

When I heard ICE agents were outside a home on Dorset Street, I joined other Vermonters in gathering there because ICE has a consistent record of ignoring the law and civil liberties, abducting people from the street and from their homes, and moving them between states to try and deny them the due process we're all entitled to. I believe that if people's rights are being violated, I have a moral duty to show up, witness, and prevent harm to my neighbors if I can. In the end they seized three people without a warrant and drove into the night with them. Most people would call that kidnapping. In this wrongful act, they had essential help from our state and local police, who beat and shoved people aside so ICE could break down the door, and then shielded the ICE agents while they dragged three residents of the home out to their vehicle. Over the next two hours, I saw officers whose salaries we pay, and who should have a duty to protect us, dealing out beatings and pepper spray against people who came with nothing more dangerous than linked arms and raised voices. If state and local officers saw that ICE had a warrant for one person, why did they work so violently to make sure they could leave with three? If some people can be snatched from their homes with no warrant, and anyone who tries to protect them will be brutalized, what safety and liberty can any of us count on? I don't believe Vermonters will stand aside and allow such injustice to happen quietly. I hope our lawmakers will stand with us and help keep our state a place where liberty is respected, and everyone can count on equal treatment under the law.