

Electric shock gloves sought by ICE were used on Omaha schoolchildren

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Police in Omaha, Nebraska, have been forced to stop carrying electric shock gloves in most Omaha Public Schools (OPS) following public outrage over their use on two students, including a child in a special-education program. But police officers from the suburb of Bellevue who are assigned to two OPS schools continue to carry the devices, as do officers in several neighboring districts.

The shock gloves are the same which Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) plans to spend up to \$20 million purchasing for federal agents.

In June 2025, the Omaha City Council approved, as part of the police department's consent agenda (a block of items voted on without separate discussion), a \$65,924 purchase of 40 pairs of G.L.O.V.E. devices—Generated Low Output Voltage Emitters—for school resource officers, a routine budget item that drew no public debate at the time. The gloves were used twice during the 2025-26 school year, both times on students. In the first case, an officer shocked a trespassing student's wrist for roughly two seconds during a fight at Omaha South High School. In the second, at the district's Integrated Learning Program, which serves students with social, emotional, behavioral and learning needs, a student who had thrown a chair and struck a security guard was shocked twice, once for about a second and again for two to three seconds.

Democratic Mayor John Ewing, a former Omaha police deputy chief, and Police Chief Todd Schmaderer reviewed both incidents and pronounced them, in their own words, “the safest use-of-force option in the rare times when it is used.”

That assessment was not shared by the roughly 30 parents, students and community members who packed an Omaha Public Schools board meeting on August 17 to denounce the devices, after the story broke nationally. Omaha Central High School student Lux Tipton told the board her twin brother has autism and that a shock device

could compound rather than de-escalate his outbursts, saying his safety could be put at risk “not only mentally but also physically.”

Nick Koehler, a former student, challenged any resource officer in the room to demonstrate the device on him instead, asking flatly what actual safety purpose the gloves served. The Arc of Nebraska (an organization that works to raise awareness of and provides assistance to those with intellectual or developmental disabilities) issued a statement opposing the use of any “aversive procedures, including shock technology,” on students with disabilities.

Parents who spoke to the WSWs were unwilling to let the matter pass quietly. “I am going to be loud about this because apparently parents are expected to just sit quietly while decisions involving our children are being made,” one mother of an OPS student said. “I am absolutely opposed to electric shock gloves being used by school resource officers in our schools ... our schools are supposed to be places where children are safe, learning and being protected—not places where electrical weapons become another tool of discipline or control.”

Another OPS parent said: “Me as a parent, I’m scared because my son is autistic. He doesn’t know how to regulate his emotions very clear so he could possibly have the chance to experience the shock gloves, which is scary. Because also due to Medicaid cutting the funding to have his therapist in a school setting, there is an opportunity he could be exposed to these gloves.”

Official records show that Omaha police and school officials discussed the gloves as early as January 2023. In March 2025 an OPS safety official acknowledged that Bellevue officers already carried them in two district schools. After two police-budget requests failed, an officer proposed seeking asset-forfeiture money. The City Council approved the \$65,924 purchase on a consent agenda in June 2025, without public debate. Officers

received the gloves on August 7.

This is part of a general pattern of the flooding of American schools with police. Federal survey data shows that in 2023-24, 48 percent of public schools reported a school resource officer present at least once a week, while 11 percent reported the regular presence of another sworn law enforcement officer. Among schools with either type of police presence, 92 percent said the officers routinely carried firearms.

Each of these measures was sold as a response to an external threat: mass shootings, unruly hallways, trespassers. In practice they have built a permanent security apparatus inside schools whose reach keeps expanding to answer the ordinary crises of adolescence and disability.

The G.L.O.V.E. device, worn like an ordinary glove and activated by a button, sends an electrical charge through electrodes on the palm. The manufacturer, Compliant Technologies, calls it a “Conductive Distraction and De-escalation Device.” What the company’s own user manual concedes is less reassuring: it warns that the device may increase biological factors associated with “physiological changes associated with sudden death,” recommends avoiding small children, pregnant women, the elderly and people it calls “severely handicapped,” and states that longer exposure increases the risk.

A pending wrongful-death lawsuit alleges that jailers in Kentucky shocked Johnathon Mansfield 27 times with a G.L.O.V.E. and subjected him to 13 Taser discharges before he suffered cardiac arrest. Mansfield died on October 10, 2024. The allegations have not yet been adjudicated.

The device now being rolled back from Omaha’s own hallways is still headed for a much larger deployment. On August 10, the Department of Homeland Security published an acquisition forecast announcing its intent to spend up to \$20 million equipping ICE agents with the devices through a noncompetitive contract. They will go to officers in both of ICE’s operational wings, Homeland Security Investigations and Enforcement and Removal Operations.

DHS has defended it by pointing to what it calls a 1,300 percent rise in assaults on ICE personnel—a comparison based on 275 alleged incidents in 2025 and 19 in 2024. The ACLU’s review of more than 1,200 immigration-enforcement incidents found more than 400 involving alleged misconduct by agents. The incidents affected 214 children; 49 occurred at or near schools and 40 prompted school lockdowns.

On August 20, Democratic Representatives Bennie Thompson, Lou Correa and Shri Thanedar asked DHS to halt the procurement pending answers about testing, training and safeguards. Their letter confines the issue to oversight of equipment while leaving intact the mass-deportation operation for which the devices are intended.

Nebraska’s political establishment, for its part, did not wait for the gloves to demonstrate its readiness to serve as an arm of the deportation state. A year ago this month, Governor Jim Pillen announced the conversion of the McCook Work Ethic Camp into a 300-bed ICE detention facility nicknamed the “Cornhusker Clink,” a deal DHS Secretary Kristi Noem promoted with the boast that it would help “remove the worst of the worst out of our country.” In reality, state officials acknowledged the facility mostly holds low-level detainees.

The arrangement nets the state an estimated \$14.25 million a year. Alongside it, the Nebraska State Patrol signed its own 287(g) agreement with ICE, growing from six deputized troopers to 16 within months.

The police state is growing as cuts are being carried out elsewhere. On July 8, Pillen ordered state agencies to seek allotment reductions of at least 5 percent and restrict hiring. His directive exempted sworn law-enforcement and correctional officers. Resources are cut from health care and services for disabled children while police, prisons and deportation receive protected funding.

What is being built in Nebraska, as in the rest of the country, is an integrated system, spanning school hallways, county jails and state highways, in which local and state agencies are being enlisted in the federal deportation apparatus.

Stopping it will not come from procurement hearings or congressional letters. It requires the independent mobilization of the working class, uniting immigrant and native-born workers, students and their parents, against a deportation apparatus that neither capitalist party has any intention of dismantling.



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