

# Monitoring and Analysis of Military and Border Operations (MAMBO) – Charlotte Briefing

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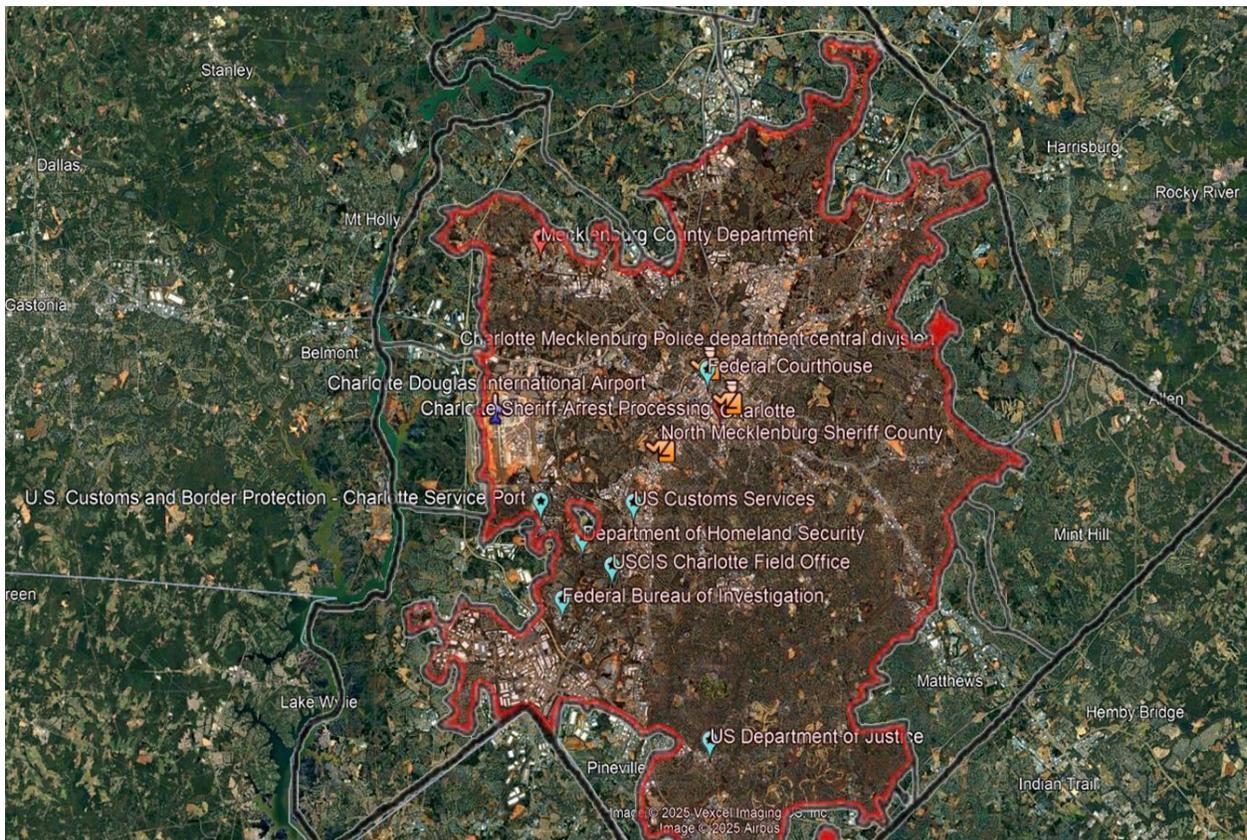
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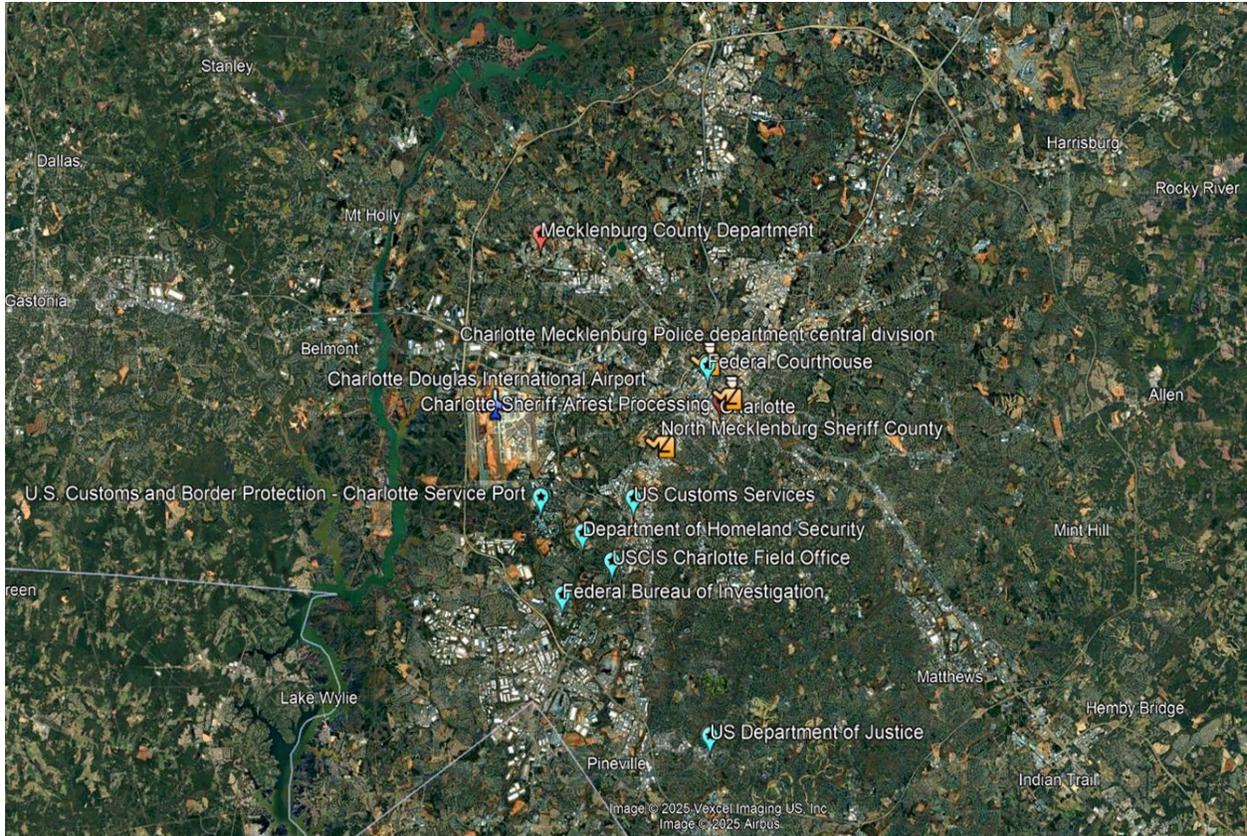
## I. Executive Summary (Bottom Line Up Front)

