



ICE Body-Camera Public-Interest Access Campaign

*When ICE Records the Public, the Public Deserves
Accountable Access*

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Use of this framework creates no obligation to Community First, Civic Codex, or SocialJustice.AI. Organizations are encouraged to modify the language, demands, targets, timelines, and tactics to reflect local conditions, community priorities, organizational capacity, and legal considerations.



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Campaign purpose

ICE's nationwide body-camera rollout creates an accountability opportunity-but cameras alone do not create transparency. ICE Directive 19010.3 allows expedited release of certain critical-incident footage only when ICE determines release is in the agency's "best interests," leaving ICE leadership with significant discretion to delay or withhold video. ICE has said it expects all field officers and agents to have body cameras by the end of **August 2026**.

This campaign supports body-worn cameras for ICE agents. It seeks enforceable rules so that video is preserved, protected from manipulation, accessible to people directly affected, and disclosed when justice and the public interest require it.

The change sought

Win a binding federal **ICE Public-Interest Body-Camera Evidence Rule** that prevents ICE from serving as the sole recorder, custodian, reviewer, editor, and disclosure gatekeeper when its agents' conduct is under scrutiny.

Primary demand

For defined critical incidents-including death, serious bodily injury, firearm discharge, serious force, credible misconduct complaints, or other events raising substantial public-accountability concerns-ICE body-camera footage, metadata, and audit logs must be:

1. **Automatically preserved** immediately, with retention rules that prevent deletion or alteration.
2. **Protected through a tamper-evident chain of custody**, including a secure forensic copy accessible outside ICE's operational chain of command.
3. **Made available promptly to directly affected people, their counsel, and-where appropriate-families or designated representatives.**
4. **Subject to a public-interest presumption of disclosure**, not an agency-interest test.
5. **Redacted before withheld**, using the least restrictive protection necessary for privacy, safety, or fair-process concerns.
6. **Reviewed independently** whenever disclosure is delayed or denied.
7. **Accompanied by a written public decision record** identifying the basis, decision-maker, scope, and expiration date of any delay, withholding, or redaction.
8. **Reported publicly in aggregate**, including recording failures, release timelines, redactions, denials, delays, and compliance outcomes.
9. **Enforceable**, with consequences when required footage is not recorded, preserved, or produced.

Why this rule is necessary

ICE's policy is not a meaningful transparency rule if ICE alone decides whether evidence of its own conduct will be seen. ICE has asserted that it has broader authority to release footage beyond the expedited critical-incident

provision. But discretionary authority is not an access right, a deadline, an independent review process, or a remedy when the agency refuses disclosure.

The campaign does **not** call for immediate public release of every recording. Footage can contain vulnerable people, children, medical care, homes, confidential information, or active-investigation details. Those concerns justify narrowly tailored protections-not indefinite agency-controlled secrecy.

> Privacy must be protected through limited redactions and independently reviewable delays, not through ICE's unchecked power to decide what evidence the public may see.

Targets and decision pathway

Structural target: Congress

Congress can enact durable requirements governing preservation, access, independent review, reporting, and funding conditions for ICE body-camera footage. Existing legislative proposals show there are already federal vehicles and policy components to build from:

- **H.R. 4651**, the **Immigration Enforcement Staff Body Camera Accountability Act**, would require ICE and CBP personnel to use body cameras and directs DHS to develop rules for use and provision of footage, but it does not itself establish a critical-incident public-disclosure presumption.
- **H.R. 5070**, the **Federal Police Camera and Accountability Act**, contains adaptable provisions concerning recorded-person and counsel access, retention, preservation, disclosure, and limits on treating officer-conduct footage as exempt simply because it is investigatory.

Congressional asks

- Sponsor or develop ICE-specific evidence-access legislation.
- Request ICE/DHS criteria, data, and records on release, delay, redaction, and withholding decisions.
- Seek oversight briefings or hearings on body-camera accountability.
- Advance appropriations conditions tied to preservation, public reporting, and independent review.
- Incorporate the campaign's safeguards into any immigration-enforcement body-camera proposal.

