

Orange County opposes 'incompatible' ICE detention warehouse in Orlando



Pastor Sarah Robinson of Audubon Park Church leads protesters in song outside the Orange County Administration building in downtown Orlando, Tuesday, March 10, 2026. The county commission was scheduled to vote Tuesday on a resolution opposing plans to convert an Orange County warehouse into an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel)



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Orange County leaders voted to oppose [a planned ICE facility in east Orlando](#) Tuesday, taking a “principled stand” against the agency’s goal of converting a warehouse into a processing center for detainees.

The unanimous vote by the Board of County Commissioners took place after dozens of people demonstrated outside the county building, playing tambourines, hand drums and egg shakers and singing, “We are many, We are one. We won’t stop fighting till ICE is gone.”

The federal agency, flush with cash from President Trump’s One Big Beautiful Bill Act, is seeking to vastly expand its detention capacity nationwide by buying warehouses and converting them into massive detention hubs.



Aerial image of the Beachline Logistics Center, a 439,945-square-foot industrial facility, located at 8660 Transport Drive in east Orange County, on Wednesday, February 4, 2026. The warehouse could be future location for ICE. (Ricardo Ramirez Buxeda/ Orlando Sentinel)

A senior Immigration and Customs Enforcement official had toured the warehouse at 8660 Transport Drive, south of State Road 528’s Sunbridge Parkway interchange, amid a surge of detentions in Central Florida in January.

If it goes forward, the building would be turned into a processing center capable of [holding about 1,500 detainees at a time.](#)

Board members argued such a facility would strain water and sewer capacity, harm the area’s quality of life and dampen tourism.

“Our responsibility is to protect the health, safety and well-being of our residents, preserve the integrity of our local land use process and ensure that major decisions effecting our community are not made without transparency, coordination or respect for local government,” Mayor Jerry Demings said.

“This resolution makes clear that any proposal of this nature is incompatible with our community’s values and priorities,” he added.

The county resolution can’t actually prevent the sale or conversion of the warehouse, however. Attorneys for the county and the city of Orlando, which has jurisdiction over the property, have said the U.S. Constitution’s Supremacy Clause prioritizing federal law over local and state laws prevents them from blocking it.

But at least [a dozen similar planned facilities](#) have been scrapped nationwide following bipartisan opposition, including in Oklahoma, Missouri, New Hampshire and Mississippi. Others, however, are moving forward and [have already begun awarding contracts](#).

Orange County leaders again heard a deluge of comments from the public, with several dozen opposing [the county’s agreement with the federal government](#) that allows the detention of immigration detainees at the jail.

“This resolution tells the world that Orange County will not remain silent in this moment of cruelty,” said Barbeth Foster, an attorney working with the group Immigrants Are Welcome Here. “We absolutely, wholeheartedly support this resolution.”

Others feared that the possible ICE detention center would be detrimental to the region’s booming tourism industry, which employs thousands of immigrant workers.

“We the people of Orange County feel that this county, and this part of Florida, is supposed to welcome people here,” said Beverly Casseus, a member of the progressive group Florida Rising. “How can we make sure that we have tourism still coming and booming when the people who work in the industries are afraid to come to work?”

Not everyone was celebratory. Ryan Smith, the chief strategist for Byron Donalds, the Trump-endorsed Republican candidate for governor, blasted Demings for the resolution. Demings, a Democrat, is also a gubernatorial candidate.

"Jerry Demings and Orange County Democrats are once again choosing political theater over public safety," Smith said in a statement. "Florida Democrats are trying to obstruct President Trump and federal law enforcement from removing criminal illegal aliens from our communities. That is reckless and irresponsible."

Donalds visited the warehouse site in January along with local GOP activists and announced his support of the proposed ICE facility.

Outside the county building, demonstrators shared messages of hope and told stories of neighbors or friends who have been detained or impacted by the immigration detention surge nationwide.

Hannah Miller, part of the Orlando Singing Resistance group, said [the surge in ICE arrests which began in January](#) impacted not only those who are undocumented but those who are in the country legally too, she said.

She told the story of an Hispanic Uber driver who quickly veered into a nearby neighborhood, pulled over and ran out of the car after seeing ICE vehicles on a recent ride in Orlando. The driver returned to the car after the cops drove away and began typing on his phone to communicate with Miller, who did not speak Spanish.

"He told me, 'Sorry, I have my papers but when you're from another country they make it hard for you,'" Miller said. The two sat in the car for a few minutes to decompress because he was scared. Before dropping her off, he showed her some photos of his family.

"I felt so bad that the only thing I knew to say was, 'Take care of yourself,'" she said.

For others, the crackdown on immigration is even more personal. Haitian immigrant Hedder Pierre Joseph, who attended the event and sang alongside the group, said she is now a naturalized citizen but still feels vulnerable amidst the crackdown on immigration.

"I spent 16 years undocumented myself, so I understand," said Pierre Joseph, a candidate for the District 6 seat on the Orange County Commission. "We didn't come over here because we wanted to ... to an America where we are not welcome. We came to survive."



Protesters hold signs outside the Orange County Administration building in downtown Orlando, Tuesday, March 10, 2026. The county commission was scheduled to vote Tuesday on a resolution opposing plans to convert an Orange County warehouse into an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel)

The group, Orlando Singing Resistance, formed recently as part of a nationwide movement of singers that began in Minnesota during the federal surge there.

U.S. Rep. Maxwell Frost joined the group on Tuesday and played a cajon, a square-like drum originally from Peru, to the beat.

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"We want this to pass today," Frost, D-Orlando, said of the resolution. "But of course we know there's more work to do here in Orange County, here in Florida, across the country."

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