This report analyzes the developing federal immigration enforcement posture in Charlotte, North Carolina. Based on a synthesis of open-source reporting and stakeholder statements, our confidence is **Medium-High** that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is actively redirecting federal assets to Charlotte for a near-term, high-profile enforcement operation.

- **Federal Posture:** U.S. Border Patrol (CBP) personnel and resources, led by Senior U.S. Border Patrol Commander Gregory Bovino, are reportedly being reassigned from "Operation Midway Blitz" in Chicago to new operations in Charlotte and New Orleans.<sup>1</sup>
- **Novel Enforcement Doctrine:** This action marks the first deployment of a new federal doctrine: using Border Patrol (a CBP component) as the primary interior enforcement arm, without coordination or co-leadership with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).<sup>5</sup>
- **Operational Friction:** This operation is defined by a significant and deliberate federal-local coordination gap. As of November 12, 2025, both the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) have publicly stated they have *not* been contacted or involved in any planning by federal agencies.<sup>5</sup>
- **Political & Legal Conflict:** The federal strategy is a *direct bypass* of resistant state and local political actors. At the state level, Democratic Governor Josh Stein refuses to deploy the North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) for this purpose, despite intense pressure from Republican U.S. Representatives.<sup>6</sup> At the local level, Mecklenburg County Sheriff Garry McFadden has a public history of non-cooperation with federal immigration authorities, notably his 2018 termination of the county's 287(g) agreement with ICE.<sup>9</sup>

