



**Give Me Your Poor,  
Your Tired, Your  
Homeless  
(Some Restrictions  
May Apply):  
Immigration to the United  
States in the 21st Century**

Bob Gitter, Ohio Wesleyan  
Prof of Econ, Emeritus

National Economic Education  
Delegation

American University OLLI  
Washington, DC  
March 16, 2026

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## Course Schedule

### Economics of Public Policy Issues

- Week 1 (3/02): Economic Update & Tariffs Geoffrey Woglom, Amherst College
- Week 2 (3/09): Trade and Globalization, Mina Kim, NEED
- **Week 3 (3/16): Economics of Immigration, Robert Gitter, Ohio Wesleyan University**
- Week 4 (3/23): Autonomous Vehicles, Arkadiusz Mironko, Kean University
- Week 5 (3/39): Climate Change Economics, Sarah Jacobson, Williams College
- Week 6 (4/06): Health Care Economics, Robert Rebelein, Vassar College
- Week 7 (4/13): Saving Social Security, Geoffrey Woglom

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## Next Week

### Identifying the Waymo Fully Self-Driving Vehicle

The Waymo fully self-driving Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid minivans can be easily identified by the white color with Waymo logos, roof assembly, front fender additions, or rear roof additions below.

**During driverless testing and operation, Waymo's vehicles are fully self-driving at all times, and will not have any person in the driver's seat either steering or otherwise controlling the vehicle.**



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## Submitting Questions

There will be time for a Q&A after the presentation

Slides will be available from the NEED website tonight or tomorrow

[https://needecon.org/delivered\\_presentations.php](https://needecon.org/delivered_presentations.php).

