

LAID-ON-THE-TABLE

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

Assembly Information Memorandum

No. AIM - 2026

Meeting Date: February 3, 2026

From: ASSEMBLY MEMBERS SILVERS AND VOLLAND

Subject: AR 2026-35: A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY REAFFIRMING ITS COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE U.S. CONSTITUTION AND CALLING UPON THE ALASKA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO PASS LEGISLATION REFORMING FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS.

For the Assembly's consideration, the attached news articles are provided:

- *Detention of Soldotna Restaurant Owner Violates His Rights, Lawyer Says;*¹ and
- *Alaska Sees Surge of ICE Detentions Amid National Immigration Crackdown.*²

Prepared by: Office of Assembly Counsel

Respectfully submitted: Yarrow Silvers, Assembly Member
District 5, East Anchorage

Daniel Volland, Assembly Member
District 1, North Anchorage

¹ The attached article, written by Jacob Dye, was originally published online by the *Peninsula Clarion* on June 4, 2025 and may be found here: <https://www.peninsulaclarion.com/article/2025/06/04/this-is-what-happened-to-the-people-who-were-locked-out-of-the-2025-ak-legislature>

<https://www.peninsulaclarion.com/news/detention-of-soldotna-restaurant-owner-violates-his-rights-lawyer-says/#:~:text=Se%C3%B1or%20Panchos%20in%20Soldotna%2C%20Alaska%20is%20closed,he%20is%20illegally%20in%20the%20United%20States>

² The attached article, written by Michelle Theirault Boots, was originally published online by the

Anchorage Daily News on January 19, 2026 and may be found here:
<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2026/01/19/alaska-sees-surge-of-ice-detentions-amid-national-crackdown/>

Detention of Soldotna restaurant owner violates his rights, lawyer says



Señor Panchos in Soldotna, Alaska, is closed on Wednesday, June 4, 2025. (Jake Dye/Peninsula Clarion)

Francisco Rodriguez-Rincon is facing federal charges for accusations that he is in the U.S. illegally.

A Soldotna resident is being held in an out-of-state federal detention center, in what his attorney wrote Wednesday is a violation of his rights.

Francisco Rodriguez-Rincon, 47, owns Señor Panchos and Sol Agave in Soldotna. Both restaurants were suddenly shuttered in late May, with a handwritten sign outside one location reading “closed permanently.”

Rodriguez-Rincon is facing federal charges for allegations that he is illegally in the United States, but was ordered released from custody in April by a federal chief magistrate judge, according to federal court documents. New filings by Rodriguez-Rincon’s attorney say he was seized by the Department of Homeland Security and taken to a detention center in Washington state in a move that violates of his statutory rights and impinges his constitutional rights.

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“The Executive Branch has a choice to make: either it can proceed with this criminal case against Mr. Rodriguez-Rincon or it can proceed with his removal,” Assistant Federal Defender Samuel Eilers writes in a motion filed Wednesday.

First reported by KDLL 91.9 FM, Rodriguez-Rincon was indicted by a federal grand jury in March with one count of reentry after deportation and one count of false statement of citizenship.

Per the indictment, Rodriguez-Rincon was “found in the United States” on Feb. 12 of this year. The federal government says he had previously been deported from the U.S. in California in 1995. The charge of false statement stems from an allegation that Rodriguez-Rincon made a false statement of U.S. citizenship when filing for an Alaska driver’s license in January 2023.

After being arraigned on the charges in April, Rodriguez-Rincon was ordered released from custody while his court proceedings unfolded. The federal court filing for his case this week still says he is out of custody. Despite that, Eilers writes that on May 21, weeks after Rodriguez-Rincon appeared in court and was released from custody, and while Eilers was out of the office on leave, Rodriguez-Rincon was arrested in Soldotna by Homeland Security Investigations and transferred “over 2,000 miles away” to Northwest Detention Center in Washington state.

“By detaining Mr. Rodriguez-Rincon as this criminal case remains pending, the Executive Branch violates Mr. Rodriguez-Rincon’s statutory rights … and impinges on his constitutional rights,” Eilers writes.

Eilers has motioned either for Rodriguez-Rincon to be released from custody or for his indictment to be dismissed with prejudice. He also requested the revocation of an authorization for court proceedings to be held without Rodriguez-Rincon present. In both instances, he requested expedited consideration.

Rodriguez-Rincon has never been convicted of a crime, Eilers writes.

