

## Escondido Indivisible Explainer

### How the ICE Firing Range Contract Harms Escondido

#### *Increases Risk to Residents, Undermines Public Safety*

Escondido Police Department's (EPD) contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to allow use of its firing range is a community outrage. The contract, approved on January 15, 2026, runs through January 2027 brings in \$22,500, but is devastating to local community members.

#### **It Increases ICE Enforcement Presence**

The contract allows up to 200 ICE agents to train at the range for up to 20 days a year, giving agents exclusive use of the facility on those dates. By drawing ICE to and through our neighborhoods at a higher rate, the contract increases ICE presence which can expose vulnerable residents at a higher level. Recent experiences show that escalation is already underway.

#### **Puts City is League with a Lawless Agency and At-Risk of Increased Liability**

ICE operates in violation of our laws and constitution. In MN, a judge found that ICE defied 97 federal court directives. Judges found ICE engaging in racial profiling and denying court orders to stop. ICE murdered two citizens with no accountability. To date, 46 people have died in ICE detention since 2025. ICE has done door-to-door raids, entered homes, and detained people, including citizens, based on their appearance in violation of the law. ICE has been found to have detained 4,400 people improperly. The Trump administration claim of "absolute immunity" for ICE agents puts all in Escondido at risk. The city should not be contracting with any agency with a record of legal violations and misconduct. By inviting and condoning ICE use of city facilities city officials are morally responsible for ICE abuses in our community and may open the door to potential legal liability for doing business with an agency known to consistently act in violation of the law.

#### **Destroys Trust Between the Community and Local Government and EPD**

The contract reduces community willingness to cooperate with EPD when needed. This damage to community trust is significant. Residents avoid calling police, seeking services, or participating in civic life. It has undermined any confidence the public has in elected officials due to their failure to protect them. As one resident put it, *"The most powerful weapon of the police is not a gun. The best protection is not a bullet-proof vest. It is the cooperation of the Community. It is the support of the Community."* EPD has worked hard over several years to restore the trust of communities impacted by previous anti-immigrant policies. Continuing this contract undermines this trust and this progress.

## **Repeats a Troubling Historical Pattern**

Escondido has a tragic prior history of cooperation with ICE: in the early 2000s, the city conducted joint DUI checkpoints that also served as immigration stops. It damaged Escondido's reputation for decades. This contract repeats that same harm and incites that same fear and exploitation.

## **Approved Without Democratic Oversight**

The contract was renewed by the new police chief without any Council or public input. This lack of transparency has deepened community distrust. Council members said they were not even aware of the contract. City resources should not support agencies like ICE that operate without transparency or accountability. Even if it had been in place before, now the illegal behavior and lawlessness of ICE since 2025 is well-known, it should be ended immediately—and it could be if the political will was there.

## **Broad Opposition Reflects the Depth of Harm**

Over 500 people attended a hearing about the contract, over 100 testified, 34 elected officials wrote to oppose the contract, and 1,000s signed petitions urging the Council to cancel the contract. The four Republicans, including Dane White and Joe Garcia refused, thereby failing to protect the community.

Escondido's ICE firing range contract is not a neutral administrative arrangement — it is a signal to the Escondido community that their city government prioritizes a \$22,500 annual contract over the safety, dignity, and trust of the people who they were elected to protect. And, because they failed to listen to or protect their constituents, they are not worthy of re-election.

## **What You Can Do:**

- Check your registration: Ensure you are registered to vote at your current address.
- Spread the word: Share this info with your neighbors.
- Show up, Speak Out: Attend City Council meetings Wednesdays, 5 PM City Hall
- Keep informed. Sign up at <https://escondidoindivisible.org/>
- Visit Escondido Indivisible [Immigration Issues](#) page to learn more
- Join local groups like **Escondido Democratic Club**. <https://www.escondidodems.org/>