



How Many Illegal Aliens Are in the United States? 2025 Update

A FAIR Research Report | March 2025

FINDINGS

As of March 2025, FAIR estimates that approximately 18.6 million illegal aliens reside in the United States. This is 11 percent higher than our June 2023 illegal alien population estimate of 16.8 million.¹

Since our December 2020 estimate, the illegal alien population in the United States has grown by 4.1 million, or 28.2 percent, reflecting an unprecedented wave of illegal immigration during the Biden administration. The surge in illegal immigration was so large that the U.S. Census Bureau announced just three months ago it has changed its methodology for estimating the foreign-born population to account for it.

As of 2025, American population growth comes almost entirely from unsustainably high levels of immigration, both legal and illegal.²

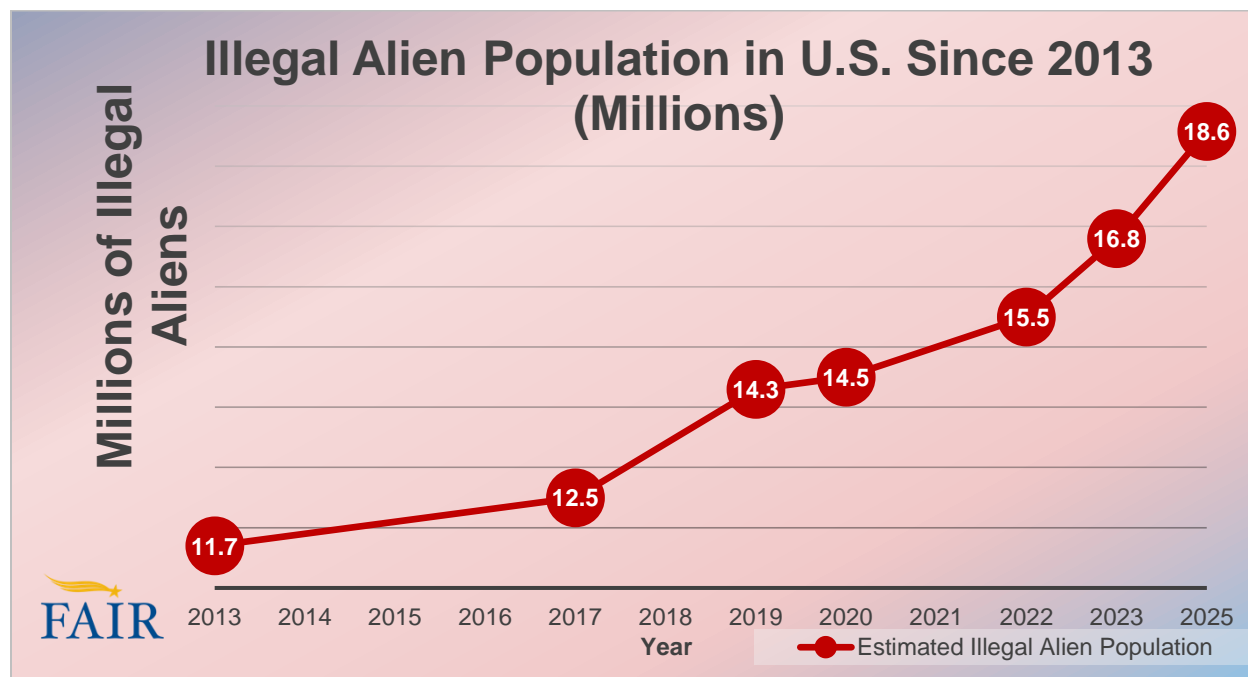


FIGURE 1: ILLEGAL ALIEN POPULATION IN U.S. SINCE 2013 (MILLIONS). DATA SOURCE: FAIR ESTIMATES. CHART BY FAIR

WHO IS AN ILLEGAL ALIEN?

An illegal alien is simply any alien who is present in the United States without legal status, like a valid visa or lawful permanent residence.

It is important to note that “legal status” is not the same as “lawful presence.” For example, recipients of deferred action, deferred enforced departure, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or parole do not have legal status. These programs (some of which are authorized by statute and some are not) do not give illegal aliens visas or green cards. They merely defer deportation for a period of time.

Nevertheless, these aliens are still described as “lawfully present” or as having “lawful presence.” That is because “lawful presence” is a term of art under immigration law designed to clarify that although an alien has no legal status, he or she is not accruing unlawful presence under Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) Section 212(a)(9) for purposes of the three and ten-year bars.³

Under INA Section 212(a)(9), an alien who has no legal status will start to accrue days of unlawful presence. If the alien accrues more than 180 days of unlawful presence and is then deported or otherwise leaves, the alien is barred from admission for three years. If the alien accrues 365 or more days (one year) of unlawful presence and is then deported or otherwise leaves, s/he is barred from admission for ten years.⁴

However, if an alien is granted a deferral of deportation, such as deferred action, the deferral would not be meaningful if, by staying, the alien could be barred from re-entry for three to ten years. To avoid this outcome, the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), now United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), essentially deemed that aliens with such deferrals are “lawfully present” so that they do not accrue days of unlawful presence and are not subject to the statutory bars.⁵

For this study’s purposes, we use the definition that conforms to U.S. immigration law and consider individuals present in the U.S. without legal status to be illegal aliens, regardless of any deferments applicable to their removal or accrual of unlawful presence. Counting individuals in these situations as “legal immigrants” or “lawful residents” would be both incorrect and a biased mischaracterization of immigration law.

