

The Urgency of Immigrant Justice



Executive Orders, ICE Raids, and Detentions

Unpacking Policies That Criminalize
And Create Profit From Immigrant Detention

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. immigration system is a complex network of laws, policies, and processes that don't work fairly, efficiently, or humanely. The system is referred to as "broken" because it fails to meet today's realities and often causes harm rather than offering solutions.

I have been working as an organizer at the intersection of faith, immigrant justice, and detention for nearly thirty years in a fast-changing system that is not benefiting immigrants. Former U.S. Presidents have made minor changes through executive actions as Congress continues to avoid a comprehensive immigration overhaul.

The year 2025 has brought unprecedented challenges for immigrant communities under Trump's administration. His numerous executive orders have not only instilled a profound sense of fear but also necessitated immediate action from the public. ICE's aggressive immigration enforcement has left entire communities traumatized, highlighting the urgency of the current immigration situation.

During discussions with pro-immigrant organizations and clergy, the need to understand the many 2025 executive orders and their implications for immigrants became evident. In response to the frequent question of "how did we end up in this chaos?" I undertook the task of documenting my knowledge of the immigration system, its history, and that of immigrant detention. In this digital book, I identify the problems with this system and provide numerous sources of information. If you see underlined words, those are links that take you to another page with a relevant report, article, and/or research data.

My insights are not just mine alone; they are shaped by the experiences of the numerous detained immigrants I've supported over the years and by my collaborative work with pro-immigrant organizations of which I have been a part.

The intention of this book is for collective action that will lead us to:

Understand the Past:

We need to name and confront the deep roots of institutional racism that have shaped this country. For too long, systems of punishment have cast immigrants and people of color as scapegoats, reducing their lives to false narratives of “criminality” while erasing their humanity and contributions.

Heal the Present:

We heal collectively when we walk alongside those most impacted. Immigrant families, workers, and communities whose labor, culture, and resilience have always sustained this nation. Amplify immigrant voices and include them in the solution-creation process. Demand that Congress enact a dignified overhaul of our broken immigration system. Advocate for bold policies that end cycles of harm and exclusion.

Transform the Future:

Let’s dream and create the Beloved Community, grounded in radical love, creative resistance, peaceful courage, and tender compassion. In this future, immigrants are not only received with dignity but also cherished as builders of hope. Everyone belongs, and everyone is welcomed for generations to come.

This digital book is an easy-to-navigate tool for learning, mobilizing, and seeking immigrant justice in our local communities and across the U.S.

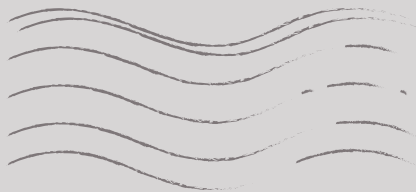


Table of Contents

U.S. Context Pg. 5 -13

- Mubarak, an Asylum Seeker Personal Story
- The Impact of the Presidential Executive Orders on Immigration
- A Long History of Blaming Immigrants in Tough Times

Key 2025 Executive Orders & Policy Impact Pg. 14

2025 Timeline of Executive Actions Affecting Immigrants Pg. 15-18

California Context Pg. 19-21

- 2025 Presidential Executive Orders
- Raul's Story

The Problems Pg. 22-29

- Old Immigration Reforms
- Criminatory Laws
- The Risk of Deportation, Jose's Story
- For-Profit Carceral Economies
- Corporations that Profit from Immigrant Detention
- Project 2025

Trump's Campaign Agenda, Anti-immigrant Rhetoric and Its Human Cost Pg. 30-34

- The Campaign Narrative Evolves
- Stock Market Evidence: How Wall Street Bets on Detention
- Connecting the Campaign Promises to the Profits

Profits Over People Pg. 35-37

- The One Big Beautiful Bill
- Increased Immigration Enforcement Spending
- Fiscal Budget

The Conditions of the Immigrant Communities Pg. 38-39

Debunk the Myths That Feed Into the Narrative of Fear Pg. 40-41

Here Is What We Can Do Pg. 42-45

- Practice Nonviolent Resistance
- Join pro-immigrant movements

Let's Follow the Money Pg. 46-50

- List of Donors

Acknowledgements Pg. 51-54

Appendices Pg. 55-60

Author's Note Pg.61

U.S. Context - The Impact of the Presidential Executive Orders on Immigration

On January 20, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order EO 14159, “Protecting the American People Against Invasion.” Not because there is an invasion. It is his anti-immigrant rhetoric and his continued use of harmful and alarming language to accomplish his campaign promises and goals. This executive order also called for the deportation of immigrants lacking official admission who had committed heinous crimes or presented significant threats to national security and public safety.

By March 2025, the number of immigrants in ICE detention had grown to 47,892, according to a news report from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse. Arrests occurred during interviews required to obtain a green card or gain approval for their naturalization application. The protocol for asylum seekers and other immigrants is to report regularly to the local ICE field office. ICE agents waited to arrest immigrants who were following these rules.

Take the story of Mubarak, a young man the author met in detention at the Adelanto ICE Processing Center in 2018. He permitted the sharing of his story, using a pseudonym to protect his identity.



Mubarak's Story

My story of oppression began in my childhood. I experienced fear and discrimination in a place where it was not safe to practice my religion.

Growing up in Egypt as a Coptic Christian, I witnessed time and again how Christians often faced persecution, from sectarian violence and discrimination by authorities to social hostility that made daily life uncertain. Many others and I remember the fear that spread after tragedies like the Nag Hammadi massacre in 2010 and the Alexandria church bombings in April 2017.

Although the government made gestures toward inclusion, such as recognizing Coptic Christmas as a national holiday and forming committees to address sectarian tensions, inequality remained deeply rooted. We, Christians, were still largely excluded from public office and faced bias in the workplace, including blasphemy for expressing our faith.


I was not in a healthy environment. Most workspaces are rooted in a culture of hate for those who practice different beliefs. I felt forced to flee my home country seeking peace, safety, and a place where I could live out my Christian faith without fear.

I arrived at LAX in May 2018 on Memorial Day. After more than 40 hours of a trip, I faced 12 hours of interrogations by TSA and CBP, which ended in my being taken to the Adelanto ICE Processing Center. I remember the fear I felt and the actual coldness of the handcuffs and chains placed on me by ICE.

As the author, I wanted to share more of his story. Mubarak spent 18 months detained inside the Adelanto facility, one of the largest immigrant detention centers in California. He had asked for asylum and had to wait in detention until his immigration case was processed. For those 18 months, he experienced the exploitation of working for \$1.00 a day cleaning the facilities. The money he earned was credited to his commissary account. A commissary is a store located within a detention facility.

In detention, individuals purchase their own toiletries, including shampoo, toothpaste, and toothbrushes. If you crave a change from the bland menu, the only option is the instant Cup Noodles soup sold at the commissary, where you can also purchase a soda or instant coffee. If you need to make a phone call, you use funds from your commissary to pay for it.

Mubarak also experienced medical neglect and violence. He had been there a few months when he fell off the stairs and ended up with an injury. When he insisted that he needed medical help, instead, he was assaulted by the guards and left with more pain and the need to use a wheelchair.



