

UNalienable

ENCOUNTERS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

Of all counties in the United States, Mississippi counties are among the **most entangled** with ICE. This study highlights what this entanglement looks like and demonstrates the great cost to public safety and civil rights that Mississippi pays as a result.

ICE Detainers

ICE detainers are voluntary requests in which federal immigration authorities ask local jails to hold individuals for up to an additional 48 hours after their initial detention period. The threats they pose to local policing and communities are expansive:

- **Obstruction of Local Policing:** Scott County Sheriff Mike Lee and a **majority** of prosecutors, judges, and police officers identify the intrusion of federal immigration enforcement as an obstacle to their public safety priorities.
- **The COVID-19 Pandemic:** Holding people in detention increases jail occupancy and can “amplify epidemics,” according to public health **experts**.
- **Impact on Local Economies:** Facilitating the detention and deportation of some immigrants **drains** local economies by removing a primary source of labor and tax revenue.
- **Legal Liability:** Local agencies and officials can be and have been **sued** for effectuating ICE detainers, costing these groups **millions** in settlements and court fees.

Abusive Policing

Academic research and community testimony confirm that the existence of a pipeline from local to federal agencies promotes discriminatory policing and public harm at the local level. The practical effects include:

- Roadblocks in areas with **higher** concentrations of Hispanic residents;
- Deterrence of undocumented immigrants and their families from **reporting** crimes and emergencies to the police; and
- Discriminatory **treatment** by police officers of Hispanic-appearing drivers in traffic stops and community interactions.

Policy Framework

Mississippi’s legislative framework exacerbates the damage caused by local-federal entanglement. There are two sites in which these policy obstacles are most apparent:

- **Prohibition on Sanctuary Cities:** While Mississippi’s 2017 Senate Bill 2710 bans sanctuary cities in our state, research shows that sanctuary policies actually correspond with **lower crime** rates and greater **compliance** with federal law.
- **Status-Requirement for Government IDs:** A lack of government-issued ID affects most undocumented immigrants’ abilities to open bank accounts and legally drive. The resulting vulnerability makes them disproportionately victims of home invasions, stopped for minor traffic violations, and fined exorbitant sums when trying to complete everyday tasks.

Recommendations

For State and Local Bodies

- Enhance the transparency of local agencies’ involvement with immigration enforcement
- Issue policies to ensure unbiased policing
- Create secure and accessible complaint mechanisms for victims of discriminatory policing
- Improve police officer outreach with immigrant communities
- Implement cultural consciousness in police training and hiring

For the Biden Administration and Federal Agencies

- End the ICE detainer regime and any other agreements that allow local assistance in federal immigration enforcement
- Produce a public report with recommendations on the civil rights impact of local-federal entanglement
- Conduct civil rights trainings for immigration enforcement officers