



ICE Defends Use of NYPD Jackets as Law-enforcement Identity Symbols

After residents in the Brooklyn and Manhattan boroughs of New York City complained about Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) wearing jackets emblazoned with the letters “NYPD,” ICE responded with a statement justifying the practice.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio had also criticized the wearing of the jackets by ICE agents, and asked federal immigration authorities to ban its officers from doing so, asserting that it amounted to portraying themselves as local police, driving victims and witnesses of crime “into the shadows and creat[ing] fear.”



Dave Hosford/Flickr

Following complaints from residents in Brooklyn who attended a rally in front of the 88th police precinct on October 11 saying that they had had encounters with uniformed officers wearing NYPD gear, ICE said the agency is looking into the incident. The residents acknowledged that the ICE agents identified themselves as immigration agents and never said they were NYPD officers.

In response to residents’ concerns, ICE issued a statement saying:

ICE officers are sworn federal law enforcement officers who enforce U.S. immigration laws created by Congress to keep this country safe. The word “POLICE” is a universally recognized symbol of law enforcement in most cultures, an important distinction given that many of the individuals with whom ICE interacts are not native English speakers. Given the inherently dangerous nature of ICE officers’ work, their ability to quickly establish their identity as sworn law enforcement personnel could potentially mean the difference between life and death.

Shortly after releasing that statement, ICE sent out a second statement that ICE agents were not involved in any of the activities in question — despite Brooklyn residents’ claims.

“U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has no record of any enforcement activities being conducted at the time and location specified in your query,” said ICE.

There was a report of a similar incident occurring in Upper Manhattan.

“They were saying, ‘Hey, can you open the door. We are just NYPD, we come from precinct 34. We’re not ICE,’” said a young woman, as quoted by Fox News.

NYPD told station PIX11 in New York that they have no record of the incidents.

In response to the allegations, De Blasio wrote in a letter to Tony H. Pham, the acting director of ICE,



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 13, 2020

who was born in Saigon and came to the United States as a refugee in the 1970s, “Clearly stated, the NYPD does not want ICE agents stating or implying that they represent the NYPD.” “Such behavior negatively affects the public safety mission of the NYPD and erodes trust in our communities.”

Newsmax reported that earlier this year, ICE took the city to court after the de Blasio administration refused to honor “immigration subpoenas” it received from the federal government that sought information about a handful of inmates wanted for deportation.

New York City officials’ recalcitrance reflected ICE’s increased frustration with jurisdictions that do not honor deportation “detainers” or provide information about illegal aliens going in and out of local custody.

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