

# **ICE Raids Spark Outrage: 14 Children Found, 361 Arrests, 1 Death**

## **Federal Cannabis Farm Raids Spark National Debate Amid Child Labor, Human Trafficking Allegations and One Death**

### *ICE and CBP Agents Arrest 361 Undocumented Workers During Glass House Raids in California*

On July 10, 2025, a large-scale federal enforcement operation executed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) targeted two cannabis cultivation sites operated by Glass House Farms in southern California. The raids, which took place in Carpinteria and Camarillo, resulted in the arrest of 361 undocumented workers and have triggered federal investigations into potential child labor violations and human trafficking.

### **14 Migrant Children in Custody and Ongoing Federal Investigation**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) confirmed that 14 migrant children were taken into custody during the operations. DHS officials are now investigating whether the children were trafficked or illegally employed at the cannabis grow sites. These concerns are heightened by the federal prohibition on anyone under 21 working with cannabis in California, despite state and federal labor laws allowing minors to work in agriculture under certain conditions.

### **Fatal Fall During Raid Underlines Dangers of Enforcement Tactics**

During the raid, a 57-year-old worker, Jaime Alanis, fell approximately 30 feet from the roof of a greenhouse. Alanis sustained critical injuries and died two days later at Ventura County Medical Center. While early reports speculated that he may have been fleeing law enforcement, DHS later clarified that Alanis was not being pursued at the time of the fall. His death marks the first fatality associated with the Trump administration's renewed immigration enforcement efforts.

### **Criminal Backgrounds Among Arrested Individuals Highlight DHS Concerns**

Among those detained were individuals with prior criminal convictions, including violent crimes. DHS identified four individuals with serious criminal records. One of them, Roman Izquierdo, was previously convicted of kidnapping, attempted rape, and attempted child molestation. He had been deported in 2006 but was found working at the cannabis site alongside minors, raising concerns about labor practices and background checks at the facility.

### **Glass House Farms Maintains Compliance and Denies Hiring Minors**

Glass House Farms, one of the largest cannabis operators in the United States with 6 million square feet of cultivation space and 10 dispensaries, has denied knowingly employing minors or violating hiring laws. In public statements, the company stated it fully complied with the search warrants and intends to continue normal operations.

## **Protests and Public Outcry Follow Violent Clashes at Raid Sites**

The raids triggered mass protests involving more than 500 people at the two grow sites. Protesters clashed with law enforcement, leading to four U.S. citizens being charged with resisting or assaulting federal officers. The FBI has offered a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of an individual who allegedly fired a weapon at agents during the chaos.

Many protesters and bystanders posted videos accusing federal agents of escalating tensions by deploying rubber bullets and tear gas. The scenes have drawn comparisons to military-style crackdowns, with law enforcement officials dressed in plain clothes and using unmarked vehicles.

## **State Officials Condemn Raids as Politically Motivated and Excessive**

California Attorney General Rob Bonta and Governor Gavin Newsom criticized the raids as part of a broader federal strategy designed to instill fear in immigrant communities. They argue that federal agents used intimidation tactics and racial profiling, further fueling tensions between state and federal leadership.

Bonta called attention to the use of masks and unmarked vehicles by federal agents, which he said created confusion and panic. Newsom accused the federal government of using tear gas against children and separating families.

## **DHS Defends Operations and Emphasizes Legal Compliance and Safety**

In response to state-level criticism, DHS emphasized that the raids were conducted lawfully and in accordance with federal labor and immigration standards. Officials highlighted concerns over child labor and the presence of individuals with serious criminal records at the cannabis facilities. DHS also cited public safety as a driving force behind the enforcement actions.

## **Conflicting Labor Laws Complicate Regulatory Oversight of Cannabis Facilities**

Under federal labor law, minors as young as 14 can work in agriculture outside school hours, with additional permissions required for younger workers. However, cannabis remains a federally controlled substance, and in California, individuals must be 21 or older to work with cannabis products. This conflict between federal and state labor rules creates uncertainty for cannabis operators and regulators.

The presence of 14 underage migrants at a cannabis facility has further complicated matters. Elliot Lewis, CEO of licensed cannabis company Catalyst, called for a thorough investigation into how unaccompanied minors ended up working at a cannabis site and questioned whether human trafficking was involved.

## **Cannabis Industry Responds to Federal Action with Concern and Calls for Clarity**

Industry leaders have expressed concern about the implications of the federal raids. While some oppose the militarized enforcement tactics, others acknowledge that the allegations—if proven—highlight a serious failure in employment practices and regulatory oversight.

The federal operation places a renewed spotlight on the cannabis industry's labor practices and raises questions about the enforcement of employment standards in an industry that is still federally illegal despite widespread legalization at the state level.

## **Glass House Says Business Will Continue Despite Ongoing Investigations**

Despite the ongoing federal investigation, Glass House Farms has signaled that it does not anticipate significant disruptions to its operations. The company remains under scrutiny from both federal and state authorities, and further regulatory or legal actions may follow depending on the outcome of the investigation.

## **National Implications for the Cannabis Industry Amid Political Divides**

The July 10 raids have ignited a political and legal firestorm that reaches beyond California. The involvement of minors, the death of a worker, and the scale of arrests have raised alarms about labor practices, federal overreach, and the fragile status of cannabis legalization in the United States.

With state and federal officials at odds, the incident underscores the ongoing challenges facing cannabis operators as they navigate conflicting regulations and shifting political landscapes.

As the investigation continues, the cannabis industry and its regulators will be closely watching for outcomes that could reshape labor compliance expectations and enforcement protocols across the country.

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