



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 21, 2015

## Most Minor Illegal Aliens Are Resettled in the United States and Not Deported

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has supplied only limited information in response to a Freedom of Information Act request filed in January by the Immigration Reform Law Institute, on behalf of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) to determine the cost of resettling and educating the tens of thousands of illegal unaccompanied minors who came across the U.S. border last year. ICE has partially answered just two of the five requests.



Although sufficient information to determine the exact cost of accommodating the tens of thousands of illegal aliens allowed to remain in the United States is not available, this much is known: Of 77,000 illegal immigrant adults and minors who were apprehended and served Notices to Appear between July 18, 2014 and May 26, 2015, only a little over 3,000 of them appeared before a judge and were ordered “removed” (deported). This means that 96 percent of illegal aliens apprehended either received judicial or administrative amnesty, were ordered removed “in absentia” (that is, they did not appear for the proceedings and are still likely residing within the United States), or their case has not been decided yet.

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Breitbart News compiled the above-cited statistics from the Justice Department’s Executive Office of Immigration Review for a June 24 article. In an August 20 report, the news organization provided details of the letter sent by FAIR to ICE and listed the information that the immigration reform group had requested:

- (1) the costs of building of family detention centers;
- (2) the costs of apprehending, processing and detaining unaccompanied minors;
- (3) the costs transporting, transferring, removing and repatriating unaccompanied minors;
- (4) the costs related to ICE’s representation of government in removal procedures involving unaccompanied minors; and;
- (5) the number of instances where objections to the return of unaccompanied minors were raised by the governments of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

However, noted Breitbart, ICE refused to answer three of the questions that FAIR had asked and only partially answered two others. The only useful data ICE supplied was the costs of transporting, transferring, and removing illegal minors, as well as the costs of the man-hours such tasks required. The total cost of those operations amounted to \$58.2 million, \$42.6 million more than the \$15.6 million ICE spent for them in the previous year.

FAIR told Breitbart News that “68,541 [unaccompanied minors] were apprehended entering the U.S.



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Virtually all of them have been allowed to remain in the U.S., at least temporarily.”

The *New York Times* provided much statistical information about the surge in illegal-alien children crossing the border in a report published on October 21, 2014, noting that more than 68,000 children had been caught crossing the United States border since the previous October. As for where the children were sent after being apprehended, the report noted that since January 1, 2014 more than 43,000 unaccompanied minors had been placed with sponsors, usually parents or relatives, with whom they remained while their cases are being processed. The majority of the children were in states “where immigrants have traditionally settled, like Texas, New York, California and Florida.” A large number were also sent to Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, and Louisiana.

The report noted that more than three-quarters of the unaccompanied minors came from three countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Children from Mexico, once the largest source of illegal migrants, made up less than a quarter of the total.

The *Times* report noted that the number of unaccompanied minors began to surge in 2012, and gave “poverty, violence and family reunification” as the most often cited reasons for the surge.

However, FAIR and many other sources have attributed the surge to the Obama administration’s own policies, noting that its refusal to enforce immigration law has only encouraged more illegal border crossings.

FAIR noted: “In July 2015, the Government Accountability Office confirmed that President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals [DACA] program played a substantial role in triggering the surge of [unaccompanied minors] in 2014.”

This view was mirrored by Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) who posted a statement about the crisis on his Senate webpage on June 3, 2014 that read, in part:

The rising crisis at the border is the direct and predictable result of actions taken by President Obama. He and his Administration have announced to the world that they will not enforce America’s immigration laws, and have emphasized in particular that foreign youth will be exempted from these laws. The world has heard the President’s call, and illegal immigrants are pouring across the border in pursuit of his promised amnesty. President Obama is responsible for this calamity, and only by declaring to the world that our border is no longer open — and that the law will be restored — can this emergency be stopped.

The influx of minors from Central America presented problems beyond those usually associated with illegal aliens. Most of them were not deported immediately back to their country of origin because the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 — enacted to prevent victims of child trafficking from being automatically sent back to those who had effectively enslaved them. The act required that children entering our country illegally be granted a court appearance to allow a judge to evaluate their particular situation.

The authors of that act had not foreseen last year’s massive surge of tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors. The massive numbers of such UACs clogged the immigration courts, and many hearings were postponed for years. In the meantime, pending the hearings, the children were initially housed in camps and eventually resettled in sponsor homes around the country.

Until their cases are resolved, U.S. law requires that they be provided with the full range of social services, including education. As we [noted in an article last September](#): “The massive influx of children



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unaccompanied by parents or relatives who have illegally crossed our borders this year is placing a heavy burden on the American schools that have been given the responsibility of educating them.”

In that article, we looked at the burden placed by the cost of educating these UACs on the local educational systems in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and Lynn, Massachusetts.

A recent statement from FAIR note that educating 68,541 illegal immigrant children at “an average annual cost of \$12,401 per child enrolled in K-12 education, the annual cost to local schools is at least \$850 million. However, since virtually all of the [unaccompanied minors] are non-English proficient, the actual costs are likely substantially greater.”

The Obama administration’s lax enforcement of our nation’s immigration laws is burdensome in many ways, including more than the costs associated with the surge in UACs. It also includes increased crimes rates from both individual alien criminals and gangs composed of illegal aliens. Senator Sessions has frequently cited the negative effects on the American job market caused by overly generous granting of foreign work visas.

Americans are becoming more aware of the negative impacts of our present immigration policy and are demanding that our open borders be closed and that illegal aliens be deported. This is sure to be a major issue in the upcoming 2016 presidential election, with Donald Trump, in particular, already making it a major part of his campaign.

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