

Ice Signals Retreat from Romulus as its National Detention Plan Falters

HOW YOU DEFEAT A FASCIST PROJECT What Romulus teaches, in three principles



Detroit, Michigan Sep 8, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Ice Signals Retreat from Romulus as its National Detention Plan Falters

The apparent retreat in Romulus is not an accident or an act of mercy — it is what sustained, strategically targeted community pressure forces. Signs of the same shift are appearing across the country. The Coalition to Shut the Camps credits Attorney General Nessel and the City of Romulus, rejects any claim that this was ever only about one site, and stresses that nothing is final: it is awaiting the binding terms and DHS's own confirmation before treating the outcome as settled.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel announced today that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement will abandon its plan to convert the warehouse at 7525 Cogswell Street into an immigration detention center, and will instead sell the property. The reversal — coming less than three months after the State of Michigan and the City of Romulus sued, and after months of community organizing led by the Coalition to Shut the Camps (CSC) — is the latest sign that the federal government's nationwide plan to build a network of mass-detention warehouses is faltering under organized opposition, community by community.

CSC welcomed the announcement as a hopeful and hard-won development while cautioning, firmly, that it is not yet a final outcome. While the news came from the Attorney General's office, the Coalition said it is still waiting to hear DHS's own confirmation and to see the specific, binding terms. ICE has not sold the building, no money has changed hands, and the lawsuit will remain active until DHS and ICE sign a written agreement promising **never** to use the site for detention and to list it for sale — and CSC will be watching that it contains no loophole to relabel the site a "processing center" and reopen the same fight.

We are not declaring final victory today — we are still waiting to learn the binding terms, and a promise to sell is not a sale. But we already know why the federal government has reached this point. Authoritarian projects run on the appearance of inevitability; they win when people believe resistance is pointless. Romulus is showing the opposite. This project was not stalled by luck or by anyone's change of heart — it was stalled by a community that applied constant, strategically directed pressure to every weak point it had: legal, political, environmental, and infrastructural. That is the method. And

the method is working.

— Chris Boyd, Strategy Committee Chair, Coalition to Shut the Camps

How Do you Defeat a Fascist Project

What Romulus teaches, in three principles:

- 1. Deny them inevitability.** These projects run on the belief that they cannot be stopped. Visible, organized refusal breaks that spell — and every community that says no makes the next refusal easier.
- 2. Pressure every weak point at once.** Legal, political, environmental, infrastructural. No single lever is enough; together they make a project impossible to complete on the timeline and budget that hold it together.
- 3. Never stop at one site.** A victory that simply lets the machine move down the road is not a victory. The target is not a building. It is the system that keeps building them.

Romulus is not alone. The warehouse here was one of eleven that the agency bought nationwide for roughly \$1 billion to detain tens of thousands of people. According to reporting by The New York Times and NBC News, ICE is now moving to offload most of them — including the Romulus site — while the Department of Homeland Security’s own inspector general investigates the purchases. Courts and communities have already blocked or stalled conversions from Maryland and New Jersey to Social Circle, Georgia, and Byhalia, Mississippi, including in deeply conservative areas. The emerging pattern is hard to miss: where communities organized, the camps stalled.

The Attorney General’s lawsuit, filed March 24 alongside the City of Romulus, forced the site’s defects into public view — a location within a mile of two schools, in a floodplain that flooded last year, with utilities sized for an empty warehouse rather than a jail for the roughly 2,000 people the facility was designed to hold. But CSC organizers say the decisive obstacle was the one DHS could not litigate away: the water, sewer, and power upgrades a detention center requires, and the Coalition organized so those approvals would never come quietly.

We want to be very clear, because the Attorney General’s framing was not ours. The problem was never that Romulus is the wrong town. A cage is wrong in Romulus and in Baldwin, and it would be just as wrong in any other community DHS might target. We did not fight this because of where it was — we fought it because of what it is. If ICE tries to open a detention camp anywhere in this state, it will meet the same coalition, the same neighbors, and the same answer: not here, and not anywhere.

— Anna Fisher, No Detention Centers in Michigan

The Fight Ahead

The Coalition is clear-eyed about where this goes next. When the warehouse strategy falters, the machinery of detention does not disappear — it reroutes. DHS has already signaled it will lean on “existing detention space with our state and county partners,” which in practice means turning county jails into ad hoc profit centers for immigration detention and expanding 287(g) agreements that deputize local police to carry out ICE’s attacks in our own neighborhoods. CSC intends to follow that money and that authority wherever they go, and to meet each new front with the same coordinated pressure that stalled Romulus.

That fight is inseparable from the people already caged. CSC stands in solidarity with those still detained at the Baldwin facility in northern Michigan — and with the women at Women’s Huron Valley, Michigan’s only women’s prison, where three people died within a single month this spring: Khaira Howard, 28; Rebecca Fackler, 57; and Ashley Hoath, 36. Their deaths — amid allegations of medical neglect, toxic mold, overcrowding, and inadequate care that a bipartisan group of state lawmakers has called a crisis — are what the machinery of mass incarceration produces wherever it runs, whether the sign on the door reads ICE or MDOC. Stopping a warehouse in Romulus and dismantling that system are not two causes. They are one.

We will not declare this over until the deed is signed and the site is permanently barred from detention. But we are also not going to pretend the goal was ever just one building. The goal is to make this entire system — the warehouses, the cages, the county jails turned into profit centers, the agency expanding into our neighborhoods — impossible to operate and impossible to justify. Romulus is beginning to show it can be done. Every site we stop brings that day closer, and we intend to keep stopping them until there are none left to stop.

— Melody Simmons, Chair, Coalition to Shut the Camps

The Coalition to Shut the Camps will continue its work until the Romulus sale is final, the site is permanently off the table for detention, and the system that produced it is dismantled.

About: The Coalition to Shut the Camps is a Michigan coalition working with more than 30 community, faith, labor, and immigrant-rights organizations united to stop the conversion of the Romulus warehouse — and any site in Michigan — into an ICE detention facility.

Media Contact — Yvonne Lassalle

contact@shutthecamps.org • shutthecamps.org



Media Contact

Coalition to Shut the Camps

*****@shutthecamps.org

3476136537

<http://shutthecamps.org>

Source : Coaliltion to Shut the Camps shutthecamps.org

[See on IssueWire](#)