



## Fact check: Elon Musk's claim that Democrats are avoiding deportations to win elections is False.

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Following news reports about immigrants in the U.S. illegally suspected in violent attacks in New York City and Georgia, Elon Musk accused Democrats of avoiding deportation to win at the ballot box.

"Dems won't deport, because every illegal is a highly likely vote at some point," [Musk wrote on X Feb. 26](#). "That simple incentive explains what seems to be insane behavior."

Musk's post also referred to immigrants illegally in the U.S. who are [accused](#) of assaulting New York City police officers. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, [said](#) that the reported migrants who were recorded on video assaulting police should be deported.

Musk's post shared another person's X post about the murder of Laken Riley, a 22-year-old University of Georgia nursing student who was killed Feb. 22 while on a run. Authorities [charged](#) Jose Ibarra, a 26-year-old from Venezuela, with the murder.

[U.S. Customs and Border Protection stopped Ibarra](#) when he illegally crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in September 2022, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Ibarra was paroled in, allowing him to be released into the U.S. to await further immigration proceedings.

The Nashville Tea Party, a conservative group, posted Musk's statement on [Instagram](#) about a week later.

This post was flagged as part of Meta's efforts to combat false news and misinformation on its News Feed. (Read more about our [partnership with Meta](#), which owns Facebook and Instagram.)

Musk has [repeatedly posted similar statements](#) about Democrats "importing voters" or illegal immigrants and voters.

These statements by [Musk](#) — and similar ones by [former President Donald Trump](#) and [J.D. Vance](#), now a Republican U.S. Senator from Ohio — are wrong.

We contacted X's press team asking for Musk's evidence and received an automated response: "Busy now, please check back later."

### **Democratic presidents have removed, returned or expelled millions of people**

Presidents, including Democrats, have removed and returned immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally for years, as federal government data shows.

David Bier, associate director of immigration studies at the libertarian Cato Institute, said Musk's statement is "ludicrously untrue."

Bier pointed to data from the Department of Homeland Security showing that Biden and former Democratic presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton have returned, removed or expelled millions of people.

During each of his terms, Obama removed and returned more people than Trump did.

There have been more than 3.6 million removals, returns and expulsions from February 2021, Biden's first month in office, to September 2023, based on Department of Homeland Security estimates.