

Nebraska Governor Unveils Immigrant Detention Center Plan

August 20, 2025

— Categories: *Breaking News*



[Download IPFS](#)

Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen announced plans Tuesday for a new immigration detention facility in McCook, a rural town in the state's southwest corner. The move aligns with President Donald Trump's broader push to expand deportation infrastructure nationwide.

Pillen confirmed that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Nebraska officials agreed to repurpose an existing minimum-security prison work camp in McCook. The site,

nicknamed the “Cornhusker Clink” by Nebraska corrections director Rob Jeffreys, will initially house 200 detainees with the capacity to expand to 300.

“This is about keeping Nebraskans – and Americans across our country – safe,” Pillen said in a statement.

The Nebraska National Guard will provide administrative and logistical support, with about 20 Guard members assisting immigration enforcement operations. In addition, the Nebraska State Patrol will sign an agreement authorizing troopers to aid federal immigration officers with arrests.

According to DHS, the project is part of a nationwide expansion made possible by Congress’s recent approval of a \$45 billion funding bill for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Nearly \$30 billion of that allocation is dedicated to ICE agents and enforcement resources.

Jeffreys said the 186 inmates currently at McCook will be transferred to other correctional facilities across the state. Once vacated, the camp will be converted to house low- to medium-risk immigration detainees. “That facility has already been accredited. It’s ready in the event we are to move our folks out and move detainees in,” he explained.

The Trump administration has been rapidly increasing detention capacity. As of June, ICE facilities nationwide were holding more than 56,000 immigrants, the highest figure since 2019.

New facilities include “Alligator Alcatraz” in the Florida Everglades, which opened last month with a capacity for 3,000 detainees in temporary tent structures. During a visit, Trump suggested it could serve as a model for future centers. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis also announced plans for another facility, dubbed “Deportation Depot,” at a north Florida prison with up to 2,000 beds.

Elsewhere, officials in Mason, Tennessee, approved a plan to convert a former prison into an immigration detention facility despite strong opposition from residents. In Indiana, the administration has outlined plans for a 1,000-bed detention center, called the “Speedway Slammer,” sparking pushback in a state known for the Indianapolis 500.

The Nebraska plan has faced resistance from activists and some lawmakers. Independent state senator Megan Hunt criticized the governor’s office for what she called a lack of

transparency, saying her request for related emails and records has gone unanswered.

Hunt urged residents to support immigrant advocacy groups and argued that the legislature would not address the issue until next year. “The number one thing we need to do is protect our neighbors, protect the people in our communities who are being targeted,” Hunt said in a video posted online.

A small group of protesters gathered outside the governor’s office, displaying signs reading “No Nazi Nebraska” and “ICE = Gestapo.”

Lincoln resident Maghie Miller-Jenkins also voiced opposition, saying the state should instead prioritize issues such as child hunger and homelessness.

Despite criticism, federal officials maintain that the Nebraska facility is a necessary step in enforcing immigration law. DHS Secretary Kristi Noem praised Pillen for his cooperation. “If you are in America illegally, you could find yourself in Nebraska’s Cornhusker Clink. Avoid arrest and self-deport now using the CBP Home App,” she said.

The McCook facility is expected to open within 60 days once current inmates are relocated.