



ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

# Trump's ICE limits illegal immigrant releases amid moves to shake off Biden 'hangover'

One official said they expect releases to 'fall off a cliff'



By Adam Shaw · Fox News

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**EXCLUSIVE:** [Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\)](#) is taking dramatic steps to limit the number of illegal immigrants released from custody, as it moves at speed to shake off what one official described as the "hangover" from the Biden administration.

Fox News Digital is told that, as of this week, officials are being instructed that any release of an illegal immigrant in ICE custody must be personally signed off on by acting ICE director Caleb Vitello.

The administration has racked up thousands of arrests in the first week as it launched a mass deportation operation in cities and states across the U.S., with agents quickly hitting over 1,000 arrests a day as the agency drops Biden-era restrictions and takes a more aggressive stance towards illegal immigration.

### 30/28/14/7 DAY WORK CHALLENGE FOR BEGI

7-DAY PLAN		14-DAY PLAN		
<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>DAY 2</b>	<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>DAY 2</b>	<b>DAY 3</b>
<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>DAY 4</b>	<b>DAY 4</b>	<b>DAY 5</b>	<b>DAY 6</b>
<b>DAY 5</b>	<b>DAY 6</b>	<b>DAY 7</b>	<b>DAY 8</b>	<b>DAY 9</b>
<b>DAY 10</b>	<b>DAY 11</b>	<b>DAY 12</b>		

30-DAY PLAN				
<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>DAY 2</b>	<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>DAY 4</b>	<b>DAY 5</b>
<b>DAY 8</b>	<b>DAY 9</b>	<b>DAY 10</b>	<b>DAY 11</b>	<b>DAY 12</b>

## TRUMP DOJ SLAPS ILLINOIS, CHICAGO WITH LAWSUIT OVER SANCTUARY LAWS



ICE agents arrested seven illegal immigrants during a workforce operation raid. (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement)

"We are fending off the hangover and some of the bad habits," a senior ICE official told Fox News Digital, comparing the task to turning around the Titanic. "We are fixing four years of really bad habits."

ICE currently has just under 42,000 beds available to it, and has been exceeding capacity under the current administration. The administration has been pushing hard to get more beds and detention space, but sources tell Fox it typically takes around 30 days for contractors to deliver given the time taken to identify buildings, hire people, conduct background checks and related requirements. That help is expected soon, but it is still in the process of coming online.

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The White House confirmed on Wednesday that around 460 illegal immigrants have been released from custody of the more than 8,000 arrested. While that's a small percentage, it's expected to get even smaller with the additional restrictions.

"I expect the number of releases to fall off a cliff," the ICE official told Fox News Digital, stressing that the new sign-off requirement sends a message to agents about a new posture by the agents.

The official stressed that any releases do not include public safety or national security threats. Anyone released is only done so with monitoring like ankle bracelets. Cases where illegal immigrants could be released could include someone who is pregnant or who is ill with cancer.

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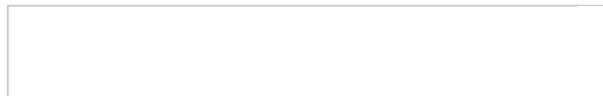
"That's someone we are likely going to release...not only for the human side of it, but ICE and the government incur all of those medical costs the minute we take somebody into custody and so now we're passing that on to the taxpayer as well," they said.

While there are now additional limits on releases, [ICE is also moving](#) quickly to ramp up detention space. ICE has requested an apportionment of around \$575 million from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as an advance of its funding for the year in order to be able to work quicker and get another step closer to a reported target of 100,000 beds and one million removals a year.



US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, along with other federal law enforcement agencies, attend a pre-enforcement meeting in Chicago, Illinois on Sunday, Jan. 26, 2025. (Christopher Dilts/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

It's also working with the Bureau of Prisons to identify space to house illegal immigrants as well as Customs and Border Protection (CBP) -- where there may be plenty of open space in soft-sided facilities due to a dramatic plunge in encounters at the border. This week, the administration began flying illegal immigrants to Guantanamo Bay, where there are expected to be around 30,000 spaces.



"We are looking well outside the box," the official said.

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Family detention is one of the biggest challenges facing the agency. The Biden administration ended family detention in 2021, choosing instead to release families on Alternatives to Detention. The Trump administration is turning that back on.



### Prevent Suicide

"The Biden administration cut down so many of our beds and they canceled so many contracts. And the problem with that is you can't just immediately turn those back on. It's not a switch, it's a dial," they said.

ICE has been talking with other agencies, including the State Department to expedite travel documents for deportable illegal immigrants. That's in addition to a slew of new agreements by the Trump administration with other countries. Venezuela and Colombia have both announced they will accept back illegal immigrants.

That cooperation was on display on Wednesday when [Guatemala has said](#) it will accept migrants from other countries in what is known as a safe third country agreement.