



**To: Elected Officials & Other People Looking For What Actions They Can Take**  
**From: Todd Schulte - President, [FWD.us](https://fwd.us)**  
**Re: This Moment Requires Action: On Funding, Accountability, Mobilization & More**  
**Date: Sunday, January 25th**

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The day after another horrific killing on the streets of Minneapolis by DHS officials, when the Trump administration took to the airwaves to say they will continue to terrorize communities and went beyond defending their agents to now explicitly blaming the actual victims, we wanted to lay out key actions that Members of Congress, Governors, Mayors and other policymakers can take, leveraging their power to constrain the horrors we're seeing each day.

This urgent moment cannot simply collapse into a beltway conversation. The moment is now for elected officials to use whatever authority they have, to go and bear witness, to expend their political capital, to convene, and communicate clearly. There are many steps that Americans deserve to see right now *outside* of just an -- albeit very important -- appropriations bill.

Below we have listed approximately two dozen meaningful actions and steps. This list isn't exhaustive, but it highlights actionable things that can be done right now. These are not a substitute for the true transformations that America deserves and we must build towards; they are, however, steps that our elected officials can take immediately to fight against the violence and help those most in need. **The public is rightly outraged. Elected officials have the ability to take actions listed below right now to begin to meet the moment:**

### **The DHS Appropriations Fight - Where Things Stand & Actions to Take**

Congressional Democrats should not vote for any bill that increases DHS funding and lacks actual, meaningful reforms. As of the writing of this memo, it appears Senate Democrats will not provide for the bill to move as part of the larger appropriations bill.

The current funding process comes after the astronomical, unprecedented explosion of funding for every aspect of immigration enforcement in the interior of the United States resulting from the reconciliation legislation passed in July 2025. Over \$100 billion is just now beginning to pour into ICE, into CBP militarized invasions of American cities, into local criminal justice systems across the country to build new jails and prisons to incarcerate immigrants and their (sometimes US citizen) family members, and more. In the years ahead this funding increases spending on every aspect of these efforts by 300% to 500% annually; the United States is set to spend more money on this administration's immigration enforcement agenda in American cities and towns

than the military budget of all but a half dozen or so countries in the world. And while much of this money is ostensibly focused on “immigration enforcement” we are already seeing the deadly consequences for *all* Americans resulting from supercharging funds into these systems.

Funding is a critical avenue for Congress to provide limits and oversight; and the first thing to do when you’re in a hole is stop digging. Or put differently, the last thing Congress should do is pass legislation that *further increases funding for out-of-control federal agents or legislation without constraints that prevent them further terrorizing American communities*. Along with the policies we outline below, the commonsense approach in the next few days is to split off the appropriations bill from the other bills, which fund ~95% of the government. Senators -- including Republican Senators expressing unease with this administration’s actions in Minneapolis and elsewhere -- should publicly state their plans to reject the House’s binding of H.R.7147 and H.R.7148 and move those to a vote separately.

### **Congress - Legislating Federal Policy Constraints, Reforms & Changes**

Members of Congress should not pass this DHS appropriations bill. Instead, in a moment of massive public outcry across the ideological spectrum, Congress should ensure funding is paired with important, popular, commonsense reforms that are the first steps to rein in an already out-of-control system set to receive tens of billions more in funding. This should include:

ICE, DHS and federalized forces should immediately withdraw from Minneapolis and other communities. They have brought chaos, violence, propaganda; they should leave now.

Congress should pass legislation that constrains CBP to the actual physical border, that reinforces that no funds may be used for actions like home raids without a judicial warrant, that ensures accountability for federal officers by eliminating qualified immunity, bans masking and more. Moreover, they should ensure that no future funding can be used for enforcement at “sensitive locations” like schools, hospitals and churches, no funding goes towards “arrest quotas.” and *no funding can be used for family jails and detention centers*, like “Dilley” in Texas where thousands of children and parents are currently incarcerated, including refugee families with US citizen kids targeted in Minnesota.

