

FY18 Federal Budget: Immigration Enforcement and Latinos

Undocumented immigrants have long been the subject of contentious debate. Yet the population has remained stable at about 11 million, or 3.4% of the U.S. population, for nearly a decade, as the number of apprehensions at the border are at historical lows.¹ As a result, most undocumented immigrants have been living in the United States for over 10 years and are deeply rooted in our workforce, communities, and families.² However, President Trump's FY18 budget request seeks to expand a deportation force to rip families and communities apart, while also imposing massive cuts to programs that support all Americans to fund tax cuts for the wealthy.

What Is the Current State of Immigration Enforcement?

Through a broader array of enforcement strategies, more is being done than ever before to carry out immigration laws. The United States already spends about \$18 billion annually on immigration enforcement—well above all other federal law enforcement agencies combined.³ It is becoming evident that the administration has instituted an immigration enforcement scheme that incentivizes quantity of deportations over quality law enforcement focusing on the most serious public safety threats. For example, in the first 100 days of the Trump administration, 12,766 people with no criminal convictions were arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), an over 50% increase compared to the same period last year (8,381).⁴

How Are Latinos Affected?

While nearly eight in 10 Latinos in the country are U.S. citizens, almost six in 10 Hispanic voters know someone who is undocumented.⁵ The Latino community has borne the brunt of increased deportation: while less than two-thirds of the undocumented population is Hispanic, nearly all those deported are Latino.⁶ Ramped-up deportations threaten the well-being and success of a future generation of Americans: 5.7 million U.S.-citizen children have one parent who is undocumented.⁷ Further, in recent months, reports have surfaced of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents being caught up in ICE enforcement activities. Some of these encounters have raised new concerns about racial profiling among Latino communities across the country.

What About the Federal Budget?

Border and immigration enforcement is one of the few areas that President Trump requested increased funding for FY18, by an amount of \$4.5 billion. The House of Representatives passed its first set of appropriations bills for FY18, including one for defense, which includes \$1.6 billion for the construction of a border wall.⁸ Funding for expanded immigration enforcement, including ramped-up interior enforcement and unnecessary expansions of the border wall, would needlessly rip families apart and waste scarce federal funding that should be spent on federal efforts to improve opportunities for Americans.

¹ Jens Manuel Krogstad, Jeffrey Passel, and D'Vera Cohn, "5 Facts About Illegal Immigration in the U.S.," Pew Research Center, April 27, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/27/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/>.

² Ibid.

³ Doris Meissner, Donald Kerwin, Muzaffar Chishti, and Claire Bergeron, *Immigration Enforcement in the United States: The Rise of a Formidable Machinery* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2013) <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigration-enforcement-united-states-rise-formidable-machinery>.

⁴ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, ICE ERO immigration arrests climb nearly 40% (Washington, D.C: US ICE, 2017) <https://www.ice.gov/features/100-days>.

⁵ UnidosUS calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Sex by Age by Nativity and Citizenship Status, Hispanic or Latino," American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates, 2011-2015, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_B05003I&prodType=table; and NCLR and Latino Decisions, "Latino Decisions 2016 Election Eve Poll," http://www.latinodecisions.com/files/2514/7864/5282/National_and_State_by_State_Toplines.pdf.

⁶ Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, National Day Laborer Organizing Networks, and National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, *Detention, Deportation, and Devastation* (Washington, DC: MALDEF, NDLO, NHLA, 2014) https://www.maldef.org/assets/pdf/Deportation_Brief_MALDEF-NHLA-NDLO.pdf.

⁷ Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin, *Mass Deportations Would Impoverish US Families and Create Immense Social Costs* (New York: Center for Migration Studies of New York, 2017) <http://jmhs.cmsny.org/index.php/jmhs/article/view/71>. <https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/hr3219/BILLS-115hr3219pcs.pdf>.

⁸ *Make America Secure Appropriations Act, 2018* H.R. 3219, 115th Cong., 1st sess., <https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/hr3219/BILLS-115hr3219pcs.pdf>.