

# ICE operations continue in Michigan as local cops play key role

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In the wake of Operation Metro Surge in early 2026, ICE has reorganized its approach. In place of these tactics, it is now relying on less visible tactics and relying on local police under 287(g) agreements, which grant them limited immigration authority.

Newly-appointed DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin stated during his confirmation hearing that he would “love to see ICE becoming a transport more than the front line...[i]f we can get back into just simply working with law enforcement, we’re going to them, we’re picking these criminals from their jail.”

According to the most recent information put out by DHS, 1,845 law enforcement agencies across the United States participate in 287(g) agreements. Eight of these law enforcement agencies are in Michigan: the sheriff’s departments of Berrien, Calhoun, Crawford, Jackson and Roscommon counties; and the police departments of Oakley, Taylor and West Branch.

This change in tactics does not indicate the Trump administration has shifted away from its mass deportation policies. Rather, the new drive for ICE to be less visible is a direct response to the massive popular condemnation of the agency over its brutal actions in 2025 and early 2026.

ICE’s now-infamous shows of force are still being employed, however. In Ypsilanti on April 10, 2026, six ICE vehicles stopped all street traffic to block a man’s vehicle and arrest him. Those who witnessed the incident immediately responded to it by blowing whistles, honking and shouting.

Beth Bashert, former Democratic mayor of Ypsilanti from 2018 to 2020, witnessed the April 10 incident and provided the following pathetic statement afterward: “[t]he community did some things very successfully...[o]ne is that they caused the incident to last longer than it would without community

attention...[t]hat’s all we can do: slow them down, make them treat people better and draw attention to it.”

Bashert’s position is entirely bankrupt. Her statement reflects the outlook of a layer of Democratic politicians who accept the legitimacy of the ICE apparatus while appealing for procedural decency. This position objectively serves to demobilize the working class resistance it claims to support. In effect, Bashert thinks ICE arrests are fine, the biggest problem is that they do not treat people nicely.

On April 14, 2026, ICE agents arrested a man near an Ann Arbor daycare. According to Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor, the ICE agents had their guns drawn, surrounded the man’s vehicle, and arrested him. ICE did not alert Ann Arbor police or city officials about the raid.

Both Mayor Taylor and Michigan State Representative Carrie Rheingans condemned ICE, less for the arrest itself, but more for ICE creating a traffic hazard. ICE agents drew guns near a daycare without notifying local authorities it was even operating in the area, traumatizing children and bystanders, yet Ann Arbor’s elected representatives reduced their objections to a traffic inconvenience. As with Bashert’s statements, these reactions are simply an expression of the Democratic Party’s acceptance of the ICE apparatus, so long as they act “decently.”

The Ypsilanti incident occurred just a day after the US government sued Washtenaw County and several of its officials in the Eastern District Court of Michigan over local policies which refuse to honor ICE detainees and which bar federal agents from county property. The complaint alleges that these actions violate the Supremacy Clause of the US Constitution and otherwise interfere with the president’s authority to enforce federal immigration laws.

This lawsuit is a part of a pattern of legal prosecution of officials who resist ICE, which includes the arrest and conviction of Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Hannah Dugan, the arrest of Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka, and the indictment of Congresswoman LaMonica McIver.

The invocation of the Supremacy Clause is done as an instrument of authoritarian centralization. Trump has previously declared that cities and states which do not cooperate with ICE are engaged in insurrection against the federal government. The government's use of the Supremacy Clause is also facially hypocritical: the Biden administration did not invoke it when Republican governors Greg Abbott of Texas and Ron DeSantis of Florida routinely defied federal authority with Trump's open encouragement.

ICE detainers are also not judicial warrants; they are administrative requests. Multiple federal courts have found they do not satisfy the Fourth Amendment's requirements for detention. Washtenaw County's refusal to honor them without a judicial warrant is not a novel act of defiance, but a constitutionally grounded position. It is the Trump administration that is pressing a legally-contested expansion of executive power.

The response of Democratic officials to the continued ICE operations in Michigan reveals a consistent pattern: protest at the margins, acceptance at the core. They do not challenge ICE's existence or the legal framework of mass deportation. They function solely to channel working class anger behind the Democratic Party rather than independent action—a function they see as all the more important in the wake of the Minneapolis protests.

Washtenaw County's non-cooperation policies illustrate this dynamic clearly. ICE arrests have surged since Trump's return to the White House, but these policies have not stopped a single ICE arrest. They did not stop guns being drawn near an Ann Arbor daycare, nor did they stop six vehicles blockading a Ypsilanti street, nor did they stop the federal government from intimidating Washtenaw County and its officials through a lawsuit. These methods are no substitute for the organized power of the working class.

What is required is not better lawsuits or stronger local ordinances, but the independent organization of the working class. Workers in every factory, hospital, and school in Washtenaw County and Michigan should

build rank-and-file committees, independent of union bureaucracies that support the capitalist state, and independent of the Democratic Party, which manages ICE repression while posturing as its opponent.



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