- **Predicted Tactics & Risks:** The assignment of Gregory Bovino is a primary risk indicator. His leadership in Chicago and Los Angeles was marked by aggressive, high-visibility tactics (e.g., use of chemical agents in urban areas, "sanctuary buster" rhetoric) that resulted in widespread community backlash, multiple lawsuits, and direct condemnation from a federal judge for "lying" in a sworn deposition.<sup>11</sup> It is assessed that similar tactics are intended for Charlotte, ensuring significant legal, political, and community-level friction.
- **Community Preparedness:** Key indicators for community response have already been triggered. Local legal aid networks (Carolina Migrant Network, Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy) are actively disseminating "Know Your Rights" materials.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, a coalition of local and state elected officials has already issued a joint public statement denouncing the potential operation and reaffirming local non-participation.<sup>5</sup>





## II. Threat & Posture Assessment: Operation Charlotte

This section details the confirmed reporting on the federal operational pivot and the novel doctrine being implemented.

### A. Federal Posture: Redeployment from "Operation Midway Blitz"

Multiple national and local media outlets, citing U.S. officials, report that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is shifting personnel from its controversial, months-long enforcement campaign in Chicago, known as "Operation Midway Blitz".<sup>1</sup> These federal resources are being redirected for new enforcement surges in at least two other Democratic-led cities: Charlotte, North Carolina, and New Orleans, Louisiana.<sup>1</sup>

The operation is reportedly being led by CBP Commander Gregory Bovino, who has been described as the "on-the-ground face" <sup>1</sup> of the administration's aggressive urban enforcement policy, having previously led the operations in Chicago and Los Angeles.<sup>1</sup>

While the exact timeline for the Charlotte operation remains unconfirmed <sup>5</sup>, sources indicate Commander Bovino and his agents could depart Chicago "as early as this week" (commencing November 11, 2025).<sup>1</sup>

## B. Novel Doctrine: Border Patrol as Interior Enforcement

The most significant tactical development is the reported command structure. Reporting from WXII and WCNC, citing DHS officials, explicitly states that Charlotte "is expected to be the first city where Border Patrol will spearhead immigration enforcement without coordinating ICE in the same location."<sup>5</sup>

This represents a deliberate doctrinal workaround to a specific local political obstacle. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) historically relies on local partnerships, primarily through the 287(g) program, which deputizes local law enforcement (usually sheriff's deputies) to perform immigration enforcement functions.<sup>20</sup> However, Mecklenburg County Sheriff Garry McFadden was elected on a platform that included terminating this agreement, which he did in 2018.<sup>9</sup> This action effectively decapitated ICE's primary force multiplier model within the county.

By deploying U.S. Border Patrol (CBP), which operates under a separate and broader federal authority (specifically 8 U.S.C. § 1357<sup>22</sup>), the federal government bypasses the need for a 287(g) agreement. This move allows DHS to project federal power into an interior city while circumventing the specific local political and logistical roadblock (McFadden's anti-ICE stance) that would have hobbled a traditional ICE-led operation.

