

# Impact Report

The Marshall Project tracks the impact of our journalism on policymakers, advocates and other media. This report highlights some key examples.

## Shining a light on children in immigration detention

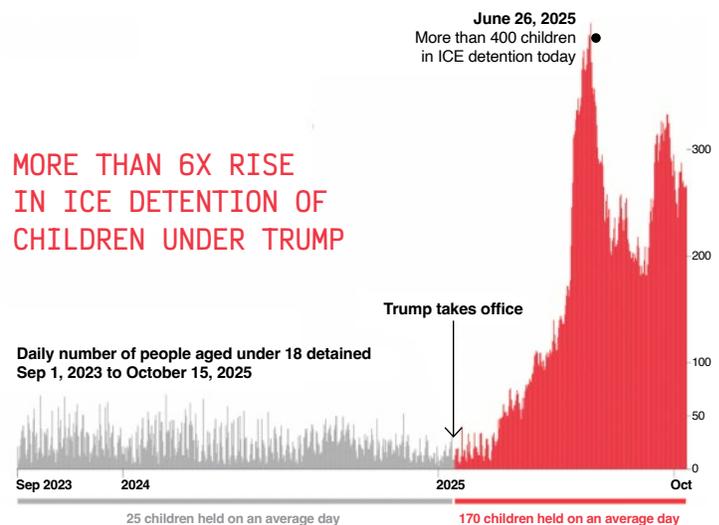
Data reporting is one of the cornerstones of our newsroom for a reason. When our team analyzes government records, it's about much more than numbers. It's about bringing added context, transparency and sense-making to the forefront of the public conversation about important issues. That's what happened when we analyzed Immigration and Customs Enforcement data obtained by the [Deportation Data Project](#).

[Our reporting](#) showed that ICE had placed thousands of children in detention, and many were held longer than the limits set by federal courts. Behind those numbers were families whose lives were disrupted after being detained following routine immigration check-ins. Families described children struggling with stress, uncertainty, fear and illness. Legal advocates told us that prolonged detention makes it harder for parents to prepare their immigration cases and can leave lasting emotional scars, particularly on very young children. Since President Donald Trump took office last year, at least 3,800 children under the age of 18 — including 20 infants — have been booked into detention facilities. Those numbers are up [more than sixfold](#) since the start of the second Trump administration.

The impact of those stories was immediate. Within days of publication, dozens of news outlets cited our reporting and data analysis, amplifying our findings and adding critical context to immigration coverage nationwide. Our work was also cited in a legal brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court and referenced by advocacy organizations including the Brennan Center for Justice, the Children's Defense Fund and the ACLU of Louisiana.



The South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas, in 2019.  
ILANA PANICH-LINSMAN



### ELIMINATING BLIND SPOTS

Following the fatal beating of Robert Brooks and our reporting on how [New York prison guards assaulted incarcerated people in health clinics](#), Gov. Kathy Hochul signed legislation requiring [continuous 24-hour video surveillance](#) in all areas where guards interact with incarcerated people, including infirmaries and prison vehicles. The law mandates the elimination of camera blind spots, with exceptions for toilets, showers and inside cells. It also required changes to the state Commission of Correction, whose investigations into the deaths of incarcerated people have been criticized for their lack of urgency and transparency.



Jared Ricks, brother of Robert Brooks, speaks at a press conference to announce the filing of a civil rights lawsuit after Brooks died when he was beaten by guards in a New York prison.  
LAUREN PETRACCA



**CASES DISMISSED**

Hundreds of drivers in Lorain, Ohio, had their licenses suspended over minor parking infractions — tickets for parking more than a foot from a curb or with a tire on the lawn. What began as minor violations quickly spiraled into court fines and costly state reinstatement fees, leaving working families in significant debt. Within days of The Marshall Project - Cleveland [asking questions](#) about the parking tickets issued across Lorain neighborhoods, Mayor Jack Bradley halted the practice. In November, a municipal court judge began dismissing cases. A crackdown that quietly upended so many lives is finally being reconsidered.

**PUBLIC DEFENSE PLANS REQUIRED IN WRITING**



The Mississippi Supreme Court building in 2024. RORY DOYLE/THE MARSHALL PROJECT

In April of 2025, Mississippi Chief Justice Michael Randolph ordered the state’s 23 circuit courts to [publicly disclose](#) how they ensure that people who cannot afford a lawyer receive one. Each court was required to not only submit its public defense plan to the state Supreme Court, but also post it online for the public to see. The directive follows reporting by our [Jackson newsroom](#), the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal and ProPublica’s Local Reporting Network, which revealed in 2023 that nearly every circuit court in Mississippi was ignoring a 2017 rule requiring judges to create and file public defense plans. For years, the mandate went unenforced and largely unnoticed. Courts that once operated without public scrutiny must now explain, in writing and in public, how they protect one of the Constitution’s most fundamental rights: access to legal counsel.



ANUJ SHRESTHA/THE MARSHALL PROJECT

**ELIMINATED FEES**

In January, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that state courts can no longer bill low-income Iowans for the cost of their court-appointed defense attorney when criminal charges against the person have been dismissed. In media depictions, police officers read Miranda rights and tell the accused they will be provided a lawyer if they cannot afford one. But in reality, legal representation is rarely free. [Our 2024 investigation found](#) that Iowa imposed some of the highest public defender fees in the nation and often billed people who couldn’t afford an attorney, even when they were acquitted or their cases were dropped. During oral arguments before the court in October, the ACLU of Iowa cited The Marshall Project’s reporting. Now, tens of thousands of Iowans stand to receive financial relief as a result of the court’s decision.

**JUDGE RESIGNS**

Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Judge Leslie Ann Celebrezze pleaded guilty to tampering with public records to funnel work in her courtroom to Mark Dottore, her longtime friend, whom she’d repeatedly appointed to oversee lucrative divorce cases. The third-degree felony charge, which carries a potential prison term of up to three years, comes more than two years after The Marshall Project - Cleveland [first detailed Celebrezze’s relationship with Dottore](#). She [resigned](#) from the bench in December. She will be sentenced in the spring.



Administrative Judge Leslie Ann Celebrezze’s courtroom in the Old Courthouse on Lakeside Avenue in Cleveland. GUS CHAN/THE MARSHALL PROJECT

**The Marshall Project Inside - Increasing Access**

Over the last year, our Marshall Project Inside team has continued to expand access to our journalism behind bars.



Facilities where our *News Inside* magazine is available. Up approximately 25% from last year.



Facilities where our *Inside Story* TV show is available. More than double the 750 facilities this time last year.

**“I would like to thank you for taking the time to publish *The Marshall Project’s News Inside*, as it constantly provides valuable insight into what’s happening in and around prison communities.”**

JAMES M., incarcerated in New York