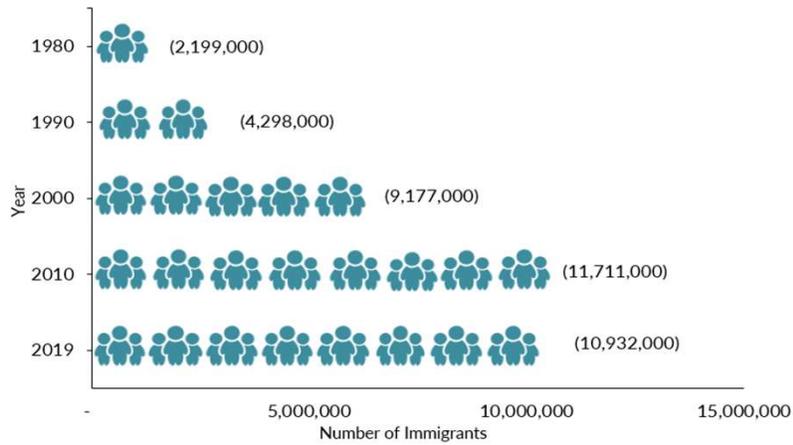
# Migration to the US

## Difficult to Measure How Many

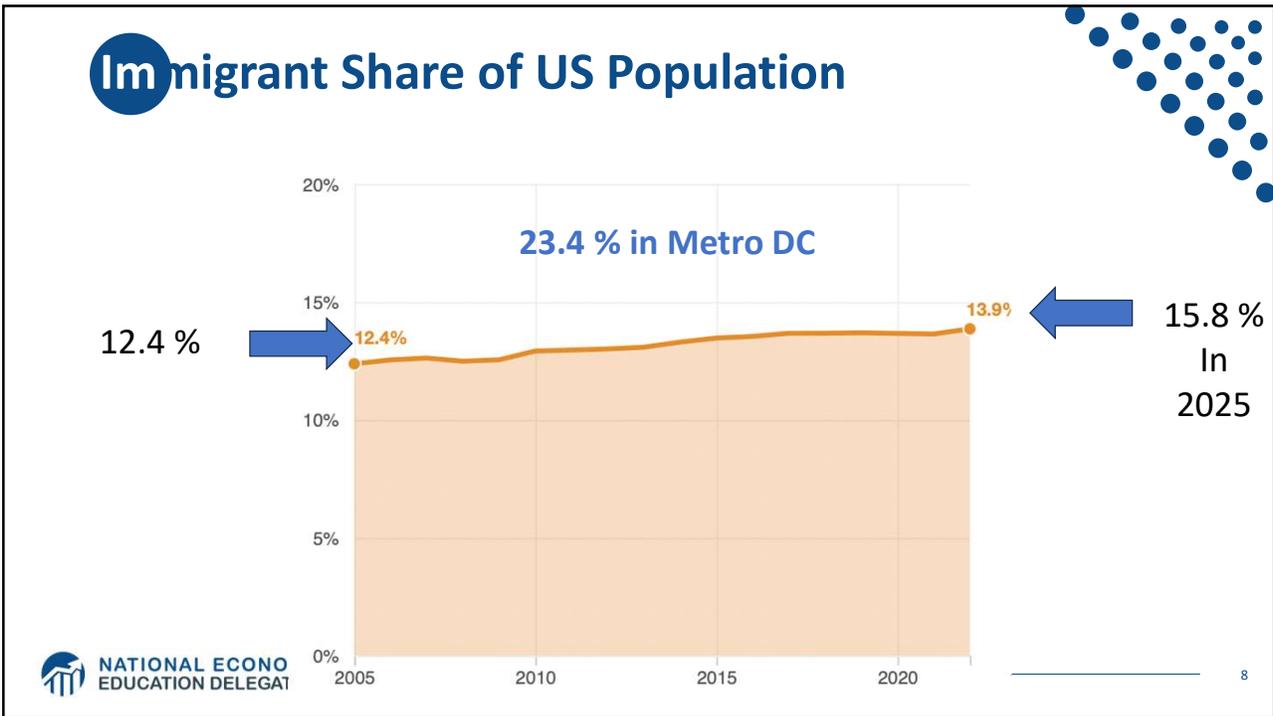
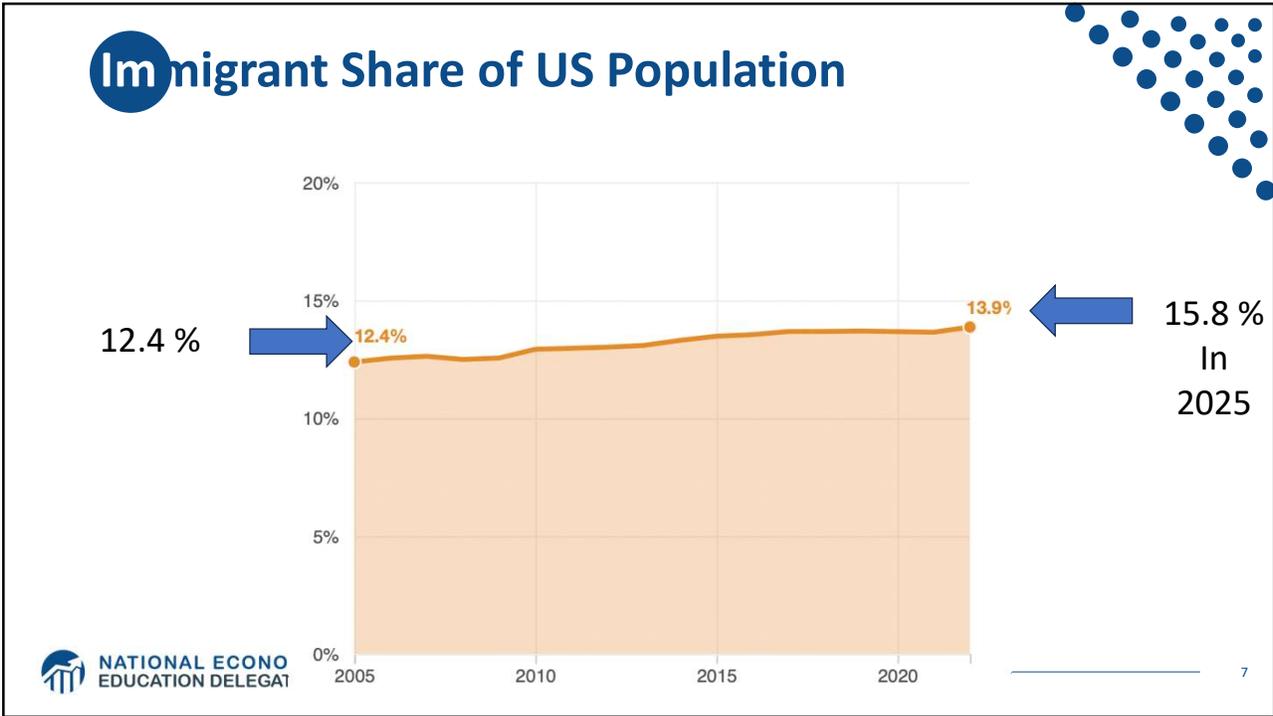
- Legal Immigrants - easy
- Undocumented Immigrants
- Return Immigrants – no record if return



