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LATINO ICE DETENTIONS DRAMATICALLY RESHAPED UNDER TRUMP

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INTRODUCTION

The second Trump Administration has significantly reshaped immigration enforcement and detention by expanding executive power to rapidly increase arrests and detentions by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), with the blessing of a compliant Congress and U.S. Supreme Court.¹ ICE, which has the statutory authority to arrest and detain noncitizens believed to be removable under U.S. immigration law, manages the nation's civil immigration detention system and is entrusted to make custody determinations.² Typically, detainees may be held in ICE facilities, contracted private immigration detention centers, or local jails under contract with ICE, and remain detained while their cases proceed through immigration court or until a final order of removal is executed.³

Under the second Trump Administration, ICE's immigration detention policies have expanded to become broader and less discretionary, and now include many more people with no criminal convictions and those with legal immigration status. Using ICE administrative records, this study shows that in the first eight months of the Trump administration, detentions and deportations increasingly targeted noncriminal, law-abiding Latinos, contradicting claims that enforcement focuses on the "worst of the worst" and highlighting the research's importance in debunking false narratives about the administration's mass deportation regime.

As with his previous two presidential campaigns, then-candidate Donald Trump's 2024 campaign focused on immigration enforcement, promising "the largest domestic deportation operation in American history" that would deport people by the millions per year.⁴ On his first day in office, President Trump issued an executive order, *Protecting the American People Against Invasion*, which launched the promised mass deportation program.⁵ In spring 2025, the Department of

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Homeland Security (DHS) rolled out a national media campaign “exposing the heinous crimes of criminal illegal aliens and warning others to leave America,” with Secretary Kristi Noem stating to the camera, “if you are here illegally, you’re next,” next to rotating images of 15 mugshot-style photos of Black and Brown men.⁶ Anti-immigrant policies and practices quickly evolved, expanded, and escalated in short order.

A notable development occurred in May 2025, when Stephen Miller, the White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, proposed an unprecedented target of 3,000 immigration arrests per day.⁷ The administration subsequently mobilized the National Guard to support expanded ICE efforts, first in Los Angeles and then in Chicago, Minneapolis, Portland, New Orleans, and other major cities.⁸ ICE agents use racial profiling (factors such as ethnicity, language, and location in immigrant neighborhoods and work places) to identify potential targets, a practice the U.S. Supreme Court upheld.⁹

Under the Trump administration, ICE’s expanded detention practices have deviated from a focus on public safety and flight risk to robust, routine enforcement of mass detention, including many individuals with no criminal record, holding them for longer periods in harsh conditions. Despite persistent rhetoric from the Trump administration that they are “removing dangerous criminal illegal aliens,” as of November 16, 2025, nearly three quarters of all immigrants detained have never been convicted of a criminal offense.¹⁰ In July 2025, the Trump administration opened a detention facility nicknamed “Alligator Alcatraz” in the Florida Everglades and has contracted other remote or repurposed sites in states including Louisiana, Nebraska, and Texas. In doing so, it has rapidly expanded ICE detention capabilities, signaling a dramatic escalation of enforcement beyond traditional facilities.¹¹ The Trump administration has partnered with red states under the 287(g) program to expand detention with the goal of holding 100,000 individuals a day.¹² As a comparison, no prior administration has held more than 50,200 people per day in immigration detention, and at the start of 2026 there were 153,651 federal inmates under the U.S. Bureau of Prisons custody.¹³

As the administration has moved to detain record numbers of people, media and nongovernmental actors have reported on the poor conditions of ICE detention facilities. Notably, the number of deaths in custody has risen significantly, making 2025 the deadliest year in over two decades.¹⁴ The direction and magnitude of these changes are likely to intensify with the congressional allocation of \$170 billion over four years to border and interior enforcement, with ICE receiving \$45 billion to increase detention capacity, a three-fold increase in the agency’s detention budget.¹⁵

This brief utilizes administrative records to examine key outcomes of ICE detention practices experienced by noncriminal Latinos arrested by ICE (i.e., those who had not committed a crime nor were facing a criminal charge). We focus on this group because they are unambiguously not the “worst of the worst,” but instead are law-abiding and contributing members of society. These are the types of immigrants that an overwhelming majority of Americans believe are a “good thing...for this country today” and should have a path to citizenship.¹⁶ The major findings comparing the data from the first year of the Trump administration and last year of the Biden administration include: detentions of noncriminal Latinos grew faster than other types of ICE apprehensions; the number entering facilities outnumbered those exiting, causing the imprisoned population to jump; the numbers increased for both genders, with a significant growth of working-age men; the number of transfers between facilities, average length of detention, and out-of-state stints were substantially higher; and most of those released from detention were removed (deported). The empirical results are very likely a harbinger of a larger right-wing agenda to eviscerate the rule of law, due process, and civil liberties by expelling immigrants with and without legal status through arrests, detention, and forced and self-deportations.¹⁷