## C. Official Federal Messaging: Strategic Ambiguity

- The official federal posture is one of strategic ambiguity and plausible deniability. The on-the-record stance from the Department of Homeland Security, provided by Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Tricia McLaughlin, is a firm "no comment": "Every day, DHS enforces the laws of the nation across the country. We do not discuss future or potential operations."<sup>4</sup>
- This statement was coupled with a seemingly contradictory one: "We aren't leaving Chicago".<sup>1</sup> These two statements, however, are not mutually exclusive. Local reporting<sup>4</sup> clarifies that while Bovino and his primary team are leaving, *some* CBP personnel are expected to remain in Chicago.
- This ambiguity serves a clear operational purpose. "Operation Midway Blitz"<sup>1</sup> provides both the *resource pool* for the Charlotte deployment and the *operational cover*. By refusing to confirm a full *departure* from Chicago, DHS maintains operational security for the *destination* (Charlotte) and *timeline* of the new surge. This ambiguity freezes the postures of adversaries (protest groups, legal aid networks) in *both* cities, forcing them to hedge resources, and prevents the media from tracking a clean "end" and "beginning" of an operation. It is a classic information-control tactic.

### III. Key Stakeholder Analysis & Biographies

This operation is driven by the specific, clashing personalities and documented political histories of its key actors.

#### A. Federal Operator: Gregory Bovino (CBP)

**Role:** Senior U.S. Border Patrol Commander, leader of "Operation Midway Blitz" in Chicago<sup>1</sup>, and prior operations in Los Angeles.<sup>3</sup>

**Enforcement Philosophy (Verbatim):** Commander Bovino has been public about the mission's focus on cities with "sanctuary" policies. In a November 2025 interview, he stated: "We're what I call now sanctuary busters... There are no sanctuaries. There will be no sanctuaries."<sup>15</sup>

**Controversial Tactics & Judicial Censure (Verified):** The deployment of Commander Bovino is not merely a personnel change; it is the deliberate transfer of a controversial and judicially-condemned tactical playbook. His record is a direct predictor of tactics intended for Charlotte.

- **Chicago (2025):** Bovino's "aggressive clashes with protestors"<sup>1</sup> became the "core of ongoing litigation".<sup>1</sup> His tactics led to a federal judge (U.S. District Judge Sara Ellis) issuing an exceptional order requiring him to *personally appear in federal court every weekday* to report on his agents' actions.<sup>12</sup> In a subsequent hearing, Judge Ellis stated that Commander Bovino "**admitted that he lied**" in a sworn deposition about being struck by a rock before he deployed tear gas.<sup>11</sup> His agents were repeatedly accused of deploying chemical irritants (tear gas, pepper balls) against residents, protesters, and even children in dense urban neighborhoods<sup>12</sup>
- **Los Angeles (2025):** His operations "triggered large-scale protests"<sup>3</sup> and media and legal groups criticized him for making "false and misleading statements" about the criminal records of individuals who were arrested.<sup>11</sup>

DHS is not deploying Bovino *despite* this record, but *because of it*. It signals a "shock and awe" political move designed for high-visibility disruption, not a low-profile enforcement action. We project an *immediate* mobilization of local legal and protest groups to seek a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) against him and his agents upon his arrival.

#### B. State Executive: Governor Josh Stein (Democrat)

**Role:** Governor of North Carolina, Commander-in-Chief of the NCNG.

**Stance on NCNG Deployment:** Governor Stein has *explicitly refused* Republican demands to deploy the NCNG to Charlotte for this purpose. His office stated: "Local, well-trained law enforcement officers... are best equipped... not military servicemembers".<sup>6</sup>

**Stance on ICE Cooperation:** Governor Stein has a clear record of opposing mandatory federal-local cooperation. He *vetoed* the recent GOP-led immigration bills (HB 318, SB 153).<sup>27</sup> This creates a high-friction environment, as the Republican-controlled legislature *overrode his veto*<sup>30</sup>, making the cooperation measures state law against his wishes.

