ICE turns state and local police into nationwide deportation force

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is expanding agreements with state police in Indiana, Oklahoma and Wyoming that authorize troopers to participate in federal immigration kidnapping operations during traffic stops, accidents and commercial vehicle inspections, according to an August 14 report by FreightWaves.

The agreements were established under the Task Force Model of ICE's 287(g) program. Once trained and credentialed by ICE, state troopers can question people about their immigration status, detain those suspected of civil immigration violations and transfer them into federal custody.

The program transforms every encounter with state and local police into a potential kidnapping. A worker with car trouble or a truck driver undergoing a commercial vehicle inspection can be questioned, detained and delivered into ICE's network of concentration camps even though they committed no crime.

Seventeen Wyoming Highway Patrol officers have already received immigration-enforcement credentials. Highway Patrol spokesman Aaron Brown acknowledged that when immigration status arises during a stop, a person determined to be in the country without authorization can be detained and transferred to ICE.

Brown nevertheless claimed that Wyoming troopers "do not act as ICE agents." The distinction is fraudulent. Under the agreement, state police exercise authority delegated by ICE to identify, detain and arrest immigrants while performing their regular duties.

Section 287(g) takes its name from a provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act added by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, signed by Democratic President Bill Clinton. It authorizes the federal government to delegate immigration-enforcement powers to state and local law enforcement agencies.

ICE currently operates three forms of 287(g) agreement. The Jail Enforcement Model permits local jail personnel to question prisoners about immigration status and hold them for transfer to ICE. The Warrant Service Officer Model authorizes corrections officers to serve administrative immigration warrants. The Task Force Model, the most far-reaching, allows police, sheriffs and state agents to carry out federal immigration raids during their normal oppressive operations.

The Obama administration discontinued the Task Force Model in 2012 following repeated exposures of racial profiling and other abuses. It continued the jail-based forms of the program. Trump revived the Task Force Model immediately after returning to office and placed it at the center of his mass deportation operation.

According to ICE, the 287(g) program now extends across 39 states and two US territories. More than 2,000 state and local agencies have entered agreements with the federal government. An analysis by FWD.us found that more than 1,400 agencies were participating in the Task Force Model alone by July 10. State-level agencies had joined the program in 20 states, placing approximately one-quarter of the US population under the jurisdiction of a state police or highway patrol agency participating in 287(g).

Even by February, before the latest wave of agreements, at least 77.2 million people, one-quarter of the US population, lived in a county where a local agency had joined the program, according to the American Civil Liberties Union.

The Trump administration is using billions of dollars in federal funding to bind local police departments to ICE. Participating agencies have been offered reimbursement for salaries, benefits, equipment, training and overtime, along with performance payments tied to immigration arrests. FWD.us estimates that between $1.4 billion and $2 billion could flow to participating state and local agencies in 2026.

This creates a federally financed bounty system under which financially strained counties and municipalities are rewarded for placing their police forces at the disposal of ICE.

Oklahoma has served as a laboratory for this nationwide integration of federal, state and local police agencies.

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In June 2025, KOSU reported (public radio station in Oklahoma) that 14 of Oklahoma's 17 active agreements had been established since late February. Oklahoma was then the only state with five statewide agencies participating in 287(g), including the Department of Public Safety, Department of Corrections, State Bureau of Investigation and Bureau of Narcotics.

At that stage, approximately 40 Oklahoma Highway Patrol officers were undergoing training. Within months, roughly 750 state troopers had reportedly been authorized to participate in immigration enforcement.

State police and ICE have since conducted coordinated operations targeting commercial drivers along Oklahoma's major transportation routes. During one 30-hour operation in western Oklahoma, police agents reported arresting 91 immigrant commercial drivers. Another operation in eastern Oklahoma led to the detention of 73 people, including 34 truck drivers.

The implications extend far beyond the trucking industry. Once state police exercise federal immigration powers during their ordinary duties, the entire road network becomes part of the deportation apparatus.

As of March, Oklahoma law enforcement agencies held at least $47 million in ICE contracts, the second-highest total in the country behind Florida. At least 30 Oklahoma agencies entered 287(g) agreements, ranging from local police departments and sheriffs' offices to statewide law enforcement bodies.

The drive reached such absurd and ominous proportions that the police chief of a rural K-12 school district nearly enrolled the district in 287(g) after mistakenly signing an agreement.

Lance Schroyer, Trump's nominee to become ICE director, played a central role in developing Oklahoma's 287(g) apparatus. Schroyer spent nearly three decades with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol before becoming a senior adviser at the Department of Homeland Security. Department of Homeland Secretary Markwayne Mullin praised him for helping establish the state's 287(g) program and conducting operations to remove immigrants from Oklahoma.

Schroyer's nomination signals the administration's intention to reproduce the Oklahoma model nationally: federal direction, billions of dollars in financial inducements and the conversion of every available police agency into an auxiliary force for ICE.

Trump greatly expanded 287(g) during his first administration, increasing the number of participating agencies from 34 at the end of the Obama administration to more than 140. Biden campaigned on a pledge to terminate Trump's agreements. Once in office, his administration retained nearly all of them.

The ACLU's 2022 report, *License to Abuse*, found that 65 percent of participating agencies had records involving racial profiling or other civil rights violations. Nevertheless, the Biden administration preserved the legal and institutional framework that Trump has now expanded into a nationwide dragnet.

The ACLU has responded to the current expansion by arguing that local police should "serve their communities" and that states and cities must withdraw from 287(g). While its reports document important evidence of abuse, this position obscures the class character of the police.

Local police have not been diverted from an otherwise neutral or benevolent purpose. Municipal police departments, county sheriffs, state troopers, Border Patrol and ICE are components of the same capitalist state. They enforce capitalist property relations and defend the wealth and power of the ruling class against the working population.

The 287(g) program exposes this underlying unity. The uniform may belong to a town, county, state or federal agency, but the social function remains the same. Today this integrated police apparatus is being mobilized against immigrant workers. It will also be used against strikes, demonstrations and every form of working class opposition to war, inequality and dictatorship.

The fight against mass deportations cannot be entrusted to Democratic politicians, the courts or appeals for a more "community-oriented" police force. It requires the independent mobilization of the working class, uniting immigrant and US-born workers against the capitalist state and both parties that defend it.

All 287(g) agreements must be terminated. All police, including ICE and Customs and Border Protection must be abolished, all immigration detainees released and the entire deportation regime dismantled. The resources poured into police agencies, concentration camps and mass deportations must be redirected toward guaranteeing housing, healthcare, education and secure employment for all workers, regardless of nationality or immigration status.

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