Here is a well-documented report and video of the use of force inside the Adelanto detention center. Hunger strikes have been employed by many individuals in detention as a means to make a demand for change, and Mubarak went on a hunger strike himself to demand medical attention for his injuries.

After eighteen months in detention, with medical conditions, much pain, and psychological trauma, he was given a bond of \$20k. Through collective efforts by pro-immigrant organizations, funds were raised to pay the bond, and Mubarak was released from detention.

Immigrant detention is unnecessary. It exists because it profits at the expense of human dignity. It is well documented that what is best for immigrants is to live with family and friends in the community, where they can more easily find legal representation and support for their case.

Mubarak thrived in the community, outside detention! He put one of his passions to work, carving religious art, and began a small business providing counseling for small family-owned businesses. He found a Coptic Christian community and got involved. He joined pro-immigrant organizations and trained as an impacted leader who shared his lived experience as he sought to shut down immigrant detention facilities.

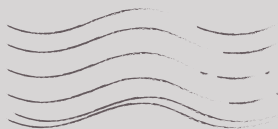
An impacted leader is someone who leads from lived experience. They are not just advocating for a cause they have been personally shaped, affected, or harmed by the very systems they seek to change.

He continued to have regular check-in meetings with an ICE officer. In 2023, his immigration case had shifted from seeking asylum to a U Visa due to being assaulted. His case seemed to be going in the right direction until his ICE check-in meeting at the end of April 2025, when ICE arrested him once again. For nearly five years, he had consistently shown up and followed the protocol imposed on him. ICE took him to the Desert View Annex ICE detention center and, a couple of weeks later, transferred him to the Adelanto ICE facility.

When I visited him there, this past May, he did not look well, possibly due to the many triggers and trauma of being in the same oppressive facility once again. He shared with me that they transferred him from California to Texas and Arizona, and then back to California, within 9 days. Why? Because this is a practice of detention centers across the U.S.

The author got the news at the end of July that ICE officials had deported him to his home country, where thankfully, he made it safely and is healing with the help of his family and friends.

Mubarak continues to seek safety in his home country in a very intense, economically gloomy environment.



The continued ICE raids taking place on the streets in several Democratic states across the nation are creating public concern and outcry over the ICE agents' abuse of power and racial profiling.

When I researched the data, I wanted to know how many of the detained immigrants had criminal records or convictions. Data show that, towards the end of September 2025, 59,762 persons were arrested and detained nationwide. According to current TRAC immigration data, 71.5% of the individuals held in ICE detention have **no criminal record**. Many detained immigrants have only minor offenses, including traffic violations.



Image from TRAC Immigration Quick Fact

A Long History of Blaming Immigrants in Tough Times

Discrimination, economic exploitation, and scapegoating of immigrants have a long history in the U.S. This historical context is of most importance for understanding the current state of immigration issues. For example, Chinese immigrants were brought to the U.S. in the mid-19th century as cheap labor for the construction of the final leg of the transcontinental railroad. They were attacked not just by native-born Americans due to their willingness to work as cheap contract labor, but also by earlier immigrant laborers, such as the Irish, who claimed the Chinese were taking their jobs. In California, complaints by non-Chinese laborers led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, Mexicans and Mexican Americans were targeted for repatriation after similar claims about them working for lower wages pushed politicians into that action. Today's policies and programs aimed at incarcerating immigrants for profit are just as exploitative as such earlier injustices experienced by immigrants.

And yet, time and again, immigrants proved they were indispensable. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic made this painfully clear. From early 2020 through 2023, while much of the United States sheltered in place, immigrant workers were on the front lines. Immigrant nurses, home health aides, farm laborers, delivery drivers, and many others deserve our ongoing support. We relied on them to survive while the rest of the world paused.

Think about Maria, a nurse from El Salvador. She worked double shifts in a New York ICU, caring for COVID patients while her own family faced the virus back home. Across the country, immigrant farmworkers like Juan kept vegetables in the fields from rotting, and meatpackers like Rosa risked exposure to keep grocery shelves stocked. These are not just statistics; they are real people who made significant sacrifices for the country. And yet, many of them lacked health insurance, paid sick leave, or access to federal relief programs.

Here's the paradox of the U.S.: the very people feared or blamed in economic downturns are the ones who keep the country moving in times of crisis and in times of no crisis. The pandemic exposed this truth clearly. Immigrant entrepreneurship and labor aren't just helpful; they're the backbone of the nation. And if history tells us anything, it's that ignoring or scapegoating these essential workers comes at our own peril.



By September 2025, with only nine months in office, we are witnessing that Trump's campaign promises of the creation of wealth and jobs are at the expense of the immigrant community.

Key 2025 Executive Orders & Policy Impact

Executive Order / Action	What It Does	This Connects to Trump's Earlier Immigration
EO 14159, <u>"Protecting The American People Against Invasion"</u> (Jan 20, 2025)	Directs that the immigration laws be "faithfully executed" vs. prior administration policies; revokes specific asylum/refugee-related EO's; sets priorities for removal (inadmissible/removable aliens, those posing security/safety risk); encourages state/local law enforcement cooperation (287(g) agreements); ramps up detention/enforcement; punishes failure to register.	This EO essentially formalizes the "law and order / public safety" framing from the campaign years. The idea that illegal immigration is an "invasion" and that prior administrations were lax becomes codified. It marks a sharp shift toward enforcement as default.
EO 14160, <u>"Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship"</u> (Jan 20, 2025)	Seeks to alter the interpretation of the 14th Amendment's Citizenship Clause, limiting birthright citizenship for children born to parents who are undocumented or temporarily present.	Birthright citizenship was more symbolic in earlier campaigns and used in rhetoric about fairness, security, "anchor babies", but in 2025, it's being challenged directly as policy.

<p>Sanctuary Cities / Public Funding Restrictions</p>	<p>Under EO 14159, there are provisions to deny federal funding to jurisdictions that do not fully cooperate with immigration enforcement. Additionally, several orders issued by the prior administration were rescinded, including those that had softened enforcement or prioritized different classes of immigrants.</p>	<p>These reflect an escalation of earlier threats to sanctuary jurisdictions, now backed by stronger executive power. The narrative of non-cooperation as criminal or harmful is being translated into budget leverage.</p>
<p>Alien Registration & Enforcement Priorities</p>	<p>Under EO 14159, there is a direction that non-citizens comply with statutory registration requirements, and failure to do so becomes an enforcement priority (civil or criminal). Also, more aggressive removal and detention authorities are being emphasized.</p>	<p>The narrative of undocumented immigrants being outside the law is being pushed not just at the border but inside the country. Registration is made a duty; noncompliance is treated not simply as status but as misconduct.</p>
<p>Rescinding Prior Orders / Policies</p>	<p>The EO 14159, first-day orders rescind Executive Orders from the previous administration that had expanded protections or reprioritized immigration enforcement (like asylum reform, refugee/immigration inclusion, etc.).</p>	<p>This demonstrates a commitment to rollback, not just new policy, but also the erasure of past policies deemed “soft” or counter to the narrative of stringent enforcement.</p>

2025 Executive Actions Affecting Immigrants Timeline & Legal Development

Date	Action / Ruling	Significance & effect
January 20, 2025	President signs Executive Order <u>“Protecting The American People Against Invasion”</u>	Revokes multiple Biden-era immigration EOs and directs full enforcement of immigration laws, including more aggressive removals and detention.
January 20, 2025	Concurrent DHS memo: <u>“Exercising Appropriate Discretion Under Parole Authority”</u> issued	Clarifies that parole programs may be paused, modified, or terminated; instructs DHS to review existing parolees for removal or revocation.
January 21, 2025	DHS announces it will implement <u>“expedited removal to the fullest extent authorized by Congress”</u>	Expands use of expedited removal and bypasses immigration courts to noncitizens present for 2 years, and revokes geographic/lapse restrictions.

