

Advocacy Groups File Suit Seeking Transparency on ICE Enforcement Practices

A Clearer Picture of Immigration Enforcement is Needed as Communities Prepare for Next Presidential Administration

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CONTACT:
UCI Law Immigrant Rights Clinic, Annie Lai, (949) 824-9894

Irvine, Calif. (December 19, 2024) – The Harbor Institute for Immigrant and Economic Justice (the “Harbor Institute”) and the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, represented by the University of California, Irvine School of Law Immigrant Rights Clinic, filed a complaint in federal court today charging that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) failed to respond to requests for data and records about the agency’s enforcement practices and collusion with state and local officials, including probation and parole.

On August 19, 2024, the Harbor Institute and Immigrant Legal Resource Center submitted a request pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) seeking the relevant records. Although ICE asked for clarification about the request, to date the agency has not provided any responsive records. The goal of the lawsuit is to compel ICE’s compliance with its obligations under FOIA.

“Our request seeks important information about ICE practices that harm immigrant communities and erode communities’ trust in local government,” said Mai Do, Research and Policy Manager with the Harbor Institute. “This comes at a critical time when communities are bracing for what will come under the new presidential administration and determining what demands they have of their local elected officials.”

One practice highlighted in the FOIA request and lawsuit filed today is ICE’s practice of ambushing immigrants at meetings with probation or parole officials to arrest them. The request aims to shed light on patterns of local and regional cooperation between local officials and ICE that makes such arrests possible.

“Many Americans are unaware of the extent to which their state and local tax dollars are going toward helping ICE deport people,” said Lena Graber, Senior Staff Attorney with the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. “Our hope is to ensure communities have the information they need to spark meaningful conversations at the local level and fight for policies that reflect their values.”

“The data we hope to obtain in response to this lawsuit will help establish a baseline for analyzing the impact of immigration policies to come,” said Cruz Chaidez, a second-year student with the UCI Law Immigrant Rights Clinic who worked on the case. Alexis Reyes, another second-year student, stated, “Access to this data will empower advocates around the country. I’m grateful to have had the chance to contribute to this effort.”

A copy of the complaint filed today is available [here](#).

About the University of California, Irvine School of Law

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