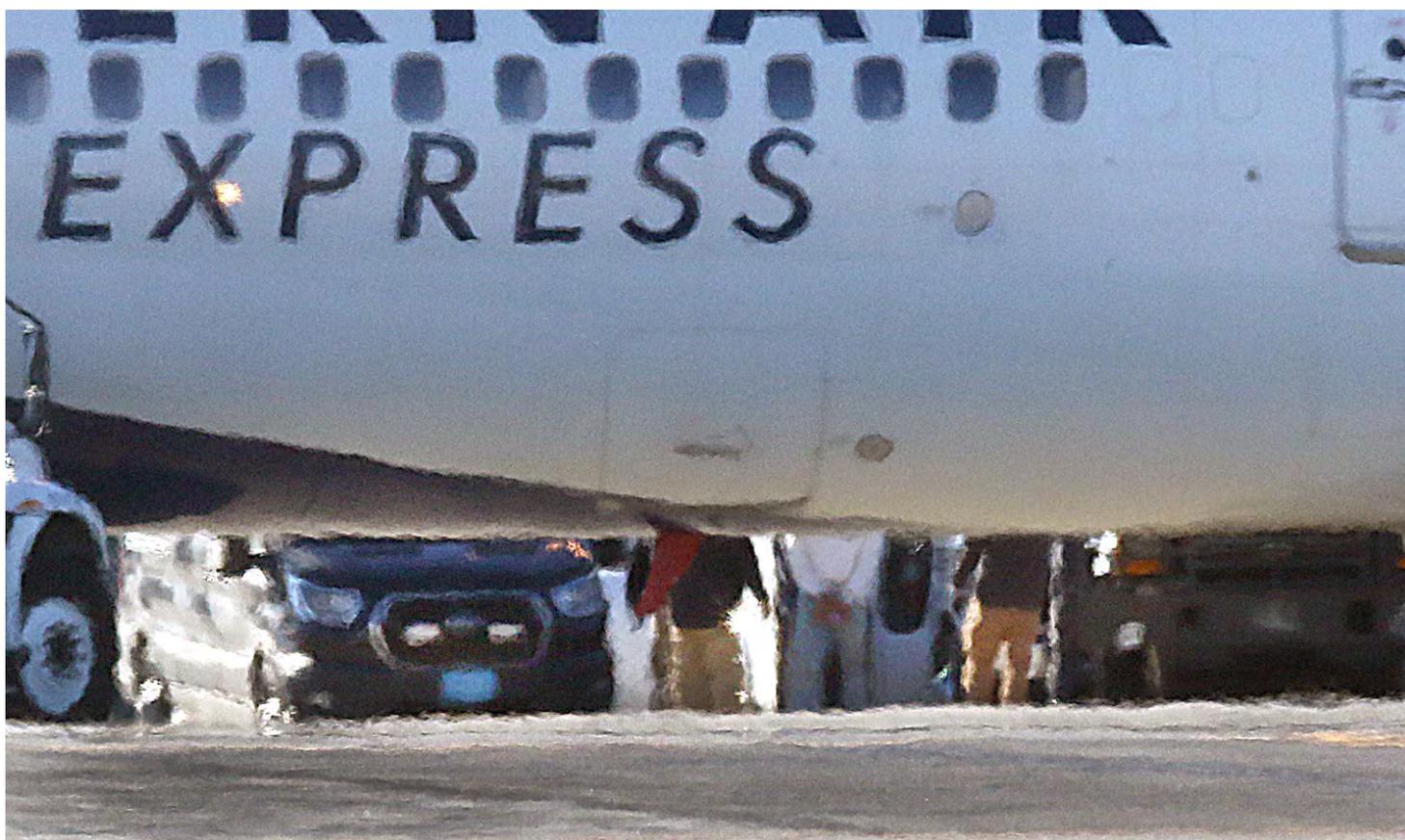


# 'That response is meaningless': Hanscom Field commission says ICE is 'stonewalling' its questions on deportation flights at the airport

By **Emily Spatz** Globe Correspondent, Updated December 16, 2025, 11:55 p.m.



On Dec. 12, charter flight picked up federal migrant detainees at Hanscom Field for a flight south to Louisiana. JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

The Hanscom Airfield Commission was hoping to hear details Tuesday night from Immigration and Customs Enforcement about flights from the airport carrying immigrants out of the country.

But the commission said it received a “meaningless” response from a spokesperson from ICE, whose Boston field office is in Burlington.

The spokesperson said the agency “does not discuss any upcoming, or planned immigration enforcement operations” due to operational and officer security, according to an email sent from ICE to the commission.

A representative of ICE invited to the meeting did not attend.

On Nov. 9, commission chair Margaret Coppe sent a letter to ICE spokesperson James Covington asking for ICE to provide details of how and when Hanscom Field in Bedford is being used for public deportation flights.

In the letter, Coppe also addressed public concerns that the airport is reportedly being used to deport people who have no criminal record.

But that issue was also not addressed in ICE’s brief response, according to a copy of the email provided to the Globe.

“With regards to flights at Hanscom, all proper authorities are notified prior to ICE using the airfield. ICE is in constant communication with our local law enforcement partners, and all appropriate notifications are made through them,” the email said.

The commission’s meeting came after [Governor Maura Healey sent a letter](#) to the Department of Homeland Security demanding the Trump administration halt

immigration detention flights from Hanscom Field.

Hanscom, a civilian airport west of Boston, is run by the Massachusetts Port Authority. It shares airspace with an adjacent US Air Force base.

The government has used Hanscom for immigration flights since at least 2014, and ICE-chartered planes have departed the airport 112 times between January and Nov. 30, according to [previous Globe reporting](#).

The commission, which represents communities covered by the airport, had been discussing ICE activity there in its monthly meetings since July, according to its letter to ICE.

“Despite claims that ICE is focusing only on violent criminals, we continually hear examples of people who have no criminal records, who are children, or are long-time tax-paying members of the community doing valued jobs. As such, ICE’s contribution to community safety is being questioned,” Coppe wrote in her letter to ICE.

Coppe also wrote the committee has “fundamental questions about the legality of [ICE’s] actions.”

“It is essential for ICE representatives to meet with the public and explain your use of Hanscom Field, the detailed flight information, and your compliance with the law,” she wrote, inviting Covington to attend the commission’s meeting on Nov. 18.

Christopher Celozzi, a public affairs representative for ICE’s Boston office, attended the Nov. 18 meeting to take notes on public concerns about deportation flights to relay to the Department of Homeland Security, according to [meeting minutes](#).

In an email shared with the Globe, Coppe invited Celozzi back to the Dec. 16 meeting to address additional questions, but he did not attend.

Celozzi instead responded with the emailed response to the commission's letter attributed to an "ICE spokesperson."

"That response is meaningless, as we all realize," Christopher Eliot, a commission member who represents the town of Lincoln, said at the meeting, calling the response "stonewalling."

Kathy Madison, a resident of Lincoln, said ICE's response was a "non-answer."

"It's a boilerplate response, and I'll be surprised if we get any drill-down data or more information than this," she said.

The commission plans to send a follow-up letter to ICE to ask for more direct answers to its questions,

The commission also asked MassPort to provide it with data on how many immigration enforcement flights leave the airport, saying the numbers are available because they've been [reported](#) by prominent human rights group Human Rights First.

"The airport operators have discretion in terms of collecting this information and making it public," said commission member Terri Ackerman, who represents Concord.

Amber Goodspeed, manager of the airport's administration for Massport, said she would check on getting the data.

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