

LATINO ICE ARRESTS, DETENTIONS, AND REMOVALS UPDATES

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Introduction

As documented in our previous briefs, President Trump’s pursuit of the largest deportation program in American history has had a significant impact on Latinos. This xenophobic agenda, first announced during the 2016 presidential campaign and renewed eight years later, promised to remove millions of undocumented immigrants.¹ His rhetoric inflamed his supporters by framing this as a public safety issue, stating he would deport violent criminals and branding them the “worst of the worst.” In particular, he has targeted Latinos. For example, he portrayed the U.S. as a dumping ground for Mexico to send drugs, criminals, and rapists at the New York City launch of his 2016 presidential campaign.² He has refurbished existing anti-Latino and anti-immigrant rhetoric for a twenty-first-century audience.³

President Trump’s position is not just political blustering. During his first administration, his immigration policies included a travel ban, southwest border wall, family separation of arriving migrants, and the termination of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS)—many of which disproportionately affected Latino immigrants and families.⁴ One of his first executive orders issued on inauguration day (January 20, 2025) of his second term was Protecting the American People Against Invasion,⁵ which initiated mass deportation. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been instrumental through an aggressive—and arguably unconstitutional—enforcement of immigration laws within the U.S.⁶ ICE has received a substantial increase in federal funding, significantly increasing enforcement capacity, including detention infrastructure, staffing, and removal operations. Additionally, the Trump administration’s immigration agenda has extended beyond mass deportations to include questions about whether children born in the U.S. to noncitizen parents are entitled to citizenship and the right to remain in the country, effectively challenging long-standing precedents under the Fourteenth Amendment’s Citizenship Clause.⁷

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Our three previous analytical briefs, conducted by the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge in partnership with Unseen, documented the impact of ICE on Latinos under President Trump’s current administration. The first brief documented a dramatic surge in Latino arrests by ICE under President Trump’s second administration, doubling during the first 100 days then climbing to record highs after new daily arrest quotas were introduced.⁸ Apprehensions were carried out in community settings such as workplaces and public spaces, reflecting a major shift toward more visible and punitive enforcement and employing racial profiling. The second brief documented how detentions increasingly targeted non-criminal, law-abiding Latinos, with sharp increases in detention length, transfers between facilities, and out-of-state confinement.⁹ The findings raised serious concerns about due process, family separation, and the broader social and economic impacts of expanded detention policies. The third in the series examined the deportation process, finding that Latinos were disproportionately impacted by ICE actions.¹⁰ The Trump administration curtailed due process and created a toxic environment designed to coerce detainees into self-deporting. Moreover, the “worst of the worst” became a smaller share of all deportations while the removal of non-criminals grew dramatically, indicating ICE’s primary focus is not on making America safer. Instead, it has cast an indiscriminate dragnet entrapping many long-term immigrants who are otherwise law-abiding and productive residents. These are immigrants that a majority of the American public believe should have a pathway to legalization.¹¹

This new brief updates our analysis of Latinos with more recent data extending to the first part of 2026.¹² The major findings are consistent with those reported previously: a dramatic increase in the numbers arrested, detained, and deported; an increase in targeting non-criminals; and the creation of fear within the community by utilizing extreme and questionable tactics.

Data And Methodology

The analysis utilizes data provided by the UC Berkeley School of Law’s Deportation Data Project, documenting ICE activities from January 2024 to February 2026, which covers the last 13 months of the Biden administration and the first 13 months of the current administration.¹³ The dataset is a publicly available collection of record-level immigration enforcement actions, compiled by researchers and lawyers through the use of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). We utilized information from the ICE arrest and detention files. We deleted duplicate records, retaining only the most recent arrest. Using alternative deletion methods produced very similar analytical results and qualitative interpretations. Arrest and detention-stay records were merged using a unique identifier, keeping only records where the stay¹⁴ started within a week of the arrest. We estimated the number of detainees in custody for the 15th of each month. The brief includes an analysis of three Latino subgroups, whose outcomes provide insights into ICE’s tactics. The first is comprised of non-criminal immigrants (i.e., those without a prior criminal conviction nor pending charge). These are unambiguously not the “worst of the worst.” The second subgroup is comprised of the “worst of the worst” criminals—those classified with the greatest threat level as determined by ICE, which includes any person convicted of a violent crime (i.e., murder, manslaughter, rape, kidnapping, robbery, or major drug offense) or convicted of two or more felonies. This is the population that should be prioritized based on the Trump administration’s stated aims. The third subgroup is comprised of those arrested in public spaces, homes, and workplaces, a practice that heightens fear and insecurity within immigrant communities.

