

July 14, 2025

Faron K. Paramore
Director, Federal Protective Service
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528-0525.

via email: ogc@hq.dhs.gov

Re: Harassment of Journalists by ICE Agents at New York Immigration Courts

Dear Mr. Paramore:

The undersigned press freedom organizations write to express our serious concern regarding recent reports that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents making arrests in New York City immigration courts are harassing journalists. Among other things, the agents have reportedly photographed journalists' press credentials and falsely told them that common areas of the courthouse are "restricted areas" from which they are prohibited from reporting.

This conduct, reported in AMNY on June 26, 2025, raises serious First Amendment and press freedom concerns.¹ It is likely to chill constitutionally protected reporting on a matter of the utmost public interest – the Trump administration's mass deportation policy and how it's being carried out in New York – if it hasn't already.

The Federal Protective Service (FPS) as part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) makes it clear that "photography and videotaping, absent a criminal predicate, is a First Amendment protected activity"² and that "[e]xcept where security regulations, rules, orders, or directives apply or a Federal court order or rule prohibits it, persons entering in or on Federal property may take photographs of: a) Space occupied by a tenant agency for non-commercial purposes only with the permission of the occupying agency concerned; b) Space occupied by a tenant agency for commercial purposes only with written permission of an authorized official of the occupying agency concerned; and c) Building entrances, lobbies, foyers, corridors, or auditoriums for news purposes."³

Harassment of journalists for doing their jobs — specifically by photographing or seizing press credentials in response to their lawful reporting — has led to lawsuits and public backlash against federal and state authorities alike.⁴

¹ Dean Moses, *ICE hardens: [Masked agents intimidate reporters while seizing more immigrants at Lower Manhattan court](#)*, AMNY, June 26, 2025.

² DHS/FPS [Operational Readiness Order HQ-ORO-002-2018 Photography and Videotaping Federal Facilities](#)

³ Title 41, Section 102-74.420 of the Code of Federal Regulations provides federal "policy concerning photographs for news, advertising or commercial purposes."

⁴ See, e.g., Adam Klasfeld, [Judge Holds NYPD's Feet to Fire on Press Credentials](#), Courthouse News, Feb. 27, 2017; Jason Schwartz, [Judge orders White House to return press credentials to](#)

The actions of ICE agents are censorial: In addition to their direct impact on reporters, they also signal to sources considering talking to the press that journalists are being watched. Those most impacted by ICE's actions — undocumented people and noncitizens — will be particularly reluctant to tell their stories as a result.

We respectfully urge you and the FPS to take immediate action to condemn these tactics, protect press access to public spaces and ensure that ICE agents operating in immigration courts in New York and elsewhere are aware that photographing press credentials to intimidate journalists, and other harassment of journalists for doing their jobs, will not be tolerated.

Specifically, we ask that you:

- Publicly reaffirm that journalists have the right to lawfully report the news in immigration courts without surveillance, harassment, or intimidation, including baseless legal threats and photographing of credentials.
- Inform ICE, the U.S. Marshalls Service and other relevant federal entities of the directives in FPS Operational Readiness Order HQ-ORO-002-2018 regarding Photography and Videotaping Federal Facilities and that improper photographing, inspection or seizure of press credentials will not be tolerated.
- Develop further policies, provide guidance, and conduct trainings to put a stop to ICE's harassment of journalists inside immigration courts.

The FPS is obligated to act within the confines of the constitution, and prides itself in doing so. It should oppose intrusive conduct by federal agencies conducting highly controversial and newsworthy operations. Although journalists may be the ones being harassed by ICE agents in this instance, all Americans ultimately suffer when they are less informed.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact Mickey H. Osterreicher, General Counsel for the National Press Photographers Association, at lawyer@nppa.org if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

Coalition For Women In Journalism
Committee to Protect Journalists
Freedom of the Press Foundation
Los Angeles Press Club
National Press Photographers Association
PEN America
Radio Television Digital News Association

Society of Environmental Journalists
Society of Professional Journalists
The Association of Foreign Press
Correspondents
The Media and Democracy Project
Women Press Freedom