## C. Local Law Enforcement: CMPD & MCSO

### Chief Johnny Jennings (CMPD):

- **Role:** Chief of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police. His biography indicates a long-term local officer focused on community collaboration.<sup>32</sup>
- **Stance:** Has publicly stated a total lack of federal coordination: "They haven't reached out to me, so I'm not sure what's going to occur. ".<sup>5</sup>

### Sheriff Garry McFadden (Mecklenburg County):

- **Role:** Sheriff of Mecklenburg County, with direct control over the local jail (the primary detention facility in the county).
- **Stance:** Has also confirmed "no contact... nor have we been involved in any planning".<sup>5</sup>
- **Critical Context:** Sheriff McFadden's 2018 *termination* of the county's 287(g) agreement with ICE<sup>9</sup> is the single most crucial local factor. It demonstrates a history of *active resistance* to federal immigration enforcement partnerships.

The "coordination gap" is not an oversight; it is a deliberate federal strategy. Federal planners are well aware of Sheriff McFadden's 2018 termination of the 287(g) program.<sup>9</sup> Contacting him or Chief Jennings would, at best, result in a non-committal response and, at worst, a public leak or a statement of opposition—which is precisely what both officials gave to the press upon hearing the *media reports*.<sup>5</sup> By *not* coordinating, DHS retains the element of surprise, maintains operational security, and forces local law enforcement into a purely *reactive* posture.

## IV. Operational & Political Friction Analysis

Three primary arenas of conflict define this operation: Federal vs. State, Federal vs. Local, and an internal State-level dispute.

## A. The "Non-Aligned State" Strategy

As analyzed, the federal administration is facing a "non-aligned" state executive (Governor Stein) and a "hostile" local enforcement partner (Sheriff McFadden). The strategy of deploying *Border Patrol* (which needs no local invitation) under a *controversial commander* (Bovino) is a direct projection of federal power into a jurisdiction that is politically, though not legally, resistant.

## B. The National Guard Dispute (State-Level Internal Conflict)

This internal political dispute is the critical context that *enabled* the federal BP-led strategy.

- **The Demand:** On November 5, 2025, Republican U.S. Representatives Mark Harris (NC-08), Pat Harrigan (NC-10), and Chuck Edwards (NC-11) issued a formal letter to Governor Stein demanding he deploy the NCNG to Charlotte <sup>6</sup>
- **The Pretext:** The letter cites a "growing violence crisis," including "8 homicides in 7 days" and a "murder rate in uptown Charlotte... 200 percent higher."<sup>8</sup>
- **The Rebuttal:** Governor Stein's office refused, prioritizing local LEOs.<sup>6</sup>
- **The Factual Contradiction:** The pretext used by the Representatives is *directly refuted* by local law enforcement data. WCNC reported that "CMPD's third-quarter public safety report found an 8% decrease in overall crime, highlighted by a 20% drop in violent crime compared to 2024. "<sup>36</sup>

This discrepancy indicates the demand for the Guard is a *political maneuver* rather than a good-faith public safety request. It is designed to (a) publicly brand Governor Stein and Democrats as "pro-crime" (Rep. Harris's press release stated Stein was "exposing him and his party as pro-crime Democrats" <sup>7</sup>) and (b) to *create a public justification* for a federal or state "surge" to bypass local control. This internal state conflict *prevents* a unified state-federal response, thereby *forcing* DHS into the BP-led "non-aligned" strategy.

## C. Stakeholder Positions & Messaging Matrix

Stakeholder	Entity	Date	Verbatim Statement / Key Position	Source
Tricia McLaughlin	<b>Federal (DHS)</b>	Nov 12, 2025	"We do not discuss future or potential operations."	5
Tricia McLaughlin	<b>Federal (DHS)</b>	Nov 12, 2025	"We aren't leaving Chicago."	1
Reps. Harris, et al.	<b>Federal</b>	Nov 5, 2025	"Governor Stein is deaf to the desperate	7

