



July 29, 2025

**Via Secure Release & Certified Mail**

ICE Privacy Office  
Immigration & Customs Enforcement  
500 12th St., SW Stop 5004  
Washington, DC 20536-5004

Senior Director of FOIA Operations  
Privacy Office, Mail Stop 0655  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane SW  
Washington, DC 20598-0655

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request on Terminations of Immigration Proceedings and ICE Arrests at Immigration Courts

Dear FOIA Officer:

The American Immigration Council (the “Council”) and LatinoJustice PRLDEF (collectively, “Requesters”) submit this request to U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (“ICE) under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Since around the middle of May 2025, ICE has been arresting noncitizens in or near Executive Office for Immigration Review (“EOIR”) immigration courts after they appear for a hearing in their immigration case. Requesters seek certain records about these arrests as well as expedited processing and a fee waiver.

**I. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Requesters seek all guidance, instructions, policies, and other similar records<sup>1</sup> circulated to Office of the Principal Legal Advisor Assistant Chief Counsel, Deputy Chief Counsel, or Chief Counsel since January 20, 2025, about ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations arresting noncitizens at immigration courts.

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<sup>1</sup> Such records include an internal memorandum circulated on or around May 20, 2025. See Hamed Aleaziz et al., *How ICE is Seeking to Ramp Up Deportations Through Courthouse Arrests*, NY Times (May 30, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/30/us/politics/ice-courthouse-arrests.html> (referencing this memorandum);

## II. FORMAT OF PRODUCTION

Requesters seek responsive electronic records in a machine-readable, native file format, with all metadata and load files. Requesters ask ICE to produce responsive materials in their entirety, including all attachments, appendices, enclosures, and/or exhibits, in a text-searchable, static-image format (PDF), in the best image quality in the agency's possession, and that the records be provided in separate, Bates-stamped files.

## III. EXPEDITED PROCESSING

Requesters seek expedited processing of this request and certify that the statements herein are "true and correct" pursuant to 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3). FOIA obligates ICE to process requests expeditiously in two cases: (i) those where a requester "demonstrates a compelling need"—such as "urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity" if the requester is "primarily engaged in disseminating information," 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), (v)—and (ii) "in other cases determined by the agency," *id.* § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), which, for the Department of Homeland Security, include "[a] matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence," 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(1)(ii), (iv). Both cases exist here.

### A. A MATTER OF WIDESPREAD AND EXCEPTIONAL INTEREST RAISING GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY CONCERNS

ICE arrests at and near immigration courts are a matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence.

Fifty articles on an issue make it a matter of widespread and exceptional public interest. *Citizens for Resp. & Ethics in Wash. v. U.S. DOGE Serv.*, Case No. 25-cv-511 (CRC), 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (D.D.C. Mar. 10, 2025) (hereinafter "CREW") *see also Brennan Ctr. for Just. v. Dep't of Com.* 498 F. Supp. 3d 87, 97 (D.D.C. 2020). A "handful of articles" also establishes such interest where the articles are "in a variety of publications" and "repeatedly reference the ongoing national discussion." *Am. Civ. Liberties Union v. Dep't of Just.*, 321 F. Supp. 2d 24, 32 (D.D.C. 2004).

Here, one hundred and twenty four articles in nationwide, state, local, and international media outlets have covered ongoing ICE arrests at or near immigration courts in Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Charlotte, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Portland, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and elsewhere throughout the country since May 20, 2025.<sup>2</sup> This equates to almost two articles per day for seventy days.

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<sup>2</sup> Emiliano Tahu Gómez, 'Unconstitutional Death Row': At San Antonio Immigration Court, Rep. Casar Decries Arrests, Gets Few Answers, Austin American-Statesman (July 28, 2025, 6:19 PM),

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<https://www.statesman.com/story/news/politics/government/2025/07/28/unconstitutional-death-row-san-antonio-immigration-court-rep-casar-decries-arrests-gets-few-answers/85415560007/> (hereinafter, “Gómez re: San Antonio”); Meredith Haas, *ICE Arrests Outside SA Immigration Court Draw Criticism from Lawmakers, Advocates*, KENS5 (July 28, 2025, 6:06 PM), <https://www.kens5.com/article/news/local/san-antonio-texas-immigration-court-ice-arrests-deportation-congressman-greg-casar-advocates-lawmakers/273-dd5bcb13-bcb5-4ea2-b6bb-9827e056376c>; Sanford Nowlin, *U.S. Rep. Greg Casar Calls ICE Arrests at San Antonio Immigration Court ‘Disturbing, Dystopian’*, San Antonio Current (July 28, 2025, 5:03 PM), <https://www.sacurrent.com/news/us-rep-greg-casar-calls-ice-arrests-at-san-antonio-immigration-court-disturbing-dystopian-38097422>; Margaret Kadifa, *ICE Arrests All Adults Without Children at S.F. 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and scare noncitizens into giving up on their immigration cases.<sup>3</sup> Some coverage alludes to possible coordination between ICE and EOIR.<sup>4</sup> Several editorials also decry the arrests as a “set up” and for disregarding due process.<sup>5</sup>

Arrests at immigration courts have outraged Americans around the country. Opposition to these actions and doubts about their legality have prompted mass protests at immigration courts in New York, Seattle, San Francisco, and elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> It has also prompted clergy, political leaders,

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<sup>3</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 2; Hass, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa re: Adult Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Salama, *supra* n. 2; Markey, *supra* n. 2; Mose re: ICE in Court; James, *supra* n. 2; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 2; Bellisile, *supra* n. 2; Cole et al., *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 2; Rivera et al., *supra* n. 2; Cuevas, *supra* n. 2; Abbot, *supra* n. 2; Bernstein, *supra* n. 2; Thamer, *supra* n. 2; Browning & O’Brien, *supra* n. 2; Economist, *supra* n. 2; Ramos, *supra* n. 2; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Tavernise, *supra* n. 2; Khan, *supra* n. 2; DeAngelis, *supra* n. 2; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 2; Singhai re: Volunteers, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 2; Moses re: ICE Raids, *supra* n. 2; Yahr, *supra* n. 2; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Brigida, *supra* n. 2; Katz, *supra* n. 2; Morrissey, *supra* n. 2; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 2; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Lyons, *supra* n. 2; Oehrli, *supra* n. 2; Bustillo, *supra* n. 2; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa et al., *supra* n. 2; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 2; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n.14; Romero et al., *supra* n.14; Carey, *supra* n. 2; Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 2; Bradbury, *supra* n. 2; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Gamboa, *supra* n. 2; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 1; Gonzalez & Ruelas, *supra* n. 2; Hebert, *supra* n. 2; Chien, *supra* n. 2; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 2; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 2; Solis, *supra* n. 2; Hughes, *supra* n. 2; Goodman et al., *supra* n. 2; Goodman & Salomon, *supra* n. 2; Shoemaker, *supra* n. 2; Ruiz et al., *supra* n. 2; Álvarez, *supra* n. 2; Lacy et al., *supra* n. 2; Ingram, *supra* n. 2; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 2; Hendricks, *supra* n. 2; Schmidt, *supra* n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 2; Bernstein, *supra* n. 2; Khan, *supra* n. 2; Yahr, *supra* n. 2; Aleaziz, *supra* n. 2; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 2; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 1; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Díaz & Alvarez, *supra* n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Veronica Cardenas, *I Was Once an ICE Prosecutor. What I See Now in Immigration Courts Is Disturbing*, The Hill (July 17, 2025, 8:00AM), <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/5404863-i-was-once-an-ice-prosecutor-what-i-see-now-in-immigration-courts-is-disturbing/>; Brian Strassburger, S.J. & William Critchley-Menor, S.J., *What We Saw During An ICE Arrest & Immigration Court Hearing: The Breakdown of Justice in America*, America: The Jesuit Review (July 11, 2025), <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2025/07/11/ice-immigration-court-deportation-injustice-251119>; *Trump Disregards Due Process in Our Nation’s Immigration Courts*, San Antonio Express-News (June 27, 2025), <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/editorial/article/ice-arrest-immigration-court-texas-20395342.php>; *Masked ICE Arrests Raise Urgent Questions About U.S. Immigration Practices*, The Riverdale Press (June 26, 2025), <https://www.riverdalepress.com/stories/masked-ice-arrests-raise-urgent-questions-about-us-immigration-practices.187060>.

<sup>6</sup> Thamer, *supra* n. 2; Browning & O’Brien, *supra* n. 2; Alicia Victoria Lozano, *Violent Clashes at San Francisco Immigration Court Won’t Deter Protestors, Organizers Say*, NBC News (July 10, 2025, 4:43 PM), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/violent-clashes-san-francisco-immigration-court-wont-deter-protesters-rcna218059>; Sarah Rumpf-Whitten, *Watch: ICE Agents Fight Off Masked Mob Outside Blue City Immigration Court*, FOX News (July 10, 2025, 1:12 PM), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/watch-ice-agents-fight-off-masked-mob-outside-blue-city-immigration-court>; Shay Arthur, *Crowd Gathers for Immigration Rally at Memphis Court*, WREG Memphis (July 8, 2025, 12:07 PM), <https://wreg.com/news/local/crowd-gathers-for-immigration-rally-at-memphis-court/>; Ramos, *supra* n. 2; Regalado & Karlamangla, *supra* n. 2; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Khan, *supra* n. 2; DeAngelis, *supra* n. 2; Stephania Jimenez, *PSL San Antonio Organizes Event to Educate Community on Immigration Laws Amid Rising IDE*

and other members of the public to accompany noncitizens to their immigration court dates to stop ICE from detaining noncitizens when they exit courtrooms, document arrests that occur, and help arrestees inform their families.<sup>7</sup> At least four federal judges have also deemed specific arrests at immigration courts unlawful and ordered ICE to release the arrestees,<sup>8</sup> while a class of noncitizens represented by several rights groups has also sued to stop the arrests nationwide.<sup>9</sup>

Responsive records will address critical integrity questions left open by existing media coverage. Such records will show the guidance, instructions, and policies that ICE has provided to attorneys representing the agency in immigration courts about its enforcement operations in these courts and the extent to which these attorneys are supporting or otherwise facilitating arrests.

## B. URGENCY TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY BY A REQUESTER

Additionally, and alternatively, the Council has a compelling need for the records sought. It is primarily engaged in disseminating information. And urgency also exists to inform the public about the guidance, instructions, and policies that ICE has provided to attorneys representing

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*Deportations*, KSAT (July 1, 2025, 10:42 PM), <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2025/07/02/psl-san-antonio-organizes-event-to-educate-community-on-immigration-laws-amid-rising-ice-deportations/>; May & Marr, *supra* n. 2; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 2; Greg Micek et al., *Sacramento Immigration Court on Lockdown, Draws Protest After Suspected ICE Operation*, Capradio (June 12, 2025), <https://www.capradio.org/articles/2025/06/12/sacramento-immigration-court-on-lockdown-draws-protest-after-suspected-ice-operation/>; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Lyons, *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 2; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Alvarez, *supra* n. 2; George Kelly & Max Harrison-Caldwell, *Protesters Shut Down Immigration Court After ICE Arrests*, *The San Francisco Standard* (June 10, 2025, 1:00 PM), <https://sfstandard.com/2025/06/10/protesters-surround-immigration-court-after-ice-arrests/>; Kadifa et al., *supra* n. 2; Weber, *supra* n. 2; Joe Rivano Barros et al., *S.F. Police Arrest Dozens in 2<sup>nd</sup> Night of Protests Against ICE*, *Mission Local* (June 9, 2025, 8:16 PM), <https://missionlocal.org/2025/06/sf-mission-march-mobilized-thousands-against-ice/>; Boyanton, *supra* n. 2; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 1; Hogan re: NYC Immigr. Ct. Arrests; Ruiz et al., *supra* n. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 2; Salama, *supra* n. 2; Markey, *supra* n. 2; Mose re: ICE in Court; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 2; Belz, *supra* n. 2; Thamer, *supra* n. 2; Strassburger & Critchley-Menor, *supra* n. 5; Ciara Encinas, *Volunteers Describe How They Document ICE Arrests in Immigration Courts*, Fox 5 (July 11, 2025, 4 :55 PM), <https://fox5sandiego.com/news/local-news/san-diego/san-diego-court-ice-arrests/>; Zavala, *supra* n. 2 ; Joey Safchik, *ICE Handcuffs 71-Year-Old Grandmother, a US Citizen, at San Diego Immigration Court*, 7 San Diego (July 9, 2025, 7 :06 PM), <https://www.nbcсандiego.com/news/local/ice-arrests-71-year-old-grandmother-a-us-citizen-at-san-diego-immigration-court/3865098/>; Ramos, *supra* n. 2; Rossoto, *supra* n. 2; Khan, *supra* n. 2; Singhai re: Volunteers, *supra* n. 2; Gomez re : Faith Leaders, *supra* n. 2; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 2; Sanchez & Ebrahimji, *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Escort, *supra* n. 2; Micek et al., *supra* n. 2; Stone, *supra* n. 2; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Estrada re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Boyanton, *supra* n. 2.

<sup>8</sup> See Markey, *supra* n. 2; Bernstein, *supra* n. 2; Baumhardt, *supra* n. 2; Ramos, *supra* n. 2; Vertuno, *supra* n. 2.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Rivera et al., *supra* n. 2; Abbot, *supra* n. 2; Bellisile, *supra* n. 2; Cole et al., *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 2.

the agency in immigration courts about its enforcement operations in these courts and the extent to which these attorneys are supporting or otherwise facilitating arrests.

### 1. *The Council Primarily Engages in Information Dissemination*

The Council primarily engages in disseminating information and analysis on immigration and other issues. Organizations primarily engaged in information dissemination include not only “media organizations and newspapers,” *Heritage Found. v. Entl. Prot. Agency*, Civil Action No. 23-748, 2023 WL 2954418, \*3 (D.D.C. 2023), but also “non-partisan law and public policy group[s]” like Requesters that “regularly write[], publish[], and disseminat[e], information online,” *Brennan Ctr. for Just.*, 498 F. Supp. 3d at 98 (Brennan Center); see also *Ctr. for Pub. Integrity v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 411 F. Supp. 3d 5 (D.D.C. 2019) (Center for Public Integrity); *Protect Dem. Proj. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293, 298 (D.D.C. 2017) (Protect Democracy Project); *Am. Civil Liberties Union*, 321 F. Supp. 2d at 29 n.5 (Electronic Privacy Information Center (“EPIC”)).

Like Brennan Center, Protect Democracy Project, EPIC, and Center for Public Integrity, the Council authors factsheets and special reports on proposed and actual immigration policies, some of which shape media coverage in outlets across the nation.<sup>10</sup> It also analyzes immigration data and other government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this one—in interactive web reports.<sup>11</sup> And it circulates its reports and factsheets through its website,<sup>12</sup> blog, email newsletters, and an X (formerly known as Twitter) account with 64.9 thousand followers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., *Trump-Backed Mass Deportations Would Cost Billions*, Report Says, CBS News (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/trump-backed-mass-deportations-would-cost-billions-report/> (discussing Am. Immigr. Council, *Mass Deportation: Devastating Costs to America, Its Budget and Economy* (Oct. 2, 2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/mass-deportation/>); Emma Goldberg, *What if Trump Deported Millions of Immigrants*, The New York Times (Oct. 22, 2024), [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.990iYFTTpEl6](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked_article_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.990iYFTTpEl6) (same); *What Trump’s Mass Deportation Plan Might Look Like If He Wins the Election*, 60 Minutes (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjCHjwISMFI> (same); *Mass Deportations*, Last Week Tonight (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UEhMDAIX1Y> (same); *The Costs of Mass Deportation? Expert Breaks Down Trump’s Immigration Plan*, Amanpour & Company, (Oct. 28, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dmfo3atidKE> (same).

<sup>11</sup> See Am. Immigr. Council, *Torrance County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/torrance-detention-facility>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement’s Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio’s Immigration Enforcement* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/ohio-border-patrol-abuse>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities* (2019), [https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory\\_tool](https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory_tool)

<sup>12</sup> The Council’s website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://x.com/immrcouncil>.

## 2. Urgency Exists to Inform the Public

Urgency also exists to inform the public about the guidance, instructions, and policies that ICE has provided to attorneys representing the agency in immigration courts about its enforcement operations in these courts and the extent to which these attorneys are supporting or otherwise facilitating arrests.

Requisite urgency exists where “the request touches on ‘a matter of current exigency to the American public’” and delay “compromises a significant recognized interest.” *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (quoting *Al-Fayed v. CIA*, 254 F.3d 300, 310 (D.C. Cir. 2001)). The above topics are exigent to the American public, as demonstrated by the one hundred twenty plus articles discussing ICE arrests cited in this request and the mass protests outside immigration courts against these arrests. See *CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (finding urgency to inform the public based on at least fifty articles on the issue); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of No. Cal. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, No. C 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (same); 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3) (“The existence of numerous articles published on a given subject can be helpful to establishing the requirement that there be an ‘urgency to inform’ the public on the topic.”).

