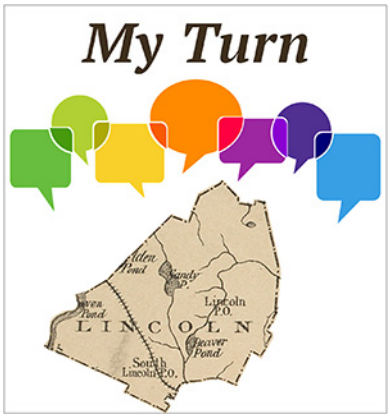
My Turn: Speak up about ongoing ICE deportations from Hanscom

By Barbara Slayter



If you have walked or driven down Trapelo Road in the last few days, four red and white signs may have caught your eye. Sponsored by Lincoln Witness, they read in either direction:

“NEIGHBORS DISAPPEARING ON ICE FLIGHTS AT HANSCOM”

Lincoln Witness, a local group formed in May 2025, has responded vigorously to the plight of immigrants under threat by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). So also have other groups and organizations in Lincoln and surrounding communities including the First Parish in Lincoln; St. Anne’s-in-the-Field Episcopal Church; Indivisible groups in Acton, Concord, and Weston; Bearing Witness; and Fuerza in Waltham.

According to the Boston Globe (July 21, 2026), the De-ICE Hanscom coalition, drawing on data from the nonprofit Human Rights First, estimated that to date, more than 2,200 detainees have been transported from Hanscom to domestic detention centers or abroad. In the past several months, numbers of flights have increased.

If you are upset about what is happening to our immigrant community, especially those individuals who are Black and brown, regardless of their legal status and length of residence, consider:

- Viewing the documentary entitled “ICE AIR: Inside American’s Secret Deportation System.” The film is produced by photojournalist Chris Hansen and investigative journalist Chris Vanderveen, both of KUSA-TV, a Denver-based news station. Many affiliate news stations contributed.
- Checking out the DeICE Hanscom coalition of groups across this region that are collaborating in advocacy and education to oppose ICE deportation, focusing specifically on Hanscom. There’s a lot we can do to protest the existence and cruel activities of ICE and to work for humane policies on immigration.

Now, back to those colorful signs. Perhaps you have celebrated your 60th birthday (or more) and recall the Burma-Shave roadside signs, a famous and widely used American advertising campaign running from 1926 to 1963. Created by the Burma-Vita Co. of Minneapolis, the

campaign promoted a brushless shaving cream. Typically, the ad consisted of six sequential small red and white signs placed about 100 feet apart along highways, so that passing motorists could read each line one by one as they drove by. Often there was a jingle or humorous comment. At its height, the campaign grew to roughly 7,000 signs spread across 45 states.

Over the years, this advertising technique has been adapted for a variety of purposes, including calling attention to important issues. In this case, the issue concerns the inhumane and cruel treatment ICE agents are inflicting on many immigrants across our country.

Keep an eye out for those red and white signs. Who knows? They may pop up elsewhere in Lincoln.

Barbara Slayter, Trapelo Road
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"My Turn" is a forum for readers to offer their letters to the editor or views on any subject of interest to other Lincolnians. Submissions must be signed with the writer's name and street address and sent via email to lincolnsquirrelnews@gmail.com. Items will be edited for punctuation, spelling, style, etc., and will be published at the discretion of the editor. Submissions containing personal attacks, errors of fact, or other inappropriate material will not be published.