

POLITICS

CONGRESSMAN DENOUNCES ICE RESPONSE ABOUT PROSECUTOR OPERATING RACIST X ACCOUNT

In response to the Observer's reporting, U.S. Rep. Marc Veasey demanded answers he has yet to fully receive—while ICE refuses to clarify the prosecutor's current job status.

by **STEVEN MONACELLI**

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Last month, Congressman Marc Veasey, a North Texas Democrat, **sent a letter** to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Acting Deputy Director Kenneth Genalo demanding a swift investigation into James “Jim” Joseph Rodden, an ICE assistant chief counsel who acts as a prosecutor for ICE in immigration court in Dallas. The letter came in response to a *Texas Observer* **investigative report** that identified Rodden as the operator of a white supremacist social media account.

The *Observer* identified Rodden as the operator of GlomarResponder, an X account with around 17,000 followers that has routinely posted racist and

hateful content, through an extensive review of GlomarResponder's X posts, publicly available documents, other social media profiles and posts, and courtroom observation. The GlomarResponder account has posted that "Migrants' are all criminals" and that "All blacks are foreign to my people," in addition to posting apparent praise of Adolf Hitler, among numerous other similar posts.

Congressman Veasey's letter, sent on February 24, requested that ICE provide within 30 days "a full and transparent account" of the actions the agency is taking to "investigate this matter and ensure that individuals engaged in such behavior are held accountable."

On March 6, ICE responded to Veasey in a letter, in which it acknowledged "recent media reports alleging an ICE employee operated a white supremacist social-media account" and stated that the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) "understands the seriousness of the allegations and will ensure the allegations are addressed appropriately, fairly, and expeditiously."

The letter, which the *Observer* reviewed, further stated that typically "OPR administrative investigations are completed within 120 days" and that "OPR is unable to share additional information regarding this matter."

The letter did not mention Rodden, nor did it confirm whether he has been placed on administrative leave pending the completion of the investigation.

"While I appreciate receiving any response, the lack of detail and clarity regarding the initial investigation—beyond the vague statement that 'we are investigating and hope to reach a conclusion within 120 days'—is simply not enough," Veasey told the *Observer* via email.

"This is a person with the power to significantly impact and harm people's lives," Veasey continued. "This administration has shown a troubling pattern of failing to uphold the rule of law, disregarding the rights of citizens, green card holders, and targeting Black and POC communities. James Rodden's continued authority in any capacity undermines the public's trust in this agency, weakens the rule of law, and fails to hold individuals accountable for their outright racist and disgusting remarks. I need to know—has he been

placed on leave while this investigation is ongoing? And, most importantly, is this investigation a priority for the agency? It certainly is for my office, as it directly impacts the safety of my constituents. A simple response of ‘we will get back to you’ is insufficient and does not reflect the gravity of this situation.”

Veasey is not alone in his displeasure with the pace of the investigation.

On the same day ICE sent its response to Veasey, a group of protesters gathered at a park across from the federal building in downtown Dallas where the immigration courts are located. Holding signs and chanting into megaphones, they called for Rodden to be let go.



A GROUP OF PROTESTERS GATHERED AT A PARK ACROSS FROM THE FEDERAL BUILDING IN DOWNTOWN DALLAS ON MARCH 6. (STEVEN MONACELLI)

“We want him fired,” said Azael Alvarez, an activist in Dallas. “And we want all of his deportation cases investigated.”

Prior to the publication of the *Observer’s* initial investigative report on February 19, Rodden’s name consistently appeared on courtroom schedules that the Dallas ICE Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA), where Rodden works, regularly distributed to local immigration attorneys. After the week of February 26, when **the Observer reported** that Rodden was absent from hearings where he had been scheduled to appear, the Dallas ICE OPLA office stopped distributing the schedule to private attorneys who previously

received it, according to two Dallas immigration lawyers who work at the court and another source who works within the immigration courts.

In response to an email requesting the latest schedule, Dallas OPLA Deputy Chief Counsel Judson J. Davis deferred to the ICE media office. Davis did not respond to a follow-up email about the schedule's distribution. The ICE media office did not respond to the *Observer's* inquiry regarding the schedule.

In a prior statement to the *Observer*, ICE has said it “will not comment on the substance of this article pending further investigation.” The agency has declined to confirm whether Rodden has been placed on leave pending the investigation, though three sources who work in Dallas immigration court told the *Observer* that they believed Rodden had not been seen at work in-person since shortly after the *Observer's* initial report.

In response to a request for comment for this story, an ICE spokesperson told the *Observer* that “ICE has nothing further to add at this time.”

Rodden did not respond to a request for comment for this story.

On March 12, two representatives of the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility, which oversees investigations of allegations of employee and contractor misconduct, called the *Observer* to inquire about the initial reporting. They declined to speak further on the record.

Multiple lawyers have sent complaints regarding Rodden to the D.C. Bar, through which a James J. Rodden holds a law license, citing GlomarResponder's racist X posts. But, according to **a letter** posted on X and independently obtained by the *Observer*, the D.C. Bar Office of Disciplinary Counsel has declined to further investigate the matter.

“Even if we could establish that Mr. Rodden is responsible for the content of GlomarResponder's posts, we do not have a basis to find that his conduct violates one of [the D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct,” the letter reads. “The Rules do not prohibit offensive or racist speech, which may also be

protected by the constitutional right to free speech. The Rules address discriminatory conduct only in the context of employment.”

In response to a request for comment regarding the letter, the D.C. Bar would neither confirm nor deny “that there even is a matter” relating to Rodden, citing confidentiality rules.