FAIR offers additional details on who should be considered an illegal alien in our publication titled “Why ‘Illegal Alien’ is the Correct Term.”⁶

CHALLENGES ESTIMATING THE ILLEGAL ALIEN POPULATION

Estimating the size, distribution, and characteristics of the illegal alien population is an inexact science. The methods used by those claiming to have calculated a definitive figure should be viewed skeptically, as there is no completely reliable source of information on illegal aliens. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) only (loosely) counts foreign nationals who enter and leave the United States in a lawful manner, and its illegal alien population estimates remain unhelpful due to underestimating the size of the population and utilizing outdated numbers.⁷ In truth, we do not know exactly how many people cross the border illegally and evade immigration authorities, nor can anyone accurately quantify overstays or gotaways. We can only estimate these figures based on annual and monthly census data.

Most of the current estimates regarding the total number of illegal aliens are based on U.S. Census Bureau data. Unfortunately, far too many of these tallies presume that essentially all unlawful migrants are willing to respond to demographic questionnaires and that they provide accurate information to federal officials. As their presence in the United States is the result of a violation of law, many illegal aliens understandably see no personal benefit in revealing any information about their nativity or true immigration status. Therefore, when asked about how, when, and why they entered the United States, illegal aliens have a strong motive to either lie, claiming they are lawful immigrants or citizens, or refuse to respond at all.

Most reputable demographers and researchers have long understood that there is widespread and systematic undercounting in the Census Bureau's estimate of the foreign-born population because it is difficult to estimate the portion of that population attributable to illegal immigration. Understandably, many illegal aliens are reluctant to engage with government surveys, and many do not even live in residential addresses within the survey pool. Because of this simple fact, older estimates frequently assumed there was a lower response rate of illegal aliens as a portion of the foreign-born population. Indeed, even before the Biden-era, Census publications frequently acknowledged that certain population groups, particularly sections of the foreign-born, have "undercoverage" rates of 10 to nearly 20 percent.⁸

The undercount of the foreign-born population came under greater scrutiny during the Biden-era, when a massive inflow of illegal aliens in just four short years through entirely new channels made it even harder for Census Bureau surveys to capture the true size of the population. The Current Population Survey, for example, is conducted through two 4-month surveys with an 8-month break in between, and only serves a subset of residential addresses.⁹ However, many aliens allowed in by the Biden administration lived in migrant shelters, specially designated hotels, homeless shelters,

or even on the streets, moving frequently between these. Census surveys were simply not designed with the chaos of places like the infamous Roosevelt Hotel¹⁰ in mind.

FAIR and many other organizations recognized a significant disconnect between official immigration data, like border apprehensions, asylum applications and immigration paroles, and the Census Bureau's lagging and seemingly incomplete estimate of the foreign-born population. With these discrepancies in mind, other organizations began relying on other methods to estimate net illegal immigration for their own purposes.

In July 2024, Congressional Budget Office published a significantly higher estimate than the Census Bureau, estimating net illegal immigration of 9.9 million from 2021-2026 based mostly on DHS data.¹¹ Financial institutions made their own estimates, with J.P. Morgan noting in early 2025 that undercount among illegal aliens could cause unforeseen pressure on the housing market.¹² News organizations such as *The New York Times* compared the situation to the 1990s, noting that both then and now undercount becomes much worse when the immigration situation rapidly changes.¹³ The Census Bureau changed its methodology in the 1990s to account for shifting dynamics in illegal immigration, and would do the same just a week after the *Times* discussed the issue.

WHAT HAS CHANGED

In December 2024, the Census Bureau admitted that net foreign migration to the U.S. was "significantly higher" than previous estimates.¹⁴ This admission was coupled by significant changes to Census Bureau methodology to capture the sheer scope of the Biden administration's illegal immigration crisis, which previous survey methods had not accounted for.¹⁵

The Census Bureau compiles a database of foreigner entries and exits of various types known as the "Benchmark Database", and analysis of the database showed that recent "humanitarian migrants" were being missed most frequently.¹⁶ The Bureau adjusted its estimates of the foreign-born population up significantly to account for the inflows of "humanitarian migrants" documented in the database.

At the same time, the Census Bureau revised upward its raw estimates of net international migration for the previous three years. From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, the Census Bureau reported it had missed net foreign migration of roughly 700,000 people, revising its estimate upward by nearly 70 percent, or from 1 million to 1.7 million. From July 1 20222 to June 30, 20203, the Census Bureau revised its estimate upward by an extraordinary 101.7 percent, adding 1.15 million more foreign nationals to its initial estimate of 1.13 million. Finally, from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, the Census Bureau estimated that net international migration had reached nearly 2.8 million (a figure higher than the population of Chicago), a completely unprecedented total.¹⁷

