

## NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES – MARCH 2020

### LATEST IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

#### BORDER CRACKDOWN STALLS AS ILLEGAL CROSSINGS INCREASE FOR FIRST TIME IN 9 MONTHS

By Nick Miroff and Abigail Hauslohner – *The Washington Post* – March 5, 2020

- ❖ The number of migrants detained along the U.S.-Mexico border has increased for the first time in nine months, according to statistics published by the administration Thursday (Mar. 5) that indicate the president's deterrent measures may be stalling. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials said 37,119 unauthorized border crossers were taken into custody in February, up from 36,660 in January. While the number of migrants taken into custody last month was fewer than half the February 2019 total, it was significantly higher than the 23,557 arrests recorded in February 2017, the president's first full month in office. Arrests have dropped 75 percent since May, when authorities detained more than 144,000 border-crossers during a record surge of Central Americans.
- ❖ News Article Source: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/trump-border-crackdown-stalls-as-illegal-crossings-increase-for-first-time-in-9-months/2020/03/05/c864c828-5eec-11ea-8baf-519cedb6ccd9\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/trump-border-crackdown-stalls-as-illegal-crossings-increase-for-first-time-in-9-months/2020/03/05/c864c828-5eec-11ea-8baf-519cedb6ccd9_story.html)



The scene outside the Border Patrol station in El Paso where U.S. officials say they are becoming overwhelmed in the face of a migration surge.

Photo Credit: U.S Customs and Border Patrol/Handout

#### AS TRUMP BARRICADES THE BORDER, LEGAL IMMIGRATION IS STARTING TO PLUNGE

By Zolan Kanno-Youngs – *The New York Times* – February 24, 2020

- ❖ The number of people who obtained lawful permanent residence, besides refugees who entered the United States in previous years, declined to 940,877 in the 2018 fiscal year from 1,063,289 in the 2016 fiscal year, according to an analysis of government data by the National Foundation for American Policy. Four years ago, legal immigration was at its highest level since 2006, when 1,266,129 people obtained lawful permanent residence in the United States. A report released on by the foundation projected a 30 percent plunge in legal immigration by 2021 and a 35 percent dip in average annual growth of the U.S. labor force. Increased vetting and additional in-person interviews have further winnowed foreign travelers. The number of visas issued to foreigners abroad looking to immigrate to the United States has declined by about 25 percent, to 462,422 in the 2019 fiscal year from 617,752 in 2016. The travel and visa bans, soon to cover 13 countries, are almost sure to be reflected in immigration numbers in the near future. Of the average of more than 537,000 people abroad granted permanent residency from 2014 to 2016, including through a diversity lottery system, nearly 28,000, or 5 percent, would be blocked under the administration's newly expanded travel restrictions, according to an analysis of State Department data.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/24/us/politics/trump-border-legal-immigration.html>

#### AFTER TRUMP TARGETED CENTRAL AMERICAN MIGRANTS, VIOLENCE AND FEAR DRIVE MORE MEXICANS TO USA

By Lauren VillagranRafael Carranza – *USA TODAY* – February 29, 2020

- ❖ In the past four months, Mexicans have once again become the majority of unauthorized migrants caught at the border, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Border Patrol apprehensions of Mexican nationals have risen for two consecutive years, jumping 30% from a 40-year low, reversing a decade-long downward trend. The number of Mexicans apprehended with a family member at the border in the first four months of fiscal 2020 – 4,425 – is on pace to be more than double the 6,004 Mexicans traveling as a family unit apprehended in all of fiscal 2019, according to CBP. Overall, border agents apprehended 63,405 Mexican nationals in the four-month period, 87% of them single adults, compared with 47,000 Central Americans detained over the same period. In contrast, border agents detained 144,836 Central Americans and 44,832 Mexicans during the first four months of fiscal 2019. Border agents detained 607,000 Central Americans and 166,000 Mexicans in 2019. Mexican migrants aren't subject to the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), under which Central American and other asylum seekers may be returned to Mexico. The MPP program was briefly halted by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday (Feb. 28) before being reinstated. The U.S. government has made preemptive efforts to deter Mexican migration. CBP launched a program in late October to fast-track Mexican asylum claims, called the Humanitarian Asylum Review Process, or HARP. The program returns asylum seekers quickly if their claims are found to have no merit. The American Civil Liberties Union sued the government in December, alleging the program violates due process for migrants.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/02/29/mexicans-majority-us-border-arrests-under-trump-immigration/4879779002/>

## **MIGRANT PROTECTION PROTOCOLS (MPP) / REMAIN IN MEXICO (RIM)**

### **COURT BLOCKS TRUMP'S 'REMAIN IN MEXICO' POLICY ALONG PART OF THE BORDER**

*By Colin Dwyer – NPR – March 5, 2020*

- ❖ A federal appeals court has decided to block the Trump administration's "Remain in Mexico" plan in two states along the U.S. border, following back-and-forth rulings over the program. In its order late Wednesday (Mar. 4), the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco said that next week the administration will have to stop making asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for the U.S. to process their claims, but that the court ban applies only to areas in its jurisdiction, Arizona and California. The decision comes less than a week after the appeals court briefly blocked the program, then quickly suspended that order. The court said it will wait until March 12 for its order to take effect to see "if the Supreme Court has not in the meantime acted to reverse or otherwise modify our decision." Since implementation of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), tens of thousands of migrants have been told to wait in Mexico to await the outcome of their cases — less than 1% of which have ended in successful entry into the U.S.
- ❖ News Article Source: [https://www.npr.org/2020/03/05/812474279/court-blocks-trumps-remain-in-mexico-policy-along-part-of-the-border?fbclid=IwAR2\\_akDr\\_GgqK-Hg6fEEIHkltt2Us7w20cJiCEQmsAWMhp1x8ySpPF6rgWI](https://www.npr.org/2020/03/05/812474279/court-blocks-trumps-remain-in-mexico-policy-along-part-of-the-border?fbclid=IwAR2_akDr_GgqK-Hg6fEEIHkltt2Us7w20cJiCEQmsAWMhp1x8ySpPF6rgWI)