# Mexican-Born People in the US



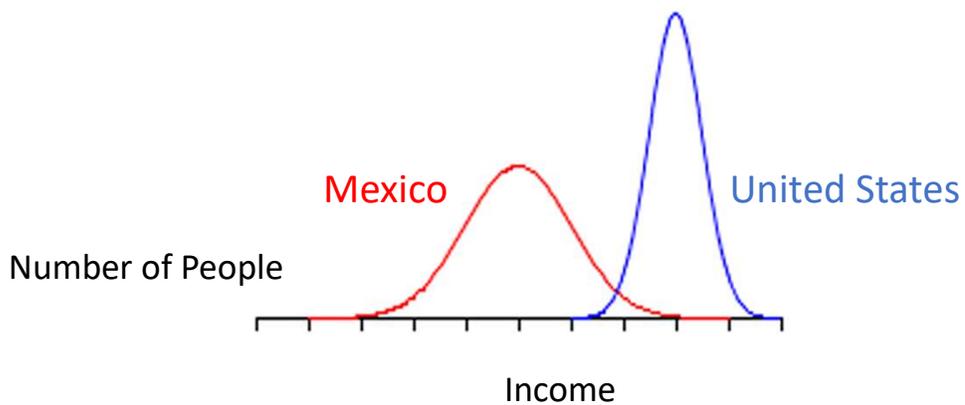
**About 10.9 million in 2023 (Latest data)**  
**1 in 14 people born in Mexico currently lives in the US**



## The Migration Decision

- **Benefit of Migrating**
- **Benefit of Staying**
- **Cost of Migrating**

## Distribution of Income



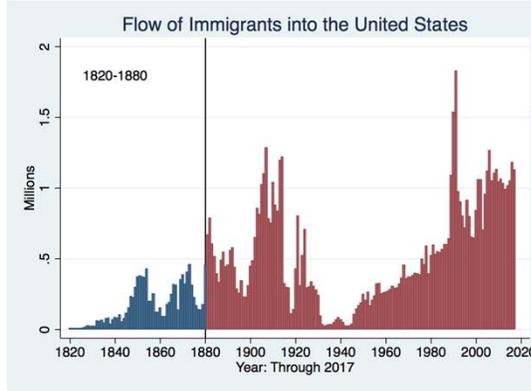
## The Dangers of Border Crossing



## Key Laws

- **Quota and Immigrations Acts (1921 and 1924)**
- **Bracero Program(1942-1964)**
- **Immigration and Nationality Act (1965)**
- **Immigration and Control Act (1986)**

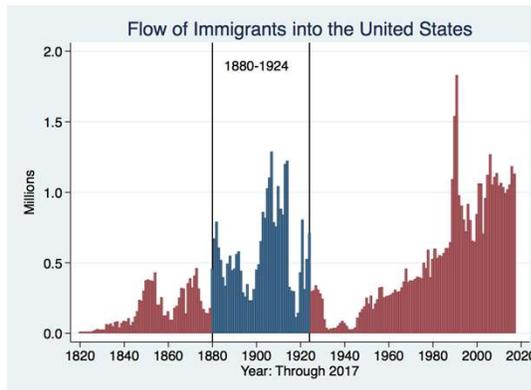
# U.S. Immigration 1820-1880



Source Country	1820-1880
Germany	3,000,000
Ireland	2,800,000
Britain	2,000,000
Austro-Hungarian Empire	1,000,000
Canada	750,000
China	230,000
Africa	50,000

