



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on March 13, 2020

Deporting Illegals Now Almost Impossible, ICE Chief Admits, Because of Sheer Numbers

It appears that illegal aliens present in the United States now and still crossing the border will prevail in their fight to stay in the country.

The reason? Sheer numbers. More than one million illegals have deportation orders but won't be leaving anytime soon, says Matt Albence, acting chief of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

ICE is so overwhelmed that removing illegals who jumped the border during the invasion of the last two years will take nearly a century-and-a-half, he told a House committee on Wednesday.

Sheer Numbers

The numbers are beyond staggering, [Albence told](#) the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday in his prepared testimony:

Even if no surge occurs along the border, the effects of the enormous number of illegal entries over the last two years will reverberate for years to come. Today, ICE's non-detained Docket includes a record 3.3 million cases, a steep increase from 2.6 million in FY 2018 and 2.4 million in FY 2017, with over a million of these aliens having already received final orders of removal. The Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) issued roughly 181,000 final orders of removal in FY 2019 and approximately 70,000 final orders of removal in just the first quarter of FY 2020. As numbers continue to climb, they will further outpace ICE's ability to conduct its work identifying, apprehending, and detaining this staggering number prior to effecting removal.

ICE detains just 1.5 percent of illegal aliens, he said, and frighteningly enough, his testimony suggests that those with removal orders have nothing to fear:

Without additional resources to actually effectuate a judge's removal orders, we will have an immigration enforcement and court system in which billions of dollars a year are spent to obtain orders, that are not worth the paper they are written on — with the exception of a small percentage, and mainly those who have come to ICE's attention through the criminal justice system.

Albence said that ICE arrested 2,500 noncriminal fugitives last year, the [Washington Times reported](#) about his testimony. "If we do that, based on just the numbers that came in the last two years, it would take us about 140 years to clear up that backlog."

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Noting that just 10 percent of asylum claims are approved, which means [90 percent are phony](#), Albence told the committee that illegals know they won't be detained, [a complaint](#) border officials [have made](#) for





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more than a year, particularly during last year's surge. [That deluge peaked at](#) more than 140,000 for May.

"So this is not about asylum, this is about the release," Albence said, [Fox reported](#). "Most of these individuals want to come here because they know regardless if they get a removal order, regardless if they show up to court, if they don't have a detention bed at the time the removal order is issued, the likelihood of them actually being removed from the country is nil."

Indeed, it even goes beyond that, two border officials said last year. [Illegals want to be apprehended](#) because [they know](#) they'll be released, and then can disappear. Ninety percent of the "family units" caught at the border, a significant number of which aren't families anyway, don't show up for asylum hearings, a Senate committee learned last year.

[Most of the illegals](#) are poor illiterates from Central America's Northern Triangle of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Backlog in Immigration Courts

Apart from the backlog at ICE, immigration courts face 1,101,061 unadjudicated removal cases, the [TRAC Immigration website at Syracuse University reports](#).

Nearly half of those — 484,774 — are in three states: California, with 180,663; Texas, with 172,999; and New York, with 131,112.

The number of cases now clogging the immigration courts has more than doubled, with an increase of 113.4 percent since fiscal 2016 when they faced 516,031.

The figure has increased 43.3 percent since fiscal 2018, [TRAC reports](#). The backlog then was 768,257.

Last year's total was 1,023,767, which was 33 percent more than fiscal 2018.

Neither the backlogs at ICE nor in the immigration courts are a surprise given what border agents have faced in the last few years.

In fiscal 2018, they bagged 521,090 illegals, [Customs and Border Protection data show](#). Last year, the figure jumped to 977,509 — again, thanks to the "migration" waves that peaked in May at 144,116.

Apart from President Trump reinstating something akin to President Dwight Eisenhower's [Operation Wetback](#), a mass deportation carried out regardless of lawsuits from the Left and their sympathetic judges, the illegal immigrants will be here forever.



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R. Cort Kirkwood is a long-time contributor to The New American and a former newspaper editor.



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