Stakeholder	Entity	Date	Verbatim Statement / Key Position	Source
Tricia McLaughlin	<b>Federal (DHS)</b>	Nov 12, 2025	"We do not discuss future or potential operations."	5
	<b>(Congress)</b>		pleas... He refuses reinforcements to crush the violent crime surge... exposing him... as pro-crime Democrats."	
Gov. Josh Stein (Office)	<b>State (Executive)</b>	Nov 6, 2025	"Local, well-trained law enforcement officers... are best equipped to keep North Carolina neighborhoods safe, not military servicemembers."	6
Chief Johnny Jennings	<b>Local (CMPD)</b>	Nov 11, 2025	"They haven't reached out to me, so I'm not sure what's going to occur."	5
Sheriff Garry McFadden (Office)	<b>Local (MCSO)</b>	Nov 11, 2025	"We have had no contact... we request federal agencies communicate with our office... to ensure the safety of all parties involved."	5
Becca O'Neill	<b>NGO (Carolina Migrant Network)</b>	Nov 11, 2025	" looked like increased presence of ICE officers, National Guard, and other military and law enforcement... to terrorize communities."	37
Local Elected Officials	<b>Local (City/County/State)</b>	Nov 11, 2025	"CMPD has no authority to enforce federal immigration law and does not participate in ICE or CBP operations... you are not alone, and you belong here."	5

## V. Legal Authorities & Jurisdictional Constraints

The federal strategy is a direct response to a complex and contested legal landscape.

### A. Federal Enforcement Powers

- **8 U.S.C. § 1357 (Powers of immigration officers):** This is the core statute authorizing the entire operation. It provides federal immigration officers (including Border Patrol agents) with broad, non-warrant authority to "interrogate any alien... as to his right to be or to remain in the United States" and to "arrest any alien... whom he has reason to believe is in the United States in violation of any such law... and is likely to escape before a warrant can be obtained".<sup>22</sup> Crucially, this authority is *not* geographically limited to the border and requires *no local permission*.
- **8 U.S.C. § 1103(a)(10):** This statute grants the DHS Secretary (delegated from the

Attorney General) authority to authorize *state and local* LEOs to perform federal duties *only* during an "actual or imminent mass influx of aliens."<sup>39</sup> This statute is *not* the basis for the current operation and is not being invoked.

## B. Military & National Guard Authority

- **Posse Comitatus Act (18 U.S.C. § 1385):** This act prohibits the use of *federal* active-duty military (Title 10) for domestic law enforcement.<sup>40</sup>
- **National Guard (Title 32):** The NCNG, when operating on state orders (Title 32), is *exempt* from Posse Comitatus. This is why Governor Stein's refusal is the *only* legal barrier to their deployment. There is *no OSINT*<sup>43</sup> to suggest the NCNG is on standby for this mission.

## C. State & Local Cooperation Framework

This is the most critical and complex legal flashpoint.

- **The Old Framework (Defunct): INA § 287(g) Agreements.** This program<sup>20</sup> deputizes local officers to perform ICE functions. As noted, Sheriff McFadden *terminated* Mecklenburg County's 287(g) agreement in 2018<sup>9</sup>, removing this tool for ICE.
- **The New Framework (Active & Contested): NC HB 318 & SB 153.** Passed in June-July 2025 over Governor Stein's veto<sup>27</sup>, these laws *mandate* that local jails (i.e., Sheriff McFadden) *must* cooperate with ICE, honor detainees, and hold individuals for ICE pickup<sup>45</sup>

This creates a jurisdictional nightmare scenario. The federal BP-led strategy successfully bypasses Gov. Stein (re: Guard) and Sheriff McFadden (re: 287(g)). *However*, a new flashpoint is created. When a *BP agent* (federal) arrests a non-citizen and transports them to the *Mecklenburg County Jail* (local) for detention, Sheriff McFadden is on record *opposing* this cooperation.<sup>10</sup> But the *new state law* (HB 318) *legally mandates* that the Sheriff accept and hold that prisoner for federal immigration authorities.<sup>47</sup> This places two key stakeholders (DHS/BP and Sheriff McFadden) on a direct collision course, with the new state law (HB 318) as the legal battleground.

## VI. Logistics & Support Infrastructure (Analysis of Unknowns)

The potential operation requires significant logistical support, particularly for detention.

