

COULD ELON'S DISGUSTING ABOMINATION CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHER MIGRANTS?

It's fashionable to focus reporting about Elon Musk's attacks on Trump's Big Awful on the spat within the Republican party.



Politico has separate stories on how “hard-liners” like Tom Massie and Rand Paul are “rejoic[ing]” over Elon’s tweets and parroting White House excuses for Musk’s comments, which both repeat four claims Marc Caputo first aired (half of which are dubious or dated) and demand that journalists view Elon’s comments as exclusively about the effect on his own business.

“When businessmen criticize legislation, journalists don’t take them at their word, they look at how the legislation would impact their business interests,” said a Republican close to the White House. “They should be doing that in this case.”

I wonder if this anonymous Republican close to the White House raised similar concerns about Elon’s business interests driving his decisions as he shredded regulators overseeing his own businesses? In a brilliant summary of 130 shitty things Elon did in his 130 days in government,

Elizabeth Warren cited 29 Federal contracts and 34 instances where Elon fiddled with his regulators, of which this is just a selection:

55. Musk's cost-cutting team is laying off workers at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the auto safety agency investigating Tesla for crashes stemming from its "full self-driving" and remote control features.

56. The Trump Administration first shut down NLRB altogether – which had cases against multiple Musk companies (including SpaceX, Tesla, and X).

57. Then President Trump removed independent NLRB members.

58. DOGE is gutting NOAA while Musk eyes privatization of NOAA weather satellites, which could present a business opportunity for Starlink.

59. President Trump signed an executive order halting operations of the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance, which had Tesla on its list of contractors scheduled for audits.

60. OSHA has 27 cases against Tesla for workers rights violations and investigated SpaceX for workplace injuries – and now DOGE is limiting the agency's work.

61. President Trump tried to fire over 90% of National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which put two Musk companies – Boring and Tesla – on its "dirty dozen" list of worst workplace safety offenders.

All that drama is amusing. All the tweets from House members like Scott Perry and Marjorie Taylor Greene disavowing their votes could become more interesting once this bill returns to the House, but probably won't

I'm more focused in the extent to which Elon's comments will unsettle the dynamic that otherwise would permit (as Politico also reported was the plan) John Thune to ram through changes and Mike Johnson in turn to ram through the changed bill.

Elon's comments unsettle things. Who knows what could happen as a result.

Consider the several instances where local communities have stood up against Stephen Miller's authoritarian dragnet. There was the backlash to a heavy-handed raid in San Diego where ICE agents deployed flash bangs before bystanders chased them off, chanting, "Shame, shame." Then there was the spontaneous protest yesterday in response to a restaurant raid in Minneapolis.

A more controversial case involves Carol Hui, whose plight mobilized a conservative Missouri town, with a number of Trump voters claiming they didn't vote to deport their sweet neighbor.

"I voted for Donald Trump, and so did practically everyone here," said Vanessa Cowart, a friend of Ms. Hui from church. "But no one voted to deport moms. We were all under the impression we were just getting rid of the gangs, the people who came here in droves."

She paused. "This is Carol."

Whatever you think of such disavowals – Never Trumper JV Last is unimpressed; Greg Sargent did a great interview that conveys why she's the kind of person non-liberals might rally behind – G Elliot Morris made a compelling argument that these Trump voters are precisely the kind of people you'd need to combat these policies.

The other way to say that – and the way Carol's friends put it – is that millions of Americans voted for Trump, but they didn't vote for this.

[snip]

If you are a Democrat, I know it is tempting to do schadenfreude and voter-bashing toward regretful Trump voters, who you see as enabling authoritarianism. But it is very important right now to make the point that people who voted for Trump did not support all of his policy agenda (the vast majority of which is unpopular) for four reasons.

First, internalizing that voting for someone is not an endorsement of their future policy agenda **gives people data to fight the worst excesses of Trump's agenda, especially on trade and immigration.** Data can be a very powerful rhetorical tool in catalyzing opposition to unpopular policies.

In Trump's first administration, for example, polling on his separation of families crossing the border was almost 50 points underwater. That data and related protests convinced the administration to change course.

The alternative to this is assuming that moderate Trump supporters actually support deporting non-criminal parents, which we know (given the data above) to be false. If you assume that, then there is a much smaller landscape of opinion on which to do battle about politics. You have to believe these people are persuadable to move them.

You will not defeat fascism with just the people who voted for Kamala Harris, or even just the people who voted for Joe Biden in 2020. You need some of Carol Hui's neighbors to stand up for what is decent.

