

Week in Review

DEPT. OF SOCIAL WORK

1 April, 2025



In this newsletter you can expect:

Weekly Local and National Updates

Policy Highlights

Resources

Weekly Somatic Practice

Action Corner

Share you feedback with us?

Joy is a radical act!

Welcome!

Welcome to our weekly informational newsletter! We are living in what is often described as “interesting” times. In general, the world is moving at warp speed. News reports coming out of the new administration has the potential to impact our community in broad terms. From those we serve, to our own personal and professional experiences, and the field of social work.

Because of the fast pace of news and our belief that this pace is an intentional tactic to keep us dysregulated, confused, and in fear. Our intention is to resist this temptation by becoming a hub for information sharing that highlights weekly happenings, connects them to the multitude of spaces we occupy, and clarify where our energies are needed.

*Critical Response
Team x*

Each week you will find updates regarding what’s happening in politically both locally and nationally, what policy implications these have, and what we understand to be possible. In addition, you will find multiple resources, ways in which you can get involved and take action, care practices, and encouragements to continually seek moments of joy and peace.



Department of Social Work
College of Health and Human Sciences





What's Happening?

We hope that everyone had a restful spring break and had time to enjoy the beautiful Colorado weather. It's been two weeks since we've issued a newsletter as our team needed a little time off and to step back for a few days. And, because of that there are plenty of stories to talk about. As we continue to catch up with all the happenings, please don't forget to reach out to your student team or members of the CRT if you have thoughts or stories, you'd like us to cover. Due to the amount of information that feels critical during this time, we are starting a three-part series on immigration. This week we will engage with Neri Alvarado Borges, a young Venezuelan immigrant who now sits in an El Salvador prison for nothing more than the autism tattoo presented below. For Neri's full story and those of other immigrants targeted for just having tattoos, check out this article ["You're here because of your Tattoos"](#)





Immigration Stories, Part 1

About a week and a half ago, breaking news hit the airways and social media reporting that 30 undocumented persons were being taken to an El Salvadoran prison, without due process. According to Mother Jones, on March 14 Trump invoked the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 after declaring the United States is under invasion by the Tren de Aragua gang. Under this Act the administration loaded around 30 undocumented Venezuelan people on a plane, many who believed they were being taken back to Venezuela and landed in El Salvador. Under an agreement between El Salvador and the United States, the El Salvadorian government agreed to house up to 300 undocumented immigrants from the United States in exchange for \$6 million annually. Reporting states that nearly 260 immigrants have been sent to the Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT) in Tecoluca, El Salvador. The prison holds up to 40,000 people, with each cell holding 65 – 70 individuals. According to the Associated Press CECOT inmates are not allowed visits and never go outside. Not to mention, this was done in violation of a court order, demanding the plane be turned around and brought back to the United States to ensure due process. In defiance the administration continued the flight and began to attack the judge and due process. The administration started talking, calling the judge an “activist judge” and calling for him to be removed from the bench. While the language of a “constitutional crisis” has been floated, I recently heard the argument that is “constitutional rot,” the slow, persistent, and progressive eroding of the constitution. Host of Young Turks, Ana Kasparian, noted this week that there is precedent for such constitutional erosion. In 2001, after the 9/11 attacks, the government messaging of fear was so palpable that the people were willing to sacrifice their civil rights to address those fears by consenting to the Patriot Act.

Today we see a similar move, we are so afraid of the violent, “heinous monsters,” that are undocumented immigrants that we are willing to say it’s okay for anyone to not receive due process, that just stating someone is guilty of, or may be guilty of a violent crime, is enough for them to bear the punishment of being kidnapped off the street, isolated from their families, and taken to a strange county and held in a prison for terrorists. And yet, this isn’t a surprise. Accusations of criminality have always been used in this way, and the truth is the administration does not seem to care if the accusations are true or not. Tom Homan, the border czar, states that we should just trust ICE to have correctly identified violent, gang members through investigation, social media, and additional surveillance. The acting field office director for ICE, Robert Cerna, when asked about the lack of evidence, he appeared to indicate that it was the lack of evidence that is the evidence, he wrote, “The lack of a criminal record does not indicate they pose a limited threat... In fact, based upon their association with TdA [not proven], the lack of specific information about everyone highlights the risk they pose. It demonstrates that they are terrorists about whom we lack a complete profile.” In other words, they are a threat because they don’t have a criminal record and they are a criminal if they have a record, how does one win this argument?



