



Testimony  
of

**Todd M. Lyons**

Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

before the

U.S. House of Representatives  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security

on

*The Fiscal Year 2027 Budget for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency*

April 16, 2026  
Washington, DC

## **Introduction**

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Cuellar, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the invitation to appear today to discuss the vital work of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and our Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 President's Budget submission. It is an honor and a privilege to lead the 30,215 dedicated men and women who have answered the call to serve our nation through enforcing our immigration and customs laws. I am exceedingly proud of our workforce for their dedication to the agency and our mission.

Despite routine villainization, ICE personnel are working around the clock to carry out President Trump's commonsense agenda to make Americans safe again, restore order to our communities, and implement law-and-order policies. In the wake of an unprecedented number of illegal aliens released into our country under the prior administration, ICE continues to enhance its role and delegated responsibility to enforce longstanding U.S. immigration law duly enacted by Congress. However, this increased enforcement activity has been met with increased threats, assaults, and doxing incidents against ICE employees across the country. In FY 2025 alone, death threats against ICE personnel increased by more than 8,000 percent from FY 2024. Over the course of 2025, assaults increased more than 1,400 percent compared to 2024.

Notwithstanding these challenges, ICE continues to implement and execute highly impactful programs that strengthen our national security, enhance public safety, and restore integrity to our immigration system. Last summer, Congress passed the Working Families Tax Cut Act, which included a historic \$75 billion for ICE. This bill is fundamentally transforming the agency's approach to immigration enforcement. It has enabled ICE to hire 11,000 new officers and agents and over 1,800 new attorneys. It also enables implementation of a new detention model, expedites the removal of at least one million illegal aliens annually, and expands the Homeland Security Task Forces to combat transnational organized crime. As of March 19, 2026, ICE has obligated \$11 billion of Working Families Tax Cut Act funding, and we will continue to execute the funding to meet the Administration's priorities and goals, especially facilitating the deportation of illegal aliens.

While ICE has made progress in executing the Working Families Tax Cut Act over the last several months, this hearing comes at a critical time for the agency. Members of Congress, the media, and others incorrectly assert that ICE is somehow unimpeded by the lapse in annual appropriations. These statements are categorically false. The impacts of the ongoing failure to fund ICE through the appropriations process have been dire, as numerous ICE personnel and operations have gone unfunded, including much of ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). While we appreciate the opportunity Congress provided ICE with enactment of the

Working Families Tax Cut Act, ICE cannot rely solely on the funding this bill provides. The law provides resources for specific programs and activities — namely, to surge or expand ICE’s detention and removal operations. However, this is just one aspect of ICE’s mission and programs. As the longest shutdown in history continues, ICE implores the House to pass the Senate DHS funding bill and work expeditiously to enact a second reconciliation measure by June 1st to provide sustained funding to ICE and Border Patrol.

Additionally, the annual appropriations process is critical for our base operations and our ability to meet the Administration’s goals. Therefore, the FY 2027 President’s Budget requests \$10 billion in net discretionary funding for the agency. This funding, when combined with the historic \$75 billion from the Working Families Tax Cut Act, will enable ICE to bolster immigration enforcement and better implement President Trump’s vision for America’s immigration system.

Today, I am thankful for the opportunity to highlight the work of the dedicated men and women of ICE, and to discuss the agency’s continued efforts to make the most effective and efficient use of our resources as we execute ICE’s critical mission.

### **Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)**

ERO protects the homeland by arresting and removing aliens who undermine the safety of U.S. communities and who break federal law. The FY 2027 budget requests \$5.4 billion to sustain ERO’s operations, thus ensuring ICE can continue its robust efforts to focus on threats to national security and public safety. This budget allows ICE to continue its increased immigration enforcement operational tempo, maintains partnerships with state and local law enforcement, supports 41,500 detention beds, promotes best practices in civil detention and facility compliance, allows the agency to manage aliens on ICE’s non-detained docket, and facilitates the removal of illegal aliens.