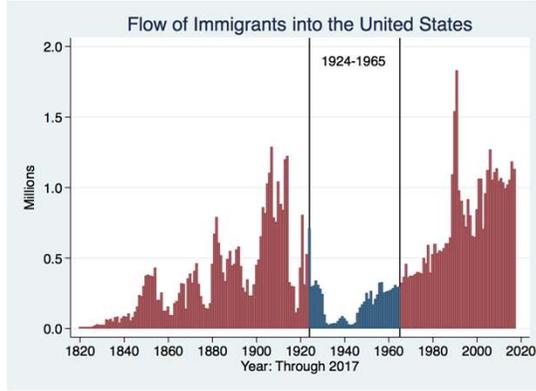
<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/immigration-timeline>

# U.S. Immigration 1880-1924



Source Country	1880-1930
Italy	4,600,000
Austro-Hungarian Empire	4,000,000
Russian Empire	3,300,000
German Empire	2,800,000
Britain	2,300,000
Canada	2,300,000
Ireland	1,700,000

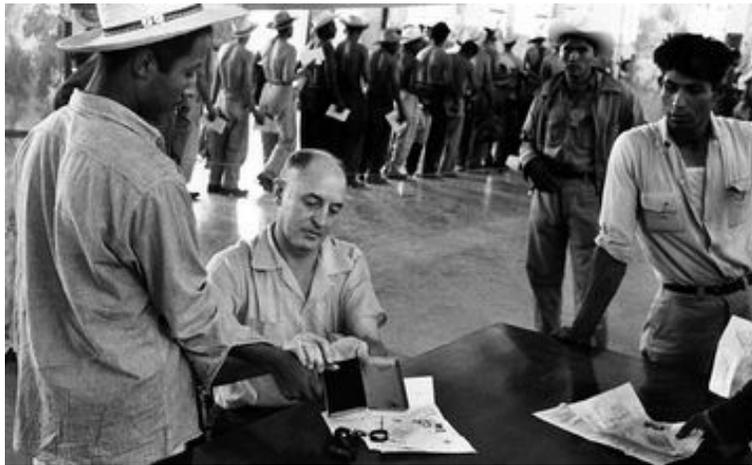
# U.S. Immigration 1924-1965



Source Country	1930-1965
Germany	940,000
Canada	900,000
Mexico	610,000
Britain	480,000
Italy	390,000
Caribbean/ West Indies	310,000

<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/immigration-timeline>

# Signing up for Bracero Program



## LBJ Signs Immigration and Nationality Act (1965)



- Abolished Quotas
- Limits immigration to about 1 million/year
- Family reunification most important consideration

## NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS BY TYPE OF ADMISSION: FISCAL YEAR 2023

Family-sponsored preferences	755,830	204,240
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens		551,590
Employment-based preferences <sup>3</sup>		196,760
Diversity		67,350
Refugees		59,030
Asylees		40,330
<u>Other</u>		<u>53,610</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,172,910</b>



## Four Times as Many H1B Applications as Visas Awarded



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## H2A Program



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EDUCATION DELEGATION

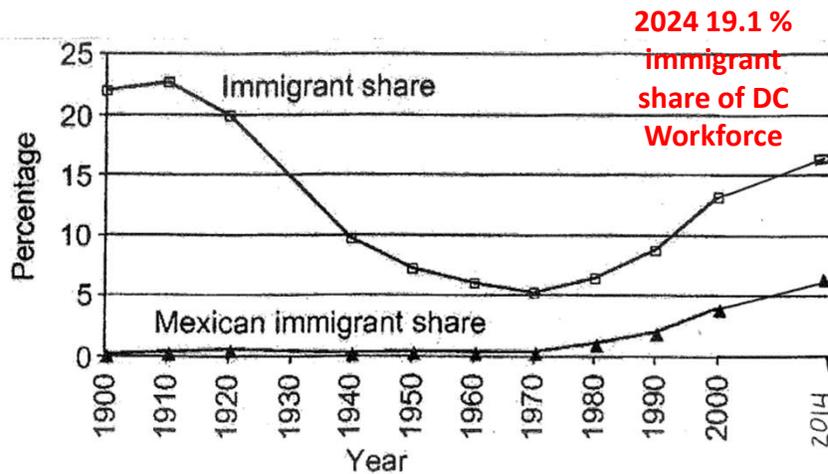
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# Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986



- Grants amnesty to undocumented individuals in US since 1982
- Must pay penalty and back taxes
- Amnesty granted for being undocumented
- Path to citizenship
- Two million people took advantage, mostly Mexican
- Illegal to knowingly hire undocumented workers