	<u>DHS / ICE guidance expands expedited removal to parolees</u>	Directs that people admitted under specific parole programs be evaluated for expedited removal and that removal proceedings or revocation of parole may follow.
March 25, 2025	DHS publishes Federal Register Notice: <u>Termination of Parole Process for CHNV (Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Venezuela)</u>	Announces that the Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans Parole Program will be terminated; parole grants will be revoked effective April 24 (unless expired earlier).
April 14, 2025	U.S. District Court (<u>District of Massachusetts</u>) <u>issues preliminary injunction</u>	Blocks parts of DHS's CHNV termination notice; rules that parole revocations require individualized, case-by-case review.
April 25, 2025	<u>(Planned date) CHNV parole terminations take effect</u>	According to DHS's March notice, existing CHNV paroles were to be revoked by this date (unless they expired earlier), unless blocked by the courts.

May 19, 2025	<u>U.S. Supreme Court issues emergency stay of district court's TRO in case about TPS /parole</u>	The stay allows DHS to proceed with termination actions while litigation continues, superseding the March 31 district court order.
May 30, 2025	<u>U.S. Supreme Court lifts the injunction blocking CHNV parole termination</u>	Removes the preliminary injunction imposed by the district court, allowing DHS to proceed with terminating parole for 532,000 individuals while litigation is pending.
May 30, 2025	<u>DHS issues statement: can resume removals under CHNV programs</u>	DHS frames the Supreme Court decision as a “major victory” that permits the resumption of removals of CHNV parolees.
June 12, 2025	<u>DHS sends Notices of Termination to CHNV parolees</u>	Formal letters to CHNV parole holders notifying termination and urging “self-deportation” for those without lawful status.


(Ongoing)	Court proceedings, appeals, and legal challenges	The First Circuit is considering appeals, with new rulings emerging on expedited removal practices, parole revocation, and related cases. Catholic Legal Immigration Network+7Bloomberg Law+7Justice Action Center+7
(Ongoing)	Policy shifts on parole, CBP One revocations	DHS also revoked parole for those entering via the CBP One app (as reported in the press), affecting large numbers of parolees beyond CHNV. Catholic Legal Immigration Network+3Politico+3Vera Institute of Justice+3

California Context

2025 Presidential Executive Orders on Immigration

Under Trump's administration, the type of immigration enforcement California is experiencing is abhorrent and has trampled on rights that most Americans understand to be universal.

The First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech, yet in California, we've seen advocates, community leaders, and even legal observers harassed and arrested simply for documenting or protesting ICE operations. The Fourth Amendment protects against unreasonable search and seizure. Still, masked ICE agents, backed by militarized units of National Guard and Marines, have engaged in street sweeps, intimidation tactics, and raids in homes, schools, and churches without transparency or accountability. The Fifth Amendment says that no person can be "deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law." Nevertheless, thousands of immigrants have been detained and deported to dangerous conditions abroad, based on flimsy, unchallengeable allegations.



Immigrant families are the heart of California's identity and economic strength. They deserve nothing less than full humanity, respect, and dignity
- CA shared community values

Raul's Story

Raul (pseudonym) was a creative young man from Honduras who had made his way to the U.S. border, escaping his country's violence, and asked for asylum. He was allowed into the U.S. and placed in an immigrant detention center. While detained, he made small artifacts from torn trash bags, turning the threads into bracelets, rings, and small keychain objects. He was well-liked by those who shared his housing unit in detention. He was released in 2018 and began building his life in the U.S. as he waited for his asylum case, meeting every requirement asked of him. In the early part of 2025, Raul reached out to his friends through social media and shared that he had been detained again and deported to Honduras. A few months later, common friends from Honduras would share his tragic death on Facebook. He had been killed.



This bracelet was created from white plastic bags, which were torn into fine threads of plastic. The core of colored pencils is used to produce paint. The threads are then painted and dried before creating the bracelets.

Trump's immigration agenda has become the tip of the spear not only for attacks on asylum seekers like Raul and other immigrants in our communities, but on the very structure of constitutional government. The Tenth Amendment reminds us that constitutional order is what sustains democracy, requiring that leaders respect limits on power and honor the separation of state and federal authority. Instead, the administration has pushed beyond those limits, deploying the National Guard and even Marines into immigrant neighborhoods, turning city streets into militarized zones.

The administration has not only undermined California's state authority but has also criminalized resistance, prosecuting elected officials, local judges, and advocates for allegedly "interfering" with ICE, when in fact they were exercising their duty to uphold rights and community safety. When ICE agents operate without judicial warrants, people have the constitutional right to resist unlawful entry, to take video of the incident, and to defend their communities through nonviolent means.

This convergence of militarized enforcement, disregard for constitutional protections, and erosion of checks and balances makes clear that the raids in California are not isolated incidents. And when federal judges, including the Supreme Court, have attempted to rein in these abuses, the response has been to attack the legitimacy of the judiciary itself. The abuses are part of a broader plan, the assault on immigrant communities and American democracy.

The Problems

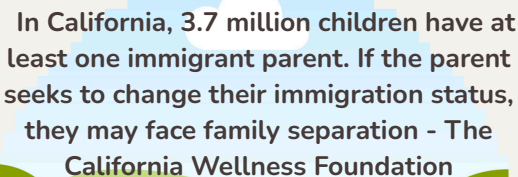
One problem is that the last comprehensive immigration reform took place 39 years ago. It was the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) under President Ronald Reagan. This reform legalized the immigration status of many immigrants who had been living in the U.S. for at least four years, were contributing to the economy, and demonstrated good moral character. However, since then, Congress has focused on piecemeal reforms that have created mixed-status families, which have added to the brokenness of the system.

Another problem is that Congress has been focused on passing some of the harshest immigration laws in modern U.S. history, which not only exclude people but also lead to the criminalization of immigrants and the growth of a carceral economy. President Clinton signed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996:

- Massively expanded reasons for deportations, even for lawful permanent residents.
- Created mandatory detention for a broad list of offenses.
- Introduced the "3 and 10-year bars" that punished people for living in the U.S. and wanting to change their immigration status to Legal Permanent Residency. Leading to the separation of families.

- Implemented “expedited removal” without due process, which means that individuals can be deported without a hearing or review of their case. This policy has raised concerns about potential human rights violations and the lack of opportunity for individuals to present their case.
- Allowed local law enforcement to act as immigration agents, Section 287(g).
- Retroactively applied criminal bars that would disqualify or detain immigrants for past conduct, such as minor offenses or immigration violations.