Delayed production of ICE policies and guidance to OPLA attorneys for arrests at and near immigration courts would compromise the ongoing public debate about these arrests’ propriety. Cf. *CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (expediting a request for records about the U.S. DOGE Service); *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (expediting a request for records about a possible unlawful airstrike on Syria); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of N. Cal. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, No. C. 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6-7 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (expediting a request for records about possible unlawful military surveillance of protestors); *Freedom Coalition of Doctors for Choice v. Ctrs. For Disease Control & Prevention*, 2:23-cv-102, 2024 WL 69084, at \*14 (N.D. Tex. Jan. 5, 2024) (expediting a request disputing the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines).

## IV. FEE WAIVER REQUEST

Requestors seek a fee waiver since “disclosure of the requested records is in the public interest.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). ICE must construe “the FOIA fee waiver provision . . . liberally . . . in favor of waivers for noncommercial requesters” like Requesters. *Schoenman v. FBI*, 604 F. Supp. 2d 174, 188 (D.D.C. 2009). Disclosure is in the public interest where it (A) “is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government” and (B) “is not primarily in the commercial interest of the [R]equesters.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); A)(iii); see also 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(1). Requesters satisfy both requirements.

### A. DISCLOSURE OF THE INFORMATION IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Disclosing the requested records is likely to contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of the guidance, instructions, and policies that ICE has provided to OPLA attorneys representing

the agency in immigration court and the extent to which these attorneys are supporting or otherwise facilitating arrests.

ICE must consider two factors when assessing a disclosure's contribution to public understanding of a government activity or operation, see 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(2): (i) whether the request has a "direct and clear" rather than "remote or attenuated" connection to "identifiable operations or activities of the federal government"; and (ii) whether disclosure "would be likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of those operations or activities." *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(i)-(ii). Each factor supports a fee waiver here.

1. *Request Has a Direct and Clear Connection to Government Operations or Activities*

First, this request has a direct and clear relation to the following governmental operations and activities: ICE enforcement operations and arrests at or near immigration courts.

2. *Records Sought Will Contribute Significantly to Public Understanding of the Above*

Second, disclosing the records sought will "contribute significantly to public understanding of" the above activities. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii). Such contribution exists where "[d]isclosure of the requested information [is] meaningfully informative about [these] activities" and "contribute[s] to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester." *Id.* 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A)-(B). Both criteria are satisfied here.

i. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS IS MEANINGFULLY INFORMATIVE

Disclosing requested records will be meaningfully informative about OPLA attorneys' role in supporting and otherwise facilitating ICE arrests at or near immigration courts. Disclosure is meaningfully informative where disclosed information is not "in the public domain, in either the same or a substantially identical form." *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A).

Here, as demonstrated by the media coverage cited above, the public only knows that ICE is arresting noncitizens at or near immigration courts after moving to dismiss their immigration cases and that immigration judges are granting many dismissals, thereby allowing ICE to pursue expedited removal.<sup>14</sup> Public knowledge does not extend to the exact guidance that ICE OPLA attorneys are receiving from their superiors about arrests and any role these attorneys play in supporting or otherwise facilitating these arrests. Requested records are therefore "meaningfully informative" about these activities.

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<sup>14</sup> See generally Media articles cited in footnotes 2-9.

ii. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS CONTRIBUTES TO UNDERSTANDING OF A REASONABLY BROAD AUDIENCE

Disclosing requested records will contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in ICE arrests at or near immigration courts.

Requesters presumably satisfy this consideration as representatives of the news media. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(B). They both “gather[] information of potential interest to a segment of the public, use[] [their] editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distribute[] that work to an audience.” *Id.* § 5.11(b)(6); *see also Serv. Women’s Action Network v. Dep’t of Def.*, 888 F. Supp. 2d 282, 287-88 (D. Conn. 2012) (finding that ACLU is a news media representative); *cf. Elec. Privacy Info. Ctr. v. Dep’t of Def.*, 241 F. Supp. 2d 5, 10-15 (D.D.C. 2003) (finding that an organization similar to the Council is a news media representative).

Additionally, and alternatively, the ongoing and extensive media coverage in nationwide, state, and local outlets about ICE arrests at and near immigration courts demonstrates interest in these subjects by a reasonably broad audience. Requesters intend and are well-equipped to inform this audience about the information contained in responsive records, as they are experts in educating the public about immigration issues.

As detailed further in the expedited processing section, the Council analyzes government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this one—in interactive web reports and other publications available for free on its website.<sup>15</sup> And it circulates these publications for free through its website,<sup>16</sup> blog, email newsletters, and X an account with 64.9 thousand followers. It intends to publish content about records obtained from this request on its website and otherwise disseminate that content to its readers and the larger public.

Similarly, LatinoJustice PRLDEF produces newsletters, blogs, reports, opinion, editorials, and video interviews about the constitutional rights and equal protection of Latinos, immigrants, and other marginalized communities.<sup>17</sup> And it circulates these publications for free through its social media accounts. All of its materials are free and available to the public on its website.

In sum, Requesters intend to analyze the records they receive from this request and educate a broad audience of the interested public about them. And, Requesters have a demonstrated ability to do so.

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<sup>15</sup> *See, e.g.,* Torrance County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident, *supra* n. 11; Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement’s Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio’s Immigration Enforcement, *supra* n. 11; Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities, *supra* n. 11.

<sup>16</sup> The Council’s website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>17</sup> *See, e.g.,* LatinoJustice PRLDEF, 100 Days Later: The Harm So Far to Latinx Communities (April 2025), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/100-days-later-harm-so-far-latinx-communities>; LatinoJustice PRLDEF, A Promise to Harm: What’s at Stake for the Latino Community in Project 2025 (Oct. 2024), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/promise-harm-whats-stake-latinx-community-project-2025>.

## B. REQUESTERS' LACK OF COMMERCIAL INTEREST

Turning to commercial interest, disclosure is not primarily in Requesters' commercial interest. As nonprofits, Requesters have no commercial interest in the records requested. See *Am. Ctr. for L. & Just. v. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, 573 F. Supp. 3d 78, 84 (D.D.C. 2021) (“[N]onprofit organizations by definition have no commercial interests.”); *Am. Immigr. Council v. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, 82 F. Supp. 3d 396, 406 (D.D.C. 2015) (finding that the Council has no such interest in its record requests). Rather, the request furthers Requesters' work to increase public understanding of immigration processes, including ICE enforcement operations in and around immigration courts and the guidance it has provided to OPLA attorneys to support and otherwise facilitate arrests.

Alternatively, and additionally, the public interest in obtaining a better understanding of ICE's actions discussed above exceeds any commercial interest that ICE may ascribe to Requesters in records responsive to this request.

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Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Chris Opila

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July 29, 2025

Via Secure Release & Certified Mail

ICE Privacy Office  
Immigration & Customs Enforcement  
500 12th St., SW Stop 5004  
Washington, DC 20536-5004

Senior Director of FOIA Operations  
Privacy Office, Mail Stop 0655  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane SW  
Washington, DC 20598-0655

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request on Terminations of Immigration Proceedings and ICE Arrests at Immigration Courts

Dear FOIA Officer:

The American Immigration Council (the “Council”) and LatinoJustice PRLDEF (collectively, “Requesters”) submit this request to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Since around the middle of May 2025, ICE has been moving to dismiss immigration proceedings against noncitizens in immigration courts around the country to pursue their expedited removal. Requesters seek certain records about these dismissals as well as expedited processing and a fee waiver.

## I. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Requesters seek all guidance, instructions, policies, templates, and other similar records provided to an Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (“OPLA”) Chief Counsel, OPLA Deputy Chief Counsel, or OPLA Assistant Chief Counsel since January 20, 2025, for dismissing an immigration court case.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Madeleine May & Hannah Marr, *Afghan Ally Detained by ICE After Attending Immigration Court Hearing*, CBS News (July 1, 2025, 1:48 PM), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghan-ally-detained-by-ice-immigration-court/> (reporting that OPLA attorneys are moving to dismiss immigration cases based on their underlying notices being “imprudently issued”); Daniel Gonzalez & Richard Ruelas, *After Short Break, ICE Resumes Arrests at Phoenix*

## II. FORMAT OF PRODUCTION

Requesters seek responsive electronic records in a machine-readable, native file format, with all metadata and load files. Requesters ask ICE to produce responsive materials in their entirety, including all attachments, appendices, enclosures, and/or exhibits, in a text-searchable, static-image format (PDF), in the best image quality in the agency's possession, and that the records be provided in separate, Bates-stamped files.

## III. EXPEDITED PROCESSING

Requesters seek expedited processing of this request and certify that the statements herein are "true and correct" pursuant to 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3). FOIA obligates ICE to process requests expeditiously in two cases: (i) those where a requester "demonstrates a compelling need"—such as "urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity" if the requester is "primarily engaged in disseminating information," 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), (v)—and (ii) "in other cases determined by the agency," *id.* § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), which, for the Department of Homeland Security, include "[a] matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence," 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(1)(ii), (iv). Both cases exist here.

### A. A MATTER OF WIDESPREAD AND EXCEPTIONAL INTEREST RAISING GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY CONCERNS

ICE's dismissal of noncitizens' immigration court cases to facilitate their expedited removal is a matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence.

Fifty articles on an issue make it a matter of widespread and exceptional public interest. *Citizens for Resp. & Ethics in Wash. v. U.S. DOGE Serv.*, Case No. 25-cv-511 (CRC), 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (D.D.C. Mar. 10, 2025) (hereinafter "CREW") *see also Brennan Ctr. for Just. v. Dep't of Com.* 498 F. Supp. 3d 87, 97 (D.D.C. 2020). A "handful of articles" also establishes such interest where the articles are "in a variety of publications" and "repeatedly reference the ongoing national discussion." *Am. Civ. Liberties Union v. Dep't of Just.*, 321 F. Supp. 2d 24, 32 (D.D.C. 2004).

Here, state, local, and nationwide media outlets have published at least at least eighty seven articles since May 21, 2025, about ICE asking immigration judges to dismiss noncitizens'

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*Immigration Court, Changes Keep Tactic*, AZ Central (May 29, 2025, 5:01 AM), <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/immigration/2025/05/29/phoenix-immigration-court-ice-arrests-resume/83767918007/> (reporting that OPLA attorneys are moving to dismiss immigration cases because they are "no longer in the best interest of the government").

immigration cases and then arresting noncitizens once their cases are dismissed.<sup>2</sup> Immigration attorneys also report ICE officials serving pre-signed dismissals based on “non-opposition” to

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<sup>2</sup> Emiliano Tahu Gómez, ‘Unconstitutional Death Row’: At San Antonio Immigration Court, Rep. Casar Decries Arrests, Gets Few Answers, *Austin American-Statesman* (July 28, 2025, 6:19 PM), <https://www.statesman.com/story/news/politics/government/2025/07/28/unconstitutional-death-row-san-antonio-immigration-court-rep-casar-decries-arrests-gets-few-answers/85415560007/> (hereinafter, “Gómez re: San Antonio”); Sanford Nowlin, *U.S. Rep. Greg Casar Calls ICE Arrests at San Antonio Immigration Court ‘Disturbing, Dystopian’*, *San Antonio Current* (July 28, 2025, 5:03 PM), <https://www.sacurrent.com/news/us-rep-greg-casar-calls-ice-arrests-at-san-antonio-immigration-court-disturbing-dystopian-38097422>; Margaret Kadifa, *ICE Arrests All Adults Without Children at S.F. Immigration Court Today*, *Mission Local* (July 25, 2025, 1:05 PM), <https://missionlocal.org/2025/07/hed-ice-steps-up-arrests-at-s-f-immigration-court/> (hereinafter, “Kadifa re: Adult Arrests”); Pedro Camacho, *ICE Arrests Migrant Deemed Mentally Impaired by Judge as He Exits Immigration Court: ‘He’s Clearly Not Understanding the Questions’*, *The Latin Times* (July 25, 2025, 10:36 AM), <https://www.latintimes.com/ice-arrests-migrant-deemed-mentally-impaired-judge-he-exits-immigration-court-hes-clearly-not-587576>; Jordan Salama, *When ICE Agents Are Waiting Outside the Courtroom*, *The New Yorker* (July 25, 2025), <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/when-ice-agents-are-waiting-outside-the-courtroom>; Maurice DuBois et al., *3 Immigration Judges Speak Out About Their Firings: ‘It Was Arbitrary, Unfair*, *CBS News* (July 24, 2025, 8:34 PM), <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/immigration-judges-speak-out-firings-arbitrary-unfair/?intcid=CNM-00-10abd1h>; Danielle James, *ICE Arrests at Check-Ins, Court Hearings Are on the Rise. Michigan Is No Exception*, *MLIVE* (July 21, 2025, 7:10 AM), <https://www.mlive.com/politics/2025/07/ice-arrests-at-check-ins-court-hearings-are-on-the-rise-michigan-is-no-exception.html>; Margaret Kadifa, *ICE Agents Keep Snatching Asylum Seekers Immediately After Their Court Hearings*, *Mother Jones* (July 21, 2025), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/07/ice-agents-arrest-asylum-seekers-after-court-hearings-san-francisco/>; Martha Bellisile et al., *Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts to Support Migrants Arrested in the Hallways*, *ABC News* (July 20, 2025, 8:38 AM), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/volunteers-flock-immigration-courts-support-migrants-arrested-hallways-123902561>; Mark Rivera et al., *ICE Arrests at Immigration Court in Chicago, Nationwide Labeled ‘Unlawful’ in New Lawsuit*, *ABC 7 Chicago* (July 18, 2025, 8:36 PM), <https://abc7chicago.com/post/us-immigration-news-ice-arrests-courts-chicago-nationwide-labeled-unlawful-new-lawsuit-trump-administration/17186490/>; Eduardo Cuevas, *‘Escalation:’ Federal Agents Now Detaining People with Active Immigration Cases*, *USA Today* (July 18, 2025, 11:26 AM), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/07/18/migrants-immigration-court-trump-crackdown/84614161007/>; Martha Bellisile, *Homeland Security Officials Defend Immigration Court Arrests After Being Sued*, *Associated Press* (July 17, 2025, 2:04 PM), <https://apnews.com/article/ice-immigration-court-immigrants-a5190ada4a6019f84d76e62c11c44e30>; Swasti Singhai, *Five Days, 12 Arrests: A Week Inside San Diego Immigration Court*, *Times of San Diego* (July 17, 2025, 7:41 AM), <https://timesofsandiego.com/politics/2025/07/17/arrests-immigration-court-trump-anxiety-chaos/> (hereinafter, “Singhai re: Week at San Diego Immigration Court”); Devan Cole et al., *Trump Administration Sued Over ICE Arrests at Immigration Courthouses*, *CNN* (July 16, 2025, 6:23 PM), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/07/16/politics/ice-immigration-courthouse-arrests-lawsuit>; Luis Ferré-Sadurní, *Immigrants File Class-Action Lawsuit to Stop IC Courthouse Arrests*, *NY Times* (July 16, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/16/nyregion/trump-ice-arrests-lawsuit-immigrants.html> (hereinafter, “Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit”); Maxine Bernstein, *Federal Judge in Oregon: Homeland Security ‘Tricked’ Asylum Seeker Before Arrest at Immigration Court*, *The Oregonian* (July 15, 2025, 10:47 AM), <https://www.oregonlive.com/pacific-northwest-news/2025/07/federal-judge-in-oregon-homeland-security-tricked-asylum-seeker-before-arrest-at-immigration-court.html>; Sarah Thamer, *Advocates Denounce ICE Arrests at Fort Snelling Immigration Court*, *MPR News* (July 15, 2025, 4:00 AM), <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2025/07/15/advocates-protest-ice-arrests-at-immigration-court>; Paige Browning & John O’Brien, *Fears of Arrests Cause Tension at Seattle Immigration Court*, *KUOW* (July 10, 2025, 5:58 PM), <https://www.kuow.org/stories/fears-of-ice-arrests-cause-tension-at-seattle-immigration-court>; Margaret Kadifa, *ICE Arrests 4 People After Immigration Court Hearings in San Francisco*, *Mission*

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noncitizen respondents at immigration courts without respondents not having notice of ICE's motion to dismiss their immigration case and an opportunity to oppose it. Much of the coverage on these dismissals casts doubt on their integrity, describing them as a violation of due process and a tactic to deport noncitizens without hearings.<sup>3</sup>

ICE dismissals and arrests at immigration courts have outraged Americans around the country. Opposition to these actions and doubts about their legality have prompted mass protests at immigration courts in New York, Seattle, San Francisco, and elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> It has also prompted

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[immigration-court/83772323007/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p](https://www.kuow.org/stories/ice-agents-at-seattle-courthouse-arrest-people-whose-deportation-hearings-are-dismissed/); Gustavo Sagrero Álvarez, *ICE Agents at Seattle Courthouse Arrest People Whose Deportation Hearings are Dismissed*, KUOW (May 21, 5:45 PM), <https://www.kuow.org/stories/ice-agents-at-seattle-courthouse-arrest-people-whose-deportation-hearings-are-dismissed/>; Akela Lacy et al. *ICE Agents Are Camped Outside Immigration Courts to Make Arrests*, The Intercept (May 21, 2025, 3:27 PM), <https://theintercept.com/2025/05/21/ice-agents-courts-arrests-immigrants-deport/>; Paul Ingram, 'Mayhem' As ICE Officials Arrest Multiple People at Immigration Court in Phoenix, AZ Mirror (May 21, 2025, 11:12 AM), <https://azmirror.com/2025/05/21/mayhem-as-ice-officials-arrest-multiple-people-at-immigration-court-in-phoenix/>; Nina Shapiro, *ICE Arrests at WA Immigration Court Spark Fear of Fast-Track Removal*, Seattle Times (May 21, 2025, 6:00 AM), <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/ice-arrests-at-wa-immigration-court-spark-fear-of-fast-track-removal/> (hereinafter, "Shapiro re: ICE Arrests").