Latinos are defined as those who are a citizen of Mexico or a country in Central America, Latin America, or the Caribbean (excluding former British and French colonies). Due to data limitations, statistical results may be imprecise and biased. The data limitations include, but are not limited to,

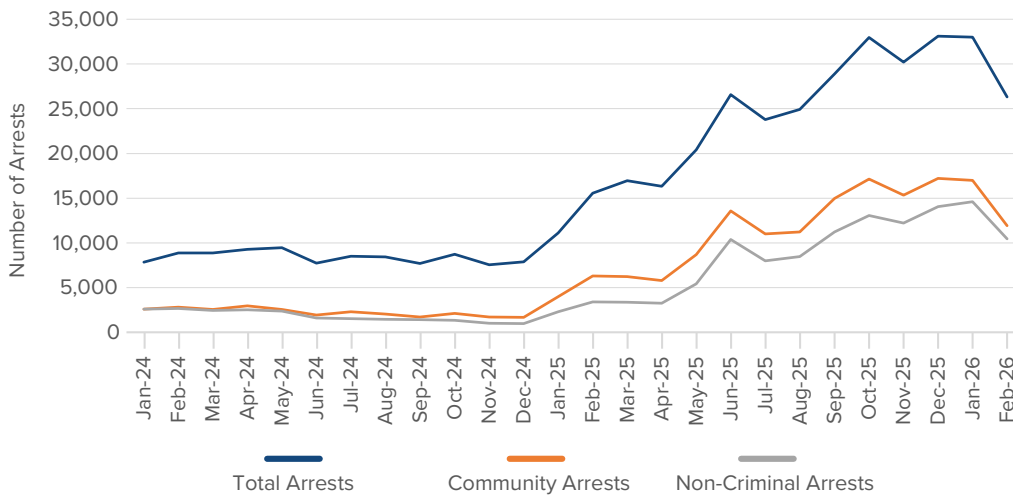
duplicate and inconsistent records, data entry errors, and missing information. Potential biases, however, are likely to be minimal because incomplete information and errors appear to be rare and random. Consequently, the reported results are reasonable and the best estimates available.

FINDING 1:

There Was a Fivefold Increase in ICE Arrests Within the First 13 Months of the Trump Administration

Figure 1 reports the trend in total monthly Latino ICE arrests, non-criminal arrests, and those arrested in the community.¹⁵ The number of arrests increased by 4,400 when the Trump administration transitioned into power, from January 2025 to February 2026. The counts rose steadily through much of the Trump administration, peaking in December 2025 at over 33,000—three times as high as the level recorded in January 2025. Overall, arrests during the Trump administration were three times as much as under Biden.¹⁶ During the Trump administration, the number of non-criminal arrestees and community-at-large arrests were each about five times as high as during the Biden administration. The number of arrests during the Trump administration dropped in February 2026, perhaps due to the public’s negative reaction to the killing of Renee Good and Alex Pretti.¹⁷

Figure 1: Monthly Latino ICE Arrests, Community Arrests, and Non-Criminal Arrests, January 2024 to February 2026



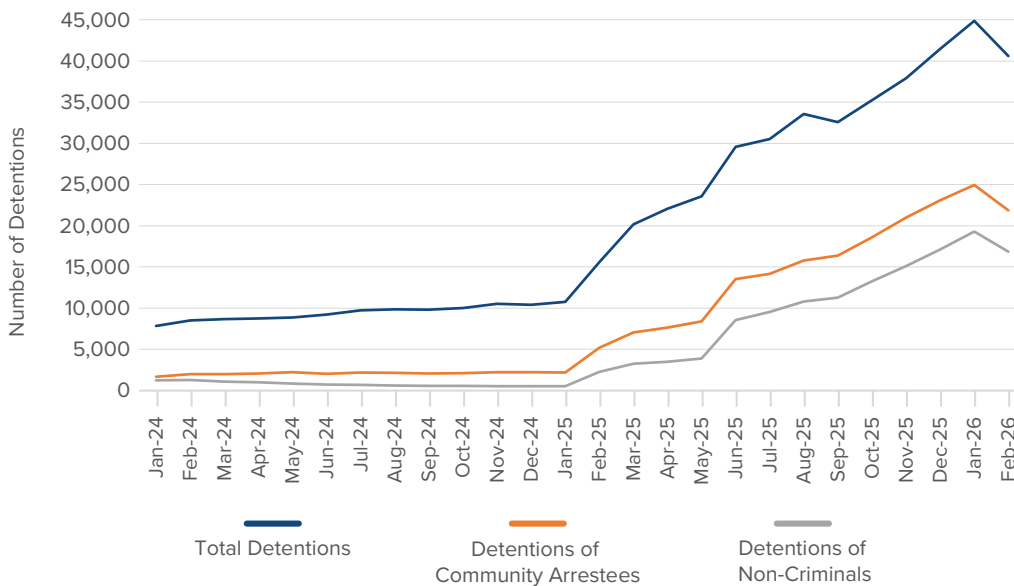
Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of ICE arrest data from UC Berkeley School of Law’s Deportation Data Project.

