

ICE Under Fire: The Radical Left's Crusade Against Immigration Enforcement

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My name is Mia Cathell. I am an investigative journalist at *The Washington Examiner*. I have been closely covering civil unrest in the U.S. since the 2020 racial justice riots. Members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to testify about this important issue.

When the uprisings against ICE erupted on the West Coast in June, we saw uniform signage, tactical gear, and boots-on-the-ground activists deployed to Los Angeles, the epicenter of the unrest, almost instantaneously. These certainly were not spontaneous riots. They were well-coordinated and, in fact, well-funded.

What we uncovered was an orchestrated operation, and those at the forefront of the anti-ICE resistance have received ample funding.

Chief among them is the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, or CHIRLA for short. CHIRLA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is part of a sprawling anti-ICE activist network in the Los Angeles area serving as rapid response to deportation sightings.

CHIRLA instructs its followers via Bluesky to report ICE encounters to the Los Angeles Rapid Response Network, abbreviated LARRN. CHIRLA co-launched LARRN in late January with the expressed intent to counter the incoming Trump administration's immigration policies.

Here's how it works: In response to reports of immigration enforcement called in over its hotline, LARRN sends out "cells" comprised of immigration lawyers, legal observers, and activist organizers in order to mobilize counter-efforts against ICE.

This rapid response model is replicated elsewhere across the country, using crowd-sourced surveillance software, some quite sophisticated, or simply social media to track ICE activity in the region and alert activists, as well as illegal immigrants, to nearby ICE agents.

CHIRLA has acquired its funding from federal and state sources. According to CHIRLA's tax filing from fiscal 2023, the group reported receiving about \$34 million in government grants.

In its capacity as a legal services provider, CHIRLA helps illegal immigrants, including those convicted of crimes, avoid deportation. Grant records show that Homeland Security, the very agency CHIRLA's protesting, has awarded the anti-deportation group several six-figure grants since 2014, as part of an immigration aid program that financially supports organizations "actively working to remove barriers to naturalization."

CHIRLA has also received generous taxpayer funding from the state of California. In 2023, the state's Department of Social Services awarded CHIRLA about \$3 million for an initiative providing free legal services to immigrants, such as application assistance in "cases seeking immigration remedies," i.e. deportation relief. In 2022, CHIRLA received \$1.37 million from California's social services department, specifically to provide pro bono defense services in removal proceedings.

CHIRLA's deportation defense team, nicknamed "Warriors for Justice," was bankrolled by the Los Angeles Justice Fund, a public-private partnership between liberal grantmaking foundations, the city of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County. These grantees formed "a removal defense pipeline" in the county.

Another far-left agitator group fomenting anti-ICE unrest is the foreign-funded Party for Socialism and Liberation, whose chapters mass mobilize their forces in major U.S. cities, many of them so-called "sanctuaries," or safe havens welcoming illegal immigration.

At the time of the Los Angeles riots, PSL activated its followers from all corners of the country to take to the streets, rise up in solidarity, stage parallel protests, and force "ICE Out of LA," a rallying cry that has since been repurposed for cities targeted by federal immigration authorities.

PSL's San Antonio arm explained to local press that the more cities that oppose ICE operations through these pressure campaigns, the more difficult a federal crackdown becomes.

PSL chapters, such as the ones operating in D.C. and Milwaukee, continue to convene massive "ICE Out" rallies to "Stop the Raids." Most recently, PSL led an "emergency" march in Charlotte, where activists were seen waving Mexican flags, to drive out Border Patrol and "defeat the deportation machine." PSL Charlotte began circulating call-to-action material days before Border Patrol made landfall in North Carolina. A coalition of local and national organizations sponsored the protest, including 50501, one of the organizers behind the nationwide "No Kings" movement.

Left unchecked, these powerful actors work in tandem to advance agendas harmful to the safety and security of the nation. Their shared objective is to obstruct the enforcement of U.S. immigration law—legislation that Congress enacted. Simply put, the men and women of ICE are law enforcement officers tasked with carrying out their congressionally mandated duties. They are increasingly under the threat of targeted attacks and hostile demonstrations that often devolve into violent clashes. At this rate, I fear more political violence is to come unless federal officials take further steps to protect our federal officers. Thank you.