### **COURT HALTS TRUMP ASYLUM POLICY, THEN SUSPENDS ITS OWN ORDER**

*By Elliot Spagat – The Associated Press – February 29, 2020*

- ❖ The policy "Remain in Mexico" (RIM), officially known as the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) that requires asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their cases wind through U.S. courts was blocked and then reinstated by a court in the matter of hours, creating chaos at border crossings, courtrooms and legal offices. A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals put the policy on hold midday Friday (Feb. 28). But by the end of the day, the court allowed the program to go back into effect after the Justice Department argued that its suspension will prompt migrants to overrun the border and endanger national security. Customs and Border Protection closed one border crossing leading into El Paso after the initial decision. MPP was instituted last year and has sent about 60,000 asylum seekers back to Mexico. Immigration lawyers and advocates say the program is a humanitarian disaster, subjecting migrants to violence, kidnapping and extortion in dangerous Mexican border cities. MPP took effect in January 2019 in San Diego and gradually spread across the southern border. About 60,000 people have been sent back to wait for hearings, and officials believe it is a big reason why illegal border crossings plummeted about 80% from a 13-year high in May. Asylum has been granted in less than 1% of the roughly 35,000 Remain in Mexico cases that have been decided. Only 5% are represented by attorneys, many of whom are reluctant to visit clients in Mexico.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/48092a71a9008e4c76e195e5fb366ea3>

## **DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)**

### **AS DACA DECISION LOOMS, SAN ANTONIO EDUCATORS TALK SUPPORT FOR UNDOCUMENTED FAMILIES**

*By Alia Malik – The San Antonio Express-News – February 21, 2020*

- ❖ As the nation awaited a U.S. Supreme Court decision this spring on President Donald Trump's efforts to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program, participants in a conference for bilingual educators grappled with ways to support undocumented students, families — and colleagues. DACA provides legal status in two-year increments to teens and adults who were brought into the country illegally as children. The average DACA recipient is 25 or younger, though the oldest eligible recipients are now 37. That means DACA has allowed many undocumented adults to work as teachers, including Karina Alvarez, a first-grade bilingual teacher in Edgewood Independent School District. An estimated 81,000 undocumented immigrants live in Bexar County, and 22,000 have at least one child in school who is a U.S. citizen, Viridiana Carrizales said in another session. She is co-founder of the nonprofit ImmSchools, which works with educators to create safe environments for undocumented students and families. Carrizales said 92 percent of undocumented immigrants in Bexar County are from Mexico or Central America, while 6 percent are from Asia. Counting people with legal status who are in danger of losing it, about 175,000 noncitizens in San Antonio are at risk of deportation, she said. Texas is one of 18 states across the country that allow in-state tuition for undocumented students, as long as they prove they've resided in Texas for at least three years, Carrizales said. They have to submit separately notarized forms to each college, but Café College, a city-funded resource center, can help find free notaries, Carrizales said. Under the Supreme Court's 1982 decision in Plyler vs. Doe, public schools must educate students regardless of their immigration status. Teachers can't ask students their status, both presenters said, and should keep it in confidence if students volunteer it. Some of Alvarez's first graders, for example, have told her they can't visit their family in Mexico. "They don't know they're undocumented, but they just know that they can't come back," Alvarez said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/education/article/As-DACA-decision-looms-San-Antonio-educators-15075329.php>

## DETENTION CENTERS

### MIGRANT DETENTION CENTER TO OPEN AFTER CONDITIONS STIR ANGER

By Cedar Attanasio – *The Associated Press* – February 25, 2020

- ❖ A year after asylum-seekers and other migrants overwhelmed U.S. immigration authorities at the southern border, the Border Patrol is opening a processing facility in Texas that officials say could help it better care for detainees following outcry last year over young children and adults held in squalid, crowded conditions. The agency said it plans to open the 1,040-person facility for families as early as this weekend (end of February). It gave journalists a tour Tuesday (Feb. 25) of the solid wall modular buildings that feature play areas for children, showers, laundry facilities, and other basic necessities not always available in remote Border Patrol holding centers. Agents at the new facility will have help from civilians who have been recently hired to care for migrant families, including handing out snacks, doing medical screenings and watching children. A 500-person facility for longer-term housing for child migrants also is opening as early as this spring in El Paso. It will be overseen by the contractor Caliburn International after receiving a grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement, according to a Health and Human Services spokesman Mark Weber.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2020-02-25/migrant-detention-center-to-open-after-conditions-stir-anger>



Families detained at a U.S. Border Patrol Station in McAllen, Texas.  
Photo Credit: Office of Inspector General/Department of Homeland Security/Getty Images

### “YOU WILL NEVER SEE YOUR CHILD AGAIN”: THE PERSISTENT PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF FAMILY SEPARATION

By Hajar Habbach, MA, Kathryn Hampton, MSt, and Ranit Mishori, MD, MHS – *Physicians for Human Rights* – February 25, 2020

- ❖ A new Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) investigation, based on psychological evaluations of asylum-seeking parents and children who were separated by the U.S. government in 2018, found pervasive symptoms and behaviors consistent with trauma; most met diagnostic criteria for at least one mental health condition, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, major depressive disorder, or generalized anxiety disorder consistent with, and likely linked to, the trauma of family separation.
- ❖ To download the PHR report go to: <https://phr.org/our-work/resources/you-will-never-see-your-child-again-the-persistent-psychological-effects-of-family-separation/>

### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION POISED TO START COLLECTING DNA FROM IMMIGRATION DETAINEES

By Merrit Kennedy – *NPR* – March 6, 2020

- ❖ Starting in April, immigration authorities will start taking cheek swabs to collect DNA from hundreds of thousands of immigration detainees in federal custody each year. The Trump Administration says the policy change will help law enforcement apprehend criminal suspects. The data collected will be transferred to an FBI database, so that in the future, law enforcement officials could check if these samples matched any DNA recovered from a crime scene. The Justice Department said Friday (Mar. 6) that it is formally amending regulations and pushing forward with the DNA collection plan, which was first floated in October. The final rule is scheduled to publish on Monday (Mar. 9). The Department of Justice said the final rule is simply implementing a 2005 law called the DNA Fingerprint Act, which gave authorities broad authority to collect DNA samples from people in federal custody. Until now, however, the law allowed the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive the collection of DNA samples from some migrants "because of operational exigencies or resource limitations." The Trump administration has removed this option, and now requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to collect DNA from immigration detainees. It says that DNA collection has become easier and cheaper since the 2005 law was passed. The final rule says the DNA information that will be collected is a "sanitized 'genetic fingerprint'" that "can be used to identify an individual uniquely, but they do not disclose the individual's traits, disorders, or dispositions." According to the final rule, sample collections would be expected to ramp up over several years, eventually reaching about 748,000 new samples annually. The information will be added to the FBI's Combined DNA Index System, known as CODIS, which authorities use to search for DNA that matches traces of biological material found at crime scenes. The data that will be gathered from immigration detainees per year is expected to be more than the entire database from almost any individual state.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/06/812940401/trump-administration-poised-to-start-collecting-dna-from-immigration-detainees>

