



Written by [William P. Hoar](#) on April 23, 2018

Published in the April 23, 2018 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 34, No. 08

## Losing the Illegal Alien Fight

From the print edition of The New American

### Correction, Please! Losing the Illegal Alien Fight

A sampling of news stories:

**Item:** *Time magazine*, dated March 19, features a cover story asserting that the Trump administration's "immigration policy is splitting families and spreading fear." The magazine, while acknowledging (in the fine type) that "Trump is deporting fewer undocumented immigrants than Obama," highlights the message that the "new approach has led to a surge of arrests."

*Continues Time:* "A major consequence of this new policy has been an explosion of fear among immigrant communities, which are reacting not so much to the spiking number of arrests but to the apparent randomness of the roundups."

**Item:** So-called sanctuary cities have issued policies that place limits on the extent to which local law-enforcement officials should comply with federal immigration authorities. A current online (undated) special report carried by MSNBC maintains that in "the spirit of America's founding principles as a nation of immigrants, sanctuary cities act as a protective shield, standing in the way of federal efforts to pinpoint and deport people at random."

**Item:** An article in the left-wing *Nation* magazine for March 9 brands the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a federal government law-enforcement agency under the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security, as a "mass-deportation strike force."

The article by Sean McElwee goes on to say: "Groups like Indivisible Project and the Center for Popular Democracy have also called for defunding ICE. Brand New Congress, a progressive PAC, has the proposal in its immigration platform. 'ICE is terrorizing American communities right now,' said Angel Padilla, policy director of the Indivisible Project. 'They're going into schools, entering hospitals, conducting massive raids, and separating children from parents every day. We are funding those activities, and we need to use all the leverage we have to stop it.'"

Moreover, says the piece, "The call to abolish ICE is, above all, a demand for the Democratic Party to begin seriously resisting an unbridled white-supremacist surveillance state that it had a hand in creating."

**Item:** Writing in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* newspaper for March 15, staff columnist Will Bunch asserts: "The conduct of ICE and its first cousin, the Border Patrol, has been arguably the darkest moral stain





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*on the sometimes comical but too often diabolical Trump era.”*

*He goes on to refer to the “legal framework for an immigration police state,” which is, he says, “led by a president elected largely on a xenophobic screed and chants of ‘Build the Wall.’” ICE has become, he insists, “a rogue agency that not only has virtually no boundaries for whom it rounds up, detains and sends back to sometimes life-threatening scenarios, but is increasingly accountable to no one.”*

**Correction:** U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, lest there be any misunderstanding and in the off chance that there are those who believe the hyperbolic exaggerations of the political extreme Left, is really not the Gestapo.

Rather, ICE is a U.S. government law-enforcement agency that enforces federal laws governing border control, customs, trade, and immigration. The agency was created in 2003, with a merger of some of the responsibilities of the (then) U.S. Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The underlying disputes rest on the fact that there are many influential people and groups, elected and otherwise, who want to inflict the United States with “open borders,” at least when it is convenient to their interests or current quarrels. They can and often do choose sides — backing either state or federal authorities in their various arguments — when it is expedient.

In 2012, for instance, the Department of Justice under Barack Obama sued Arizona because it didn’t like that state’s interpretation on immigration; these days, it is the Trump administration’s DOJ that is suing California. This latter development comes after a number of cities there (and in other states, as well) have decided to shield illegal aliens from federal immigration authorities. In California, a law signed by Governor Jerry Brown designates California as a “sanctuary state.” The move, among other points, says police cannot ask individuals about their immigration status or take part in some federal immigration enforcement activities.

*Photo: AP Images*

*This article appears in the April 23, 2018, issue of The New American.*

Various courts will be squabbling over these aspects for a good while, and there is no space to delve into all of the various federal/state jurisdictional nuances here. That said, there are plenty of political and media misrepresentations in need of correction.

The situation is, after all, a major problem. Depending on who is doing the counting (and making the definitions), there are about 11 million illegal immigrants living in the United States. (The Federation of American Immigration Reform, or FAIR, puts the number at 12.5 million.) While totals have been dropping compared to a decade ago, most covering the subject agree that around 300,000-400,000 new illegal immigrants are arriving in the country each year.

All of this is costly, in several regards. FAIR, for instance, calculated last fall that taxpayers pay “approximately \$8,075 per illegal alien family member and a total of \$115,894,597,664. The total cost of illegal immigration to U.S. taxpayers is both staggering and crippling. In 2013, FAIR estimated the total cost to be approximately \$113 billion. So, in under four years, the cost has risen nearly \$3 billion.”

Breaking down the expenses, FAIR estimates that the federal government spends

a net amount of \$45.8 billion [per year] on illegal aliens and their U.S.-born children. This amount includes expenditures for public education, medical care, justice enforcement initiatives, welfare



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programs and other miscellaneous costs. It also factors in the meager amount illegal aliens pay to the federal government in income, social security, Medicare and excise taxes.

Crimes and their repercussions add to the costs. A report issued in December 2017 by the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security revealed that there were almost 40,000 known or suspected aliens then in federal prisons. It noted that one in five of all of those in Bureau of Prisons custody were foreign-born, with about 94 percent of confirmed aliens in custody being unlawfully present.

