

# Meet The Biden ICE Official Who Previously Worked for Group Working to Shield Illegal Migrant Kids from Deportation

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by Jennie Taer

A senior Biden Administration Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) official previously worked for an organization that seeks to shield illegal immigrant children from deportation that is funded by left-wing groups, according to a Daily Caller News Foundation review of the group’s public statements and financials.

ICE Assistant Director for the Office of Immigration Program Evaluation Claire Trickler-McNulty (pictured above) worked for Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), which helps illegal migrant children fight deportation, according to her ICE bio. She “served as a Regional Director for Legal Services at Kids in Need of Defense where she oversaw the provision of direct legal services to unaccompanied children,” says the bio.

During her tenure at ICE under the Biden Administration, the agency has expanded social services and programs that monitor illegal immigrants who aren’t detained.

“She created a position for herself and is effectively the top person running immigration at ICE. Career staff in ICE’s policy shop have been largely sidelined and are barely participating in the development of policies,” former ICE Chief of Staff during the Trump Administration Jon Feere told the DCNF.

“The same is true of ICE officers running various operational divisions — instead of being viewed as subject matter experts who can provide ideas and guidance, they’re made aware of policies only after policy drafts are in their near-final form. My assumption is that these policies are largely written by outside, anti-ICE organizations and then distributed by their allies and former colleagues now working inside the White House, DHS, and ICE,” Feere added.

Trickler-McNulty worked for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as the deputy director for compliance in the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties from 2011 to 2014, before she went on to serve at ICE as a deputy assistant director until 2019, according to her LinkedIn. She then left the Trump Administration to work for KIND in 2019.

KIND received \$115,000 in funding from the left-wing megadonor George Soros’ Open Society Foundations between 2018 and 2020, according to the grantmaking group’s website. Additionally, between 2018 and 2019, the group received more than \$25,000,000 in subcontracts from the Vera Institute of Justice, a group that advocates against immigration detention and has labeled federal immigration enforcement authorities a “threat to civil liberties,” according to USASpending.gov.

In a 2020 tweet, Vera said: “We must dismantle the current culture of policing in the United States. We must work toward solutions that defund the police and shift power to communities.”

In a March 10, 2022 tweet, Vera said: “We applaud @NYCCouncil for passing #Reso0066 and supporting #DignityNotDetention to end contracts with ICE in our state and help immigrants fight their cases at home and in their communities.”

“Safe communities are communities with resources. Solutions that prevent crime by meeting people’s basic needs are far better for society than jails and prisons that create more harm. Yet, in the minds of far too many who hold the power to allocate resources, the words ‘public safety’ conjure images of armed police and prisons,” Vera wrote in a report on “What True Public Safety Looks Like in 2022.”

KIND also advocated in 2020 for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to end all deportations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“KIND joins 60+ orgs demanding @DHSgov stop ALL #deportations during #COVID19,” it said in an April 9, 2020 tweet. “It is inhumane & dangerous to deport #migrants from the US when many face horrible conditions in detention & receive no medical screening.

“This is putting the globe at risk  
<https://t.co/Ew5LiH7ujf> pic.twitter.com/R8lzScYsbj”

Meanwhile, under the Biden administration, ICE has been expanding its “Alternatives to Detention” (ATD) program, which is used to monitor illegal migrants released into the country. By the end of fiscal year 2019, there were roughly 83,000 in the ATD program and roughly 85,000 by the end of fiscal year 2020, according to ICE data.

In fiscal 2021, after President Joe Biden took office, ATD enrollment jumped to more than 136,000, according to ICE data. In fiscal 2022, it climbed to 322,000. As of late August in this fiscal year, there were roughly 195,000 individuals enrolled in the program.

The Biden Administration’s ICE also has focused on expanding social services for illegal immigrants through “case management” programs that provide services that include mental health support and legal orientation services, according to ICE.

During a September 2021 webinar entitled “From Immigrant Detention to a More Effective U.S. Immigration Custody System,” Trickler-McNulty discussed a shift within the agency away from detaining illegal migrants.

“I’ve seen it in different areas within the agency that sometimes with change there’s sort of a lot of resistance up front, but then as it sort of weaves into the agency culture, different things can be embraced in different ways and so I think a lot of it is just education, training, persistence and making sure that we’re really making alternatives on the table and part of the assessment and analysis going forward,” Trickler-McNulty said.

“You know, it’s a big bureaucracy, all of government’s bureaucracy, it’s not going to be a fast shift, but ways that we can move towards slower shifts to new and different programs focused more on non-detained case management,” she added.

Feere believes that Trickler-McNulty is helping move ICE away from its law enforcement role altogether, he told the DCNF.

“If you’re going to work at a law enforcement agency, your driving passion should be the enforcement of law. I don’t think any of Biden’s ICE appointees can say they’re passionate about law enforcement — so what are they doing there? Well, they’re actively undermining the agency’s mission. It’s the equivalent of Biden appointing arsonists to run the U.S. Forest Service,” Feere told the DCNF.

Trickler-McNulty didn't respond to a request for comment, while an ICE spokesperson told the DCNF that the agency's work involves many departments and teams.

“Responsibility for administering the U.S. immigration system spans multiple agencies within the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice. Policy decisions at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are made with coordination through interagency working groups to ensure ICE is working on behalf of the public and within the confines of the law. ICE continues to facilitate the safe, orderly, and humane management of the U.S. immigration system alongside its federal partners,” the ICE spokesperson told the DCNF.

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*Jennie Taer is a reporter at Daily Caller News Foundation.*