## **ANOTHER IMMIGRANT HAS DIED IN ICE CUSTODY. SHE'S THE EIGHTH SINCE OCTOBER.**

*By Hamed Aleaziz – BuzzFeed News – March 9, 2020*

- ❖ A 22-year-old Guatemalan woman who passed her initial asylum screening and was in detention for several months died in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody at a Texas hospital Sunday (Mar. 8). The death is the eighth in ICE custody in the 2020 fiscal year, which began Oct. 1, and equals the number of deaths for the entire 2019 fiscal year. ICE on Monday (Mar. 9) identified the woman as Maria Celeste Ochoa Yoc de Ramirez and said the cause of death was “autoimmune hepatitis, complicated by septic shock and acute liver failure.” She had been detained at the Prairieland Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas. The woman had been arrested by Border Patrol officials in early September after crossing into Texas without authorization. A few weeks later, asylum officers determined that she had passed a “credible fear” screening. On Feb. 7, Ochoa Yoc de Ramirez was taken from detention to a hospital in Oklahoma, where she was admitted. Two days later, she had her gallbladder surgically removed. On Feb. 10, she was returned to a detention center in Oklahoma, then taken to the detention facility in Texas on Feb. 13. On Feb. 18, officials took her to a hospital in Texas for treatment for abdominal pain. From that point on, she remained in the care of Texas hospitals until she was pronounced dead Sunday (Mar. 8).
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/immigrant-died-ice-custody-healthcare-hospital-asylum>

## **NEW TRUMP ADMINISTRATION POLICIES FAST-TRACK SOME CHILDREN'S IMMIGRATION COURT HEARINGS, INCLUDING VIDEO PILOT IN HOUSTON**

*By Lomi Kriel – The Houston Chronicle – March 3, 2020*

- ❖ President Donald Trump's administration is fast-tracking the legal proceedings of thousands of immigrant children in its care and unveiling a pilot program in Houston to video stream their hearings. Immigration judges also have been instructed to decide the fate of detained children within 60 days, a significantly tighter time frame than usual. Unlike in the criminal justice system, the government does not provide attorneys to immigrants facing deportation if they cannot afford them so children often represent themselves in court. If they are released and reunited with family, however, they are far more likely to obtain legal counsel and qualify for protection. The White House has said it trying to reduce a record immigration court backlog of more than 1.1 million cases. The new video conferencing program for detained minors would begin March 9 and last for at least two months, with children appearing in a Houston court room and their testimony streamed to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) prosecutor and Judge Sirce Owen in Atlanta. The administration has also implemented two additional changes making it more difficult for detained migrant children. Previously prosecutors would wait at least a month before filing notices for children to appear in immigration court. That allowed time for them to be processed in federal shelters and contact their relatives. Now the government in Houston and Phoenix is filing that documentation within days of children's arrival, speeding up their cases and reducing the time they have to find a lawyer. Federal shelters for children run by the Office of Refugee Resettlement also previously transported children in its custody to appointments with their lawyers, but have stopped that practice — likely denting the pool of pro bono lawyers who can drive to faraway federal shelters and meet with their juvenile clients. The administration's changes this month come as the number of children detained by the government has dropped 70 percent since March 2019 to about 3,600. The amount coming here has steadily plummeted from a peak of 11,500 last May during a surge of Central American families at the border to nearly 2,700 in January.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/New-Trump-administration-policies-fast-track-some-15105573.php#photo-19128367>

## **FOLLOWING A PROTEST, ICE TRANSFERS DOZENS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS TO AN ISOLATED LAREDO FACILITY**

*By Acacia Coronado – The Texas Observer – March 2, 2020*

- ❖ In retaliation for protesting poor medical treatment, dozens of women detained at the T. Don Hutto Residential Center in Taylor, TX, which houses asylum seekers, were suddenly transferred to a facility in Laredo, TX. The move follows reports from immigration advocacy group Grassroots Leadership that those involved in the protest were barred from having visitors, including legal aid providers and members of the community. In a statement, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) confirmed that 80 detainees held an “impromptu ‘sit-down’ protest”. “According to ICE, facility staff told detainees that they may be transferred if they did not comply with requests to clear “critical pathways.” The agency confirmed that 47 women were ultimately moved to the Laredo Detention Center. In a statement, CoreCivic, the private prison contractor that operates the facility, offered a different account: The women were queuing for commissary when they asked to speak with ICE officials. CoreCivic said that ICE then met with the detainees. Bethany Carson, an immigration researcher and organizer for Grassroots Leadership, an Austin-based nonprofit, said that detainees estimate that more than 300 women from Cameroon had recently arrived at the center. Most of the women the group has spoken with have little legal aid.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.texasobserver.org/following-a-protest-ice-transfers-dozens-of-asylum-seekers-to-an-isolated-laredo-facility/>

## ASYLUM SEEKERS

### ASYLUM-SEEKERS TAKE CHARGE OF LARGE MATAMOROS ENCAMPMENT

By Silvia Foster-Frau – San Antonio Express-News – February 14, 2020

❖ Dozens of Nicaraguan migrants wearing donated clothes held garbage bags and roamed among a couple of thousand tents at an encampment in this border city (Matamoros, Tamaulipas) to pick up trash. Each day, a different nationality cleans the nearly 9-acre encampment, which is occupied by more than 2,500 asylum-seekers who are subject to the Trump administration's Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), or "Remain in Mexico," policy. Under the protocols, the U.S. has returned more than 60,000 migrants to Mexico to await their asylum hearings. The cleaning routine is one of many practices put in place by a newly formed migrant council made up of two representatives from each nationality in the encampment. The council is the latest migrant effort to meet standards similar to those found in refugee camps around the world. The United Nations High Commissioner (UNHCR) of Refugees provides some aid to the camp, though it would be up to the Mexican government to request further UNHCR intervention. In Nuevo Laredo and elsewhere along the border, thousands of migrants live in religious-affiliated shelters. In Matamoros, their homes are donated tents patched with black garbage bags and clustered on dusty, federal land alongside the Rio Grande. The U.N. agency began offering services about a year ago in Tijuana and Mexicali, which share a border with Southern California. But, citing safety concerns, it has not set up offices in Matamoros. U.N. staff in Monterrey visit about once every two weeks, mostly to provide legal assistance on asylum cases. The U.N. has provided legal counseling to more than 1,000 migrants borderwide, U.N. refugee camps are supposed to have one toilet for every 20 people. Matamoros has about one for every 60. And many of the asylum-seekers here still resort to bathing and washing clothes in the unsanitary Rio Grande, creating a breeding ground for infections and rashes. In other parts of the world, refugee camps typically are in a secured, fenced area. Here the migrants are exposed to the elements and criminals. People have disappeared from the camp. Some moved away. Some were kidnapped. The leadership council has been meeting once a week for more than a month. It's establishing sanitation guidelines, taking inventory of the donations stored in locked tents and asking each nationality to keep a censo, the count of migrants living in the camp — their ages, family members, clothes sizes and length of stay. The Mexican government has relied on nonprofits to improve the camp, though it did install a few showers and wash stations. The federal government opened a couple of shelters for MPP migrants in other border cities. The camp has swelled since MPP expanded to Brownsville last July. More migrants continue to arrive at the border, and the court process has grown lengthier amid the more than 1 million cases in the backlogged U.S. immigration court.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/us-world/border-mexico/article/Asylum-seekers-take-control-of-large-Matamoros-15056883.php>