A previous brief documented the magnitude and pattern of those apprehended by ICE.¹⁸ The report found that ICE arrests of Latinos nearly doubled during the first 100 days of President Trump's second term and remained substantially elevated through mid-2025, with Latinos accounting for about nine in 10 interior ICE arrests. This trend was driven largely by aggressive targets and expanded community arrests rather than criminal justice referrals from federal, state, and local jails and prisons. Almost all of the individuals picked up by ICE under the second Trump Administration have been placed directly into custody, transforming mass arrests into mass detentions. ICE has broadened who is subject to mandatory detention, effectively limiting release possibilities and reducing the frequency of individualized custody decisions that were standard in previous presidential administrations.¹⁹

Detaining these immigrants harms them, their families, and the country. Research has found that enhanced immigration enforcement practices, including mass detention, have negative mental and physical health impacts on immigrants regardless of their legal status, including children.²⁰ The Trump administration's immigration detention practices are creating considerable social and economic hardships for detainees: indefinite confinement and loss of income; isolation from family, community, and technical support; multiple long-distance transfers including out-of-state transfers; and documented harsh and deplorable custodial conditions.²¹

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This analysis used individual level records provided by the UC Berkeley School of Law's Deportation Data Project covering ICE detentions from February 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025.²² The dataset is a publicly available collection of record-level immigration enforcement actions, compiled by researchers and lawyers through the use of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). We utilized several key variables: detention starting and ending dates; location of detentions; country of citizenship, gender, criminality, and age of each arrestee; and method of release. We define a detention as the date a person starts a stay, and a stay as the time a person is held continuously. Unless otherwise noted, we use the start date (date entered into detentions) to denote the timing of a stay. During a given stay, a person could be moved between ICE facilities and each placement within the stay is known as a stint. It is possible that a person can have more than one stay (i.e., they were previously released, then subsequently re-arrested and re-detained), but these instances are relatively rare during the study period.

We used the following method to identify detained noncriminal Latinos who were arrested by ICE. We define a noncriminal detainee as someone classified as not being a convicted criminal nor facing a pending criminal charge. ICE classifies them as "Other Immigration Violators." Because those in custody include both ICE arrestees and others, we identify ICE arrestees based on how they were arrested.²³ We define a Latino as an individual who is a citizen of Mexico or a country in Central America, South America, or the Hispanic Caribbean.

The brief focuses on two time periods: the first eight full months of the Trump administration (February to September 2025) and the same months in the prior year during the Biden administration (February to September 2024). For convenience, we use the terms Trump administration and Trump period interchangeably, as well as for the Biden administration and period. Some of the results for September are incomplete. For example, if a detainee did not complete a stay during the data timeframe, then the length of stay and number of stints could be underestimated. In cases where this is particularly problematic, we do not report September's statistics.

All analyses except one rely on the detention dataset. The exception is our estimation of the number and proportion of detainees moved out of the state where they were arrested. Unfortunately, the detention dataset lacks the required information (e.g., the state where the arrest occurred, the state where detention facilities are located, and a complete list of stints). Because of this limitation, we merged information from multiple data sources for the analysis. The first dataset is the raw stints data file, which identifies all facilities where a person was held. Unfortunately, that file does not report facility locations by state. To address this issue, we assembled information from additional sources on the states of the facilities and then merged that list with the stint dataset. Our final step was merging the data with the arrest data file, which identifies where the original arrest took place. We then analyzed the assembled dataset to determine whether a detainee had ever been held out of state.

