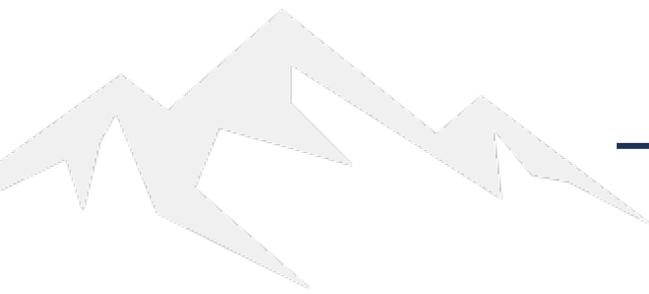




**Examining Violent
and Repeat Criminal
Offenses by Illegal
Immigrants: Case
Studies from Colorado
and Nationwide**



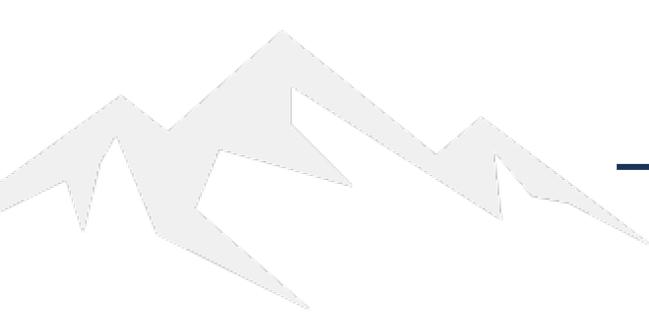


About the Author

Elizabeth Caven



Elizabeth serves as the Outreach Director and Policy Analyst at Advance Colorado. She previously worked for the Colorado House of Representatives for nearly three years as a legislative aide, where she assisted in policy work across a range of issue areas for the caucus. Elizabeth earned dual undergraduate degrees in Politics and Philosophy from Colorado Christian University. While at CCU, she served as President of the Philosophy Club, participated in First Liberty's D.C. Fellowship Program, and worked with the Centennial Institute. She and her husband, Jason, live in Littleton.



Introduction

Colorado has been identified as a “sanctuary state,” by the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and The Center for Immigration Studies, meaning that state and local policies limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. These restrictions have created major gaps in our public safety, particularly when violent or repeat offenders are released back into communities rather than transferred to federal custody. (1)

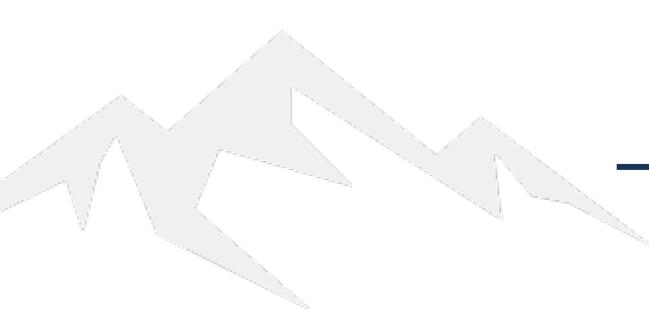
Colorado’s sanctuary policies have had tangible effects on the safety of the public. Across the state—and in similar jurisdictions nationwide—cases have emerged in which violent or repeat offenders were allowed to remain in the community they resided in, despite known risks, only to reoffend. These incidents highlight how restrictions on detainers, information sharing, and custody transfers can leave local communities exposed to otherwise preventable harm. Focusing on real-world cases over political rhetoric allows citizens to elevate the outcomes and documented effects these policies have had on victims, law enforcement, and overall community safety.

Sanctuary Policies in Colorado

Over the years, the Colorado General Assembly has passed a multitude of laws that have effectively prevented our state from any proactive coordination with federal law enforcement, with no exceptions for violent criminals or repeat felons.

SB25-276 imposed a near-total ban on communication or cooperation with DHS without a court order, including data sharing or coordination, and established a \$50,000 fine for violations with no exceptions for violent or repeat offenders. (2)

Colorado is among a small subset of states that impose particularly stringent sanctuary restrictions without specific carve-outs for violent or repeat offenses. Across the U.S., there are only ten sanctuary states that do not have an immigration cooperation exception for violent or serious crimes or felonies: Colorado, Washington, Vermont, Rhode Island, Oregon, Maryland, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Delaware.



