

THE WHITE HOUSE

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REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
AT THE SALUTE TO THE HEROES OF THE
IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT
AND CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

East Room

3:22 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you very much. That's really for ICE, I have to tell you. That's not for me. That's for ICE. Please, sit down.

We're here today to salute the incredibly brave patriots who keep America safe: the heroes of ICE and CBC [sic]. To everyone here today from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Customs and Border Protection, I want to you let you know that we love you, we support you, we will always have your back, and I think you know that. (Applause.)

I want to thank a true and loyal friend of ICE and CBC, our wonderful Vice President, Mike Pence. Thank you, Mike. Beautiful. (Applause.) Thank you, Mike. Stand up, Mike. Stand up. Great, Mike. Great job.

I want to share my profound appreciation for our wonderful Secretary of Homeland Security, Kirstjen Nielsen. (Applause.) Where is Kirstjen? Kirstjen, thank you. Thank you. Great job. You're doing a great job. Not easy.

And if we've got some great immigration laws, she would really set standard. But we've already broken every record in the book, haven't we? So, thank you very much, Kirstjen.

Everyone here today understands a vital truth: that America is a land of opportunity because we are a nation of laws. For America to be a strong nation, we must have strong borders.

Helping to lead that effort are great patriots in the audience today, including our new Acting Director of ICE, Ron Vitiello. Where is Ron? Ron -- thank you, Ron. Stand up, Ron. Great job. (Applause.) Good. Thank you, Ron.

And the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Kevin McAleenan. (Applause.) Where's Kevin? Thank you.

The new Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol -- the first woman ever to hold the job -- Carla Provost. (Applause.) Carla, thank you. Congratulations. Congratulations, Carla.

And our new Acting Deputy Director of ICE, Matt Albence. Where is Matt? (Applause.) Matt. Thank you, Matt. Thank you.

We're also grateful to be joined today by a really wonderful friend of mine, and a tremendous senator, and that's David Perdue. (Applause.) David? Come on, David. You've done a great job, David. We really appreciate it. The people of Georgia really appreciate it, that I can tell you. Thank you very much.

Many state and local partners are represented in the audience, including Arizona Governor Doug Ducey. Doug? Thank you, Doug, for being here. (Applause.) Thank you, Doug. Great job you're doing.

A wonderful man, Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall. Steve, thank you very much. (Applause.) Thank you.

A friend of mine, South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson, and sheriffs from all around the country. Thank you, Alan. Thank you. (Applause.) Sheriffs, thank you. Say hello to your father.

Most importantly, let me extend my gratitude to every law enforcement professional representing ICE and CBC: Enforcement and Removal Operations, Homeland Security Investigations, ICE prosecutors, the Office of Field Operations, Air and Marine Operations, and Border Patrol. You're incredible people. You do an unbelievable job. You're not appreciated enough, but I'll tell you what: Ninety-nine percent -- we get it. We really get it. We love you. We'll always be with you. We'll never let you down. Thank you very much for being here, too. (Applause.)

Over the last year -- these are incredible numbers -- ICE and CBC seized more than 2.8 million pounds of illicit and deadly narcotics. A lot of people would have died. In the interior of our country, ICE officers arrested over 127,000 criminal aliens -- and these are tough ones too, aren't they, fellas? Right? These are tough -- these were tough ones -- including those charged or convicted of 48,000 assaults, 12,000 sex crimes, and 1,800 homicides. We need strong people to handle those people. We don't play games, right? We don't play games.

Every day, on average, CBC prevents 10 known or suspected terrorists from entering the United States. What a job you've done.

To protect our nation from smuggling, trafficking, drugs, crime, the men and women of DHS are building the border wall as we sit, and the wall is getting longer, and taller, and stronger each and every day. We've spent and will soon be spending about \$3.2 billion and we're looking for about \$5 billion for this next coming year. We're building the wall, step-by-step. And it's not easy because we have a little opposition called, "the Democrats." I guess they just don't mind crime. They don't mind crime. It's pretty sad.

Just this past month, CBC officers at a single port of entry discovered more than 30,000 fentanyl pills, 62 pounds of meth -- that's a lot -- and 11 pounds of heroin.

