

MEDIA ADVISORY
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Southern Missouri Immigration Alliance
Info@SMImmigrationAlliance.org

SHERIFF JIM ARNOTT NAMED IN 44 LAWSUITS REGARDING UNLAWFUL DETENTION IN GREENE COUNTY JAIL

SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI, February 23, 2026 – Springfield Daily Citizen reported today that we are seeing an increased number of lawsuits brought against Greene County Sheriff Jim Arnott, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, and Attorney General Pam Bondi. These lawsuits are habeas petitions that allow detained individuals to challenge their imprisonment in Greene County Jail.

Habeas petitions have historically been reserved for extreme cases of constitutional violations as their success rate was extremely low. However, under the current administration's immigration practices we have seen a surge, both locally and nationally, of habeas petition filings and plaintiff victories. ProPublica reported that immigrants are filing more than 200 habeas petitions a day in 2026.

Springfield Daily Citizen reported that Greene County Sheriff Jim Arnott has been named in 44 of these lawsuits since 2025; more than triple the previous three years combined (2022-2024). Judges Harpool and Wimes have concluded that those detainees who have lived in the United States for years and do not have a criminal record are entitled to a bond hearing.

*Judge Harpool stated, "In some of these cases I have simply **ordered release** based on previous approved parole. ICE had detained them even though they were on approved parole. On **all** others, I ruled they were entitled to bond hearings."*

In a video captured on 2/17/2026, a Southern Missouri Immigration Alliance (SMIA) Board Member asked Sheriff Jim Arnott if he was aware that 96% of detainees in Greene County Jail that day had no criminal charges. Arnott replied, "Nope. I did not know that. How would you know that?" SMIA has been tracking ICE detention in Greene County Jail since May 2025. This information is public record on the Greene County Jail Tracker available on their website. Later in that same video, Arnott claimed that he checks his jail roster every day.

"The increased number of habeas petition filings and victories proves what we've all known to be happening: constitutional rights are being violated and immigrants are being unlawfully detained. It is no longer enough to just end our county jail's contract with ICE. Sheriff Jim Arnott is in clear breach of his fiduciary duties and should resign immediately," says Dominique Moore, President of Southern Missouri Immigration Alliance.

Take action. Get organized and informed. Raise awareness in your community. Support your neighbors: **REPORT ICE SIGHTINGS AT (417)-MELT-ICE.**

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