The IIRAIR Act of 1996 would be very costly for a vast number of immigrants who had already entered the country without authorization or by overstaying. When they want to change their immigration status, they need to leave the U.S. to be interviewed in their home country. It is at this time that many learn about the 3- to 10-year bar, depending on how many days they lived in the USA without authorization. A costly process, separating families from their loved ones for years, which most immigrants living here in the U.S. cannot afford.



In California, 3.7 million children have at least one immigrant parent. If the parent seeks to change their immigration status, they may face family separation - The California Wellness Foundation

Jose's Story

This type of penalty is why José (pseudonym) never attempted to change his status, despite having lived in the country for over 30 years. This past May, he was arrested in his neighborhood as he was arriving from work. He noticed the ICE raid and decided to wait it out in his car, but that did not happen. ICE literally snatched him from his car, and he ended up in detention. Jose, a hardworking man well known for his friendly and helpful nature in the community, is living the nightmare of family separation in a horrible way.

The passing of the IIRAIR Act brought radical changes to immigration policies. These changes included mandatory detention for a broad list of offenses, massively expanded deportation reasons for lawful permanent residents, including 94,000 U.S. military veterans. It allowed for the detention of a wide range of immigrants, including asylum seekers, and removed the judges' discretion to grant release on bond. As a result, the U.S. saw a significant increase in the number of people detained daily, and the for-profit detention system grew at the expense of immigrant families and communities.

These punitive policies have led to the criminalization, detention, and deportation of contributing members of their communities who have lived in the U.S. for many years. Let's fast forward to 2025, and Trump's second term, with only nine months in office, we are witnessing this administration's immigration policy as an attack on our democracy.

For-Profit Carceral Economies

A carceral economy is a system where the state and private entities profit from mass incarceration through services, labor, and other related industries. The United States' carceral economy has grown in part due to the for-profit detention of immigrants. The practice of detaining individuals whose immigration status is pending, commonly known as immigrant detention, has a deep-rooted history in the United States. Dating back to the 18th century, immigration policies and detentions reflect the nation's racist decisions about who is welcomed and who is rejected. This historical context is crucial to understanding the complexities and challenges that have shaped the current state of immigrant detention in the U.S., while urging us to collective action and public engagement.

DID YOU KNOW?

Thanks to the collective efforts of past organizing, community resistance, and legal challenges, the Adelanto immigration detention center held only three individuals at the beginning of 2025

Corporations that Profit from Immigrant Detention

When Donald Trump ran for office, he pledged to rejuvenate the American economy through job creation, infrastructure investment, and vigorous border enforcement. His “America First” message promised opportunity and prosperity for citizens who felt left behind. Yet, under the weight of enforcement-driven immigration policy, one of the fastest-growing “industries” has become the detention of immigrants. This system is increasingly resembling a profit machine that benefits corporations. Corporate interests, combined with weak job growth in many sectors, have converted detention into a market-based activity. Private prison companies stand as one of the biggest beneficiaries of this dynamic, and recent stock performance underscores how financial incentives both reflect and reinforce an unjust system, one that treats immigrants not as human beings but as line items in revenue reports.

Immigrant detention is part of the Prison Industrial Complex and the Private Sector. Major private prison corporations, such as CoreCivic, The GEO Group, and LaSalle Corrections, along with many of their affiliates, profit alongside the cities where the facilities are located. Local county governments gain monetarily from sheriffs’ office agreements to jail immigrants on behalf of the federal government. Also, the abundance of other companies that exist to poorly and expensively construct and manage immigrant prisons and jails, run the medical clinics, provide the food, run the commissaries, and manage the telephone systems.

The average daily cost to detain a person in a privately run facility is \$149.58. A significant cost borne by U.S. taxpayers. This financial burden, coupled with the systemic issues in the detention system, should raise concerns and a sense of responsibility among the readers.

Private prison corporations have successfully spent millions of dollars lobbying the government to expand detention and other forms of incarceration for years. Their lobbying has been so powerful that the government has established a daily quota for ICE to maintain 34,000 detention beds, with contracts requiring certain facilities to pay their guaranteed minimums even when the beds remain unoccupied.

Research has shown that privately managed prisons have a higher rate of abuse than those run by the government. Data from the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General has revealed instances of physical and sexual assault in these private facilities. The death of 185 people while in immigrant detention is a clear indicator of the lack of adequate medical care for detainees. The latest death, adding to 14 people in detention this year alone, took place in California's largest immigrant detention facility in the City of Adelanto. For many years, pro-immigrant advocates have been sharing the horror stories of these detention facilities, through inside hunger strikes, community prayer vigils, advocacy, legislative meetings asking Congress to shut them down, and invest in life-affirming policies.

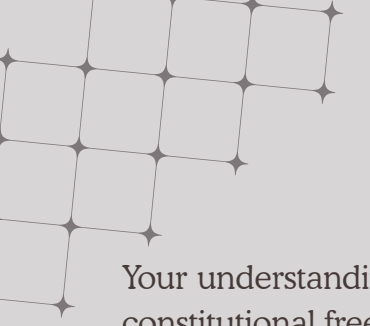


Project 2025

How did we get from detaining immigrants at the border to racial profiling and ICE raids in U.S. streets? This cruel reality is not just a question for history, but a pressing issue that demands our attention and action.

Most of us are aware that campaign financing plays a crucial role in shaping political strategies and policy priorities. Equally significant is the role of think tanks, which craft narratives and invest in selected individuals to champion these narratives in their pursuit of political power. These think tanks, such as The Heritage Foundation, strategize how their corporations and businesses can benefit from and profit from narratives and policies. The Heritage Foundation, for instance, developed a 900-page plan, Project 2025, aimed at reorganizing the federal government to implement one of its many conservative initiatives, including targeting immigrant communities and mass ICE raids, causing family separations through deportations.

Democracy is not a gift from corporate America or wealthy think tanks. It is a collective duty and shared responsibility to show up, speak up, and uplift those whom history tells us continue to be harmed by systems. Hilda Cruz



Your understanding of Project 2025 and its impact on U.S. constitutional freedoms is crucial. Their plan to undermine civil liberties has been in place for a long time. I recommend reading the American Civil Liberties Union's [explanation to equip yourself](#) with the knowledge needed to make a difference. A big power we have against these think tanks is how we spend our money.

Let's follow the money and see who values the undoing of democracy. Some of you may want to learn who supported both Project 2025 and Trump's campaign. I have compiled a list of donors, and you will find it in this booklet as well. Keep reading.

Newsweek reported that corporations like the GEO Group and CoreCivic, anticipating benefits from his planned immigration policies, each donated \$500,000 to Trump's campaign. The Executive Chairman for the GEO Group, George Zoley, stated: "We believe that the private sector will play a critical role in assisting the government in carrying out its objectives...The GEO Group was built for this unique moment in our country's history and the opportunities that it will bring." Zoley's statement underscores the significant role of corporations in supporting and influencing political initiatives.

Trump's Campaign Agenda, Anti-immigrant Rhetoric, and Its Human Cost

In 2014, most people dismissed the whispers of Donald Trump running for president as entertainment gossip. Yet, even before he formally announced his candidacy, Trump was planting the seeds of what would become one of the most aggressive anti-immigrant narratives and agendas in modern U.S. history. He painted immigrants, especially Mexicans, as “criminals” and “rapists,” introducing a narrative of fear and division that would become the foundation of his political identity. His call to “build the wall” wasn’t just a slogan, it was a symbol meant to capture the anxieties of a nation and redirect them against immigrant communities.

