



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on December 16, 2009

## 286 Illegal-immigrant Criminals Arrested

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested 286 illegal immigrants with criminal records during a three-day operation in California. It was the largest crackdown of this kind ever carried out by federal authorities.

The statewide undertaking ended December 10. Over 400 ICE agents participated, and of the 286 illegal immigrants arrested, more than 200 had previous convictions in the United States for armed robbery, rape, and other major crimes — but had previously eluded capture.



The operation highlights the Obama administration's focus on apprehending and deporting illegal immigrants with criminal records instead of those foreigners who have come to the United States illegally but who are not committing any recognizable crimes other than their initial entry. ICE chief John Morton told a December 11 news conference that only six of the 286 persons arrested did not have any previous criminal convictions.

Morton said the undertaking was a "direct reflection" of the Obama administration's emphasis on removing "from our streets criminals who don't have the right to be here in the first place." He pointed out that "within the world of limited resources," ICE would target the violent criminal element among the estimated 11 million illegal immigrants living in the United States.

ICE currently fields 104 fugitive-operations teams around the country, according to Morton. They have made thousands of arrests in recent years, although groups devoted to immigrant advocacy and human rights have complained about this.

Officials within the Obama administration have therefore focused on illegal immigrants who are guilty of serious crimes and have avoided the high-profile raids leading to large-scale arrests that took place under President George W. Bush. They are continuing with plans made by the Bush administration for the government-run electronic employment-verification system called E-Verify.

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [website](#):

E-Verify is an Internet-based system that allows an employer, using information reported on an employee's Form I-9, to determine the eligibility of that employee to work in the United States. For most employers, the use of E-Verify is voluntary and limited to determining the employment eligibility of new hires only.

There is no charge to employers to use E-Verify.

The E-Verify system is operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in partnership with the Social Security Administration.

The employers who must use E-Verify are all federal contractors and subcontractors with a Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) E-Verify clause in their contracts. If their contract has a FAR E-Verify



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clause, they must use E-Verify.

President Barack Obama is a known supporter of legal residency and citizenship for the millions of illegal immigrants already in the United States. His administration has realized that by *appearing* to get tough on illegal immigrants who are guilty of violent crimes, it can win support for future efforts that amount to amnesty. By seeming to address the criminal element within the larger community of illegal immigrants, the administration hopes to make amnesty more palatable.

Of course, this ignores the fact that every single illegal immigrant is guilty of breaking the law; they are all criminals by definition. They may not have robbed anyone at gunpoint, but they are taking advantage of U.S. welfare programs and medical care while taking jobs away from legal citizens. Their illegal activities may be less violent, but they still hurt the American economy and Americans in general.

*Photo: AP Images*



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