All the better if the process of standing up leads them to rethink their support for MAGA.

The point being, we're beginning to see real activism against Trump's immigration dragnet,

the same kind of activism that (Morris notes) led Trump to temper his plans in the first term.

And we're seeing it before it's too late to, one way or another, defeat (or at least impose a cost for) the vast expansion of Stephen Miller's dragnet in the Big Ugly.

Yesterday, Miller listed the immigration provisions first among the reasons he likes the bill – ahead of giving Elon a tax cut, ahead of taking food from poor children.



Stephen Miller 
@StephenM



The Big Beautiful Bill contains three major sections:

1. The most significant border security and deportation effort in history, including the entire wall — up front, now, with no possibility of Democrat obstruction.
2. Full extension and expansion of the Trump Tax Cuts (this is what CBO is “scoring” — not spending, TAX CUTS. The ones we campaigned on and pledged!)
3. The largest welfare reform in history, CUTTING almost \$2 trillion in spending (net)

Item 1 alone (border security + deportation) makes this the most important legislation for the conservative project in the history of the nation.

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There's a reason Miller is so excited about the bill. It would dramatically expand ICE, ICE detention centers, and ICE's ability to deputize cops, making ICE — rather than the FBI — the biggest federal law “enforcement” agency.

The House GOP-crafted bill includes some \$45 billion that would go toward detaining immigrants until 2029.

That's roughly \$9 billion per year — an amount that far surpasses a previous record-high of \$3.4 billion Congress appropriated for ICE detention a little over a year ago, under the Biden administration.

ICE currently has capacity to detain roughly 41,000 people. Under the GOP bill, that number would increase to some 100,000.

Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, a senior fellow

at the American Immigration Council, says there's not currently enough space to detain that many people.

"ICE would be forced to use this funding to build new detention centers, new soft-sided detention camps, where tents would be thrown up by detention contractors, where immigrants would be held, potentially en masse," he said.

The bill includes over \$150 billion for various components of immigration enforcement, including detention, border wall construction and deportation transportation.

"Taken together, this funding would make ICE the best funded federal law enforcement agency in U.S. history, with more detention bed funding than the entire Federal Bureau of Prisons and potentially more agents on board than the entire Federal Bureau of Investigations," Reichlin-Melnick said.

He says the new bill also includes additional funds for ICE to hire new agents and increase collaboration initiatives with local law enforcement agencies – like 287-g agreements. But, no funding for DHS oversight.

ICE is the leading edge of Miller's assault on the Constitution. His goons are already struggling to find as many migrants as he demands be arrested, leading to screaming sessions and threats (first reported in the Washington Examiner!!).

"They've been threatened, told they're watching their emails and texts and Signals," the first official said. "That's what is horrible about things right now. It's a fearful environment. Everybody in leadership is afraid. ... There's no morale. Everybody is demoralized."

ICE's top 50 field officials were given roughly a week's notice of an emergency meeting in Washington.

ICE's 25 Enforcement Removal Operations, or ERO, field office directors and 25 Homeland Security Investigations, or HSI, special agents in charge flew into Washington and descended on the agency's Washington headquarters last Tuesday, May 20. There, they were met by Miller, ICE confirmed to the Washington Examiner.

"Miller came in there and eviscerated everyone. 'You guys aren't doing a good job. You're horrible leaders.' He just ripped into everybody. He had nothing positive to say about anybody, shot morale down," said the first official, who spoke with those in the room that day.

"Stephen Miller wants everybody arrested. 'Why aren't you at Home Depot? Why aren't you at 7-Eleven?'" the official recited.

One of the ERO officials in attendance stood up and stated that the Department of Homeland Security and the White House had publicly messaged about targeting criminal illegal immigrants, and therefore, ICE was targeting them, and not the general illegal immigration population.

"Miller said, 'What do you mean you're going after criminals?' Miller got into a little bit of a pissing contest. 'That's what Tom Homan says every time he's on TV: 'We're going after criminals,'" the ICE official told Miller, according to the first official.

The (un)intended consequences of this vast expansion, with Stephen Miller screaming that ICE has to go search places for people who are

definitely *not* the criminal aliens he lied about during the election, are pretty obvious.

Now is the time for the people shaming ICE's invasions of their neighborhood to make a stink about this bill.

To be clear: it won't kill the bill. The only way the bill will die is if the conflict between hardliners and those who want to preserve health care reaches an impasse which, so far, it has not.

But it would be useful if the localized mobilization raised the cost of this bill going forward, especially if the bill happens to die via other means.