Immigration Stories, Part 1

As this story continues to unfold, the “evidence used” to demonstrate ties to the TdA gangs were tattoos, any tattoos. The Mother Jones article stated that a detainee, who was able to speak with his boss stated that he asked an agent why he was being detained and was told, “Well, you’re here because of your tattoos, we’re finding and questioning everyone who has tattoos.” Neri Alvarado is one of these individuals, caught up due to a tattoo honoring his autistic brother, now in an El Salvadoran prison (see the image of Neri’s tattoo). These stories are endless, the Mother Jones article recounts story after story of individuals with tattoos that are being assumed to represent gang affiliation with no evidence. One woman stated that they were told her husband would be deported back to Venezuela and hadn’t heard from him, it wasn’t until she saw the images of men being bought into the CECOT two weeks ago, when she recognized that her husband was one of those men. It appears that this will not end anytime soon, family detention centers are being reopened on our southern border. More ICE arrests, no due process, and flipping off the check and balances of the government, these things all matter and this when people who care about others, who care about accountability, and how we treat each other, this is when we organize and collaborate, we work in alliance not as allies, as accomplices to these blatant human rights violations. I want to highlight here an important note, a few weeks ago I shared a reflection on the ways in which so many of the progressive ideas I’ve been articulating for the last decade seem to be co-opted by the right and changed significantly to benefit them. I have spent so much time being critical of our systems, at times admitting I just want to burn it all down, and now I feel the cognitive dissonance of depending on these same systems to save us all, cheering on their continuation and success, and asking myself about consistency? A moral stance often depends on consistency, it helps to prevent engaging in hypocrisy. More on this next week...

Next week, we will focus on the detaining and deportation of college students and its connection to campus protests and free speech. We will also highlight the role of universities at this time in history, particularly as Columbia University has decided to give in to the demands of the administration, threatening the academic freedom of faculty across the country. We will wrap up the series with a discussion regarding what is happening at our southern border, as family detention centers are being reopened in the South.

Please look for additional follow-ups and mini stories that will be provided and posted to the student discord channel. For more information about how to get connected to this resource and connect with other students, please contact...

Policy Highlights

This section of the newsletter continues to be “under construction,” We hope to begin providing more direct policy overview and impacts moving forward; however, as we continue to develop this, please continue to engage with these websites to stay up to date with our University and Social Works’ professional organizations,. Please note statement from CSWE, our accrediting body linked below.

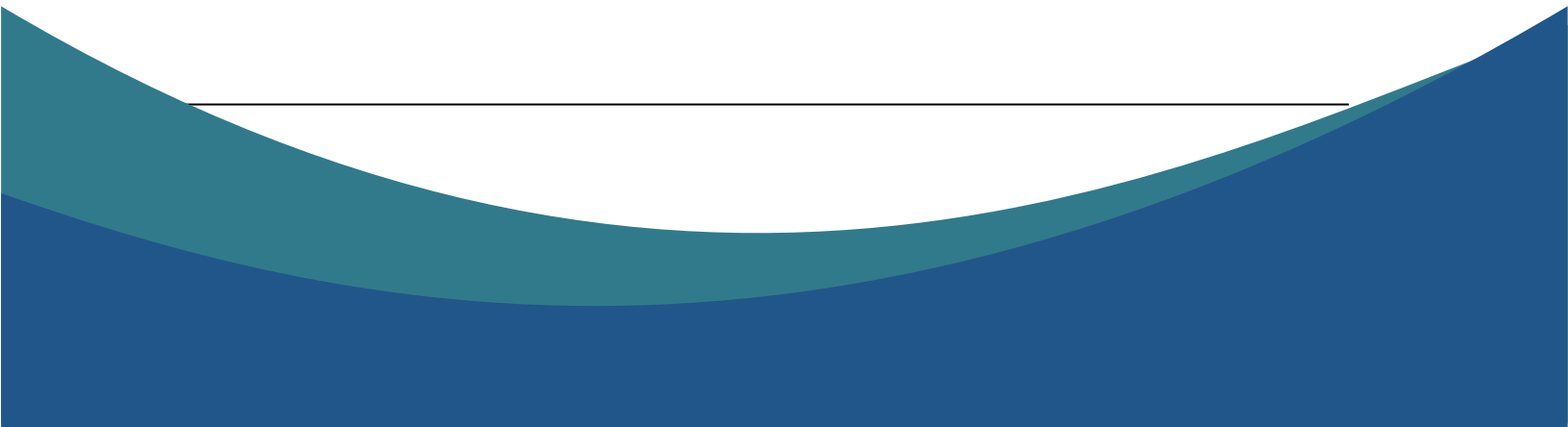
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

- [NASW Policy Briefs Website](#): Get current information on the NASW position regarding important local, national, and global policy.