### ACLU RACES TO STOP ICE FROM DELETING YEARS OF RECORDS, INCLUDING DATA ON DETAINEE DEATHS AND SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTS

By Chantal Da Silva – NewsWeek – February 18, 2020

❖ The American Civil Liberties Union is racing against the clock to stop the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency from erasing countless documents on detention records, including records from the first year of the Trump administration. In an interview with Newsweek, ACLU Senior Staff Attorney Eunice Cho said the civil liberties union would be filing a sweeping Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to preserve and obtain ICE records that could soon be erased thanks to a recent ruling from the National Archives and Records Administration. On December 11, 2019, the Archivist of the United States approved a request from ICE that was initially proposed on October 2, 2015, under the Obama administration, to delete detention records from past years. Among the records that stand to be deleted, Cho said, are documents related to the deaths of detainees, allegations of sexual assault and allegations of abuse of detainees in ICE custody, including from those held in solitary confinement. Weekly monitoring reports of detention facilities, she warned, could already face erasure, including those from President Donald Trump's earliest days in office. Many of the records that face deletion, Cho said, are allegations that have been made through ICE's toll-free hotline for complaints about detention conditions. The ACLU is set to file its FOIA request on Tuesday (Feb. 18) morning, with the organization seeking detention-related ICE records scheduled to be deleted after short retention periods of only three to seven years.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/aclu-races-stop-ice-deleting-years-records-including-data-detainee-deaths-sexual-assault-1487755>



Migrants are living in tents in Matamoros while they wait for their asylum cases to be heard across the river in Brownsville.

Photo Credit: Carlos Sanchez/Texas Monthly

## **FAST FACTS ON ASYLUM AND MIGRANT PROTECTION PROTOCOLS (MPP)**

*By Lynn Tramonte – Interfaith Immigration Coalition – February 28, 2020*

- The asylum denial rate is growing. In recent years, 58% of asylum applications have been denied. In FY 2019, that number jumped to 69%. For individuals from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, the denial rate is 81%. (Source: TRAC, February 2020)
  - At least 138 people deported to El Salvador were murdered and more than 70 were sexually abused, tortured, or disappeared. (Source: NBC News/Human Rights Watch, February 2020)
  - Since the creation of the “Remain in Mexico” policy in January 2019, more than 57,000 people have been forced to wait in Mexico for asylum hearings in the United States. (Source: Human Rights First, January 2020)
  - At least 816 asylum-seekers have been raped, kidnapped, assaulted, and even murdered in Mexico, including 201 children. (Source: Human Rights First, January 2020)
  - Only 4% of individuals subjected to Remain Mexico have lawyers. Less than 1% have won their cases. (Source: NPR, December 2019).
  - Many are homeless or living in unsanitary conditions. Organizations along the border are working tirelessly, with no government support, to try to meet their basic human needs.
- ❖ Press Release Source: <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/2020/02/28/mpp-injunction-faith-leaders-urge-congress-to-restore-asylum-protections/>

## **BORDER WALL**

### **HOMELAND SECURITY WAIVES CONTRACTING LAWS FOR BORDER WALL**

*By Elliot Spagat – The Associated Press – February 18, 2020*

- ❖ The Trump administration said Tuesday (Feb. 18) that it is waiving federal contracting laws to speed construction of a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border. The Department of Homeland Security said waiving procurement regulations will allow 177 miles (283 kilometers) of wall to be built more quickly in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The 10 waived laws include a requirement for open competition and giving losing bidders a chance to protest decisions. The acting Homeland Security secretary, Chad Wolf, is exercising authority under a 2005 law that gives him sweeping powers to waive laws for building border barriers. Secretaries under President Donald Trump have issued 16 waivers, and President George W. Bush issued five, but Tuesday’s (Feb. 18) announcement marks the first time that waivers have applied to federal procurement rules. Previously they were used to waive environmental impact reviews. The Trump administration said the waivers will allow at least 94 miles (150 kilometers) of wall to be built this year, bringing the Republican leader closer to his goal of about 450 miles (720 kilometers). It said the other 83 miles (133 kilometers) covered by the waivers may get built this year. The waivers, to be published in the Federal Register, apply to projects that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will award in six Border Patrol sectors: San Diego and El Centro in California; Yuma and Tucson in Arizona; El Paso, which spans New Mexico and west Texas, and Del Rio, Texas. The move came days after Defense Secretary Mark Esper approved a \$3.8 billion request from Homeland Security to pay for walls in those same areas, and the Pentagon acknowledged that more cuts could be coming to provide additional funding. The Defense Department transferred \$6.1 billion to wall construction from its counter-narcotics and construction budgets after Congress gave Trump only a portion of what he wanted.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/1689fa48a2e177d1f397b95ff0cb97db>

### **PRIVATE BORDER WALL IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY MEETS WIDE OPPOSITION — INCLUDING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION**