FINDING 2:

Detainee Levels under the Trump Administration Exceeded Those of the Biden Administration to More Than Threefold

Figure 2 traces the trend in total monthly Latino ICE detentions, detainees who were arrested in the community, and non-criminal detentions.¹⁸ Detentions increased continuously throughout most of the Trump administration, peaking in December 2025 at nearly 45,000. The increase was driven by the fact that the numbers entering facilities outnumbered those exiting.¹⁹ Overall, the number of detainees during the Trump administration was more than three times as high as during the Biden administration. The number of non-criminal detainees and detainees arrested in the community rose faster—to more than 13 times and over 7 times as high, respectively. Similar to the arrest trends, the number of detentions dropped in February 2026 as the administration recalibrated its efforts.

Figure 2: Monthly Latino ICE Detentions, Detentions of Community Arrestees, and Non-Criminal Detentions, January 2024 to February 2026



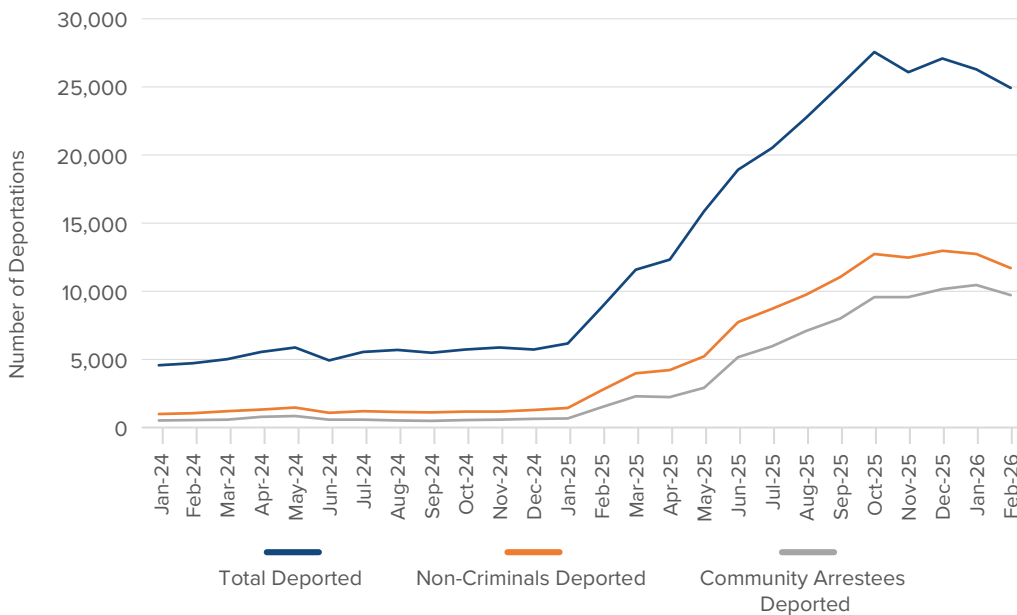
Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of ICE arrest data from UC Berkeley School of Law's Deportation Data Project.

FINDING 3:

By March 2025, ICE Deportations More Than Doubled from a Year Earlier, Rising from 5,000 to Nearly 11,600

Figure 3 tracks the deportation of Latinos, including all removals, those who were arrested in the community and subsequently deported, and non-criminal arrests leading to deportation. The numbers increased notably during the first two months of the Trump administration as ICE started implementing its mass deportation campaign. By March 2025, ICE deported more than twice as many individuals as the year before—from 5,000 to nearly 11,600. Removals continued to increase, peaking at nearly 27,600 in September 2025. Deportation plateaued in the last quarter of 2025, then declined slightly. Overall, deportations during the Trump administration were nearly fourfold as high as during the Biden administration. As with arrests and detentions, removal of non-criminal immigrants and individuals arrested in the community rose even more sharply—to nearly 11 times and over 7 times their previous levels, respectively.