The FY 2027 budget requests approximately \$163 million for ICE’s Fugitive Operations, through which ERO identifies, locates, and arrests removable aliens in the United States, and \$293 million for its Criminal Alien Program, which allows ERO to arrest criminal aliens incarcerated within federal, state, or local jails and prisons. These two critical funding sources permit ICE to identify and arrest aliens unlawfully present in the United States. Since January 20, 2025, ICE arrested nearly 457,000 aliens.<sup>1</sup> Among those arrested were more than 281,000 aliens with criminal histories, 8,400 suspected gang members, 1,600 known or suspected terrorists, and 54,000 special interest aliens, making our country and our communities dramatically safer in the process. Moreover, Criminal Alien Program funding enables ICE to continue expanding the number of state and local law enforcement partners through its 287(g)

---

<sup>1</sup> ICE arrest data is current from January 20, 2025 through March 30, 2026.

program. Since January 20, 2025, ICE has seen a 1,075 percent increase in 287(g) agreements, and the agency expects this number to climb throughout the coming year.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, these immigration enforcement efforts led to an increase in the amount of overtime worked by our ERO law enforcement officers. Fortunately, the Working Families Tax Cut Act has enabled ICE to surge its hiring efforts for new ERO law enforcement officers. This surge of personnel should provide relief to ERO's overtime requirements within our annual appropriation. Therefore, in FY 2027, ICE is reducing its ERO law enforcement officer pay by 60 percent, resulting in a \$155 million reduction to the agency's budget.

ICE's increased enforcement efforts over the last 15 months have led to a need for more detention bedspace. While the Working Families Tax Cut Act provides additional beds to meet surge detention requirements, the FY 2027 budget includes \$3.7 billion to maintain Custody Operations. At this funding level, the FY 2027 budget sustains 41,500 detention beds. Throughout the past year, ICE has explored various options to increase its bedspace with federal, state, local, and private partners. Currently, ICE is reimagining its detention structure and acquisition strategy. These efforts aim to meet the growing demand for bedspace, streamline the detention and removal process, and focus on non-traditional facilities that are built specifically to support ICE's needs. We have briefed this Subcommittee on those plans, and ICE looks forward to continuing to work with you going forward. As a result of the Working Families Tax Cut Act funding and FY 2027 budget, ICE will ensure a safe and secure environment for aliens in its custody while working to remove them from the United States in furtherance of interior immigration enforcement.

Moreover, through its Title 8 authority, ICE removes aliens with final orders of removal from the United States. The FY 2027 budget includes \$748 million so that ERO can coordinate the safe and secure transportation of illegal aliens who are subject to final orders of removal or require custodial transfer within the interior of the United States. With this funding, ICE's Transportation and Removal Program will use flights, ground transportation, and international cooperation to successfully and efficiently deport illegal aliens with final orders from the United States.

Last year, President Trump tasked ICE with effectuating interior enforcement in accordance with existing law, and we are taking every step possible to fulfill that mandate. Since January 20, 2025, ICE removed more than 565,000 aliens.<sup>3</sup> To meet one of President Trump's key immigration initiatives, ICE developed the Incentivized Voluntary Departure (IVD) program, which is separate from ICE's overall removals. Designed to complement DHS's self-deportation program, IVD offers eligible aliens — those recently arrested by ICE or in ICE custody — the

---

<sup>2</sup> ICE 287(g) agreement data is current through March 31, 2026.

<sup>3</sup> ICE removal data is current through March 30, 2026.

option to voluntarily depart at the U.S. Government's expense and receive a \$2,600 stipend upon confirmation of return to their home country. Since ICE began tracking these data in June 2025, more than 40,500 aliens have departed through the IVD program.<sup>4</sup> These increased removal efforts demonstrate that ICE is actively working to arrest and remove aliens with no lawful basis to remain in the United States.

Last summer's legislation provided ICE with \$15.4 billion in resources to address these increased removal requirements. The FY 2027 budget includes a \$350 million reduction to the program, which will be offset by the Working Families Tax Cut Act resources. The combination of the FY 2027 budget and Working Families Tax Cut Act will ensure that ICE has sufficient resources needed to support our continued removal efforts.

### **Homeland Security Investigations**

Because of its unique authorities and footprint, HSI is the federal law enforcement agency that is best positioned to investigate and dismantle transnational criminal organizations and narco-terrorist organizations. The FY 2027 budget requests \$2.6 billion to maintain HSI operations at current levels, empowering HSI to continue its critical investigations and enforcement activities.

