



Senate Enrolled Act 76

Our next installment of Need to Know will cover Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 76. Also known as the “FAIRNESS (Forging American Independence, Restoring National Exceptionalism Safely and Securely) Act,” SEA 76* took effect in July 2026 (hospital reporting requirements begin January 1, 2027). At its core, it requires schools, businesses, and local governments to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement officers. Further, it allows Indiana’s Attorney General to investigate and take legal action against organizations and employers that fail to comply with the requirements of SEA 76.

Between August 30 and September 3, 2026, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducted Operation Safe Community-Indiana across the state where over 400 immigrant neighbors were arrested. It is notable that from July 2025 to July 2026, there has been a 93% increase (389 to 751) in arrests leading to detention in Indiana. Immigrant Welcome Center’s (IWC) qualitative study, “The Effects of Immigration Policies on Immigrants in Central Indiana” conducted in April 2026—before SEA 76 went into effect—found that immigrant neighbors disengaged from civic activities, including grocery shopping, going to the doctor’s office because they are scared.

Over the past 18 months, our immigrant neighbors have experienced numerous obstacles to feeling safe in the communities they live and work. SEA 76 further creates uncertainty and fear. Below is a breakdown of SEA 76 and its impact.

CAUSE:



EFFECT

SEA 76 mandates broader cooperation with ICE and Indiana’s law enforcement agencies.

- As of September 2026, 39 law enforcement agencies (compared to seven in August 2025) in Indiana have joined the 287(g) program, which creates a partnership with federal immigration agencies. A traffic stop or interaction with a police officer could result in an individual being arrested while they wait for ICE to detain or deport them.
- These agreements blur the line between local law enforcement officers and ICE, resulting in fear and undermining of trust among immigrant communities. These communities are, therefore, less likely to seek help and report crimes.

287(g) agreements play a key role in expanding this cooperation. These agreements are partnerships between local law enforcement and ICE.

Officers from participating agencies receive training and authority to carry out certain ICE enforcement functions.

CAUSE:



EFFECT

SEA 76 expands the authority of the Indiana Attorney General to enforce federal employment requirements.

- Indiana employers face penalties including:
 - Five- or 10-day license suspensions
 - A 180-day suspension for repeat violations
 - Permanent license revocation in more serious cases
 - Up to two years of probation and quarterly compliance reports
- SEA 76 combined with federal policies such as TPS designation changes and executive orders impact the day-to-day functions of top industries where immigrants work including healthcare, manufacturing, and logistics. These policies result in confusion for employers and fear amongst the employees.

E-verify, a federal program, is used by employers to ensure that workers are authorized to work in the United States.



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CAUSE:



EFFECT

SEA 76 mandates the Family and Social Services Administration FSSA report to the number of non-citizens accessing benefits. Beginning January 1, 2027, the law requires hospitals to report the type of identification patients present when admitted.

- Our study found that service providers reported increased mental health needs, including heightened anxiety, stress, and trauma-related concerns among immigrant families.
- This law uses a term that applies to a broad group of immigrants with various statuses or no legal status, thereby scaring eligible individuals away from applying for benefits or receiving care.

Only a small group of immigrant neighbors can now access public benefits, and historically, immigrants utilize public benefits at lower rates than U.S. citizens.

Sources

- ICE arrests 426 people across Indiana ([WFYI](#))
- Governor Braun Announces Cooperation Agreements with Federal Immigration Enforcement ([IN.gov](#))
- Indiana police agencies partnered with ICE ([IndyStar](#))
- Indiana's state police, prisons and more ink immigration enforcement agreements with ICE ([Indiana Capital Chronicle](#))
- The 287(g) Program: An Overview ([AIC](#))
- Immigrants in Indiana ([AIC](#))
- Indiana Senate Bill 76 Takes Effect: What Employers Need to Know ([Ice Miller](#))
- Map - ICE Arrests, Detentions ([Newsweek](#))
- What SEA 76 Means for Indiana ([ACLU](#))
- Immigrants and the Use of Public Benefits in the United States ([MPI](#))
- Need to Know: Public Benefits ([IWC](#))
- Judge blocks ICE detainer law in Monroe County ([FOX59](#))
- Senate Enrolled Act 76 ([IGA.gov](#))