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## Trump Cites Hate Group at Conservative Political Action Conference

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At this year's Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) on March 2, President Donald Trump cited a study by anti-immigrant hate group Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) claiming that "illegal aliens are incarcerated at three times the rate of legal residents."

The CATO Institute, a libertarian think tank, disproved this repeated claim by the anti-immigrant movement through an analysis of criminal conviction data in Texas for 2015 provided by the Texas Department of Public Safety, the American Community Survey and the Center for Migration Studies. "Illegal immigrants, non-citizens, and legal immigrants are less likely to be incarcerated, convicted, or arrested for crimes than native-born Americans are," the study concluded.

The myth of the criminal immigrant has been a trope in the anti-immigrant movement for decades. In 1994, anti-immigrant extremists Wayne Lutton and John Tanton co-authored The Immigration Invasion. The book was published by The Social Contract Press (TSCP), the white nationalist publishing house founded by Tanton and run by Lutton.

Tanton, the racist architect of the anti-immigrant movement, wrote alongside Lutton, "Among illegal aliens, the incarceration rate is three times the U.S. average" (Lutton and Tanton, 1994, p. 61). This is an almost identical claim to Trump's, written 25 years earlier.

Trump also made assertions similar to Tanton's about immigrants in prison. "And if you look at prison population in federal prisons," Trump continued in his speech at CPAC, "these federal prisons are – the number is staggering. The number of illegals – far, far, far greater than any proportion of our population."

In May 1992, Tanton wrote for TSCP: "Criminal activities committed by aliens have escalated dramatically. Aliens are crowding local, state, and federal jails across the country. ... Criminal activities in the U.S. run by Third World natives can be traced back to the Immigration Act of 1965 and failure to control illegal immigration."

Trump has cited fallacious figures about immigrants committing crimes in the past. In June, he met with family members of individuals killed by undocumented immigrants, a group he calls "angel families." Among the attendees were members from Advocates for Victims of Illegal Aliens Crimes (AVIAC), a splinter group from the Remembrance Project, an anti-immigrant hate

group run by Maria Espinoza. At the event, Trump claimed, “In Texas alone, within the last seven years, more than a quarter million criminal aliens have been arrested and charged with over 600,000 criminal offenses.” CATO both refuted this figure and also showed the criminal conviction rate for legal immigrants in Texas was 85 percent lower than the native-born rate.

Anti-immigrant groups founded and funded by Tanton such as FAIR and Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) continue to propagate this myth. In January 2018, Steven Camarota, research director at CIS, wrote a paper titled, “Non-Citizens Committed a Disproportionate Share of Federal Crimes, 2011 – 16.” In February, FAIR published a report, “SCAAP Data Suggest Illegal Aliens Commit Crime at a Much Higher Rate than Citizens and Lawful Immigrants.”

These erroneous reports, facts and figures are not without consequence. A 2017 Gallup poll shows 45 percent of Americans polled believe immigrants make “the crime situation” worse.

President Trump’s promotion of these consistently discredited claims surely won’t help.