<sup>3</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 2; Nowlin, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa re: Adult Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Camacho, *supra* n. 2; Salama, *supra* n. 2; James, *supra* n. 2; Cole et al., *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 2; Cuevas, *supra* n. 2; Bernstein, *supra* n. 2; Browning & O'Brien, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa re: 4 Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Khan, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 2; Yahr, *supra* n. 2; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Brigida, *supra* n. 2; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 2; Lyons, *supra* n. 2; Oehrl, *supra* n. 2; Garcia, *supra* n. 2; Bustillo, *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 2; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Saavedra & Arnold, *supra* n. 2; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 2; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Romero et al., *supra* n. 2; Carey, *supra* n. 2; Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 2; Bradbury, *supra* n. 2; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Gamboa, *supra* n. 2; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 2; Chien, *supra* n. 2; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 2; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 2; Hughes, *supra* n. 2; Ruiz et al, *supra* n. 2; Lacy et al, *supra* n. 2; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 2; Hendricks, *supra* n. 2; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Thamer, *supra* n. 2; Browning & O'Brien, *supra* n. 2; Alicia Victoria Lozano, *Violent Clashes at San Francisco Immigration Court Won't Deter Protestors, Organizers Say*, NBC News (July 10, 2025, 4:43 PM), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/violent-clashes-san-francisco-immigration-court-wont-deter-protesters-rcna218059>; Sarah Rumpf-Whitten, *Watch: ICE Agents Fight Off Masked Mob Outside Blue City Immigration Court*, FOX News (July 10, 2025, 1:12 PM), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/watch-ice-agents-fight-off-masked-mob-outside-blue-city-immigration-court>; Shay Arthur, *Crowd Gathers for Immigration Rally at Memphis Court*, WREG Memphis (July 8, 2025, 12:07 PM), <https://wreg.com/news/local/crowd-gathers-for-immigration-rally-at-memphis-court/>; Regalado & Karlamangla, *supra* n. 2; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Khan, *supra* n. 2; Stephania Jimenez, *PSL San Antonio Organizes Event to Educate Community on Immigration Laws Amid Rising IDE Deportations*, KSAT (July 1, 2025, 10:42 PM), <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2025/07/02/psl-san-antonio-organizes-event-to-educate-community-on-immigration-laws-amid-rising-ice-deportations/>; May & Marr, *supra* n. 1; Nina Shapiro, *As Pushback Grows to WA Immigration Court Arrests, ICE Changes Tactics*, The Seattle Times (June 24, 2025, 6:00 AM), <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/as-pushback-grows-to-wa-immigration-court-arrests-ice-changes-tactics/>; Luis Ferré-Sadurní, *Brad Lander is Arrested by ICE Agents at Immigration Courthouse*, NY Times (June 17, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/17/nyregion/brad-lander-immigration-ice.html>; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 2; Stephen Hobbs, *In Sacramento's Immigration Court, ICE Detention Threats Leave Residents in Limbo*, The

clergy, political leaders, and other members of the public to accompany noncitizens to their immigration court dates to document dismissals and arrests, attempt to stop the latter, and help arrestees inform their families.<sup>5</sup>

Responsive records will address critical integrity questions left open by existing media coverage. Such records will show the exact policies underlying dismissals and the extent to which ICE OPLA attorneys retain discretion to consider the individual circumstances of a particular case.

## B. URGENCY TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY BY A REQUESTER

Additionally, and alternatively, the Council has a compelling need for the records sought. It is primarily engaged in disseminating information. And urgency also exists to inform the public

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Sacramento Bee (June 14, 2025, 10:05 AM), <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article308346910.html>; Greg Micek et al., *Sacramento Immigration Court on Lockdown, Draws Protest After Suspected ICE Operation*, Capradio (June 12, 2025), <https://www.capradio.org/articles/2025/06/12/sacramento-immigration-court-on-lockdown-draws-protest-after-suspected-ice-operation/>; Lyons, *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: *Inside NYC Immigr. Cts.*, *supra* n. 2; Bellisile et al. re: *Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests*, *supra* n. 2; Priscilla Alvarez, *ICE Protest Nationwide Comes As Agency Scrambles to Meet Trump's Immigration Arrest Quotas*, CNN (June 10, 2025, 10:16 PM), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/06/10/politics/ice-scrambles-immigration-arrest-quotas>; George Kelly & Max Harrison-Caldwell, *Protesters Shut Down Immigration Court After ICE Arrests*, The San Francisco Standard (June 10, 2025, 1:00 PM), <https://sfstandard.com/2025/06/10/protesters-surround-immigration-court-after-ice-arrests/>; Weber, *supra* n. 2; Joe Rivano Barros et al., *S.F. Police Arrest Dozens in 2<sup>nd</sup> Night of Protests Against ICE*, Mission Local (June 9, 2025, 8:16 PM), <https://missionlocal.org/2025/06/sf-mission-march-mobilized-thousands-against-ice/>; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 2; Hogan re: *NYC Immigr. Ct. Arrests*, *supra* n. 2; Ruiz et al., *supra* n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Gómez re: *San Antonio*, *supra* n. 2; Salama, *supra* n. 2; Bellisile et al. re: *Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts*, *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: *Lawsuit*, *supra* n. 2; Thamer, *supra* n. 2; Brian Strassburger, S.J. & William Critchley-Menor, S.J., *What We Saw During An ICE Arrest & Immigration Court Hearing: The Breakdown of Justice in America*, America: The Jesuit Review (July 11, 2025), <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2025/07/11/ice-immigration-court-deportation-injustice-251119>; Ciara Encinas, *Volunteers Describe How They Document ICE Arrests in Immigration Courts*, Fox 5 (July 11, 2025, 4 :55 PM), <https://fox5sandiego.com/news/local-news/san-diego/san-diego-court-ice-arrests/>; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 2; Joey Safchik, *ICE Handcuffs 71-Year-Old Grandmother, a US Citizen, at San Diego Immigration Court*, 7 San Diego (July 9, 2025, 7 :06 PM), <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/ice-arrests-71-year-old-grandmother-a-us-citizen-at-san-diego-immigration-court/3865098/>; Khan, *supra* n. 2; Swasti Singhai, *San Diego Volunteers Bear Witness Daily as ICE Continues Courtroom Arrests*, Times of San Diego (July 3, 2025, 3:41 PM), <https://timesofsandiego.com/life/2025/07/03/san-diego-community-bears-witness-as-ice-continues-courtroom-arrests/>; Gomez re : *Faith Leaders*, *supra* n. 2; Shapiro re: *ICE Tactic Change*, *supra* n. 2; Ray Sanchez & Allsha Ebrahimji, *Masked Ice Officers: The New Calling Card of The Trump Administration's Crackdown*, CNN (June 21, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/us/ice-immigration-officers-face-masks>; Ferré-Sadurní re: *Lander Escort*, *supra* n. 2; Micek et al, *supra* n. 2. Ken Stone, *ICE Agents Scatter As SD Bishop Pham, Other Clergy Visit Immigration Court*, Times of San Diego (June 20, 2025, 3:04 PM), <https://timesofsandiego.com/life/2025/06/20/ice-agents-scatter-as-sd-bishop-pham-other-clergy-visit-immigration-court/>; Stephen Hobbs, *In Sacramento's Immigration Court, ICE Detention Threats Leave Residents in Limbo*, The Sacramento Bee (June 14, 2025, 10:05 AM), <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article308346910.html>; Carolina Estrada, *Two Men Detained by ICE After Sacramento Immigration Court Hearings*, KCRA3 (June 11, 2025, 11:13 PM), <https://www.kcra.com/article/two-men-detained-by-ice-sacramento-immigration-hearings/65041264>.

about the policies and guidance underlying ICE OPLA attorneys moving to dismiss noncitizens' immigration court cases to facilitate expedited removal.

### 1. *The Council Primarily Engages in Information Dissemination*

The Council primarily engages in disseminating information and analysis on immigration and other issues. Organizations primarily engaged in information dissemination include not only “media organizations and newspapers,” *Heritage Found. v. Entl. Prot. Agency*, Civil Action No. 23-748, 2023 WL 2954418, \*3 (D.D.C. 2023), but also “non-partisan law and public policy group[s]” like Requesters that “regularly write[], publish[], and disseminat[e], information online,” *Brennan Ctr. for Just.*, 498 F. Supp. 3d at 98 (Brennan Center); see also *Ctr. for Pub. Integrity v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 411 F. Supp. 3d 5 (D.D.C. 2019) (Center for Public Integrity); *Protect Dem. Proj. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293, 298 (D.D.C. 2017) (Protect Democracy Project); *Am. Civil Liberties Union*, 321 F. Supp. 2d at 29 n.5 (Electronic Privacy Information Center (“EPIC”)).

Like Brennan Center, Protect Democracy Project, EPIC, and Center for Public Integrity, the Council authors factsheets and special reports on proposed and actual immigration policies, some of which shape media coverage in outlets across the nation.<sup>6</sup> It also analyzes immigration data and other government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this one—in interactive web reports.<sup>7</sup> And it circulates its reports and factsheets through its website,<sup>8</sup> blog, email newsletters, and an X (formerly known as Twitter) account with 64.9 thousand followers.<sup>9</sup>

### 2. *Urgency Exists to Inform the Public*

Urgency also exists to inform the public about the policies and guidance underlying the dismissal of noncitizens' immigration court cases to facilitate expedited removal.

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<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., *Trump-Backed Mass Deportations Would Cost Billions*, Report Says, CBS News (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/trump-backed-mass-deportations-would-cost-billions-report/> (discussing Am. Immigr. Council, *Mass Deportation: Devastating Costs to America, Its Budget and Economy* (Oct. 2, 2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/mass-deportation/>); Emma Goldberg, *What if Trump Deported Millions of Immigrants*, The New York Times (Oct. 22, 2024), [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.990iYFTTpEl6](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked_article_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.990iYFTTpEl6) (same); *What Trump’s Mass Deportation Plan Might Look Like If He Wins the Election*, 60 Minutes (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjCHjwLSMFI> (same); *Mass Deportations*, Last Week Tonight (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UEhMDAIX1Y> (same); *The Costs of Mass Deportation? Expert Breaks Down Trump’s Immigration Plan*, Amanpour & Company, (Oct. 28, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dmfo3atidKE> (same).

<sup>7</sup> See Am. Immigr. Council, *Torrance County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/torrance-detention-facility/>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement’s Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio’s Immigration Enforcement* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/ohio-border-patrol-abuse/>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities* (2019), [https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory\\_tool](https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory_tool)

<sup>8</sup> The Council’s website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>9</sup> See <https://x.com/immcouncil>.

Requisite urgency exists where “the request touches on ‘a matter of current exigency to the American public’” and delay “compromises a significant recognized interest.” *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (quoting *Al-Fayed v. CIA*, 254 F.3d 300, 310 (D.C. Cir. 2001)). Dismissal of immigration court cases to facilitate expedited removal is exigent to the American public, as demonstrated by the eighty plus articles cited in this request and protests inside and outside of immigration courts around the country. See *CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (finding urgency to inform the public based on at least fifty articles on the issue); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of No. Cal. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, No. C 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (same); 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3) (“The existence of numerous articles published on a given subject can be helpful to establishing the requirement that there be an ‘urgency to inform’ the public on the topic.”).

Delayed production of the policies and guidance for dismissing noncitizens’ immigration court cases to facilitate expedited removal would compromise the ongoing public debate about the propriety of such dismissals. *Cf. CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (expediting a request for records about the U.S. DOGE Service); *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (expediting a request for records about a possible unlawful airstrike on Syria); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of N. Cal. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, No. C. 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6-7 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (expediting a request for records about possible unlawful military surveillance of protestors); *Freedom Coalition of Doctors for Choice v. Ctrs. For Disease Control & Prevention*, 2:23-cv-102, 2024 WL 69084, at \*14 (N.D. Tex. Jan. 5, 2024) (expediting a request disputing the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines).

#### IV. FEE WAIVER REQUEST

Requestors seek a fee waiver since “disclosure of the requested records is in the public interest.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). ICE must construe “the FOIA fee waiver provision . . . liberally . . . in favor of waivers for noncommercial requesters” like Requesters. *Schoenman v. FBI*, 604 F. Supp. 2d 174, 188 (D.D.C. 2009). Disclosure is in the public interest where it (A) “is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government” and (B) “is not primarily in the commercial interest of the [R]equesters.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); *see also* 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(1). Requesters satisfy both requirements.

##### A. DISCLOSURE OF THE INFORMATION IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Disclosing the requested records is likely to contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of ICE dismissing immigration court cases and the extent to which dismissal remains a matter of discretion for OPLA attorneys to consider on a case-by-case basis.

ICE must consider two factors when assessing a disclosure’s contribution to public understanding of a government activity or operation, *see* 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(2): (i) whether the request has a “direct and clear” rather than “remote or attenuated” connection to “identifiable operations or activities of the federal government”; and (ii) whether disclosure “would be likely to

contribute significantly to public understanding of those operations or activities.” *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(i)-(ii). Each factor supports a fee waiver here.

1. *Request Has a Direct and Clear Connection to Government Operations or Activities*

First, this request has a direct and clear relation to the following governmental operations and activities: ICE’s dismissal or termination of immigration court proceedings so it can seek noncitizens’ expedited removal.

2. *Records Sought Will Contribute Significantly to Public Understanding of the Above*

Second, disclosing the records sought will “contribute significantly to public understanding of” the above activities. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii). Such contribution exists where “[d]isclosure of the requested information [is] meaningfully informative about [these] activities” and “contribute[s] to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester.” *Id.* 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A)-(B). Both criteria are satisfied here.

i. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS IS MEANINGFULLY INFORMATIVE

Disclosing requested records will be meaningfully informative about ICE’s dismissal or termination of immigration court proceedings so it can seek expedited removal of respondent noncitizens. Disclosure is meaningfully informative where disclosed information is not “in the public domain, in either the same or a substantially identical form.” *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A).

Here, as demonstrated by the media coverage cited above, the public only knows that ICE is arresting noncitizens at or near immigration courts after moving to dismiss their immigration cases and that immigration judges are granting many dismissals, thereby allowing ICE to pursue expedited removal.<sup>10</sup> Public knowledge does not extend to the exact guidance that ICE OPLA attorneys are receiving from their superiors about dismissals or the extent to which dismissal remains a matter of discretion for attorneys to consider on a case-by-case basis. Requested records are therefore “meaningfully informative” about each of these activities.

ii. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS CONTRIBUTES TO UNDERSTANDING OF A REASONABLY BROAD AUDIENCE

Disclosing requested records will contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in ICE’s dismissal or termination of immigration court proceedings so it can seek respondent noncitizens’ expedited removal.

Requesters presumably satisfy this consideration as representatives of the news media. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(B). They both “gather[] information of potential interest to a segment of the public,

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<sup>10</sup> See generally Media articles cited in footnotes 2-5.

use[] [their] editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distribute[] that work to an audience.” *Id.* § 5.11(b)(6); see also *Serv. Women’s Action Network v. Dep’t of Def.*, 888 F. Supp. 2d 282, 287-88 (D. Conn. 2012) (finding that ACLU is a news media representative); cf. *Elec. Privacy Info. Ctr. v. Dep’t of Def.*, 241 F. Supp. 2d 5, 10-15 (D.D.C. 2003) (finding that an organization similar to the Council is a news media representative).

Additionally, and alternatively, the ongoing and extensive media coverage in nationwide, state, and local outlets about ICE dismissals of immigration proceedings demonstrates interest in this subject by a reasonably broad audience. Requesters intend and are well-equipped to inform this audience about the information contained in responsive records, as they are experts in educating the public about immigration issues.

As detailed further in the expedited processing section, the Council analyzes government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this one—in interactive web reports and other publications available for free on its website.<sup>11</sup> And it circulates these publications for free through its website,<sup>12</sup> blog, email newsletters, and an X account with 64.9 thousand followers. It intends to publish content about records obtained from this request on its website and otherwise disseminate that content to its readers and the larger public.