This rhetoric was not empty threats. Once in office in 2017, Trump moved swiftly to turn words into policy. Within days, he issued executive orders targeting immigrant and Muslim communities, the “Muslim ban,” expanded interior enforcement, and laid the blueprint for constructing the border wall. His administration immediately threatened programs like DACA, and families began living with constant fear of raids and deportations.

His administration escalated these efforts with the “zero tolerance” policy in 2018. Zero Tolerance was a horrific policy that forcibly separated thousands of children from their parents at the border. Detention centers swelled, ICE’s power expanded, and the administration restricted asylum in ways unseen in decades. 1,360 children remain unaccounted for as of December 2024.

Trump’s 2025 policies were not random acts of governance; they were the direct continuation of the narrative he began weaving during his first term. A narrative that casts immigrants as the cause for the nation’s troubles and the country as needing to be protected from them.

These were not incremental steps; they reflected a consistent and dangerous judgment that immigration posed a threat to security, the economy, and social cohesion, and thus the government justified sweeping measures.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 1,360 children who remain unaccounted for amount to nearly 30 percent of children separated during the first administration of President Donald J. Trump - Human Rights Watch

The Campaign Narrative Evolves

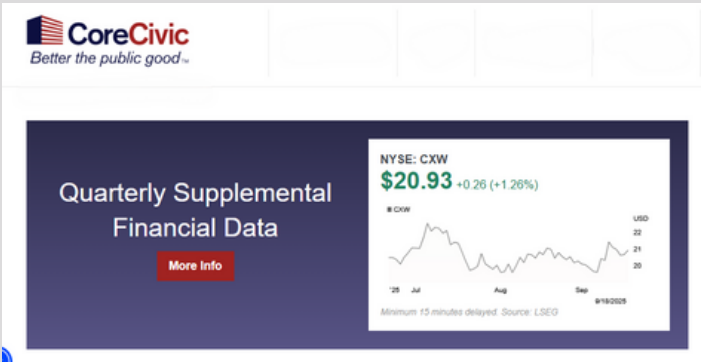
Fast forward to 2025, Trump returned with similar underlying themes, but with a more polished, expansive set of instruments to turn narrative into policy and profit. A key turning point is the cluster of executive orders issued early in his second (non-consecutive) presidency, with Wall Street and corporations ready to profit.

Stock Market Evidence How Wall Street Bets on Detention

Shares of The GEO Group have surged since Trump's most recent election. According to several financial reports, GEO's stock "soared approximately 142% since the election," and is up 22-25% year-to-date in recent months. The data below is from their website.



Similarly, CoreCivic saw its stock price rise sharply in expectation of expanded immigration enforcement. For example, stock performance metrics show a year-over-year gain of 40–50+% for CoreCivic, with earnings also improving significantly in the third quarter of 2025, as stated in their website.



The elation among investors rests on a set of concrete developments: under the Trump administration, ICE has been awarding no-bid contracts to reopen or expand detention facilities. CoreCivic and GEO Group are major recipients of these contracts.

Connecting the Campaign Promises to the Profits

This recent stock performance isn't merely a financial anomaly; it is a symptom of how campaign promises about law, order, and immigration translate into policy and profit:

- 1. Promises of more vigorous border enforcement and mass deportations generate expectations and often realities of increased demand for detention beds, transportation, and supervision services. Private corporations, such as GEO and CoreCivic, are poised to capture a large share of these government contracts. Investors factor that in, driving up the stock prices.**
- 2. Weak job growth in more traditional sectors makes stories of prison and detention facility construction, staffing, and operations comparatively attractive from a political angle. Local governments, especially in rural or economically struggling areas, are often convinced that detention contracts will bring jobs, making these deals politically palatable despite moral or humanitarian concerns.**
- 3. The presence of financial incentives weakens accountability. When profits depend on high bed usage, low vacancy rates, and steady contracts, there is no incentive to improve conditions or reduce detention as a policy objective. Worse, this creates a perverse feedback loop: tighter immigration enforcement means more detained people; more detention means more revenue for corporations; and corporations with political and financial clout then lobby for policies that keep the system expanding.**

4. Immigrants as income streams become more than a metaphor. Contracts are entered into without competitive bidding; previously shuttered facilities are reopened; family detention centers are reactivated; corporations invest in increased capacity, all in expectation of revenue tied to high detention rates.

Profits Over People

The Trump administration's anti-immigrant narratives, policies, and enforcement have only emboldened corporate profiteering from incarceration. At a time when families are struggling to afford housing, food, and healthcare, we see billions of dollars being funneled into systems of harm: surveillance, incarceration, and deportation. National budgets not only divert resources from the programs and services our communities need to thrive but also tear families apart, causing untold emotional and psychological distress.

The One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBBA), a comprehensive spending bill passed by the current administration, includes a significant increase for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and related agencies, totaling \$325 billion over the next decade.

“When we pour billions into ICE, detention, and forced family separation while starving the very services that help communities thrive, we aren’t creating safety, we are manufacturing fear and deepening trauma.”
Collective Wisdom

The bill allocates \$175 billion, explicitly earmarked for mass deportation operations, and expands immigration enforcement capacities. This law will significantly shift our national budget towards harmful and divisive policies, neglecting the needs of our communities.

The funding supports initiatives such as adding 10,000 new ICE officers, expanding Border Patrol and CBP capacities, rebuilding border walls, expanding detention infrastructure, and increasing transportation for deportations.

The OBBBA and the \$325 billion increase in federal spending are a cause for concern. It will supercharge immigration enforcement and military spending while cutting life-affirming programs, potentially leading to a less secure and less prosperous future for all.

**Increased immigration enforcement and border security
+\$175 billion**

Increased military Spending +\$150 billion

Snap reforms cut -\$187 billion

Student loan reforms cut -\$320 billion

Medicaid reforms cut -\$917 billion

Here is a link to this well-rounded report on the Cost of Immigration Enforcement and Border Security by the American Immigration Council, which includes extensive data on year-to-year increases. In 1994, when the U.S. government initiated stricter border enforcement, its annual budget was \$400 million; it has since grown, along with detention funding, to over \$10 billion for FY 2025.

Here is the congressional justification document for another increase in fiscal year 2026, which allocates additional personnel and detention beds to the Department of Homeland Security, specifically to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This budget makes one thing clear: the current administration is not prioritizing life-affirming policies for the people.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement Budget

The fiscal year 2024	\$9,936,672 billion
The fiscal year 2025	\$10,421,672 billion
The fiscal year 2026	\$11,290,535 billion

Trump's campaign rhetoric promised economic uplift, safety, and fairness. However, the real beneficiaries of much of the immigration enforcement system have often been private corporations. Stock market gains for companies that manage detention reflect not just investor optimism, but also policy choices: to increase detentions, issue no-bid contracts, and treat immigration as a matter of enforcement rather than human rights.

In doing so, we see that the system not only neglects immigrants' human dignity but also monetizes it. When financial incentives are deeply entwined with enforcement, the risk is that immigrants become a means to an end: revenue, contracts, profits. Thus, a promise of "jobs" becomes a promise not of shared prosperity, but of the commodification of suffering.