How does that square with claims by open-border proponents and many in the mainstream media who repeatedly insist that immigrants are not as likely to commit crimes as Americans born in this country? The answer: They don't tell all the relevant facts. As noted by Maria Espinoza of the Remembrance Project: "To mislead the public, the left perverts the results of studies that suggest that 'immigrants' commit less crime, and deliberately and intentionally lumps in legal aliens with illegal aliens, who are the criminals."

Following the release of the DOJ/DHS report, Attorney General Jeff Sessions summarized its findings, noting that:

Nearly 95 percent of confirmed aliens in our federal prisons are here illegally. We know based on sentencing data that non-citizens commit a substantially disproportionate number of drug-related offenses, which contributes to our national drug abuse crisis. The simple fact is that any offense committed by a criminal alien is ultimately preventable. One victim is too many. It's time for Congress to enact the President's immigration reform agenda so that we start welcoming the best and brightest while turning away drug dealers, gang members, and other criminals.

Yet, the pro-illegal crowd is doing its best to shield offenders, with some pushing tactics that even have forced police in "sanctuary" cities not to make certain arrests. And as has been noted by the *Washington Times*, "Another option is to reduce criminal penalties" so that immigrants convicted of some offenses "don't rise to the level of being targets for deportation." (Cited was Denver — where some sentences have been reduced to a maximum of 364 days rather than a full year. That deliberate change of a single day, reported the paper, "drops those offenders lower on the federal deportation priority list.")

The upshot may result, as pointed out by a spokesman for the Center for Immigration Studies, in the creation of more lenient rules for illegal immigrants — in essence discriminating against legal American citizens.

In a related point, columnist Deroy Murdock suggests that it might be more accurate, and could change the nature of the debate for conservatives, to refer to "sanctuary cities" as "fugitive cities."

As it is, California is breaking federal laws with the blessing of its governor. For example, 18 U.S. Code § 1071 stipulates that it is "an offense to harbor or conceal any person for whose arrest a warrant or process has been issued, so as to prevent the fugitive's discovery and arrest." In addition, 8 U.S. Code § 1324 prohibits sheltering illegal aliens from authorities.

Such federal laws, say "progressives," don't apply to them.

In March, during a White House roundtable, acting ICE Director Tom Homan pointed out that so-called sanctuary policies "are being used by criminal organizations in Mexico and Central America. It's a



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selling tactic for them to get the smuggled aliens to a sanctuary jurisdiction, where even local law enforcement won't cooperate with ICE, thereby bankrolling the very criminal organizations that smuggle these aliens, or bankrolling the very criminal organizations that have killed Border Patrol agents and special agents."

Homan's pointed remarks deserve quoting *in extenso*. As he put it:

I want to be clear on sanctuary policies. ICE isn't asking local law enforcement to be ICE officers. We don't want them out making vehicle stops, asking immigration questions. What we want them to do is give federal law enforcement officers unfettered access to a county jail to take custody of somebody that's in the country illegally and yet commit another crime against a citizen of this country.

The acting director denied the repeated accusations that its agents were rounding up people indiscriminately. Homan told the law-enforcement officials in attendance:

Everybody we arrest is a targeted enforcement operation. We know exactly who we're going to arrest and exactly where we're going to find them, most of the time....

In fiscal year 2017, for example, for those people that say we don't prioritize re-arrest, 81 percent of all aliens we arrested in California last year were convicted criminals. We also prioritize fugitives and aliens who have illegally re-entered the United States, which is a felony by the mere fact of re-entering after being formally removed.

But let me be clear: As I've said many times, it's a crime to enter this state — enter the United States illegally. It's under the Title 8 code, and ICE officers shouldn't be condemned because they're upholding their sworn oath and enforcing the laws that Congress enacted.

Meanwhile, the charges of "racism" and "white supremacy" are being thrown out when it comes to the debate over immigration, legal or illegal. The accusation tends to cloud reasoned discussion and muddies the issue.

Nonetheless, there are several studies that have demonstrated that it is black Americans who have suffered in particular from increased immigration. One such study about the social effects of immigration in the United States by Cornell University Professor Vernon Briggs concluded: "No racial or ethnic group has benefited less or been harmed more than the nation's African-American community." The catch phrase that "black lives matter," useful when it comes to wrangles with police, somehow gets ignored in this case.

Meanwhile, at the federal legislative level, erstwhile vows by Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell about funding the U.S. border wall with Mexico disappeared into the memory hole.

When it came to the most recent "omnibus" bill in Congress — a 2,300-page monstrosity written in secret by the GOP and Democrat leaders that was (among other points) supposed to crack down on illegal immigration and include considerable funding for President Trump's wall on the porous southern border — those key items were dropped. It was passed less than 24 hours after the huge bill was made public. Nonetheless, all too many Republicans, and the president himself, went along with it. For what it is worth, when Trump put his signature on the \$1.3 trillion legislation on March 23, he said would never sign such a bill in the future.



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“It’s almost like President Obama is still President,” said a spokeswoman for Numbers USA, an immigration-reduction organization. “The Republicans did not get a single win on immigration, Trump’s top priority.”

The Democrats’ congressional leaders understandably gloated. The clear losers are law-abiding taxpaying American citizens; the winners are the wall’s opponents and illegal aliens — the millions here now and the multitude to follow.

*Photo: AP Images*



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