Similarly, LatinoJustice PRLDEF produces newsletters, blogs, reports, opinion, editorials, and video interviews about the constitutional rights and equal protection of Latinos, immigrants, and other marginalized communities.<sup>13</sup> And it circulates these publications through its social media accounts. All of its materials are free and available to the public on its website.

In sum, Requesters intend to analyze the records they receive from this request and educate a broad audience of the interested public about them. And, Requesters have a demonstrated ability to do so.

## B. REQUESTERS’ LACK OF COMMERCIAL INTEREST

Turning to commercial interest, disclosure is not primarily in Requesters’ commercial interest. As nonprofits, Requesters have no commercial interest in the records requested. See *Am. Ctr. for L. & Just. v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, 573 F. Supp. 3d 78, 84 (D.D.C. 2021) (“[N]onprofit organizations by definition have no commercial interests.”); *Am. Immigr. Council v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, 82 F. Supp. 3d 396, 406 (D.D.C. 2015) (finding that the Council has no such interest in its record requests). Rather, the request furthers Requesters’ work to increase public

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<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., *Torrance County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident*, *supra* n. 7; *Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement’s Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio’s Immigration Enforcement*, *supra* n. 7; *Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities*, *supra* n. 7.

<sup>12</sup> The Council’s website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., LatinoJustice PRLDEF, *100 Days Later: The Harm So Far to Latinx Communities* (April 2025), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/100-days-later-harm-so-far-latinx-communities>; LatinoJustice PRLDEF, *A Promise to Harm: What’s at Stake for the Latino Community in Project 2025* (Oct. 2024), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/promise-harm-whats-stake-latinx-community-project-2025>;

understanding of immigration processes, including the dismissal of immigration court proceedings so that ICE may channel respondent noncitizens into expedited removal.

Alternatively, and additionally, the public interest in obtaining a better understanding of ICE's actions discussed above exceeds any commercial interest that ICE may ascribe to Requesters in records responsive to this request.

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Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Chris Opila

/s/Rex Chen

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July 29, 2025

**Via Secure Release & Certified Mail**

ICE Privacy Office  
Immigration & Customs Enforcement  
500 12th St., SW Stop 5004  
Washington, DC 20536-5004

Senior Director of FOIA Operations  
Privacy Office, Mail Stop 0655  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane SW  
Washington, DC 20598-0655

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request on Terminations of Immigration Proceedings and ICE Arrests at Immigration Courts

Dear FOIA Officer:

The American Immigration Council (the “Council”) and LatinoJustice PRLDEF (collectively, “Requesters”) submit this request to U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (“ICE”) under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Since around the middle of May 2025, ICE has been arresting noncitizens in or near Executive Office of Immigration Review (“EOIR”) immigration courts after they appear for a hearing in their immigration case. ICE has also been moving to dismiss immigration proceedings against noncitizens in immigration courts to pursue their expedited removal. Requesters seek certain records about these arrests and dismissals as well as expedited processing and a fee waiver.

**I. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Requesters seek all emails,<sup>1</sup> correspondence, calendar entries, meeting notes, text messages, Signal messages, WhatsApp messages, Microsoft Teams messages, and other similar communication records between one or more individuals listed in Column A of the table below and one or more individuals listed in Column B about a topic listed in Column C from April 1, 2025, to the date of a reasonable search for responsive records.

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<sup>1</sup> Requested emails exclude duplicates. (E.g. agencies should only produce one record of an email chain that contains all emails in that chain, rather than a record for each new email in the chain that contains all emails in the chain prior to that email).

A	B	C
ICE Principal Legal Advisor	The Chief Immigration Judge	Expedited removal
ICE Executive Deputy Principal Legal Advisor	A Regional Deputy Chief Immigration Judge (“RDCJ”)	An ICE enforcement operation in or near an immigration court
ICE Deputy Principal Legal Advisor for Field Legal Operations	An Assistant Chief Immigration Judge (“ACIJ”)	An ICE arrest in or near an immigration court
An ICE Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (“OPLA”) Field Location’s Chief Counsel	A court administrator	Dismissal or termination of immigration cases or proceedings in immigration court <sup>2</sup>
An ICE OPLA Field Location’s Deputy Chief Counsel		

## II. FORMAT OF PRODUCTION

Requesters seek responsive electronic records in a machine-readable, native file format, with all metadata and load files. Requesters ask ICE to produce responsive materials in their entirety, including all attachments, appendices, enclosures, and/or exhibits, in a text-searchable, static-image format (PDF), in the best image quality in the agency’s possession, and that the records be provided in separate, Bates-stamped files.

## III. EXPEDITED PROCESSING

Requesters seek expedited processing of this request and certify that the statements herein are “true and correct” pursuant to 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3). FOIA obligates ICE to process requests expeditiously in two cases: (i) those where a requester “demonstrates a compelling need”—such as “urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity” if the requester is “primarily engaged in disseminating information,” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), (v)—and (ii) “in other cases determined by the agency,” *id.* § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), which, for the Department of Homeland Security, include “[a] matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government’s integrity which affect public confidence,” 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(1)(ii), (iv). Both cases exist here.

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<sup>2</sup> Responsive records should be construed as exclusive of records that are part of a noncitizen’s record of proceedings (e.g., a motion to dismiss).

A. A MATTER OF WIDESPREAD AND EXCEPTIONAL INTEREST RAISING GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY CONCERNS

ICE arrests at and near immigration courts and dismissals of immigration cases are a matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence.

Fifty articles on an issue make it a matter of widespread and exceptional public interest. *Citizens for Resp. & Ethics in Wash. v. U.S. DOGE Serv.*, Case No. 25-cv-511 (CRC), 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (D.D.C. Mar. 10, 2025) (hereinafter "CREW") see also *Brennan Ctr. for Just. v. Dep't of Com.* 498 F. Supp. 3d 87, 97 (D.D.C. 2020). A "handful of articles" also establishes such interest where the articles are "in a variety of publications" and "repeatedly reference the ongoing national discussion." *Am. Civ. Liberties Union v. Dep't of Just.*, 321 F. Supp. 2d 24, 32 (D.D.C. 2004).

Here, one hundred and twenty four articles in nationwide, state, local, and international media outlets have covered ongoing ICE arrests at or near immigration courts in Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Charlotte, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Portland, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and elsewhere throughout the country since May 20, 2025.<sup>3</sup> This equates to almost two articles per day for seventy days.

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<sup>3</sup> Emiliano Tahu Gómez, 'Unconstitutional Death Row': At San Antonio Immigration Court, Rep. Casar Decries Arrests, Gets Few Answers, Austin American-Statesman (July 28, 2025, 6:19 PM), <https://www.statesman.com/story/news/politics/government/2025/07/28/unconstitutional-death-row-san-antonio-immigration-court-rep-casar-decries-arrests-gets-few-answers/85415560007/> (hereinafter, "Gómez re: San Antonio"); Meredith Haas, ICE Arrests Outside SA Immigration Court Draw Criticism from Lawmakers, Advocates, KENS5 (July 28, 2025, 6:06 PM), <https://www.kens5.com/article/news/local/san-antonio-texas-immigration-court-ice-arrests-deportation-congressman-greg-casar-advocates-lawmakers/273-dd5bcb13-bcb5-4ea2-b6bb-9827e056376c>; Sanford Nowlin, U.S. Rep. Greg Casar Calls ICE Arrests at San Antonio Immigration Court 'Disturbing, Dystopian', San Antonio Current (July 28, 2025, 5:03 PM), <https://www.sacurrent.com/news/us-rep-greg-casar-calls-ice-arrests-at-san-antonio-immigration-court-disturbing-dystopian-38097422>; Margaret Kadifa, ICE Arrests All Adults Without Children at S.F. Immigration Court Today, Mission Local (July 25, 2025, 1:05 PM), <https://missionlocal.org/2025/07/hed-ice-steps-up-arrests-at-s-f-immigration-court/> (hereinafter, "Kadifa re: Adult Arrests"); Pedro Camacho, ICE Arrests Migrant Deemed Mentally Impaired by Judge as He Exits Immigration Court: 'He's Clearly Not Understanding the Questions', The Latin Times (July 25, 2025, 10:36 AM), <https://www.latintimes.com/ice-arrests-migrant-deemed-mentally-impaired-judge-he-exits-immigration-court-hes-clearly-not-587576>; Jordan Salama, When ICE Agents Are Waiting Outside the Courtroom, The New Yorker (July 25, 2025), <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/when-ice-agents-are-waiting-outside-the-courtroom>; Eileen Markey, Punished for Playing by the Rules: The Deliberate Cruelty of Trump's Deportation Regime, The Nation (July 24, 2025), <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/ice-trump-detention-regime-cruelty/>; Dean Moses, ICE in Court: Feds Snatch More Immigrants as Lander, Williams Demand Safety Inspection of Detainment Center, AMNY (July 23, 2025), <https://www.amny.com/politics/ice-immigrants-court-lander-williams-07232025/> (hereinafter, "Mose re: ICE in Court"); Danielle James, ICE Arrests at Check-Ins, Court Hearings Are on the Rise. Michigan Is No Exception, MLIVE (July 21, 2025, 7:10 AM), <https://www.mlive.com/politics/2025/07/ice-arrests-at-check-ins-court-hearings-are-on-the-rise-michigan-is-no-exception.html>; Margaret Kadifa, ICE Agents Keep Snatching Asylum Seekers Immediately After Their Court Hearings, Mother Jones (July 21, 2025), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/07/ice-agents-arrest-asylum-seekers-after-court-hearings-san-francisco/> (hereinafter, "Kadifa re: ICE Snatching"); Esmeralda Perez,

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Much of the coverage express doubts about the integrity of ICE arrests at immigration courts, describing them as a due process violation and/or a tactic to increase deportations, forum shop,

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and scare noncitizens into giving up on their immigration cases.<sup>4</sup> And several editorials also decry the arrests as a “set up” and for disregarding due process.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, eighty-seven articles in state, local, and nationwide media outlets have discussed ICE asking immigration judges to dismiss noncitizens’ immigration cases so it can pursue these noncitizens’ expedited removal.<sup>6</sup> Immigration attorneys also report ICE officials serving pre-

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<sup>4</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 3; Hass, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Adult Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Salama, *supra* n. 3; Markey, *supra* n. 3; Mose re: ICE in Court; James, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile, *supra* n. 3; Cole et al., *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Rivera et al., *supra* n. 3; Cuevas, *supra* n. 3; Abbot, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Browning & O’Brien, *supra* n. 3; Economist, *supra* n. 3; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Tavernise, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; DeAngelis, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 3; Singhai re: Volunteers, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 3; Moses re: ICE Raids, *supra* n. 3; Yahr, *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Brigida, *supra* n. 3; Katz, *supra* n. 3; Morrissey, *supra* n. 3; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Lyons, *supra* n. 3; Oehrli, *supra* n. 3; Bustillo, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa et al., *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n.14; Romero et al., *supra* n.14; Carey, *supra* n. 3; Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 3; Bradbury, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Gamboa, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Gonzalez & Ruelas, *supra* n. 3; Hebert, *supra* n. 3; Chien, *supra* n. 3; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 3; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 3; Solis, *supra* n. 3; Hughes, *supra* n. 3; Goodman et al., *supra* n. 3; Goodman & Salomon, *supra* n. 3; Shoemaker, *supra* n. 3; Ruiz et al., *supra* n. 3; Álvarez, *supra* n. 3; Lacy et al., *supra* n. 3; Ingram, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 3; Hendricks, *supra* n. 3; Schmidt, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Veronica Cardenas, *I Was Once an ICE Prosecutor. What I See Now in Immigration Courts Is Disturbing*, The Hill (July 17, 2025, 8:00AM), <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/5404863-i-was-once-an-ice-prosecutor-what-i-see-now-in-immigration-courts-is-disturbing/>; Brian Strassburger, S.J. & William Critchley-Menor, S.J., *What We Saw During An ICE Arrest & Immigration Court Hearing: The Breakdown of Justice in America*, America: The Jesuit Review (July 11, 2025), <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2025/07/11/ice-immigration-court-deportation-injustice-251119>; *Trump Disregards Due Process in Our Nation’s Immigration Courts*, San Antonio Express-News (June 27, 2025), <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/editorial/article/ice-arrest-immigration-court-texas-20395342.php>; *Masked ICE Arrests Raise Urgent Questions About U.S. Immigration Practices*, The Riverdale Press (June 26, 2025), <https://www.riverdalepress.com/stories/masked-ice-arrests-raise-urgent-questions-about-us-immigration-practices.187060>.

<sup>6</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 3; Nowlin, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Adult Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Camacho, *supra* n. 3; Salama, *supra* n. 3; Maurice DuBois et al., *3 Immigration Judges Speak Out About Their Firings: “It Was Arbitrary, Unfair*, CBS News (July 24, 2025, 8:34 PM), <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/immigration-judges-speak-out-firings-arbitrary-unfair/?intcid=CNM-00-10abd1h>; James, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 3; Rivera et al., *supra* n. 3; Cuevas, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile, *supra* n. 3; Singhai re: Week at San Diego Immigration Court, *supra* n. 3; Cole et al., *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Browning & O’Brien, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: 4 Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Economist, *supra* n. 3; Regalado & Karlamangla, *supra* n. 3; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 3; Vertuno, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 3; Gomez re: Faith Leaders, *supra* n. 3; Bremer, *supra* n. 3; May & Marr, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 3; Yahr, *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Brigida, *supra* n. 3; Marnin, *supra* n. 3; Katz, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 3; Morrissey, *supra* n. 3; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Escort, *supra* n. 3; Celeste, *supra* n. 3; Oehrli, *supra* n. 3; Garcia, *supra* n. 3; Lyons, *supra* n. 3; Bustillo, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Taylor et al.,

signed dismissals based on “non-opposition” to noncitizen respondents at immigration courts without respondents not having notice of ICE’s motion to dismiss their immigration case and an opportunity to oppose it. Much of the coverage on these dismissals casts doubt on their integrity, describing them as a violation of due process and a tactic to deport noncitizens without hearings.<sup>7</sup>

Arrests and dismissals at immigration courts have outraged Americans around the country. Opposition to these actions and doubts about their legality have prompted mass protests at immigration courts in New York, Seattle, San Francisco, and elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> It has also prompted

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*supra* n. 3; Julia Ainsely, *Trump Admin Tells Immigration Judges to Dismiss Cases in Tactic to Speed Up Arrests*, NBC News (June 11, 2025, 5:00AM), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/trump-admin-tells-immigration-judges-dismiss-cases-tactic-speed-arrest-rcna212138>; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Saavedra & Arnold, *supra* n. 3; Weber, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Larson, *supra* n. 3; Romero et al., *supra* n. 3; Carey, *supra* n. 3; Schmidt, *supra* n. 3; Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Initial Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Díaz & Alvarez, *supra* n. 3; Bradbury, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Gamboa, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Sherry, *supra* n. 3; Gonzalez & Ruelas, *supra* n. 3; Noriega, *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: NYC Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Chien, *supra* n. 3; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 3; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Hendriks, *supra* n. 3; Montoya-Galvez & Cavazos, *supra* n. 3; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 3; Hughes, *supra* n. 3; Goodman et al., *supra* n. 3; Hagstrom & Melugin, *supra* n. 3; Goodman & Salomon, *supra* n. 3; Shoemaker, *supra* n. 3; Ruiz et al., *supra* n. 3; Álvarez, *supra* n. 3; Lacy et al., *supra* n. 3; Ingram, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 3; Nowlin, *supra* n. 3; James, *supra* n. 3; Cole et al., *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Cuevas, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Browning & O’Brien, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: 4 Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 3; Yahr, *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n.2; Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Brigida, *supra* n. 3; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Lyons, *supra* n. 3; Oehrli, *supra* n. 3; Garcia, *supra* n. 3; Bustillo, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Saavedra & Arnold, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Romero et al., *supra* n. 3; Carey, *supra* n. 3; Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 3; Bradbury, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Gamboa, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Chien, *supra* n. 3; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 3; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 3; Hughes, *supra* n. 3; Ruiz et al, *supra* n. 3; Lacy et al., *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 3; Hendricks, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Browning & O’Brien, *supra* n. 3; Alicia Victoria Lozano, *Violent Clashes at San Francisco Immigration Court Won’t Deter Protestors, Organizers Say*, NBC News (July 10, 2025, 4:43 PM), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/violent-clashes-san-francisco-immigration-court-wont-deter-protesters-rcna218059>; Sarah Rumpf-Whitten, *Watch: ICE Agents Fight Off Masked Mob Outside Blue City Immigration Court*, FOX News (July 10, 2025, 1:12 PM), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/watch-ice-agents-fight-off-masked-mob-outside-blue-city-immigration-court>; Shay Arthur, *Crowd Gathers for Immigration Rally at Memphis Court*, WREG Memphis (July 8, 2025, 12:07 PM), <https://wreg.com/news/local/crowd-gathers-for-immigration-rally-at-memphis-court/>; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Regalado & Karlamangla, *supra* n. 3; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; DeAngelis, *supra* n. 3; Stephania Jimenez, *PSL San Antonio Organizes Event to Educate Community on Immigration Laws Amid Rising ICE Deportations*, KSAT (July 1, 2025, 10:42 PM), <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2025/07/02/psl-san-antonio-organizes-event-to-educate-community-on-immigration-laws-amid-rising-ice-deportations/>; May & Marr, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Greg Micek et al., *Sacramento Immigration Court on Lockdown, Draws Protest After Suspected ICE Operation*, Capradio (June 12, 2025), <https://www.capradio.org/articles/2025/06/12/sacramento-immigration-court-on-lockdown-draws->

clergy, political leaders, and other members of the public to accompany noncitizens to their immigration court dates to document arrests and dismissals, attempt to stop the former, and help arrested noncitizens inform their families.<sup>9</sup> At least four federal judges have also deemed a few specific arrests at immigration courts unlawful and ordered ICE to release the arrestees,<sup>10</sup> while a class of noncitizens represented by several rights groups has also sued to stop the arrests nationwide.<sup>11</sup>