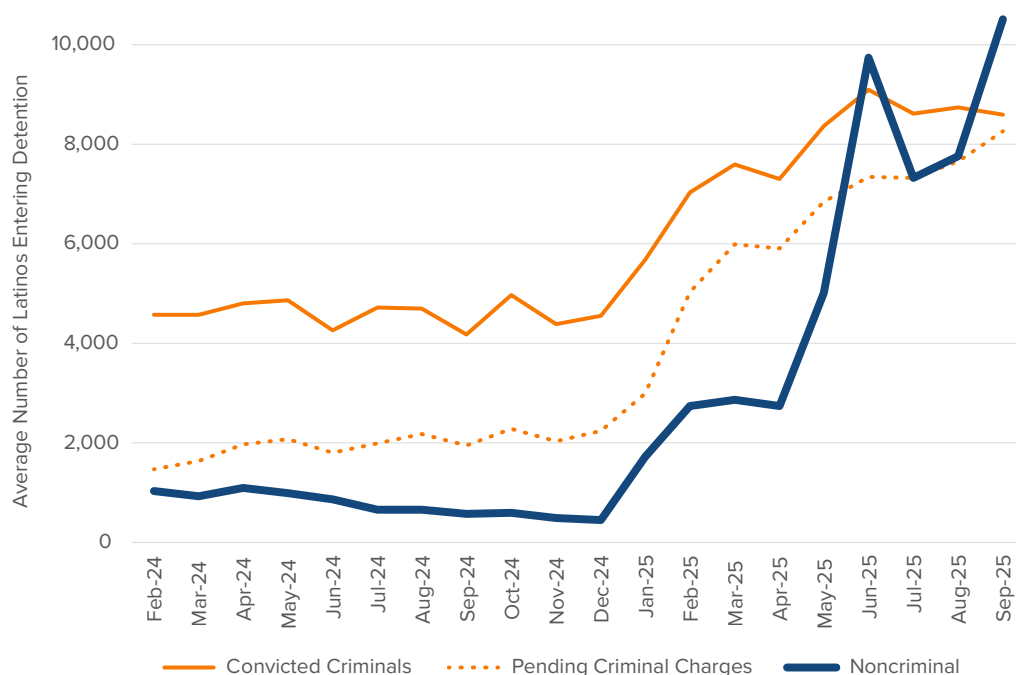
The available data have limitations due to duplicate records and incomplete information. We addressed the first problem by deleting records using the duplicate variable provided by the Deportation Data Project. This approach produced similar results when we deleted duplicate records based on the unique identification number and time stamp. We addressed the second problem by using only records with information for the variables of interest for each of the tabulations and crosstabulations reported in the brief. It is likely that the data have errors due to missing and incorrect information, which is common in large, complex administrative data systems.²⁴ Because the data are imperfect, statistical results are not precise and may be biased. Potential biases are likely to be small because incomplete information is relatively rare and errors are not likely to be systematic; therefore, the reported results are reasonable and the best available statistics. Because of the data limitations, we report rounded estimates. When we use terms such as “by twofold increase” or similar wording, we mean that a quantity is two times more than the base. For example, if a population of 100 increased by twofold, then we mean that the resulting population is 300. This is equivalent to a 200% increase.

FINDING 1:

The Number of Noncriminal Latinos Detained Increased by Sixfold in the First Eight Months of Trump Administration

In 2025, the number of noncriminal Latino ICE arrestees entering detention each month increased sixfold during the first eight months of the Trump administration compared to the Biden administration (see Figure 1).²⁵ During the 2024 Biden comparison period, an average of about 900 detainees entered detention each month, compared to about 6,000 detainees monthly under Trump. The increase was particularly pronounced between June and September 2025, peaking at nearly 10,500 new noncriminal Latino detainees in September. This extraordinary growth rate outpaces the increases for criminal Latino ICE detainees, those individuals with criminal convictions or facing pending charges. The noncriminal share of all monthly detentions also increased, from less than one eighth in 2024 to over one third between June and September 2025. The surge in noncriminal detainees coincided with the dramatic increase in at-large arrests (i.e., outside of the criminal and penal system), which racially targeted people at places of employment and public spaces.²⁶

