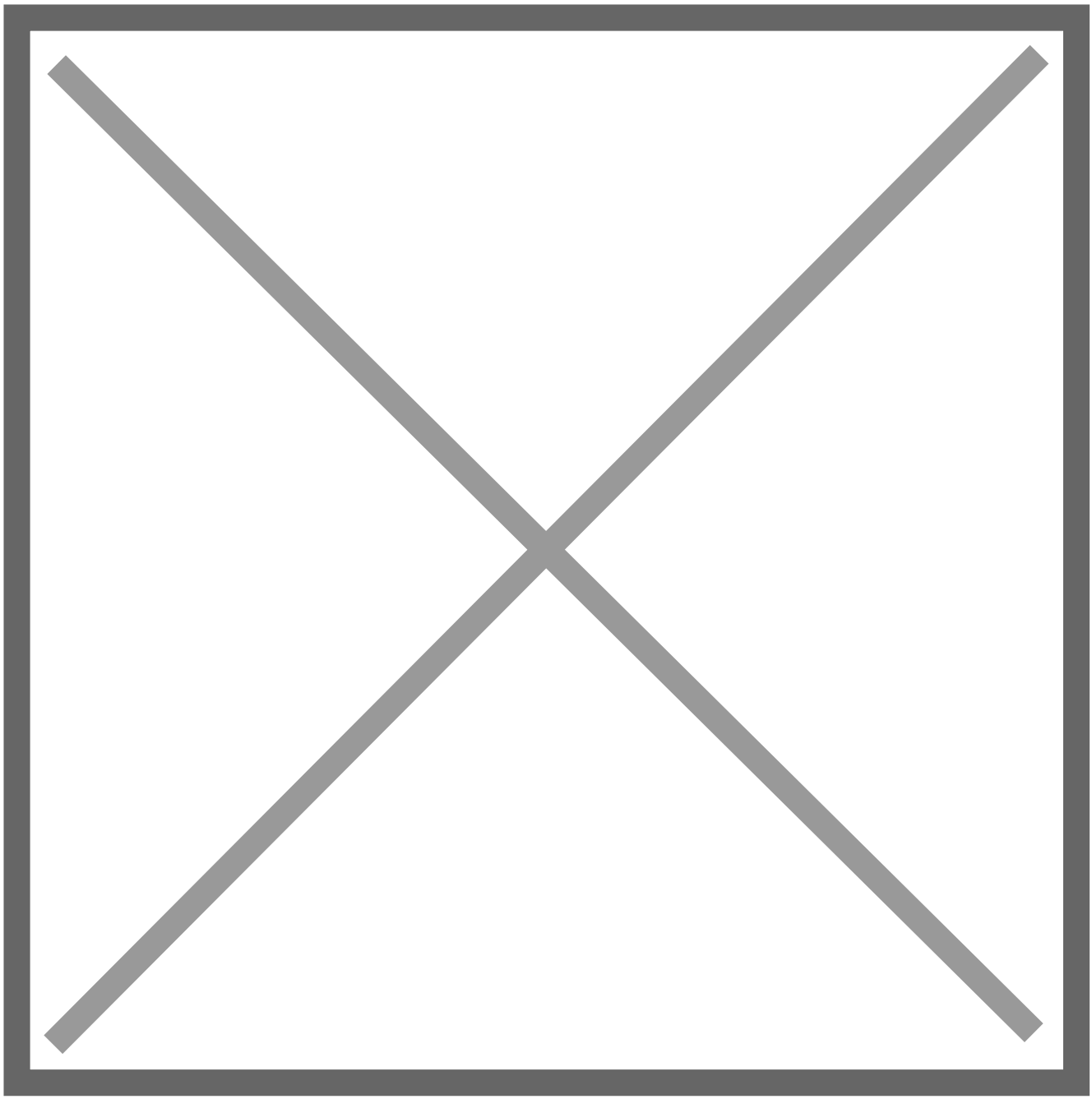
News



Immigrants in detainment shackles, deemed eligible for an expedited order of removal, board air transport by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at an airport in Tampa, Fla., Nov. 7, 2025. A group of U.S. bishops, most from the U.S.-Mexico border region, wrote a May 20, 2026, letter to members of Congress expressing "grave concern" over budget legislation that would provide an additional $72 billion for immigration enforcement. (OSV News/Reuters/Shannon Stapleton)

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Washington — May 21, 2026
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A group of U.S. bishops, most from the U.S.-Mexico border region, wrote a May 20 letter to members of Congress expressing "grave concern" with budget legislation that would provide an additional $72 billion for immigration enforcement.

The letter came the same day Senate Republicans on the Budget Committee advanced the measure, and the day after it was advanced by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

The letter to members of Congress was signed by 14 U.S. bishops, including Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of San Antonio; Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico; Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas; and Bishop Michael Pham of San Diego.

They wrote that the potential additional funds would follow previous legislation that already "provided an unprecedented $142 billion to DHS for the arrest, detention, and deportation of immigrants across the country," referring to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which enacted key items of President Donald Trump's legislative agenda on issues including taxes and immigration.

"As pastors, we remain troubled by how immigrants, the vast majority of whom have committed no crimes and have built equities in the country, have become targets for

enforcement, with their God-given human dignity and human rights being violated on a daily basis," they wrote.

Pointing to a previous statement issued in February by many of the same signatories before Trump's first State of the Union address of his second term, the bishops urged lawmakers to require DHS to make policy changes to its current enforcement practices "to ensure that the human rights and dignity of all persons are fully respected," such as stronger protections for due process, efforts to prevent the separation of families, and the guarantee that sensitive locations such as houses of worship, schools and hospitals are protected from enforcement actions.

"We ask that you support these recommended changes and work to include as many of them as possible in this second reconciliation measure. If no or insufficient of these immigration enforcement requirements are included in the bill, we respectfully ask that you oppose the legislation," they said.

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Another portion of the funding package, which would grant $1 billion for Secret Service projects, such as "enhancements" to Trump's White House ballroom, was still under debate in committee.

Debate over the package comes as polls show the public is souring on the Trump administration's immigration enforcement policies. An AP-NORC Center Poll published in May found that 61% said the U.S. used to be a great place for immigrants but is not anymore, and just 27% said they feel the country is currently a great place for immigrants. Another 10% said the U.S. was never a great place for immigrants.

A stalemate among lawmakers over debate on potential reforms regarding federal immigration officers resulted in a lengthy partial shutdown for DHS after the deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, two American citizens killed by federal agents in separate incidents in Minnesota.

Lawmakers recently agreed on a package to fund the rest of that department, but they have yet to reach an accord on Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol.

This story appears in the **Immigration and the Church** feature series. View the full series.