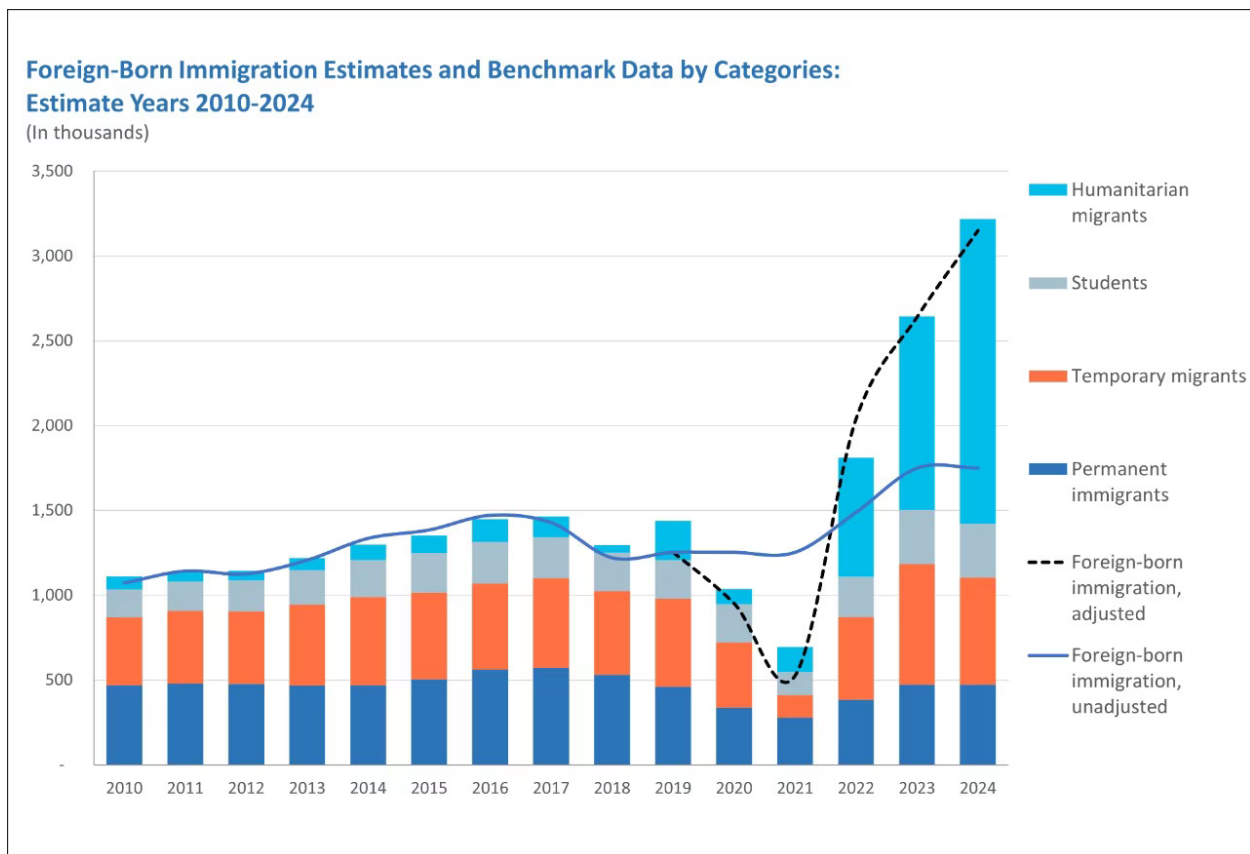


FIGURE 2. SOURCE: CENSUS BUREAU ESTIMATES OF NET FOREIGN MIGRATION, UNADJUSTED AND ADJUSTED.

The chart above, published by the Census Bureau when it announced changes to its methodology, shows the drastic difference between its previous and revised estimates of the foreign-born population. The significant growth in the category of humanitarian migrants between 2021 and 2024 is particularly striking.

The Census Bureau’s methodology change validates FAIR’s long-held position that official data, and organizations relying solely on that data, were dramatically undercounting the foreign-born, and thus the illegal alien population. This is because the data in the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) and Current Population Survey (CPS) that demographers and other researchers rely on are weighted based on pre-revision Bureau estimates and will undercount the foreign-born to a similarly significant degree unless this is corrected for.

Only one year ago, estimates of the foreign-born population based on the CPS showed the that after four years of mass immigration, the foreign-born population stood at a record high (over 50 million).¹⁸ This immigration wave, *The New York Times* reported, was the largest in American history, surpassing the Ellis Island “Great Wave” era of the late 1890s.¹⁹ At least 60 percent of the foreigners who during this wave were illegal

aliens.²⁰ Now, thanks to the Census Bureau's revision of its foreign-born population estimates, we know that even this record high was understated by millions.

Based on the Census Bureau's change in methodology, FAIR has revised its methodology to factor in significant undercounting of recent arrivals. Therefore, FAIR's estimates align much more closely with the Census Bureau's post-revision figures than other organizations', though even the revised Bureau data is not comprehensive.

HOW WE REACHED OUR ESTIMATE

To estimate the total number of illegal aliens living in the United States, we began by establishing the total number of native-born and foreign-born residents. This estimate accounts for the Census Bureau's December 2024 announcement of methodology revisions, unlike virtually every other publicly available estimate. As of the end of 2024, the total U.S. population was 341.1 million in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, several million higher than previously projected, because the foreign-born population had been so significantly undercounted by reporting bodies.

We calculated a base estimate of the illegal alien population from that total by eliminating other groups as captured by the most recent ACS and CPS surveys and other publicly available data. After excluding citizens at birth, naturalized citizens, permanent residents, and valid visa holders, we obtained a raw total of illegal aliens in the U.S.²¹ However, as previously discussed, these raw numbers still routinely miss a significant portion of the illegal alien population through undercounting. The degree to which undercount occurs varies between demographic groups, with one of the most important factors being length of time in the U.S. Even among illegal aliens, recent arrivals are much less likely to be properly counted than long-settled individuals with stable addresses.

Thus, to produce the most accurate possible estimate of undercounting, we chose to split that raw total of the illegal alien population into two groups: those who came in during the Biden administration, and those who came in before. This is because of significant flaws in the 2020 Census and ACS data from that year, as well as policy changes beginning in 2021 under the Biden administration. Those changes led to far more recent arrivals who are more likely to be undercounted, and the Census Bureau was initially unprepared for these events.