*By Silvia Foster-Frau – The San Antonio Express-News – January 24, 2020*

- ❖ Blocked in court until a judge recently lifted a restraining order, an 18-foot high-wall of galvanized steel bollards, by a privately funded project, is gaining about 1,000 feet a day as crews race to build 3 miles along a bend in the river. Built by North Dakota-based Fisher Sand and Gravel Co. on land it agreed to purchase, the wall is about 11 yards from the river on the floodplain. The U.S. government joined the nearby National Butterfly Center and other opponents in suing to block construction, citing concerns the barrier will worsen flooding and could change the river’s course. The wall hasn’t been approved by the International Boundary and Water Commission, a treaty organization that regulates construction and water use along the Rio Grande by both the U.S. and Mexico. Despite the opposition, Fisher Sand and Gravel is plowing ahead, spending \$40 million of its own funds to demonstrate it can build the wall faster than the government and in a way that will provide greater security. Fisher Sand and Gravel gained attention last year when it built a short stretch of privately funded wall near El Paso. After failing to win government bids, the company filed a complaint with the Government Accountability Office. As Fisher was promoting his wall design on Fox News, Trump reportedly urged Homeland Security officials to consider Fisher Sand and Gravel for a wall contract funded with Defense Department money that the president diverted for wall construction. Soon after, the company won a \$400 million government contract to build 31 miles of a border wall in Arizona.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/us-world/border-mexico/article/Private-border-wall-in-the-Rio-Grande-Valley-15001735.php>

## SOUTHERN MEXICO HAS ITS OWN 'TRUMP WALL'

By Dudley Althaus – *The San Antonio Express-News* – February 22, 2020

- ❖ In the nine months since Mexico began cooperating with the Trump administration's policy to make asylum-seekers wait on the other side of the border while their cases are processed, some 10,000 migrants have returned to the comparative safety of Mexico's southernmost Chiapas state. At the same time, the shallow Suchiate River, which serves as the country's border with Guatemala, has become an ever more formidable barrier to migrants heading north. Mexican National Guardsmen and immigration agents have stepped up efforts to tighten control over the frontier, driving up the fees charged by smugglers. As a result, tens of thousands more migrants — mostly Central Americans, but also Haitians, Cubans and West Africans — face months-long waits to obtain either asylum in Mexico or the temporary residency that would allow them to live and work legally in the country. Thousands of Central Americans, Haitians, Cubans and Africans have jammed into Tapachula, a city of 340,000 that has become the operations center for Mexico's border enforcement. With detention centers and privately funded shelters overwhelmed, thousands pack into overcrowded houses and apartments. The nearly 37,000 people apprehended by the Border Patrol or refused admission at official border crossings last month (January) marked a 74 percent decline since the peak last May. Under the so-called Remain in Mexico program, U.S. officials have pushed 70,000 people awaiting asylum hearings into Ciudad Juárez, Nuevo Laredo and other Mexican border cities to wait out court processes that can take several years. Similar programs are being implemented in Guatemala and Honduras. In the Texas border cities, where nearly three-quarters of the asylum claims are being decided, as many as 44 percent of petitioners — most of whom lack lawyers — failed to show up for their most recent hearings, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), a research organization at Syracuse University in New York that collects data on the activities of federal agencies.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/us-world/border-mexico/article/Southern-Mexico-has-its-own-Trump-Wall-15074390.php#>



Arrests along the southern border have risen in recent months to their highest levels in more than a decade.  
Photo Credit: Herika Martinez/AFP/Getty Images

## CONGRESS WARNS PENTAGON NOT TO MOVE MONEY TO FUND TRUMP WALL

By Lolita C. Baldor – *The Associated Press* – February 26, 2020

- ❖ Lawmakers from both parties told Pentagon leaders on Wednesday (Feb. 26) that the Defense Department is undermining its own efforts to get military money by diverting billions of dollars for the construction of President Donald Trump's U.S.-Mexico border wall. The plan to shift money has triggered rare Republican opposition to one of Trump's priorities. Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, said the result may be that Congress will place greater restrictions on the Pentagon's ability to move money around to meet military needs. The chairman, Democratic Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, said the money transfer is "very, very damaging to the Pentagon." The Pentagon announced this month that it was slashing billions of dollars in funding for Navy and Air Force aircraft and other military programs to free up money for the construction of the wall. Defense Secretary Mark Esper approved the \$3.8 billion border wall request from the Department of Homeland Security, and the Pentagon acknowledged that more cuts could be coming to provide additional dollars for the wall. Trump has repeatedly claimed that Mexico is paying for his promised "big beautiful wall," but that has never happened. Esper said the money was shifted from programs that had more money than needed or had money that wasn't needed right away. Despite congressional opposition, Trump faced no consequences when making similar transfers last year, when the Pentagon canceled dozens of military construction projects to free up \$3.6 billion and transferred \$2.5 billion in counterdrug money. All together, Trump has obtained just over \$3 billion for border barrier construction by working through regular congressional channels, subject to limitations imposed by lawmakers. He has used various transfer and emergency authorities to shift almost \$7 billion more from the emergency declaration, from a forfeiture fund containing money seized by law enforcement and from funding for military counterdrug activities.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/f0495b2ff91eb832faa33754da897c15>

## **COURT RULINGS**

### **JUDGE RULES CUCCINELLI APPOINTMENT TO TOP IMMIGRATION POST WAS UNLAWFUL, VOIDING SOME ASYLUM ORDERS**

*By Camilo Montoya-Galvez – CBS News – March 2, 2020*

- ❖ A federal judge on Sunday (Mar. 1) ruled that Ken Cuccinelli was unlawfully appointed to a top immigration post in the Trump administration, invalidating some of his directives to restrict the access asylum-seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border have to lawyers. In his 55-page order, Judge Randolph Moss of the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., said Cuccinelli was "not lawfully" appointed last year as acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that administers and vets benefits for non-citizens like refugees, asylum-seekers and green card holders applying for U.S. citizenship. Moss said the June 2019 appointment of Cuccinelli, a vocal proponent of President Trump's hardline immigration agenda, violated the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998. The federal judge, an appointee of President Obama, held that Cuccinelli was not eligible to become acting USCIS director last year because the position of principal deputy he initially assumed was not a "first assistant" job, as defined by the 1998 law. Along with finding Cuccinelli's appointment at USCIS unlawful, Moss voided a directive Cuccinelli issued last year to reduce the time asylum-seekers in so-called "credible fear" proceedings have to receive counsel from lawyers. The judge also invalidated an order that barred asylum officers from granting extensions for the time migrants have to prepare for interviews, except "in the most extraordinary circumstances." Moss' order stemmed from a lawsuit filed by the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) on behalf of five Honduran asylum-seekers and their children who received negative credible fear decisions by asylum officers. The judge set aside those decisions, as well as the expedited deportations orders issued against the five asylum-seekers, and ordered USCIS to process their cases again.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ken-cuccinelli-unlawfully-tapped-uscis-judge-voids-some-asylum-orders/?ftag=CNM-00-10aac3a>

