



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Louisiana mothers organize daily ICE watch

written by Gregory E. Williams

January 2, 2026



Slidell, Louisiana, Dec. 10 -
Masked ICE agents film an
activist conducting ICE watch
from a parked vehicle outside La
Morenita grocery store. Photo:
ange_50/TikTok

On New Year's Day, I spent the afternoon with activists watching for ICE in Slidell, a small Louisiana town about 40 miles northeast of New Orleans. We sat in parked vehicles outside a Latine grocery store in the middle of a strip mall.

The scene today was totally ordinary, if a bit slow; people came and got their groceries without incident. But this location has been heavily targeted by ICE, with multiple incidents documented on social media. In response, several youth-led protests have happened next to the highway here, and ICE watch has posted up daily. The community in Slidell has gotten organized.

Kayla, a Slidell native and mom, told me: "They thought these small towns were just going to roll over, but we're not. The kids were out here for three days protesting. They had a protest here yesterday but I couldn't make it because I was doing ICE watch somewhere else."

I asked her how often she's out doing this. "Every day. I'm living in this car," she laughed.

With the car seat and other signs of child passengers, her SUV looked like any other busy mom's, except this vehicle was packed with boxes of whistle kits and food to distribute. The whistles are for making noise when ICE shows up.

"They want people to be afraid to even go to the grocery store, so we've been doing

food distributions. Some small stores are locking their doors until people come up.

"ICE is targeting construction sites, neighborhoods, and trailer parks. Things are so bad that notaries are going to people's houses to help parents give over guardianship of their children in case the parents are taken."

Kayla said she had never been involved in activism before Trump returned to office in January 2025. I asked her if she ever imagined she would be doing something like this. She said:

"Absolutely not. I never saw myself doing something like this. I was not an activist. I went from being scared just to go to a protest to confronting ICE. I'm not very political but this is just wrong."

Jennifer, another Slidell activist doing ICE watch, said:

"They're changing their tactics, just driving around in single vehicles, looking less conspicuous. I feel like I'm chasing ghosts. Now they're mainly getting people during traffic stops. The police departments are working with ICE. State police are doing checks, supposedly to check inspection stickers, but they're really looking for immigrants."

Despite the challenges, these activists aren't giving up. They adapt. For example, Kayla said: "We've started school watches too, just in case ICE tries to snatch people up while they're dropping off their kids."

In Slidell, they've learned from ICE watch in other states. These networks across the country are increasingly linked up. Kayla explained:

"We're 3-D printing whistles here, but some have also been donated by folks in

Chicago, North Carolina, and California.

"It's just amazing how many good people there are in the world. People we don't even know are just giving us money to put these whistle kits and food packages together. There are so many people right here in our community. Yeah, there are some MAGA types who come out to troll us. But overall we're getting a lot of support. There's this one local guy - I didn't know him at all - and he just gave me money to get the supplies. He just trusted me.

"But there's still a lot of education that needs to be done. You know, a lot of people think undocumented immigrants are getting all this free stuff and taking advantage of the system. It's not true. They think they're getting Medicaid and all this stuff, but they're not. They are paying taxes, though. Immigrants are making a big contribution to the economy and then they're treated like garbage.

Despite the terror being sown in our communities here in South Louisiana, Kayla is optimistic.

"A lot of what we have to do is just documenting and exposing them. That really does have an effect. It makes it more difficult for them to operate. And the community learns about their tactics and all the harm they're doing to people and families, including children. We have to keep going."

What Kayla describes as "documenting and exposing" ICE is not an appeal for transparency or reform — it's tactical intelligence gathering for community defense. The daily ICE watch, the whistle networks, the food distributions that keep people from having to risk the grocery store — these aren't symbolic gestures. They are concrete obstructions to the deportation machinery.

The activists' presence has already forced ICE to change tactics, switching from

conspicuous vans to single vehicles, making their operations slower and more difficult. When community members receive warnings, they avoid capture.

When mutual aid networks provide food, people don't have to expose themselves at targeted stores. The strategy isn't to make ICE operate better or more humanely — it's to make ICE operations harder to carry out at all. This is working-class people in Slidell building the power to materially impede state terror in their community, one day of organized resistance at a time.

Names have been changed to protect the activists' identities.

