

Trump signs \$70 billion blank check for ICE and Border Patrol after Democrats enable passage

Jacob Crosse
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The House of Representatives passed the “Secure America Act” on Tuesday, allocating an additional \$70 billion to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection and funding the agencies through the remainder of Trump’s second term. Trump signed the bill into law Wednesday morning.

The House vote was 214-212, along party lines, with every Democrat voting against the measure. The Senate passed the bill last week, also along party lines.

The bill provides \$38 billion to ICE, \$26 billion to Border Patrol and Customs and Border Protection, and another \$6 billion to the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security. With Trump’s signature, the administration has now allocated roughly \$246 billion to ICE and Border Patrol since returning to the White House.

Speaking at the White House before signing the bill, Trump praised the “heroes of ICE and Border Patrol” and boasted that the legislation fully funds the Department of Homeland Security “through the end of my term, so we won’t have that to be talking about any longer.”

After months of mass protests, appeals to Congress and denunciations of ICE violence, the administration has secured a massive increase in funding for the same agencies responsible for the murders of Renee Good and Alex Pretti. The bill contains no restrictions on their operations. There is no requirement that ICE or CBP agents use judicial warrants; no prohibition on masked agents; no end to roving patrols; and no restriction on the deployment of immigration police in airports, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods and public spaces.

The passage of the bill exposes, once again, the fraud of the Democratic Party’s posture as an opponent of Trump’s mass deportation regime. While Democrats voted “no” on the final bill, they had ensured its passage

beforehand, making possible the last act in a phony charade.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained last week, the Democrats’ opposition was a carefully staged maneuver. Earlier this year, they agreed to separate funding for ICE and Border Patrol from the broader Department of Homeland Security funding bill. This allowed them to vote for the rest of DHS funding, posture as opponents of the most openly fascist elements of Trump’s immigration program, and then leave Republicans free to pass the ICE and CBP money through the budget reconciliation process without formal Democratic support.

In other words, the Democrats preserved their ability to posture before the public while guaranteeing that the immigration Gestapo would receive the funding demanded by Trump and the ruling class.

Following the House vote, Democratic Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries bemoaned the fact that Trump had “promised America that he would target violent felons who are here illegally,” but that instead “taxpayer dollars are being used by ICE and his violent mass deportation machine to target and brutalize American citizens, in some cases, killing them.”

Jeffries’ statement sums up the reactionary framework of the Democratic Party. His criticism is not that Trump is carrying out mass deportations, building concentration camps and deploying masked federal agents across the country. Rather, he accepts the premise that immigrants previously convicted of felonies should be hunted down and deported.

This itself is a fraud, since the Democratic Party when it is in power has enormously expanded the deportation of all immigrants, and state government under Democratic Party control have deployed the police to assist ICE and attack protesters.

Illinois Democratic Representative Delia C. Ramirez centered her criticism on the failure to proceed in a bipartisan way. Speaking to 535 News, Ramirez said, “How dangerous it was that yesterday we passed a bill to fund ICE and CBP for the next three years without any necessity to come before the committees of jurisdiction for the oversight work necessary in order to be able to release the money.”

“Yesterday’s vote, in fact, made it possible that whether the Republicans are in the majority or the minority they don’t have to come before us anymore, at least for three years,” she added.

Ramirez’s use of the word “we” was more revealing than she intended. The Democrats are not helpless bystanders. They are participants in the same state apparatus, defenders of the same capitalist order and collaborators in the strengthening of the police-state machinery now being placed in Trump’s hands.

Since Trump’s return to the White House, millions have taken part in “No Kings” demonstrations and the mass protests in Minnesota in response to the killing of Good and Pretti. There have been protests outside for-profit immigrant detention centers in New Jersey, Texas, Illinois and California, and walkouts by students across the country against the mass deportation operation. Yet this mass opposition finds no expression in Washington. The reason is that the Democrats are not an opposition party. They are collaborators in Trump’s and the ruling class’s drive to establish a presidential dictatorship.

The passage of the Secure America Act underscores that the fight to free immigrants, stop the construction of a nationwide network of concentration camps, and abolish the immigration Gestapo cannot be left in the hands of the Democratic Party. Workers need their own party and organizations, grounded in an internationalist and socialist program, which recognizes the right of all human beings to live, labor and love wherever they choose, regardless of immigration status.



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