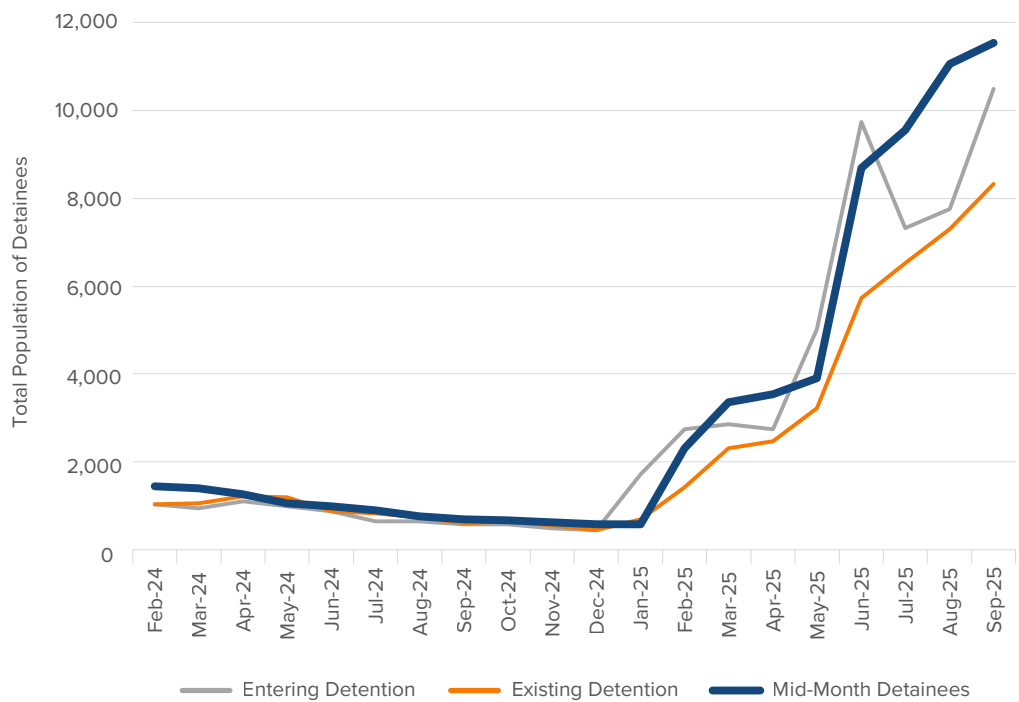
Figure 1: Average Number of Latinos Entering ICE Detention per Month by Criminal Status, February 2024 through September 2025



Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention data from UC Berkeley School of Law's Deportation Data Project.

Figure 2 reports the monthly entries and exits of ICE-arrested noncriminal Latinos, along with the number in custody on the 15th of each month. Throughout much of the Biden comparison period, exits exceeded entries, resulting in a decline in the noncriminal population held mid-month (from over 1,400 in February 2024 to around 700 in September 2024). However, starting in January 2025, entries surpassed exits, leading to a subsequent rise in the population held. This trend was particularly evident from June to September 2025 following Miller’s pressure on ICE to ramp up arrests. The influx of newly detained Latinos overwhelmed an already overburdened and understaffed review system, causing a surge in the number of detainees.²⁷ By mid-September 2025, the number of detained noncriminal Latinos rose to 11,500. This growth continued into the next month, reaching over 13,700 by mid-October 2025.

Figure 2: Entries, Exits, and Total Mid-Month Population of Latino Noncriminal Detainees, February 2024 through September 2025



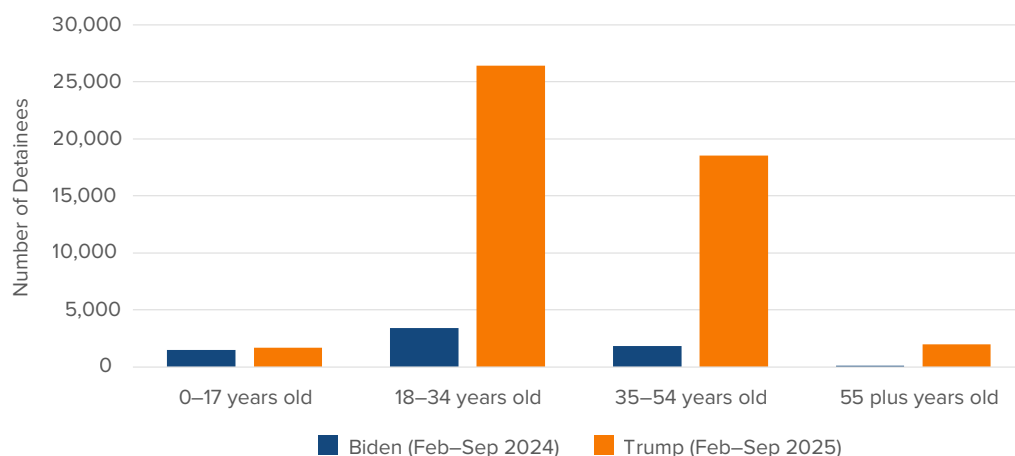
Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention data from UC Berkeley School of Law’s Deportation Data Project.

