



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
FOUNDATION

Delaware

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Governor Meyer:

On Thursday, November 6, Delawareans across the state were shocked to learn that Seaford Police Department (SPD) and Delaware State Police (DSP) responded to a request by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for assistance in detaining Carlos Chag-Gonzalez at the Lowe's in Seaford. Despite media attention and public outcry surrounding the event, it is still unclear whether ICE possessed a valid judicial warrant for Chag-Gonzalez. The only [information](#) ICE has provided on the matter is that Chag-Gonzalez was detained because he was an "illegal alien" who had previously entered the country, but ICE is yet to provide evidence that they had the legal right to detain him.

Delaware law enforcement (SPD and DSP) responded to the request for assistance following the claim that Chag-Gonzalez had assaulted officers and fled. However, no ICE agents were injured. Chag-Gonzalez was the only person harmed during the incident and required treatment by EMS at the scene.

Delawareans have been clear – we do not want our state and local law enforcement agencies and local taxpayer dollars and personnel to serve the administration's attempts to target our state's immigrant communities. **We ask you to be faithful to your previous commitments and issue renewed guidance for state and local law enforcement on when they can assist ICE operations.**

Delaware's Recent Actions to Protect Immigrants

Our state leaders, including those receiving this correspondence, have responded to public outcry to not support the federal administration's immigration enforcement program, and we are appreciative of your past actions. In February, your office [affirmed](#) that state resources would not be used to assist federal immigration efforts "unless there are a valid court warrant and an exigent circumstance where the community is at risk." In July, Delaware took a critical step to

protecting immigrant communities and the integrity of local law enforcement by banning 287(g) agreements between ICE and state and local law enforcement agencies. Most recently, the Wilmington City Council [passed a unanimous resolution](#) opposing collaboration between the city and ICE.

However, the incident in Seaford illustrates that despite these meaningful steps, the rules around when and how our state and local law enforcement cooperate with ICE remain murky. That is why your office must act immediately to issue firm guidance outlining how all Delaware agencies interact with ICE. Without clear guidance, inconsistent responses from state and local agencies risk undermining public safety by decreasing trust in law enforcement and diverting resources away from programs that keep our communities safe. We also run the risk of Delaware being unintentionally dragged in to the federal administration's immigration enforcement regime under backdoor, misleading pretenses that state and local law enforcement must respond to public safety threats where none actually exist.

Cooperation with ICE Enforcement Undermines Public Safety and Leads to Public Confusion

As we're witnessing in the aftermath of the Seaford incident, lack of clarity on what constitutes a public safety threat or emergency has led to confusion for members of the public about when, if, and under what circumstances state and local police will provide assistance to ICE. While SPD and DSP have [stated](#) that it did not assist with immigration enforcement, their actions during the operation led directly to ICE's ability to detain Chag-Gonzalez. For many Delawareans, especially immigrant communities, state and local law enforcement's actions equate to undertaking an active role in immigration enforcement. These actions violate community trust, reignite fear and anxiety, and threaten the goodwill our state has built between community members and law enforcement through actions like banning 287(g) agreements.

Reports from ICE Demand Greater Scrutiny

Maintaining trust between community members and state and local law enforcement is vital as it becomes increasingly apparent that ICE is acting with little oversight — conducting secretive operations, employing excessive force, and blatantly violating civil liberties. In Chicago, Border Patrol Commander Greg Bovino admitted to using false claims about rocks thrown at agents as justification for tear gassing protesters. United States District Judge Sara Ellis [stated](#), "Overall, this calls into question everything that [ICE] say they are doing in their characterization of what is happening either at the Broadview facility or out in the streets of the Chicagoland area during law enforcement activities." These troubling accounts of misleading information and outright misrepresentations of what occurs at ICE actions have not been limited to Chicago but happen in nearly every

location where ICE is active. Our days of relying solely on the word of ICE are well and truly over.

While we do not oppose state and local law enforcement responding to truly exigent circumstances where public safety is imminently at risk, we believe that information from ICE must be scrutinized given their track record. Similarly, we do not want to see ICE's reliance on state and local law enforcement always responding to calls for assistance to be exploited to allow ICE to ramp up their efforts and escalate actions that violate peoples' civil liberties and then implicate state and local law enforcement in those violations.

Law enforcement, judges, and the American people can no longer believe on face value what ICE states are the facts on the ground and who is the real victim and aggressor. Instead, we must verify what ICE is reporting before assisting them. In Seaford, ICE claimed their agents had been assaulted, and then the target fled. However, it was later reported that no agents were injured. Instead, their target – who was likely terrified while hiding under a trailer - was the only person reportedly injured. ICE claimed it was a minor injury, however, a statement from a witness said, “they busted some [guy's] head open” and that “a lady cop was putting pressure on his head.” The extent of Chag-Gonzalez's injuries are still unknown as well as if he received any additional medical treatment.

There is also no evidence that ICE had a valid judicial warrant for Chag-Gonzalez, nor is it known if state and local law enforcement requested to see a warrant at any point. Without clear evidence of a warrant and a situation that does not appear to have been a public safety emergency, it raises serious concern about whether DSP violated the guidance regarding cooperating with ICE that your office has previously issued.

Clear Guidelines Will Protect the Public and Law Enforcement

Clear guidelines will allow Delaware law enforcement to systematically verify ICE requests before responding or providing assistance and afford the public transparency regarding state and local law enforcements' role in future ICE actions. It will also help to ensure that state and local law enforcement are only providing assistance to ICE if there is a clear and verifiable emergency public safety threat that could lead to harm or injury for members of the public. Failure of ICE to meet established guidelines should result in Delaware law enforcement's refusal to provide assistance.

We cannot allow vague requests for assistance to become a back door for ICE to weaponize our state and local law enforcement and build its mass deportation force here in Delaware. Instead of assisting with violent operations that stoke fear and divide our communities, Delaware law enforcement, personnel, and resources should be dedicated to protecting Delawareans — and that includes our state's immigrant communities.

Our state is at a crossroads – will we allow our state and local law enforcement to continue to play by the old rules even as ICE terrorizes our communities, or will we hold our state agencies accountable for ensuring that Delaware is not willingly or unwillingly aiding ICE? **We must be clear about where Delaware stands and ensure our guidelines reflect our state’s values and guarantee that Delaware remains a place where all people — regardless of immigration or citizenship status — can live and thrive without fear**

We request that you respond to this letter and detail your next steps in creating this guidance by 11/20/2025.

Sincerely,

Helen Salita
Campaign Manager
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