However, New York, California, New Jersey, and Connecticut’s laws all allow for local law enforcement cooperation with DHS when someone has serious felony or violent crime convictions, making Colorado *further to the left* than some of the most liberal sanctuary states in the nation.

The following case studies illustrate the real-world consequences of Colorado’s extreme sanctuary policies. Without any exception for noncitizens charged with violent or repeat crimes, known offenders can remain in local communities, avoiding federal transfers or the involvement of the Department of Homeland Security altogether. Under current sanctuary laws, known offenders must often be ignored once released back to the streets, exposing communities to real public safety risks and placing significant strain on law enforcement operating within these constraints.

Colorado Case Studies

Who: Mohamed Sabry Soliman

The Facts:

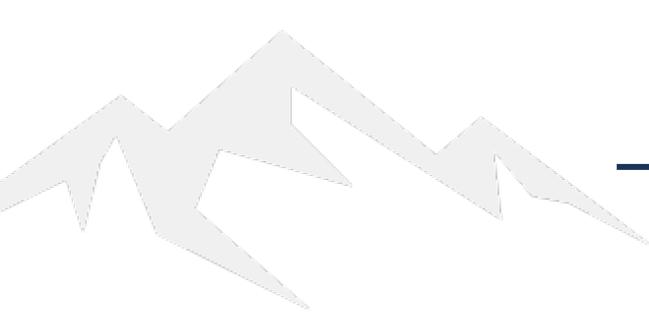
On June 1, 2025, an attack involving Molotov cocktails and a makeshift incendiary device occurred on the Pearl Street Mall in Boulder, when Soliman, a 45-year-old Egyptian national threw the devices into a crowd participating in a peaceful demonstration supporting the release of Israeli hostages. This act injured more than a dozen people and later caused the death of an 82-year-old woman, Karen Diamond, due to her injuries. (3)

Who: Eduardo Parra-Corral

The Facts:

On November 9, 2025, 19-year-old Eduardo Parra-Corral, a Mexican national, was driving drunk at over 100 mph in Greeley and ran a red light before striking another vehicle. The 27-year-old woman in that car, Jasmine Faith Carpio, later died from her injuries five days after the collision. DHS officials confirmed Parra-Corral had previously been deported and reentered the United States illegally. (4)

Who: Valeria Ramirez-Marcano



The Facts:

On March 28, 2025, Carissa Aspens was riding on the back of a motorcycle when a car driven by an unlicensed and uninsured motorist cut across three lanes of traffic, causing them to crash. Her mother, in a viral video, confirmed the person who caused the wreck was an illegal immigrant. Aspens was slammed into a concrete barrier and, despite wearing a helmet and full protective gear, sustained a traumatic brain injury along with fractures to her leg, arm, and face, as well as multiple other injuries. The crash caused extreme swelling in her brain, which required surgeons to remove a significant portion of her skull. She is now severely disabled, nonverbal, and minimally conscious. (5)(6)

Who: Osmani Garces-Ortiz

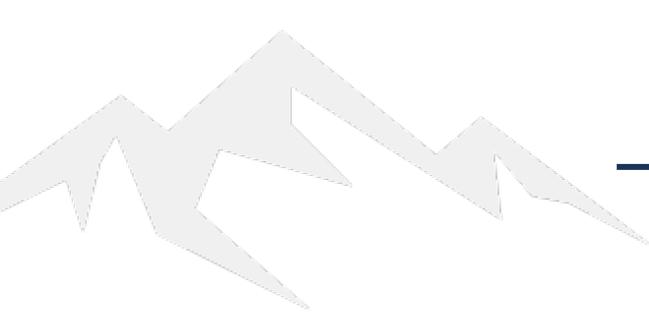
The Facts:

In late 2019, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) lodged a detainer on Osmani Garces-Ortiz, a Cuban national held in the Arapahoe County Jail for multiple crimes, requesting that local authorities continue to detain him so federal agents could take custody. Under Colorado's sanctuary law, local jail officials released him after he posted bond rather than holding him for federal authorities, and he was later arrested and charged with attempted murder and other violent offenses in Aurora. DHS officials stated that honoring the detainer could have allowed federal authorities to take him into custody before he committed the later crimes. (7)

Who: 15-year-old illegal immigrant who killed Kaitlyn Weaver, a 24-year-old woman.

