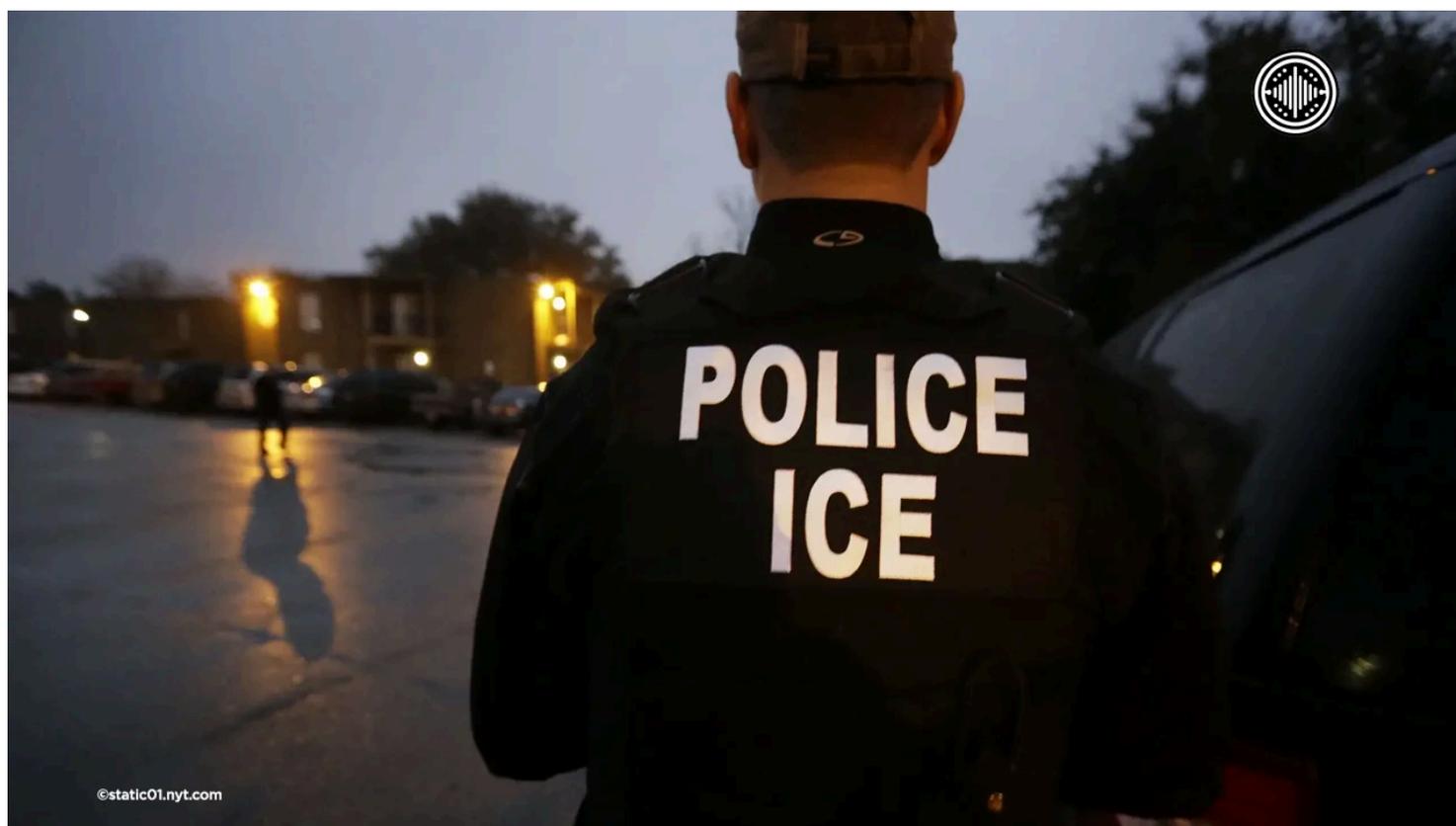


Fewer ICE Arrests Under Trump Involve Convicted Offenders

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– Categories: Crime



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Fewer than half of the individuals arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under President Donald Trump had prior criminal convictions, despite firm rhetoric around prioritizing public safety and cracking down on violent offenders. Recent data highlights a sharp increase in arrests for non-criminal violations such as traffic infractions and immigration-related offenses, signaling a broader enforcement strategy.

Between January 20 and late June 2025, ICE made nearly 112,000 arrests. Of those, only 40% involved individuals with any criminal convictions, a noticeable drop from the 53% seen during the same period in 2024 under the previous administration. Moreover, the share of arrests involving violent crimes fell from 10% to 7%, and drug-related convictions decreased from 9% to 5%, according to data reviewed by the Deportation Data Project, a public data initiative compiled through Freedom of Information Act requests by legal experts in California, Maryland, and New York.

While the actual number of violent and drug convictions increased slightly in absolute terms, they made up a smaller portion of the total as arrests for civil immigration violations and minor offenses surged. These include infractions like expired vehicle registrations and non-violent entries, which have become more prevalent as federal agencies push to meet aggressive detention goals. The Trump administration has set a target of 3,000 ICE arrests per day, compared to the current daily average of around 711.

Some within the conservative ranks have raised flags over the shift in priorities. Oregon state Representative Cyrus Javadi, a Republican, expressed concern: “The majority of recent ICE detentions involve people with no convictions. That’s a pattern I find troubling, especially when it risks sweeping up people for things like expired tags or missed court dates.”

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which oversees ICE, has defended the agency’s actions. Tricia McLaughlin, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, stated that ICE remains committed to “targeting dangerous criminal illegal aliens and taking them off American streets.” DHS cited arrests of individuals convicted of crimes such as child exploitation, narcotics trafficking, and burglary as evidence of this focus.

Nonetheless, broader enforcement patterns suggest a shift toward mass detention rather than a precise, risk-based approach. Driving while intoxicated remains the most common conviction among those arrested, followed closely by general traffic violations, now surpassing offenses such as assault or drug trafficking in frequency. Arrests of individuals with no criminal history nearly tripled from 2024, rising from 47% to 60% of the total.

Critics argue that the strategy risks overwhelming immigration courts and undermining due process protections. Vanessa Dojaquez-Torres, a policy counsel at the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), said, “They seem to have been struggling to get

their deportation numbers up, so we're seeing policies that circumvent the immigration court process.”

As the Trump administration intensifies its campaign promise of mass deportation, the evolving focus of ICE operations has reignited debate over the balance between national security and individual rights. While taking dangerous offenders off the streets remains a vital goal, growing numbers of low-level and non-criminal arrests are raising eyebrows across the political spectrum.