

# Immigration officers allowed to make arrests in churches

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Officers enforcing immigration laws now are authorized to arrest undocumented suspects in churches, schools and hospitals after the Trump administration lifted restrictions on enforcement in sensitive locations.

Benjamin Huffman, acting secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, [issued a directive](#) Jan. 20 rescinding the Biden administration's guidelines for Customs and Border Protection and for Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers.

"This action empowers the brave men and women in CBP and ICE to enforce our immigration laws and catch criminal aliens—including murderers and rapists—who have illegally come into our country," Huffman said.

"Criminals will no longer be able to hide in America's schools and churches to avoid arrest. The Trump administration will not tie the hands of our brave law enforcement, and instead trusts them to use common sense."

Matthew Soerens, vice president at World Relief and national coordinator of the Evangelical Immigration Table, [responded on social media](#) to the policy change.

"I'm offended that my government is accusing churches of sheltering murderers," Soeren posted on X, the platform previously known as Twitter.

"The real effect of this change is that people will be afraid to go to church on Sunday."

# Changes to humanitarian parole

At the same time, Huffman announced humanitarian parole to migrants will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

“The Biden-Harris Administration abused the humanitarian parole program to indiscriminately allow 1.5 million migrants to enter our country. This was all stopped on day one of the Trump administration,” Huffman said.

During President Joe Biden’s time in office, the United States broadly extended [humanitarian parole](#) to migrants fleeing Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela due to “urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit.”

The Homeland Security directives were issued in response to a series of executive orders that also included temporarily [halting the U.S. refugee resettlement program](#), shutting down the CBP One app and cancelling all asylum appointments in that system.

[Refugees International](#) issued a statement condemning the executive orders.

“Make no mistake, these orders are not just about stopping irregular migration—they also target long-standing legal migration pathways in ways that will endanger vulnerable people, undermine border security, and harm the U.S. economy,” the advocacy group stated.

“The orders seek to remake U.S. refugee and immigration policy by closing off virtually all pathways for people to seek refuge in the United States, while threatening the safety and stability of newcomers and long-established immigrant families alike.”