



## U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

# ICE seeks custody of teen murder suspects for a second time

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) sent this bulletin at 05/21/2019 04:56 PM EDT

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## Local jurisdiction failed to honor previous detainers

BALTIMORE – Following the recent arrest of two unlawfully present teens suspected in the violent murder of a young girl in Maryland, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) officers in Baltimore are again seeking to take custody of the illegal aliens through the ICE detainer process following the Prince George's County Detention Center's (PGCDC) failure to cooperate.

Josue Rafael Fuentes-Ponce and Joel Ernesto Escobar, both Salvadoran nationals, were previously arrested on May 11, 2018 when they were arrested by Prince George's County Police Department (PGCPD) for attempted first-degree murder, attempted second-degree murder, participation in gang activity, conspiracy to commit murder, attempted robbery, and other related charges. ICE officers lodged a detainer with PGCDC, however both were released on an unknown date and time without notification to ICE.

On May 16, 2019, PGCPD arrested the same individuals and charged them with first-degree murder.

“As law enforcement officers, we must continue to serve and protect the American public and act in the interest of public safety first,” said Baltimore Field Office Director Diane Witte. “These individuals had demonstrated violent criminal behavior before, and because they were released in spite of the lawful detainer, they were afforded an opportunity to take a life.”

ICE officers have again lodged detainers with PGCDC and will again seek to take custody of these public safety threats pending the outcome of their criminal proceedings.

Fuentes initially arrived in the U.S. on Dec. 23, 2015 as part of a family unit in Texas. They were ultimately paroled into the U.S. pending the outcome of the immigration case. On March 16, 2017, an immigration judge ordered Fuentes removed in absentia, yet he remained.

Escobar was found by immigration officials to be an unlawfully present unaccompanied juvenile on Aug. 23, 2016, near McAllen, Texas. Escobar was transferred to the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, and later released to a family member in the Washington, D.C. area.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is a 21<sup>st</sup> century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit: [www.ICE.gov](http://www.ICE.gov). To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423.*

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