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**Sent:** Monday, August 11, 2025 5:55 PM  
**To:** s9(2)(a), s6(a) GILLESPIE, Andrew (WSH) Andrew.Gillespie@mfat.govt.nz  
**Cc:** s6(a), s9(2)(a) TAPLEY, Jane (WSH) Jane.Tapley@mfat.govt.nz  
**Subject:** RE: Sarah Shaw [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

s9(2)(a), s6(b)(i)

Best,

Finlay

**Finlay L. Fraser Milne**

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UNCLASSIFIED

**From:** s6(a), s9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Monday, August 11, 2025 4:41 PM  
**To:** FRASER MILNE, Finlay (WSH) Finlay.FraserMilne@mfat.govt.nz; GILLESPIE, Andrew (WSH) Andrew.Gillespie@mfat.govt.nz  
**Cc:** s9(2)(a), s6(a)  
**Subject:** re: Sarah Shaw

Finlay and Andrew-  
s9(2)(a), s6(b)(i)

Thanks!

**KING5: Washington state employee and 6-year-old son detained by ICE**

Released under the Official Information Act

Sarah Shaw crossed into Canada mistakenly thinking she had the proper visa to return home to Everett. She and her 6-year-old son are now being held in Texas.

SEATTLE — Sarah Shaw, a New Zealand national and mother of three, believed she had done everything right.

She had checked her documents, confirmed her visa status, and felt confident she could make a quick trip across the Canadian border to drop off her two older children at Vancouver International Airport for a flight to New Zealand, where they would visit their grandparents.

She brought her youngest son, 6-year-old Isaac, along for the drive. The crossing into Canada went smoothly. The return to Everett did not.

"I thought we had crossed every 'T' and dotted every 'I,'" said Victoria Besancon, a close friend of Shaw. "Sarah had been waiting on some travel documents to be approved. But once her visa and her children's visas were cleared, she felt comfortable taking them to Canada. We assumed everything was fine."

That assumption proved wrong.

When Shaw and Isaac attempted to re-enter the United States, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents detained them at the border.

"This was a simple administrative error," said Shaw's attorney, Minda Thorward. "Anyone could have made it."

Shaw is in the process of applying for lawful permanent residency and holds what is known as a "combo card," a temporary immigration document that provides both work authorization and advance parole, which allows international travel and re-entry.

While her work authorization had been approved, her advance parole had not.

"Border Patrol had the discretion to parole her into the U.S.," Thorward said. "I told her, yes, you don't have a travel document, but you've only been gone about a day. Just explain what happened to the immigration officials."

Shaw immigrated to the United States three and a half years ago under sponsorship from her then-husband. While divorce often jeopardizes a green card application, she qualified to reapply independently under provisions for survivors of domestic abuse.

She is now being held at the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, one of only two facilities in the country that detain families facing deportation.

"Being treated like a criminal has been very embarrassing," Besancon said. "One of the hardest parts for her has been her job finding out what was going on."

Shaw works for the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and is a member of union Local 341. She serves at Echo Glen Children's Center, a juvenile rehabilitation facility in Snoqualmie.

"She's a civil servant who works with some of the most at-risk youth in our community," Besancon said. "She handles some of the hardest cases you can imagine."

Thorward said Shaw remains eligible for a green card and believes that, in previous years, she likely would have been released quickly. But under the current presidential administration, she added, "anything's possible."

"With everything this administration has done, they've chosen cruelty intentionally — over and over," she said.

Although Shaw lacked a travel document, her son Isaac had one, according to Thorward.

"There was absolutely no reason for him to be detained. It's unconscionable," she said.

Shaw asked Border Patrol agents to allow Besancon, the family friend, to pick up her son, but they refused.

"You never think it's going to happen to you," Besancon said. "The main thing Sarah has expressed throughout this ordeal is just absolute shock and devastation. She truly believed she had done everything that was required of her."

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