Previous (1980s-1990s) waves of illegal immigration mainly involved clandestine border crossings, and estimates of undercount for recent arrivals in those periods were around 30 percent or more according to contemporary academic studies. For illegal aliens who entered during the Biden administration, the Census Bureau's 2024 methodology revision is more of a return to this previous norm than a fully accurate correction. This is because pre-revision, the illegal alien component of net foreign migration during the

Biden administration was being undercounted by well over 100 percent.²² Census data collection was unable to cope with the unprecedented free-for-all approach the Biden administration took with illegal immigration.

Comparing post-revision Census Bureau estimates with known entry totals, we found that the undercount has dropped to a level only slightly above earlier estimates for recent arrivals (around 40 percent). We applied this estimate of undercount to the proportion of the illegal alien population who arrived in the Biden administration's open-borders wave.

Adjusting for undercount in the pre-Biden administration illegal alien population is easier because undercount and deficiencies in data are less severe and more well-understood for illegal aliens who are not recent arrivals. This population arrived largely through "conventional" means, rather than the unprecedented categorical mass paroles and mass releases of the Biden administration. Therefore, the Census Bureau is much better equipped and more experienced in counting those who arrived under "conventional" pre-Biden administration means. We conservatively estimated the percentage of the undercount in this portion of the illegal alien population to be in the low teens, consistent with other non-partisan studies on the subject.

Using this method and combining the two populations, we reached our estimate of 18.6 million illegal aliens residing in the United States as of the beginning of 2025.

WHAT DROVE THE NUMBERS

The illegal alien population has reached record highs after exploding growth under the former Biden administration. This has also catapulted the overall foreign-born population to its highest ever number, at nearly 57 million people, and highest ever proportion of the U.S. population at around 16.6 percent. This disastrous rapid increase has occurred as a result of several concrete factors that both attract and retain illegal aliens living in the United States:

I. The Former Biden Administration Enacted Policies that Encouraged More Illegal Immigration to the United States (Pull Factors).

In its first few months in power, the Biden administration sent a strong message of welcome to would-be illegal aliens. Examples of early actions that would draw illegal aliens included the following:

- The Biden administration stopped construction of the border wall.
- The Biden administration expanded the grounds for claiming asylum by reversing legal opinions issued under the first Trump administration.
- The Biden administration ended the Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs) with Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras which required

migrants to apply for asylum in one of the countries through which they traveled (and be denied) as a prerequisite to eligibility for asylum in the United States.²³

These policies had the expected effect. Illegal border crossings began to rise as soon as the Biden administration took office and continued growing to absolutely catastrophic levels throughout the administration's term.²⁴

