

DAILY KOS

Despite Trump's claims, native-born Americans are more likely than immigrants to be 'bad hombres'

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No matter what Donald Trump tries to tell you, the fact is that native-born Americans are more likely than immigrants to be the actual “bad hombres”:

Although federal data are limited, two reports released this month — by the Sentencing Project and the libertarian Cato Institute — confirmed past studies that immigrants, including those here illegally, commit crimes at lower rates than do native-born Americans.

“The big picture concern is that the administration’s policies seem premised on the idea that immigration status is some kind of indicator for criminality, when in fact that is not at all the case,” said Gregory Chen, advocacy director for the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

According to the Sentencing Project, not only are immigrants “less likely than native-born individuals to have engaged in violent or non-violent anti-social behaviors in their lifetimes, including harassment, assault, and acquiring multiple traffic violations,” but higher levels of immigration actually make communities safer:

The rate at which homicide declined was much greater in cities with larger immigrant populations than in cities with smaller immigrant populations. Property crimes also decreased faster in cities with larger immigrant populations than in cities with smaller immigrant populations.

Researchers have suggested that immigrants help lower the crime rate in their communities because of their strong familial ties, their political participation, their orientation to the justice system, and their economic impact.

Since criminal-justice contact may also jeopardize their immigration status, immigrants who willingly came to the United States for safety and better opportunities are more likely to be law-abiding than their U.S.-born counterparts.

To put it more plainly, undocumented immigrants, even those with U.S. citizen kids and deep roots in the U.S., already live their daily lives here on a precarious basis. So why would they want to endanger that?

But you wouldn't know any of this from Trump, who launched his presidential campaign by calling Mexican immigrants criminals and "rapists" (despite the fact the he confessed on tape to sexually assaulting women himself), and has since taken steps to further demonize and criminalize immigrants, including floating sharing the personal information of immigrants swept up in raids:

This week the administration released a list of cities that have not fully cooperated with federal immigration authorities, and soon the Department of Homeland Security will unveil an office staffed by more than two dozen employees tasked with closely assisting families of Americans who were victims of violent crimes by undocumented foreigners.

DHS lawyers also are examining federal privacy laws to determine ways to more freely share potentially incriminating personal information on immigrants among government agencies and release it publicly, including the nationality, immigration status and criminal history of those swept up in enforcement raids.

And on Thursday, the Justice Department specifically highlighted immigration offenses and arrests during the release of its annual federal statistics report.

When Trump's raids are sweeping up undocumented immigrants with no criminal record, you cannot understate the danger of releasing their personal information publicly to supporters who have already been committing acts of violence and harassment against immigrants and people of color in his name.

Chen asks: "Why is this administration so hyper-focused on making the connection between crime and immigration?" Well, when you're looking for someone to blame for your troubles in life, it's easy to pick on the most vulnerable. It's also a good distraction when your own administration is so deeply mired in its own questionable actions.