Under the Trump Administration, HSI continues to deliver exceptional results. HSI has led large-scale, intelligence-driven operations nationwide; intercepted dangerous narcotics such as fentanyl before they reached our communities; and rescued unaccompanied alien children from abusive and exploitative situations. Specifically, in 2025, HSI:

- Arrested over 500 criminal sponsors for offenses including child sexual exploitation, forced labor, identity fraud, immigration violations, and aggravated assault.
- Conducted more than 4,800 arrests related to child exploitation and rescued nearly 1,500 child victims from ongoing sexual abuse.
- Dismantled more than 2,400 human smuggling operations, including over 3,100 convictions related to human smuggling, human trafficking, and child exploitation.
- Reached 114 million people nationwide through public awareness campaigns focused on preventing child trafficking and sponsor fraud.
- Seized more than 2.5 million pounds of narcotics, representing a 53 percent increase from FY 2024. This total includes more than 20,000 pounds of fentanyl and nearly one million pounds of precursor chemicals — dangerous substances capable of devastating entire communities that were intercepted before they could reach American streets.
- In support of the Administration's efforts to impose maximum pressure on Venezuela and Iran, HSI export enforcement and sanctions investigations led to the issuance of three judicial seizure warrants. These warrants resulted in the seizure of three oil tankers that were involved in illegally transporting Venezuelan- and Iranian-origin oil on behalf of the

---

<sup>4</sup> ICE IVD data is current through March 31, 2026.

Venezuelan and Iranian regimes. This included oil transported for the benefit of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization.

- Seized approximately \$875 million in currency and other assets using its financial investigative authorities — a 50 percent increase over FY 2024.
- Seized over \$121 million in bulk cash and \$1.6 billion in cryptocurrencies.
- Focused on victims of financial crimes, returning seized and forfeited property to over 950 victims.
- Recovered 7.9 petabytes of digital evidence during forensic examination of electronic devices, including 14,655 mobile devices, in support of criminal investigations.
- Supported over 190 active investigations into suspected human rights violators and continues to pursue more than 1,985 investigative leads and immigration removal cases involving suspected human rights violators.

Since President Trump took office, HSI has also significantly expanded enforcement efforts to protect unaccompanied alien children and hold offenders accountable. HSI special agents have conducted more than 72,000 field engagements since February 2025, including door-to-door interviews, to locate children, verify sponsor legitimacy, and uncover criminal activity related to exploitation and trafficking. These operations have involved comprehensive criminal investigations, intelligence gathering, and close coordination with federal, state, local, and foreign law enforcement partners to identify fraudulent sponsors, dismantle trafficking networks, and pursuing individuals who prey on vulnerable children. Incredibly, under President Trump’s leadership, HSI special agents and others within DHS law enforcement and the Department of Health and Human Services have located more than 145,000 unaccompanied alien children that the Biden Administration “lost.”

Additionally, HSI has an unparalleled capability to combat transnational criminal organizations on a global scale. The FY 2027 budget increases funding for international operations to ensure that HSI can leverage its global partnerships to combat transnational crime and safeguard national security. Specifically, the FY 2027 budget request includes a \$2 million increase for Capital Security Cost Sharing to help protect our HSI personnel at 81 international embassies and consulates. The budget also includes an increase of \$3 million for International Cooperative Support Services, which is the cost-sharing service provided by U.S. embassies overseas. Both efforts are critical to supporting our HSI international operations to detect and deter national security and public safety threats before they reach the homeland.

### **Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA)**

The FY 2027 budget reflects a total of \$469 million for OPLA, which is the largest legal program in the Department of Homeland Security and one of the largest law offices in the nation. Additionally, OPLA serves as the Federal Government’s exclusive representative in removal

proceedings before the Department of Justice’s Executive Office for Immigration Review. The FY 2027 budget includes an additional \$8.7 million for the OPLA Principal Legal Advisor Network. This is a strategic initiative that will help address OPLA’s increased workload and administrative needs, thereby allowing OPLA’s attorneys to focus on litigating cases before the Executive Office for Immigration Review and providing legal advice to ICE programs.