The Conditions of the Immigrant Communities

ICE agents are targeting anyone who looks like an immigrant. We have all seen people detained who were U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, non-immigrant visa holders, and individuals lacking official admission. The practice of racial profiling has only added to the fear within immigrant communities, who are no longer safe going to schools, doctor appointments, or church. It is no wonder that the immigrant community is experiencing much anxiety and fear.

The impact of ICE raids on Latino mental health is severe and cannot be ignored. The fear, depression, and anxiety over the raids have seen a significant spike since June. Many immigrants are in survival mode, and the toll on families is evident. Therapists have raised serious concerns about the enduring effects of these raids on Latino mental health.

This Special Report: U.S. Immigration Policy and the Mental Health of Children and Families offers a detailed insight into the severe and alarming toll that the heightened sociopolitical tension, stemming from the current immigration enforcement, is taking on the mental health of children in mixed-status families.

We shall sing again, as
we bring flowers
and beauty to the
places we call home.

Our immigrant
presence a blessing,
a living gift
for all who walk
among us.

We are resilient,
strong, our love
forgiving, generous,
rooted in faith and
hope.

We shall sing again.



Collage and poem by Hilda Cruz
November 2024, mourning the
election results

Debunk the Myths That Feed Into The Narrative of Fear

- **Immigrants** do not come to take away jobs. 2020 taught us that services continued thanks to essential workers, many of whom were immigrants. Their **contributions were vital then and remain so now.**
- Contrary to popular belief, **immigrants** are not reliant on state welfare programs. Immigrants are self-sufficient and independent, and **contribute significantly to our tax system.** Knowing this fact should reassure us of their positive impact on our society.
- Immigrants are not a burden on society. A report by the Economic Policy Institute shows that in 2024, **immigrants' overall economic contribution was \$2.1 trillion.**

DID YOU KNOW?

Immigration is an important source of growth in the U.S. workforce, especially as overall population growth has been slowing. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, if there were no future immigration, the U.S. population would eventually begin to shrink in absolute numbers. - Economic Policy Institute

- **Immigrants are not a threat to U.S. culture**; quite the contrary, immigrants add cultural beauty through diversity, resilience, industriousness, and entrepreneurial experience. These experiences often lead to long-term economic growth, contributing to the nation's overall prosperity.
- **Immigrants are not responsible** for the fentanyl crisis in the United States. The truth is, most drugs have entered the U.S. through ports of entry for decades. The deeper issue is that of drug addiction itself, which is a societal challenge that demands a solution of compassionate care and healing.
- **Immigrants build strong social networks** and foster community cohesion. Immigrants do not increase crime rates. Sociological research demonstrates that cities with higher immigrant populations tend to have lower crime rates. They are also more cautious about attracting law enforcement's attention and thereby reducing the likelihood of crime.
- Immigrants would come through legal pathways. Unfortunately, for most people, there is no legal pathway, no "line to get into." **The U.S. immigration system is broken, outdated, and backlogged.** For many families, waiting legally could mean decades or no option at all.

Here Is What We Can Do

Practice Nonviolent Resistance

I've learned, through decades of community organizing and immigrant rights work, that every breakthrough began with someone deciding to speak, to act, to risk. We don't find safety in silence; we create safety by standing together, advocating for life-sustaining policies, and refusing to give up. Speaking out is necessary for our collective safety and well-being. Know that you are not alone! Many in the community are resisting in many ways, and our collective action is a powerful force. Here are my recommendations to practice Nonviolent Resistance.

Boycott - Stop buying from companies that view the public as consumers and contribute to economies that harm. Check the link to access a well-put-together list of [companies to boycott](#).

Divest - We can not continue to invest in corporations and banks that continue to destroy communities, sustain weapon industries, fund fossil fuel economies, and the surveillance and carceral economies. Please review the [Worth Prison Industry Corporate Database](#) and consider divesting from businesses that operate in harmful economies.

If you invest, ask your investment manager to ensure that your hard-earned savings are not being invested in companies that cause harm. We should **strive for ethical alternatives**, and these tools can play a crucial role in achieving this goal. Check out [Fossil Free Funds](#), [Weapon Free Funds](#), and [Gun Free Funds](#) to learn more.

Bank conscientiously - Move your money to a local credit union bank that invests in your local community. How and where we use money is a powerful way to support our views and values.

Stay Informed. Stay Engaged. Stay Powerful.

Sign up for newsletters from your city council, county supervisor, school board, state, and federal representatives. These offices are required to listen to and represent us, but they can do well only when we are informed, engaged, and ready to speak from our lived experience.

Join local pro-immigrant organizations and coalitions. Many organizations practice nonviolence and are led by individuals who are system-impacted. Stronger organizations are well-connected and function most effectively within a coalition to achieve greater community impact. They are also a valuable resource for information on pro-immigrant bills at the state level, and it's advisable to check in with them before elections.

Join a local Rapid Response Network and train to become a first responder to confirm and document ICE sightings and raids. Here are two good sources in California.



Civil Disobedience is also a **nonviolent practice** that **requires extensive preparation**, both intellectually and emotionally, as well as support from those organizing the event. It is advisable to seek the advice of a lawyer before engaging in this practice. For more information, refer to the [ACLU](#) website.

Advocate for life-sustaining policy changes, both locally and at the state and federal levels, from the comfort of your laptop or smartphone. Sign up with reputable organizations. See the next page for recommendations. They are really good at keeping you updated on legislative bills that need the public's attention. They will invite you to quickly and efficiently send an email to your elected officials.

Participate in marches and prayer vigils, and invite others to stand in solidarity with the immigrant community.



Due to these volatile times, it is essential to understand our rights in various settings. An excellent **resource for learning about your rights, including free speech in marches and on college campuses, filming the police, and interactions with ICE**, are in the ACLU's 'Know Your Rights' guide. Be sure to watch their videos and read all the information they provide.

The California Immigrant Policy Center put together a **list of networks** and resources for those who choose to Defend Immigrant Communities. I found that it is a well-rounded list from partners across California created for organizations, legal service providers, and individuals working to protect and defend immigrant communities.

Sign up to receive information and **federal legislative updates** from pro-immigrant organizations that work and advocate at the federal level. I recommend these:

Sisters of Mercy
Justice Action Alerts

Detention Watch Network
detentionwatchnetwork.org

American Civil Liberties Union
aclu.org/action

HIAS
Take Action

Let's Follow the Money

Corporate America has funneled large sums into President Trump's causes. His allies have raised over \$200 million since his election, for his inauguration, political operation, and future presidential library. No other U.S. president has been given \$200 million. This raises fundamental questions about who really holds influence in our government and whether big money should carry so much weight in deciding our policies and priorities.

The following page lists 25 selected corporate entities tied to Project 2025 advisory groups, Trump's campaign, and his inaugural fund. The purpose of this list is to inform readers about these entities and to offer alternatives, encouraging thoughtful consideration of whether to use our spending power to support businesses that back the undoing of our civil liberties. As we practice nonviolent resistance, let's keep in mind that many realities shape people's purchasing choices.