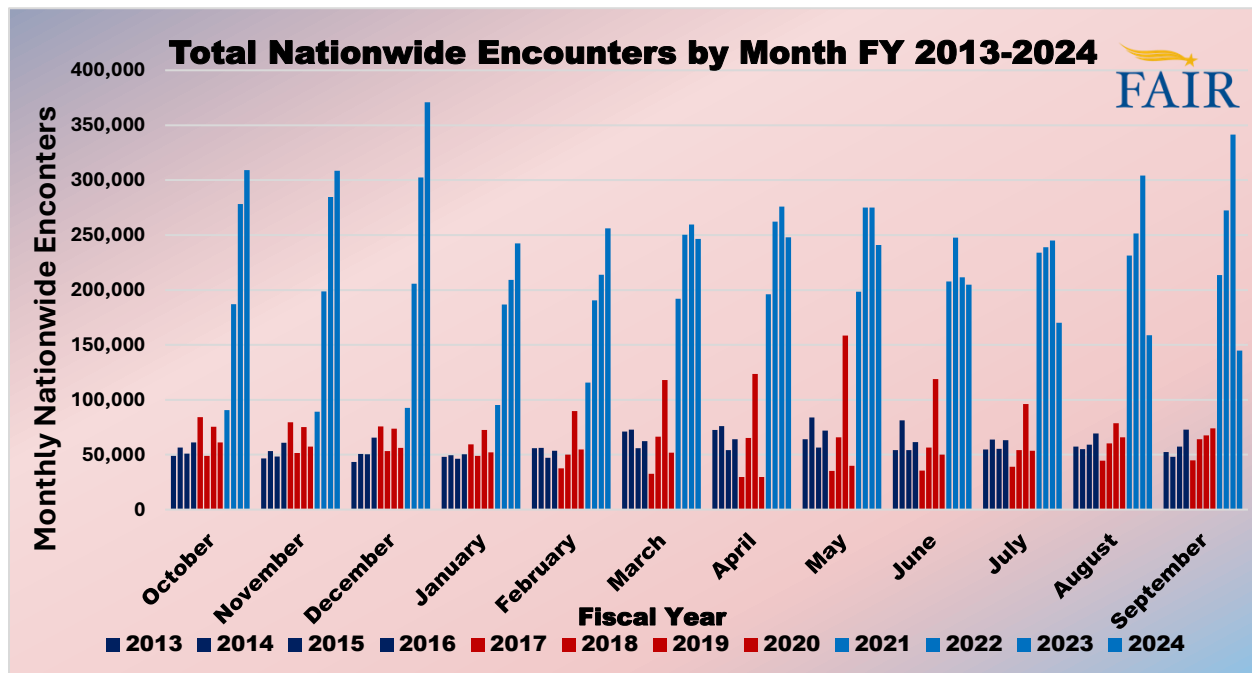


FIGURE 3. TOTAL NATIONWIDE ENCOUNTERS BY MONTH FY 2013-2024. DATA SOURCE: CBP, OHSS

In the eight full fiscal years (FY) before the Biden administration took office (FY2013-2020), annual encounters (arrests and expulsions of illegal border crossers) nationwide averaged 735,895. The Biden administration took office several months into FY21, and nationwide encounters that year surged to just under 2 million. FY22 saw a record total of 2.766 million, and that figure jumped again the next year to 3.2 million. The Biden administration's last full year, FY24, saw only a slight decrease to 2.9 million encounters.²⁵ However, December 2023 (FY24) was the worst month for illegal border crossings in history, a shameful record that was set several times during the Biden administration. That month alone saw over 370,000 illegal crossings nationwide, more than many entire fiscal years.²⁶

II. In Addition to Policies Drawing Illegal Aliens to the Border, the Former Biden Administration Released Illegal Aliens *en masse* Into the United States.

- **Rescission of “Remain in Mexico”.**

One of the first actions President Biden took was to end the successful Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP, or “Remain in Mexico” program). Ending this program meant that illegal aliens apprehended at the border would now be released into the U.S. while their removal cases were pending instead of waiting in Mexico for a scheduled asylum case. A federal judge ordered the administration to restart the program, but very few migrants (only 267) were actually placed in the program after that court order.²⁷ Ultimately, in June 2022, the Supreme Court ruled that the Biden administration could legally rescind “Remain in Mexico.”²⁸

- **Notices to Report Replacing Notices to Appear.**

When an individual enters the U.S. without legal authorization the alien must either be processed through expedited removal and removed swiftly or the alien is referred to immigration court through a Notice to Appear (NTA). A Notice to Appear, which must be given to would-be asylum-seekers who are determined to have “credible fear”, informs the alien that he or she is in the U.S. in violation of our immigration laws and is subject to deportation. It orders him or her to appear at a scheduled date before an immigration judge to plead their case for legal relief. This system is already subject to tremendous multi-year and multi-million-case backlogs due to a glut of frivolous asylum cases,²⁹ but one ad-hoc practice by the Biden administration simply subverted it entirely with even worse consequences.

From March to September 2021, the Border Patrol, at the direction of the Biden Administration, began issuing Notices to Report (NTR) instead of NTAs to illegal alien families arriving at the border in a bid to reduce processing time. These notices simply directed individuals in these family units to report to ICE at a time in the future to receive a court date, and the individuals were then released without monitoring or oversight and only required to provide an unverified address. Approximately 94,000 individuals received NTRs before the program was terminated due to very concerning results.³⁰ A large proportion of these individuals never reported back to ICE and simply disappeared from monitoring because these notices were effectively unenforceable and did not collect adequate information.

- **Abuse of Immigration Parole Authority at the Border.**

One of the most egregious ways the Biden administration facilitated catch-and-release was through massive abuse of immigration parole authority to release illegal aliens into the United States. This was a direct violation of federal statute. When Congress drafted a statute authorizing immigration parole, which allows inadmissible aliens to be released into the U.S. while their case is pending, it intended parole to be utilized solely on an extremely limited, case-by-case, temporary basis. According to Section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the government may only grant parole to an alien for “urgent humanitarian reasons” or “significant public benefit.”³¹ In addition, Section 235(b)(1)(B)(ii) of the INA requires that aliens be detained (“shall be detained”) while their asylum applications are considered, showing clear congressional intent that detention is mandatory and immigration parole cannot be the default.³²

Nevertheless, the former Biden administration abused the parole authority on an unprecedented scale to release millions of illegal aliens into the U.S. through a variety of channels. As FAIR has documented, parole abuse actually surpassed legal immigration in scope by FY2023, during which 1.34 million illegal aliens were let in through abuse of parole authority.³³ Many of these individuals fail to appear at any hearings and face few to no consequences.³⁴ Immigration parole allows illegal aliens to receive work authorization and many public benefits, making it extremely attractive for would-be illegal aliens.

- **Parole + ATD.**

Parole Plus Alternative to Detention (Parole + ATD) was a CBP program whose formal use ran from November 2021 to its demise in federal court in March 2023.³⁵ The program, first applied to family units and additionally to individuals after July 2022, let illegal aliens arriving at the Southwest border into the country under parole authority. These aliens were given some form of tracking, like ankle bracelets or even just a smartphone app, and then allowed to enter the U.S.

As with the NTR debacle, these individuals were not issued NTAs but rather directed to receive them at a later date. At one point under this policy, tens of thousands of illegal aliens were being released into the U.S. every month with minimal oversight.³⁶ The haphazard release of a significant number of these aliens without A-numbers, vital for case tracking and future immigration court cases, left thousands untraceable to the government.³⁷

- **Parole with Conditions.**

The Biden Administration issued the Parole with Conditions policy just as Title 42 was coming to an end in May 2023, and it was quickly halted by a lawsuit before fully coming into effect.³⁸ This CBP policy would have allowed the Border Patrol to indiscriminately release illegal aliens into the U.S. from any port of entry experiencing crowding. Illegal aliens released under the policy would only be required to provide an address, with no verification of residence, and be directed to report to an ICE office at a later date to receive an NTA.³⁹

