



U.S. Senate  
Committee on the Judiciary  
“How Mass Deportations Will Separate American Families, Harm Our Armed Forces, and Devastate Our Economy”

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Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Graham and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, and I currently serve as a Senior Fellow at the American Immigration Council, a non-profit organization that envisions a nation where immigrants are embraced, communities are enriched, and justice prevails for all. We strive to create a society that values immigrants as vital contributors and where everyone is afforded an equal opportunity to thrive socially, economically, and culturally. We do this by shaping immigration policies and practices at the federal, state, and local levels through educating decisionmakers and the public and advancing sensible policy solutions through research and advocacy.

The Council has long studied the population of immigrants in the United States, of all immigration statuses. On our website, we maintain an interactive map called “Map the Impact” showing the demographic characteristics of immigrants in each state, county, major metro area, and congressional district, as well as data on the demographic profile and economic contributions of undocumented immigrants.<sup>1</sup>

Today, there are at least 13 million undocumented people living in the United States.<sup>2</sup> President-elect Trump promises to carry out a mass deportation campaign with the stated intent of arresting and deporting every one of them. So, who are we talking about? While most people entered without inspection across the U.S.-Mexico border, millions entered with a visa and then overstayed.<sup>3</sup> Over 8.6 million entered the country before 2009, meaning they have now lived here for a minimum of 15 years.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> American Immigration Council, “Map the Impact,” <https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/map-the-impact/>.

<sup>2</sup> Using American Community Survey data, we estimate that there were 10.99 million undocumented immigrants in the country as of 2022. DHS data shows that over 2.5 million people were released after crossing the southern border either at or between a port of entry since January 2023. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec., Office of Homeland Security Statistics, “Immigration Enforcement and Legal Processes Monthly Tables,” <https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/immigration-enforcement/immigration-enforcement-and-legal-processes-monthly>, last updated October 29, 2024. Roughly 500,000 additional people entered through the CHNV parole program over that period. Without more recent Census data, we do not know the total of undocumented immigrants that left the country in 2023 and 2024, so it is not possible to provide an exact estimate of the undocumented population as of today.

<sup>3</sup> Congressional Research Service, “Nonimmigrant Overstays: Overview and Policy Issues,” November 21, 2023, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesec/R47848.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec, Office of Homeland Security Statistics, “Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2018–January 2022,” April 2024, at 4 <https://ohss.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024->

Nearly five million have been here for a minimum of 25 years, and nearly 1.5 million have been here for a minimum of 35 years.<sup>5</sup> Without a path to permanent legal status, they have spent decades living in limbo; living, working, and often raising a family. They have become integral parts of their communities, and yet the law prevents them from securing the necessary paperwork that can make it formal.

Undocumented people are part of nearly every community and institution in the country. Over 100,000 undocumented children graduate from an American high school each year.<sup>6</sup> We estimate that there were 408,000 undocumented college students in 2021.<sup>7</sup> As of 2022, we estimate that there were roughly 1.7 million undocumented immigrants with a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>8</sup>

Undocumented immigrants are also parents, spouses, and family members to millions of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents. Over 11.3 million U.S. citizens, plus an additional 2.4 million people with lawful permanent residency, live with someone who is undocumented (most often a member of their family).<sup>9</sup> Nationwide, more than one in 13 children in K-12 education has at least one parent who is undocumented; in Nevada, one in every seven, in Texas, one in every eight, and in California, one in every 11.<sup>10</sup>

While President-elect Trump talks about targeting “criminal immigrants,” over 90 percent have no prior criminal record whatsoever.<sup>11</sup> Of the minority that do, the most common prior convictions are traffic offenses.<sup>12</sup> Efforts to ramp up arrests for a mass deportation campaign would therefore necessarily sweep up thousands of people who have no or minimal criminal histories. In October, the Council published an analysis of 42 years of demographic data confirming that there is no statistically significant correlation between the immigrant share of the population and the total crime rate in any state.<sup>13</sup>

Instead of mass deportation, Congress could create a new path to permanent legal status allowing undocumented people already living here to file an application, pay a fee, and get some form of permanent status. The Council has studied the impact of the creation of a path to legal status for the undocumented population. In 2013, we examined the impact of the 1986 path to legal status created by the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and concluded that legalization “would be the cheapest

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[06/2024\\_0418\\_ohss\\_estimates-of-the-unauthorized-immigrant-population-residing-in-the-united-states-january-2018%25E2%2580%2593january-2022.pdf](#).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Fwd.US, “The Post-DACA Generation is Here,” Mary 23, 2023, <https://www.fwd.us/news/undocumented-high-school-graduates/>.

