

# What would it take to

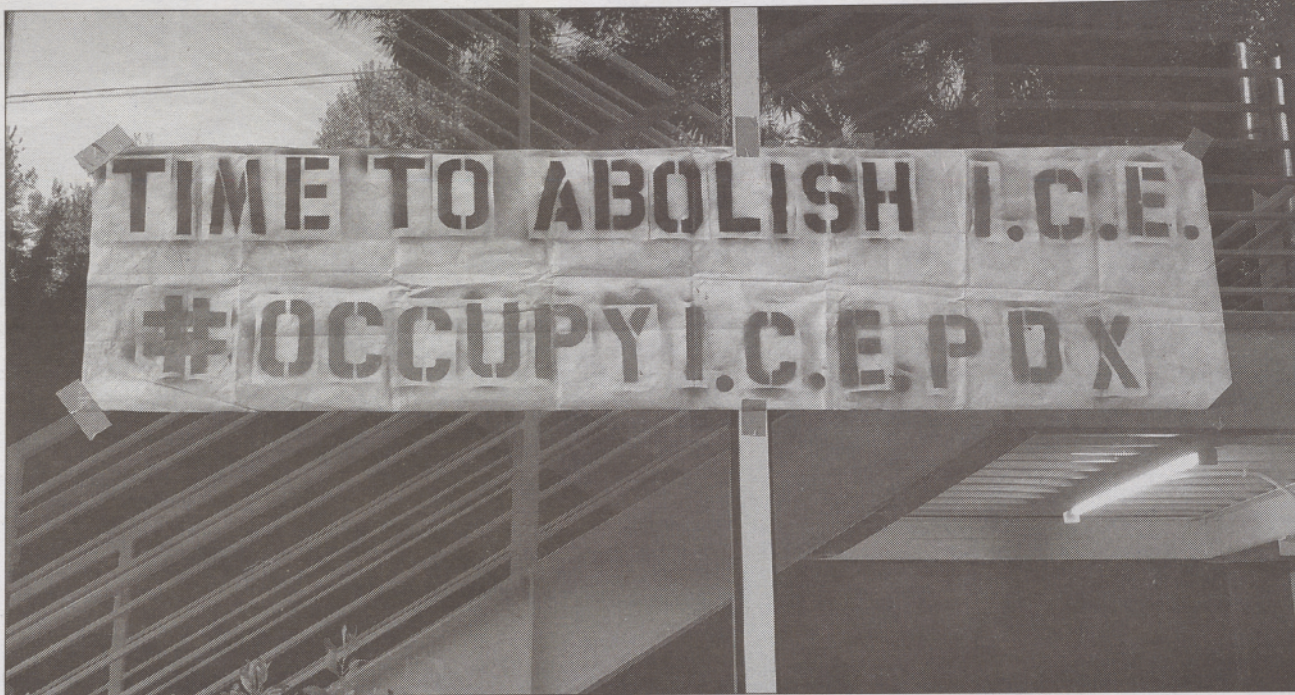


PHOTO BY KAIA SAND

A sign taped to a window of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in Southwest Portland before the office reopened Tuesday.

## Abolish ICE?

*There's a movement afoot to abolish ICE, but how do we get there, and what do we do in the meantime?*

**BY EMILY GREEN**  
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**A**bolish ICE." It's the rallying cry and end goal emanating from Occupy ICE demonstrations in Portland, San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York, San Diego, Los Angeles and Detroit, as well as protests and rallies against Trump administration immigration policies across the country.

Oregon lawmakers have joined the burgeoning movement, also calling for an end to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

On its surface, the demand seems futile under a presidential administration more interested in ramping ICE up than shutting ICE down, but U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) explains that's not the point.

On June 28, Blumenauer announced he was joining Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Wis.) in introducing legislation that would dismantle ICE and establish a commission that would make recommendations on its replacement, a more "humane and service-oriented system."

"I'm not stupid. I understand the Republicans aren't going to let it pass, and if it did, Donald Trump would veto it," he told Street Roots.

To actually abolish ICE, he said, "it's

going to require a new president and a better Congress."

While the country may have to wait for a new president, the face of Congress may change in November, and Blumenauer said that could put lawmakers "in a much better position to hold ICE accountable."

But that doesn't mean his ill-fated bill is pointless.

"We need to put down a marker," he said. "We need to have people think about an alternative, and we need to have people think about what's happened with an agency that looks like it's just kind of spun out of control."

Blumenauer was visibly shaken during a press conference following his visit to Sheridan Federal Correctional Facility on June 16, where he met with immigrant and asylum seeking men who are detained there.

After listening to the detainees' stories — one man's house was set on fire because he's Christian, another was shot by the cartel — Blumenauer said he was convinced many of the men were fleeing "very dangerous situations."

For Oregon Rep. Diego Hernandez (D-East Portland), Abolish ICE is not about the "nuts and bolts" of dismantling the organization.

"As simplistic as Abolish ICE, as a

hashtag, as a movement, can be," he said, "as far as the values go, you're going to find commonalities in our values, and from there is where you can start building systems that have those values and goals as center."

Hernandez and other state lawmakers, Sen. Michael Dembrow and Reps. Sheri Malstrom and Rob Nosse, together called for an end of ICE on the steps of Portland City Hall on June 24.

Hernandez said he's been focused on issues facing immigrants most his life.

He was a freshman in high school during the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and said he experienced the ensuing racism. It was also the Sept. 11 attacks that paved the way to ICE's formation.

ICE was created under the Homeland Security Act of 2003, which was passed in response to the threat of terrorism. The act completely revamped U.S. immigration enforcement as part of a federal law enforcement overhaul. The Department of Homeland Security absorbed 22 federal agencies, including ICE's predecessor, Immigration and Naturalization Services, which had been overseen by the Department of Justice.

Ultimately, a system that lumped terrorism and immigration into the same

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