Two of those officers are here: Alfredo Olfahito and David Skiahno. Where are they? Where are they? They're right here. (Applause.) Stand up, please. (Applause.)

And Alfredo, David: Thank you for the amazing job you've done. We all appreciate it -- everybody in this room, everybody in this country.

Just over a week ago, a human smuggler was arrested in Laredo for locking -- and really locking -- a horrible 78 illegal aliens inside of a trailer. The Border Patrol Agent who caught the accused -- and likely really saved many lives -- he's here with us -- and Adrian -- where's Adrian? Adrian is here with us. Thank you, Adrian. Great job. Thank you. It's a lot of lives. (Applause.) That's great.

Adrian, come here. I want to ask you a question. So, how did you -- come here. Come here. You're not nervous, right? (Laughter.) Speaks perfect English. Come here. I want to ask you about that: 78 lives. You saved 78 people. So, how did you feel that there were people in that trailer? There's a lot of trailers around. Please.

AGENT ANZALDUA: (Inaudible.) (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: He didn't know he was going to do this, but -- (laughter) -- it's just of interest.

AGENT ANZALDUA: First of all, most -- thank you for allowing me to come from Laredo. On behalf of Border Patrol, thank you, as well.

It all started that day. I had a canine alert. A vehicle was referred to secondary and once a vehicle is referred to secondary -- well, the tractor trailer -- I'm sorry -- was referred to secondary, the vehicle proceeded to elude and flee the checkpoint.

Shortly after, the vehicle was stopped at the -- approximately 30-mark -- 30-mile marker -- which is a mile north of the checkpoint. Subsequently, I went out there and ran the dog, conducted a non-intrusive search of the vehicle -- of the tractor trailer. And once again, the canine alerted. And subsequently, I opened the little latch of the back of the tractor trailer and revealed a lot of subjects.

I quickly asked for backup, and backup got there, and the subjects were transported back to transport -- back to the checkpoint, and all of them were in good health.

THE PRESIDENT: Fantastic job. Fantastic. (Applause.)

AGENT ANZALDUA: Thank you, sir. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: What a good job he did. What a good job. Now, you know tomorrow, he's going to be -- he's like that so much. He didn't know he was going to do it. (Laughter.) Tomorrow, he will be announcing that he's running for office. (Laughter.) Good job. Seventy-eight people saved. Thank you very much, Adrian.

Last month, under Operation Eagle's Shield, right here in the D.C. area, ICE officers arrested 132 illegal aliens,

including criminal aliens charged or convicted of rape, battery, and strangulation. Among those arrested was a high-ranking MS-13 gang member, who has four prior convictions for rape and federal warrant for felony assault with a deadly weapon. Bad, bad person.

Enforcement and Removal Officers Daniel Nichols and Mark Collazo, together with Nancy [Nandy] Ratoe, each played a crucial role. And I want to thank you, officers. And I believe you're here. Where are you? Please. Stand up. (Applause.) Stand up. Great job. You did a great job, right here. (Applause.) Nancy [Nandy], you want to say something? Come on. Come on up here, the three of you. I find listening to these folks -- they're very brave -- I find them a lot more interesting than listening to the President. (Laughter.) Come on up here. Come on up, guys. Come on, darling. (Applause.)

OFFICER RATOE: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you. It's an honor working for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. We're here to serve and protect our nation, and we're proud to do it every day. Thank you so much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Fantastic. Fantastic. Thank you.

OFFICER COLLAZO: Thank you, sir

THE PRESIDENT: You want to say? Go ahead.

OFFICER COLLAZO: Hello, everyone. My name is Mark Collazo. I work for the Washington field office. And the gist of what we do is, making everyone a safe -- a safe and protected place for everybody. That's what my job is. And I appreciate everyone coming out here and commemorating, and giving thanks. Thank you. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: These are great people. Brave people. ICE's Operation Matador recently led to the arrest of 325 members of MS-13 -- a vicious, violent, horrible gang. Horrible group of people. And we're throwing them the hell out of our country so fast, your head would spin. But too many were allowed in. (Applause.)

