving. Lopez Belloza has not been accused or convicted of any crime.

When she attempted to board her flight, Lopez Belloza was told there was a problem with her boarding pass and instructed to go to customer service. As she walked toward the desk, ICE agents surrounded her, placed her in handcuffs and dragged her out of the airport.

Roughly 48 hours later, ICE deported Lopez Belloza to Honduras, a country she had not lived in since she was seven years old, after her parents brought her to the United States seeking asylum. Immigration attorney Todd Pomerleau told CNN that throughout her transfer his client "had chains around her ankles, handcuffs on her wrists" and was put "on a plane and deported to a country she hadn't been to in like 12 years. It's beyond the pale."

Pomerleau stated that Lopez Belloza was deported even after a federal judge issued an order barring her removal from the United States or her transfer outside Massachusetts. He told CNN that she was never shown a warrant or an order of removal. "I still am not convinced that she ever had an order of removal," Pomerleau said, adding, "She wasn't shown any proof." He noted that the only federal records connected to her case indicate it was closed in 2017.

In an interview with ABC News, Lopez Belloza said

she “burst into tears” when she was taken into custody, forced to sleep on a floor, and then transferred to Texas. In a separate interview with MSNBC last week, she explained that ICE agents ignored her pleas that she was only traveling home to surprise her parents for Thanksgiving. During the flight to Honduras, agents shackled and handcuffed the teenager. “It felt like I was a criminal, when I am not,” she said.

Through tears, Lopez Belloza explained that the first time she was able to speak with her parents after being taken by ICE at Boston’s Logan Airport was when she reached her grandparents’ home in Honduras.

This TSA-ICE data-sharing operation is unfolding alongside a separate but closely related initiative by CBP, which has proposed requiring foreign travelers entering the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to submit years of social media history, mandatory “selfie” photo uploads and a mobile-only Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) which would require travelers to download an invasive app on their phone as a condition of travel authorization. Taken together, these programs function in tandem to compile vast centralized databases of personal, biometric, travel and political information.

Under the CBP proposal, the new screening requirements would apply primarily to travelers entering the US under the VWP, which covers citizens of more than 40 countries, overwhelmingly in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. These include, among others, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Poland, Israel, Singapore and Taiwan. Citizens of these countries are normally permitted to enter the United States for up to 90 days for tourism or business without a visa, provided they obtain authorization through the ESTA.

According to CBP, not every traveler from a VWP country would necessarily be required to submit the same volume of information. However, the proposal would make the disclosure of social media identifiers mandatory for many applicants, transforming what had previously been a nominally voluntary field into a de facto requirement for entry. CBP has indicated that the information could be used for automated vetting, risk scoring, and cross-referencing against law enforcement

and intelligence databases, with little transparency regarding how determinations are made or how long the data is retained.

Canadian citizens occupy a partial exception within this framework. Canada is not part of the Visa Waiver Program, and most Canadian visitors do not require either a visa or an ESTA to enter the United States for short stays. As a result, Canadian tourists are not currently subject to the proposed ESTA social media disclosure requirement. Nevertheless, Canadians remain subject to questioning, inspection, and discretionary enforcement at the border, and are already affected by the TSA’s domestic passenger data-sharing with ICE when traveling by air within the United States.

The CBP proposal explicitly leaves open the possibility of future expansion, both in the categories of travelers covered and in the types of information collected. Taken together with TSA’s bulk transfer of passenger lists to ICE, the initiative signals the construction of an integrated surveillance architecture that treats routine travel as an opportunity for political and immigration screening, laying the groundwork for broader repression as the administration escalates its attacks on dissent.

Under conditions in which the Trump administration is openly declaring broad layers of political opposition to be “antifa terrorists,” criminalizing protest and equating dissent with treason, the expansion of this domestic surveillance and policing apparatus is especially ominous. It constitutes a warning to the working class that mechanisms initially justified in the name of “security” are being repurposed to facilitate political repression, mass deportations and the suppression of opposition to the capitalist state.



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