

Former ICE instructor testifies agents were trained to discard constitutional rights

The instructor, who is an attorney, is telling a forum sponsored by Congressional Democrats that the procedures in entering homes are not taught appropriately.

[By Christopher Vondracek](#)

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WASHINGTON — A former ICE teacher at a Georgia training center will tell a forum called by congressional Democrats on Monday, Feb. 23, that new agents are trained to run roughshod over constitutional rights, including the right against a home invasion, and that the federal agency is “broken.”

Ryan Schwank, who resigned from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on Feb. 13, plans to tell the forum that ICE is training new agents to violate Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure, according to a draft of Schwank’s testimony shared with the Minnesota Star Tribune.

“ICE is lying to Congress and the American people about the steps it is taking to ensure its 10,000 new officers faithfully uphold the Constitution,” Schwank, who joined ICE as legal counsel in 2021, said in the draft.

The Department of Homeland Security, which runs ICE, has said all of its officers were following federal law throughout Operation Metro Surge in Minneapolis and other widespread escalations such as in Chicago.

But others have made several criticisms. **Last month, Blumenthal wrote to DHS Secretary Kristi Noem about a “secret” policy permitting agents to “circumvent the privacy protections” in the 4th amendment, by relying on an administrative order, rather than a judicial warrant.**

DHS said Feb. 23 that no training requirements have been removed. Despite false claims from the media and sanctuary politicians, no training hours have been cut,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary Lauren Bis.” Bis said ICE agents receive “comprehensive instruction” in both the Fourth and Fifth Amendments.

The congressional forum, set for 2 p.m. central time, is hosted by Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Connecticut, and Rep. Robert Garcia, D-California. Earlier this month, a similar gathering heard testimony from Renee Good’s brothers and a Minneapolis resident dragged from her car. A memo from Minority Staff of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations also lays out internal ICE records showing that new recruits are receiving significantly less training than previous officers.

Two weeks ago, ICE Acting Director Todd Lyons told Congress that while the overall training days had declined, new officers were being asked to work longer days. But the records in the memo suggest ICE trainees are still working “nine-hour days.” Furthermore, they are taking fewer exams. One exam cut by staff includes a practice on “Judgment Pistol Shooting,” according to the memo.

Minneapolis resident Teyana Gibson Brown, who was photographed as ICE burst into her home in mid-January, will also appear at the forum on Feb. 23.

“To anyone else who is repulsed by what you’re seeing or what authorities are asking you to do, please know that you can make a real difference by coming forward,” said Blumenthal, in a statement.