FINDING 2:

Most Noncriminal Latino Immigrants Detained by Ice Under Trump Were Working-Age Adults in Their Most Productive Years

The bulk of the growth of Latino noncriminal detainees came from prime working-age adults (18 to 54 years old; see Figure 3). Between the 2024 and 2025 comparison periods, the 18 to 34 group increased by nearly sevenfold and the 35 to 54 group by over ninefold. With respect to gender differences by age, men accounted for the majority of prime working-age adults detained. The number of Latino working-age men detained climbed from 3,500 during the Biden administration to over 38,700 during the Trump administration. Consequently, the share of all Latino male detainees climbed from 51% during Biden to 80% during Trump.

Figure 3: Latino Noncriminal Detainees by Age, February through September of 2024 versus 2025



Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention data from UC Berkeley School of Law's Deportation Data Project.

The number of minors (17 years old and younger) grew only marginally between 2024 and 2025, from around 1,500 to less than 1,700, with their share falling from 22% to 3%. Older adults (55 years and older) remained a small share of detainees, about 4% during both comparison periods. Few in the 55 years and older segment were 65 years or older.

Meanwhile, for female Latina noncriminals overall, the number of stays nearly tripled between the two periods, from about 2,500 to 7,300. While the absolute number increased, the female share dropped by more than half, from 37% to 16%. This is due to the greater number of men detained, which increased by over eightfold, from about 4,300 to 41,400.

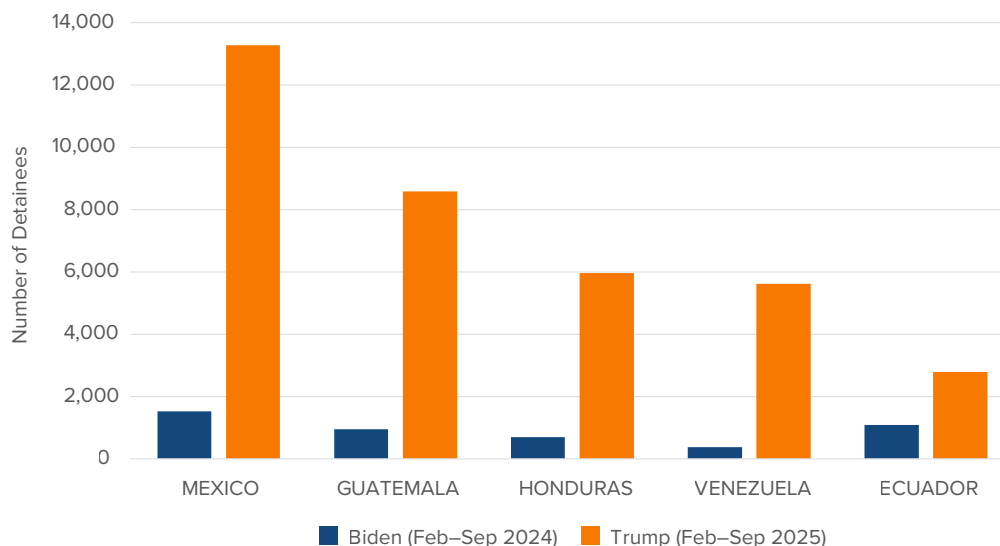
FINDING 3:

Detainees of Noncriminal Mexican and Guatemalan Descent Increased Eightfold and Venezuelans Increased Fourteenfold Under Trump

Detained noncriminal Latinos came from 19 countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, with a high concentration from a handful of countries (see Figure 4). The top five countries of origin for noncriminal Latino detainees accounted for about three quarters of all noncriminal Latino detainees. These countries were Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Venezuela, and Ecuador.

Mexico ranked first by total number of detainees, with Mexican detainees increasing by nearly eightfold between 2024 and 2025, from just over 1,500 to nearly 13,300.²⁸ Noncriminal Latino detainees of Mexican descent accounted for over one quarter (27%) of Latinos during the Trump period. Guatemalans were the second largest group, also increasing by nearly eightfold from less than 1,000 to nearly 8,600 between 2024 and 2025. They accounted for 17% of noncriminal Latino detainees under Trump. Hondurans were third, numbering nearly 6,000 during the 2025 period compared with 700 during the 2024 period. Venezuelans were fourth, experiencing an astonishing fourteenfold increase, from less than 400 in 2024 to over 5,600 in 2025. Ecuadorans were a distant fifth, with nearly 2,800 under Trump compared with 1,100 under Biden.

Figure 4: Noncriminal Latino Detainees by Country of Citizenship, February through September of 2024 versus 2025



Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention data from UC Berkeley School of Law's Deportation Data Project.

