



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 28, 2021

New FAIR Study Provides 2020 Update on Number of Illegal Immigrants in the U.S.

A newly released [annual study](#) by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) finds that the illegal-immigrant population in the United States has grown by at least 200,000 since 2019 and is costing taxpayers an additional \$2 billion, bringing the total annual cost to approximately \$134 billion.

According to the report, there are now roughly 14.5 million illegal immigrants living in the United States, and, predictably, a large majority of them live along the southern border or in states with welcoming sanctuary protections.



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“The ten states with the largest estimated illegal alien populations account for just under three-fourths (71%) of the national illegal alien total,” the study states.

The researchers also admit that the figures are an estimate, and could be higher.

“In truth, we do not know exactly how many people cross the border unlawfully and evade immigration authorities,” the researchers note. “We can only estimate these figures based on how many individuals U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement believe slip through their detection.”

Indeed, other estimates contend the figures could be significantly higher. According to a [2018 study](#) by two Yale professors and an MIT instructor, there were approximately 22.1 million illegal immigrants living in the United States. Lending credence to this estimate is the fact that the researchers on that study were, in fact, setting out to disprove the oft-cited 11.3 million figure and were shocked by their findings.

“Our original idea was just to do a sanity check on the existing number,” said Edward Kaplan, a professor of operations research at Yale School of Management, according to the report at [Yale Insights](#). “Instead of a number which was smaller, we got a number that was 50% higher. That caused us to scratch our heads.”

Regardless of the exact estimates, it is safe to say the numbers are high.

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FAIR’s study found that despite the increased number of illegal immigrants in the country over 2019 levels, the increase is still less than expected, largely because of the strict immigration policies of the Trump administration.

“As many as 60 percent of all new illegal aliens in any given year are those who have overstayed visas,” FAIR researchers write. “Thanks to a timely travel freeze implemented by the Trump administration to stop the spread of the virus, far fewer people entered the United States in recent months, so far fewer people had the opportunity to overstay their visas.”



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The researchers also attribute the lower-than-expected growth rate to the “implementation of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) by the Trump administration, which requires asylum applicants to wait outside of the United States for their applications to be processed. Prior to this change, asylum seekers making “fraudulent asylum claims” would be released into the United States while their applications were being process and never appear for their hearings.

Still, in spite of the slower-than-expected growth, the number of illegal immigrants in the United States is staggeringly high and has grown exponentially within the last 10 years. From 2010, when FAIR estimated the illegal immigrant population to be somewhere around 11 million, the growth of the population and its [financial burden](#) on taxpayers has been enormous, with a more than 31-percent increase in the population.

Meanwhile, the report argues that weak immigration policies at the state level are one of many reasons illegal immigration remains a persistent problem. These include sanctuary policies, backlogged immigration court systems, the exploitation of cheap illegal labor by many large corporations, the availability of social-welfare programs and other benefits to illegal immigrants, and continued promises of amnesty from politicians.

The report’s findings are particularly significant as Americans are bracing themselves for an open-door immigration policy under the Biden administration. Breitbart News reports that Biden does not only support easing immigration enforcement and halting deportations, but the Democrat has proposed amnesty for nearly all illegal immigrants, “a policy that would add millions of foreign nationals to the U.S. labor market at a time of mass unemployment where 18 million Americans remain jobless.”

In a separate report by FAIR titled “By the Numbers: How the Biden/Harris Immigration Platform Will Fuel a Staggering Increase of Immigrants and Population Growth,” FAIR projects that the effects of an unchecked Biden/Harris administration on illegal immigration would be monumental:

If enacted in its entirety, the Biden/Harris platform would potentially invite more than 50 million additional lawful and illegal immigrants into the country. During a time when tens of millions of Americans are out of work, the focus of all presidential candidates needs to be on how to help American citizens find gainful employment, not importing millions of new migrants to compete for the few jobs currently available.

States such as Texas, however, are prepared to [fight](#) to stop the Biden administration from enacting extreme and harmful immigration policies. In fact, Texas has already secured a [victory](#) in federal court this week after Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton sued to block Biden’s 100-day moratorium on deportations.



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