<sup>7</sup> American Immigration Council, “Undocumented College Students,” August 2, 2023, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/undocumented-college-students-2023>.

<sup>8</sup> American Immigration Council, “Mass Deportation: Devastating Costs to America, Its Budget and Economy,” October 2, 2024, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/mass-deportation>.

<sup>9</sup> Fwd.US, “New data analysis shows 28 million people, including nearly 20 million Latinos, are at risk of family separation in 2025,” October 24, 2024, <https://www.fwd.us/news/mixed-status-families-oct/>.

<sup>10</sup> Pew Research Center, “Unauthorized immigrants and characteristics for states, 2022,” [https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2024/07/SR\\_24.07.22\\_unauthorized-immigrants\\_table-3.xlsx](https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2024/07/SR_24.07.22_unauthorized-immigrants_table-3.xlsx).

<sup>11</sup> Muzaffar Chishti and Michelle Mittelstadt, “Unauthorized Immigrants with Criminal Convictions: Who Might Be a Priority for Removal?” *Migration Policy Institute*, November 2016, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/unauthorized-immigrants-criminal-convictions-who-might-be-priority-removal>.

<sup>12</sup> This is based on the profile of criminal records of individuals arrested by ICE. See, e.g., U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Fiscal Year 2019 Enforcement and Removal Operations Report,” 2020, <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2019/eroReportFY2019.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> American Immigration Council, “Debunking the Myth of Immigrants and Crime,” October 17, 2024, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/debunking-myth-immigrants-and-crime>.

federal workforce development and anti-poverty program for children in history.”<sup>14</sup> Economists agree that a path to legal status “is not only a humanitarian act; it is also a form of economic stimulus” that will “generate more tax revenue for federal, state, and local governments, as well as more consumer spending which sustains more jobs in U.S. businesses,” which “would benefit everyone by growing the economy and expanding the labor market.”<sup>15</sup> And we examined data from both the government and the academy showing that legalization programs do not drive increased migration, and if properly designed may actually reduce migration at the border.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the economic benefits of legalization, President-elect Trump plans to pursue mass deportations of millions of undocumented people. This year, the Council studied the impact of taking the country down this path.<sup>17</sup> In our October 2024 study, “Mass Deportation: Devastating Costs to America, Its Budget and Economy,” we examined the fiscal and economic impacts of mass deportations of the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants present in the U.S. as of 2022, as well as the 2.3 million individuals who entered the country and were placed into removal proceedings from January 2023 through April 2024.<sup>18</sup>

Our analysis concludes that beyond the enormous human toll that mass deportations would take on the U.S., mass deportations would also impose extraordinary economic and fiscal damage to our country. Mass deportations would cost U.S. taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars, with an estimated cost of an 11-year operation to arrest, detain, process, and deport one million people per year at \$88 billion.<sup>19</sup>

Mass deportations would also cause economic chaos. As millions are expelled, the U.S. population and labor force would shrink. So too would the economy. Prices would rise in sectors with significant undocumented workforces, including construction, agriculture, and hospitality. Building, maintaining, and repairing houses would become more expensive, as would groceries, restaurants, travel, and childcare. Every American would feel the pinch of inflation.

Overall, we estimate that a successful mass deportation campaign would lead to a loss in total GDP of 4.2 percent to 6.8 percent; in comparison, the GDP dropped by 4.3 percent during the Great Recession.<sup>20</sup> And just like that period, many Americans would lose their jobs. Even an *attempt* to deport millions of people will have repercussions for local economies. After all, undocumented immigrants are not just producers, they are also consumers. Collectively, they hold \$256.8 billion in annual purchasing power. If millions of

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. Sherrie A. Kossoudji, “Back to the Future: The Impact of Legalization Then and Now,” American Immigration Council, January 31, 2013, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/back-future-impact-legalization-then-and-now>.