- **Categorical Parole Programs and CBP One.**

In addition to paroling in illegal aliens apprehended at the border, the Biden Administration created new programs out of thin air that would allow otherwise inadmissible aliens to enter the U.S. and work. In March 2021, the Biden administration re-launched the Obama-era parole program for Central American minors (CAM Program), eventually expanding the categories of eligible petitioners. In addition, it introduced a “Family Reunification Parole Process” allowing illegal aliens to cut the line for visas available to relatives of American citizens and permanent residents.⁴⁰ The former administration also abused its parole authority by paroling in tens of thousands of Afghan (Operation Allies Welcome) and Ukrainian (Uniting for Ukraine) citizens without valid visas.⁴¹

The most egregious abuses of categorical parole, however, were the Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan (CHNV) parole program and parole through the CBP One app. Both began full operations in early 2023. As described in FAIR’s report on parole, the CHNV allowed 30,000 people from those four nationalities to fly right into the U.S. every month. “Sponsors” for this program could even be other illegal aliens. The CBP One app allowed 1,450 illegal aliens a day to make appointments to enter the U.S. at the border, bypassing standard vetting or visa requirements.⁴² In July 2024, FAIR exposed massive fraud in the CHNV program that led to a temporary shutdown.⁴³

While both the CHNV and CBP One categorical parole programs have been ended by the second Trump administration, they contributed significantly to growth in the illegal alien population. From January 2023 to November 2024, there were over 900,000 CBP One appointments,⁴⁴ of which virtually all were paroled into the U.S. as illegal aliens. In the same period, over 530,000 illegal aliens were confirmed paroled into the U.S. under the CHNV program.⁴⁵ Programs like these, unlawfully operating at an unprecedented scale, are the reason the Census Bureau had to adjust its methodology. Neither the Bureau nor the American people were prepared for an administration that was actively

importing millions of people without regard for eligibility for visas, vetting, or ultimately the law.

III. The Former Biden Administration Prevented the Arrest and Deportation of Illegal Aliens Already in the United States.

- **Restrictions Placed on Immigration and Customs Enforcement**

Soon after taking office, former President Biden took steps to severely limit ICE officials from detaining and removing most non-criminal immigration violators.⁴⁶ On day one of the former Biden administration, the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security issued a 100-day moratorium on deportations and set new, interim enforcement priorities which clearly indicated that simply being an illegal alien would no longer subject an alien to deportation proceedings.⁴⁷ The 100-day moratorium on deportations was later enjoined by a court; however, the interim priorities for enforcement remained in place. Not long thereafter, ICE issued another memo that required agents to seek preapproval for enforcement actions in all non-priority cases.⁴⁸

In September of 2021, former Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas formally adopted the same enforcement priorities for the department.⁴⁹ These enforcement priorities limited the arrest and initiation of deportation proceedings, as a general practice, to aliens who posed a threat to national security, to public safety, and to border security. Even with regard to public safety, the enforcement guidance encouraged agents to apply broad mitigating factors when deciding to initiate deportation proceedings against criminals. Secretary Mayorkas essentially declared that illegal aliens who had not come in contact with law enforcement were now off limits. He stated, “The fact an individual is a removable noncitizen therefore should not alone be the basis of an enforcement action against them.”⁵⁰

In June 2022, due to a lawsuit brought by Texas and Louisiana, a federal district court in Texas issued a judgment vacating the memorandum and on November 29, 2022, the Supreme Court granted the administration’s request to review the case and heard arguments.⁵¹ Ultimately, in June 2023, the Supreme Court ruled that the executive has broad authority to set immigration enforcement priorities and reinstated the policy.⁵² Throughout the Biden administration, and especially when these priorities were in force, this lack of enforcement allowed illegal aliens relative freedom from consequences for breaking our immigration laws. Removals would not significantly cut into the population of illegal aliens that was already here before the Biden administration took office.

- **Further Abuse of Temporary Protected Status.**

In addition to enforced passivity for immigration agents, the former Biden administration took active steps to shield illegal aliens from deportation. The Biden administration implemented new Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for several nations, such as Ukraine, Venezuela, and Ethiopia while failing to end any existing designations – even in situations where the original reasons for granting TPS have long been resolved.⁵³ TPS, despite its name, is not a permanent legal status but simply defers the deportation of illegal aliens. Therefore, its recipients are included in our estimates. As residents from more and more countries are offered TPS, fewer illegal aliens will be removed from the country and more will arrive in hopes of coming under a future TPS designation. If an eligible illegal alien successfully applies for TPS, they receive the ability to work legally in the U.S. and are much harder to deport.

As of the end of 2024, the number of individuals in the U.S. estimated to be eligible for TPS was over 2.1 million.⁵⁴ Of these, an estimated 1,778,075 (nearly 84 percent) became eligible under Biden administration TPS designations or re-designations.⁵⁵ Furthermore, as of December 2024, 1,095,115 applications for TPS had been approved.⁵⁶ This is compared to just 319,465 in April 2021, before the Biden administration began its large-scale abuse of TPS designation authority.⁵⁷

The TPS program, which literally has “temporary” in its name, became yet another tool the former Biden administration used to make it easier for illegal aliens to stay. The administration’s wanton designations protected both recent arrivals from various nationalities and many illegal aliens who have been unlawfully present for years.

WHERE DO ILLEGAL ALIENS LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES?

Because the Census Bureau’s methodology revision was so recent, updated state-level data with demographic characteristics is not currently available for analysis. FAIR will supplement this report with individual state estimates as data is published and becomes available for study.

