

Minnesota's prisons had to launch a website to correct 'inaccurate' arrest info from Trump's DHS

State officials push back against 'reckless' and 'inaccurate' statements about law enforcement in the state

Alex Woodward in New York

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Donald Trump's administration has "repeatedly" spread "inaccurate" statements about the people who are targeted by federal immigration officers in Minnesota, according to state prison officials.

The state's Department of Corrections has launched a website to correct what it calls "ongoing misinformation" from Homeland Security officials, including in the immediate aftermath of the fatal shooting of 37-year-old Alex Pretti.

"It is disturbing that DHS continues to issue inaccurate statements that erode public trust," Minnesota Department of Corrections commissioner Paul Schnell said in a statement. "We will not allow misinformation to go unchecked — especially when it threatens the integrity of public safety agencies and undermines transparency."

In a press conference after the shooting, Greg Bovino, the border patrol official leading Trump's operation in the state, claimed that officers were on the scene to target Jose Huerta-Chuma, who was characterized as having a significant criminal history.

But Huerta-Chuma has never been in the state's custody, and state records show he doesn't have any felony allegations, according to the DOC. Records show he has misdemeanor-level traffic offenses from more than a decade ago, the agency said.



Minnesota officials have accused border patrol official Gregory Bovino of making false statements about immigrants in state custody as the Trump administration repeatedly accuses state officials of refusing to work with ICE (*Getty Images*)

The agency’s website was created in response to those and other “repeated false or misleading claims” from Homeland Security officials about the people under DOC custody, officials said.

Homeland Security also releases “false numbers” about people subject to Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody who are in the state’s jails, according to the DOC.

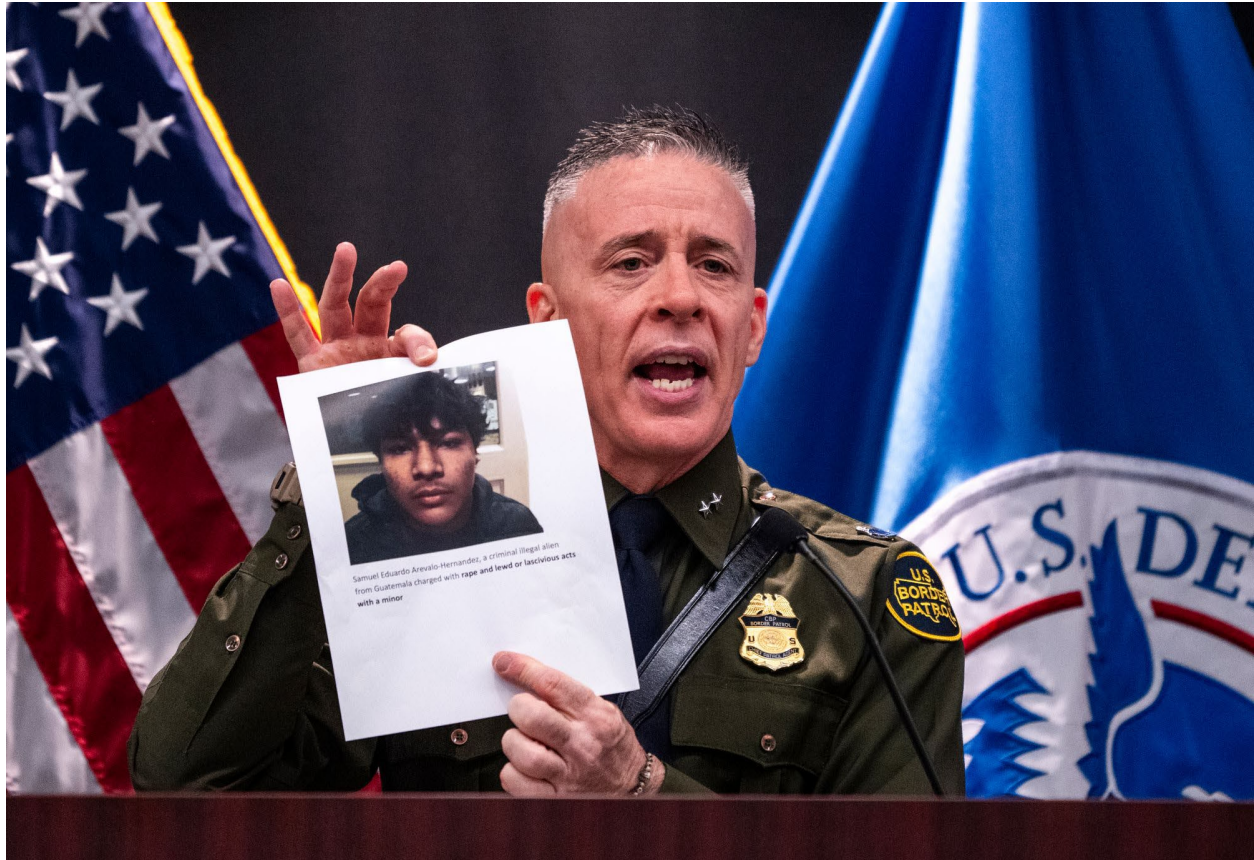
Under Minnesota law, DOC is required to notify ICE when an immigrant convicted of a felony is set to be released. Last year, prison officials turned over 84 people in state custody who had finished sentences and were leaving the state’s prison system, according to the agency.