And at a time when Americans are outraged by the cost of living--in part directly due to the Trump administration’s immigration policies--Democrats should make clear they will fight for American families by clawing back all of the over \$100 billion in the reconciliation bill that has not yet been spent and redirecting it to help struggling families.

### **Local & State Elected Officials: Common Sense Policies and Actions to Take Now**

State and local elected officials have the ability to take meaningful, critical action *today* to help limit the attacks on immigrants, their families and US citizens alike, particularly when it comes to the intersection of federal immigration and state and local law enforcement.

To start, Governors and state legislators should pass legislation right away to take steps to protect their constituents from the actions we’re seeing from this administration.. That starts with

passing state legislation like the [Trust Act](#) or other bills that limit how local and state law enforcement may coordinate with ICE. They should further work to eliminate “287(g)” agreements, where possible order sheriffs to eliminate cooperation with ICE, and pass legislation and sign executive orders to [protect people’s data](#) from this administration. Evidence shows these measures lead to [better public safety](#) outcomes for all Americans.

*State and local officials should not enable the Trump administration’s efforts to dramatically expand immigrant incarceration,* and they should both eliminate private prisons in their states and also provide no additional (state, city or county) public jail space for ICE.

*We also need to see state governments moving to pass legislation that allows people some basic accountability* against an administration that has followed its violence with outrageous statements and efforts to shield its agents from basic accountability. Illinois [just passed such a law](#) and bills are being considered [elsewhere](#). Mayors and Governors should establish accountability commissions to document abuses, preserve information for future investigations and eventual truth and reconciliation efforts. The moment is urgent but this need, tragically, will need to continue for some time, and they should take efforts to extend the statute of limitations for violent actions by federal agents and [new state efforts against corrupt actions](#).

*Mayors and Governors should use convening power* to call meetings this week with local civic, civil rights, and immigrants’ rights organizations, and convene their chambers of commerce and local businesses to train them on the steps that all employers and institutions can take to protect their community members. Moreover, they can allocate direct funding to support families harmed by these actions.

### **Meet the Moment - Mobilize, Bear Witness, Protect & Communicate**

*In the wake of the ask from the Governor, it seems critical that all Democratic Senators, Members of Congress and other elected officials -- including former prominent elected officials of both parties -- volunteer to go to Minneapolis* to lift up the [work and demands](#) of those leading the work on the ground in Minnesota.

*In their own communities and Minnesota, we need elected officials to go bear witness and volunteer* -- to go with local organizers and document actions by DHS, and to help raise and provide funds for these organizations providing direct assistance and legal aid. They can join an [“adopt-a-corner”](#) group to protect day laborers while also demanding answers from companies.

*Elected officials at every level should go visit jails, prisons, detention centers of all kinds and document what they see* and communicate to the families of those incarcerated there and the public. Members of Congress should exercise their legal oversight authority that assures them entrance to DHS jails and detention facilities. Mayors and Governors and others should visit prisons and jails in their own jurisdictions. They can also participate in court watch programs to witness the hearings.

### **Conclusion**

This list pulls from the work of many individuals and organizations. More information, including on state and local policies, can be found here from the [NDLON](#), [ACLU](#), [SIX](#), [ILRC](#), [NILC](#), and [Detention Watch Network](#). **For more information on any of these actions or to speak with experts, please reach out to [todd@fwd.us](mailto:todd@fwd.us) or [press@fwd.us](mailto:press@fwd.us).**

**About FWD.us:** FWD.us is a policy organization working to advance better and more politically resilient solutions on criminal justice and immigration. For too long, our harmful criminal justice and immigration systems have held us back and been weaponized in ways that undermine our nation's promise and democratic ideals. For over a decade, FWD.us has advanced criminal justice and immigration reforms that expanded freedom and opportunities to tens of millions of people in the United States. Working with partners in red, blue, and purple jurisdictions, we have secured legislative and judicial victories and executive actions despite often-challenging political conditions.