Special Agent Derek Bergman, who helped lead the operation, is here with us today. And Derek, where are you? I want you to

-- you're a brave-looking guy. Come here,
Derek. (Applause.) Fast. Hurry up, Derek. Come on. Please.

OFFICER BERGMAN: Well, I wasn't expecting this, but --
(laughter) -- I guess I would say that -- you know, at Operation
Matador, we had a lot of violence on Long Island and in the New
York area. So the response started, really, with the leadership
that supported us and was able to allow us to go out there and
do what we had to do. And it really speaks to the collaborative
effort that we have with our state and local partners and other
federal agencies, that everybody was able to get together and
assist each other in different facets of the operation. And
hopefully, we were able to make a difference in the communities,
because that's ultimately why we were doing it, was to make those
neighborhoods safe for the people that inhabit them. So
hopefully, we were able to do that. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's a beautiful job. Thank
you. Beautiful.

And I know Long Island very well, and I can tell you that,
when I hear some of the stories -- I grew up there,
essentially. Very near. And I know every one of the
towns. And to hear some of the stories going on with MS-13, you
wouldn't believe it. And they're doing an incredible
job. They're actually liberating towns. Think of it. We're
talking about liberating towns where you'd walk down the street
at night -- 20 years ago, 30 years ago -- you wouldn't even
think about it. People didn't lock their doors.

And today, we're liberating towns. And this is what we
have coming in, but we're getting them out. We're also -- thank
you. (Applause.)

It hits home when you know the towns. It hits home when
you grew up there. That's where it really hits, when you can't
even believe it's happening.

We're also deeply honored to be joined today by family
members of four fallen Border Patrol agents -- Luis Aguilar,
Nicolas Ivy, Rohelio Martinez, and Brian Terry. And I just met
the folks and the people and the children, and these are
incredible people. Could I ask you to stand, please? What
incredible people. Incredible. (Applause.)

Our gratitude to all of you and the memories of your loved
ones, because they will be honored and cherished forever in our

hearts and all of our hearts. Everybody in this room, thank you very much.

Today, I sent a letter to state and local leaders across our nation asking them to pledge their full support and cooperation with the officers and agents of ICE and CBC.

Sadly, in recent months -- incredibly, I have to say; incredibly -- a coalition of open borders extremists -- and, to me, that means crime; people that don't mind crime. They mind it when it happens to them. They don't mind it when they have to watch it on television. Have waged an unprecedented assault on American law enforcement -- our greatest people -- threatening ICE and Border Patrol for performing their duties admirably and for defending our country from horrible people and horrible, horrible events and crimes.

In major cities across the nation, these open border radicals have blocked access to ICE buildings, defaced public property, and threatened public safety. And what you hear in the newspapers and on the news is nothing compared to the way it really is, and we're stopping it very, very strongly. But that you have to go through what you're going through, and for you have to be having to be demeaned by people that have no idea what strength is, is really very sad, and we fight it very hard. And I can tell you, all of these people right here and all of the people in this room, we will never let you down.

And I will also say -- you're talking about the vast majority -- I don't mean like 51 percent; I mean like 88 percent, 93 percent. I've seen numbers. They're all with you. It's just a small group that gets a lot of publicity because they have no courage, they have no guts; they just have big, loud mouths. And we don't want to put up with that.

And I just want you to know that you're loved. You're loved and you're respected as much as anybody in this country is respected.

Last month, the mayor of Portland, Oregon shamefully ordered local police to stand down, leaving federal law enforcement officers to face an angry mob of violent people.

Leading members of the Democrat Party have even launched a campaign to abolish ICE. In other words, they want to abolish America's borders. And when you think about it -- I'm working on it all the time. They come in -- we're protecting borders of

other countries, but we don't protect our own borders. How about that? Spending billions and billions of dollars in other countries -- in some cases, places we shouldn't be -- to protect their borders, but we don't protect our own border.

We condemn these shameful attacks on our great law enforcement. Any politician who puts criminal aliens before American citizens should find a new line of work, because it's not going to work. It's not going to work. (Applause.)

And any politicians that get up and say that our country was never great, you heard that -- I think that's the end of that career. (Laughter and applause.)

