
Background

Probably most of you know that there is an ICE Office in Portland on SW Macadam Ave. Want to know more? Here is some background.

The Macadam facility is one of two offices in Oregon; the other is in Medford. The facility was constructed specifically for ICE field operations personnel, mainly ICE agents, to replace offices in an aging federal building in North Portland. According to a Portland building permit, the Macadam facility is 60,000 square feet of mixed-use with offices, storage, high-security entry with bullet-proof glass and “limited duration” detention.

The number of personnel at the facility is not published officially. A 2010 article in the Oregonian estimated the Portland ICE staff as about 100 personnel. It is probably more now.

In the same Oregonian article, ICE characterized the building as a “processing environment” and downplayed its role in detention. That’s probably true since most detentions are at Tacoma and NORCOR, but the Macadam facility is a gateway.

The ICE” Check-In”

You’ve also probably heard of an “ICE check-in” required of undocumented immigrants. What is it?

When an undocumented immigrant is apprehended they may be detained or placed under supervision by Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), a department of ICE. Supervision is an alternative to detention, where an individual is released back into the community. As of 2015, ERO had 2.2 million individuals under supervision nationwide! The number under supervision in Oregon is not published.

An immigrant under supervision must periodically check-in with their ICE case manager, which occurs at the Macadam office for our area. The frequency of the check-in is typically annually at the discretion of the ICE agent. As part of the check-in, the agent will perform a background check to see if there are any new legal violations that would affect the immigrant’s status.

So what could happen to the immigrant during their check-in? There are three possible outcomes. The first is administrative delay; the individual is released back into the community and continues under supervision.

Detention is the second possibility, which could come from a problematic background check. The third possibility is the “final removal order”. But let’s get rid of that jargon and call it what it is: deportation.

Clearly an ICE check-in is very stressful. None of the possible outcomes represent freedom for the individual. Frankly, this ERO process is just a path to deportation. The threat of deportation at any time is always present. The check-in is a firm reminder of this threat, repeated at least annually, and tweeted all too often by President Trump.