What we do know is that the surge in the illegal alien population has impacted places large and small across the entire country. Large cities with “sanctuary” policies often handled the initial influx of illegal aliens, who then remained or moved on to other communities, and estimates of these flows exist for many cities.

New York City, for example, dealt with an influx of 210,000 new illegal aliens since 2022, joining hundreds of thousands already living in the city.⁵⁸ Most of these illegal

aliens came directly to the city on buses from the southern border. While not all of them would remain in city boundaries, the strain on what is already America's most expensive city was incredible. Chicago counted at least 51,000 arrivals directly from the southern border,⁵⁹ but doubtless many more illegal aliens made it to this "sanctuary" hub on their own. Boston, another high-cost "sanctuary" city, received tens of thousands of illegal aliens and was required to house them at taxpayer expense.⁶⁰

The Miami area, on the other hand, became the largest single port of entry for illegal aliens in the country. As previously described, the Biden administration's CHNV parole program allowed illegal aliens to fly directly into the U.S., and the vast majority of them (over 306,000) did so through the Miami area.⁶¹ Miami-Dade County public schools enrolled more than 14,000 new migrant children, and this area's already fragile ecosystem is being affected by traffic and development pressures driven by illegal migration.⁶²

However, this does not mean that states which hold a comparatively small share of the illegal alien population are spared its negative impact. In fact, as FAIR has pointed out in other studies, illegal immigration often hits these states the hardest, as it is more difficult for low-population areas to absorb the impacts of illegal immigration.⁶³

Under the Biden administration, many smaller towns and cities across the country saw waves of illegal immigration without warning or any resources to cope. Many of these illegal aliens arrived through the former administration's categorical parole programs and left their unwitting host communities shattered.

The small city of Springfield, Ohio had around 58,000 people in 2020. In the few years since then, it has experienced shocking growth of 25 percent after an influx of more than 10,000 Haitians.⁶⁴ A spike in road accidents, healthcare demand, and school costs has since created massive problems for residents.⁶⁵ Similar stories of unpredictable growth and societal chaos have repeated themselves in countless smaller towns and cities across the country. These range from the large Denver suburb of Aurora, Colorado, which saw tens of thousands of migrants settle and spark a crime wave,⁶⁶ to Whitewater, Wisconsin (1,000 Nicaraguans and Venezuelans arriving in a town of 15,000)⁶⁷ and Charleroi, Pennsylvania (2,000 Haitians added to a town of just 4,000).⁶⁸

NOTE ON FAIR'S COST STUDY AND THE GROWTH IN THE ILLEGAL ALIEN POPULATION

FAIR's landmark 2023 cost study showed that illegal aliens and their U.S.-born children impose a net annual cost of \$150.7 billion on American taxpayers.⁶⁹ The costs imposed by illegal aliens only increase over time due to increased demand and eligibility for healthcare, education, housing, and social programs. In addition, much of the data in

our 2023 cost study was collected before the impact of the Biden administration's open borders was fully clear.

Because of increased illegal immigration since our 2023 cost study and other costs that have accrued during the Biden administration, American taxpayers are now paying additional tens of billions of dollars annually. For example, during the Biden administration, around 450,000 unaccompanied alien children were released to sponsors in the U.S.⁷⁰ With average K-12 public education expenditures at \$17,277 per pupil (not including a premium for bilingual education), this new population will cost taxpayers nearly \$8 billion per year for education alone.

Additionally, the approximately 650,000 Cuban and Haitian nationals paroled into the U.S. by the Biden administration⁷¹ are statutorily eligible as Cuban/Haitian Entrants for a range of welfare benefits other illegal aliens cannot access.⁷² With thousands of dollars' worth of cash refugee benefits, Medicaid, TANF, SNAP, and other funds available per individual, this population will cost taxpayers billions of dollars to support. These two populations alone make up more than \$10 billion in annual costs directly attributable to the Biden administration's illegal alien population surge since the release of our 2023 cost study, and the full total is undoubtedly far higher.

¹ <https://www.fairus.org/issue/how-many-illegal-aliens-are-united-states-2023-update>

² <https://www.census.gov/popclock/>

³ https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/memos/revision_redesign_AFM.PDF

⁴ <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title8-section1182&num=0&edition=prelim>

⁵ https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/memos/revision_redesign_AFM.PDF

⁶ <https://www.fairus.org/issue/why-illegal-alien-correct-term>

⁷ https://ohss.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024_0418_ohss_estimates-of-the-unauthorized-immigrant-population-residing-in-the-united-states-january-2018%25E2%2580%2593january-2022.pdf

The most recent estimate, for January 2022 but published in April 2024, relies on out-of-date Census data that fails to capture the massive scope of illegal immigration to the U.S. nor account for undercounting. It claims that just under 11 million illegal aliens live in the U.S.

⁸ <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2015/demo/POP-twps0103.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/methodology.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.fox5ny.com/news/nyc-migrant-crisis-roosevelt-hotel>

¹¹ <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/60569>. As this estimate covers a period from 2021-2026, the impact of the last two years is unclear and likely to change significantly with a new administration in place.

¹² <https://www.jpmmorgan.com/insights/global-research/real-estate/us-housing-market-outlook>

¹³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/11/briefing/us-immigration-surge.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2024/12/international-migration-population-estimates.html>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The Census Bureau uses this term to refer to refugees, asylum applicants, beneficiaries of Biden administration humanitarian parole abuse, and more broadly those released into the U.S. via catch-and-release policies. With the exception of refugees, none of these individuals have a legal status and are thus illegal aliens.

