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ICE faces new rules in state's courts

Agents can't wear masks or make arrests without a warrant under policy enacted by chief justice

By Christopher Keating
Hartford Courant

Federal immigration agents cannot wear masks and cannot make arrests without a warrant inside Connecticut courthouses under new rules enacted Tuesday. Gov. Ned Lamont, the state Supreme Court chief justice and a top legislator made the announcement as they said that all three

branches of state government are united in dealing with the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents who have made arrests in Connecticut. ICE has been controversial nationwide as President Donald Trump's administration sharply increases enforcement, with masked agents often making dramatic arrests without identifying themselves. "I want to do everything I can

to make sure that people are safe, and feel safe, going into our state courthouses," Lamont told reporters at the state Capitol in Hartford. "There have not been a lot of instances, but there have been some instances of ICE going into our courthouses, wearing masks, taking people out. ... It's very important that immigrants, and even undocumented immigrants, feel safe going into our courthouses. In many cases, they're going into our courthouse as a witness to a crime."

The policy was enacted Tuesday

by Chief Justice Raheem Mullins, and the legislature is preparing to codify the new rules as part of state law in the coming months. Citing his role as chief justice, Mullins largely declined to answer most questions from reporters by saying it is "a very fine line" as he wanted to avoid "delving too far into the political realm."

Starting Tuesday, ICE will need a judicial warrant to make an arrest, as opposed to a "civil detainer," Lamont said.

A key point, officials said, is that law enforcement officers cannot

wear masks in the courthouse, but they can do so if there are medical reasons and they receive permission in advance from the judicial branch. The general public will continue to be allowed to wear masks, officials said.

"Something I think people really understand is no masks in the courthouse — it's intimidating," Lamont said. "We want to be able to identify people who are there so that people are safe and we know who is in the courthouse."

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Company to close all operations in state

Solar installer slashes jobs after Trump curtails tax credits

By Kenneth R. Gosselin
Hartford Courant

A major residential solar installer, which already has slashed its workforce in Connecticut by dozens of jobs, will permanently close its three locations in the state and will layoff its remaining employees by early October, according to a notice filed with the state labor department.

Solar installer PosiGen laid off nearly 80 employees beginning late last month after President Donald Trump signed sweeping legislation that included curtailing renewable energy tax credits for homeowners installing solar panels.

PosiGen has locations in Wethersfield, Danbury and Shelton — and the company, according to the notice, expects to lay off its remaining eight employees by no later than Oct. 4.

The layoffs come as Louisiana-based PosiGen moves to cease most of its operations nationwide, unable to raise long-term capital to keep the company on firm financial footing.

PosiGen has focused on bringing solar power to low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

"...although the company has obtained some additional financing from its lender and is still actively seeking additional financing from its lender, such financings only will permit the company to continue operations for a temporary period — at the end of which the company will shut down all operations and close its facilities" in Connecticut, according to a Sept. 12 notice filed with the state and signed by PosiGen chief administrative officer John Truschinger.

The Connecticut locations are at 100 Great Meadow Road, Suite 205, Wethersfield; 50 Ivy Brook Road, Shelton and 98 Mill Plain Road, Suite 2C,

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Apostol Laske, from USI Insurance Services, checks the date on lettuce before packing the food into boxes as volunteers pack food for distribution by Connecticut Foodshare's mobile pantries Tuesday.

Helping to feed the hungry across Connecticut

Philip Morris International US has donated \$100,000 to Connecticut Foodshare in recognition of Hunger Action Month. Connecticut Foodshare provides food to at least one pantry in each of Connecticut's 169 towns and cities. "Because of our efficiency and our volunteer force here, every dollar donated we can turn into two meals, so \$100,000 is great — 200,000 meals is even better," said Jason Jakubowski, president and CEO of Connecticut Foodshare. Nearly 470,000 residents of Connecticut are classified as "food insecure" according to the organization Feeding America.

AARON FLAUM/
HARTFORD COURANT PHOTOS



Weekly volunteer Betty Curley of Naugatuck packs celery for distribution by Connecticut Foodshare's mobile pantries.

Town opinion fractured over post

Message about Charlie Kirk murder sparks controversy

By Don Stacom
Hartford Courant

Amidst national division about the Charlie Kirk assassination, Farmington residents on Monday night alternately defended and criticized school board Chairman Bill Beckert over a controversial message posted briefly to his Facebook page.

Beckert repeated his contention that he didn't write "They reap what they sow," didn't post the message on Facebook, and immediately took it down when he learned of it.

"That post does not reflect how I feel about Charlie Kirk's work, it was not my words. My heart goes out to his family and to his supporters," Beckert told a large crowd at the board's meeting at West District School.

Nevertheless, minutes later Republican board member Nadine Canto called for Beckert, a Democrat, to step down as chairman, saying the debate has become a distraction to the school system's work.

Democrat Beth Kintner immediately defended Beckert, saying his resignation would be an even bigger distraction. Kintner also said the upcoming municipal election could be playing a role in the debate.

"We really need to stop and be careful about being swayed by politics and the opportunities that present themselves when controversies like this come up," she said. "It's this taking advantage of the opportunity for political gain that really upsets me."

A line of speakers took turns giving character references for Beckert, arguing that he'd given decades of community service in Farmington and insisting that he'd never put up an offensive social media message.

"I believe he's as horrified by the murder of Mr. Kirk as we all are and would never wish to minimize such loss of life,"

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FBI chief, Senate Democrats clash at hearing



FBI Director Kash Patel speaks Tuesday during a Senate Judiciary hearing on Capitol Hill. CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY

Patel rejects critics' charge that agency focused on revenge

By Eric Tucker
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — FBI Director Kash Patel clashed with skeptical Democrats at a contentious Senate oversight hearing Tuesday, defending his record amid criticism that he has politicized the nation's premier federal law enforcement agency and pursued retribution against perceived adversaries of President Donald Trump.

"Mr. Patel, in just eight months, you have assaulted the institu-

tional integrity of the FBI," said Democratic Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey, in one of several testy exchanges between Patel and lawmakers.

The appearance Tuesday before the Senate Judiciary Committee represented the first oversight hearing of Patel's young but tumultuous tenure and provided a high-stakes platform for him to try to demonstrate that he is the right person for the job at a time of internal upheaval and mounting concerns about political violence inside the United States, a threat laid bare by last week's killing of conservative activist Charlie Kirk at a college

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Three indicted on gunpoint robbery

The men have been indicted on charges alleging they stole more than \$300,000 worth of Apple products in Manchester in March. **Connecticut, Page 3**

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