

# 20 States Sue Trump Admin Over Immigration Conditions Placed on Grants

The multi-state coalition alleges that the Trump administration overstepped its authority when it linked immigration enforcement conditions to federal grants.

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President Trump walks to Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland on May 12, 2025. Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images



By Aldgra Fredly

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Attorneys general from 20 states filed two lawsuits on May 13 alleging that the Trump administration had threatened to withhold federal

grants unless their states agreed to cooperate with immigration enforcement efforts.

In the first suit, the multi-state coalition sued the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) over federal grants related to disaster relief and flood mitigation efforts.

The second lawsuit was directed at the Department of Transportation (DOT) over federal funding intended to support transportation projects, including highway development and public transportation maintenance.

In a [statement](#) published by Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul, who is leading the coalition, the attorneys general allege that the departments had imposed conditions requiring states to comply with federal immigration enforcement actions or risk losing those funds.

Both lawsuits alleged that the administration overstepped its authority and violated the Spending Clause of the U.S. Constitution when it placed immigration enforcement conditions on billions of dollars in federal funding. The states argued that it is Congress that determines federal spending, not the executive branch.

Raoul said the 20 states rely on congressionally approved funding, warning that freezing “lifesaving” funding from FEMA and DOT could impact public safety and infrastructure projects.

“This critical funding has nothing to do with immigration, and the administration’s attempts to hold it hostage unless states agree to do the federal government’s job of civil immigration enforcement is unconstitutional and outrageous,” Raoul said in a statement.

DHS spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin said the administration remains committed to “restoring the rule of law,” adding that states attempting to prevent the federal government’s efforts to arrest “criminal illegal aliens” should not receive federal funding.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said the states filed the lawsuits because “their officials want to continue breaking federal law and putting the needs of illegal aliens above their own citizens.”

Joining Raoul in the lawsuits are attorneys general from California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Maryland, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta, also leading the legal challenge, called the departments' move "blatantly illegal," noting that President Donald Trump doesn't have authority to compel state and local governments to cooperate with the federal immigration crackdown.

"He's treating these funds, which have nothing to do with immigration enforcement and everything to do with the safety of our communities, as a bargaining chip. But this is not a game," Bonta said in a [statement](#).

President Trump [signed](#) an executive order in April directing his administration to publish a list of sanctuary cities accused of obstructing federal immigration law enforcement.

In his order, the president said that the states were obstructing and defying federal immigration enforcement despite the need for the federal government's intervention amid an invasion at the southern border.

"This is a lawless insurrection against the supremacy of Federal law and the Federal Government's obligation to defend the territorial sovereignty of the United States," the order stated.

The order specifically directs Attorney General Pam Bondi to target any state or local laws that may prioritize illegal immigrants over U.S. citizens, including in-state tuition benefits or favorable criminal sentencing.

*The Associated Press and Jacob Burg contributed to this report.*

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**Aldgra Fredly**

Author

Aldgra Fredly is a freelance writer covering U.S. and Asia Pacific news for The Epoch Times.

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