FINDING 4:

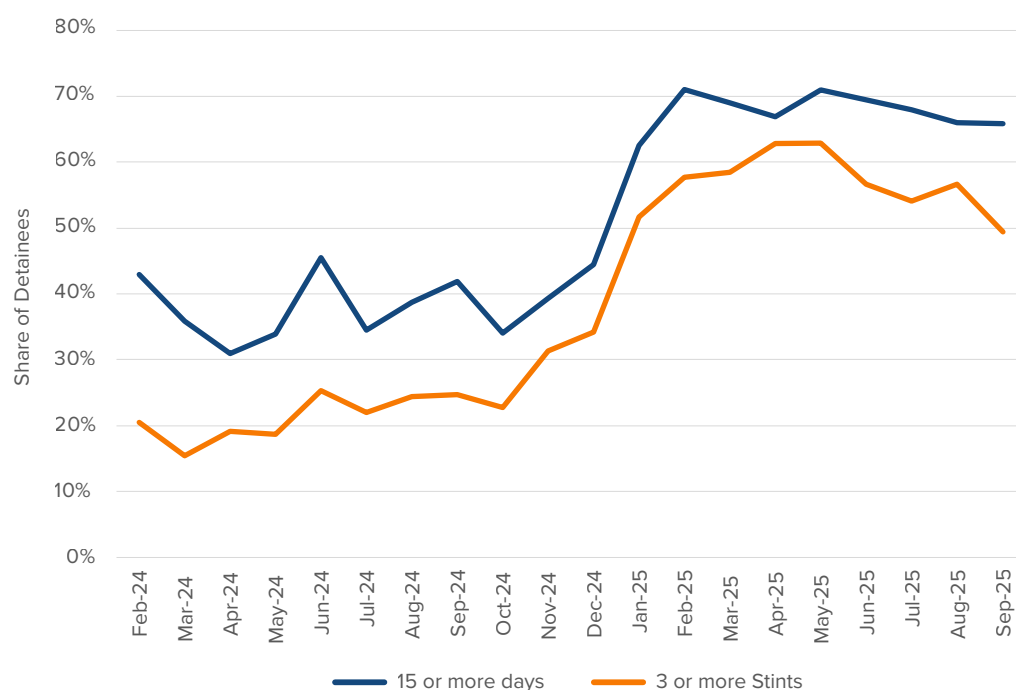
Nearly Seven in 10 Latino Noncriminal Detainees Were Detained for 15 or More Days

The data found significant changes in the share of noncriminal Latino detainees experiencing a stay of more than two weeks and the number of stints per stay between 2024 and 2025. The data show that during the Trump period, nearly seven in 10 noncriminal Latino detainees had a stay of 15 or more days, compared with only four in 10 during the Biden period. The median length of a stay ranged from one to three days during the Biden period to over 25 days under Trump.²⁹ This difference is due in part to changes in whether detainees were allowed to return temporarily to their community, which is discussed in the next section.

Not only did the length of stay increase, but so did the number of stints per stay. The average number of stints was three under Trump, compared with less than two under Biden. The median increased from one to three stints per stay between the comparison periods in 2024 and 2025.

Figure 5 tracks the proportion of these detainees who had a stay longer than two weeks and the average number of stints per stay (corresponding to the number of transfers, which is equal to stints minus one).

Figure 5: Shares of Noncriminal Latino Detainees Who Had a Stay Longer than Two Weeks and Three or More Stints



Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrest, detention, and stint data from UC Berkeley School of Law's Deportation Data Project.