<sup>15</sup> American Immigration Council, “An Immigration Stimulus: The Economic Benefits of a Legalization Program for Unauthorized Immigrants,” April 2013, [https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/legalization\\_0.pdf](https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/legalization_0.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> American Immigration Council, “Built to Last: How Immigration Reform Can Deter Unauthorized Immigration,” May 2013, [https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/built\\_to\\_last\\_how\\_immigration\\_reform\\_can\\_deter\\_unauthorized\\_immigration.pdf](https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/built_to_last_how_immigration_reform_can_deter_unauthorized_immigration.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Portions of the aforementioned report are reproduced in this testimony.

<sup>18</sup> American Immigration Council, “Mass Deportation: Devastating Costs to America, Its Budget and Economy,” October 2, 2024, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/mass-deportation>.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> John Weinberg, “The Great Recession and its Aftermath,” Federal Reserve History, November 22, 2013, <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/great-recession-and-its-aftermath>.

people are deported or otherwise forced to leave, American businesses will close not just from a lack of workers, but also from a lack of customers.

A large-scale mass deportation campaign will also increase labor exploitation during the years in which it is carried out. Unscrupulous employers will dangle deportation over any of their workers who dare to push back, and will have the full force of the U.S. government to back up their threats.

This country is at a crossroads. In one direction, we can crack down on unscrupulous employers, strengthen millions of families, and build American prosperity. In the other direction, we can crash the American economy, break up families, and take a hammer to the foundations of our society. Faced with this choice, we should pick the path that leads to a brighter future for all.

### **Fiscal Costs of Mass Deportation**

In calculating the costs to the U.S. government of mass deportation, we divided the removal process into four stages: arrest, detention, legal processing, and removal. For each of these stages, we examined a wide variety of government and public sources, including presidential budgets, congressional appropriations reports, official DHS documents, and testimony of government officials, to produce an estimate for the cost to the taxpayers for each step in this process.

We acknowledge that it is impossible to fully model the governmental costs of any effort to carry out the largest deportation operation in human history, given the number of variables involved and the scale of operations. The most significant variables for any such operation would be time and capital investment. A single operation aiming to deport 13.3 million people would unfold differently, and with different results and costs, than a longer operation carried out over the course of multiple years. We conclude that a single mass deportation operation to deport 13.3 million people, presuming all costs remain the same as today, would cost at least \$315 billion dollars.

By contrast, a protracted operation would require sustained investment in detention centers and immigration courtrooms that would have to remain in operation for over a decade. Inflation would also increase costs on an annual basis. Even assuming that 20 percent of the undocumented population would “self-deport” under a yearslong mass-deportation regime, we estimate the ultimate cost of such a longer operation would average out to \$88 billion annually, for a total cost of \$967.9 billion over the course of more than a decade. A summary of our findings is below.

#### **Arrests:**

- ICE arrest operations are target-based and begin when a person is identified through a database hit as the person is taken into local, state, or federal custody. There is no modern history of indiscriminate “papers, please” raids on immigrant communities, although ICE has often carried out large-scale worksite raids which involve the arrest of all workers at a target site who cannot establish their status.
- Only 18 percent of ICE arrests from 2015 through 2021 occurred “at large” in the community. The remaining 82 percent were custodial arrests which occurred inside of a local, state, or federal jail. Custodial arrests are easier in localities which cooperate with ICE.