### **COURT SIDES WITH TRUMP IN 'SANCTUARY CITIES' GRANT FIGHT**

*By Larry Neumeister – The Associated Press – February 26, 2020*

- ❖ The Trump administration can withhold millions of dollars in law enforcement grants to force states to cooperate with U.S. immigration enforcement, a federal appeals court in New York ruled Wednesday (Feb. 26) in a decision that conflicted with three other federal appeals courts. The ruling by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan overturned a lower court's decision ordering the administration to release funding to New York City and seven states — New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Washington, Massachusetts, Virginia and Rhode Island. The states and city sued the U.S. government after the Justice Department announced in 2017 that it would withhold grant money from cities and states until they gave federal immigration authorities access to jails and provide advance notice when someone in the country illegally is about to be released. Before the change, cities and states seeking grant money were required only to show they were not preventing local law enforcement from communicating with federal authorities about the immigration status of people who were detained. The 2nd Circuit said the plain language of relevant laws make clear that the U.S. attorney general can impose conditions on states and municipalities receiving money. And it noted that the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly observed that the federal government maintains broad power over states when it comes to immigration policies. In the past two years, federal appeals courts in Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco have ruled against the federal government by upholding lower-court injunctions placed on the enforcement of some or all of the challenged conditions.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/f2a328bfa091de9f59b34deee463e2fc>

### **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT CREATES SECTION DEDICATED TO DENATURALIZATION CASES**

*By Priscilla Alvarez – CNN – February 26, 2020*

- ❖ The Justice Department announced Wednesday (Feb. 26) that it's dedicating a section of its workforce to review denaturalization cases. The latest move by the Justice Department is in line with broader administration efforts to investigate cases where individuals are believed to have illegally obtained U.S. citizenship. While previous administrations have launched initiatives to investigate the circumstances under which an individual has obtained U.S. citizenship, immigrant advocates have called into question the standards used by the Trump administration to investigate those cases. Still, denaturalizations are rare and can only occur in federal court. The Justice Department has filed 228 civil denaturalization cases since 2008, according to a DOJ official. Of the 228 cases, 94 were filed over roughly the last three years, indicating a recent jump in filings, the official said. Historically, the U.S. revoked citizenship for a range of reasons, including lying about date of arrival, age or marital status to political reasons, according to Patrick Weil, a professor at Yale Law School who focuses on immigration and citizenship.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/26/politics/justice-department-denaturalization-cases/index.html>

## THE NEW PUBLIC CHARGE RULE

By Raymond G. Lahoud – *The National Law Review* – March 2, 2020

- ❖ On February 22, the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) announced the Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds final rule, effective as of February 24. This announcement came after the U.S. Supreme Court lifted the nationwide injunctions against the new public charge rule on January 27. Anyone who received one or more public benefits for more than twelve months in aggregate within any 36-month period (such that, for instance, receipt of two benefits in one month counts as two months) could be held to be a public charge. The rule expands to the following type of cash and non-cash benefits: Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance and Housing Assistance Under the Housing Choice Voucher Program; Subsidized Public Housing; and Federally-Funded Medicaid (with Certain Exclusions). Any other public non-cash benefit that is not mentioned above will not be considered a public charge of inadmissibility. Such immigrants who are identified to become a public charge will not be issued a U.S. visa, granted admission to the United States, or allowed to adjust status. The following immigrants will be subject to the new “public charge” rule: (1) Immigrants who are in the U.S. applying for a green card; (2) Immigrants requesting a visa extension to stay in the U.S.; and (3) Individuals who are applying to come to the U.S. from abroad. The immigration officer will use the totality of the circumstances while deciding if an immigrant is to become a public charge in the future. The USCIS officer, while determining the inadmissibility of the public charge grounds, must consider the applicant’s age, health, family status, assets, resources and financial status, education and skills, prospective immigration status, expected period of admission and sufficiency of the affidavit of support. This rule does not apply to refugees, asylees, U-visas for crime victims or T-visas for trafficking victims, individuals applying under the Violence Against Women Act, Special immigrant Juveniles, and those whom the Department of Homeland Security granted a waiver of public charge inadmissibility. A foreign national will not be penalized if any other members of the household, including U.S. citizens, are receiving public benefits. Additionally, a foreign national who is currently serving in the armed forces and Medicaid recipients who are pregnant or younger than 21 years of age will not be disadvantaged by the new rule.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/new-public-charge-rule>



Migrants are loaded onto a bus by U.S. Border Patrol agents after being detained when they crossed into the United States from Mexico in El Paso.

Photo Credit: Joe Raedle/Getty Images

## SUPREME COURT RULES MEXICAN PARENTS CAN'T SUE BORDER PATROL AGENT WHO KILLED THEIR SON

By Pete Williams – *NBC News* – February 25, 2020

- ❖ The Supreme Court ruled Tuesday (Feb. 25) that the parents of a 15-year-old boy cannot sue the federal agent who fatally shot him by firing across the border separating the United States and Mexico — a case that inflamed tensions over border security. The ruling was a defeat for the parents of Sergio Hernández Güereca, who was on the Mexico side when he was killed in 2010 by a Border Patrol agent who fired from the U.S. side of the boundary separating El Paso, Texas, from Juarez, Mexico. The teen, a Mexican national, was playing with three friends in the concrete culvert that separates the two cities. They dared one another to cross the unmarked border, run up and touch the fence on the U.S. side, then run back to the Mexican side. The Border Patrol agent, Jesus Mesa Jr., detained one of the boys for illegal border crossing, but Hernández ran away and made it back to the Mexican side. Mesa drew his weapon and fired from about 60 feet away, killing the 15-year-old with a shot to the head. An investigation by American authorities concluded that Mesa fired in self-defense in response to smugglers who were throwing rocks at him, although it found no evidence that Hernández threw anything at the agent. Mexican prosecutors charged Mesa with murder. When the U.S. refused an extradition request, the parents sued. American courts threw their case out, however, concluding that the Constitution's protection against excessive force did not apply to someone outside the United States. Writing for the Supreme Court's five-member conservative majority, Justice Samuel Alito said the court would not extend the reach of federal law into claims against U.S. law enforcement actions that have effects in other countries. "A cross-border shooting is by definition an international incident," Alito wrote, calling for a diplomatic solution, not a legal one.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/supreme-court/supreme-court-rules-mexican-parents-can-t-sue-border-patrol-n1142486>

## **CROWDED BORDER FACILITIES WHERE DETAINEES ARE FORCED TO SLEEP IN TOILET STALLS VIOLATE THE CONSTITUTION, JUDGE RULES**

