Nate Biscotti

From: Megan Cannella
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 1:06 PM
To: melindamoultonvt@gmail.com
Subject: RE: [External] Fwd: ICE TESTIMONY

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Thank you, Melinda. This will be posted to the Committee pages.

Best,
Megan

Megan Cannella | she/her
Supervisor of Committee Services
Senate Transportation Committee, Room 3
Office of Legislative Counsel
Vermont General Assembly

Attention Witnesses: If you have documents to accompany testimony, please submit as a PDF at least 24 hours in advance of your scheduled testimony. Should you require accessibility services, please click here and note that requests should be made 48 hours in advance of testimony.
First time testifying? See Information for Witnesses here.

From: Melinda Moulton <melindamoultonvt@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 12:21 PM
To: Megan Cannella <Megan.Cannella@vtleg.gov>
Subject: [External] Fwd: ICE TESTIMONY

[External]

Hi folks - I was not able to get signed up in time to make my two-minute testimony on ICE, so I am sharing an essay I wrote, which was published about my experience being harassed by people threatening to imprison me. Please share this with the appropriate legislators as you navigate this period of testimony.
Thank you,
Melinda Moulton, Huntington

The Boot Heel of Authoritarianism

Is on the Neck of America's Democracy

By: Melinda Moulton

1/26/26

My phone rang at 6 a.m. in the morning. I ignored it. When I clicked on my voicemail, I heard the voice of a man saying, "Melinda, we know where you are, ICE is coming for you, we are at your door, you cannot hide". I thought it was a joke. But after a few minutes, I realized this was no joke. I immediately blocked this UNKNOWN CALLER. My next reaction was anger…then defiance. I have written before about the rise of Authoritarianism in the United States, but it is no longer rising – it is here. Germany was taken over by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945. It was a Democratic Government, albeit a weak one. That said, Hitler was able to turn the German people against each other, terrorizing citizens with his Gestapo – secret police - and concentration camps. – detention centers. He spewed propaganda, tore down Germany's democratic institutions, and spread fear and terror throughout the countryside. Hitler created from Germany's democracy a dictatorship with one party rule. Hitler had an ideology predicated on creating an Aryan Race, and it unified the nation and allowed his brownshirts to target minority groups. The Nazi regime took absolute control over the citizenry of Germany. Hitler targeted Jews, Roma and Sinti, people with disabilities, the Slavic people, Soviet prisoners of war, communists, socialists, social democrats, and trade unionists. He went after LGBT citizens, beggars, vagrants, alcoholics, and those he labeled "professional criminals". African and Afro-Germans were sterilized or murdered, and Polish intellectuals, teachers, clergy were attacked in order to destroy Polish culture. So let us look at the MAGA movement, Project 2025, and Trumpism in 2026. Donald Trump uses his pulpit with the help of Fox News to spread lies. He calls his political opponents "vermin." He claims that immigrants are "poisoning the blood of America". Trump, for years, has attacked minority groups and political rivals and continues to diminish their value. He threatens our safety and our right to live peacefully, protected by the rights set forth in our Constitution. The entire Make America Great Again anthem echoes Hitler's call to regain the past greatness of Germany. Trump constantly attacks the press, calls it "fake news" and " a witch hunt" and tells reporters to "shut up, piggy." He has sued our TV Networks, Print News Media, Universities, Law Firms, anyone who threatens his authoritarianism. He does this to scare and intimidate and to bend everyone's will to his own. We are seeing the horrific results – day after day after day, Trump demands absolute loyalty from "everyone". This mirrors Hitler's "Führerprinzip," the totalitarian tenet of Nazi ideology; the absolute power and obedience to "The Leaders". Trump is constantly challenging the rule of law, our Constitution, and our governmental norms. We are seeing Trump's efforts to take over other countries, demean our allies, kiss up to dictators, and I believe, gone so far as to share American military secrets with Russia. His Board of Peace has been created to establish a new worldwide order which will cement Trump's control over world affairs. It is a transactional organization requiring a billion dollars to join. This money will not go to help American citizens; it is being funneled to a bank in Qatar. The Board of Peace is essentially a Trump-owned U.S. company, with Trump as the permanent chairman and a major shareholder. This is a Kleptocratic Oligarchy – a form of government known as "ruled by thieves". They will "expropriate national wealth and resources for their own personal enrichment. Trump is deranged, delusional, dying, and a traitor to our Constitution. That said, he is effective, entertaining, influential, and holds

tremendous power. As the leader of the richest country on the planet with the largest and strongest military, Trump sits on America's throne – for a bloody second time. The Don will overthrow, steal, and pocket all that has truly Made America Great these past 250 years, that which so many died to protect - the most prized of all human gifts ……OUR FREEDOM. He wants that. Let's face it Trump is a FASCIST Leader. The political violence we are seeing on American streets by the Federal Government's Homeland Security ICE thugs is Fascism. Trump is building his own GESTAPO – his own secret police force made up of Proud Boys and MAGA cult followers that subscribe to his hatred of "others". His Detainment Centers are Concentration Camps which imprison, exploit, and punish specific groups. What stopped Hitler was World War Two when the most powerful nations on Earth came together to defeat him. I am not sure what will stop Trump and his MAGA cult from destroying our country, our freedoms, and our planet. The boot heel of Authoritarianism is solidly on the Neck of America's Democracy and it will take the people of our great nation to remove it and place it solidly and forever upon the neck of Trump and his sycophants. Congress could impeach Trump, but the GOP controls Congress. We have a Supreme Court majority that is complicit with Trump's actions. All three GOP led branches of our Government are crapping all over our Constitution. So, perhaps all of this falls to the individual States. They need to defy the Federal Government – they need to uphold the rule of law and the Constitution and go to court again and again. The problem is that Trump is not following thecourts' rulings when they are not in his favor. He just throws up his middle finger and growls, "F-U" to our Judiciary. So that is where we come in, We The People of the United States – we are the last resort. We need to keep standing up, speaking out, and engaging in community action events. We must vote in huge numbers and participate in opposition events and organizations. Financially support groups like ACLU, NAACP, Legal Defense Fund, Common Cause and other pro-Democracy groups. Contact your elected representatives and participate in local organizing. Use your voice online and offline and support independent media. Stay informed and challenge false information. And to the bad guy who left me that threatening message on my phone, you don't scare me, you embolden me, you inspire me to fight back, you are a coward, and I am flattered that you are threatened by me because I know that in the end, "good" always wins out.

-Melinda Moulton

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