

For Immediate Release

May 21, 2026

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Former GEO Group Executive Appointed to Lead ICE, Raising Concerns Over Detention Expansion

San Bernardino, CA — The Trump administration’s appointment of former GEO Group executive David Venturella as acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is a blatant reminder of what immigrant communities have long known: ICE was never created to protect us. It was built to detain, deport, surveil, and criminalize immigrant communities while enriching private prison corporations in the process.

The Department of Homeland Security announced in May 2026 that Venturella would assume the role following the departure of acting ICE director Todd Lyons. Venturella is a longtime immigration enforcement official who previously worked for ICE under both George W. Bush and Obama administrations before spending more than a decade with GEO Group, one of the largest private prison corporations profiting from immigrant detention.

Venturella’s appointment exposes the deeply entrenched revolving door between federal immigration enforcement agencies and private prison corporations. The same people who profit from detention are helping shape and expand the very system that cage immigrant communities.

Javier Hernandez, Executive Director at the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice, stated

“This appointment is a further consolidation of a deportation machine designed to terrorize immigrant communities, separate families, and expand detention for profit. ICE cannot be rebranded or reformed while it continues carrying out violence against our communities. The problem is not simply who leads ICE, the problem is ICE itself, and the entire system built around immigrant detention and criminalization.”

Here in the Inland Empire, we have witnessed the deadly consequences of this system firsthand through the Adelanto ICE Processing Center. For years, the Shut Down Adelanto campaign has exposed abuse, medical neglect, inhumane conditions, and deaths inside a detention center operated for profit by GEO Group. Immigrant communities should not be treated as commodities for private prison corporations or political agendas.

The appointment of another official tied to both ICE and GEO Group only reinforces what communities have long known: this system cannot be reformed. We need to shut down Adelanto, end the use of private detention centers, and abolish ICE entirely.

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