Council on Social Work Education

- [The Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\) and its Board of Accreditation \(BOA\) are closely monitoring recent federal executive orders, state legislation, and institutional decisions regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion \(DEI\) and other restricted language. CSWE and CSWE-BOA remain committed to supporting social work programs in developing a workforce of social workers. Read the full statement here.](#)

MSU Denver

- [MSU Denver, Government Affairs Policy Updates: We know that our community is always attuned to and invested in government policies at the local, state and federal levels. Recognizing this rapidly changing policy landscape can feel overwhelming, we believe that from an institutional standpoint it's important to take a measured and focused approach to understanding how changes may impact the University's mission.](#)
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Resources

When life is moving fast, and it feels like we are facing crisis after crisis, our bodies learn to stay in a heightened state of vigilance and anxiety. When faced with a threat the body prepares to confront that threat; however, when the threat feels omnipresent our ability to regulate our response to the environment is disrupted. Somatic perspectives tell us when our body is unable to complete the regulatory process and release excess energies or emotions, we become dysregulated, leaving a memory in the with ongoing glimpses [reminders] of the threat, even after it has dissipated. When we are regulated, we are more able to ask questions, rather than trust the inflammatory headline. We are more able to organize and act, not give into the sense of powerlessness. Each week you will find resources intended to provide you access to different ways to care for yourself, including somatic practices, intended to help you move dysregulating emotions through the body, and stay regulated.

In the Moment Practices

Honor your body's needs. Your body needs constant nourishment, upkeep, and movement. Listen to your body's cues about what it needs to feel its best, and keep exploring until you find activities that make your body feel like a well-loved and comfortable home.

Find your community. The best way to self-care for activists is to surround yourself with people who affirm your experiences and that are willing to accept you for who you are.

Limit the things that drain your energy. When you're involved in advocacy or activism, there's an expectation to always be working at 100%. The urgency of the issues you're trying to solve can make it seem like there's no time to rest. But energy is not an infinite gift. Activists who work too hard, too fast, will soon burnout unless they take breaks to recharge their batteries.

Avoid traumatic experiences. Disconnect yourself from interactions that elicit your flight or fight response. Find your personal safe spaces. Do not feel guilty about turning off news that is creating a roller coaster of emotions for you.

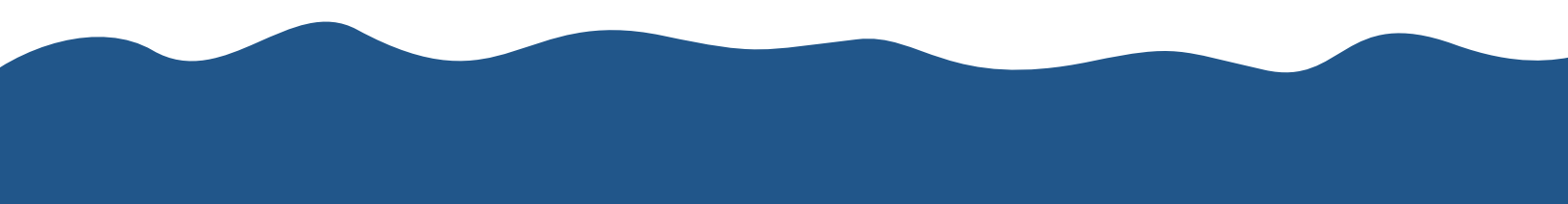
Find help when you need it. When a crisis emerges in your life, [be big enough to ask for help](#) from your friends, family, and community. Self-care is always about patience and practice. Repetition is the key to both a great life and self-care. If something does not work for you, find a substitute. The goal is persistence, not perfection.

Resources

This week as we continue to encourage you, the students, to consider how you get involved, what action to take, and to organize yourselves around what matters to you all the most. As stories continue to unfold, as injustice comes to us every day on whatever screens we engage, as our discomfort rises and our need to move, to act becomes more present, it also matters that you act with self-preservation. Caring for yourself is part of the story, it's not selfish, it's necessary. Please consider these resources as you make a plan for safety and well-being, particularly if you actively engaging in actions of solidarity and protest.

Websites & Stories on Self -Care in Activist Work

- [Beginner's Guide to Self -Care For Activists | Your Dream Blog](#)
- [Balancing Human Rights Activism and Self Care - New Tactics](#)
- [About — The Embodiment Institute](#)
- Need to get Centered, [Link here: Prentis Hemphill - Centering Practice](#)
[Centering Practice in Honor of bell hooks on Vimeo](#)



Getting Involved

This weekend there is a mass mobilization event in Denver and in surrounding communities, [link here for more details:](#)



The Hands Off organization will also provide a call on 4/1/25 at 7pm MST to discuss this mobilization, [link here for more information.](#)
[Link here for a mobilization toolkit.](#)

EXPERIENCE JOY

Why?

Joy is an act of resistance, particularly in an environment that is intended to keep us busy and going, feeling like we can't slow down, take a break, or find joy and happiness in life. We think you can slow down, you can take a break, and you can experience joy, and you should without guilt or shame!

How?

Each week we will wrap this up with a moment of joy we'd like to share with you or something you take a short break with and have a good laugh. I know it can be cliché, but laughter can be a good strategy for releasing tension, getting back into our bodies, and regulating. Will you join me in a laugh?



“Caring for myself
is not self-indulgence.
It is self-preservation,
and that is an act of
political warfare.”

AUDRE LORDE