Figure 3: Monthly Latino ICE Deportations, Deportations of Community Arrestees, and Deportations of Non-Criminals, January 2024 to February 2026



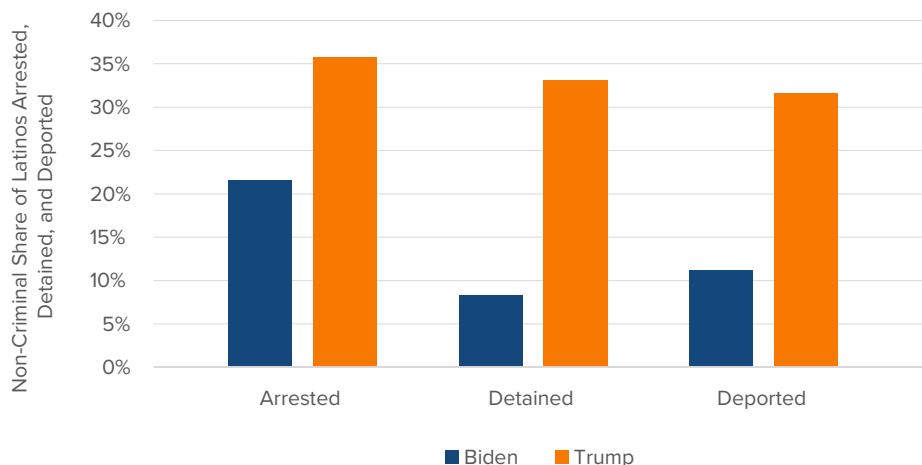
Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of ICE arrest data from UC Berkeley School of Law's Deportation Data Project.

FINDING 4:

Under Trump, Non-Criminal Share of Detentions Rose Sharply from 8% to 33%

Despite President Trump’s political rhetoric focusing on removing criminals to promote public safety, our previous briefs found that non-criminals (i.e., those without any previous convictions nor facing pending charges) became an increasing share of those arrested, detained, and deported. We found similar patterns in the updated and newer data, as shown in Figure 4. As a proportion of all arrestees, non-criminals accounted for over a third (36%) of those arrested under Trump, compared with 22% during the Biden months. The change in percentage points was even greater among detainees, climbing from 8% to 33%, a net increase of 25 points. The gap among deportees is similar, 21 percentage points, from 11% to 32%. The results reveal that ICE increasingly targeted immigrants who were not a threat to public safety. It is important to note that the likelihood of release dropped sharply under Trump: only 9% of Latino non-criminal detainees were released back into the community, while 88% were removed.²⁰

Figure 4: Non-Criminal Share of Latinos Arrested, Detained, and Deported, January 2024 to February 2026



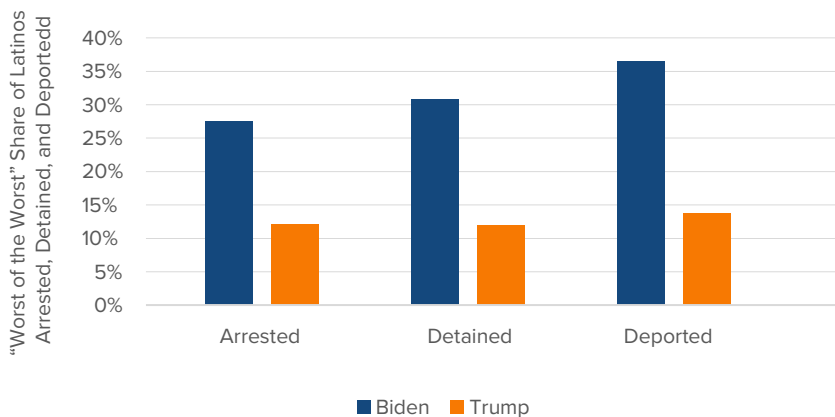
Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of ICE arrest data from UC Berkeley School of Law’s Deportation Data Project.