Congressional Democrats have opposed Kate's Law, opposed legislation to crack down on MS-13 thugs, and supported deadly sanctuary cities, which are a disaster and which are becoming, on a weekly basis, more and more unpopular with the public. A lot has happened in the last two years.

Last month, House Democrats even boycotted a resolution supporting our brave ICE officers and agents. But I will say this: The Republicans were with you all the way. All the way. (Applause.) And we won. We, actually -- we won.

This new wave of anti-borders, anti-law enforcement extremism, and shameful, dangerous -- it's horrible in every way. And it's going to stop. It's going to stop right now. It's going to stop today. We slowed it down, and now we're stopping it.

We will never surrender our nation to the forces of anarchy and chaos and crime. We will not allow our communities to be consumed by deadly poisons and violent predators. The poisons are flowing across our border, and we're hitting it from every angle. But we need new laws. We need border laws. We need immigration laws. We need them fast. We're going to get them. Hopefully, the midterms will help toward that end.

I think we're going to do very well in the midterms, and this is one of the very big reason. The fact is, people respect law and order, and they love our law enforcement. And I think we're going to have much more of a red wave than you're going to see as a phony blue wave. Blue wave means crime. It means open borders. Not good.

We will not stand for the vile smears, the hateful attacks, and the vicious assaults on the courageous men and women of ICE, and Border Patrol, and law enforcement. We will protect those who protect us.

The extremists who attack ICE and CBC like to portray themselves as champions of social justice -- they are not. But their radical policies are the ultimate injustice, hurting innocent Americans and spilling innocent blood. People are dying because of their either lack of knowledge, lack of understanding, or just plain stupidity.

Last year alone, sanctuary jurisdictions and local communities unleashed nearly 8,000 criminal aliens onto our streets. Our laws are no good. Our immigration laws are broken. They've been broken for many years. And the world is laughing at us. The world is laughing at the stupidity of what we have done with immigration. But we're getting it changed, and it's actually taking place much more so and much quicker, I think, than anybody understands -- because people really now understand the problem. We're pushing very, very hard.

In California, sanctuary policies released a domestic abuser. He is a suspected killer. They think he killed his girlfriend just two weeks after his release. It will be determined very shortly, and I have a feeling you all know the answer.

In the sanctuary city of Philadelphia, local officials refused to cooperate with ICE -- we have a lot of ICE people here that know exactly what happened there -- and they released a previously deported illegal alien back onto the streets. After his release, the illegal alien raped and battered a child.

In recent weeks, an elderly homeless woman in New York City was allegedly beaten to death by a twice-deported illegal alien. Two women in Oregon were sexually assaulted by an illegal alien previously deported 20 times. You hear that? Twenty times. The list goes on and on.

The true champions of justice are right here in this room, and they're proudly wearing the badge of American law enforcement.

My pledge to each of you is that my administration will not rest until you have the resources, the tools, and the

authorities you need to do your job, and do it properly and do it strong. You're saving lives. You've saving a lot of Americans.

We will stop sanctuary cities. We will end the ridiculous policy of catch-and-release. (Applause.) Think about that. Just think about it. You catch somebody bad, you take their name, and you release them. And except for politics, the Democrats all know it's wrong. But politics is absolutely paramount over law enforcement, safety, crime. We have to get people in that are going to do what's proper. I'll do what's proper. I'd vote the other way if I thought it was the proper thing to do. I don't have party lines.

We will pass, at some point, hopefully in the not-too-distant future, Kate's Law. It's a great law. And it's sitting, waiting for a vote.

We will destroy MS-13, and we will secure our border once and for all. (Applause.)

You are the patriots, and you are the heroes, you are the fighters, and you are the warriors for justice. You are great people. You keep us safe, you keep us free, and you make us very, very proud. Very, very proud. You don't know what I'm talking about, right? You know that. Your father. You know that. And we're proud of them.

And I'm honored every single day to serve as your Commander-in-Chief. I will never leave your side. I will never leave the fight. I will never, ever let you down.

So on behalf of a grateful nation, let me say once more: Thank you for your service. You are truly incredible people.

God bless you. God bless law enforcement. And God bless America. Thank you very much. Thank you. (Applause.)

END

3:48 P.M. EDT