The Facts:

In July 2024, a 15-year-old undocumented teen driving without a license struck and killed 24-year-old Kaitlyn Weaver in Aurora, Colorado, after driving at around 90 mph in a 45-mph zone. He was charged with vehicular homicide and originally faced the possibility of juvenile confinement but ultimately received just two years' probation and community service under the new Arapahoe County District Attorney's office. The individual was eventually placed in ICE's custody, but only after he had been released and was free to offend again. (8)



Who: Edgar Saenz Lopez

The Facts:

In May 2024, Edgar Saenz Lopez, an undocumented immigrant on parole, was arrested in Teller County, Colorado, after allegedly breaking into a home and triggering a multi-jurisdiction search. Law enforcement found that Saenz Lopez had a prior history of burglary and other convictions in Colorado but remained free, in part because state sanctuary laws limit local agencies' ability to notify or transfer individuals to the Department of Homeland Security. His case was cited by the county sheriff as an example of how current policies can leave repeat offenders at large in communities. (9)

Who: Ever Valles

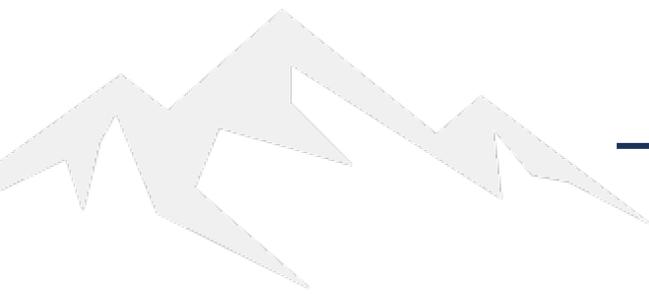
The Facts:

In February of 2017, Ever Valles, a 19-year-old Mexican national, was involved in the robbery and killing of Tim Cruz at the Sheridan Light Rail Station in Denver. Valles had been placed on an ICE detainer in 2016 following a prior vehicle-theft arrest, but the detainer was not enforced. Later that year, he pleaded guilty to reduced charges of aggravated robbery with a deadly weapon and felony accessory, while original first-degree murder charges were dismissed as part of the plea deal. In March of 2018, Valles was sentenced to 29 years in prison. (10)(11)

Who: Jose Guadalupe Menjivar-Alas

The Facts:

Jose Guadalupe Menjivar-Alas, a repeat offender and four-time deportee, killed a Broomfield teen and his mother, Melissa Powell, on December 12, 2024, after driving drunk just four days following sentencing for another alcohol-related DUI. Menjivar had a long history of alcohol-related offenses dating back to 2007 and had previously been removed from the U.S. four times. Under current sanctuary restrictions, local authorities were unable to coordinate with DHS to ensure his removal, allowing him to remain in Colorado and ultimately commit this fatal crash. If Colorado had an exception in their sanctuary state laws, DHS would have been able to work with our local law enforcement to remove Menjivar from the community, preventing



him from being released and murdering a family while driving under the influence. (12)

National Case Studies

Colorado is far from an isolated case when it comes to enforcing sanctuary policies that harm innocent citizens. Across the country, several states and cities have enacted similar laws that limit cooperation with federal authorities, and have had similar consequences, illustrated by the stories below.