Responsive records will address critical integrity questions left open by existing media coverage. Such records will show the extent that ICE OPLA leadership has coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

#### B. URGENCY TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY BY A REQUESTER

Additionally, and alternatively, the Council has a compelling need for the records sought. It is primarily engaged in disseminating information. And urgency also exists to inform the public about the extent that ICE OPLA leadership has coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

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[protest-after-suspected-ice-operation/](#); Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Lyons, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Alvarez, *supra* n. 3; George Kelly & Max Harrison-Caldwell, Protesters Shut Down Immigration Court After ICE Arrests, *The San Francisco Standard* (June 10, 2025, 1:00 PM), <https://sfstandard.com/2025/06/10/protesters-surround-immigration-court-after-ice-arrests/>; Kadifa et al., *supra* n. 3; Weber, *supra* n. 3; Joe Rivano Barros et al., *S.F. Police Arrest Dozens in 2<sup>nd</sup> Night of Protests Against ICE*, *Mission Local* (June 9, 2025, 8:16 PM), <https://missionlocal.org/2025/06/sf-mission-march-mobilized-thousands-against-ice/>; Boyanton, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: NYC Immigr. Ct. Arrests; Ruiz et al., *supra* n. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 3; Salama, *supra* n. 3; Markey, *supra* n. 3; Mose re: ICE in Court; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Belz, *supra* n. 3; Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Strassburger & Critchley-Menor, *supra* n. 5; Ciara Encinas, *Volunteers Describe How They Document ICE Arrests in Immigration Courts*, *Fox 5* (July 11, 2025, 4 :55 PM), <https://fox5sandiego.com/news/local-news/san-diego/san-diego-court-ice-arrests/>; Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Joey Safchik, *ICE Handcuffs 71-Year-Old Grandmother, a US Citizen, at San Diego Immigration Court*, *7 San Diego* (July 9, 2025, 7 :06 PM), <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/ice-arrests-71-year-old-grandmother-a-us-citizen-at-san-diego-immigration-court/3865098/>; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Rossoto, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; Singhai re: Volunteers, *supra* n. 3; Gomez re : Faith Leaders, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 3; Sanchez & Ebrahimji, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Escort, *supra* n. 3; Micek et al., *supra* n. 3; Stone, *supra* n. 3; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Estrada re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Boyanton, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>10</sup> See Markey, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Baumhardt, *supra* n. 3; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Vertuno, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Rivera et al., *supra* n. 3; Abbot, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile, *supra* n. 3; Cole et al., *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3.

## 1. *The Council Primarily Engages in Information Dissemination*

The Council primarily engages in disseminating information and analysis on immigration and other issues. Organizations primarily engaged in information dissemination include not only “media organizations and newspapers,” *Heritage Found. v. Entl. Prot. Agency*, Civil Action No. 23-748, 2023 WL 2954418, \*3 (D.D.C. 2023), but also “non-partisan law and public policy group[s]” like Requesters that “regularly write[], publish[], and disseminat[e], information online,” *Brennan Ctr. for Just.*, 498 F. Supp. 3d at 98 (Brennan Center); see also *Ctr. for Pub. Integrity v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 411 F. Supp. 3d 5 (D.D.C. 2019) (Center for Public Integrity); *Protect Dem. Proj. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293, 298 (D.D.C. 2017) (Protect Democracy Project); *Am. Civil Liberties Union*, 321 F. Supp. 2d at 29 n.5 (Electronic Privacy Information Center (“EPIC”)).

Like Brennan Center, Protect Democracy Project, EPIC, and Center for Public Integrity, the Council authors factsheets and special reports on proposed and actual immigration policies, some of which shape media coverage in outlets across the nation.<sup>12</sup> It also analyzes immigration data and other government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this one—in interactive web reports.<sup>13</sup> And it circulates its reports and factsheets through its website,<sup>14</sup> blog, email newsletters, and an X (formerly known as Twitter) account with 64.9 thousand followers.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. *Urgency Exists to Inform the Public*

Urgency also exists to inform the public about the extent that ICE OPLA leadership has coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

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<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., *Trump-Backed Mass Deportations Would Cost Billions*, Report Says, CBS News (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/trump-backed-mass-deportations-would-cost-billions-report/> (discussing Am. Immigr. Council, *Mass Deportation: Devastating Costs to America, Its Budget and Economy* (Oct. 2, 2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/mass-deportation/>); Emma Goldberg, *What if Trump Deported Millions of Immigrants*, The New York Times (Oct. 22, 2024), [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.990iYFTTpEl6](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked_article_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.990iYFTTpEl6) (same); *What Trump’s Mass Deportation Plan Might Look Like If He Wins the Election*, 60 Minutes (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjCHjwISMFI> (same); *Mass Deportations*, Last Week Tonight (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UEhMDAIX1Y> (same); *The Costs of Mass Deportation? Expert Breaks Down Trump’s Immigration Plan*, Amanpour & Company, (Oct. 28, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dmfo3atidKE> (same).

<sup>13</sup> See Am. Immigr. Council, *Torrance County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/torrance-detention-facility>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement’s Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio’s Immigration Enforcement* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/ohio-border-patrol-abuse>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities* (2019), [https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory\\_tool](https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory_tool)

<sup>14</sup> The Council’s website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>15</sup> See <https://x.com/immcouncil>.

Requisite urgency exists where “the request touches on ‘a matter of current exigency to the American public’” and delay “compromises a significant recognized interest.” *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (quoting *Al-Fayed v. CIA*, 254 F.3d 300, 310 (D.C. Cir. 2001)). The above topics are exigent to the American public, as demonstrated by the one hundred and twenty plus articles discussing arrests cited in this request, the eighty plus articles discussing dismissals cited herein, and the mass protests against these actions outside immigration courts. See *CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (finding urgency to inform the public based on at least fifty articles on the issue); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of No. Cal. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, No. C 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (same); 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3) (“The existence of numerous articles published on a given subject can be helpful to establishing the requirement that there be an ‘urgency to inform’ the public on the topic.”).

Delayed production of responsive records would compromise the ongoing public debate about the propriety of ICE arrests and dismissals at immigration courts, particularly the extent that ICE OPLA leadership has coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate these arrests and dismissals. *Cf. CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (expediting a request for records about the U.S. DOGE Service); *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (expediting a request for records about a possible unlawful airstrike on Syria); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of N. Cal. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, No. C. 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6-7 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (expediting a request for records about possible unlawful military surveillance of protestors); *Freedom Coalition of Doctors for Choice v. Ctrs. For Disease Control & Prevention*, 2:23-cv-102, 2024 WL 69084, at \*14 (N.D. Tex. Jan. 5, 2024) (expediting a request disputing the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines).

#### IV. FEE WAIVER REQUEST

Requestors seek a fee waiver since “disclosure of the requested records is in the public interest.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). ICE must construe “the FOIA fee waiver provision . . . liberally . . . in favor of waivers for noncommercial requesters” like Requesters. *Schoenman v. FBI*, 604 F. Supp. 2d 174, 188 (D.D.C. 2009). Disclosure is in the public interest where it (A) “is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government” and (B) “is not primarily in the commercial interest of the [R]equesters.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); A)(iii); see *also* 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(1). Requesters satisfy both requirements.

##### A. DISCLOSURE OF THE INFORMATION IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Disclosing the requested records is likely to contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of the extent that ICE OPLA leadership has coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

ICE must consider two factors when assessing a disclosure’s contribution to public understanding of a government activity or operation, see 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(2): (i) whether the request has a “direct and clear” rather than “remote or attenuated” connection to “identifiable

operations or activities of the federal government”; and (ii) whether disclosure “would be likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of those operations or activities.” *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(i)-(ii). Each factor supports a fee waiver here.

1. *Request Has a Direct and Clear Connection to Government Operations or Activities*

First, this request has a direct and clear relation to the following governmental operations and activities: the extent that ICE OPLA leadership has coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

2. *Records Sought Will Contribute Significantly to Public Understanding of the Above*

Second, disclosing the records sought will “contribute significantly to public understanding of” the above activities. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii). Such contribution exists where “[d]isclosure of the requested information [is] meaningfully informative about [these] activities” and “contribute[s] to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester.” *Id.* 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A)-(B). Both criteria are satisfied here.

i. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS IS MEANINGFULLY INFORMATIVE

Disclosing requested records will be meaningfully informative about the extent that ICE OPLA leadership has coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts. Disclosure is meaningfully informative where disclosed information is not “in the public domain, in either the same or a substantially identical form.” *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A).

Here, as demonstrated by the media coverage cited above, the public only knows that ICE is arresting noncitizens at or near immigration courts after moving to dismiss their immigration cases and that immigration judges are granting many dismissals, thereby allowing ICE to pursue expedited removal.<sup>16</sup> Public knowledge does not extend to the extent that ICE OPLA leadership has coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts. Requested records are therefore “meaningfully informative” about these activities.

ii. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS CONTRIBUTES TO UNDERSTANDING OF A REASONABLY BROAD AUDIENCE

Disclosing requested records will contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in ICE arrests and dismissals at or near immigration courts.

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<sup>16</sup> See generally Media articles cited in footnotes 2-11.

Requesters presumably satisfy this consideration as representatives of the news media. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(B). They both “gather[] information of potential interest to a segment of the public, use[] [their] editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distribute[] that work to an audience.” *Id.* § 5.11(b)(6); see also *Serv. Women’s Action Network v. Dep’t of Def.*, 888 F. Supp. 2d 282, 287-88 (D. Conn. 2012) (finding that ACLU is a news media representative); cf. *Elec. Privacy Info. Ctr. v. Dep’t of Def.*, 241 F. Supp. 2d 5, 10-15 (D.D.C. 2003) (finding that an organization similar to the Council is a news media representative).

Additionally, and alternatively, the ongoing and extensive media coverage in nationwide, state, and local outlets about ICE arrests at and near immigration courts and dismissal of proceedings demonstrates interest in these subjects by a reasonably broad audience. Requesters intend and are well-equipped to inform this audience about the information contained in responsive records, as they are experts in educating the public about immigration issues.

As detailed further in the expedited processing section, the Council analyzes government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this one—in interactive web reports and other publications available for free on its website.<sup>17</sup> And it circulates these publications for free through its website,<sup>18</sup> blog, email newsletters, and X an account with 64.9 thousand followers. It intends to publish content about records obtained from this request on its website and otherwise disseminate that content to its readers and the larger public.

Similarly, LatinoJustice PRLDEF produces newsletters, blogs, reports, opinion, editorials, and video interviews about the constitutional rights and equal protection of Latinos, immigrants, and other marginalized communities.<sup>19</sup> And it circulates these publications for free through its social media accounts. All of its materials are free and available to the public on its website.

In sum, Requesters intend to analyze the records they receive from this request and educate a broad audience of the interested public about them. And, Requesters have a demonstrated ability to do so.

## B. REQUESTERS’ LACK OF COMMERCIAL INTEREST

Turning to commercial interest, disclosure is not primarily in Requesters’ commercial interest. As nonprofits, Requesters have no commercial interest in the records requested. See *Am. Ctr. for L. & Just. v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, 573 F. Supp. 3d 78, 84 (D.D.C. 2021) (“[N]onprofit organizations by definition have no commercial interests.”); *Am. Immigr. Council v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, 82 F. Supp. 3d 396, 406 (D.D.C. 2015) (finding that the Council has no such

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<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., *Torrance County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident*, *supra* n. 14; *Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement’s Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio’s Immigration Enforcement*, *supra* n. 14; *Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities*, *supra* n. 14.

<sup>18</sup> The Council’s website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., LatinoJustice PRLDEF, *100 Days Later: The Harm So Far to Latinx Communities* (April 2025), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/100-days-later-harm-so-far-latinx-communities>; LatinoJustice PRLDEF, *A Promise to Harm: What’s at Stake for the Latino Community in Project 2025* (Oct. 2024), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/promise-harm-whats-stake-latinx-community-project-2025>.

interest in its record requests). Rather, the request furthers Requesters' work to increase public understanding of immigration processes, including ICE enforcement operations in and around immigration courts and the extent that ICE OPLA leadership has coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

Alternatively, and additionally, the public interest in obtaining a better understanding of ICE's actions discussed above exceeds any commercial interest that ICE may ascribe to Requesters in records responsive to this request.

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Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Chris Opila

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July 29, 2025

**Via Secure Release & Certified Mail**

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Immigration & Customs Enforcement  
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Washington, DC 20536-5004

Senior Director of FOIA Operations  
Privacy Office, Mail Stop 0655  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane SW  
Washington, DC 20598-0655

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request on Terminations of Immigration Proceedings and ICE Arrests at Immigration Courts

Dear FOIA Officer:

The American Immigration Council (the “Council”) and LatinoJustice PRLDEF (collectively, “Requesters”) submit this request to U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (“ICE) under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Since around the middle of May 2025, ICE has been arresting noncitizens in or near Executive Office of Immigration Review (“EOIR”) immigration courts after they appear for a hearing in their immigration case. ICE has also been moving to dismiss immigration proceedings against noncitizens in immigration courts to pursue their expedited removal. Requesters seek certain records about these arrests and dismissals as well as expedited processing and a fee waiver.

**I. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Requesters seek all emails,<sup>1</sup> correspondence, calendar entries, meeting notes, text messages, Signal messages, WhatsApp messages, Microsoft Teams messages, and other similar communication records between one or more individuals listed in Column A of the table below and one or more individuals listed in Column B about a topic listed in Column C from April 1, 2025, to the date of a reasonable search for responsive records.

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<sup>1</sup> Requested emails exclude duplicates. (E.g. agencies should only produce one record of an email chain that contains all emails in that chain, rather than a record for each new email in the chain that contains all emails in the chain prior to that email).

A	B	C
ICE Associate Director of Enforcement and Removal Operations (“ERO”)	ICE Principal Legal Advisor	An ICE enforcement operation in or near an immigration court
The Director of ERO Field Operations	ICE Executive Deputy Principal Legal Advisor	An ICE arrest in or near an immigration court
An Assistant Director of ERO Field Operations	ICE Deputy Principal Legal Advisor for Field Legal Operations	Dismissal or termination of immigration cases or proceedings in immigration court
An ERO Field Office Director	An ICE Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (“OPLA”) Field Location’s Chief Counsel	
An ERO Field Office Deputy Director		

**II. FORMAT OF PRODUCTION**

Requesters seek responsive electronic records in a machine-readable, native file format, with all metadata and load files. Requesters ask ICE to produce responsive materials in their entirety, including all attachments, appendices, enclosures, and/or exhibits, in a text-searchable, static-image format (PDF), in the best image quality in the agency’s possession, and that the records be provided in separate, Bates-stamped files.

**III. EXPEDITED PROCESSING**

Requesters seek expedited processing of this request and certify that the statements herein are “true and correct” pursuant to 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3). FOIA obligates ICE to process requests expeditiously in two cases: (i) those where a requester “demonstrates a compelling need”—such as “urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity” if the requester is “primarily engaged in disseminating information,” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), (v)—and (ii) “in other cases determined by the agency,” *id.* § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), which, for the Department of Homeland Security, include “[a] matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government’s integrity which affect public confidence,” 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(1)(ii), (iv). Both cases exist here.

**A. A MATTER OF WIDESPREAD AND EXCEPTIONAL INTEREST RAISING GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY CONCERNS**

ICE arrests at and near immigration courts and dismissals of immigration cases are a matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government’s integrity which affect public confidence.

Fifty articles on an issue make it a matter of widespread and exceptional public interest. *Citizens for Resp. & Ethics in Wash. v. U.S. DOGE Serv.*, Case No. 25-cv-511 (CRC), 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (D.D.C. Mar. 10, 2025) (hereinafter “CREW”) see also *Brennan Ctr. for Just. v. Dep’t of Com.* 498 F. Supp. 3d 87, 97 (D.D.C. 2020). A “handful of articles” also establishes such interest where the articles are “in a variety of publications” and “repeatedly reference the ongoing national discussion.” *Am. Civ. Liberties Union v. Dep’t of Just.*, 321 F. Supp. 2d 24, 32 (D.D.C. 2004).

