


ICE agents and southern Voters rebel, say Trump 'betrayed' them by retaining Obama's ICE, DOE and EPA people

Officers in Philadelphia told to remove body armor to avoid offending illegals during arrest

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 [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was among the most embattled agencies in the previous administration, with deportation officers saying they signed up to enforce immigration laws only to have Obama officials put severe restrictions on when and how they could carry out their duties. \(Associated Press/File\)](#)

[ICE agents rebel, say Trump 'betrayed' them by retaining Obama's people](#)

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By [Stephen Dinan](#) -

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The country's immigration enforcement officers launched a website Tuesday demanding that President [Trump](#) do more to clean up their agency, saying he has left the Obama team in place and it's stymying his goal of enforcing laws on the books.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement supervisors in [Philadelphia](#) banned officers from wearing bulletproof vests during an operation in the dangerous "badlands" section in the city's north for fear of offending the immigrant community, according to a new website, JICReport.com.

Meanwhile, officers in one Utah city are required to give city officials seven days' heads-up before arresting anyone — and by the time they go to make the arrest, the immigrants they are targeting have taken off, the website says.

Compiled by the National ICE Council, which represents ICE officers, the website is part whistleblower and part primal scream for [Mr. Trump](#) to pay attention to a group of people who were among his staunchest backers during the presidential campaign.

“ICE Officers grudgingly admit that the only President they ever endorsed hasn't kept his word, and many officers now feel betrayed,” the officers say on the website.

National ICE Council President Chris Crane, in an [open letter](#) to [Mr. Trump](#), posted on the site, said he finds himself regularly having to defend the president to ICE officers who backed [Mr. Trump](#) during the campaign but now feel “stab[bed] in the back” by the administration.

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Mr. Crane said he gives [Mr. Trump](#) the benefit of the doubt but that those around the president — whom he doesn't name — appear to be trying to shield him from hearing about the continued struggles at ICE.

“While officers view the President's position on enforcement as courageous, the Trump administration has left all of the Obama managers and leadership in place, a group that ICE Officers

know after the last eight years to be completely incompetent, corrupt and anti-enforcement,” Mr. Crane wrote.

“While President [Trump](#) did create an uptick in morale at ICE through his support of enforcement operations, tensions are on the rise between [Trump](#)’s army of Obama holdovers and boots on the ground officers in the field, as behind the scenes Obama holdovers continue to undermine law enforcement operations and wage war against their own law enforcement officers.”

The White House didn’t respond to a request for comment.

ICE was among the most embattled agencies in the last administration, with deportation officers saying they signed up to enforce immigration laws, only to have Obama officials put severe restrictions on when and how they could carry out their duties.

More than 80 percent of illegal immigrants were put off limits for deportation under the Obama administration.

When the Trump administration took over, officials lifted the restrictions, saying most illegal immigrants could be deported — though they left in place the directive that criminals, national security threats and repeat immigration violators be given top priority.

Numbers for fiscal year 2017 are still pending, so it’s unclear how much of a change the new policy has made.

On Tuesday, [Mr. Trump](#) nominated Tom Homan — who for nearly 10 months has been acting director of ICE — to hold the job

permanently. That nomination will likely ignite a fierce debate on Capitol Hill over [Mr. Trump](#)'s immigration plans.

The ICE Council's new site doesn't find fault with Mr. Homan's immigration policies but does ask for him to do more on the personnel side, saying Obama-era holdovers are still given too much power in decision-making.

The website invites tips from Homeland Security employees who see malfeasance at the department or who believe it's falling short on its mission to protect the country's borders and interior.

One early posting reports on as many as 500 ICE supervisors who the council says are using official vehicles for their own personal travel, each "gouging American taxpayers for approximately \$5,000 annually in free fuel alone," and on accusations of sexual harassment.

Yet another tip reports on "secret orders" the council says have been given to officers in Utah to alert Park City before they attempt any arrests in the city. The officers say they have to wait as long as a week before attempting the arrests — and by the time they go after their targets, they appear to have been alerted and fled.

An ICE official said they do regularly let local law enforcement know they are active in that jurisdiction "in order to deconflict and avoid any potential 'blue on blue' issues." But the official said there is no set timeline, and it often happens only while officers are on scene.

The worry about blue-on-blue entanglements played out the other way in the [Philadelphia](#) incident, where ICE officers say

supervisors told them to remove their bulletproof vests before attempting to make an arrest in the city.

The vests contain the officers' markings identifying them as police, so without the vests they had nothing visible to show they were law enforcement. Neighbors ended up calling city police to report the men as intruders.

The website said the supervisors should have been fired and [Mr. Trump](#) should personally issue a directive ordering discipline for any ICE supervisor who demands officers remove their body armor.

"Our own supervisors would rather see the bodies of their own dead officers full of bullet holes than offend an illegal alien," said Officer Gabriel Cimino, president of the local union chapter. "This is the absolute madness that our officers in the field are dealing with every day. Will an officer have to die before President [Trump](#) helps us restore order to this agency?"

The ICE official speaking for the agency was unable to provide more details but indicated they were taking the matter seriously.

"ICE holds all of its personnel to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct. The agency takes all allegations of misconduct very seriously and will respond appropriately based on any investigative findings," the official said.