Who: Victoria Sorocean

The Facts:

In November 2025, DHS arrested Victoria Sorocean, an illegal immigrant from Moldova previously convicted of premeditated murder with exceptional cruelty involving torture and pushing a victim out of a ninth-floor window. According to DHS, Sorocean had been released back into the United States after entering the country illegally and evading her original sentence, and ICE located and detained her in Los Angeles on outstanding fugitive and immigration violations. DHS officials characterized her case as an example of violent offenders being present in American neighborhoods after release rather than removal. (13)

Who: Marcelin Charles Gbey Gouley

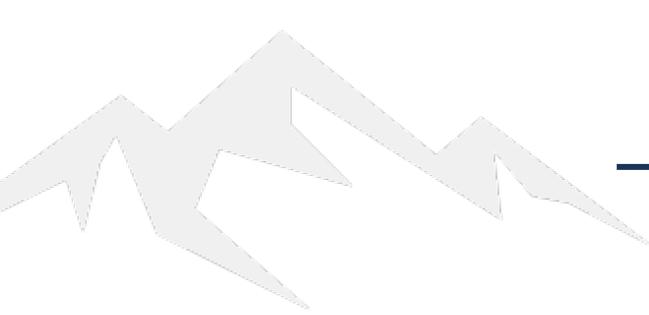
The Facts:

Marcelin Charles Gbey Gouley, an illegal immigrant from the Ivory Coast, was arrested by DHS after accumulating 39 prior arrests and eight felony convictions across Florida, Maryland, and Virginia. His criminal record includes cocaine trafficking, drug manufacturing and distribution, and possession of controlled substances. (14)

Who: Luis Bracamontes

The Facts:

Luis Bracamontes, a Mexican national who entered the United States illegally, was charged with the murders of two Northern California sheriff's deputies



during a 2014 crime spree that included carjackings and other violent offenses. During his trial, Bracamontes laughed and shouted in court that he “wished [he] could have killed more” officers and threatened further violence, behavior that underscored his dangerousness to law enforcement and the community. (15)

Who: Leyter Jeferson Arauz-Medina
The Facts:

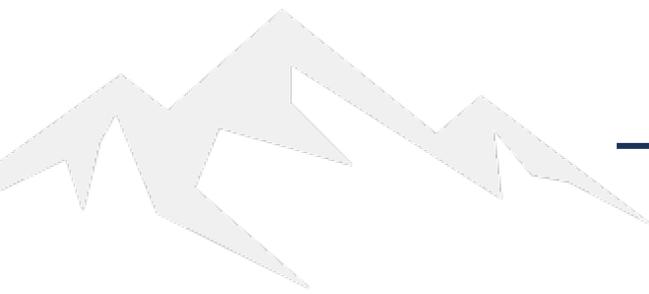
In October 2025, ICE lodged an arrest detainer for Leyter Jeferson Arauz-Medina, a Nicaraguan national living in the United States without lawful status, after he was accused of brutally raping a 54-year-old woman in Chicago. According to DHS, Arauz-Medina violently attacked the woman, striking her, dragging her to an alleyway, and sexually assaulting her, before fleeing the scene. Sanctuary policies that limit cooperation between local law enforcement and ICE can prevent timely federal detention of high-risk offenders like Arauz-Medina, allowing them to remain in the same community where their victims reside without any oversight. (16)

Who: Murad Sanih Awad
The Facts:

In Atlanta in July of 2025, DHS arrested Murad Sanih Awad, an illegal immigrant from Jordan with an extraordinary 40 prior criminal convictions, including sexual battery and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, after years of criminal behavior across multiple jurisdictions. Despite his extensive record of serious offenses, Awad remained in the country until his arrest by DHS, raising concerns about dangerous individuals remaining at large when immigration enforcement and local cooperation are limited, as they are in Atlanta. (17)

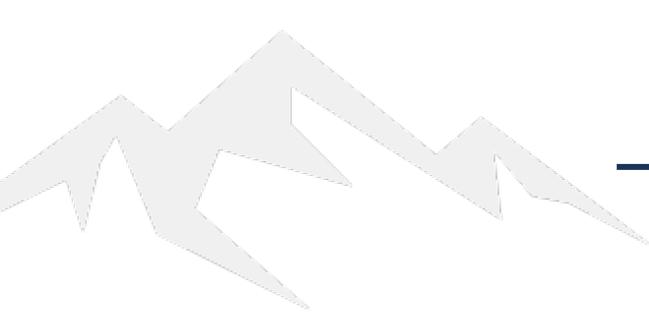
Conclusion

Overall, it is clear that Colorado’s extreme sanctuary state status – with the lack of common-sense exceptions for violent criminals and repeat felons – is a danger to innocent citizens and communities across the state. Policies that restrict agencies from reporting or even communicating with federal authorities in extreme situations have enabled individuals with long rap



