

Dear Governor Whitmer:

GR Rapid Response to ICE urges you to use your executive emergency powers to release all immigrant detainees in the state of Michigan. Many of these people--our friends and neighbors--are in detention due to minor civil infractions like driving without a license. They are being held in close confinement during a pandemic, and are at great danger of contracting and dying from COVID-19. People in jail cannot practice social distancing. The jails that immigrants are held in are unhygienic, lacking in proper medical care, overcrowded, and will ensure the spread of the disease.

A former director of ICE has [called for thousands of immigrants to be released from detention](#). There has been a coronavirus outbreak at [Rikers Island affecting at least 38 people](#). An employee of an ICE detention center in New Jersey [has tested positive for COVID-19](#). Immigrants being held at another New Jersey detention center are [on a hunger strike for soap](#). Further outbreaks at prisons and detention centers are inevitable, and 3,000 physicians have signed [a letter urging ICE to release detainees](#). It's no longer a question of whether an immigrant will die from COVID-19 in detention, but how many.

Additionally, we urge you to use your influence to pressure local sheriffs to end their collaboration with ICE by ceasing the sharing of information with ICE and barring ICE from their jails. Funneling people into ICE detention increases the number of people in detention and exacerbates this health crisis. We urge you to decrease the concentration of people in the Michigan criminal system by engaging in increased early release, cite and release, and suspended booking of people for parole or probation violations. We urge that immediate steps for pretrial release be taken, particularly for vulnerable populations, and that for those who remain in custody, testing and healthcare protocols be immediately put in place, as well as increased access to visitation, phone calls, and mail.

GR Rapid Response to ICE joins with our friends at No Detention Centers in Michigan in calling for an immediate freeze on deportations and in-person immigration court proceedings in the interest of protecting public safety. GR Rapid Response to ICE also recognizes that mass incarceration is particularly harmful to Black and brown people, and we would like to see you use your power to move away from this harmful system and toward one that is focused on transformative justice for all people. With this in mind, we urge you to also release all long-serving elderly people and chronically ill people from Michigan prisons.

Governor Whitmer, you can stop history from repeating itself in a horrific way by releasing all immigrants detained in Michigan right now.