## A. Detention & Processing Capacity

The U.S. immigration detention system is at a *record high*, with over 61,000 people in custody as of August 2025.<sup>51</sup> North Carolina has seen its own detained population *increase by 9.6%* from 2023-2025, using a network of 14 facilities, including the Mecklenburg County Jail.<sup>51</sup> A key finding confirms that logistical groundwork for a surge has already been laid. On September 15, 2025, the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) issued a "Sources Sought" notice (US-FED-00000351526) for a "Contract Detention Facility – Western District of North Carolina".<sup>53</sup>

- **Scope:** Specifically requested 155 beds (125 male, 30 female) in an *existing* secured facility.<sup>53</sup>
- **Location:** Within the USMS Western District of North Carolina, which includes Charlotte.

While this notice is from USMS, not ICE, all federal law enforcement agencies (USMS, ICE, and BP) share an interconnected detention and transportation ecosystem.<sup>54</sup> This notice *verifies* that the federal government was *already* actively sourcing new surge detention capacity in the exact operational area two months before the BP operation news. This indicates a planned, multi-stage build-up of logistical capabilities.

## B. National Guard & DoD Asset Posture

As of November 12, 2025, there are no NCNG press releases<sup>43</sup>, official readiness bulletins<sup>44</sup>, or media reports indicating that any NCNG or DoD assets have been prepositioned or placed on standby for *this specific Charlotte operation*. Governor Stein's refusal to activate the Guard<sup>6</sup> appears to be holding. This reinforces the assessment that the BP-led operation is the *sole* federal course of action.

# VII. Community Impact & NGO Preparedness

While the operation has not yet begun, the community's legal and political "immune system" is already fully activated.

## A. Anticipatory Response: Legal Aid Mobilization

Local immigrant-rights and legal-aid groups have already moved to a response footing.

- **Carolina Migrant Network (CMN):** This group, identified as the "ONLY" organization in the Carolinas providing free removal defense<sup>56</sup>, is actively disseminating "Know Your

Right! Conoce Tus Derechos!" materials.<sup>16</sup> A representative, Becca O'Neill, has already given public comment condemning the operation as a tool to "terrorize communities".<sup>37</sup>

- **Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy (CCLA):** This organization's "Immigrant Justice Program" is an established entity prepared for removal defense, legal screenings, and "Know Your Rights" presentations.<sup>18</sup>
- **ACLU of North Carolina:** The organization actively provides "Know Your Rights" resources tailored for encounters with ICE and other immigration agents.<sup>59</sup>

## B. Local Political Alignment: A Unified "Non-Participation" Stance

On or before November 12, 2025, a coalition of local and state elected officials (including members of the Charlotte City Council, Mecklenburg County Commission, and State Legislature) issued a joint public statement.<sup>5</sup>

The statement's key messages were:

1. **Reassurance to Immigrants:** "you are not alone, and you belong here".<sup>5</sup>
2. **Affirmation of Non-Participation:** "CMPD has no authority to enforce federal immigration law and does not participate in ICE or CBP operations".<sup>5</sup>

This preemptive response from both legal and political networks means the operation has lost the element of *community* surprise, even if it retains tactical surprise. This will compress the timeline for friction, likely leading to *faster* legal challenges (i.e., motions for TROs) and *more organized* on-the-ground protest and legal observation from Day 1.

## VIII. Indicators & Warnings (Next 72-96 Hours)

The following are the key indicators to monitor, refined from the draft's list based on new insights:

1. **Federal Asset Movement (Air/Ground):** (High Priority) Monitoring of non-commercial/DHS charter flights at Charlotte-Douglas (CLT) or regional airports. Sighting of vehicle convoys (vans, buses) with federal or out-of-state plates staging at federal buildings or area hotels.
2. **First Legal Challenge (High Priority):** Watch federal court dockets (PACER) for a *Motion for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO)* filed by CMN, CCLA, or ACLU, naming DHS and Gregory Bovino as defendants. This would mirror the successful legal strategy from Chicago.<sup>12</sup>
3. **Bovino "Media Sighting":** Commander Bovino has a history of public-facing media engagement.<sup>1</sup> His first social media post, "ride-along" with a media outlet, or public statement from Charlotte, will signal his tactical arrival.
4. **Jurisdictional Clash (Arrest-to-Jail):** (High Priority) The first report of a BP agent

(federal) processing a detainee at the Mecklenburg County Jail (local). This will be the *first test* of the new state law (HB 318) against Sheriff McFadden's historical non-compliance.