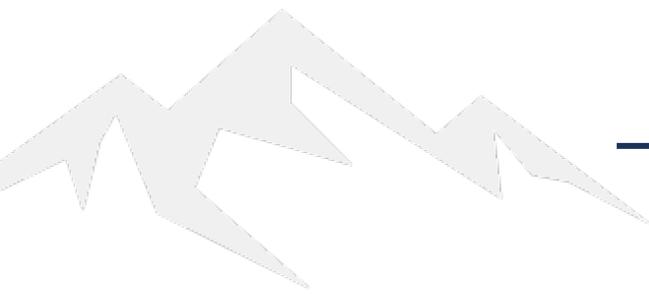
sheets and violent charges to stay within our state borders. The devastating deaths of numerous Coloradans, as well as citizens across the country, at the hands of individuals who should have been in the custody of Homeland Security highlight the tangible consequences of these policies. Colorado should not be a haven for violent criminals and repeat felons.





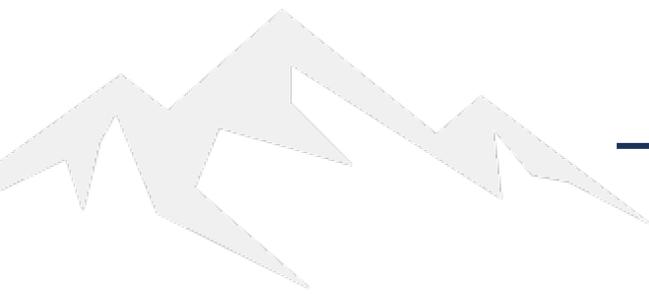
Works Cited

1. Del Puerto, Luige. "Is Colorado a Sanctuary State?" *Colorado Politics*, 5 July 2025, www.coloradopolitics.com/2023/01/17/is-colorado-a-sanctuary-state-25215d90-95d8-11ed-8829-6f11739039ea. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.
2. "SB25-276 Protect Civil Rights Immigration Status." *Colorado General Assembly*, leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb25-276. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.
3. Cook, Jeffrey, and Emily Shapiro. "82-year-old Woman Dies From Injuries Suffered in Boulder Molotov Cocktail Attack: Prosecutors." *ABC News*, 30 June 2025, abcnews.go.com/US/82-year-woman-dies-injuries-suffered-boulder-molotov/story?id=123344566. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.
4. Price, Stepheny. "Illegal Immigrant Allegedly Driving Drunk at Extreme Speed Killed Woman in Violent Crash: DHS." *Fox News*, 2 Dec. 2025, www.foxnews.com/us/illegal-immigrant-allegedly-driving-drunk-extreme-speed-killed-woman-violent-crash-dhs. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.
5. "Carissa 'Luu' Aspnes." *DAWG Nation Hockey Foundation*, 10 Feb. 2026, www.dawgnation.org/carissa-luu-aspnes. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.
6. "Carissa Aspnes Is Another Innocent Victim of Illegal Aliens Who ICE Protesters Refuse to Acknowledge." *Rumble*, 29 Jan. 2026,

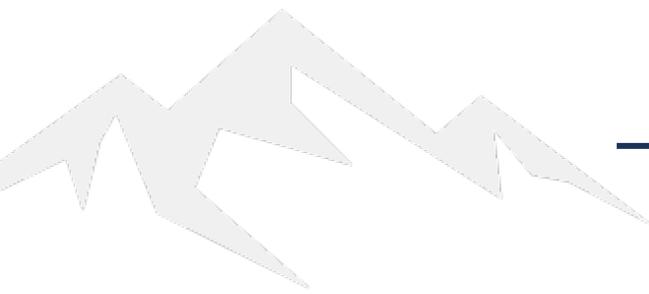


rumble.com/v750fac-carissa-aspens-is-another-innocent-victim-of-illegal-aliens-who-ice-protest.html. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.

