

Free rein for immigration Gestapo

## Democrats pave way for \$70 billion infusion to ICE and Border Patrol

Jacob Crosse  
1 May 2026

The bipartisan passage of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding bill this week has exposed the Democrats' months-long posture of opposition to Trump's mass deportation operation and criminal immigration policies as a political charade.

The funding bill, passed in the Senate last month, sailed through the House in a bipartisan voice vote. It was signed by Trump on Thursday, ending the longest DHS shutdown in US history after 76 days. The bill deliberately separated out funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) so that Republicans could ram through a massive new infusion for the immigration police through the budget reconciliation process.

The maneuver allows the Democrats to claim that they did not vote directly to fund ICE and CBP, while ensuring that the agencies will receive the money anyway. Republicans are preparing to provide roughly \$70 billion to the immigration police over three years through reconciliation, a procedure that allows budget-related legislation to pass the Senate by a simple majority and bypass the filibuster. Reuters reported that the House approved the outline for the three-year plan by a 215-211 vote, with no Democratic support, after the Senate had already passed the measure on April 23.

The \$70 billion infusion comes on top of the more than \$170 billion already allocated last year under Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill" for the immigration Gestapo, immigrant concentration camp expansion and border militarization. Under capitalism, there is supposedly "no money" for Medicaid, food stamps, Medicare or other basic social needs. But there is, apparently, nearly a quarter-trillion dollars for fascist paramilitaries, concentration camps and the private

prison profiteers who stand to benefit from mass repression.

This was not an unintended consequence. It was the outcome prepared in advance by the Democratic leadership. As the *New York Times* reported in late January, Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (New York) urged Trump, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson and "border czar" Tom Homan to split off ICE and Border Patrol funding from the larger DHS spending package. Schumer acknowledged that the idea of separating DHS money had already been "percolating among some Democrats."

The purpose of the maneuver was never to abolish ICE, halt the police state raids or bring the killers of Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti to justice. It was to rescue the Trump administration from the political crisis produced by the killings in Minneapolis. As tens of thousands of Minnesotans demanded a general strike to abolish ICE and force the immigration police out of the state, Schumer met with Trump and counseled him on how to preserve his "credibility."

"The American people hate what is going on in the streets," he said he told Trump, adding, "Frankly, it's hurting your credibility in every way. When they say 'immigration,' they don't like what Trump does."

The final passage of the DHS bill was overwhelming and bipartisan. The House approved it by voice vote, with no recorded roll call requested, after Trump and Johnson moved to end the standoff. The bill funds most DHS operations, including the Transportation Security Administration, FEMA, the Coast Guard and the Secret Service, while leaving immigration enforcement to the separate reconciliation track.

The only objections came from the far right. Texas Republican Chip Roy complained that leaving ICE and Border Patrol out of the immediate DHS package was “offensive to the men and women who serve in ICE and Border Patrol.”

Democrats and the trade union bureaucracy greeted the bill with relief. “It is about damn time,” declared Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, who had proposed the bipartisan bill more than 70 days earlier. “It could have been done 76 days ago. But I will take it today.”

Everett Kelley, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, issued a statement declaring, “While AFGE is pleased that Congress finally stepped up to do their jobs and fund DHS, it is unacceptable that it took them this long to do so.” The statement said nothing about the use of DHS as the central apparatus for Trump’s campaign of terror and dictatorship against immigrants and the working class.

The present outcome must be placed in the context of the mass opposition that erupted after the killings of Renée Nicole Good on January 7 and Alex Pretti on January 24 in Minneapolis. Before those killings, Democrats were prepared to fund all of DHS, including ICE and CBP, with no serious restrictions. Only after tens of thousands took to the streets, and after workers and youth began discussing strike action, did the Democrats shift tactics.

Their aim was not to give expression to this movement, but to contain it. While workers demanded the abolition of ICE and CBP, the Democrats and the trade union bureaucracies worked to divert calls for strike action into harmless one-day protests and symbolic boycotts. The unions threatened workers with discipline, legal consequences and termination if they took independent strike action.

The Democrats used the anger over Minneapolis to posture as opponents of Trump’s immigration Gestapo, while quietly preparing the procedure by which the agencies would be funded anyway. Having helped split DHS funding from ICE/CBP funding, they now claim innocence as Republicans prepare to deliver tens of billions of dollars to the very agencies responsible for masked raids, warrantless home invasions, illegal detentions and killings.

The Democrats function to provide cover for the

rising dictatorship while working to dissipate mass anger. In Minnesota, Governor Tim Walz, the Democratic vice-presidential candidate in 2024, deployed state police and the National Guard to the Whipple Federal Building not to free those detained inside, but to protect ICE and CBP agents and widen the security perimeter around the facility.

No ICE or CBP agents have been arrested for the killings of Good and Pretti, and no restrictions have been imposed on the immigration police. But this week, Walz praised federal raids in Minneapolis targeting mostly Somali-run daycare and autism centers under the banner of a “fraud” investigation. This campaign is part of the broader effort to criminalize immigrant and working class communities, gut social spending, and redirect society’s resources toward war and the wealthy.

Meanwhile, hundreds of armed ICE officers remain indefinitely deployed across some 14 US airports on the orders of President Trump, without a word of protest from the Democratic Party.

The Democrats are not an opposition party. They are partners in the crimes of the Trump administration, which is seeking to erect a presidential dictatorship.

Millions have marched in the streets against Trump and his immigration police. But this opposition can find no expression through the Democratic Party, whose role is to smother, misdirect and betray it. The lesson of the DHS funding deal is that the defense of democratic rights cannot be entrusted to any faction of the capitalist state.

The way forward is the independent political mobilization of the working class against both parties and the capitalist system they defend. The Socialist Equality Party fights to build rank-and-file committees in every workplace, school and neighborhood, linking the struggle against ICE, dictatorship and war to the fight for socialism.



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