Here, one hundred and twenty four articles in nationwide, state, local, and international media outlets have covered ongoing ICE arrests at or near immigration courts in Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Charlotte, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Portland, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and elsewhere throughout the country since May 20, 2025.<sup>2</sup> This equates to almost two articles per day for seventy days.

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Much of the coverage express doubts about the integrity of ICE arrests at immigration courts, describing them as a due process violation and/or a tactic to increase deportations, forum shop, and scare noncitizens into giving up on their immigration cases.<sup>3</sup> Some coverage alludes to possible coordination between OPLA and ERO in making these arrests.<sup>4</sup> And several editorials also decry the arrests as a “set up” and for disregarding due process.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 2; Hass, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa re: Adult Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Salama, *supra* n. 2; Markey, *supra* n. 2; Mose re: ICE in Court; James, *supra* n. 2; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 2; Bellisile, *supra* n. 2; Cole et al., *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 2; Rivera et al., *supra* n. 2; Cuevas, *supra* n. 2; Abbot, *supra* n. 2; Bernstein, *supra* n. 2; Thamer, *supra* n. 2; Browning & O'Brien, *supra* n. 2; Economist, *supra* n. 2; Ramos, *supra* n. 2; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Tavernise, *supra* n. 2; Khan, *supra* n. 2; DeAngelis, *supra* n. 2; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 2; Singhai re: Volunteers, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 2; Moses re: ICE Raids, *supra* n. 2; Yahr, *supra* n. 2; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Brigida, *supra* n. 2; Katz, *supra* n. 2; Morrissey, *supra* n. 2; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 2; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Lyons, *supra* n. 2; Oehrli, *supra* n. 2; Bustillo, *supra* n. 2; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa et al., *supra* n. 2; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 2; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n.14; Romero et al., *supra* n.14; Carey, *supra* n. 2; Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 2; Bradbury, *supra* n. 2; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Gamboa, *supra* n. 2; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 2; Gonzalez & Ruelas, *supra* n. 2; Hebert, *supra* n. 2; Chien, *supra* n. 2; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 2; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 2; Solis, *supra* n. 2; Hughes, *supra* n. 2; Goodman et al., *supra* n. 2; Goodman & Salomon, *supra* n. 2; Shoemaker, *supra* n. 2; Ruiz et al., *supra* n. 2; Álvarez, *supra* n. 2; Lacy et al., *supra* n. 2; Ingram, *supra* n. 2; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 2; Hendricks, *supra* n. 2; Schmidt, *supra* n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Veronica Cardenas, *I Was Once an ICE Prosecutor. What I See Now in Immigration Courts Is Disturbing*, The Hill (July 17, 2025, 8:00AM), <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/5404863-i-was-once-an-ice-prosecutor-what-i-see-now-in-immigration-courts-is-disturbing/>; Brian Strassburger, S.J. & William Critchley-Menor, S.J., *What We Saw During An ICE Arrest & Immigration Court Hearing: The Breakdown of Justice in America*, America: The Jesuit Review (July 11, 2025), <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2025/07/11/ice-immigration-court-deportation-injustice->

Similarly, eighty-seven articles in state, local, and nationwide media outlets have discussed ICE asking immigration judges to dismiss noncitizens' immigration cases so it can pursue these noncitizens' expedited removal.<sup>6</sup> Immigration attorneys also report ICE officials serving pre-signed dismissals based on "non-opposition" to noncitizen respondents at immigration courts without respondents not having notice of ICE's motion to dismiss their immigration case and an opportunity to oppose it. Much of the coverage on these dismissals casts doubt on their integrity, describing them as a violation of due process and a tactic to deport noncitizens without hearings.<sup>7</sup>

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[251119](https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/editorial/article/ice-arrest-immigration-court-texas-20395342.php); *Trump Disregards Due Process in Our Nation's Immigration Courts*, San Antonio Express-News (June 27, 2025), <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/editorial/article/ice-arrest-immigration-court-texas-20395342.php>; *Masked ICE Arrests Raise Urgent Questions About U.S. Immigration Practices*, The Riverdale Press (June 26, 2025), <https://www.riverdalepress.com/stories/masked-ice-arrests-raise-urgent-questions-about-us-immigration-practices.187060>.

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<sup>7</sup> James, *supra* n. 2; Cole et al., *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 2; Cuevas, *supra* n. 2; Bernstein, *supra* n. 2; Browning & O'Brien, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa re: 4 Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Khan, *supra* n. 2; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 2; Yahr, *supra* n. 2; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Cheang, *supra* n. 2; Brigida, *supra* n. 2; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 2; Lyons, *supra* n. 2; Oehrli, *supra* n. 2; Garcia, *supra* n. 2; Bustillo, *supra* n. 2; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 2; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Saavedra & Arnold, *supra* n. 2; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 2; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Romero et al., *supra* n. 2; Carey, *supra* n. 2;

Arrests and dismissals at immigration courts have outraged Americans around the country. Opposition to these actions and doubts about their legality have prompted mass protests at immigration courts in New York, Seattle, San Francisco, and elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> It has also prompted clergy, political leaders, and other members of the public to accompany noncitizens to their immigration court dates to document arrests and dismissals, attempt to stop the former, and help arrested noncitizens inform their families.<sup>9</sup> At least four federal judges have also deemed a few specific arrests at immigration courts unlawful and ordered ICE to release the arrestees,<sup>10</sup>

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Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 2; Bradbury, *supra* n. 2; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Gamboa, *supra* n. 2; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 2; Chien, *supra* n. 2; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 2; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 2; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 2; Hughes, *supra* n. 2; Ruiz et al, *supra* n. 2; Lacy et al., *supra* n. 2; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 2; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 2; Hendricks, *supra* n. 2; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Browning & O'Brien, *supra* n. 3; Alicia Victoria Lozano, *Violent Clashes at San Francisco Immigration Court Won't Deter Protestors, Organizers Say*, NBC News (July 10, 2025, 4:43 PM), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/violent-clashes-san-francisco-immigration-court-wont-deter-protesters-rcna218059>; Sarah Rumpf-Whitten, *Watch: ICE Agents Fight Off Masked Mob Outside Blue City Immigration Court*, FOX News (July 10, 2025, 1:12 PM), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/watch-ice-agents-fight-off-masked-mob-outside-blue-city-immigration-court>; Shay Arthur, *Crowd Gathers for Immigration Rally at Memphis Court*, WREG Memphis (July 8, 2025, 12:07 PM), <https://wreg.com/news/local/crowd-gathers-for-immigration-rally-at-memphis-court/>; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Regalado & Karlamangla, *supra* n. 3; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; DeAngelis, *supra* n. 3; Stephania Jimenez, *PSL San Antonio Organizes Event to Educate Community on Immigration Laws Amid Rising ICE Deportations*, KSAT (July 1, 2025, 10:42 PM), <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2025/07/02/psl-san-antonio-organizes-event-to-educate-community-on-immigration-laws-amid-rising-ice-deportations/>; May & Marr, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Greg Micek et al., *Sacramento Immigration Court on Lockdown, Draws Protest After Suspected ICE Operation*, Capradio (June 12, 2025), <https://www.capradio.org/articles/2025/06/12/sacramento-immigration-court-on-lockdown-draws-protest-after-suspected-ice-operation/>; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Lyons, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Alvarez, *supra* n. 3; George Kelly & Max Harrison-Caldwell, *Protesters Shut Down Immigration Court After ICE Arrests*, The San Francisco Standard (June 10, 2025, 1:00 PM), <https://sfstandard.com/2025/06/10/protesters-surround-immigration-court-after-ice-arrests/>; Kadifa et al., *supra* n. 3; Weber, *supra* n. 3; Joe Rivano Barros et al., *S.F. Police Arrest Dozens in 2<sup>nd</sup> Night of Protests Against ICE*, Mission Local (June 9, 2025, 8:16 PM), <https://missionlocal.org/2025/06/sf-mission-march-mobilized-thousands-against-ice/>; Boyanton, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: NYC Immigr. Ct. Arrests; Ruiz et al, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 3; Salama, *supra* n. 3; Markey, *supra* n. 3; Mose re: ICE in Court; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Belz, *supra* n. 3; Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Strassburger & Critchley-Menor, *supra* n. 5; Ciara Encinas, *Volunteers Describe How They Document ICE Arrests in Immigration Courts*, Fox 5 (July 11, 2025, 4 :55 PM), <https://fox5sandiego.com/news/local-news/san-diego/san-diego-court-ice-arrests/>; Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Joey Safchik, *ICE Handcuffs 71-Year-Old Grandmother, a US Citizen, at San Diego Immigration Court*, 7 San Diego (July 9, 2025, 7 :06 PM), <https://www.nbcсандiego.com/news/local/ice-arrests-71-year-old-grandmother-a-us-citizen-at-san-diego-immigration-court/3865098/>; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Rossoto, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; Singhai re: Volunteers, *supra* n. 3; Gomez re : Faith Leaders, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 3; Sanchez & Ebrahimji, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Escort, *supra* n. 3; Micek et al., *supra* n. 3; Stone, *supra* n. 3; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Estrada re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Boyanton, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>10</sup> See Markey, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Baumhardt, *supra* n. 3; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Vertuno, *supra* n. 3.

while a class of noncitizens represented by several rights groups has also sued to stop the arrests nationwide.<sup>11</sup>

Responsive records will address critical integrity questions left open by existing media coverage. Such records will show the extent that OPLA attorneys coordinate, support, and otherwise facilitate ERO arrests of noncitizens at immigration courts.

## B. URGENCY TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY BY A REQUESTER

Additionally, and alternatively, the Council has a compelling need for the records sought. It is primarily engaged in disseminating information. And urgency also exists to inform the public about the extent that OPLA attorneys coordinate, support, and otherwise facilitate ERO arrests of noncitizens at immigration court.

### 1. *The Council Primarily Engages in Information Dissemination*

The Council primarily engages in disseminating information and analysis on immigration and other issues. Organizations primarily engaged in information dissemination include not only “media organizations and newspapers,” *Heritage Found. v. Entl. Prot. Agency*, Civil Action No. 23-748, 2023 WL 2954418, \*3 (D.D.C. 2023), but also “non-partisan law and public policy group[s]” like Requesters that “regularly write[], publish[], and disseminat[e], information online,” *Brennan Ctr. for Just.*, 498 F. Supp. 3d at 98 (Brennan Center); *see also Ctr. for Pub. Integrity v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 411 F. Supp. 3d 5 (D.D.C. 2019) (Center for Public Integrity); *Protect Dem. Proj. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293, 298 (D.D.C. 2017) (Protect Democracy Project); *Am. Civil Liberties Union*, 321 F. Supp. 2d at 29 n.5 (Electronic Privacy Information Center (“EPIC”)).

Like Brennan Center, Protect Democracy Project, EPIC, and Center for Public Integrity, the Council authors factsheets and special reports on proposed and actual immigration policies, some of which shape media coverage in outlets across the nation.<sup>12</sup> It also analyzes immigration data and other government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this

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<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Rivera et al., *supra* n. 3; Abbot, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile, *supra* n. 3; Cole et al., *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., *Trump-Backed Mass Deportations Would Cost Billions, Report Says*, CBS News (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/trump-backed-mass-deportations-would-cost-billions-report/> (discussing Am. Immigr. Council, *Mass Deportation: Devasting Costs to America, Its Budget and Economy* (Oct. 2, 2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/mass-deportation/>); Emma Goldberg, *What if Trump Deported Millions of Immigrants*, The New York Times (Oct. 22, 2024), [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.99OiyFTTpEl6](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked_article_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.99OiyFTTpEl6) (same); *What Trump’s Mass Deportation Plan Might Look Like If He Wins the Election*, 60 Minutes (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjCHjwlSMFI> (same); *Mass Deportations*, Last Week Tonight (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UEhMDAIX1Y> (same); *The Costs of Mass Deportation? Expert Breaks Down Trump’s Immigration Plan*, Amanpour & Company, (Oct. 28, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dmfo3atidKE> (same).

one—in interactive web reports.<sup>13</sup> And it circulates its reports and factsheets through its website,<sup>14</sup> blog, email newsletters, and an X (formerly known as Twitter) account with 64.9 thousand followers.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Urgency Exists to Inform the Public

Urgency also exists to inform the public about the extent that OPLA attorneys coordinate, support, and otherwise facilitate ERO arrests of noncitizens at immigration courts.

Requisite urgency exists where “the request touches on ‘a matter of current exigency to the American public’” and delay “compromises a significant recognized interest.” *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (quoting *Al-Fayed v. CIA*, 254 F.3d 300, 310 (D.C. Cir. 2001)). The above topics are exigent to the American public, as demonstrated by the one hundred and twenty plus articles discussing arrests cited in this request and the mass protests against these arrests outside immigration courts. See *CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (finding urgency to inform the public based on at least fifty articles on the issue); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of No. Cal. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, No. C 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (same); 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3) (“The existence of numerous articles published on a given subject can be helpful to establishing the requirement that there be an ‘urgency to inform’ the public on the topic.”).

Delayed production of responsive records would compromise the ongoing public debate about the propriety of ICE arrests at immigration courts, particularly the extent that OPLA attorneys coordinate, support, and otherwise facilitate ERO arrests of noncitizens at immigration courts. Cf. *CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (expediting a request for records about the U.S. DOGE Service); *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (expediting a request for records about a possible unlawful airstrike on Syria); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of N. Cal. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, No. C. 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6-7 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (expediting a request for records about possible unlawful military surveillance of protestors); *Freedom Coalition of Doctors for Choice v. Ctrs. For Disease Control & Prevention*, 2:23-cv-102, 2024 WL 69084, at \*14 (N.D. Tex. Jan. 5, 2024) (expediting a request disputing the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines).

## IV. FEE WAIVER REQUEST

Requestors seek a fee waiver since “disclosure of the requested records is in the public interest.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). ICE must construe “the FOIA fee waiver provision ... liberally ... in favor

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<sup>13</sup> See Am. Immigr. Council, *Torrance County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/torrance-detention-facility>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement’s Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio’s Immigration Enforcement* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/ohio-border-patrol-abuse>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities* (2019), [https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory\\_tool](https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory_tool)

<sup>14</sup> The Council’s website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>15</sup> See <https://x.com/immccouncil>.

of waivers for noncommercial requesters” like Requesters. *Schoenman v. FBI*, 604 F. Supp. 2d 174, 188 (D.D.C. 2009). Disclosure is in the public interest where it (A) “is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government” and (B) “is not primarily in the commercial interest of the [R]equesters.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); A)(iii); see also 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(1). Requesters satisfy both requirements.

#### A. DISCLOSURE OF THE INFORMATION IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Disclosing the requested records is likely to contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of the extent that OPLA attorneys coordinate, support, and otherwise facilitate ERO arrests of noncitizens at immigration courts.

ICE must consider two factors when assessing a disclosure’s contribution to public understanding of a government activity or operation, see 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(2): (i) whether the request has a “direct and clear” rather than “remote or attenuated” connection to “identifiable operations or activities of the federal government”; and (ii) whether disclosure “would be likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of those operations or activities.” *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(i)-(ii). Each factor supports a fee waiver here.

##### 1. *Request Has a Direct and Clear Connection to Government Operations or Activities*

First, this request has a direct and clear relation to the following governmental operations and activities: ICE enforcement operations and arrests at or near immigration courts.

##### 2. *Records Sought Will Contribute Significantly to Public Understanding of the Above*

Second, disclosing the records sought will “contribute significantly to public understanding of” the above activities. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii). Such contribution exists where “[d]isclosure of the requested information [is] meaningfully informative about [these] activities” and “contribute[s] to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester.” *Id.* 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A)-(B). Both criteria are satisfied here.

#### i. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS IS MEANINGFULLY INFORMATIVE

Disclosing requested records will be meaningfully informative about the extent that OPLA attorneys coordinate, support, and otherwise facilitate ERO arrests of noncitizens at immigration court. Disclosure is meaningfully informative where disclosed information is not “in the public domain, in either the same or a substantially identical form.” *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A).

Here, as demonstrated by the media coverage cited above, the public only knows that ICE is arresting noncitizens at or near immigration courts after moving to dismiss their immigration cases and that immigration judges are granting many dismissals, thereby allowing ICE to pursue

expedited removal.<sup>16</sup> Public knowledge does not extend to the extent that OPLA attorneys coordinate, support, and otherwise facilitate ERO arrests of noncitizens at immigration courts. Requested records are therefore “meaningfully informative” about these activities.

ii. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS CONTRIBUTES TO UNDERSTANDING OF A REASONABLY BROAD AUDIENCE

Disclosing requested records will contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in ICE arrests at or near immigration courts.

