



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 10, 2017

Dramatic Drop of Illegal Border Crossers Since Trump Took Office

Statistics released by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on May 9 indicate that the flow of illegal immigration across our southwestern border has declined dramatically since Donald Trump took office in January. During the first three full months of Trump's administration, 42,000 illegal border crossers were taken into custody, compared to nearly 133,000 apprehensions during the same period a year ago.



In a statement cited by AFP, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) spokesman David Lapan credited tougher surveillance and enforcement by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (a DHS agency) but said that DHS anticipates a possible increase in coming months following the winter.

Despite the decrease in illegals apprehended, Lapan said DHS still wants to add as many as 5,000 more immigration enforcement staff, saying, "We still have shortages" in border enforcement personnel.

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Another report in the *Washington Times* noted that illegal immigration across the southwestern border is down a 76 percent since Trump took office. Total apprehensions by the Border Patrol fell to 11,129 in April, the lowest monthly total for any month in 17 years.

The *Times* also quoted DHS's Lapan, who said: "A lot of the discussion about changes in our enforcement policy and the way we are going about doing business, we believe that has deterred people. When you get here, it is likely you are going to get caught. You are going to be returned to your country."

Other statistics reported by the *Washington Examiner* indicated that, in addition to the 11,129 people apprehended at the border, Border Patrol agents declared 4,651 others inadmissible, bringing the total of illegal aliens caught to 15,780. That number is down from 48,500 last April. Another 12,193 people were apprehended in March and 18,756 in February.

The *Examiner* cited a statement made by Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly in February noting that the "unprecedented" drop from 31,578 apprehensions in January reflects a reduced flow of illegal immigrants, and indicates that President Trump's policies and executive actions on immigration — calling for a new border wall and follow-through of all immigration laws — are already causing some illegal migrants to stop before coming to the border.

Although illegal entrant numbers typically rise during the spring and summer months, Kelly added that the administration's early efforts to thwart these problems indicate continued action will have an effect in the coming months.

A report in *USA Today* stated that during an April visit to Nogales, Arizona, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a directive to federal prosecutors to bring felony criminal charges against immigrants suspected of multiple illegal entries. Undocumented entry cases have been previously



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charged as misdemeanors.

“This is the Trump era,” Sessions declared. “The lawlessness, the abdication of the duty to enforce our immigration laws and the catch-and-release practices of old are over.”

USA Today also reported that Sessions has warned nine local governments that they could lose federal funding for supporting so-called “sanctuary city” policies restricting cooperation with federal immigration enforcement efforts.

The latest figures continue a trend we [reported about in March](#), when we cited a March 8 statement from DHS Secretary Kelly noting that CBP had released data showing a 40-percent drop in apprehensions of illegal immigrants from January to February. The number of illegal aliens apprehended during that period fell from 31,578 to 18,762 persons.

Kelly’s statement observed: “The drop in apprehensions shows a marked change in trends. Since the Administration’s implementation of Executive Orders to enforce immigration laws, apprehensions and inadmissible activity is trending toward the lowest monthly total in at least the last five years.”

One major change instituted very early in the Trump administration occurred during a ceremony at the Department of Homeland Security honoring Kelly as the department’s newly confirmed secretary. At the ceremony, Trump signed an executive order to begin construction of a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico and to improve immigration enforcement, which includes ending the “catch and release” policy practiced by the Obama administration.

Under the “catch and release” policy, illegal border crossers were issued a “notice to appear” and released instead of being detained and processed for deportation.

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