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Judge ordered ICE to return 2 men arrested at Maine jobsite. They were released in Ohio.

An attorney for the Massachusetts men said volunteers from an immigrant support group helped them buy bus tickets so they could travel back to New England.

By EMILY ALLEN
Staff Writer

Two men arrested by Border Patrol at a jobsite in Bethel and moved out of state were released from a jail in Ohio last week, despite a federal judge's orders that they be returned home to New England.

Paula Esteves, their attorney, said her clients had been released

"in the cold in Ohio, knowing no one" and without means to return home to Massachusetts, where they have pending immigration court cases.

Volunteers from immigrant support groups in Ohio helped the men — Elder Benjamin Ortiz Sintuj and Selvin Isais Situj Garcia — contact their families and buy bus tickets on the morning of Feb. 3 so

they could get home, she said.

U.S. District Judge John Woodcock had ordered on Jan. 28 that the two men be flown back to Maine by Feb. 2, after learning U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement had sent them to a facility in Louisiana in violation of a temporary order.

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U.S. District Court Judge John Woodcock, in his rulings, ordered ICE to pay for attorney fees and the bus tickets. He wrote that he didn't believe the agency had "violated the court's order in bad faith" by releasing the men in Ohio.



Eliot Cutler, now 79, the disgraced former Maine gubernatorial candidate, appears in Hancock County Court in Ellsworth in May 2023. (GREGORY REC/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

Accused of possessing pornography, Cutler back in custody

The convicted sex offender has now been accused of violating conditions of his release 3 times in the span of several months.

By MORGAN WOMACK
Staff Writer

Eliot Cutler, the disgraced former Maine gubernatorial candidate who was arrested again Monday, is accused of possessing pornography, his lawyer said — the third time since September that Cutler has allegedly violated the conditions of his release.

Cutler, 79, was convicted in 2023 of possessing thousands of sexually explicit images of children and sentenced to nine months in jail followed by six years of probation. He was let out of jail in January 2024, two months before his scheduled release date because of "good behavior."

Maine State Police say they arrested Cutler at a South Portland hotel on Monday after officers witnessed him breaking the terms of his most recent — and more stringent — bail conditions. State police declined on Tuesday to share further information about the circumstances of his arrest.

Cutler's attorney, Walter McKee, said in an emailed statement Tuesday morning that he had not yet seen any police reports about the arrest, but he said his client was accused of "possessing pornography."

Cutler is being held without bail at the Cumberland County Jail, jail employees said Tuesday.

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Backyard Farms, seen Tuesday, operates a greenhouse in Madison. A spokesperson for the Canadian parent company said "contract workers did not arrive" at the facility Tuesday. (JOE PHELAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

FEDERAL AGENTS DETAIN 17 WORKERS IN SKOWHEGAN

A team from U.S. Border Patrol stopped a busload of employees heading to Backyard Farms in Madison early Tuesday morning, the bus driver says.

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By JAKE FREUDBERG
Staff Writer

SKOWHEGAN — Roland Joyce was driving his normal bus route Tuesday morning, taking temporary workers from a former motel in Skowhegan to work at the Backyard Farms greenhouses in Madison.

He pulled out of the driveway onto West Front Street promptly at 5:20 a.m. but made it only a few hundred yards down the road before federal agents in two vehicles pulled out from business driveways in front of the bus and stopped it.

"I started slowing down, and then it was blue lights everywhere,"

Joyce said in an interview at Poland's Garage on Sesame Street later Tuesday. "They were coming from behind me; they were besides me; they were coming out from both sides of me."

Federal agents — from the U.S. Border Patrol and possibly other agencies — boarded the bus speaking Spanish and ultimately detained all 17 workers on the bus, Joyce said. He said it appeared they were initially targeting one man, as an agent immediately took him into custody upon boarding the bus.

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TODAY'S ALMANAC

February 11, 2026

Today is the 42nd day of 2026. There are 323 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Feb. 11, 1990, South African anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years in prison. (Mandela would be elected president of South Africa four years later.)

Also on this date:

In 1847, American inventor Thomas Alva Edison was born in Milan, Ohio.

In 1937, a six-week-old sit-down strike against General Motors ended, with the company agreeing to recognize and negotiate with the United Auto Workers union.

In 1945, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Josef Stalin signed the Yalta Agreement, in which Stalin agreed to declare war against Imperial Japan following Nazi Germany's capitulation.

In 1975, Margaret Thatcher was elected leader of Britain's opposition Conservative Party, a prelude to her eventual rise to prime minister in 1979.

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Maine Trust for Local News

'I'm running'

Maine's Susan Collins launches campaign for a 6th U.S. Senate term

The race is expected to be one of the most competitive and closely watched in the nation.

By RANDY BILLINGS
Staff Writer

Susan Collins formally announced on Tuesday that she is seeking her sixth term in the U.S. Senate, portraying herself as a pragmatic, bipartisan lawmaker more interested in getting results than scoring political points or

ELECTION 2026

making viral content for social media.

Collins' announcement, which she made in a column in the Bangor Daily News and in a social media video, was not a surprise. Collins has repeatedly indicated her intent to run in one of the most closely watched and competitive races in the country.

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U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, speaks at an event at the newly renovated American Red Cross facility in Portland last month. She officially launched her reelection bid Tuesday. (GREGORY REC/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

Maine could adopt more ranked-choice voting this year, amid legal questions

Including elections for governor and state lawmakers faces constitutional concerns.

By RANDY BILLINGS
and BILLY KOBIN
Staff Writers

Maine lawmakers are asking the state's top court to weigh in on whether major voting changes that could come as soon as this year are constitutional.

The House and Senate passed a resolution asking the Maine Supreme Judicial Court for an advisory opinion about whether



ranked-choice voting can be used this fall to elect a governor and a new Legislature.

"If we are to expand ranked-choice voting to gubernatorial and legislative elections — as Maine voters and majorities of both bodies of the Legislature have endorsed — we

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