Company /Brand		What is documented	Suggested alternatives (what to buy/use instead)
Qualcomm	Named among tech donations reported to the inaugural fund.	Newsweek	Buy devices from brands with clearer progressive-giving policies or from independent manufacturers; support repair shops and second-hand markets.
United Airlines	Donated \$1M to Trump inaugural fund.	Reuters	Favor airlines with better labor & climate records, train/bus travel, or carbon-offset/train alternatives; support travel co-ops.
BP (BP America)	U.S. unit contributed to inaugural-related events.	Reuters	Minimize purchases of fossil fuels; support community solar, EVs, and local renewable energy suppliers.
Chevron	Publicly pledged donations to inaugural efforts.	Reuters	Use renewables, local co-op energy, EVs, or providers with firm climate commitments.
ExxonMobil	Named among big energy donors.	Newsweek	Similar to the above, shift to renewables, community solar, and low-carbon companies.
Occidental Petroleum	Named among the major donors.	Newsweek	Support low-carbon alternatives and companies investing in genuine decarbonization.
Shell (Shell USA Company Foundation)	Foundation grants to groups on the Project 2025 advisory board.	The Guardian	Avoid Shell fuel & petro products; support community solar or ethically-aligned energy co-ops.
Goldman Sachs	Planned contribution donor to inaugural efforts.	Reuters+1	Use credit unions/CDFIs for financial services and investment platforms with ESG screens.

Company /Brand		What is documented	Suggested alternatives (what to buy/use instead)
Amazon	Donated \$1M to the 2025 inaugural fund.	Reuters	Shop local bookstores & indie sellers; use independent e-commerce shops or worker-owned co-ops.
Meta (Facebook / Instagram)	Donated \$1M to the inaugural fund.	Reuters	Use smaller/community platforms (such as Mastodon and local community forums) and support creators directly.
Alphabet / Google	Donated \$1M to the inaugural fund.	Reuters	Use privacy-respecting search engines (e.g., DuckDuckGo), and opt for smaller, ad-free services whenever possible.
Microsoft	Reported among tech donors to inaugural efforts.	Common Cause+1	Use open-source tools, alternative office/cloud providers, or privacy-forward services.
Adobe	Donated \$1M to the inauguration	Reuters	Use Affinity apps, open-source creative tools (GIMP, Krita), or smaller creative-software vendors.
Robinhood	Donated \$2M to inaugural fundraising.	Reuters	Utilize community brokerage services, credit union investment programs, or brokerages with robust consumer protections.
Uber	The company and the CEO donated \$1 million each.	Reuters	Use local taxi co-ops, public transit, car-share co-ops, biking, or local delivery/restaurant co-ops.

Company /Brand		What is documented	Suggested alternatives (what to buy/use instead)
Bank of America	Planned contribution / reported as donor to inaugural efforts.	Reuters+1	Switch to local community banks/credit unions; use mission-driven banks.
JPMorgan Chase	Named among large corporate donors in coverage.	Wall Street Journal	See Bank of America alternatives.
Boeing	Reported among corporate donors.	Wall Street Journal	For travel, favor rail/bus where possible; support local aviation alternatives and accountability campaigns.
Ford Motor Co.	Reported as among auto companies donating to inaugural efforts.	Reuters	Consider EVs from makers with stronger labor and climate commitments, public transit, bike, or used vehicles.
General Motors	Reported as a donor/participant in corporate giving to the inauguration.	Reuters	Favor clean-transport options and companies with transparent climate/labor policies.
Hyundai (U.S. unit)	Donated to inaugural fund.	Reuters	See auto alternatives (EVs from ethical makers, public transit, co-ops).
Stellantis	Reported among corporate donors to inaugural events.	Reuters	See auto alternatives.
Pilgrim's Pride	Named among companies tied to inaugural fundraising.	Wall Street Journal	Support local/regional meat producers with higher-welfare standards, or plant-forward options, and local co-ops.

Company /Brand		What is documented	Suggested alternatives (what to buy/use instead)
CoreCivic (private-prison contractor)	Donated \$500k to the inaugural committee.	ABC News+1	Don't bank with institutions that finance private prisons; support decarceration orgs and community re-entry programs.
GEO Group (private-prison contractor)	Donated \$500k to the inaugural committee.	OpenSecrets+1	Support community-based alternatives and advocacy groups.

In a world where corporations shape policy and power, our most significant influence is often found in where we spend or don't spend our money. When we withhold financial support from harmful practices and instead invest in community, justice, and care, we are practicing nonviolent resistance.

Our money is our voice. Our money is our power.

Acknowledgments

On behalf of the immigrant communities whose stories and resilience inspire this work, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the following organizations for the financial and other ways they chose to sponsor this book:

The Claremont United Church of Christ is an accessible congregation to all, ensuring people of all abilities are physically and attitudinally welcome. They are a WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) congregation, making sure individuals with mental health challenges are known, loved, and nurtured. A Just Peace congregation, committed to putting faith into action and being peacemakers. They are a Creation Justice congregation, actively practicing sustainability. An Open and Affirming congregation, welcoming all members of the LGBTQ+ community into the full life of the church. They are a Sanctuary Congregation, supporting people regardless of documentation status. They are also committed to deepening their relationship with local indigenous communities through land acknowledgment and partnerships. Join them and experience their radical hospitality and creative communal connection.

claremontucc.org

“

*We are threads; fragile alone,
unbreakable together. When we
weave our stories, and work
together, we become the fabric
of change. - Inspired by collective
metaphors about community,
weaving, and solidarity.*

”

Centro del Migrante's mission is to build community through culturally inclusive programs and projects that sustain and enhance the quality of life of immigrant communities and their families in the Inland Empire. This is achieved by providing precise and coherent resources, education, and legal services to vulnerable communities, and by collectively working with regional partners to meet the needs and support the growth of empowered future generations.

centroinmigrante.com

Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB)

is a Black-led statewide coalition of more than 80 grassroots organizations. Their three-point mission is to reduce the number of incarcerated people in California; reduce the number of prisons and jails in the state; and shift wasteful spending away from incarceration and toward healthy community investments.

CURB's coalition amplifies the work of community leaders on issues such as sentencing reform, justice reinvestment, and prison closure. Their invest/divest framework bridges movements for environmental, social, racial, and economic justice in California and across the nation.

curbprisonspending.org

The Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice is composed of over 35 organizations that serve the immigrant community in the Inland Empire. The IC4IJ currently focuses on advocacy, changing the narrative, and capacity building. Our coalition engages in policy advocacy, community organizing and education, and rapid response to ICE and border patrol operations. We are collectively changing the narrative of the one million immigrants who live, thrive, and are a foundational part of the fabric of the IE. We are building organizational capacity through leadership development, cooperation, support networks, and shared regional strategies. Lastly, the IC4IJ provides resources such as training, technical support, and grants to coalition partners to further support their efforts and mission in the region.

ic4ij.org

To become a member, follow this link: bit.ly/ICIJmember

Justice for Immigrants Seeking Asylum (JISA) is a volunteer organization founded in 2018 to address the needs of immigrants seeking asylum detained at GEO Group's private prison in Adelanto, California. JISA members include individuals from local churches, synagogues, and other faith-based organizations, as well as the academic community at area colleges, and concerned citizens.

justiceforasylumseekers.com

I am profoundly blessed by the many friendships that have led me to this work. The many immigrant persons who allowed me to accompany them as they sought freedom from detention. To them I owe the stories shared in this book, and I am grateful that they have permitted me to share them.