Requesters presumably satisfy this consideration as representatives of the news media. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(B). They both “gather[] information of potential interest to a segment of the public, use[] [their] editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distribute[] that work to an audience.” *Id.* § 5.11(b)(6); *see also Serv. Women’s Action Network v. Dep’t of Def.*, 888 F. Supp. 2d 282, 287-88 (D. Conn. 2012) (finding that ACLU is a news media representative); *cf. Elec. Privacy Info. Ctr. v. Dep’t of Def.*, 241 F. Supp. 2d 5, 10-15 (D.D.C. 2003) (finding that an organization similar to the Council is a news media representative).

Additionally, and alternatively, the ongoing and extensive media coverage in nationwide, state, and local outlets about ICE arrests at and near immigration courts demonstrates interest in these subjects by a reasonably broad audience. Requesters intend and are well-equipped to inform this audience about the information contained in responsive records, as they are experts in educating the public about immigration issues.

As detailed further in the expedited processing section, the Council analyzes government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this one—in interactive web reports and other publications available for free on its website.<sup>17</sup> And it circulates these publications for free through its website,<sup>18</sup> blog, email newsletters, and X an account with 64.9 thousand followers. It intends to publish content about records obtained from this request on its website and otherwise disseminate that content to its readers and the larger public.

Similarly, LatinoJustice PRLDEF produces newsletters, blogs, reports, opinion, editorials, and video interviews about the constitutional rights and equal protection of Latinos, immigrants, and other marginalized communities.<sup>19</sup> And it circulates these publications for free through its social media accounts. All of its materials are free and available to the public on its website.

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<sup>16</sup> See generally Media articles cited in footnotes 2-11.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Tarrant County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident, *supra* n. 13; Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement’s Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio’s Immigration Enforcement, *supra* n. 13; Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities, *supra* n. 13.

<sup>18</sup> The Council’s website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., LatinoJustice PRLDEF, 100 Days Later: The Harm So Far to Latinx Communities (April 2025), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/100-days-later-harm-so-far-latinx-communities>; LatinoJustice PRLDEF, A Promise to Harm: What’s at Stake for the Latino Community in Project 2025 (Oct. 2024), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/promise-harm-whats-stake-latinx-community-project-2025>.

In sum, Requesters intend to analyze the records they receive from this request and educate a broad audience of the interested public about them. And, Requesters have a demonstrated ability to do so.

#### B. REQUESTERS' LACK OF COMMERCIAL INTEREST

Turning to commercial interest, disclosure is not primarily in Requesters' commercial interest. As nonprofits, Requesters have no commercial interest in the records requested. *See Am. Ctr. for L. & Just. v. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, 573 F. Supp. 3d 78, 84 (D.D.C. 2021) (“[N]onprofit organizations by definition have no commercial interests.”); *Am. Immigr. Council v. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, 82 F. Supp. 3d 396, 406 (D.D.C. 2015) (finding that the Council has no such interest in its record requests). Rather, the request furthers Requesters' work to increase public understanding of immigration processes, including ICE enforcement operations in and around immigration courts and the extent that OPLA attorneys coordinate, support, and otherwise facilitate ERO arrests.

Alternatively, and additionally, the public interest in obtaining a better understanding of ICE's actions discussed above exceeds any commercial interest that ICE may ascribe to Requesters in records responsive to this request.

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Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Chris Opila

/s/ Rex Chen

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July 29, 2025

**Via Secure Release & Certified Mail**

ICE Privacy Office  
Immigration & Customs Enforcement  
500 12th St., SW Stop 5004  
Washington, DC 20536-5004

Senior Director of FOIA Operations  
Privacy Office, Mail Stop 0655  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane SW  
Washington, DC 20598-0655

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request on Terminations of Immigration Proceedings and ICE Arrests at Immigration Courts

Dear FOIA Officer:

The American Immigration Council (the “Council”) and LatinoJustice PRLDEF (collectively, “Requesters”) submit this request to U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (“ICE) under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Since around the middle of May 2025, ICE has been arresting noncitizens in or near Executive Office of Immigration Review (“EOIR”) immigration courts after they appear for a hearing in their immigration case. ICE has also been moving to dismiss immigration proceedings against noncitizens in immigration courts to pursue their expedited removal. Requesters seek certain records about these arrests and dismissals as well as expedited processing and a fee waiver.

**I. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Requesters seek all emails,<sup>1</sup> correspondence, calendar entries, meeting notes, text messages, Signal messages, WhatsApp messages, Microsoft Teams messages, and other similar communication records between one or more individuals listed in Column A of the table below and one or more individuals listed in Column B about a topic listed in Column C from April 1, 2025, to the date of a reasonable search for responsive records.

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<sup>1</sup> Requested emails exclude duplicates. (E.g. agencies should only produce one record of an email chain that contains all emails in that chain, rather than a record for each new email in the chain that contains all emails in the chain prior to that email).

A	B	C
ICE Director	The Chief Immigration Judge	Expedited removal
ICE Deputy Director	A Regional Deputy Chief Immigration Judge (“RDCJ”)	An ICE enforcement operation in or near an immigration court
ICE Chief of Staff	An Assistant Chief Immigration Judge (“ACIJ”)	An ICE arrest in or near an immigration court
ICE Associate Director of Enforcement and Removal Operations (“ERO”)	A court administrator	Dismissal or termination of immigration cases or proceedings in immigration court <sup>2</sup>
The Director of ERO Field Operations		
An Assistant Director of ERO Field Operations		
An ERO Field Office Director		
An ERO Field Office Deputy Director		

## II. FORMAT OF PRODUCTION

Requesters seek responsive electronic records in a machine-readable, native file format, with all metadata and load files. Requesters ask ICE to produce responsive materials in their entirety, including all attachments, appendices, enclosures, and/or exhibits, in a text-searchable, static-image format (PDF), in the best image quality in the agency’s possession, and that the records be provided in separate, Bates-stamped files.

## III. EXPEDITED PROCESSING

Requesters seek expedited processing of this request and certify that the statements herein are “true and correct” pursuant to 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3). FOIA obligates ICE to process requests expeditiously in two cases: (i) those where a requester “demonstrates a compelling need”—such as “urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity” if the requester is “primarily engaged in disseminating information,” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), (v)—and (ii) “in other cases determined by the agency,” *id.* § 552(a)(6)(E)(i), which, for the Department of Homeland Security, include “[a] matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which

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<sup>2</sup> Responsive records should be construed as exclusive of records that are part of a noncitizen’s record of proceedings (e.g., a motion to dismiss).

there exist possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence,” 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(1)(ii), (iv). Both cases exist here.

A. A MATTER OF WIDESPREAD AND EXCEPTIONAL INTEREST RAISING GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY CONCERNS

ICE arrests at and near immigration courts and dismissals of immigration cases are a matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence.

Fifty articles on an issue make it a matter of widespread and exceptional public interest. *Citizens for Resp. & Ethics in Wash. v. U.S. DOGE Serv.*, Case No. 25-cv-511 (CRC), 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (D.D.C. Mar. 10, 2025) (hereinafter “CREW”) see also *Brennan Ctr. for Just. v. Dep't of Com.* 498 F. Supp. 3d 87, 97 (D.D.C. 2020). A “handful of articles” also establishes such interest where the articles are “in a variety of publications” and “repeatedly reference the ongoing national discussion.” *Am. Civ. Liberties Union v. Dep't of Just.*, 321 F. Supp. 2d 24, 32 (D.D.C. 2004).

Here, one hundred and twenty four articles in nationwide, state, local, and international media outlets have covered ongoing ICE arrests at or near immigration courts in Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Charlotte, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Portland, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and elsewhere throughout the country since May 20, 2025.<sup>3</sup> This equates to almost two articles per day for seventy days.

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<sup>3</sup> Emiliano Tahu Gómez, ‘Unconstitutional Death Row’: At San Antonio Immigration Court, Rep. Casar Decries Arrests, Gets Few Answers, Austin American-Statesman (July 28, 2025, 6:19 PM), <https://www.statesman.com/story/news/politics/government/2025/07/28/unconstitutional-death-row-san-antonio-immigration-court-rep-casar-decries-arrests-gets-few-answers/85415560007/> (hereinafter, “Gómez re: San Antonio”); Meredith Haas, ICE Arrests Outside SA Immigration Court Draw Criticism from Lawmakers, Advocates, KENS5 (July 28, 2025, 6:06 PM), <https://www.kens5.com/article/news/local/san-antonio-texas-immigration-court-ice-arrests-deportation-congressman-greg-casar-advocates-lawmakers/273-dd5bcb13-bcb5-4ea2-b6bb-9827e056376c>; Sanford Nowlin, U.S. Rep. Greg Casar Calls ICE Arrests at San Antonio Immigration Court ‘Disturbing, Dystopian’, San Antonio Current (July 28, 2025, 5:03 PM), <https://www.sacurrent.com/news/us-rep-greg-casar-calls-ice-arrests-at-san-antonio-immigration-court-disturbing-dystopian-38097422>; Margaret Kadifa, ICE Arrests All Adults Without Children at S.F. Immigration Court Today, Mission Local (July 25, 2025, 1:05 PM), <https://missionlocal.org/2025/07/hed-ice-steps-up-arrests-at-s-f-immigration-court/> (hereinafter, “Kadifa re: Adult Arrests”); Pedro Camacho, ICE Arrests Migrant Deemed Mentally Impaired by Judge as He Exits Immigration Court: ‘He’s Clearly Not Understanding the Questions’, The Latin Times (July 25, 2025, 10:36 AM), <https://www.latintimes.com/ice-arrests-migrant-deemed-mentally-impaired-judge-he-exits-immigration-court-hes-clearly-not-587576>; Jordan Salama, When ICE Agents Are Waiting Outside the Courtroom, The New Yorker (July 25, 2025), <https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-lede/when-ice-agents-are-waiting-outside-the-courtroom>; Eileen Markey, Punished for Playing by the Rules: The Deliberate Cruelty of Trump’s Deportation Regime, The Nation (July 24, 2025), <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/ice-trump-detention-regime-cruelty/>; Dean Moses, ICE in Court: Feds Snatch More Immigrants as Lander, Williams Demand Safety Inspection of Detainment Center, AMNY (July 23, 2025), <https://www.amny.com/politics/ice-immigrants-court-lander-williams-07232025/> (hereinafter, “Mose re: ICE in Court”); Danielle James, ICE Arrests at Check-Ins, Court Hearings Are on the Rise. Michigan Is No Exception, MLIVE (July 21, 2025, 7:10 AM), <https://www.mlive.com/politics/2025/07/ice-arrests-at-check-ins-court-hearings-are-on->

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Much of the coverage express doubts about the integrity of ICE arrests at immigration courts, describing them as a due process violation and/or a tactic to increase deportations, forum shop, and scare noncitizens into giving up on their immigration cases.<sup>4</sup> Some coverage also alludes to

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<sup>4</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 3; Hass, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Adult Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Salama, *supra* n. 3; Markey, *supra* n. 3; Mose re: ICE in Court; James, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile, *supra* n. 3; Cole et al., *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Rivera et al., *supra* n. 3; Cuevas, *supra* n. 3; Abbot, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Browning & O'Brien, *supra* n. 3; Economist, *supra* n. 3; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Tavernise, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; DeAngelis, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 3; Singhai re: Volunteers, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 3; Moses re: ICE Raids, *supra* n. 3; Yahr, *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Brigida, *supra* n. 3; Katz, *supra* n. 3; Morrissey, *supra* n. 3; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Lyons, *supra* n. 3; Oehrli, *supra* n. 3; Bustillo, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa et al., *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n.14; Romero et al., *supra* n.14; Carey, *supra* n. 3; Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 3; Bradbury, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Gamboa, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Gonzalez & Ruelas, *supra* n. 3; Hebert, *supra* n. 3; Chien, *supra* n. 3; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 3; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 3; Solis, *supra* n. 3; Hughes, *supra* n. 3; Goodman et al., *supra* n. 3; Goodman & Salomon, *supra* n. 3; Shoemaker, *supra* n. 3; Ruiz et al., *supra* n. 3; Álvarez, *supra* n. 3; Lacy et al., *supra* n. 3; Ingram,

possible coordination between ERO and EOIR in making these arrests.<sup>5</sup> And several editorials also decry the arrests as a “set up” and for disregarding due process.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, eighty-seven articles in state, local, and nationwide media outlets have discussed ICE asking immigration judges to dismiss noncitizens’ immigration cases so it can pursue these noncitizens’ expedited removal.<sup>7</sup> Immigration attorneys also report ICE officials serving pre-signed dismissals based on “non-opposition” to noncitizen respondents at immigration courts without respondents not having notice of ICE’s motion to dismiss their immigration case and an

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*supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 3; Hendricks, *supra* n. 3; Schmidt, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Nowlin, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; Yahr, *supra* n. 3; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Díaz & Alvarez, *supra* n. 3; Schmidt, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Veronica Cardenas, *I Was Once an ICE Prosecutor. What I See Now in Immigration Courts Is Disturbing*, The Hill (July 17, 2025, 8:00AM), <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/5404863-i-was-once-an-ice-prosecutor-what-i-see-now-in-immigration-courts-is-disturbing/>; Brian Strassburger, S.J. & William Critchley-Menor, S.J., *What We Saw During An ICE Arrest & Immigration Court Hearing: The Breakdown of Justice in America*, America: The Jesuit Review (July 11, 2025), <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2025/07/11/ice-immigration-court-deportation-injustice-251119>; *Trump Disregards Due Process in Our Nation’s Immigration Courts*, San Antonio Express-News (June 27, 2025), <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/editorial/article/ice-arrest-immigration-court-texas-20395342.php>; *Masked ICE Arrests Raise Urgent Questions About U.S. Immigration Practices*, The Riverdale Press (June 26, 2025), <https://www.riverdalepress.com/stories/masked-ice-arrests-raise-urgent-questions-about-us-immigration-practices.187060>.

<sup>7</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 3; Nowlin, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Adult Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Camacho, *supra* n. 3; Salama, *supra* n. 3; Maurice DuBois et al., *3 Immigration Judges Speak Out About Their Firings: “It Was Arbitrary, Unfair*, CBS News (July 24, 2025, 8:34 PM), <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/immigration-judges-speak-out-firings-arbitrary-unfair/?intcid=CNM-00-10abd1h>; James, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 3; Rivera et al., *supra* n. 3; Cuevas, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile, *supra* n. 3; Singhai re: Week at San Diego Immigration Court, *supra* n. 3; Cole et al., *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Browning & O’Brien, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: 4 Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Economist, *supra* n. 3; Regalado & Karlamangla, *supra* n. 3; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 3; Vertuno, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 3; Gomez re: Faith Leaders, *supra* n. 3; Bremer, *supra* n. 3; May & Marr, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 3; Yahr, *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Brigida, *supra* n. 3; Marnin, *supra* n. 3; Katz, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 3; Morrissey, *supra* n. 3; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Escort, *supra* n. 3; Celeste, *supra* n. 3; Oehrli, *supra* n. 3; Garcia, *supra* n. 3; Lyons, *supra* n. 3; Bustillo, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Taylor et al., *supra* n. 3; Julia Ainsely, *Trump Admin Tells Immigration Judges to Dismiss Cases in Tactic to Speed Up Arrests*, NBC News (June 11, 2025, 5:00AM), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/trump-admin-tells-immigration-judges-dismiss-cases-tactic-speed-arrest-rcna212138>; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Saavedra & Arnold, *supra* n. 3; Weber, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Larson, *supra* n. 3; Romero et al., *supra* n. 3; Carey, *supra* n. 3; Schmidt, *supra* n. 3; Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Initial Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Díaz & Alvarez, *supra* n. 3; Bradbury, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Gamboa, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Sherry, *supra* n. 3; Gonzalez & Ruelas, *supra* n. 3; Noriega, *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: NYC Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Chien, *supra* n. 3; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 3; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Hendriks, *supra* n. 3; Montoya-Galvez & Cavazos, *supra* n. 3; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 3; Hughes, *supra* n. 3; Goodman et al., *supra* n. 3; Hagstrom & Melugin, *supra* n. 3; Goodman & Salomon, *supra* n. 3; Shoemaker, *supra* n. 3; Ruiz et al., *supra* n. 3; Álvarez, *supra* n. 3; Lacy et al., *supra* n. 3; Ingram, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 3.

opportunity to oppose it. Much of the coverage on these dismissals casts doubt on their integrity, describing them as a violation of due process and a tactic to deport noncitizens without hearings.<sup>8</sup>

Arrests and dismissals at immigration courts have outraged Americans around the country. Opposition to these actions and doubts about their legality have prompted mass protests at immigration courts in New York, Seattle, San Francisco, and elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> It has also prompted clergy, political leaders, and other members of the public to accompany noncitizens to their immigration court dates to document arrests and dismissals, attempt to stop the former, and help arrested noncitizens inform their families.<sup>10</sup> At least four federal judges have also deemed a