FINDING 5:

“Worst of the Worst” Arrests, Detentions, and Deportations Fell Dramatically from the Biden Administration to the Trump Administration

A central part of President Trump’s public-safety rhetoric focused on what he called the “worst of the worst,” the most violent criminals. While ICE did arrest many in this category, the numbers arrested only grew by 27% between the two administrations over a span of 13 months per administration—not what would be considered a massive increase. In other words, ICE made nearly as many arrests during the Biden months as during the Trump months. Moreover, the share of “worst of the worst” arrested, detained, and deported declined significantly, as shown in Figure 5. For arrests, the proportion fell from over a quarter during the Biden administration to less than an eighth during Trump’s (28% to 12%, respectively). By early 2026, only one in ten arrests involved a serious threat to public safety, compared with one in five in early 2024 under the Biden administration. The data also shows similar declines in the share of “worst of the worst” detainees and deportees. These results, along with the increase in non-criminals swept up by ICE, reinforce the conclusion that the Trump administration’s agenda was to remove large numbers of Latinos by going after immigrants—regardless of criminality.

Figure 5: “Worst of the Worst” Share of Latinos Arrested, Detained, and Deported, January 2024 to February 2026



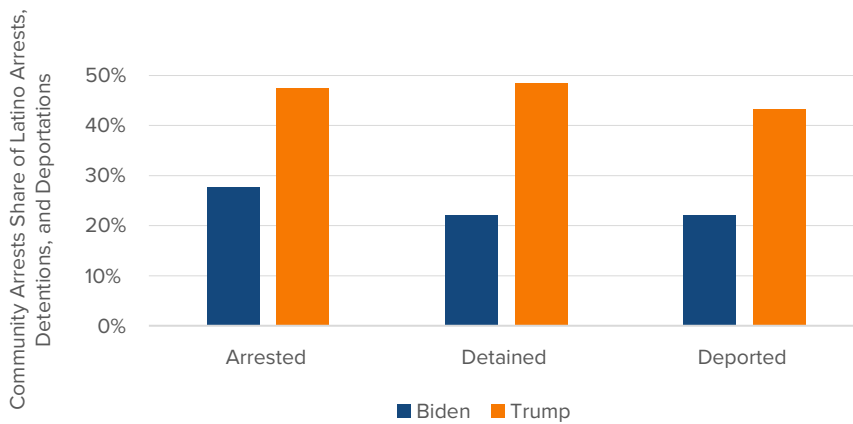
Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of ICE arrest data from UC Berkeley School of Law’s Deportation Data Project.

FINDING 6:

Under Trump, Community Arrests Made Up 48% of Latino Arrestees— Nearly Double the 28% under Biden

ICE not only went after those with no criminal history but also relied on arresting immigrants in public places, homes, and worksites.²¹ These at-large apprehensions often relied on harsh, militarized, and violent methods without accountability.²² These tactics were widely used against Latinos and coincided with Stephen Miller’s announcement of a new ambitious ICE arrest target of 3,000 arrests per day.²³ Under Trump, nearly half (48%) of Latino arrestees were apprehended in the community, as shown in Figure 6. This share was nearly double that of the Biden administration (28%). We see similar jumps for detainees and removals, with those arrested in the community making up 48% of those in custody and 43% of those deported under Trump. This new reality has created immense fear and insecurity among immigrants.²⁴

Figure 6: Community Arrests Share of Latino Arrests, Detentions, and Deportations, January 2024 to February 2026



Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of ICE arrest data from UC Berkeley School of Law’s Deportation Data Project.

Conclusion

The updates to our previous analyses of ICE activities found that the negative impacts on Latinos continued and, in some cases, worsened. Under Trump, the number of arrests jumped, non-criminals were increasingly targeted, and more apprehensions occurred in communities. While ICE activity continuously increased in the early months, there was a pause in the escalation at the start of 2026. As mentioned in this brief’s introduction, the pause was likely due to worsening public opinion.²⁵ The administration appears to have pivoted politically. There was a

change in leadership within the Department of Homeland Security (which houses ICE) with the firing of Secretary Kristi Noem²⁶ and the transfer of Gregory Bovino, who led ICE's aggressive enforcement.²⁷

These developments in early 2026 are likely temporary phenomena, a regrouping without abandoning the mass deportation agenda. There is no sign of renouncing this central component of MAGA's goal to transform the nation. Radical restructuring of the immigration system is instrumental to MAGA's interest in demographically remaking the country into one less racially and ethnically diverse.²⁸ Consequently, we are likely to see a resurgence of ICE activities, different in form but with the same objective of removing millions. The U.S. is now on a course where immigration is increasingly unfair and discriminatory against people of color.

Disclaimer: This research project is a collaborative effort of the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge and Unseen. The analysis and views expressed in this brief are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of UCLA as an institution.

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