*By Catherine E. Shoichet – CNN – February 20, 2020*

- ❖ A federal judge in Arizona ruled Wednesday (Feb. 20) that conditions in U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) migrant holding cells in the agency's Tucson sector violated the Constitution. U.S. District Judge David C. Bury's order bars the agency from holding migrants for more than 48 hours in the Tucson sector after they've been processed "unless and until CBP can provide conditions of confinement that meet detainees' basic human needs for sleeping in a bed with a blanket, a shower, food that meets acceptable dietary standards, potable water, and medical assessment performed by a medical professional." The lawsuit over conditions in the Tucson sector was first filed in 2015. Bury's decision comes after a January trial in which lawyers representing migrants presented images that they said showed dangerous overcrowding in CBP facilities. In his ruling, Bury cited those conditions as he banned the use of bathrooms for sleeping, calling it "unsanitary and degrading." "The Court finds that the conditions of detention in CBP holding cells, especially those that preclude sleep over several nights, are presumptively punitive and violate the Constitution," Bury wrote. According to the agency's policies, detainees generally should not be held longer than 72 hours in CBP hold rooms/holding facilities. "In 2019, the average time spent in CBP custody in the Tucson Sector was 53.92 hours, with 34% of 63,490 detainees being held longer than 48 hours, 9,798 were held up to 72 hours and 12,030 individuals were held longer than 72 hours". The judge's injunction directly applies to facilities in Tucson.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/19/politics/arizona-holding-cells-ruling-constitution/index.html>

### **DEVELOPING STORIES**

#### **IMMIGRATION JUDGES WANT TO KNOW HOW TO HANDLE CORONAVIRUS**

*By Priscilla Alvarez – CNN – March 9, 2020*

- ❖ The union representing immigration judges urged the Trump administration in a letter Monday (Mar. 9) to "immediately" implement steps to protect judges and their staff and provides guidance on how to proceed amid the coronavirus outbreak, which also has the potential to exacerbate the overwhelming backlog of pending cases. The letter calls for the Executive Office for Immigration Review, an agency within the Justice Department that oversees the nation's immigration courts, to inform employees about the plan "as it relates to a potential pandemic," noting that some immigration court functions "may not lend themselves to telework." The union also recommended in an email to the workforce that judges keep bottles of hand sanitizer in the courtroom, use disinfecting wipes to clean surfaces and limit court attendance. The email also included flyers on coronavirus from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about how to identify symptoms and prevent the spread of germs. Shortly after the judges' union sent that email Monday (Mar. 9), Christopher A. Santoro, acting chief immigration judge, sent a note to court administrators telling them the CDC flyer "is not authorized for posting in the immigration courts." "This is just a reminder that immigration judges do not have the authority to post, or ask you to post, signage for their individual courtrooms or the waiting areas," his email, shared with CNN, reads. "Per our leadership, the CDC flyer is not authorized for posting in the immigration courts. If you see one (attached), please remove it." A Justice Department spokesman later told CNN, "The sign should not have been taken down. The matter is being rectified." In Monday's (Mar. 9) letter, the union asked the Trump administration to consider measures such as waiving the appearance of some respondents, allowing for telephonic appearances and limiting in-court paper filings. Any change in daily operations is critical in immigration court, which faces a pile-up of pending cases. Last year's U.S. government shutdown, which resulted in some cases being postponed, exacerbated the long-standing issue and added to the backlog. There are more than 1 million pending cases before the immigration courts, according to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse or TRAC, which tracks immigration court data -- resulting in cases being scheduled out years in advance. TRAC estimated last year that between 80,000 and 94,000 immigration court hearings may have been canceled as a result of last year's government shutdown. The only cases that moved forward during that time were those of immigrants in detention.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/09/politics/coronavirus-immigration-guidance/index.html>

#### **TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TO SEND 500 ICE AGENTS TO AID SANCTUARY CITY ARRESTS**

*By Michelle Hackman – The Wall Street Journal – March 5, 2020*

- ❖ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is ramping up its enforcement efforts in 10 sanctuary cities, redeploying 500 investigators to increase surveillance and help arrest people living in the country illegally. These highly trained agents, who typically work on complex long-term investigations, have been reassigned by ICE leadership to assist in the operation, set to run through the end of the year in cities that decline to assist in federal immigration enforcement, including New York, Chicago and San Francisco. Agents with Homeland Security Investigations, a law-enforcement agency within ICE, began to be pulled off active investigations at the Justice Department—including those focusing on human-trafficking, child pornography and cybercrime cases—and redeployed to the initiative.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-administration-to-send-500-ice-agents-to-aid-sanctuary-city-arrests-11583452147?ns=prod/accounts-wsj>

## TRUMP TO DEPLOY 160 ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS TO BORDER IN RESPONSE TO COURT RULINGS, CORONAVIRUS

By Rafael Carranza – *The Arizona Republic* – March 6, 2020

- ❖ President Donald Trump's administration will immediately deploy 160 active-duty soldiers to two key cities along the U.S.-Mexico border in response to a series of adverse federal court rulings limiting the implementation of his restrictive border enforcement policies, as well as growing concerns over the spread of the new coronavirus. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced Friday (Mar. 6) that it would deploy 80 active duty troops to San Diego's San Ysidro border crossing and 80 more to El Paso's Paso del Norte bridge as early as Saturday (Mar. 7) to provide "military police support, engineer, and aviation support" to customs officials at those two ports of entry. The border agency's announcement emphasized the role that a Feb. 28 ruling from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco factored into their decision to deploy troops to those two cities. Back on Feb. 28, a panel of judges blocked the U.S. government from sending asylum seekers to Mexico for the duration of their proceedings under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), also known as "Remain in Mexico," (RIM) finding that the program was in violation of U.S. immigration laws. In response, dozens of asylum seekers sent back under MPP congregated at border crossings from Tijuana to Brownsville, Texas, asking to be let into the country. CBP temporarily shut down at least one border crossing in El Paso to keep people from rushing the port of entry. The 160 troops are part of the Defense Department's Crisis Response Force, which the Pentagon has made available to CBP since Trump initially deployed soldiers to the border in November 2018 in anticipation of the arrival of a large caravan. The federal judges presiding over the case allowed "Remain in Mexico" to continue, but only until March 11. At that point, the court will block the program in Arizona and California – the states under its jurisdiction – unless the Supreme Court stays its ruling.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/03/06/trump-deploy-troops-border-courts/4982681002/>



Immigrant families seeking asylum in the United States wait on the Mexican side of the international bridge connecting Brownsville to Matamoros, Mexico.  
Photo Credit: Reynaldo Leal/The Texas Tribune