5. **Activation of USMS Detention Contract:** Monitor SAM.gov or other procurement portals for the *award* or *activation* of the contract sought in the September "Sources Sought" notice.<sup>53</sup> This would confirm the surge detention pipeline is open.

## IX. Strategic Risk Matrix (Expanded)

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Rationale & Key Data Points
Federal BP enforcement operation commences in Charlotte (Next 1-10 days).	High	High	Multiple credible media/official sources confirm the plan. <sup>1</sup> Bovino's team is reportedly "wheels up" from Chicago. <sup>1</sup>
Federal-Local "Blue-on-Blue" Friction.	High	Medium	Not kinetic, but operational. Verified non-coordination. <sup>5</sup> A BP agent in distress may face a <i>delayed</i> CMPD/MCSO response due to lack of shared radio/comms or situational awareness.
Mass-Arrest Event(s) leading to community disruption.	Medium-High	High	Bovino's "Sanctuary Buster" philosophy <sup>15</sup> and high-visibility tactics <sup>12</sup> suggest a non-covert, "shock" operation. This will cause fear, school/work absenteeism, and legal-aid resource depletion. <sup>18</sup>
Use of Aggressive Crowd Control	High	High	This is Bovino's <i>specific, documented</i>

Tactics (e.g., Tear Gas) in Urban Areas.			<i>playbook</i> in Chicago and LA. <sup>12</sup> His deployment is the indicator. This will cause <i>immediate</i> legal (TROs) and public backlash.
Federal-Local <i>Legal Clash</i> at Jail.	High	High	The first BP arrest brought to the MCSO jail will be the flashpoint, testing the state-mandated cooperation (HB 318) <sup>47</sup> against McFadden's political resistance. <sup>10</sup> High potential for a lawsuit.
State (Governor) vs. Federal (DHS) Escalation.	Medium	Medium	Gov. Stein will publicly condemn the operation but is legally limited. He cannot <i>stop</i> federal officers. The "non-aligned" strategy (using BP) was designed <i>precisely</i> to bypass him.
NCNG Activation (in support of DHS).	Very Low	High	Gov. Stein <sup>6</sup> maintains sole Title 32 activation authority and has <i>explicitly</i> refused. There is no current legal mechanism for DHS to bypass this, short of a federal insurrection act (not applicable).

## X. Annexes: Key Source Documents

### Annex A: Full Text of U.S. Congressional Letter (Nov 5, 2025)

- *Source:*<sup>8</sup>

- *Content:* The full text of the letter from Representatives Harris, Harrigan, and Edwards to Governor Stein demanding the deployment of the North Carolina National Guard to Charlotte.

#### **Annex B: Full Text of Governor Josh Stein's Office Response (Nov 6, 2025)**

- *Source:* <sup>6</sup>
  - *Content:* The full, verbatim statement from Governor Stein's spokesperson: "Local, well-trained law enforcement officers who live in and know their communities are best equipped to keep North Carolina neighborhoods safe, not military servicemembers..."

#### **Annex C: Full Text of Local Law Enforcement Statements (Nov 11, 2025)**

- *Source:* <sup>5</sup>
  - *Content:* The full statements from both the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office confirming the lack of contact or coordination from any federal agency regarding the potential operation.

#### **Annex D: Full Text of Local Elected Officials Joint Statement (Nov 11-12, 2025)**

- *Source:* <sup>5</sup>
  - *Content:* The full joint statement from City, County, and State elected officials reaffirming CMPD non-participation and offering support to the immigrant community.

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