



Monroe County Legislature

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Sheriff Todd Baxter
Monroe County Sheriff's Office
130 S. Plymouth Ave.
Rochester, NY 14614

Sheriff Baxter,

As communities across the country, including Rochester and Monroe County, remain on edge over potential mass deportations of immigrants, I am writing to seek clarification on the Monroe County Sheriff's Office protocols regarding interactions with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As a legislator, it is my duty to raise these questions, and it is in the public's best interest for your responses to be as specific as possible.

Unlike other Sheriff's offices across New York, I have not found any public statements from you or your office about its approach to ICE interactions. However, statements from sheriffs in other counties reflect a range of policies and perspectives:

- **Peter Kehoe**, executive director of the New York State Sheriffs' Association, stated that he expects sheriffs to cooperate with federal law enforcement, saying, "If we have information to share, we'll share it."¹
- **Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple** said his office would not honor ICE detainer requests unless they include a signature from a judge or magistrate, adding, "That's how we roll."²
- **Onondaga County Sheriff Toby Shelley** stated his office will not honor ICE detainer requests, saying, "Detainers are not a legal document—they're not signed by a judge."³
- **Cayuga County Sheriff Brian Schenck** indicated his office cooperates with ICE to the extent it is allowed, explaining, "Absent a criminal immigration offense or additional conduct that constitutes a crime, we cannot legally arrest or detain an individual solely

¹ Chodak, A. (2024, December 3). Local sheriffs prepare for possible mass deportation effort. *WROC-TV*. <https://www.rochesterfirst.com/news/local-news/local-sheriffs-prepare-for-possible-mass-deportation-effort/>

² Conlin, S. (2025, January 28). Upstate elected officials monitoring Trump's crackdown on immigrants lacking legal status. *Spectrum News*. https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/capital-region/news/2025/01/28/capital-region-leader-trump-illegal-immigration-crackdown?cid=share_twitter

³ Coleman, M. (2025, February 3). Onondaga Sheriff says he'll only detain immigrant if he has warrant signed by judge. *Spectrum News*. <https://cnycentral.com/newsletter-daily/onondaga-co-sheriff-says>

for a civil violation. We can and will assist federal officials with legal authority, but without them present, we do not have jurisdiction.”⁴

These differing approaches—some of which remain unclear—prompt the following questions about the Monroe County Sheriff’s policies:

1. **Is your office following the New York State Attorney General’s guidance for local law enforcement regarding immigration enforcement?**⁵
2. **Has your office ever held, or will it hold an individual based solely on an ICE detainer request without a warrant signed by a judge?**
3. **Does your office proactively notify ICE of the presence of undocumented individuals in the Monroe County Jail or during encounters on the road?**
4. **Does your office share information with ICE regarding undocumented individuals in the community or within your jurisdiction?**
5. **Has your office assisted, or will it assist ICE in holding individuals for civil immigration matters?**
6. **Will you commit to refusing to detain individuals in the Monroe County Jail who face no criminal charges but are subject to civil deportation actions by ICE?**

Given the importance of this issue to the community, I respectfully request detailed responses to these questions. Transparency on these matters is essential for public trust and clarity regarding the role your office plays in immigration enforcement.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Rachel Barnhart – Legislator District 17

⁴ Harding, R. (2025, February 3). How Cayuga County sheriff will assist federal immigration crackdown. *Spectrum News*. https://auburnpub.com/news/local/government-politics/cayuga-county-sheriff-immigration-enforcement/article_f3379734-e2ee-11ef-a1c8-ef81f1182583.html

⁵ (2017, January 19). *Immigration enforcement*. New York State Attorney General. <https://ag.ny.gov/police-departments-law-enforcement/immigration-enforcement>