



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on November 15, 2010

Are Illegals Headed Back Home?

BBVA Bancomer Research has produced a study that indicates that since Arizona enacted Senate Bill 1070, which provides for state law enforcement officers to enforce federal immigration laws, that the Hispanic population of Arizona has dropped by about 100,000 people.

The Mexican government, the study notes, reported 23,380 Mexicans who returned from Arizona to Mexico between June and September of this year. According to U.S. Census figures, slightly less than two million people living in Arizona are Hispanic, or about 30 percent of the state's population. That ethnic description of Arizona, however, includes citizens and legal aliens, who would be unaffected by the new Arizona law, as well as illegal immigrants.



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This and related studies released at the Global Forum on Migration and Development noted that there are about 720,000 unemployed Mexican immigrants in the U.S. Arizona's economy has been in tough straits lately, and the construction industry — which typically employs a high percentage of Hispanic immigrants — has been especially hit hard. It is possible that part of the returning Mexican immigrants, whether legal or illegal, is a function of jobs drying up in the Arizona desert.

The Mexican immigrants' return to Mexico also appears to have had a significant impact upon money sent from the U.S. back home to Mexico. An estimated 12 million Mexicans live in the United States, and their remittances to families in Mexico fell in 2009 and also in 2008 because of the decline in jobs for these immigrants. These amounts, which are estimated to have peaked at \$26 billion, are significant and will affect economic conditions in Mexico. After oil exports, these payments — nearly all of which come from the U.S. — are the largest source of foreign income for Mexico.

The 2010 midterm elections might provide some indications of what will happen in states bordering Mexico, which bear the brunt of illegal immigration. [Susana](#) Martinez, the incoming Republican governor of New Mexico, is an outspoken opponent of illegal immigration. Her party also made serious gains in the New Mexico House of Representatives. Gov. Perry of Texas also begins his next term in office with a much stronger political hand. If these two states enact laws similar to Arizona's, making it tougher to break our nation's immigration laws, then more pressure might be put on California — teetering on the edge of fiscal meltdown — to do the same.



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