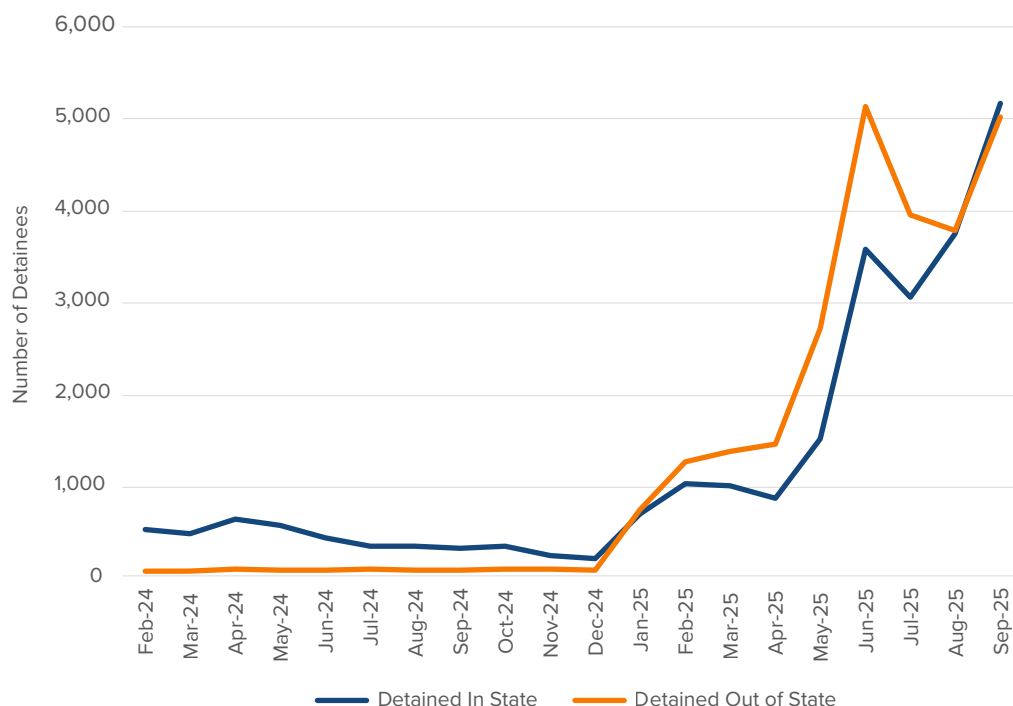
FINDING 5:

Nearly 60% of All Latino Noncriminal Detainees Were Transferred Out of State Under Trump

Along with experiencing more transfers and longer stay durations, noncriminal Latino detainees were at greater risk of being relocated out of state under the Trump administration than the Biden administration (see Figure 6). There was an increase in both the absolute number and relative proportion of noncriminal Latino detainees who were moved away from the state where they were arrested during the Trump administration. The absolute number jumped by over twelvefold, from less than 900 in the 2024 period to 24,800 in the 2025 period.³⁰ During the Trump period, 55% of noncriminal Latino detainees were transferred out of state, compared with 18% in the previous year.

This increase was partially due to the necessity of interning the ever-growing population in facilities in Texas and the Southeast, which had a disproportionate share of the detention centers.³¹ However, there is evidence suggesting that some of these moves were done for other reasons, including making it difficult for a detainee to receive legal and other support services.³²

Figure 6: Latino Noncriminal Detainees Who Had Been Detained Out of State, February 2024 through September 2025



Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrest and stint data from UC Berkeley School of Law's Deportation Data Project.

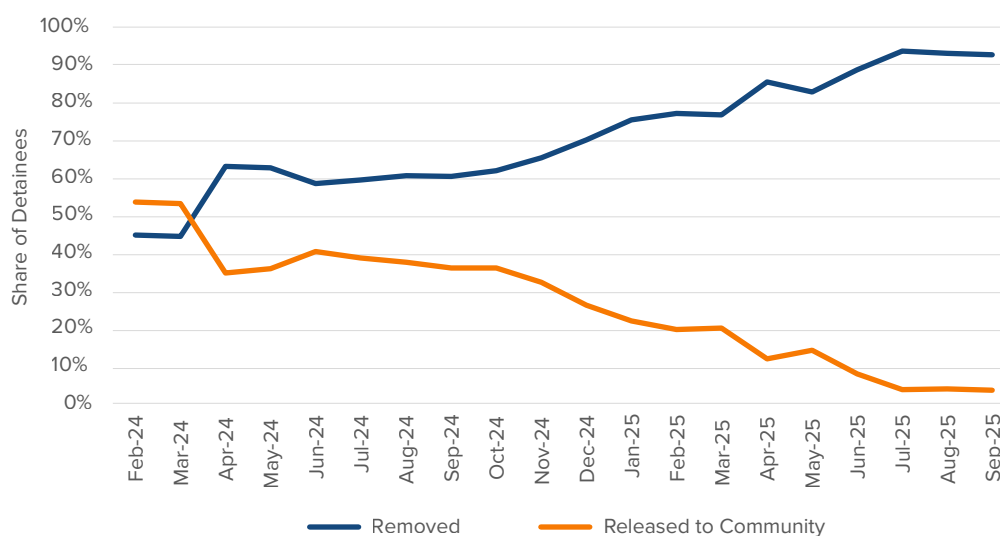
FINDING 6:

Under Trump, Only 9% of Latino Noncriminal Detainees Were Released Back into the Community and 88% Were Removed

The way stays generally ended differed significantly between the two administrations, with relatively few Latino noncriminal detainees allowed to return to their community during the Trump period compared to the Biden period.

