California is Endangering Immigrants Through ICE Transfers

Thousands of immigrants each year have been subject to cruel and inhumane conditions when transferred from jails and state prisons into ICE detention centers, which have been shown to be rife with neglect and abuse. Immigrant community members who have completed a jail or prison sentence should not be doubly punished by ICE detention and possible deportation.

The VISON Act (AB 937-Carrillo) would stop local jails and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) from conducting these unnecessary and voluntary ICE transfers.

Between 2018-2019, 3,700 immigrants were transferred to ICE from local jails...

...and from 2019-2020, CA transferred 3,200 immigrants to ICE from CDCR.

In some California ICE detention centers, an estimated 80% of incarcerated immigrants are there as a result of ICE transfers from jails and CDCR.

ICE Transfers Cost Taxpayers Millions of Dollars

Total Spent Assisting ICE Transfers From Local Jails (2018-2019)

- Total spent by LA County: $2.8M
- Estimated Statewide Cost: $7.3M

Not only are ICE transfers cruel and unnecessary, but they are also incredibly expensive. In 2018 and 2019, the LA County Sheriff’s Department spent nearly $3 million dollars transferring about 1,400 people to ICE custody for detention and possible deportation. Statewide, nearly 4,000 people were transferred from local jails to ICE in that time period, at an estimated cost of more than $7 million dollars; this estimate does not include the cost of CDCR transfers.

ICE Transfers Endanger the Lives of Community Members

Total monthly COVID cases per 100,000 people (April-August 2020)

Thousands of immigrant community members each year are subject to systematic abuses and medical neglect when transferred from jails and prisons to ICE detention centers.

ICE’s long track record of medical neglect has led people in ICE detention to disproportionately suffer from COVID. In August 2020, the COVID case rate was 15 times higher in ICE detention than the rate for the general public.
Mass Incarceration and Immigrant Detention Disproportionately Harm Black Immigrants

Black immigrants are disproportionately targeted by the criminal legal system. According to the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, just 7% of immigrants without citizenship in the U.S. are Black, but in FY2015 Black immigrants represented 20% of people in the U.S. who are facing deportation because of a conviction.

Continued ICE transfers reinforce and double the harm of our racist and unjust legal system.

Kao Saelee’s Story

Kao Saelee is a Mien refugee from Laos who resettled in California as a child with his family. Incarcerated as a youth, he grew up in CDCR state prison and fought some of the worst wildfires in CA as a firefighter. In Aug. 2020, when Kao was scheduled to be released, CDCR transferred him to ICE, which then transported him to an ICE detention center in Louisiana, far away from his family and community. Thankfully, Kao was freed earlier this year when he received a pardon from Governor Newsom and is now home with his family and community.

We need to #StopICEtransfers with the #VISIONAct so that people like Kao can return home!

Notes and sources: CDCR transfer data for 2020 were obtained by the Asian Americans Advancing Justice Asian Law Caucus. Data for 2019 is estimated to be the same number as 2020. ICE transfers from local jails are from the California DOJ for 2018 and 2019. Estimates for ICE detention center transfers in California are based on Centro Legal de la Raza’s “Golden State Annex: Impacted Communities and Immigration Enforcement Trends,” and are based on transfers identified from Sept. 2020 to May 2021 at the Golden State Annex ICE detention facility. Cost estimates for local ICE transfers are from the “LA County Sheriff’s Department Cooperation With Immigration and Customs Enforcement” report and were calculated from the cost to LA county for 2019. To estimate the state-wide cost, we calculated a per-capita rate based on the cost to LA county and multiplied it by the total number of transfers for California from 2018-2019. COVID case data among ICE detention centers is from Efrain et al, 2021.

Gabriela Solano’s Story

Gabriela Solano, a domestic violence survivor who came to this country from Mexico at age 2, was getting ready to be released after being incarcerated for 20 years. However, because of CDCR’s voluntary practice of ICE transfers, she has been re-incarcerated in an ICE detention center thousands of miles away from her family. More than twenty years ago, Gabby was attempting to leave an abusive relationship, but instead was incarcerated for the actions of the person abusing her. Gabby made the painful decision to sign her deportation order and be deported after spending months in ICE detention. The #VISIONAct would #ProtectImmigrantSurvivors & #StopICEtransfers

#VisionAct
#StopICETransfers
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