- We calculate that the average cost of one custodial arrest is \$3,600, compared to \$6,650 for one “at-large” arrest. ICE averages fewer than 30,000 “at-large” arrests per year.
- **We calculate that arresting one million people per year would cost \$7 billion annually and require hiring roughly 31,000 new ICE employees.**

## Detention

- Many immigrants are eligible for release on bond at the discretion of ICE agents and immigration judges, while others are subject to “mandatory detention” and may only be released on ICE’s discretion. However, ICE has never had the capacity to detain everyone.
- Currently, ICE is budgeted for 41,500 detention beds. Over 90 percent of ICE detention beds are operated by private prison companies or rented in state or local jails.
- The average daily cost of a standard detention bed was \$187 in FY 2023. The daily cost of a bed in a “soft-sided” facility in FY 2023 was \$317. When ICE still operated family detention centers, the inflation-adjusted cost of a single bed was \$349.
- **We calculate that building and maintaining sufficient detention capacity to detain one million people per year would cost \$66.2 billion annually.**

## Legal Processing

- Before any person can be deported, the government must obtain a final order of removal or grant authorization to voluntarily depart. While DHS may rapidly issue removal orders to some recent border crossers, those arrested in the interior generally must be placed into removal proceedings and see an immigration judge.
- The immigration court system is operated by the Department of Justice, while ICE acts as prosecutors. As of October 2024, there were 735 immigration judges nationwide overseeing 3.7 million cases, which take two to six years on average.
- The government estimates that it would cost \$1.8 million for every new judge (accounting for associated support staff and necessary space and equipment).
- **We calculate that hiring sufficient immigration judges and ICE prosecutors to generate one million removal orders per year would cost \$12.6 billion annually.**

## Removals

- After a person has been ordered deported, the government must carry out the removal. Some individuals are permitted to depart via commercial flight, but most deportations are carried out with the targets held in detention and then put on a removal flight or bused to a port of entry.
- ICE uses almost exclusively charter services to carry out removals, with over 93 percent of ICE’s Transportation and Removal Program budget going to private contractors.
- Deportations are carried out pursuant to repatriation agreements and require cooperation from receiving countries. Some countries refuse all or most deportations, including China, India,

Russia, and Venezuela. If deportation is not foreseeable, a person with a final order of removal may only be detained more than six months if ICE proves they would pose a danger if released.

- **We calculate that conducting one million removals per year would cost \$2.1 billion annually.**

We emphasize that our estimate is likely conservative, as we were unable to estimate several costs for aspects of this process which we know would be required, including the hiring costs of tens of thousands of agents, the costs of capital investments necessary to increase the ICE Air Operations charter aircraft capacity, legal costs, and a myriad of other ancillary costs necessary to ramp up federal immigration enforcement operations to the scale necessary to actually deport the entire undocumented population.

### Economic Impacts of Mass Deportation

Beyond the direct costs of the largest law enforcement operation in history, mass deportation would profoundly damage the U.S. economy. We used data from the most recent American Community Survey to estimate the economic impacts of deporting the 11 million undocumented people in the country as of 2022.

First, mass deportations would exacerbate ongoing U.S. labor shortages.<sup>21</sup> In 2022, nearly 90 percent of undocumented immigrants were of working age, compared to 61.3 percent of the U.S.-born population aged between 16 and 64, so undocumented immigrants are more likely to actively participate in the labor force. Losing these working-age undocumented immigrants would worsen the severe workforce challenges that many industries have already been struggling with in the past few years.

The impact of mass deportations would be concentrated in several key U.S. industries. The construction and agriculture industries would lose at least one in eight workers, while in hospitality, about one in 14 workers would be deported due to their undocumented status. Within those industries, some trades would be hit harder than others. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 42 percent of farmworkers are undocumented.<sup>22</sup> Our own analysis suggests that nearly one third of workers in major construction trades, such as plasterers, roofers, and painters, are undocumented. Similarly, 28 percent of agricultural graders and sorters, and a quarter of household cleaners, are undocumented.

The impact of losing these workers would be devastating. Labor shortages in the construction industry are already high, with the industry projecting a need to hire an additional 454,000 new workers in 2025 just to keep up with demand.<sup>23</sup> The construction workforce is already looking at the possibility of a “foreboding exodus of experience” as the median age of construction workers rises;<sup>24</sup> deporting an additional 1.5 million workers could destabilize the industry, rapidly increasing prices for construction labor and causing some construction firms to go under. Not only would the price of new houses rise, but so too would the price of maintenance and repair. These impacts would be felt not only by homeowners and

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<sup>21</sup> See Stephanie Ferguson Melhorn, “Understanding America’s Labor Shortage,” U.S. Chamber of Commerce, November 22, 2024 (“Right now, the latest data shows that we have 8 million job openings in the U.S. but only 6.8 million unemployed workers.”)

