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U.S. Revises Military Duty Status for Immigration Support amid Border Enforcement Shifts

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On July 26, 2025, the Pentagon announced a major change in how U.S. military personnel will support immigration operations, reclassifying the duty status of approximately 1,700 service members. The shift places most of these troops under Title 32, state authority with federal funding,

rather than Title 10, which involves full federal control. An additional 500 personnel are also being deployed under this revised framework.

According to Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell, around 1,200 troops previously assigned under Title 10 have transitioned to Title 32. This change allows state governors to oversee their deployment while the federal government continues to finance their operations. The move is designed to offer greater operational flexibility and improve coordination with immigration authorities, particularly in logistical and administrative support roles.

Under the new guidelines, these service members may engage more directly with individuals in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), although they are not authorized to perform law enforcement actions. Instead, their responsibilities will include tasks such as transportation, facility maintenance, and other support services that have previously been limited under federal command.

The realignment comes amid a broader shift in immigration enforcement strategy and may include the controversial establishment of military-controlled zones along the U.S.–Mexico border. In some of these areas, military personnel have been granted expanded authority, including the power to detain individuals, raising legal and constitutional concerns from civil rights advocates and legal scholars.

While Pentagon officials argue that the reclassification preserves the legal boundaries between military and law enforcement roles, critics contend that using Title 32 authority could be a backdoor means of circumventing long-standing restrictions on domestic military involvement in civilian affairs. They warn this approach risks undermining

civilian oversight and blurring the lines between military support and enforcement.

Supporters of the change point to improved efficiency and readiness in managing the complex logistics of immigration enforcement. The policy is seen as a way to optimize the use of military personnel in non-combat roles without triggering legal restrictions that accompany Title 10 deployments within U.S. borders.

This shift reflects a growing trend of integrating military resources into domestic immigration policy. While it offers operational benefits, it also raises essential questions about constitutional limits, transparency, and the role of the military in civil governance, debates likely to intensify as border security remains a focal point of national policy.