

No, ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) is not expected to be at polling places in Missouri (or nationwide) for the 2026 elections, and federal law prohibits actions that would intimidate voters or interfere with voting.

Recent discussions stem from comments by Steve Bannon (a former Trump advisor) in early February 2026, who claimed on his podcast that "we're going to have ICE surround the polls come November" to prevent alleged noncitizen voting (a claim widely debunked—noncitizens are already barred from voting in federal elections, and evidence shows it is extremely rare). This sparked concerns about potential voter intimidation, especially among communities of color or immigrant families.

The White House Press Secretary responded that there are **no formal plans** discussed by President Trump to deploy ICE at or near polling sites, though she declined to fully guarantee no ICE agent would be "around" one, calling it a "silly hypothetical." Democrats and voting rights groups have raised alarms, with some pushing for congressional restrictions on ICE near election sites. Polling shows many voters (including some Republicans) support blocking such actions to prevent interference.

Key Legal Protections

- **Federal law** (e.g., 18 U.S.C. § 592) makes it a crime (up to 5 years in prison) to deploy armed federal agents (including ICE) at polling places in ways that interfere with elections or intimidate voters. This stems from post-Civil War laws to protect free voting.
- Armed federal forces are explicitly banned near polls unless repelling an armed enemy (which doesn't apply here).
- Voter intimidation—including implied threats that could deter eligible citizens from voting—is illegal under federal law (e.g., 18 U.S.C. § 594) and the Voting Rights Act.
- ICE has no authority to enforce immigration law at polling places in a way that affects voting. Elections are run by state and local officials, not federal immigration agencies.

In **Missouri**, polling places are managed by local election authorities (like the St. Louis Board of Election Commissioners), and state law reinforces protections against intimidation. There's no indication of any planned ICE presence in Missouri specifically—concerns are national and hypothetical at this stage.

What This Means for You

- Polling places should remain safe, accessible spaces run by bipartisan local officials and poll workers.
- If you see or experience anything that feels like intimidation (e.g., federal agents questioning voters, hovering near lines, or creating fear), report it immediately:
 - Call the national election protection hotline: **866-OUR-VOTE** (866-687-8683).
 - Contact the Missouri Secretary of State Elections Division: 573-751-2301 or elections@sos.mo.gov.
 - In St. Louis: Board of Election Commissioners at 314-622-4336.
- Eligible voters (U.S. citizens) have nothing to fear from legitimate voting processes—bring your required photo ID as usual, and your vote will be private and counted.

This situation is fluid and politically charged, but current facts show **no deployment of ICE at polls is planned or legal** if it interferes with voting. For the latest, check official sources like:

- Missouri Secretary of State: <https://www.sos.mo.gov/elections>
- Brennan Center for Justice (non-partisan voting rights info): <https://www.brennancenter.org>
- ACLU Know Your Rights: <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/federal-agents-at-the-polls>

If you're worried about a specific scenario or need more on voting safety, let me know!