

Federal government sends ICE into the Land of the Lakes

ICE's immediate impact on the Twin Cities

By Josephine Johnson
TALON STAFF WRITER

'Minneapolis' already has enough ICE.'

Sirens

'Justice for Renee Good' Shouts

'STOP ICE'

Shots

'We Will Keep Fighting'

Protests

'History Has Its Eyes on You'

Walk-outs

'ICE OUT of Minneapolis'

Shutdown

'F YOU, ICE'

Chaos

'We love our immigrant neighbors'

Everywhere

'I thought all lives mattered.'

ICE, or the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, an agency of the Department of Homeland Security, is responsible for enforcing U.S. borders and regulating immigrants.

"The Department of Homeland Security is part of the executive branch, so it's under the authority of the President," said Kayleen Berg, government and economics teacher and speech team coach at M.A. "It was formed after 9/11 to coordinate emergency response and border control."

The Department focuses on countering terrorist attacks and threats to the security of the United States, which, for the Trump administration, involves immigrants. So in December 2025, ICE began "Operation Metro Surge," and began a centralized effort in the Twin Cities to arrest immigrants.

"They have an extensive list of people who they know are in the Twin Cities who do not have legal documentation to be in the United States, who are obviously targets, but then they're also just trying to arrest people who might be of interest," said Nathan Johnson, M.A. teacher of A.P. Human Geography, A.P. European History, and debate team coach.

Specifically, ICE's focus is on criminals in the U.S., or those who are here illegally, that is, with no temporary or permanent residence permit.

But the presence of 3,000 ICE officers increased tensions, provoked major demonstrations, and most notably, involved the shooting deaths of two U.S. citizens: Renee Good on Jan. 7 and Alex Pretti on Jan. 24. Bystander videos appear to show Good and Pretti protesting ICE activity; federal government statements claim that ICE

was acting in self-defense.

The shootings and protests have received worldwide attention, putting Minneapolis and St. Paul at the center of global events.

Kristi Noem, the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, claimed in a Jan. 19 statement posted by the Department's website that "10,000 criminal illegal aliens who were killing Americans, hurting children, and wreaking terror in Minneapolis" have been arrested, and "in the last 6 weeks, our brave DHS law enforcement have arrested 3,000 criminal illegal aliens, including vicious murderers, rapists, child pedophiles, and incredibly dangerous individuals."

Yet these 3,000 to 10,000 "criminal illegal aliens" don't seem to be the only people either deported or detained.

"ICE has had some conflicting messages," Berg said. "What we've also seen are some people who have temporary visas, or people with court orders allowing them to stay in the country, that are still getting picked up by ICE."

Besides the rampant deportations, ICE is having an impact on consumerism in the Twin Cities, and people's daily

routines are constantly changing due to the enforcement's impact.

"Economically, it's damaging, because there are many businesses that are having to reduce hours or close entirely because employees are scared, unable to come to work, or have been detained," Johnson said. "And it seems that this has been costing Twin Cities businesses millions of dollars every week."

Lake Street businesses specifically have been struggling, but generally, a grocer, restaurant, or even a boutique might see significant drops in business.

"Part of this surge of enforcement is the impact on businesses where we've seen a lot of businesses either temporarily closed, sometimes because of staffing, sometimes to protect their customers," Berg said. "And then, of course, we had the general strike day, where a lot of businesses were closed to show solidarity as well."

On Feb. 12, White House border czar Tom Homan announced that ICE agents would be withdrawn from Minnesota. Local leaders reacted with caution.

"I'll believe it when I see it," Minneapolis City Council President Elliott Payne told the Minnesota StarTribune.



Use the QR code above to view a gallery of photos from the Alex Pretti memorial site in Minneapolis.

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PHOTO BY CATHERINE SIME-MACKINTOSH



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Resilience: Many push back

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uals, native Minnesota's in visitors, continue to come together, regardless of religious affiliation, political, beliefs, and ethnic background to fight back.

"If any of us had a stereotype of what a protester might look like, it's just like breaking all of these stereotypes and assumptions," said Calvin.

Urban Ventures is one of many organizations that has stepped forward to support the various immigrant communities around South Minneapolis.

"For more than three decades, our work has centered on this neighborhood, allowing us to build deep relationships with immigrant communities," said Erica Schimelpfenig, president and CEO of Urban Ventures, as well as a Minnehaha parent.

Over the past month, many families and individuals that regularly work with Urban Ventures have stopped attending events. The fear of being racially profiled and possibly detained is widespread. Urban Ventures has continued to collaborate with other organizations.

"Urban Ventures has been able to walk alongside families during this difficult time by providing access to food and essential household items through partnerships with local food distributors, businesses, and generous donors," said Schimelpfenig.

Additionally, they have been able to support many of their participants by providing online access to mental health care, pastoral care, and legal assistance.

"Twice a week, we deliver food boxes and supplies to those affected," said Schimelpfenig.

In an effort to continue their services, Urban Ventures is working to ensure that the kids who have been impacted by the current events in Minneapolis have access to critical educational support.

Despite the internal and external roadblocks that many individuals with black and brown skin are facing, Minnesotans continue to show up for one another.

"In the midst of a dark and uncertain time, we are staying light through people who choose to recognize the humanity of complete strangers," said Schimelpfenig.

With many using their voices, platforms, and positions, as tools to advocate for change, the resilience and compassion of humankind continues to be highlighted.

"Minnesotans are saying, we are all each other's neighbor," said Calvin.

Protest at Cities Church in St. Paul

Across the streets of Minneapolis, protests are ramping up—Minnesotans want change. Despite the protests being nationwide news, many aren't seeing the desired results, only increasing the outrage. Recently, there was a protest held at Cities Church in St. Paul. Protesters targeted preacher David Easterwood, an ICE field officer in Minnesota.

High-school sophomore Axel Hesse-Moline was attending the service in which the protest began.

"They didn't physically harm anybody," he said. "They weren't getting into fights with people, but it definitely seemed like they were traumatized. There were a lot of children crying, and one of the mothers with a bunch of children was rushing her kids outside."

Several officers showed up to the service to restore order. Easterwood wasn't present at the service.

"I think we're all kind of nervous if it's gonna happen again, but the security definitely helps a lot with that," said Hess-Moline. "If the pastor didn't have a connection with ICE, I don't think any of that would have happened."

Easterwood is facing a lawsuit regarding aggressive and abusive tactics in law enforcement, which was a driving factor for the protests.

Three protesters and two journalists covering the incident, meanwhile, were arrested. Legal actions continued into February.

— by Carter Trzynka



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Use the QR code above to view a gallery of photos from the Renee Good memorial site in Minneapolis.



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PHOTO BY HENRY BECK

Use the QR code above to view a gallery of photos from the Jan. 23 protest march in Minneapolis.



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