

ICE and Seizing Ballots

What is: ICE

The Immigration Control & Enforcement Agency was created to enforce immigration laws, mainly targeting illegal immigrants with a criminal background and deporting those who pose a threat to public safety and security. This changed when the executive branch increased the number of agents by 120% while cutting the training period of agents in half. As a consequence, there have been 29 shootings (Gun Violence Data Hub) reported resulting in 8 deaths since 2025.

It could be assumed these numbers are much higher than reported because there is no federal data base regarding officer involved shootings.

Why is this important:

This is important because ICE is operating outside the scope mentioned above. Instead of serving and protecting the public from criminal activity, they are instead becoming a means for the executive branch to intimidate law abiding citizens when voting.

For example, ICE agents in Syracuse NY confronted a poll worker, Paigelynne Gonya, and served a warning in response to her Instagram she posted about indicting ICE agents in Minnesota.

“During her shift, Gonyea received a phone call from a man identifying himself as Dave Brody, a Special agent with the Department of Homeland Security. He said agents had visited her apartment and spoken with her husband about a post in which she had allegedly “doxxed” an ICE agent back in January.” (AP and others)

Her husband gave the agents her phone number and when called Gonyea offered to meet the agents in a public place because she did not feel meeting them in her home.

The agents accused her of divulging the name of the agent (doxing) when in fact she did not.

This is an obvious abuse of executive power and example of the president’s ongoing efforts to compromise the integrity of the US constitution and the rights it affords American citizens.

Another example of this administrations disregard for basic rights is a plan to assign ICE agents to polling locations. In February DHS official Heather Honey

dismissed rumors that ICE agents would be deployed at polling location, calling it misinformation. (ABC News and other media outlets). But in July, DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin said ICE would only be a deployed if a threat arose, and later AG Todd Blanche did not explicitly answer the same question other than they (ICE) would follow the law. (Axios)

The first one known to warn of ICE involvement in elections was Steve Bannon, (The Guardian and others) who may not be the most credible source of any information. Statements made subsequently by administration officials may have been off the cuff remarks in response to Bannon's statement.

In regards to law enforcement agencies raiding elections offices and seizing ballots, below is an AI summary of actions so far:

Fulton County, Georgia — FBI

This is the clearest example of a **federal law-enforcement seizure** in 2026.

The FBI obtained a search warrant and took custody of election records from the 2020 election.

The warrant reportedly covered:

- o paper ballots,
- o ballot images,
- o tabulator tapes,
- o voter rolls.

Riverside County, California — Sheriff

This was **not a federal action**.

Sheriff Chad Bianco took custody of more than 600,000 ballots as part of an investigation into alleged election irregularities. California officials challenged the authority for the action, and courts ordered preservation and restricted handling of the materials.

California subsequently moved to restrict law enforcement from interfering with election materials without proper authority.

Arizona: The DOJ sent Arizona election officials requests related to voter list maintenance and access to voter registration information in **July–August 2025**. Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes publicly rejected the request for the full statewide voter database on **August 29, 2025**, citing privacy and legal concerns.

Michigan: The DOJ sued Michigan over access to voter records in **September 2025** after the state refused to provide the requested information. A federal judge later dismissed the lawsuit in **February 2026**

All states (legal threats rather than ballot seizures): The Justice Department sent letters to election officials nationwide warning that officials could face criminal consequences if they **knowingly** allow ineligible voters (such as noncitizens) to remain on voter rolls or vote.

Federal control over mail ballots: The Trump administration issued an executive order directing federal agencies to create voter eligibility lists and directing the Postal Service regarding delivery of mail ballots. Multiple states challenged the order, arguing that it exceeded presidential authority over elections; courts blocked key parts of it.

How urgent is this:

Assigning ICE to polling locations so far appears, for lack of any clear evidence, no more than a rumor. The FBI and a local sheriff seized ballots in two states, but what they gleaned from this is uncertain, and there hasn't been an official statement that the administration will continue these efforts in other states.

Nevertheless, a worst case (5 urgency rating) scenario should be assumed and motivate citizens to mobilize to ensure a smooth voting process and put a check on federal agencies attempting to seize ballots.

What can be done:

Voters should be encouraged to vote early, and if voting at a polling location, arrange for groups to vote together. This could mitigate voter's fear of law enforcement intimidation and also be visible evidence that citizens are casting ballots and demonstrate that votes are being counted legally and fairly. Activists could also be present at polling places to observe the voting process and be there for support should law enforcement agents or others attempt to discourage citizens from voting.

Efforts could be made to further publicize media accounts like Paiglynn's story and be an example of how to deal with law enforcement should they continue these acts of intimidation towards poll workers.

Again, even though there have been no public statements of further ballot seizures, activists could communicate concerns to elected officials and be prepared to act with whatever means within the law to thwart attempts to seize

ballots.