Immediate target: DHS and ICE leadership

ICE and DHS can revise Directive 19010.3 and establish interim protections while Congress considers permanent reform.

Administrative asks

- Suspend or replace the "best interests of the agency" standard for qualifying critical incidents.
- Publish written standards for preservation, redaction, delay, withholding, and affected-person access.
- Require redaction-first analysis.
- Establish short, independently reviewed deadlines for any delay.
- Publish aggregate disclosure and compliance data.

Community leadership and coalition structure

This campaign must be led with-not merely narrated by-people directly affected by ICE enforcement.

Required coalition functions

Function	Responsibility
Directly affected-community leadership	Defines justice, safety, consent, and accountability standards; shares decision authority over public participation and escalation.
Immigrant-rights organizing	Builds constituency power and connects the policy demand to enforcement realities.
Civil-rights and due-process advocacy	Strengthens the accountability, fairness, and evidence-access case.
Transparency and open-government expertise	Designs disclosure, redaction, records, reporting, and audit standards.
Legal and policy review	Assesses enforceability, protective-access mechanisms, and independent-review structure.
Congressional engagement	Identifies legislative, oversight, and appropriations openings.
Communications and documentation	Maintains the factual public narrative and records target commitments, refusals, and delays.
Participant-safety support	Manages consent, confidentiality, retaliation, immigration-risk, and privacy protections.

No organization should be described as a coalition member until it has accepted a real role. No affected person should be publicly identified, quoted, or asked to provide evidence without informed consent and a safety assessment.

Public narrative

Core message

> We support ICE body cameras. But cameras only create accountability if the evidence is preserved, protected from manipulation, accessible to affected people, and released under independent public-interest rules when serious harm occurs.

Accountability claim

> ICE cannot be the sole custodian, editor, investigator, and disclosure gatekeeper for video of ICE conduct.

Response to anticipated opposition

Opposition claim	Campaign response
"ICE is already expanding body cameras."	Cameras are valuable, but recording is not transparency without preservation and access rules.
"ICE can release video under existing authority."	Discretion to release is not an enforceable right to evidence or a check on the agency's withholding power.
"Disclosure would harm privacy or investigations."	Protect people through narrow redactions, protected access, short delays, written reasons, and independent review.

"FOIA already provides access."	FOIA does not ensure immediate preservation, prompt access for affected people, independent review, or public deadlines after critical incidents.
"An independent process is too burdensome."	The proposal can use secure preservation, defined review authority, limited exceptions, and time-bound decisions rather than an unworkable blanket-release system.

Organizer action sequence

Phase 1 - Build a governing table

Actions

- Convene directly affected leaders and organizations with immigrant-rights, civil-rights, legal, transparency, communications, and federal-advocacy capacity.
- Adopt shared decision rules for consent, spokespeople, use of stories, confidentiality, and escalation.
- Confirm the non-negotiables: preservation, affected-person access, redaction-first disclosure, independent review, public logs, and enforceability.

Readiness condition:

Directly affected people hold meaningful decision-making power, and the coalition can safely communicate one stable policy demand.

Phase 2 - Establish an evidence record

Actions

- Document ICE's directive, the agency-interest disclosure language, and the absence of publicly auditable withholding criteria.
- Collect consent-based evidence from affected people, families, attorneys, advocates, journalists, and experts.
- Separate verified facts, reported experiences, legal opinions, and coalition interpretation.
- Build a protected record of barriers to footage access, delay, redaction, and preservation.

Readiness condition:

The coalition can make the policy case without requiring vulnerable people to disclose private case details.

Phase 3 - Open direct administrative accountability

Actions

- Submit a written DHS/ICE demand for interim safeguards.
- Request documented answers on decision criteria, reviewers, release timing, redactions, access pathways, and aggregate outcomes.
- Seek a formal briefing and a public commitment to review Directive 19010.3.

Measure of movement:

A written agency response that contains specific standards, data, responsible decision-makers, and a process for independent review.