My heartfelt gratitude to Denise S., a cherished friend whose thoughtful reading of the first draft helped shape the book. I am also deeply thankful to my dear friend Mary Elizabeth, whose encouragement to write this book and heal my own immigrant traumas has been a gift of courage and renewal. Her insightful comments and gentle edits helped polish this book with care and clarity. Her healing presence has been a steady source of comfort and strength throughout the process. I am also thankful for the pictures on the front and back covers, which my friend Ipyani Lockert from Motivational Realizations photographed, adding a personal touch to this project.

Finally, this book could not have come to life without the creativity and support of my youngest daughter, who designed and brought its digital version to life with patience and dedication.

With love and gratitude,

Hilda Elena Cruz

Appendix A: Definitions

Migration - Human mobility refers to the natural movement of people, a constant in human history.

Migrants - Persons moving temporarily from one place to another and then returning to their home country.

Emigrants - Persons who leave their home country.

Immigrants - Persons who leave their home country and settle in another country.

Displaced Persons - Persons who flee their state or community due to fear or danger for reasons other than those that would make them refugees.

Refugees - Persons who have been given refugee status due to a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country and have availed themselves of the protection of a different country.

Asylum seekers - persons who fled their home country due to persecution or serious harm and seek safety in a country other than their own, awaiting a decision on their application for a status under relevant international and national systems.

Temporary Protected Status - The U.S. government grants temporary immigration status to individuals from certain countries deemed unsafe. The countries are considered dangerous due to ongoing armed conflict, such as civil war, environmental disasters, earthquakes, hurricanes, epidemics, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions that make a return dangerous. People with TPS can stay in the country and apply for a work permit.

Key Points about Temporary Protected Status

TPS is a special and temporary permission granted for a set time period, usually 6, 12, or 18 months. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reviews the conditions in each designated country and determines whether to extend, redesignate, or terminate it. TPS is not permanent residency and does not lead directly to citizenship.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals - An executive action issued in 2012 that temporarily protects certain immigrants who arrived in the United States as children from deportation. It primarily provides an associated work permit. It is not a legal status, and it does not offer a pathway to permanent residency or citizenship.

Lawful Permanent Residency - A status that allows a person to live permanently in the United States. A Green Card serves as both identification and proof of lawful residency, enabling the LPR immigrant to work legally for any employer and travel abroad with certain restrictions. After meeting eligibility requirements, the person can apply for U.S. citizenship.

Temporary Visa Classifications - The U.S. immigration system is complex. It has more than 20 types of visas for temporary non-immigrant, employment-based workers. The specific visa classifications allow employers to hire foreign nationals for specific jobs on a temporary basis. Once the visa expires or the work season ends, the person must leave the U.S.

H-1B-High Skilled Specialty Visa - A 2025 Executive Order, Restriction on Entry, will impact specific (H-1B) non-immigrant workers. The petition or application will require a new \$100,000.00 fee. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) issued memoranda clarifying the executive order of September 20, 2025, and the U.S. State Department posted an H-1B FAQ.

Mixed-Status Family - A family in which members have different immigration statuses. For example, U.S. born children who are citizens may have parents who lack official admission, hold DACA, TPS, or permanent residency. These families often face legal, economic, and emotional challenges, including the risk of separation due to immigration enforcement.

Key points

- **Outdated laws** - Immigration laws haven't been updated in decades, while global migration patterns have changed dramatically.
- **Backlogs & Delays** - Millions wait years or decades for a visa, green card, or asylum decisions.
- **Limited legal pathways** - Very few options exist for people to migrate legally, even for those who face poverty, violence, or climate displacement.

- **Enforcement over humanity** - The current system is heavily focused on detention, deportation, and ICE raids instead of a dignified system that supports a change of immigration status and programs for integration and protection.
- **Temporary fixes** - Programs like DACA or TPS provide relief but don't offer permanent solutions.
- **Family separation & community harm** - Harsh policies often tear families apart, criminalize immigrants, create financial crisis, trauma, and devastate communities.

Appendix B: Acronyms

ICE - Immigrant and Customs Enforcement

CBP - Customs and Border Patrol

DHS - Department of Homeland Security

LPR - Lawful Permanent Resident

DACA - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

TPS - Temporary Protected Status

Appendix C: WORDS TO AVOID TO PREVENT NEGATIVE IMPACT

It is essential not to repeat discriminatory language because **words shape how we see others** and how we treat them. Harmful language reinforces stereotypes, normalizes injustice, and can deepen divisions in our communities. **When we use respectful and inclusive language, we honor people's dignity, help break cycles of prejudice,** and create spaces where everyone feels seen, valued, and safe. **Choosing our words with care** is not about being politically correct; **it is about being humane, responsible, and committed to a more just society.**

Illegal - The term illegal has a criminal connotation.

Undocumented - The better term is **"lacking official admission."**

Alien - The term **"migrant"** or **"foreign-born"** is preferred since it does not deny humanity.

Invasion - Immigrants seeking asylum at the borders are not invaders. **They journey, they flee, they search, they arrive with stories, hopes, and gifts.**

Appendix D: Web Resources

American Civil Liberties
Union
aclunc.org

American Immigration
Council
americanimmigrationcouncil.org

Congress
congress.gov

Constitution Annotated
constitution.congress.gov

Detention Watch Network
detentionwatchnetwork.org

Freedom for Immigrants
freedomforimmigrants.org

Immigration History
immigrationhistory.org

National Archives
archives.gov

The Immigrant
Learning Center
ilctr.org

The White House
www.whitehouse.gov

Transactional Records
Access Clearinghouse
tracreports.org

U.S. Citizenship and
Immigration Services
www.uscis.gov

Urban Justice Center -
Corrections
Accountability Project
[The Prison Industrial Complex:
Mapping Private Sector Players](#)

Serving Veterans
namvetsamerica.org

Author's Note

2025 has been a very overwhelming year, with so much happening in our country and around the world, and advocating for one more issue can feel overwhelming. The actions of the Trump administration on domestic soil to pursue goals aligned with white supremacy and Christian nationalism are outrageous. We must resist without ceasing. Fear and silence may feel like shields, but they are really cages. They keep us in the shadows, unseen and unheard, while injustice grows bolder.

We owe it to the immigrant community that puts food on our tables and labor in every corner of our economy to recognize their humanity. Let us stand with them in the struggle for equity and belonging. We owe it to ourselves and to the next generation to transform the current oppression and threat to democracy.

Let us raise our voices and let them shake with righteous anger. History is not shaped by those who stay quiet. It is shaped by those who dare to be brave, show up, speak up, and confront injustice. Your voice matters. It can inspire others to speak up too.

Let us act with courage and, together, create a future where justice, dignity, and belonging are not privileges for some but the birthright of all.

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Hilda Cruz is a seasoned faith organizer and immigrant advocate with almost three decades of experience leading immigrant justice efforts across California. She brings her own experience as a first-generation immigrant to her advocacy, grassroots education, faith-rooted organizing, and campaigns. She empowers communities through women's care circles and transformative prayer services. Her work bridges faith and action, grounded in a lifelong commitment to dignity, healing, and systemic change.