

PLANET FITNESS

EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22. FOR EONS, THE EARTH HAS BEEN TALKING TO US. NEW TECH ALLOWS US TO LISTEN IN. **I13**

Sunday

South Jersey TIMES

DATA ANALYSIS

Who is ICE targeting in N.J.? A clearer picture emerges.



Photo illustration by Jennifer Meyer, Advance Local / Shutterstock

An analysis of arrest data exposes the gap between rhetoric and reality in the Trump administration's immigration crackdown.

Ted Sherman *NJ.com*

The scenes play out across New Jersey every day.

An undocumented immigrant from Mexico walking home after taking his 8-year-old son to the school bus stop is stopped and detained. A masked immigration agent smashes out a car window to grab someone outside a New Jersey courthouse. A pastor from Colombia who serves at an evangelical church in Elizabeth is taken into custody after being told by authorities that he missed a court date.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforce-

ment refuses to say how many people in New Jersey have been caught up in its aggressive crackdown that has been a hallmark of the Trump administration. A spokeswoman offered only a link to file a Freedom of Information Act request for the public information, which three weeks later has yet to be met with any response.

But an analysis by NJ.com of data obtained by the Deportation Data Project at the University of California Berkeley School of Law in collaboration with UCLA's Center for Immigration Law and Policy — encompassing all ICE arrests, detainees, detentions, encounters and removals data throughout the country — opened a window into the secretive operations of the federal agency.

It shows the number of individuals taken by ICE agents in New Jersey nearly tripled from the last year of the Biden administration to more than 8,300 last year. This year's figure will likely be higher. Through the first three months of 2026, ICE has already made 2,636 arrests, the data showed.

At the same time, a deeper examination of the records tells a far different story

than the public narrative offered by ICE, which has claimed it targets “the worst of the worst.” Despite the rhetoric regarding how ICE focuses its efforts on what it calls “criminal aliens,” the data shows more than three in four people detained in the state since January 2025 had no criminal record. Among them was a 27-year-old man from the Dominican Republic who was arrested by ICE despite being granted legal permanent residence, raising questions about due process safeguards.

Comparisons with previous years actually show the increasing numbers of apprehensions were due to more arrests of those who had not been convicted of any crime, the analysis showed.

In fact, the agency's Criminal Alien Program, which according to ICE is tasked to go after those with criminal backgrounds, accounted for many non-criminal cases that were classified simply as “other immigration violator” matters in New Jersey — demonstrating the broad reach of how the program is being applied.

SEE DATA ANALYSIS, A7

EAST RUTHERFORD

Transit plan for World Cup sparks debate over costs, commuter impact

Two state lawmakers join calls for FIFA to help cover the tab.

Larry Higgs *NJ.com*

The bold World Cup transportation plan outlined by NJ Transit and the New York-New Jersey host committee for moving 78,000 people a day to eight matches at MetLife Stadium this June is drawing mixed reactions.

Much of the commentary has focused on NJ Transit's decision to charge \$150 for a round-trip train ride to the East Rutherford stadium, the host committee's \$80 shuttle bus fare from Manhattan and the impact on commuters.

Transportation experts and officials issued both concerns and praise for other aspects of the plan.

New Jersey Gov. Mikie Sherrill and other local leaders have urged FIFA to cover the state's \$48 million transportation costs for the tournament, saying the increased fares are otherwise necessary to avoid saddling taxpayers with the bill. Two ranking New Jersey legislators renewed calls Friday for the soccer's world governing body to defray some of the expenses.

“We hope that FIFA recognizes that their security protocols are unlike those for any other event held at the stadium because they largely forbid fans from parking in the lots around the stadium for World Cup games,” state Sens. Paul Sarlo, D-Bergen, and Declan O'Scanlon Jr., R-Monmouth, said in a joint statement.

Sarlo is chairman of the state Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, and O'Scanlon is the Senate Republican budget officer.

“These unique security protocols essentially require fans to use mass transit, which puts a tremendous financial and operational strain on NJ Transit and disrupts our residents' normal commutes,” they said.

“FIFA says it will make as much as \$11 billion from the events. Clearly, it can — and should — help to cover the transportation costs for its fans,” the lawmakers added.

“If FIFA would commit a small fraction

SEE TRANSPORTATION, A4

MIKIE'S WORLD

Trenton continues a tradition: Presidential prognosticating

Speculation that Sherrill may have higher political ambitions began early on in her tenure, insiders say. She's far from the first Jersey governor to be the subject of such discussions.

Brent Johnson *NJ.com*

Editor's note: The following is an excerpt from a weekly newsletter on the beginning of Gov. Mikie Sherrill's tenure and the often-stormy politics surrounding her.

The rumors swirled around Trenton before she even took office in January: Is Mikie Sherrill thinking of running for president? Or at least positioning herself to be a

vice presidential or cabinet pick?

Friends and family members even asked me about it over Easter weekend. So I figured it was time to explore the speculation.

The circumstantial evidence: The first-year Jersey governor has that unique bio everyone talks about (former Navy pilot, former federal prosecutor, former congresswoman). She has D.C. connections. She won her race last year by a shocking 14 points. She has solid early poll numbers. She keeps throwing verbal and legal punches at President Donald Trump. She's frequently on national TV. And she launched a federal political action committee to raise money for fellow Democrats in this year's critical midterms. All things that come in handy on a national platform.

Plus, practically every fresh Jersey governor gets floated — or sees themselves — as an Oval Office contender. It wasn't just Chris Christie. This goes back decades.

One Dem insider joked there's just one qualification for a Garden State governor

to be in the conversation about national office: “All you have to do is breathe.”

But the source added about Sherrill: “She's done a little more than that.”

It was actually one of my questions when I interviewed Sherrill just after she was sworn in: Is a presidential or vice presidential bid on her mind?

“That is not on my mind,” she said, without elaborating.

We're still three years away from the 2028 election, so there's plenty of time for things to change in either direction. But presidential prognosticating starts early these days, and insiders say Sherrill at a minimum is jockeying to be part of the national political dialogue.

That also means politicians in both parties are already grousing about how Sherrill should concentrate solely on Jersey. And some are skeptical the governor actually has a shot at something bigger. (More on that in a bit.)

SEE STATEHOUSE, A5

NATION & WORLD



Iran closes key strait

The standoff over the Strait of Hormuz escalated again Saturday as Iran reversed its reopening of the crucial waterway and fired on ships attempting to pass, in retaliation after the United States pressed ahead with its blockade of Iranian ports. **Page C3**

NEWS

Patz case to get 3rd trial

The murder case surrounding the 1979 disappearance of 6-year-old Etan Patz is on track for a third trial, after a judge declined the Friday to dismiss charges against the onetime New York shop clerk charged with abducting and killing the boy on his way to school. **A3**