Phase 4 - Build congressional leverage**Actions**

- Meet with congressional offices capable of supporting oversight, appropriations conditions, or legislation.
- Ask for concrete commitments: records requests, member letters, briefings, hearings, bill drafting, amendment sponsorship, or funding conditions.
- Use H.R. 4651 and H.R. 5070 as starting points for policy design, while insisting on ICE-specific public-interest access and independent-review protections.

Measure of movement:

A congressional office takes a verifiable action-not merely expresses interest.

Phase 5 - Expand public accountability when warranted**Actions**

- Release a coalition assessment after ICE/DHS responds, refuses, or fails to respond.
- Publish endorsements tied to the full policy standard.
- Use press-freedom, transparency, legal, immigrant-rights, and civil-rights validators to explain the distinct stakes.
- Mobilize constituents toward identified oversight and legislative decision points.

Readiness condition:

The governing table determines that public action advances the target strategy and participant safety can be protected.

Escalation thresholds and levels**Current level: Level 1 - Direct engagement****Purpose:**

Test whether ICE, DHS, and congressional offices will engage with an enforceable evidence-access standard.

Authorized actions:

Coalition formation, policy briefings, administrative requests, congressional meetings, endorsement outreach, and documented requests for criteria and data.

Hold condition:

Remain at this level while targets are providing substantive, documented engagement that could reasonably result in binding safeguards.

Success measure:

A target begins a written policy review, produces data, initiates oversight, advances appropriations language, or enters legislative drafting.

Available next level: Level 2 - Formal accountability**Activation threshold:**

Advance only when documented outreach results in nonresponse, unexplained delay, refusal to provide data or criteria, reliance on nonbinding discretion, rejection of independent review, or a proposal missing core protections.

Authorized actions:

Congressional or committee letters, formal oversight requests, appropriations advocacy, public-policy documentation, and appropriate external accountability referrals.

Safeguards:

Public claims must remain evidence-based; sensitive case details remain protected; legal assertions requiring counsel review are not overstated.

Decision authority:

The coalition governing table, including directly affected-community leadership.

Higher level: Level 3 - Coordinated public pressure**Activation threshold:**

Formal accountability fails to produce meaningful movement, and the coalition has adequate base, partnerships, communications capacity, and participant-safety protections.

Authorized actions:

Public coalition launch, endorsement release, media briefings, constituent engagement, and publication of a documented accountability assessment.

Pause or de-escalation conditions:

Pause or redesign any tactic if it exposes participants to unmanageable risk, fails to reach a true decision-maker, weakens consent or coalition trust, or is undermined by new evidence. Hold escalation if a target offers a credible written path toward binding protections and good-faith negotiation is strategically useful.

Measures of victory

Progress

- A community-led coalition adopts the policy standard.
- DHS/ICE receives and answers the administrative demand.
- Congressional offices request records, briefings, or oversight action.
- Organizations take defined functions rather than offering passive support.

Policy victory

- A bill, amendment, appropriations condition, or binding DHS rule includes the campaign's core protections.

Implementation victory

- Qualifying footage is automatically preserved.
- Affected people and counsel have a defined access pathway.
- ICE cannot unilaterally delay or withhold footage without independent, time-limited review.
- Public disclosure, redaction, and delay data are regularly reported.
- Failure to record, preserve, or produce footage has enforceable consequences.

MPoWER Philosophy Alignment

This campaign is grounded in **truth, community agency, organized power, and disciplined action**. It does not conceal that ICE's unilateral control over footage protects institutional discretion at the expense of public accountability. It centers directly affected people as decision-makers, not only as witnesses; builds coalition power across immigrant-rights, civil-rights, transparency, legal, and press-freedom organizations; identifies Congress and DHS/ICE as accountable decision points; and uses condition-based, nonviolent escalation rather than symbolic activity or automatic confrontation. Privacy and safety are treated as real obligations, while secrecy is challenged through specific, enforceable alternatives.

Immediate organizer action

Convene the initial community-led governing table and secure agreement on the one-sentence demand:

> Replace ICE's agency-interest disclosure discretion with a binding public-interest evidence rule: preserve the footage, protect people through narrow redactions, provide affected-person access, require independent review, and report every delay or withholding decision.