Homeland Security claims the state is shielding 1,360 criminally charged immigrants who can be removed from the country, which state and local officials have disputed.

The state’s prison system says there are roughly 300 people who ICE identified as deportable.

Earlier this month, the administration published a list of “the worst of the worst” criminal allegedly arrested by immigration officers, and suggesting that the state had prevented them from being captured.

But an investigation from Minnesota Public Radio found that most of people on the list “had been immediately transferred to ICE custody at the end of time served in Minnesota prisons,” and that all those transfers happened *before* officers surged into the state, including, in some instances, years earlier.



Minnesota’s prison system opened a website after Bovino and other Trump administration officials ‘repeatedly’ spread ‘inaccurate’ statements about how the state works with ICE (*Getty Images*)

Administration officials also accused Minnesota of releasing hundreds of deportable immigrants with criminal convictions since Trump took office, but Schnell said that only 84 inmates with ICE detainers were released last year, and in every case, the state coordinated with ICE.

Those “detainers” are requests from ICE to local law enforcement to hold people who could be deported until they can be taken into federal custody.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison has advised against signing off on those detainers without a warrant signed by a judge, though some counties in the state have signed cooperative agreements to work directly with ICE.

Trump administration officials have repeatedly accused Democratic-led states like Minnesota of refusing to cooperate with ICE to justify surges of law enforcement.

The surge in Minnesota is Homeland Security’s largest immigration enforcement operation yet, with officers accused of unlawfully targeting immigrants and citizens alike and facing off against protesters in violent clashes.



The Minnesota surge under Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem is the agency’s largest yet, with a promise to ‘FLOOD THE ZONE’ unless the state cooperates with ICE — which officials contend they already do (*Getty Images*)

Minnesota officials have sued the administration to stop the surge, alleging the operation is a politically motivated and unconstitutional attack on the state. Administration officials have disputed those claims and are fighting in several courtrooms to reject the lawsuits.

Last week, Homeland Security demanded Minneapolis to “let ICE in your jails.”

“Until then, President Trump and Secretary Noem will FLOOD THE ZONE,” the agency wrote on X.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem has also claimed that state agencies are barred from joining the investigation into Prettie’s death because the state “refuses to cooperate with ICE.”

“That statement is incorrect,” state prison officials said.

“The inaccurate assertions of these high-level ICE officials are untrue, reckless, and contrary to longstanding practice,” according to Minnesota’s DOC.

Though the state blocks officials and police from asking residents about their immigration status, in most cases, that policy does not apply to people in custody. “At the city level, we do not have authority over jails and prisons — period,” Mayor Jacob Frey said.

“The Minnesota Legislature has not passed legislation making Minnesota a sanctuary state, and I have not signed any such legislation into law,” Governor Tim Walz testified to Congress last year.

The state’s website includes a count of noncitizens in state custody and press releases clarifying Homeland Security’s “worst of the worst” lists.

“DOC will continue to review facts carefully, correct the record when necessary, and share accurate, verifiable information with the media and the public,” according to the agency.

The Independent has requested comment from Homeland Security.

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