



## Trump supporters welcome the first steps in his immigration crackdown

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Joel Rose



President Donald Trump is cheered by supporters at the Circa Resort and Casino in Las Vegas on Jan. 25, 2025.

*Leah Millis/Reuters*

WASHINGTON — Dozens of demonstrators gathered recently in a park across the street from the White House, waving Cuban flags and chanting.

They came from across the U.S. to show their support for President Trump, and push him to be even tougher on Cuba's Communist government.

That's not all they like about his policies.

"We are thankful that Donald Trump is taking action against illegal immigration," said Alexeys Blanco Diaz, a demonstrator who traveled from Spokane, Washington for the event.



NATIONAL

**The prospect of immigration agents entering schools is sending shockwaves among communities**

President Trump kicked off his second term with a [dramatic crackdown on immigration](#): ramping up arrests, terminating [temporary legal protections](#), suspending [refugee admissions](#), and restarting [migrant detention at Guantanamo Bay](#).

Immigrant advocates call those moves cruel and unnecessary. But many of Trump's supporters are applauding these early steps.

That includes Blanco Diaz, who wore a red MAGA baseball hat with the numbers 45 and 47 on the side. There is, however, one key way that Blanco Diaz differs from your average Trump supporter: he is himself a recent immigrant to the U.S. He fled Cuba, and turned himself in after crossing the U.S.-Mexico border illegally in Arizona in 2022.

"I was expecting that the officials would ask me, what are you doing here? Why are you coming to this country? I came in with my papers, with all of the evidence I have of being oppressed in Cuba," said Blanco Diaz, whose asylum case is still working its way through the courts.

"But nobody asked me anything. And at that moment, I thought, this is not right," he said.



Alexeys Blanco Diaz, left, and Marcelo Tier at a demonstration near the White House last week.

Joel Rose/NPR

If Blanco Diaz showed up at the border today, under President Trump, he would likely be turned away.

The White House moved quickly to block access to asylum at the border. The Trump administration has also ended several Biden-era policies, closing off the [CBP One app](#) that allowed migrants to enter legally to ask for asylum, as well as a [special humanitarian program](#) for migrants from Cuba and a handful of other countries.

"I think that it is a temporary necessity in order to organize the unfortunate chaos of allowing three, four or five million migrants into this country," said Kiele Cabrera, who grew up in Miami, but still has family back in Cuba.



NATIONAL

### **ICE has arrested scores of migrants in the U.S. who have no criminal records**

There were a record number of migrant apprehensions at the border during the Biden administration, though the numbers dropped significantly last year.

Still, some Trump supporters are eager for a tougher approach.

"It's an unfortunate and sad situation," said Tzvi Dechter, who was visiting Washington from Lighthouse Point, Florida with his family. "But, you know, there's a lot of things going on here in America that need to be taken care of and cleaned. And I'm happy that someone is doing it."

Near the Washington Monument, Beatrice Richards was selling Trump sweatshirts, hats and mugs laid out on a couple of tables on the sidewalk. Richards, who was born in Uganda and now lives in Washington, says she has voted for Trump twice, and is glad to see him keeping migrants out of the U.S.

"That's very good, because those are bad people. Coming to harm people -- good people here in America," Richards said. "They are criminals."



POLITICS

### **Homeland Security's workforce might not be as big as Trump's immigration goals**

There's no evidence of a widespread migrant crime wave, although a few grisly cases have drawn a lot of attention. The Trump administration has tried to play up that narrative, with a series of high-profile arrests in major cities including [Chicago](#), [New York](#) and [Denver](#).

Critics say these well-publicized raids are more flash than substance, and are stoking [fear and chaos](#) in immigrant communities. But, so far, a lot of Trump's supporters are on board.

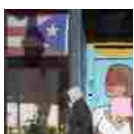
"My goodness, they're going a thousand miles an hour. But it's everything that he said he wanted to do thus far," said Enoch Rich, a pastor from Central City, Kentucky, who was wearing a knit Trump hat as he visited the Lincoln Memorial in Washington last week.



While he supports the administration's crackdown, Rich says it has been alarming for congregants in his own church who immigrated from Mexico.

"Those that are in the congregation are afraid," he said. He's tried to comfort them by saying they're not likely to be targets.

"I feel like things are not going to go down that way," Rich said. "I do believe, from what I've seen about Trump, that as tough as he is, that he does have a soft heart."



NATIONAL

## Justice Department sues Chicago and Illinois over 'sanctuary' laws

Rich says immigration policy is a balance that can tip easily in either direction. And he prays President Trump won't go too far.

He's not the only Trump supporter who worries about the impact of the president's crackdown on immigrants [who haven't committed any crimes](#).

"It's unfortunate and tragic, because you have a lot of families from other parts of the world that are seeking asylum in freedom and safety and security in this country," said Sean Lanham of El Paso, Texas.

"But it's necessary. It's something that needs to be done in this country," Lanham said. "We can't take in everybody from the world."

*Julian Aguilar contributed reporting from El Paso.*

president trump

immigration, illegal immigration, immigration reform, undocumented immigrants



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