# Immigrant Share of US Workforce



## Immigration to Washington, DC Metro Area

**Immigrants tend to be of working age. More so than the U.S. Born**

Age	Foreign Born	United States Born
0-15	5.5%	24.4%
16-64	78.5%	61.1%
65+	15.9%	14.5%

## Immigration to Washington, DC Metro Area

Country of Origin	Percent of Immigrants
El Salvador	13.1 %
India	7.0 %
Guatemala	4.2 %
Ethiopia	4.0 %
Korea	3.7 %

## Immigration to Washington, DC Metro Area

There is a higher share of immigrants without a high school diploma

Education Level	Foreign Born Population	U.S. Born Population
Less than High School	19.3 %	4.3 %
High School & Some College	33.9%	37.5 %
Bachelor's Degree	22.5 %	29.2 %
Graduate Degree	24.3 %	29.1 %

## Immigration to Washington, DC Metro Area

Top Occupations with Highest Share of Immigrant Workers

Occupation	Share of Workers Immigrants
Construction	52.4 %
Transp. & Warehousing	43.1 %
Health Care & Soc. Assistance	35.4 %
Wholesale Trade	34.4 %
Arts, Entertainment, Hospitality & Food Service	34.2 %

## Characteristics of Native and Latin Amer. Born Population (Age 16 & up - U S)

	<u>Native Born</u>	<u>Foreign Born</u>	<u>Lat. Amer. Born</u>
Labor Force	136 Mil.	32.3 Mil	15.7 Mil
< H.S. Educ	5.3 %	21.2 %	32.9 %
Poor English	2%	21 %	33 %
Employed	59.3 %	63.7 %	65.4 %
Unem. Rate	4.0%	4.2 %	4.7%
Med. Wk. Earn	\$1,190	\$1001	\$997
 Poverty Rate	12 %	14 %	17%

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## Impact of Latin American Immigration

- More likely to be in low-skill, low-wage jobs.
- Competition for less skilled native-born
- More GDP & lower prices
- Helps upper income native-born, hurts lower
- Little impact on federal budget but raises costs for state and local (schooling)



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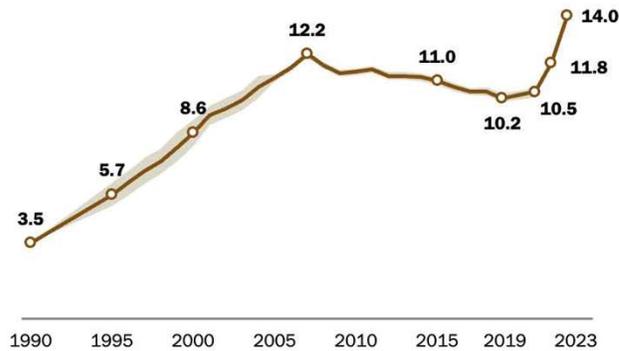
# Undocumented Immigrants in the U S

The number of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. grew sharply from 2021 to 2023 ...

*U.S. immigrant population without full legal status, in millions*

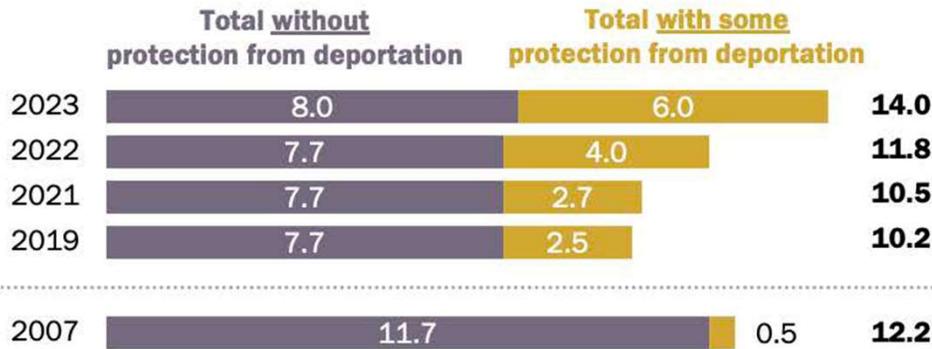
The Pew Foundation estimates undocumented immigrants dropped in 2024 and 2025

Source: PEW Foundation.



