



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 14, 2014

Fed Release of Illegal Alien Criminals Prompts Outrage

According to a report published by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) this week, during 2013, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) released 36,007 aliens with criminal convictions from detention who were awaiting the final disposition of their cases.

Because many of the 36,007 freed aliens had multiple convictions, they were responsible for a total of 87,818 convictions among them. ICE statistics indicate the number of aliens convicted for the following crimes being released from custody:



- 116 homicides
- 426 sexual assaults
- 303 kidnappings
- 1,075 aggravated assaults
- 1,160 stolen vehicles
- 9,187 dangerous drug possessions
- 24,822 DUIs (15,635 for liquor and 9,187 for dangerous drugs)
- 303 flight escapes

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CIS noted that the 36,007 criminal aliens counted in this document “are a different set of cases from the 68,000 releases reported earlier.”

In our April 1 article on this subject, we reported that ICE officials had released 67,879 illegal immigrants with criminal convictions in 2013 and made no move to deport them. Those figures had been collected by the CIS from ICE’s “Weekly Departures and Detention Report” for the end of fiscal year 2013.

The latest figures represent a different category, noted CIS:

The 36,007 criminal aliens counted [in this week’s report] are aliens who were being processed for deportation and were freed while awaiting the final disposition of their cases, or afterwards. The 68,000 releases [reported on March 31] were cases of alien criminals encountered by ICE officers, usually in jails, but who were let go in lieu of processing them for immigration removal charges in that year.

Jessica Vaughan, CIS’s policy studies director, said the statistics discredit the Obama administration’s own argument that it’s trying to keep its enforcement efforts targeted at dangerous criminals.

“We keep hearing from the administration that they are focused like a laser on enforcement against the



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worst of the worst, convicted criminals, as their top priority. On the other hand, they are releasing, at a rate of about 100 a day, aliens from their custody with criminal convictions, and many of them are serious criminal convictions," said Vaughan.

Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas), who is a former chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, issued a press release on May 12 responding to the ICE statistics collected and made public by CIS, describing the mass release of criminally convicted aliens as "the worst prison break in American history." Smith's release stated, in part:

President Obama's lax immigration policies have put the lives of Americans at risk. In 2013, ICE officials reportedly released more than 36,000 criminal immigrants who had nearly 88,000 convictions.

Obama administration officials want the American people to think these individuals were guilty of minor, petty offenses. But the convictions tell a chilling story. Among those released were criminal immigrants convicted of murder, rape, kidnapping, drunk driving, and aggravated assault....

This would be considered the worst prison break in American history, except it was sanctioned by the President and perpetrated by our own immigration officials. These criminal immigrants should have been deported to ensure that they could never commit crimes on U.S. soil. But instead, ICE officials chose not to detain them and instead released them back onto American streets....

There should be no discussion of reforming our nation's immigration laws until the President enforces the laws currently on the books. The safety of the American people should be the President's top priority. We need a President who follows the law and departs criminal immigrants who violate our laws and endanger our lives.

Breitbart news reported that Smith was one of the members of Congress who has pressed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) — of which ICE is the principal investigative arm — for an explanation for these outrageous policies.

Smith did receive a response from DHS earlier this year admitting that ICE did release 36,007 criminal aliens in 2013, but the answer did not provide any justification for the release of those who had been criminally convicted. ICE has not responded to the CIS report, but told Breitbart News on May 12 that "they are looking into it."

CBS News reported on May 13 that ICE issued a statement in response to the CIS report, saying that most of the individuals described in the report were released under restrictions, such as GPS monitoring, telephone monitoring, supervision, or surety bond.

The agency asserted that in some cases, ICE was required by law to release the individuals from custody, stating:

The releases required by court decisions account for a disproportionate number of the serious crimes listed in the report. For example, mandatory releases account for over 75% of the homicides listed. Others, typically those with less serious offenses, were released as a discretionary matter after career law enforcement officers made a judgment regarding the priority of holding the individual, given ICE's resources, and prioritizing the detention and removal of individuals who pose a risk to public safety or national security.

CIS's Vaughan said in an e-mail to Stephanie Slifer of CBS's *Crimesider* on May 13 that ICE's response is "hardly reassuring," and the fact that the agency is admitting to having released 25 percent of the



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homicide convicts listed by their own choice is “truly alarming.”

“What possible justification could there be for freeing a murderer who is being deported? Dozens of times?” Vaughan asked.

One thing that can be said with certainty is that it is not a priority of the Obama administration to enforce immigration law. However, weakness on immigration is not exclusively a Democrat monopoly. While several GOP senators have strongly opposed weak “immigration reform” legislation that includes amnesty (including the bipartisan “Gang of Eight” bill passed last June), the Tea Party compiled a list of 14 Republican senators it says have “voted for amnesty over border security and interior immigration law enforcement.”

One Republican senator who has been strong on immigration enforcement, Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), issued a statement on April 18 expressing his apprehension about a possible House immigration vote. After noting that President Obama and congressional Democrats have “put their collective weight behind an immigration bill that delivers a sweeping amnesty for open borders groups and a huge guest worker surge for corporations,” Sessions observed that — according to the *Wall Street Journal* report — “House GOP leaders are considering a plan to move an apparently similar immigration plan this summer.”

As we noted in our April 1 article, should a member of the GOP be elected to the presidency, he or she might enforce immigration law more conscientiously than President Obama, but such enforcement cannot be any better than the law, itself. So long as Republicans in Congress are willing to join Democrats in voting for amnesty, illegal immigration will not be curbed.

In the meantime, all Americans concerned about illegal immigration must voice their concerns through their elected representative that our current laws be enforced to the letter of the law.

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