

## South Korean Student Yeonsoo Go Detained by ICE

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**NEW YORK, NY.,** A South Korean student attending Purdue University was detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) last week following a visa hearing in Manhattan, prompting concern among religious leaders and supporters across both the United States and South Korea.

Yeonsoo Go, 20, was arrested on July 31 by ICE agents after exiting her hearing with her mother, Reverend Kyrie Kim, a priest serving in the Episcopal Diocese of New York. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stated that Go had overstayed a visa that had expired more than two years ago.

“ICE arrested her on July 31 and placed her in expedited removal proceedings,” said DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin in a statement to WABC.

However, attorneys representing the Episcopal Diocese contest the DHS account. According to legal counsel Mary Davis, Go’s visa remains valid until December, and the hearing was part of her application to extend it. Speaking to WCBS, Davis said Go and her mother expected a routine legal process but were instead “swept into a system they did not anticipate,” adding that the student was “absolutely terrified.”

Go originally entered the U.S. in 2021 on an R-2 visa, issued to dependents of religious workers. She moved to New York with her mother, who is noted as the first woman ordained in the Seoul Diocese of the Anglican Church of Korea. The church has stated that the family believed their immigration status was active and legal.

Following her arrest in Manhattan, Go was transferred to the Richwood Correctional Center in Monroe, Louisiana. Her family, unaware of the relocation, discovered her new location through ICE’s online detainee records. Reverend Matthew Heyd of the Episcopal Diocese of New York confirmed that Go had been in regular phone contact with her mother before the transfer.

In an interview with CNN, Go’s father, Sorg-young, said the family was shocked by the arrest. “It’s heartbreaking that this happened just as she was preparing for her second year. She’s a bright, outgoing girl with many friends,” he said.

Go had previously attended high school in Scarsdale, New York, and is currently studying at Purdue’s College of Pharmacy. Supporters describe her as academically driven and actively involved in community service, including preparing meals for homeless residents.

Over the weekend, faith-based organizations, including the Episcopal Diocese of New York, the Interfaith Center of New York, and the New York Immigration Coalition, held a gathering at Federal Plaza. Attendees prayed, held signs, and called for Go’s release.

“Soo has always been there for me,” said her friend Gabriella Lopez during the event. “She was nervous about the hearing because of the current enforcement climate. Now her fears have come true.”

Rev. Dongshin Park, Primate of the Anglican Church of Korea, issued a public appeal for U.S. authorities to ensure Go’s rights are upheld. “We urge the prompt release of Ms. Go and call for a fair and transparent review of her immigration status,” Park said. He emphasized that the United States has long represented “liberty, justice, and opportunity.”

The South Korean government has also stepped in. Its Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed it is in contact with U.S. officials and providing consular support to Go and her family. Her father has urged South Korea to act swiftly. “I hope the government does everything in its power so Yeonsoo can be released as soon as possible,” he said.

This case comes at a time when immigration enforcement in cities like New York has intensified. Federal officials have expressed frustration with “sanctuary city” policies, and in July, the Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against New York City for alleged interference with immigration enforcement.

Go remains in federal custody as her case proceeds through expedited removal proceedings.