Two major categories account for the vast majority (98-99%) of all releases (see Figure 7). The first category is temporary release to the community, which includes those paroled (a release for humanitarian reasons or public benefit), under an order of supervision (a release requiring active monitoring by ICE and regular reporting to ICE), or bonded out (requiring a monetary bail).³³ The share of all noncriminal Latino detainees in this category declined dramatically between the two administrations, from 42% to 9%. Given the larger number of detainees overall, the absolute number in this category increased slightly, from about 2,900 to 3,700. In other words, relatively few noncriminal Latino detainees were able to return temporarily to their community under Trump compared to Biden during the study's comparison period. The other major category is removal (deportation) upon release, including voluntary self-removal. In absolute terms, the numbers jumped by nearly eightfold between the two periods, from less than 3,900 to nearly 34,400. Moreover, the percentage of noncriminal Latino detainees removed increased from 57% in 2024 to 88% in 2025.

Figure 7: Share of Noncriminal Latino Detainees by Release Category, February 2024 through September 2025



Source: UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge analysis of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention data from UC Berkeley School of Law's Deportation Data Project.

What is intriguing is the relatively low number of voluntary departures (self-deportations) among noncriminal Latino detainees. The Trump administration has made this a component of its mass deportation initiative, including providing financial incentives to encourage immigrants to leave on their own.³⁴ Yet, the available data show only a small increase in the number of noncriminal Latino detainees who self-deported, from less than 50 to 1,250 between the two time periods. Despite this numerical increase, those self-deporting accounted for only 3% of the releases under Trump, compared with 1% under Biden. This analysis does not include voluntary departures by non-detainees, detainees with a criminal history, or detainees facing a pending criminal charge. Consequently, it is difficult to evaluate the overall outcomes of the Trump administration's incentives for individuals who self-deport.

CONCLUSION

This analysis documented trends in the Trump administration's detention of Latino immigrants, finding a continuous increase in the number of noncriminal Latinos arrested by ICE, their length of detention and the number of detention transfers they experienced. These detentions create four different types of hardships:

- 1. Hardships experienced directly by those in custody.** Our findings reveal that noncriminal Latino detainees experienced longer detentions, were shipped more frequently between facilities, and were more likely to be relocated out of state, creating myriad physiological and economic hardships. These are compounded by reputable reports that the detainees were treated harshly, deprived of sleep and adequate nutrition, and crowded into unsanitary conditions.³⁵
- 2. Hardships experienced by the detainees' families.** It is highly likely that many of the detainees resided in a mixed legal status family, which can include citizens, legal immigrants, and undocumented immigrants. Nationally, there may be as many as 5 million such households, which may already be experiencing financial hardship, health challenges, and other stresses.³⁶ Having a member detained by ICE compounds these hardships, particularly financial ones given the dramatic increase in the number of working-age men detained.
- 3. The widespread fear among Latino communities across the country that impacts how these families engage with their built environment.** As a result of Trump's mass deportation regime, many individuals are reluctant to go to work, school, and health care appointments, and are curtailing daily activities outside of their homes.³⁷
- 4. Harm to the U.S. economy.** The impacts are both direct from the loss of immigrant workers in industries dependent on their labor (largely low-wage jobs), and indirect by reducing the wages of other employees.³⁸ This reduces economic activity and contributes to slower gross domestic product (GDP) growth.

The empirical results indicate a troubling trajectory for the remainder of the current Trump administration. The detentions (along with apprehensions and deportations) will likely increase, with much of the growth coming from noncriminals. The President's "Big Beautiful Bill" increases ICE's budget by billions of dollars, enabling the agency to hire more enforcement agents, build or contract for more detention facilities, and pay for more deportations.³⁹ This has made ICE the largest federal law enforcement agency and is enabling the growth of a "Deportation-Industrial

Complex.” Politically, the administration must ramp up its efforts to meet its promised goal of removing millions of immigrants. As a result, the government has employed harsher and more violent tactics.⁴⁰

This analysis along with other documented analyses on the impacts of adverse immigration enforcement suggest that these efforts may restructure the nation’s racial and ethnic demographic composition. Trump’s anti-immigrant initiatives are explicit in their objective: reducing existing and future racially and ethnically diverse residents and preserving the non-Hispanic white culture.⁴¹

Disclaimer: This research project is a collaborative effort of the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge and Unseen. The analysis and views expressed in this brief are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of UCLA as an institution.

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