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US NEWS

US launches new bid to keep migrants detained by denying hearings, memo shows

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Federal prosecutors handling deportation cases have been urged to keep illegal migrants in custody by trying to deny them bond hearings, according to an internal Trump administration memo.

The government lawyers are being advised “to make alternative arguments in support of continued detention” during ICE hearings, according to recent guidance sent to the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement lawyers and obtained by Reuters.

The guidance also directed the ICE prosecutors to interpret a number of immigration laws as “prohibitions on release” after arrest.

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A bus waits at the Bluebonnet Detention Facility, where Venezuelan migrants at the center of a US Supreme Court ruling on deportation are held in Anson, Texas, in April.

REUTERS

The memo did caution that the new policy shift was “likely to be litigated.”

It comes as President Trump has been ramping up his war on illegal immigration in the US after millions of people spilled over the southern border during the Biden administration.

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The president scored a big win in his bid with the July 4 passage of his Big Beautiful Bill, which funneled about \$150 billion to battle illegal immigration over the next several years.

Among that funding was about \$45 billion for ICE detention centers – which will soon enable the federal government to hold about 100,000 people.

That's nearly double the 58,000 held as of June.



A US Department Of Homeland Security and US Customs and Border Protection sign is displayed at the US Customs and Border Protection Headquarters in DC.

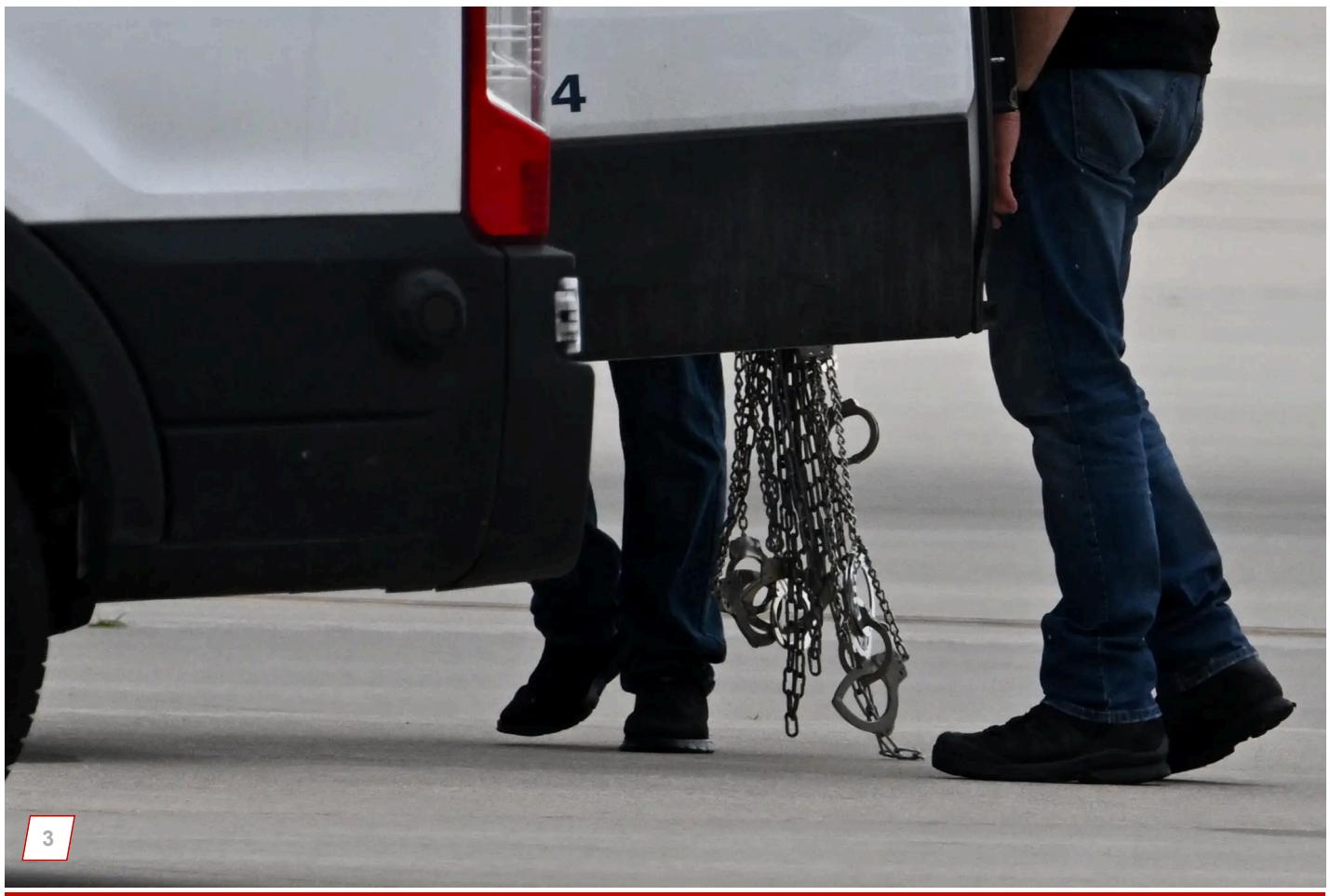
Getty Images

Some critics including Biden administration Homeland Security official Tom Jawetz have cautioned that the new bond policy could upturn decades-old legal precedents for detention.

Jawetz called the policy a “radical departure” and that it could “explode the detention population.”

The memo was first reported by the Washington Post on July 8.

Just days after the Big Beautiful Bill landed ICE with billions of dollars in new funding, Trump’s border czar Tom Homan announced plans to begin a quota to arrest 7,000 illegal immigrants per day – more than double the 3,000 daily arrest goal currently in place.



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Handcuffs are carried after being removed from detained migrants who boarded a plane after being transferred from an ICE detention facility at Gary/Chicago International Airport in Indiana in June.

REUTERS

"For those that say 3,000 a day is too much, I want to remind them, do the math, we have to arrest 7,000 every single day for the remainder of this administration just to catch the ones Biden released into the nation," Homan told reporters outside the White House on July 7.

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But that policy could be undermining the morale of ICE officials, The Post reported, with sources lamenting that such a quota could shift the focus away from dangerous criminals and lead to wider street-level round-ups.

"All that matters is numbers, pure numbers. Quantity over quality," one ICE source said, adding that the quota was not "unmaintainable" at current staffing levels and that it was "killing morale."

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About 10,000 new ICE officers are expected to be hired under the new funding, plus around 3,000 new border guards.

And new detention centers have already begun springing up – including the 1,000 bed “Alligator Alcatraz” opened in the Florida Everglades in July.

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It is interesting to see how media is framing this as something new. It is existing law, which the previous administration just decided to not enforce.

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