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<sup>8</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 3; Nowlin, *supra* n. 3; James, *supra* n. 3; Cole et al., *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Cuevas, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Browning & O'Brien, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: 4 Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; Kadifa re: Forum Shopping, *supra* n. 3; Yahr, *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: Mamadou Arrest, *supra* n.2; Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Brigida, *supra* n. 3; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Lyons, *supra* n. 3; Oehrli, *supra* n. 3; Garcia, *supra* n. 3; Bustillo, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Saavedra & Arnold, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Inside Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Conklin & Melugin, *supra* n. 3; Wilson re: Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Romero et al., *supra* n. 3; Carey, *supra* n. 3; Franklin & Hosseini, *supra* n. 3; Bradbury, *supra* n. 3; Nieto del Rio re: Boston Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Gamboa, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Chien, *supra* n. 3; Elsen-Rooney re: Dylan Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Malaver et al., *supra* n. 3; Gomez re: Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Hernández & Sacchetti, *supra* n. 3; Hughes, *supra* n. 3; Ruiz et al, *supra* n. 3; Lacy et al., *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Snatching, *supra* n. 3; Hendricks, *supra* n. 3; Seiwel re: ICE Opposition Grows, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Browning & O'Brien, *supra* n. 3; Alicia Victoria Lozano, *Violent Clashes at San Francisco Immigration Court Won't Deter Protestors, Organizers Say*, NBC News (July 10, 2025, 4:43 PM), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/violent-clashes-san-francisco-immigration-court-wont-deter-protesters-rca218059>; Sarah Rumpf-Whitten, *Watch: ICE Agents Fight Off Masked Mob Outside Blue City Immigration Court*, FOX News (July 10, 2025, 1:12 PM), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/watch-ice-agents-fight-off-masked-mob-outside-blue-city-immigration-court>; Shay Arthur, *Crowd Gathers for Immigration Rally at Memphis Court*, WREG Memphis (July 8, 2025, 12:07 PM), <https://wreg.com/news/local/crowd-gathers-for-immigration-rally-at-memphis-court/>; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Regalado & Karlamangla, *supra* n. 3; Li & Cheang, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; DeAngelis, *supra* n. 3; Stephania Jimenez, *PSL San Antonio Organizes Event to Educate Community on Immigration Laws Amid Rising ICE Deportations*, KSAT (July 1, 2025, 10:42 PM), <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2025/07/02/psl-san-antonio-organizes-event-to-educate-community-on-immigration-laws-amid-rising-ice-deportations/>; May & Marr, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Moore & Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Greg Micek et al., *Sacramento Immigration Court on Lockdown, Draws Protest After Suspected ICE Operation*, Capradio (June 12, 2025), <https://www.capradio.org/articles/2025/06/12/sacramento-immigration-court-on-lockdown-draws-protest-after-suspected-ice-operation/>; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Lyons, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Inside NYC Immigr. Cts., *supra* n. 3; Bellisile et al. re: Immigration Officers Intensify Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Alvarez, *supra* n. 3; George Kelly & Max Harrison-Caldwell, *Protesters Shut Down Immigration Court After ICE Arrests*, The San Francisco Standard (June 10, 2025, 1:00 PM), <https://sfstandard.com/2025/06/10/protesters-surround-immigration-court-after-ice-arrests/>; Kadifa et al., *supra* n. 3; Weber, *supra* n. 3; Joe Rivano Barros et al., *S.F. Police Arrest Dozens in 2<sup>nd</sup> Night of Protests Against ICE*, Mission Local (June 9, 2025, 8:16 PM), <https://missionlocal.org/2025/06/sf-mission-march-mobilized-thousands-against-ice/>; Boyanton, *supra* n. 3; Aleaziz et al., *supra* n. 3; Hogan re: NYC Immigr. Ct. Arrests; Ruiz et al, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Gómez re: San Antonio, *supra* n. 3; Salama, *supra* n. 3; Markey, *supra* n. 3; Mose re: ICE in Court; Bellisile et al. re: Volunteers Flock to Immigration Courts, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3; Belz, *supra* n. 3; Thamer, *supra* n. 3; Strassburger & Critchley-Menor, *supra* n. 5; Ciara Encinas, *Volunteers Describe How They Document ICE*

few specific arrests at immigration courts unlawful and ordered ICE to release the arrestees,<sup>11</sup> while a class of noncitizens represented by several rights groups has also sued to stop the arrests nationwide.<sup>12</sup>

Responsive records will address critical integrity questions left open by existing media coverage. Such records will show the extent that ICE and ERO leadership have coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

## B. URGENCY TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY BY A REQUESTER

Additionally, and alternatively, the Council has a compelling need for the records sought. It is primarily engaged in disseminating information. And urgency also exists to inform the public about the extent that ICE and ERO leadership have coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

### 1. *The Council Primarily Engages in Information Dissemination*

The Council primarily engages in disseminating information and analysis on immigration and other issues. Organizations primarily engaged in information dissemination include not only “media organizations and newspapers,” *Heritage Found. v. Entl. Prot. Agency*, Civil Action No. 23-748, 2023 WL 2954418, \*3 (D.D.C. 2023), but also “non-partisan law and public policy group[s]” like Requesters that “regularly write[], publish[], and disseminat[e], information online,” *Brennan Ctr. for Just.*, 498 F. Supp. 3d at 98 (Brennan Center); see also *Ctr. for Pub. Integrity v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 411 F. Supp. 3d 5 (D.D.C. 2019) (Center for Public Integrity); *Protect Dem. Proj. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293, 298 (D.D.C. 2017) (Protect Democracy Project); *Am. Civil Liberties Union*, 321 F. Supp. 2d at 29 n.5 (Electronic Privacy Information Center (“EPIC”)).

Like Brennan Center, Protect Democracy Project, EPIC, and Center for Public Integrity, the Council authors factsheets and special reports on proposed and actual immigration policies,

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*Arrests in Immigration Courts*, Fox 5 (July 11, 2025, 4 :55 PM), <https://fox5sandiego.com/news/local-news/san-diego/san-diego-court-ice-arrests/>; Zavala, *supra* n. 3; Joey Safchik, *ICE Handcuffs 71-Year-Old Grandmother, a US Citizen, at San Diego Immigration Court*, 7 San Diego (July 9, 2025, 7 :06 PM), <https://www.nbcсандiego.com/news/local/ice-arrests-71-year-old-grandmother-a-us-citizen-at-san-diego-immigration-court/3865098/>; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Rossoto, *supra* n. 3; Khan, *supra* n. 3; Singhai re: Volunteers, *supra* n. 3; Gomez re: Faith Leaders, *supra* n. 3; Shapiro re: ICE Tactic Change, *supra* n. 3; Sanchez & Ebrahimji, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Arrest, *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lander Escort, *supra* n. 3; Micek et al., *supra* n. 3; Stone, *supra* n. 3; Hobbs re: Sacramento Immigr. Ct. Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Estrada re: Two Arrests, *supra* n. 3; Boyanton, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>11</sup> See Markey, *supra* n. 3; Bernstein, *supra* n. 3; Baumhardt, *supra* n. 3; Ramos, *supra* n. 3; Vertuno, *supra* n. 3.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Rivera et al., *supra* n. 3; Abbot, *supra* n. 3; Bellisile, *supra* n. 3; Cole et al., *supra* n. 3; Ferré-Sadurní re: Lawsuit, *supra* n. 3.

some of which shape media coverage in outlets across the nation.<sup>13</sup> It also analyzes immigration data and other government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this one—in interactive web reports.<sup>14</sup> And it circulates its reports and factsheets through its website,<sup>15</sup> blog, email newsletters, and an X (formerly known as Twitter) account with 64.9 thousand followers.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Urgency Exists to Inform the Public

Urgency also exists to inform the public about the extent that ICE and ERO leadership have coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

Requisite urgency exists where “the request touches on ‘a matter of current exigency to the American public’” and delay “compromises a significant recognized interest.” *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (quoting *Al-Fayed v. CIA*, 254 F.3d 300, 310 (D.C. Cir. 2001)). The above topics are exigent to the American public, as demonstrated by the one hundred and twenty plus articles discussing arrests cited in this request, the eighty plus articles discussing dismissals cited herein, and the mass protests against these actions outside immigration courts. See *CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (finding urgency to inform the public based on at least fifty articles on the issue); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of No. Cal. v. U.S. Dep’t of Def.*, No. C 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (same); 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e)(3) (“The existence of numerous articles published on a given subject can be helpful to establishing the requirement that there be an ‘urgency to inform’ the public on the topic.”).

Delayed production of responsive records would compromise the ongoing public debate about the propriety of ICE arrests and dismissals at immigration courts, particularly the extent ICE and

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<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., *Trump-Backed Mass Deportations Would Cost Billions*, Report Says, CBS News (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/trump-backed-mass-deportations-would-cost-billions-report/> (discussing Am. Immigr. Council, *Mass Deportation: Devastating Costs to America, Its Budget and Economy* (Oct. 2, 2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/mass-deportation/>); Emma Goldberg, *What if Trump Deported Millions of Immigrants*, The New York Times (Oct. 22, 2024), [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.990iYFTTpEl6](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/10/22/us/elections/trump-deportation.html?unlocked_article_code=1.Uk4.Pjao.990iYFTTpEl6) (same); *What Trump’s Mass Deportation Plan Might Look Like If He Wins the Election*, 60 Minutes (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjCHjwLSMFI> (same); *Mass Deportations*, Last Week Tonight (Oct. 27, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UEhMDAIX1Y> (same); *The Costs of Mass Deportation? Expert Breaks Down Trump’s Immigration Plan*, Amanpour & Company, (Oct. 28, 2024), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dmfo3atidKE> (same).

<sup>14</sup> See Am. Immigr. Council, *Torrance County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/torrance-detention-facility>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement’s Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio’s Immigration Enforcement* (2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/foia/ohio-border-patrol-abuse>; Am. Immigr. Council, *Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities* (2019), [https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory\\_tool](https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/en/refugee-resettlement-us/#exploratory_tool)

<sup>15</sup> The Council’s website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>16</sup> See <https://x.com/immrcouncil>.

ERO leadership have coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate these arrests and dismissals. *Cf. CREW*, 2025 WL 752367, at \*13 (expediting a request for records about the U.S. DOGE Service); *Protect Dem. Proj.*, 263 F. Supp. 3d 293 at 299 (expediting a request for records about a possible unlawful airstrike on Syria); *Am. Civil Liberties Union of N. Cal. v. U.S. Dep't of Def.*, No. C. 06-01698, 2006 WL 1469418, at \*6-7 (N.D. Cal. May 25, 2006) (expediting a request for records about possible unlawful military surveillance of protestors); *Freedom Coalition of Doctors for Choice v. Ctrs. For Disease Control & Prevention*, 2:23-cv-102, 2024 WL 69084, at \*14 (N.D. Tex. Jan. 5, 2024) (expediting a request disputing the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines).

#### IV. FEE WAIVER REQUEST

Requestors seek a fee waiver since “disclosure of the requested records is in the public interest.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). ICE must construe “the FOIA fee waiver provision . . . liberally . . . in favor of waivers for noncommercial requesters” like Requesters. *Schoenman v. FBI*, 604 F. Supp. 2d 174, 188 (D.D.C. 2009). Disclosure is in the public interest where it (A) “is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government” and (B) “is not primarily in the commercial interest of the [R]equesters.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); A(iii); see also 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(1). Requesters satisfy both requirements.

##### A. DISCLOSURE OF THE INFORMATION IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Disclosing the requested records is likely to contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of the extent that ICE and ERO leadership have coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

ICE must consider two factors when assessing a disclosure’s contribution to public understanding of a government activity or operation, see 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(k)(2): (i) whether the request has a “direct and clear” rather than “remote or attenuated” connection to “identifiable operations or activities of the federal government”; and (ii) whether disclosure “would be likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of those operations or activities.” *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(i)-(ii). Each factor supports a fee waiver here.

##### 1. Request Has a Direct and Clear Connection to Government Operations or Activities

First, this request has a direct and clear relation to the following governmental operations and activities: the extent that ICE and ERO leadership have coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

##### 2. Records Sought Will Contribute Significantly to Public Understanding of the Above

Second, disclosing the records sought will “contribute significantly to public understanding of” the above activities. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii). Such contribution exists where “[d]isclosure of the requested information [is] meaningfully informative about [these] activities” and “contribute[s]

to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester.” *Id.* 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A)-(B). Both criteria are satisfied here.

i. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS IS MEANINGFULLY INFORMATIVE

Disclosing requested records will be meaningfully informative about the extent that ICE and ERO leadership have coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts. Disclosure is meaningfully informative where disclosed information is not “in the public domain, in either the same or a substantially identical form.” *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(A).

Here, as demonstrated by the media coverage cited above, the public only knows that ICE is arresting noncitizens at or near immigration courts after moving to dismiss their immigration cases and that immigration judges are granting many dismissals, thereby allowing ICE to pursue expedited removal.<sup>17</sup> Public knowledge does not extend to the extent ICE and ERO leadership have coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts. Requested records are therefore “meaningfully informative” about these activities.

ii. DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS CONTRIBUTES TO UNDERSTANDING OF A REASONABLY BROAD AUDIENCE

Disclosing requested records will contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in ICE arrests and dismissals at or near immigration courts.

Requesters presumably satisfy this consideration as representatives of the news media. *Id.* § 5.11(k)(2)(ii)(B). They both “gather[] information of potential interest to a segment of the public, use[] [their] editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distribute[] that work to an audience.” *Id.* § 5.11(b)(6); *see also Serv. Women’s Action Network v. Dep’t of Def.*, 888 F. Supp. 2d 282, 287-88 (D. Conn. 2012) (finding that ACLU is a news media representative); *cf. Elec. Privacy Info. Ctr. v. Dep’t of Def.*, 241 F. Supp. 2d 5, 10-15 (D.D.C. 2003) (finding that an organization similar to the Council is a news media representative).

Additionally, and alternatively, the ongoing and extensive media coverage in nationwide, state, and local outlets about ICE arrests at and near immigration courts and dismissal of proceedings demonstrates interest in these subjects by a reasonably broad audience. Requesters intend and are well-equipped to inform this audience about the information contained in responsive records, as they are experts in educating the public about immigration issues.

As detailed further in the expedited processing section, the Council analyzes government records—including those obtained through FOIA requests like this one—in interactive web

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<sup>17</sup> See generally Media articles cited in footnotes 2-12.

reports and other publications available for free on its website.<sup>18</sup> And it circulates these publications for free through its website,<sup>19</sup> blog, email newsletters, and X an account with 64.9 thousand followers. It intends to publish content about records obtained from this request on its website and otherwise disseminate that content to its readers and the larger public.

Similarly, LatinoJustice PRLDEF produces newsletters, blogs, reports, opinion, editorials, and video interviews about the constitutional rights and equal protection of Latinos, immigrants, and other marginalized communities.<sup>20</sup> And it circulates these publications for free through its social media accounts. All of its materials are free and available to the public on its website.

In sum, Requesters intend to analyze the records they receive from this request and educate a broad audience of the interested public about them. And, Requesters have a demonstrated ability to do so.

## B. REQUESTERS' LACK OF COMMERCIAL INTEREST

Turning to commercial interest, disclosure is not primarily in Requesters' commercial interest. As nonprofits, Requesters have no commercial interest in the records requested. See *Am. Ctr. for L. & Just. v. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, 573 F. Supp. 3d 78, 84 (D.D.C. 2021) (“[N]onprofit organizations by definition have no commercial interests.”); *Am. Immigr. Council v. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, 82 F. Supp. 3d 396, 406 (D.D.C. 2015) (finding that the Council has no such interest in its record requests). Rather, the request furthers Requesters' work to increase public understanding of immigration processes, including ICE enforcement operations in and around immigration courts and the extent that ICE and ERO leadership have coordinated with EOIR leadership and support staff to facilitate arrests, dismissals, and enforcement actions in immigration courts.

Alternatively, and additionally, the public interest in obtaining a better understanding of ICE's actions discussed above exceeds any commercial interest that ICE may ascribe to Requesters in records responsive to this request.

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Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., *Torrance County Detention Facility: Troubling Role in Detaining Haitian Migrants During the 2021 Del Rio Incident*, *supra* n. 14; *Ohio, We Have a Problem: Border Patrol & Local Law Enforcement's Patterns & Tactics of Abuse in Ohio's Immigration Enforcement*, *supra* n. 14; *Refugee Resettlement in U.S. Cities*, *supra* n. 14.

<sup>19</sup> The Council's website received 4,506,460 views from 2,952,034 different users in 2024.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., LatinoJustice PRLDEF, *100 Days Later: The Harm So Far to Latinx Communities* (April 2025), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/100-days-later-harm-so-far-latinx-communities>; LatinoJustice PRLDEF, *A Promise to Harm: What's at Stake for the Latino Community in Project 2025* (Oct. 2024), <https://www.latinjustice.org/en/pressreport/promise-harm-whats-stake-latinx-community-project-2025>.

Very truly yours,

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