7. "ICE Detainer Ignored by Colorado Law Enforcement, Cuban Man Now Charged With Attempted Murder After Being Released." *U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement*, 29 Nov. 2019, www.ice.gov/news/releases/ice-detainer-ignored-colorado-law-enforcement-cuban-man-now-charged-attempted-murder. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.
8. Boyd, Shaun. "Colorado Prosecutor Offers Unlicensed and Undocumented Teen Probation After Deadly Crash." *CBS News*, 14 May 2025, www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/colorado-prosecutor-offers-unlicensed-undocumented-teen-probation-deadly-crash. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.
9. Rice, Sean. "Undocumented Immigrant on Parole Accused of Breaking Into a Home in Teller County." *KRDO*, 30 May 2024, krdo.com/news/2024/05/29/undocumented-immigrant-on-parole-accused-of-breaking-into-homes-in-teller-county. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.



10. Garrison, Robert. "Man Once Accused of Murder in RTD Station Shooting Pleads Guilty to Reduced Charges." *Denver 7 Colorado News (KMGH)*, 4 Nov. 2017, www.denver7.com/news/crime/man-once-accused-of-murder-in-rtd-station-shooting-reaches-plea-deal. Accessed 16 Feb. 2026.
11. Associated Press. "2 Men Given Decades in Jail in Denver Train Station Shooting." *Denver 7 Colorado News (KMGH)*, 9 Mar. 2018, www.denver7.com/news/crime/2-men-given-decades-in-jail-in-denver-train-station-shooting. Accessed 17 Feb. 2026.
12. Factor, Jacob. "Man Charged in Broomfield Crash That Killed 2 Was Sentenced for Prior DUI Days Before, Had Been Deported 4 Times." *The Denver Post*, 17 Jan. 2024, www.denverpost.com/2024/01/17/broomfield-crash-rioradn-melissa-powell-dui-jose-menjivar-ice-immigration. Accessed 17 Feb. 2026.
13. "ICE Arrests Fugitive Murderer Released Into American Neighborhoods by the Biden Administration." *Department of Homeland Security*, 11 Nov. 2025, www.dhs.gov/news/2025/11/11/ice-arrests-fugitive-murderer-released-american-neighborhoods-biden-administration. Accessed 17 Feb. 2026.



14. Mahieu, Leif Le. "ICE Nabs Illegal Immigrant With Over Three Dozen Previous Arrests." *Daily Wire*, 5 Nov. 2025, www.dailywire.com/news/ice-nabs-illegal-immigrant-with-over-three-dozen-previous-arrests. Accessed 17 Feb. 2026.
15. "Admitted CA Cop Killer Laughs, Says in Court He Wishes He Could Kill More." *Police Magazine*, 17 Jan. 2018, www.policemag.com/news/admitted-ca-cop-killer-laughs-says-in-court-he-wishes-he-could-kill-more. Accessed 17 Feb. 2026.
16. "ICE Lodges Arrest Detainer for Criminal Illegal Alien Who Raped a Woman in Pritzker's Sanctuary Chicago." *Department of Homeland Security*, 22 Oct. 2025, www.dhs.gov/news/2025/10/22/ice-lodges-arrest-detainer-criminal-illegal-alien-who-raped-woman-pritzkers. Accessed 17 Feb. 2026.
17. "Restoring Order: ICE Arrests Illegal Alien With 40 Criminal Convictions." *Department of Homeland Security*, 15 July 2025, www.dhs.gov/news/2025/07/15/restoring-order-ice-arrests-illegal-alien-40-criminal-convictions. Accessed 17 Feb. 2026.





Advance Colorado is a non-profit dedicated to educating Coloradans on the benefit of strong and sustainable state and local governing solutions in the areas of fiscal responsibility and transparency, limited government, free enterprise, lower taxes, strong public safety, and an accountable education system.

info@advancecolorado.org

www.advancecolorado.org

[@advancecolorado](#)

