



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on January 8, 2026

Minneapolis ICE Shooting: The Case for Restoring the True Rule of Law

The fatal shooting of 37-year-old Renee Good in Minneapolis was processed with unusual speed. Not by investigators, but by politics. Before any independent inquiry had been completed, or even formally begun, the incident was absorbed into the nation's ideological machinery. Competing narratives hardened almost immediately, each seeking not clarification but mobilization. What mattered was not what happened, but what the killing could be made to signify.

As of now, no official investigation has reached a conclusion. Key factual questions remain highly contested. Yet partisan framings rushed to fill the vacuum, escalating rhetoric and rallying emotion well ahead of evidence. The language of justification and condemnation raced past the slower work of law, inquiry, and due process.



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It must be stressed that there is no dispute over first principles. The federal government has constitutional authority to enforce immigration law. Violations of law, by citizens and noncitizens alike, carry consequences. Resistance to lawful enforcement can drastically escalate those consequences. These are foundational truths of any functioning legal system.

The unresolved question in Minneapolis is narrower, and more consequential. It is not whether enforcement itself is legitimate, but whether the erosion of the rule of law created conditions in which tragedy became possible. That question lies at the center of the case, and it cannot be answered by political alignment or moral shorthand.

Democrats Hollowing the Law

Democratic leaders responded by condemning the operation's tactics and warning of dangerous escalation. Minnesota officials spoke of fear, instability, and the erosion of public trust. Governor Tim Walz, Kamala Harris' running mate in the 2024 election, [described](#) the killing as the result of the "Trump Administration's dangerous, sensationalized operations" that pose a "threat to our public safety."

The criticism addressed the outcome, but not the framework that produced it. And Walz and his party were a driving force behind it.

Over the past decade, Democratic governance steadily reframed immigration enforcement not as a legal function but as a moral failure. Border control was cast as cruelty, and statutory enforcement as



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discrimination. The language of law gave way to the talk of faux compassion. Yet this shift did not reduce federal power. It detached that power from ordinary legal restraint.

Routine enforcement became politically toxic. Laws remained on the books, but their application was narrowed, delayed, or administratively bypassed. Executive discretion expanded to compensate for legislative paralysis. At the same time, federal authority continued to grow across virtually every domain of public life, justified as expert management rather than coercion.

The result was the deformation of appropriate law enforcement. In many cases, law simply ceased to function as a stable boundary. It became conditional, selectively applied, and rhetorically disavowed even as authority centralized.

That delegitimization produced volatility. When lawful enforcement is treated as morally suspect, it does not disappear. It returns episodically, under crisis conditions, stripped of trust and predictability.

Warnings about escalation now reflect a system confronting the consequences of its own design.

Republican “Order”

Once back in power, Republicans responded to that volatility by reasserting enforcement through physical presence and decisive action.

That response was both appropriate and expected. Immigration enforcement is a legitimate and essential function of the federal government, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are tasked with carrying out laws enacted by Congress.

The concern raised by the Minneapolis case is therefore not about enforcement itself, but about how enforcement is defended and exercised when legal clarity gives way to raw authority. Enforcement is strongest when grounded in lawful process. When force becomes the primary justification, rather than the final safeguard, enforcement risks weakening the legitimacy it is meant to restore.

One of the most prominent defenses of the Minneapolis shooting illustrates this tension. The argument elevates compliance not as a legal relationship between citizen and state, but as a condition of survival. Republican Congressman Wesley Hunt from Texas [put it](#) bluntly:

When a federal officer gives you instructions, you abide by them and then you get to keep your life.

That framing, widely echoed online, treats deeper questions of legality largely irrelevant once noncompliance is assumed. But the American system does not presume that commands are lawful simply because they are issued. It presumes that commands must be lawful before they bind.

It remains to be determined whether the ICE agents involved fully complied with constitutional and procedural requirements, including clear identification, lawful authority to stop, and proportional use of force. That determination matters. Yet the broader issue exposed by the reaction does not depend on the final findings: Unquestioning obedience belongs to subjects. Citizens are governed by law.

“Just Comply”

The logic underlying the “just comply” response does not stop with policing — or the Republicans’ professed respect of “law and order.” It travels easily across party lines and other realms of modern governance because it rests on a single assumption: Authority, once asserted, justifies itself.



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Why did Good not simply comply? Why not just follow instructions?

The same reasoning surfaced during the pandemic. Why not just take the vaccine and accept the mandate? Why not show your papers to keep your job, or why not shut down your business? Compliance became a civic virtue. Noncompliance was dangerous. The state's command, especially in the situation of an "emergency," was treated as self-validating.

The same reasoning surfaced after the 9/11 attacks. The tragedy justified new "security measures." Why not just remove your shoes, surrender liquids, submit to searches, and accept surveillance? Or do you have something to hide?

Firearms debates follow the same pattern. Why not accept additional checks or give up the gun? Why not trust authorities in life-and-death situations?

Speech now carries similar conditions. Why not stop posting "misinformation"? Why not accept content moderation or stay quiet?

Meanwhile, a polarized public, accustomed to paternalistic governance and institutional messaging, has grown willing to embrace state power when it is exercised by "their team."

Rule of Law, Not Politics

The polarized reactions to the Minneapolis shooting complete the picture. They reveal not simply disagreement over facts, but how conditional many Americans' commitments to constitutional limits have become.

For decades, conservatives warned about the dangers of an expansive federal government armed with broad discretion and increasingly insulated from accountability. That concern extended not only to the steady growth in the size, scope, and [militarization](#) of federal law enforcement — a point long emphasized by figures like [Ron Paul](#) — but to a deeper principle. Power that expands faster than legal restraint inevitably turns inward. But rights and liberties do not originate with the state. They preexist it.

Thomas Jefferson articulated the balance between authority and liberty best:

In questions of power, then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.

By "man," Jefferson meant all men: those who govern and those who are governed alike.

It is no coincidence that both sides invoked the case of Ashley Babbitt in the aftermath of the Minneapolis shooting. Babbitt was killed by a Capitol Police officer on January 6, and her death became a lasting symbol for many of the dangers of unchecked state power. Even after investigations deemed the shooting lawful, the case retained its moral force for a simple reason: A citizen died at the hands of the state. That fact alone once anchored conservative insistence on restraint, scrutiny, and the rule of law for all.



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