



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on December 22, 2014

DHS Report Admits Deportations Declined in FY 2014

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released its fiscal year (FY) 2014 enforcement statistics on December 19 in a report that indicated that “overall removals” (deportations) had declined.

As Reuters noted of the report’s findings, “In its year-end report, [DHS] said Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a primary agency for border security, deported 315,943 people, down from 368,644 the previous year.”



The report was compiled and released by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a component of the DHS.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that ICE’s 315,943 deportations in the fiscal year that ended September 30 represented “a 14 percent drop and the lowest total since President Obama took office.”

Representative Michael McCaul (R-Texas), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, which oversees immigration enforcement, told the *Times* that the decline in deportations will encourage more illegal immigration. McCaul charged that the figures reveal the Obama administration’s “lax interior enforcement policies.”

“We essentially tell citizens of other countries, ‘If you come here, you can stay — don’t worry, we won’t deport you,’” McCaul told the *Times*. “The reality on the ground is that unless you commit multiple crimes, the chances of your being removed from this country are close to zero.”

The report also indicated ICE had released about 127,000 people, including 30,862 convicted criminals, which promoted criticism from Representative Jeff Duncan (R-S.C.) at a House Homeland Security Committee meeting this week. “That further erodes the trust of the American people,” said Duncan. “The American people want to see border security. They want to see deportations.”

The more unfavorable figures were buried well within the report, however, and the introduction put its most positive spin on its findings. We read:

In FY 2014, DHS conducted a total of 577,295 removals and returns, including 414,481 removals and 162,814 returns. ICE had a total of 315,943 removals or returns, and CBP made 486,651 apprehensions. These figures reflect the Department’s commitment to border security and public safety by focusing on smart and effective immigration enforcement that prioritizes the removal of convicted criminals and recent border entrants.

The report also contained a statement from DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson that touted the agency’s accomplishments, while ignoring the decline in deportations:

DHS’s 2014 year-end enforcement statistics demonstrate that our front line officers and agents continue to execute their critical mission in a smart and effective way, focusing our resources on convicted criminals and those attempting to illegally cross our nation’s borders. This year’s statistics are informed by a number of complex and shifting factors, most notably the 68 percent



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increase in migration from countries other than Mexico, predominately from Central America, and a 14 percent drop in Mexican migration since fiscal year 2013. The unprecedented surge of unaccompanied children and families last summer, as well as the increasing number of jurisdictions declining to honor ICE detainers, also impacted DHS enforcement operations. Notwithstanding these challenges, DHS components have adjusted and continue to successfully secure our borders and protect our communities.

As the reader peruses the entire report, the decrease in deportations is periodically noted, but always in a context that attempts to cast the decline as part of an overall success story. Examples include:

- In FY 2014, while total criminal removals declined from last year, a significant percentage of ICE's interior removals — 85 percent — remained focused on criminal aliens.
- In addition, ICE removed 2,802 individuals in FY 2014 who were classified as suspected or confirmed gang members. As a result, while overall removals declined in FY 2014, ICE has sustained the improved quality of its removals by focusing on the most serious public safety and national security threats.

ICE also shared the blame for declining deportations with local law enforcement who did not cooperate with its requests for detainers. Such requests occur when local law enforcement arrests an illegal immigrant on another charge and that individual is scheduled for release, either after having served a short confinement or because his case has been dismissed. Upon learning that the immigrant's release is imminent, ICE may ask local authorities to detain the individual for a period of time — perhaps 48 hours — beyond when he would otherwise be released so that the individual's custody may be transferred to ICE. The report stated:

Since January 2014, state and local law enforcement authorities declined to honor 10,182 detainers. This required ICE to expend additional resources attempting to locate, apprehend, and remove criminal aliens who were released into the community, rather than transferred directly into custody. These changes further contributed to decreased ICE removals.

This is a legitimate issue, particularly in jurisdictions where a “liberal,” “pro-immigrant” (in reality, *pro-illegal* immigrant) mentality prevails. We noted in our article last October that New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito had introduced a bill in the council that would “significantly restrict the conditions under which the NYPD complies with ... ICE requests.”

The bill was signed into law by New York Mayor Bill de Blasio on November 14.

Federal immigration enforcement is also hindered in self-proclaimed “sanctuary cities” that have decided by legal regulation or internal memo not to inquire about the immigration status of persons with whom they come into contact, including individuals detained upon suspicion of having committed crimes. Among U.S. cities that have designated themselves as sanctuaries in this regard are New York; Los Angeles; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; San Diego, Houston; Detroit; Chicago; Minneapolis; Miami; Denver; Baltimore; and Seattle.

However, it is difficult to pin all the blame for ICE's reduced deportation numbers on local authorities when President Obama announced his intention on November 20 to use executive action to grant protection from deportation to millions of illegal immigrants.

Obama promised those who fit his criteria, “If you register, pass a criminal background check, and you're willing to pay your fair share of taxes — you'll be able to apply to stay in this country



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temporarily, without fear of deportation. You can come out of the shadows and get right with the law.”
With a national policy such as that, can 2015’s deportation numbers be anything but worse than 2014’s?

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