## GREYHOUND TO STOP ALLOWING IMMIGRATION CHECKS ON BUSES

By The Associated Press – February 22, 2020

- ❖ Greyhound, the nation's largest bus company, said Friday (Feb. 21) it will stop allowing Border Patrol agents without a warrant to board its buses to conduct routine immigration checks. The company's announcement came one week after The Associated Press reported on a leaked Border Patrol memo confirming that agents can't board private buses without the consent of the bus company. Greyhound had previously insisted that even though it didn't like the immigration checks, it had no choice under federal law but to allow them. In an emailed statement, the company said it would notify the Department of Homeland Security that it does not consent to unwarranted searches on its buses or in areas of terminals that are not open to the public, such as company offices or any areas a person needs a ticket to access. Some other bus companies, including Jefferson Lines, which operates in 14 states, and MTR Western, which operates in the Pacific Northwest, have already taken similar steps to those announced by Greyhound.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/greyhound-to-stop-allowing-immigration-checks-on-buses/?ftag=CNM-00-10aac3a>

## TRUMP'S CHIEF OF STAFF ADMITS IMMIGRANTS HELP THE ECONOMY, AMID U.S. IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN

By Jonathan Blanks – *NBC News* - February 24, 2020

- ❖ President Donald Trump's acting White House chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, told an audience at the Oxford Union in England that the United States was "desperate" for immigrants to "fuel economic growth." Although Mulvaney noted that the administration wanted immigrants to come fuel America's economic growth in "a legal fashion," the administration's record reflects not only heightened enforcement of immigration violations, but also breathtaking curtailments of immigration that had previously been legal. From the Muslim travel ban to family separation of asylum seekers at the U.S. border to the denial of visas to family members of people already legally in the country, the administration's actions prove that "we want legal immigrants" is nothing more than a rhetorical sham. The New York Times reported that Mulvaney's remarks at Oxford also addressed the dissonance between his beliefs and administration policy. He said: "I disagree with the president every single day. ... You just don't hear about it — that's not my job."
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/trump-s-chief-staff-admits-immigrants-help-economy-amid-u-ncna1140751>

## ICE HAS RUN FACIAL-RECOGNITION SEARCHES ON MILLIONS OF MARYLAND DRIVERS

By Drew Harwell and Erin Cox – *The Washington Post* – February 26, 2020

- ❖ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials have been permitted to run facial-recognition searches on millions of Maryland driver's license photos without first seeking state or court approval, state officials said — access that goes far beyond what other states allow and that alarms immigration activists in a state that grants special driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. More than 275,000 such licenses have been issued statewide since 2013, when the state became the first on the East Coast to defy federal guidelines and allow undocumented immigrants to obtain a license without having to provide proof of legal status. The technology now under scrutiny could let an ICE official run a photograph of an unknown person through the system and see if any potentially undocumented immigrants are returned as a match. A top Maryland law enforcement official told state lawmakers in November that ICE officials had logged nearly 100 sessions in the state's driver's license database since 2018, according to a previously unpublicized letter obtained by *The Washington Post*. Each session could have included multiple searches of the Maryland Image Repository System database, which includes the photos, names, addresses and other personal information of approximately 7 million drivers statewide. ICE has for years tapped the driver's license databases of states such as Utah, Vermont and Washington while attempting to match a photo to a person's identity, as *The Post* first reported last year. But in those cases, ICE agents had to request a state official run the search. Maryland records show that ICE officials across the country can independently search without outside approval. ICE spokeswoman Dani Bennett said that the agency would not discuss specific law enforcement tactics or techniques and that its investigative activities are in compliance with federal law. ICE's facial-recognition searches, she added, are not "routinely" used for civil immigration enforcement and are instead primarily used by special agents investigating child exploitation or cybercrime. Twenty states allow FBI agents to scan driver's license photographs, and the agency has run more than 390,000 facial-recognition searches of state DMV rolls and other local databases since 2011, the Government Accountability Office said last year.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/02/26/ice-has-run-facial-recognition-searches-millions-maryland-drivers/>

## A RECORD HIGH: 1 IN 10 ELIGIBLE AMERICAN VOTERS ARE IMMIGRANTS

By Suzanne Gamboa – *NBC News* – February 26, 2020

- ❖ One in 10 Americans eligible to vote this election is an immigrant, a record high, according to a Pew Research report. According to Pew, 34 percent of naturalized citizen voters are Latino and 31 percent are of Asian descent.
- ❖ Sixteen percent of all foreign-born voters are from Mexico, and at 3.5 million, they make up the largest group of eligible immigrant voters. They're followed by voters from the Philippines (1.4 million) India (1.2 million) and China (1 million). About 22 percent of foreign-born eligible voters are white immigrants, numbering about 4.8 million, and making them the third largest racial and ethnic group, Pew reported. Black immigrant eligible voters number about 2.3 million. Their share of the immigrant electorate has grown from 7 percent in 2000 to 10 percent in 2018. Eligible voters who immigrated to the U.S. mostly live in California, New York, Texas and Florida. Two-thirds have lived in the country more than 20 years and 63 percent are proficient in English, the report said. Only a quarter (25 percent) of Latino voters are immigrants. But among Asian Americans, two thirds of eligible voters are immigrants. Among African Americans, immigrants account for 8 percent of voters; among whites it's 3 percent. At about 215 million, the number of U.S. born voters is still vastly larger than the foreign-born voter population. But while the number of immigrant voters has been expanding, the growth of the U.S.-born, eligible voter population has slowed, Pew reported.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/record-high-1-10-eligible-american-voters-are-immigrants-n1142261>

## SOTOMAYOR ISSUES SCATHING DISSENT IN SUPREME COURT ORDER THAT COULD RESHAPE LEGAL IMMIGRATION

By Ariane de Vogue – *CNN* – February 24, 2020

- ❖ Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote a scathing dissent late Friday night (Feb. 21), castigating the government for repeatedly asking the Supreme Court on an emergency basis to allow controversial policies to go into effect and charging her conservative colleagues on the court with being too eager to side with the Trump administration on such requests. The justice wrote that granting emergency applications often upends "the normal appellate process" while "putting a thumb on the scale in favor of the party that won." Targeting her conservative colleagues, she said "most troublingly, the Court's recent behavior" has benefited "one litigant over all others." Sotomayor's dissent was in response to the court's 5-4 order granting the government's request to allow its controversial "public charge" rule to go into effect in every state. The rule makes it more difficult for immigrants to obtain legal status if they use public benefits like food stamps and housing vouchers. Although the three other liberal justices on the bench also dissented, they remained silent and did not join Sotomayor's decision.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/23/politics/sotomayor-dissent-supreme-court/index.html>