# Undocumented Immigrants and TPS

*Unauthorized immigrant population in the U.S., in millions*



Source: Pew Foundation

## Asylees and Refugees

- Refugees are usually outside the United States when they are screened for resettlement in US
- Asylum seekers submit their applications while physically present in the United States or at a U.S. port of entry

**Reason to grant – (US & UNCOR) unable to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on: **race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.** (Not economic hardship!)**

## Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

- **The Secretary of Homeland Security can grant**
- **Can be granted to foreign-born persons who can't return to home country safely due to their country unable to handle their return**
- **Acceptable reasons**
  - Conflict
  - Hurricane or earthquake
  - epidemic
  - Other temporary conditions
- **Temporary status but can be extended**
- **Can work and travel within the United States**
- **May be eligible for welfare such as TANF, SNAP, Medicaid**

## TPS As of March 31, 2025

Country	Individuals
Venezuela	605,015
Haiti	330,735
El Salvador	170,125
Ukraine	101,150
Honduras	51,225
Other	39,150
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,297,635</b>



## TPS As of March 2026

Country	Individuals - 2025 Totals
<del>Venezuela</del>	<del>605,015</del>
Haiti ???	330,735
El Salvador	170,125
Ukraine	101,150
<del>Honduras</del>	<del>51,225</del>
Other	39,150
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,297,635</b>



## Current TPS Status

In Effect	Ended but Suspended by Court Order
El Salvador	Burma
Lebanon	Ethiopia
Sudan	Haiti
Ukraine	Somalia
Yemen	South Sudan
	Syria

## DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)

- Entered U.S. before age 16, now in U.S.
- Entered before June 2007
- Currently in school, high school grad or honorable discharge from military
- No felony conviction or threat to security
- Renewable every 2 years
- Executive Order by Obama, Trump ended, Biden restored, in court now

**About 530,000 in US and 14,000 in DMV**

## President Trump Day 1 Executive Orders

- **Massive Expansion of Expedited Removal**
- **Targeting "Recent" Entrants**
- **Expansion of 287(g) Agreements**
- **Targeting "Sanctuary Cities"**
- **"Catch and Revoke" Program**
- **Expansion of Detention Infrastructure**



## Other Recent Changes

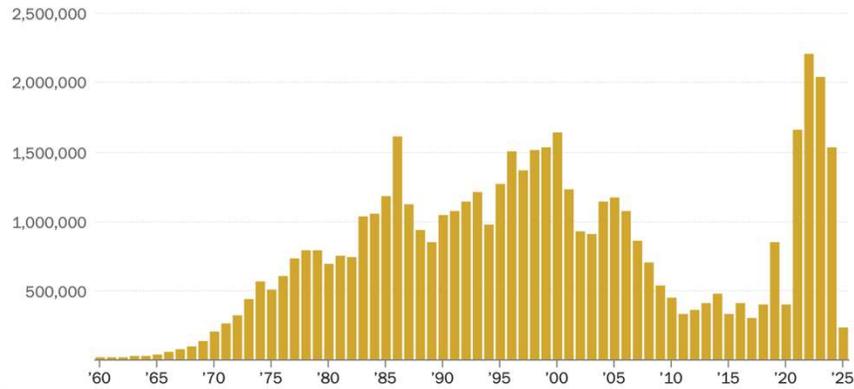
- **Proposed Revocation of Birthright Citizenship**
- **Operation Metro Surge & Other Targeted Cities**
- **Workplace & Campus Raids**
- **The One Big Beautiful Bill Act**
- **Alien Enemies Act of 1798**
- **Expedited Removal Expansion**
- **International "Third-Country" Agreements**
- **Elimination of "Sensitive Zones"**
- **\$100,000 Fee for H1B Visa**



# Border Encounters at U.S.-Mexico Border

**In 2025, encounters with migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border fell to their lowest level since 1970**

*Migrant encounters by U.S. Border Patrol at the U.S.-Mexico border, by fiscal year*



# Final Thoughts



- Building a wall might not be effective
- Going through the desert is dangerous
- Illegal to hire undocumented workers but still done
- Undocumented are not eligible for welfare
- Maybe a points system like Canada

**Thank you!**



## Questions?

Robert Gitter

[rjgitter@owu.edu](mailto:rjgitter@owu.edu)

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