

DEBUNKING THE DHS MISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN

ILLINOIS CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS RELEASE
COMPREHENSIVE FACT CHECK REFUTING THE TRUMP
ADMINISTRATION'S FALSE ACCOUNTS OF DANGEROUS
IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS IN ILLINOIS

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FACT CHECK: DEBUNKING THE DHS MISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has repeatedly spread misinformation about events in Illinois and its so-called “Operation Midway Blitz,” only to be contradicted by eyewitness accounts, video evidence, and local law enforcement. Despite the evidence debunking these claims, DHS misinformation is being used by President Trump to support an unlawful and unconstitutional troop deployment to Illinois and to mislabel peaceful protestors, journalists, and elected officials as “Antifa.” This misinformation and the reckless, dangerous, and cruel actions of federal agents in Illinois should not be used to support the Trump Administration’s unlawful attacks on our democracy and constitutional rights.

Claim: Violent [rioters](#) are assaulting federal law enforcement.

Reality: Federal agents have engaged in excessive force against overwhelmingly peaceful protestors, regularly deploying tear gas, flash bang grenades, and other weapons against protesters and journalists—and even members of the clergy—who are engaged in peaceful and lawful activity.

- In Illinois alone, federal officials have:
 - [Arrested](#) an elected official merely for asking if agents had a warrant.
 - [Threatened, physically assaulted, injured and subjected to arrest several members](#) of the press, [including by firing a pepper ball at the car of a journalist driving by the Broadview facility](#), causing chemical agents to enter her car.
 - [Threatened](#) local police, telling them that there will be “a s*** show” during protests in Broadview, Illinois, in retaliation for local officials calling on ICE officials to “stop making war on our community.”
 - Detained and [pushed](#) to the ground a 70-year-old Air Force veteran for handing his cell phone to a protestor.
 - Responded to [a pastor’s prayer](#) by firing pepper balls directly into his face.
 - Regularly [deployed tear gas](#) on peaceful protestors in neighborhoods around Chicago.

Claim: DHS is trying its best to [coordinate](#) with local officials in Illinois, and local police [refuse](#) to cooperate.

Reality: DHS officials refuse to share information with local officials, and federal government actions have endangered first responders.

- In early October, DHS Secretary Noem arrived in Broadview with an entourage of [cameras and a production crew](#) for a photo op—and failed to coordinate a meeting with the Broadview mayor, instead appearing unannounced at the Village Hall when the mayor was unable to meet. Meanwhile, snipers, an armored vehicle, and militarized federal agents with assault rifles responded to protests outside the Broadview ICE facility.
- Demonstrating the lack of coordination, federal officials have even exposed [local police](#) to tear gas.

- According to the [sworn declaration](#) of the Broadview police chief who witnessed this conduct daily:

“The use of chemical agents by federal agents at the ICE facility in Broadview has often been arbitrary and indiscriminate. At times it is used when the crowd is as small as ten people. The deployment of chemical agents is dangerous to the health of both demonstrators and first responders on the scene. In addition, when ICE agents deploy chemical agents, it causes the crowd of protesters to disperse, sometimes running into the road, which is dangerous both for them and for motorists. Broadview police officers have had to attempt to position themselves in a way that directs the crowd to disperse in a safe manner. Over the course of my career in law enforcement, the way in which federal agents have indiscriminately used chemical agents in Broadview is unlike anything I have seen before.”

Claim: DHS law enforcement officers are not [engaged in racial profiling](#).

Reality: DHS officials are arresting individuals on the basis of race or ethnicity. In fact, when asked, Border Patrol Commander Gregory Bovino [admitted](#) that race and ethnicity play a significant role in arrests, stating that when considering arrest factors, an agent examines “obviously, the particular characteristics of an individual, how they look.”

- In Illinois, a judge found that ICE [illegally](#) arrested nearly two dozen people, conducting warrantless arrests without probable cause to believe someone is in the United States unlawfully and is a flight risk.
 - As the [judge noted](#), probable cause is particularly critical given that “[c]itizens and non-citizens with legal status who share commonalities (such as race/ethnicity, a preference for speaking Spanish, or employment in certain occupations or locations) with—or mere physical proximity to—Latino foreign nationals may now find themselves more likely to be subjected to ICE questioning for sometimes lengthy periods of detention, and, potentially, warrantless arrests during immigration enforcement operations.”
 - The decision followed the [Supreme Court granting a stay](#) in a 9th Circuit case in September that essentially allows the federal government to, as Justice Sotomayor noted in dissent, “seize anyone who looks Latino, speaks Spanish, and appears to work a low wage job.”
- In one incident in Chicago, masked, armed agents dressed in camouflage, arrested a [family of four](#), including two young children aged three and eight, in Millennium Park in Chicago. The mother noted that “[t]here were a lot more people there, but the agents came directly to us because of how we look,” going on to say “[i]t’s not fair.”

Claim: DHS law enforcement officers are not [targeting U.S. citizens](#).

Reality: Immigrants and U.S. citizens alike have been targeted by masked, unidentified agents conducting violent raids, arrests, and arbitrary detentions.

- Federal immigration agents in Waukegan [detained](#) a U.S. citizen, but the local mayor intervened on her behalf. Federal agents claimed that she was impeding a federal law

enforcement operation, but she believes she was targeted due to having a Mexican flag on her car.

- Federal agents detained a [U.S. citizen of Latino descent working in the service industry](#) and held her for an hour, even after she presented her passport. The agents stated that she didn't "look like" a person with her last name and accused her of lying.
- Federal agents [detained several U.S. citizens](#), including Jacqueline Lopez and Elianne Bahena, staffers for Alderman Michael Rodriguez, during a militarized raid in the Little Village neighborhood in Chicago. In addition to serving as Alderman Rodriguez's chief of staff, Bahena serves as an elected 10th District Police Commissioner.

Claim: DHS is arresting the [“worst of the worst.”](#)

Reality: Federal agents are mostly detaining people who have [committed no crimes](#) in order to meet an arbitrary [3,000-person daily arrest quota](#).

- ICE and other federal agents conducting immigration enforcement actions are sweeping up hardworking, longstanding members of our communities in disorganized, dangerous, and, raids and arrests—including an arrest that turned [deadly](#).
- In fact, this Administration is undermining investigations into the “worst of the worst” to arrest immigrants with no criminal convictions. The Trump Administration has pulled federal law enforcement officials away from investigating serious threats to our communities, including [child sex exploitation](#), [counterterrorism](#), and [national security threats](#), to focus on its disastrous mass deportation campaign.

Claim: Illinois is like a [war zone](#).

Reality: Illinois is a welcoming, vibrant state that has long thrived thanks to the contributions of immigrants to our communities and our economy.

- Illinois does not need National Guard troops or militarized federal agents targeting our friends and neighbors. One [analysis](#) found that one video that the White House posted supposedly showing Chicago in “chaos” was littered with outdated footage of drug busts, arrests, and deportation raids *in other states*, including Florida, Texas, South Carolina and Nebraska.