¹⁷ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2024/12/international-migration-population-estimates.html>

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- ¹⁸ <https://nypost.com/2023/11/30/news/50m-people-living-in-america-were-born-in-a-different-country-study/>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/11/briefing/us-immigration-surge.html>
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ In order to exclude legal immigrants and lawful foreign-born residents, we relied on data from the ACS, CPS, State Department visa issuance data, the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* and other Department of Homeland Security publications.
- ²² In this case, over 100 percent undercount means that the Census Bureau's population estimates were missing more than half of net foreign-born population growth. This was the case, for example, from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 when the Census Bureau adjusted its estimate of net foreign migration up by 101.7 percent. Because the vast majority of that upwards adjustment was composed of illegal aliens who had been missed previously, the undercount rate for illegal aliens specifically was much higher than 100 percent i.e. far more than half of new illegal aliens were being missed.
- ²³ <https://www.fairus.org/issue/border-security/bidens-border-crisis-101>
- ²⁴ More details on early policies that attracted illegal aliens to the United States during the Biden administration are available in previous FAIR estimates of the illegal alien population. See <https://www.fairus.org/issue/how-many-illegal-aliens-are-united-states-2023-update>
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters>
- ²⁷ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-admin-enrolled-fewer-migrants-in-remain-in-mexico-in-december>
- ²⁸ <https://www.fairus.org/press-release/supreme-court-greenlights-continuation-bidens-border-crisis>
- ²⁹ https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/court_backlog/
- ³⁰ <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-105456>
- ³¹ <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/8/212.5>
- ³² <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/8/235.3>
- ³³ <https://www.fairus.org/issue/immigration-parole-executive-branches-shadow-immigration-system>
- ³⁴ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/dhs-secretary-reveals-startling-stat-on-asylum-seekers-who-skip-hearings-disappear/>
- ³⁵ <https://cis.org/Arthur/Federal-Judge-Vacates-Bidens-ParoleATD-Border-Release-Policy>
- ³⁶ From March to September 2022, for example, at least 24,000 illegal aliens a month were released under this program with a September high of over 95,000. See "Custody and Transfer Statistics FY2022", U.S. Customs and Border Protection, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/custody-and-transfer-statistics-fy22>.
- ³⁷ <https://www.fairus.org/blog/2022/09/29/border-patrol-audit-shows-crucial-step-being-skipped-harming-americans-and-migrants>
- ³⁸ <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.flnd.464923/gov.uscourts.flnd.464923.7.1.pdf>
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ <https://www.uscis.gov/FRP>
- ⁴¹ <https://cis.org/Report/Parole-Benefits>
- ⁴² <https://www.fairus.org/issue/immigration-parole-executive-branches-shadow-immigration-system>
- ⁴³ <https://www.fairus.org/news/executive/internal-homeland-security-report-proves-biden-harris-mayorkas-chnv-parole-program>
- ⁴⁴ <https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/immigration-enforcement/immigration-enforcement-and-legal-processes-monthly>
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesec/LSB10578.pdf>
- ⁴⁷ https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/21_0120_enforcement-memo_signed.pdf
- ⁴⁸ https://www.ice.gov/doclib/news/releases/2021/021821_civil-immigration-enforcement_interim-guidance.pdf
- ⁴⁹ <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/news/guidelines-civilimmigrationlaw.pdf>
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesec/LSB10578.pdf>
- ⁵² https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/22-58_i425.pdf
- ⁵³ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RS/RS20844/79>

⁵⁴ This includes 1,008,508 individuals estimated by DHS to be eligible under initial TPS designations and 1,113,855 estimated by DHS to be made eligible by TPS re-designations, for a total of 2,122,363. Data aggregated from Federal Register notices.

⁵⁵ Data aggregated from Federal Register notices.

⁵⁶ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RS/RS20844/79>

⁵⁷ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RS/RS20844/55>

⁵⁸ <https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2024/12/following-asylum-seeker-odyssey/382850/>

⁵⁹ <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/texas-new-arrivals/home/Dashboard.html>

⁶⁰ <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/04/01/metro/how-many-migrants-in-massachusetts/>

⁶¹ <https://cis.org/Bensman/Florida-Gateway-Data-Shows-Most-Migrant-Flights-Landing-Gov-DeSantiss-Sunshine-State>

⁶² <https://news.miami.edu/stories/2023/02/record-breaking-number-of-migrants-place-burden-on-city-resources.html>

⁶³ <https://www.fairus.org/issue/societal-impact/small-migrant-populations-huge-impacts-even-states-few-immigrants-hit-costs>

⁶⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/09/19/us/springfield-ohio-haitians-immigration-cec/index.html>

⁶⁵ <https://www.fairus.org/news/state-and-local/while-residents-springfield-ohio-reel-impact-mass-immigration-officials-turn>

⁶⁶ <https://denverite.com/2023/11/15/aurora-migrant-response/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.kcra.com/article/whitewater-wisconsin-immigration-2024-election/62788581>

⁶⁸ <https://nypost.com/2024/10/10/opinion/how-2000-haitian-migrants-changed-rust-belt-town-of-charleroi-pennsylvania/>

⁶⁹ <https://www.fairus.org/issue/publications-resources/fiscal-burden-illegal-immigration-united-states-taxpayers-2023>

⁷⁰ <https://acf.gov/orr/about/ucs/facts-and-data>

⁷¹ <https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/immigration-enforcement/immigration-enforcement-and-legal-processes-monthly>

⁷² <https://acf.gov/archive/orr/fact-sheet/benefits-cuban/haitian-entrants>