For example, OPLA attorneys, paralegals, researchers, and support personnel work under tremendous caseloads related to removal proceedings and a variety of immigration laws while also providing counsel to ICE officials. In FY 2025, OPLA represented DHS in nearly 2 million removal hearings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review. This number includes master calendar hearings, hearings held for pleadings, scheduling, and other similar matters, as well as other individual hearings where substantive legal arguments and applications for relief and protection from removal were presented and decided. In FY 2025, they managed more than 1,900 human rights-violator cases and over 4,000 national security cases nationwide. The increased attorney staffing enabled by the Working Families Tax Cut Act has been instrumental in reducing the enormous backlog in immigration court. This enhanced capacity has allowed legal resources to be strategically allocated to complex cases, particularly those involving fraud and threats to public safety and national security. Additionally, the expanded hiring has improved essential client services and strengthened OPLA’s ability to support the Department of Justice in prosecuting criminal and civil immigration violations in federal court. These improvements — in concert with the continued support provided by the annual appropriations — directly contribute to the integrity and efficiency of the immigration system and reinforce the agency’s commitment to upholding the rule of law.

## **Mission Support**

Our FY 2027 budget requests \$1.6 billion for Mission Support activities, programs, and personnel. While the Working Families Tax Cut Act supported the hiring, outfitting, training and infrastructure needs of these additional personnel, our FY 2027 annual appropriations are critical to providing the ongoing support and infrastructure needed to support the workforce.

Mission Support is the backbone of the agency and advances every aspect of ICE’s mission. Our dedicated Mission Support professionals address the agency’s expansive operational needs by providing a solid, integrated information technology infrastructure; a dynamic human capital program encompassing proactive recruitment endeavors and pre-employment suitability; the development of acquisition strategies and oversight of procurement activities and contracts; and sound and prudent stewardship and protection of all ICE resources and information. The FY 2027 budget will ensure foundational services are fortified and continue to advance in key areas, such as a \$25 million increase for General Services Administration rent.

Mission Support also led the agency's unprecedented 2025 hiring campaign that resulted in ICE hiring approximately 11,000 new personnel in less than a year. This effort followed the receipt of over 250,000 applications. With funding provided under the Working Families Tax Cut Act, ICE rapidly acquired over 11,000 vehicles and secured leases in over 100 locations to provide the additional personnel hired by ICE with the resources and facilities needed to perform ICE's mission. In addition, ICE executed 7,401 contract actions totaling \$9 billion, thus advancing ICE's mission and supporting key priorities. Mission Support personnel also executed more than 200 service agreements with state and local law enforcement agencies under the 287(g) Task Force Model, significantly expanding joint operational capacity.

With the Working Families Tax Cut Act funding and our FY 2027 budget, ICE will continue to maintain ICE's IT infrastructure. In FY 2025, ICE has been able to advance its IT modernization efforts by proactively deploying artificial intelligence tools — including the I-9 Portal, HSI Tipline, and ERO's Enhanced Leads Identification & Targeting Enforcement system. These tools improve data analysis, lead identification, and operational decision-making. ICE's modernization initiatives ensure technology meets current and future operational requirements, enabling the agency to more effectively support its personnel and mission. By adapting to evolving challenges, ICE demonstrates its commitment to leveraging innovative solutions to protect the nation, disrupt criminal activity, and optimize law enforcement operations.

Included among our dedicated Mission Support personnel is the agency's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), which is responsible for promoting the agency's integrity and accountability through a multi-disciplinary approach of security, inspections, and investigations. The FY 2027 budget includes \$204 million to continue OPR's critical operations. In FY 2025, OPR vetted an unprecedented number of individuals in support of ICE's hiring surge, in furtherance of the President and the Secretary's bold agenda to enforce our laws and detain and remove illegal aliens in a safe and humane manner. Additionally, OPR's Office of Detention Oversight conducted more than 100 compliance inspections, 20 detainee death reviews, and more than 30 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audits to ensure the agency's ongoing compliance with ICE policy and legal requirements. Furthermore, OPR oversees the agency's 287(g) Jail Enforcement Model, ensuring our law enforcement partners remain compliant with the terms of their Memoranda of Agreement with ICE.

As evidenced by all these contributions, ICE law enforcement personnel could not have accomplished their crucial work without the commitment and dedication of Mission Support personnel.

## **Conclusion**

ICE exists to enforce America's longstanding immigration and customs laws. The men and women of this agency are dedicated and hardworking, and they are unmatched in their devotion, patriotism, and professionalism.

While the Working Families Tax Cut Act has provided an unprecedented amount of funding to transform and surge ICE operations, the agency's FY 2027 President's Budget will enable the agency to respond to the nation's current needs while preparing for additional challenges that may lie ahead. By providing this agency with the resources requested in the FY 2027 budget, we can ensure that ICE remains capable of effectively executing its critical national security and public safety mission.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.