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Dep’t of Agriculture, “Farm Labor,” last updated December 6, 2024, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-labor/#legalstatus>.

<sup>23</sup> Associated Builders and Contractors, “ABC: 2024 Construction Workforce Shortage Tops Half a Million,” January 31, 2024, <https://www.abc.org/News-Media/News-Releases/abc-2024-construction-workforce-shortage-tops-half-a-million>.

<sup>24</sup> Zachary Phillips, “Construction’s age problem: A foreboding exodus of experience,” *Construction Dive*, May 25, 2023, <https://www.constructiondive.com/news/construction-labor-retirement-recruiting-dei/651184/>.

likely home buyers, but also by the U.S. government, which would be required to spend more on any of its own construction projects, more on disaster recovery, and more on basic maintenance of any U.S. government property.

As prices rise and businesses falter, Americans would lose jobs. A recent study also found that for every 500,000 immigrants removed from the labor market due to deportation, U.S.-born workers lose 44,000 jobs.<sup>25</sup> Using that metric, deportation of 11 million undocumented immigrants could cause a loss of 968,000 jobs held by U.S. citizens.

Mass deportation would also reduce the overall size of the U.S. economy. Among the deported would be one million undocumented immigrant entrepreneurs, who generated \$27.1 billion in total business income in 2022. Losing the 157,800 undocumented entrepreneurs in neighborhood businesses would lead to disruptions to services that have become an integral part of community life and provide local jobs for Americans. We also find that undocumented immigrant households have a combined purchasing power of \$256.8 billion. This is money that goes into the economy and stimulates broader economic growth. After all, undocumented immigrants not only produce goods; they also consume goods, and that money goes back into the U.S. economy. Mass deportation would disrupt this economic behavior and damage the economy.

Mass deportation would also deprive federal, state, and local governments of billions in tax contributions from undocumented households. In 2022 alone, undocumented immigrant households paid \$46.8 billion in federal taxes and \$29.3 billion in state and local taxes.

Yet undocumented immigrants are unable to benefit from many of the programs they pay into, including Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment insurance. The U.S. would lose out on key contributions undocumented households make to social safety net programs annually, including \$22.6 billion to Social Security and \$5.7 billion to Medicare. As the U.S. population ages, the loss of these payments would make it increasingly challenging to keep social safety net programs solvent.

Beyond broader economic impacts, millions of families would feel the pinch caused by deportation. Deporting undocumented immigrants would separate four million mixed-status families, affecting 8.5 million U.S. citizens with undocumented family members (5.1 million of whom are U.S. citizen children). Many of those who would be deported are breadwinners, and mass deportations would slash the income of their households by an average of 62.7 percent (\$51,200 per year). In many cases, U.S. citizens may choose to leave as well to remain with a loved one who was being deported, which would make the economic impact even worse.

Taken together, we calculate that mass deportation would lead to a loss of 4.2 percent to 6.8 percent of annual U.S. GDP, or \$1.1 trillion to \$1.7 trillion in 2022 dollars. In comparison, the U.S. GDP shrunk by 4.3 percent during the Great Recession between 2007 and 2009. The negative impact would be the most significant in California, Texas, and Florida, the three states that were home to 47.2 percent of the country's undocumented immigrants in 2022 and where one in every 20 residents would be deported.

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<sup>25</sup> Chloe East, "The labor market impact of deportations," *Brookings*, September 18, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-labor-market-impact-of-deportations/>.

