

After ICE Admitted Having No Justification for Arrests at Immigration Courthouses, District Court Grants Stay Prohibiting ICE From Conducting Courthouse Arrests

ICE is now largely prohibited from conducting civil immigration arrests at Immigration Courts in New York City

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NEW YORK – Following Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) [recent admission](#) that it has no justification for conducting mass arrests at courthouses, today a District Court [granted a stay](#) in [African Communities Together and The Door v. Todd Lyons](#) – the lawsuit filed by the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Make the Road NY (MRNY), and Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward Maazel LLP (ECBAWM) challenging ICE’s cruel, unlawful policies that allow ICE agents to arrest people for showing up to court and prevent them from pursuing their immigration cases.

With this stay, ICE officers are largely prohibited from conducting civil immigration enforcement actions in or near 26 Federal Plaza, 201 Varick Street, and 290 Broadway as the case proceeds. Now, officers must adhere to [ICE’s 2021 guidance](#), which only permits immigration court arrests in very limited circumstances.

“This is a huge win for New Yorkers and sets an important example for the rest of the country. We must continue to protect the right to due process and ensure that immigration courts are not turned into sites of fear and intimidation. For far too long, immigrant communities have been forced to navigate an impossible choice of either appearing for legally required court proceedings or risk detention by ICE simply for complying with the law. We welcome this decision and will continue advocating for policies that uphold dignity and justice for all immigrants,” said **Diana Konaté, Deputy Executive Director of Policy & Advocacy at African Communities Together.**

“Today’s ruling is an enormous win for noncitizen New Yorkers seeking to safely attend their immigration court proceedings,” said **Amy Belsher, director of Immigrants’ Rights Litigation at the New York Civil Liberties Union.** “For nearly a year, we’ve watched masked ICE officers ambush noncitizens in courthouse hallways, throw immigrant New Yorkers to the ground, and tear children from their parents. Now, ICE has admitted that it does not and has never had an explanation or justification for conducting mass arrests at immigration courts. We look forward to a final ruling in the case, setting aside these cruel, pointless policies once and for all.”

“In the face of this administration’s ongoing targeting of our young members, this decision brings us hope,” said **Beth Baltimore, deputy director of The Door’s Legal Services Center.** “Our staff continues to work tirelessly to support Door members who were terrified to go to their required court appearances. We stand with our members to fight for those impacted by courthouse arrests, including those who remain detained, and other cruel policies.”

The organizations originally filed [this lawsuit](#) on behalf of African Communities Together and The Door on August 1, 2025. Soon after, the orgs asked for expedited relief through a stay, which the Court partly denied in

September 2025. But then, [in a shocking revelation in March](#), the government admitted that a 2025 memorandum — which it had relied on throughout the case to justify its immigration court arrest policy — does not and has never authorized any immigration courthouse arrests. Immediately after, the organizations asked the Court to reconsider its denial — which is what has happened today.

“The court was correct to block the Trump administration’s inhumane and unlawful tactic of ambushing people who are complying with their legal obligations at their court appointments,” said **Hannah Steinberg, staff attorney with the ACLU’s Immigrants’ Rights Project**.

“We are grateful that the court recognized today what our clients and immigrant communities have been saying all along: allowing ICE to arrest people at immigration court without any limits undermines access to justice and erodes trust in the legal system,” said **Katie Rosenfeld, Partner at Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP**. “Today’s decision restores critical protections for people appearing in immigration court and reaffirms that federal agencies must follow the law when changing policies that affect fundamental rights and due process.”

“For nearly a year, countless immigrant New Yorkers have been arrested simply for attending their court hearings at 26 Federal Plaza,” said **Harold Solis, co-legal director of Make the Road New York**. “Our clients tried to put a stop to this last year but were denied preliminary relief—based on what the government recently acknowledged was false information. All the while, immigration courthouses became places of fear, and not due process. Almost on a daily basis, parents were ripped away from their children, students were detained, and loved ones disappeared into inhumane detention centers as a result of these immigration courthouse arrests. We welcome today’s decision, which for many will feel long overdue. For them and the countless others who remain fearful, we hope today signals an end to this chaos.”

Since Trump took office, ICE has mounted an unprecedented campaign of arresting people at their mandated immigration court hearings, and then trying to fast track their deportation. This includes [Dylan](#), a 16-year-old Bronx high school who ICE arrested when attending a routine court date, and [Oliver Mata Velazquez](#), a 19 year old living in Buffalo who ICE targeted, detained, and fast tracked for deportation. The NYCLU filed a lawsuit challenging Oliver’s unlawful arrest and [secured his release](#).

For more information on this case, please see [here](#).

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