Eilers did not respond to a request for comment by the Clarion in May.

A GoFundMe was started on May 24 to support Rodriguez-Rincon’s family by a person who writes that they’ve worked for Rodriguez-Rincon for five years and says that the family have been members of the Soldotna community for more than 30 years. As of June 4, more than \$3,000 have been donated. The organizer of the GoFundMe did not respond to a request for comment.

Reach reporter Jake Dye at jacob.dye@peninsulaclarion.com.

Alaska sees surge of ICE detentions amid national immigration crackdown



The Anchorage headquarters of the Department of Homeland Security, photographed on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2025. (Loren Holmes / ADN)

Amid a national immigration crackdown ordered by the Trump administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is detaining far more people in Alaska than in previous years.

While attorneys who represent immigrant clients say detention numbers are low compared to the Lower 48 and federal agent tactics seem to be more focused, the change is palpable: In all of 2024, the Alaska Department of Corrections held a total of 13 people for ICE.

From the beginning of January 2025 until mid-January 2026, a total of 99 people taken into custody by ICE have been held in Alaska jail facilities.

“ICE operations up here have clearly ramped up compared to previous years,” said Asa Hohman, an immigration attorney in Anchorage.

Alaska has no dedicated ICE detention facility, so the U.S. Department of Homeland Security contracts with the state Department of Corrections to temporarily confine people until they are flown out of state, usually to a regional detention center in Tacoma, Washington. Most are held only a few days in Alaska jails.

The 99 detainees figure doesn’t include a June airlift of around 40 detainees who were flown to Alaska from a Tacoma federal immigration holding facility to relieve crowding. Most of those detainees spent

roughly three weeks in Alaska.

Advocates have raised concerns about conditions, saying civil immigration detainees shouldn't be held in jail conditions. It's possible that some people in immigration custody in the state are never held in jail facilities and are transferred directly out of state.

The Department of Corrections data offers a look at the scope of ICE's immigration actions in Alaska, as well information on who the federal officers are taking into custody.

Of the people held in Alaska jails on behalf of ICE, 17 self-reported being from Mexico. Six people each said they were from Guatemala and Peru. Some 35 people did not declare their country of origin. ICE also detained people in Alaska from Fiji, Tonga, Mauritania, India, the Philippines and Slovenia, among other countries.

A spokesperson for ICE did not respond to questions about the agency's actions in Alaska.

About a third of the people listed were first detained on Alaska state criminal charges, then moved to ICE custody, according to the corrections department data.

That tracks with what immigration attorneys have observed, said Nicolas Olano, an Anchorage immigration attorney: In Alaska, ICE has largely been pursuing people who have some kind of past criminal issue or are already in immigration deportation proceedings, Olano said.

In some cases, the people targeted have been longtime Alaska residents with no criminal record.

Usually, ICE tracks the person and then takes them into custody coming to or going from their home, Olano said. In one October case, a man arriving to work at a jobsite was taken into custody while a woman filmed.

There have been larger-scale raids on restaurants and other businesses that employ immigrants, said Hohman, the attorney. But in general, Alaska hasn't seen the aggressive sweeps and sidewalk raids like those documented in Lower 48 cities.

"I don't think that the ICE officers are doing it the same way they are in the Lower 48, at least not that I've heard or seen," Olano said. "I do know that they are picking up a lot more people than they would have in the past."

"It does seem much more targeted (here)," Hohman said. "More like they are using precision tools."

Hohman said he hasn't heard of situations where ICE has entered areas such as schools to detain people, but he held a training Saturday aimed at educating bystanders and advocates on the legal rights of immigrants in such situations.

"It's good to know how to proceed so you can try and keep your head on and keep things safe, but still protect everybody's liberties and constitutional rights," Hohman said.

It's not clear whether ICE had detained people in Alaska in other sensitive places such as hospitals or medical clinics. In at least one case documented in court filings, ICE officers entered the Anchorage courthouse Jan. 12 and left with a woman who was there for a hearing in a divorce case, according to a statement from the Alaska Court System. The woman was released after about an hour, according to an advocate who was with her.

While Alaska has seen more targeted detentions, anything could happen, Olano said: Nationally, the Trump administration has ordered ICE to detain at least 3,000 people each day. In Alaska, ICE used to

have two officers who conducted most immigration enforcement, he said. Now, there are around 12 officers.

“The pressure to maintain numbers is there,” Olano said.