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Immigration officials plan to spend \$38.3 billion to boost detention capacity to 92,000 beds

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BY **HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH**

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Federal immigration officials plan to spend \$38.3 billion to boost detention capacity to 92,600 beds, [a document released Friday](#) shows, as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement quietly purchases warehouses to turn into detention and processing facilities.

Republican New Hampshire Gov. Kelly Ayotte posted the document online amid tension over ICE's plans to convert a warehouse in Merrimack into a 500-bed processing center.

It said ICE plans 16 regional processing centers with a population of 1,000 to 1,500 detainees, whose stays would average three to seven days. Another eight large-scale detention centers would be built to house 7,000 to 10,000 detainees for periods averaging less than 60 days.

The document also refers to the acquisition of 10 existing "turnkey" facilities.

Plans call for all of them to be up and running by November as immigration officials roll out a \$38.3 billion [expansion of detention facilities](#) financed by President Donald Trump's recent tax



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More than 75,000 immigrants were being detained by ICE as of mid-January, up from 40,000 when Trump took office a year earlier, according to federal data released last week.

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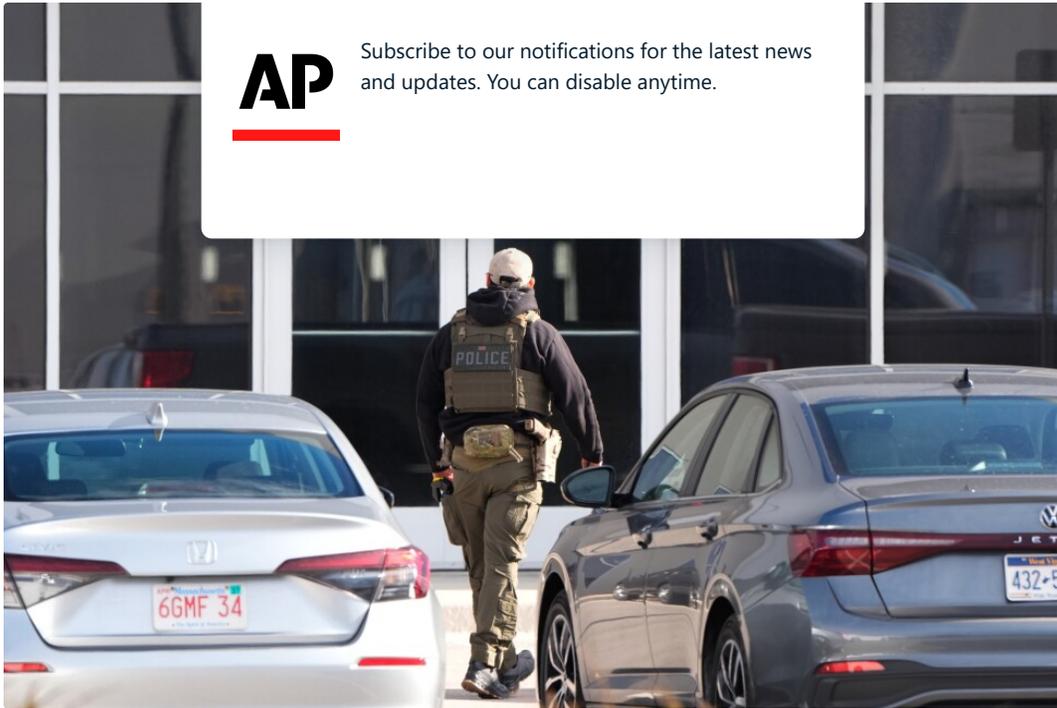


Trump's \$45 billion expansion of immigrant detention sites faces pushback from communities





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Federal immigration officials scout warehouses as they eye more detention space



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The newly released document refers to “non-traditional facilities” and comes as ICE has quietly bought at least seven warehouses — some larger than 1 million square feet (92,900 square meters) — in the past few weeks in Arizona, Georgia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Warehouse purchases in six cities were scuttled when buyers decided not to sell under pressure from human rights activists. Several other deals in places like New York are imminent, however.

City officials are frequently unable to get details from ICE until a property sale is finalized.

Tensions boiled to the surface after interim ICE Director Todd Lyons testified Thursday that he had worked with Gov. Ayotte and provided her with an economic impact summary.





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[Ayotte said](#) that assertion was “simply not true” and the summary was sent hours after Lyons testified.

The document mistakenly refers to the “ripple effects to the Oklahoma economy” and revenue generated by state sales and income taxes, neither of which exist in New Hampshire.

“Director Lyons’ comments today are another example of the troubling pattern of issues with this process,” Ayotte said. “Officials from the Department of Homeland Security continue to provide zero details of their plans for Merrimack, never mind providing any reports or surveys.”

DHS did not respond to questions about Ayotte’s comments or the new document. But it previously confirmed that it was looking for more detention space, although it objected to calling the sites “warehouses,” saying in a statement that they would be “very well structured detention facilities meeting our regular detention standards.”

Associated Press writer Holly Ramer contributed.



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Hollingsworth has worked for The AP for 25 years, covering stories of interest in the Midwest and beyond. She is based in Kansas City, Missouri.





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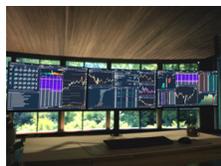
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