## The Trump Administration Should Respect Congress's Enforcement Funding Decisions

Given that mass deportations would require these enormous sums, it remains unclear where a future Trump administration would obtain funding for these operations without substantial support from Congress. These funding concerns are particularly significant given the Trump campaign's suggestion that the administration is aiming to "start with" the deportation of one million people, which we estimate will cost \$88 billion per year.<sup>26</sup>

In his first term, President Trump reprogrammed roughly \$10 billion in Department of Defense funding to build border barriers and associated infrastructure, despite Congress having refused to provide that funding itself.<sup>27</sup> This funding took directly from military projects. For example, when President Trump took \$3.8 billion from the Department of Defense in 2020, the Air Force and Navy lost over \$1.4 billion combined which had been provided by Congress to procure aircraft, and the National Guard and Army Reserve lost \$1.3 billion for equipment.<sup>28</sup>

Loss of this funding delayed many vital infrastructure projects on U.S. military bases, including a loss of \$402 million in funding for Camp Santiago in Puerto Rico,<sup>29</sup> which had suffered significant damage from Hurricane Maria in 2017 and needed extensive work to rebuild and hurricane-proof the base.<sup>30</sup> At Fort Campbell along the Kentucky-Tennessee border, the Trump administration's effort halted the construction of a new middle school meant for military families, even though the old school was woefully inadequate, , another example of the way these cuts hurt military life and operations across the board.<sup>31</sup>

During his first term in office, President Trump also took \$155 million from FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund in 2019 to increase immigration detention above the level for which Congress had appropriated funding.<sup>32</sup> This funding grab came on top of \$9.8 million transferred from FEMA for similar purposes in 2018.<sup>33</sup> These uses of reprogramming threaten to undermine Congress's power of the purse and have real impact on Americans who were relying on the funding for the purposes intended under the law.

### Conclusion

The options are clear. If we go down the path of mass deportations, the entire country will suffer. Millions of mixed-status families will be torn apart or forced to leave, and millions of people will be kicked out of

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<sup>26</sup> Ivan Pereira, "JD Vance says mass deportations should 'start with 1 million,' defends 'thought experiment' giving parents extra votes," *ABC News*, August 11, 2024, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/jd-vance-mass-deportations-start-1-million-defends/story?id=112739447>.

<sup>27</sup> Congressional Research Service, "FY2020 Defense Reprogrammings for Wall Funding: Backgrounder," March 24, 2020, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11274>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Congressional Research Service, "Military Funding for Southwest Border Barriers," updated September 27, 2019, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45937>.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Sonne, "To pay for Trump's wall, a hurricane-wrecked base in Puerto Rico loses funding," *Washington Post*, September 19, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/at-half-ruined-puerto-rico-base-hurricane-recovery-funds-pulled-for-trumps-wall/2019/09/19/173ad4f4-d63c-11e9-ab26-e6dbebac45d3\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/at-half-ruined-puerto-rico-base-hurricane-recovery-funds-pulled-for-trumps-wall/2019/09/19/173ad4f4-d63c-11e9-ab26-e6dbebac45d3_story.html).

<sup>31</sup> Helene Cooper, "No New School at Fort Campbell: The Money Went to Trump's Border Wall," *New York Times*, September 5, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/05/us/trump-border-wall-military-families.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Holmes Lybrand, "Fact check: Does Trump's reallocation of FEMA funds take money from Puerto Rico?" *CNN*, August 29, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/29/politics/fema-puerto-rico-disaster-funding-hurricane-donald-trump-fact-check/index.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Camila Domonoske, "Trump Administration Transferred \$9.8 Million From FEMA To ICE," *NPR*, September 12, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/09/12/647021316/trump-administration-transferred-9-8-million-from-fema-to-ice>.



their jobs and the lives they've made here for decades. In the wake of their removal, the economy will shrink. Prices will rise across most sectors, and may increase the most in construction, agriculture, and hospitality. As inflation rises and the economy shrinks, businesses will go under, workers will lose their jobs, and we will become poorer both as a nation and as individuals. We would also leave a permanent stain on this country's legacy and undermine our credibility around the world. Who would ever trust the United States to talk about human rights if we forcibly evict millions of people at the point of a gun?

By contrast, if Congress passes a path to permanent legal status, we can benefit as a nation. Bringing millions of people out of the shadows will allow them to obtain stability, fight against exploitation, and contribute even more to this country. Rather than self-sabotage, we should follow the proud tradition of this nation and give people a real chance to come into compliance with the law rather than bring down the hammer.