



Border Patrol apprehensions rise, number of convicted criminals trying to get through dramatically drops

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The number of arrests made by Border Patrol in 2019 is at a twelve-year high, according to an analysis of official data published by the [CATO Institute](#) this week.

Some 268,044 individuals are documented to have been apprehended on the Southwest border from the beginning of the year through the end of February.

“If those numbers continue to climb, Border Patrol apprehensions this fiscal year could exceed the annual number in any year since the start of the Great Recession,” the CATO analysis asserted, referencing the devastating economic downturn that formally started in December 2007 and ended eighteen months later.

Even though Border Patrol has increased the number of apprehensions, the report highlighted Border Patrol data showing the number of “criminal aliens” – defined as those who have been convicted of crimes inside the United States or for what is considered by U.S. standards to be a crime abroad – who have been trying to get through to the U.S. has declined.

“From the beginning of the fiscal year 2015 through the end of February 2019, the absolute number and percent of criminal aliens arrested by Border Patrol have fallen every year,” the analysis noted. “In 2015, about 5.8 percent of all Border Patrol apprehensions were criminal aliens. For 2019 through the end of February, only 0.8 percent of people apprehended by Border Patrol were criminal aliens.”

The report indicated that, unlike previous surges, the current crisis of women, children and asylum seekers “means that today’s surge is preferable to previous surges,” ironically.

However, what is not clear is the number of those engaging in criminal activity – who have not been convicted of wrongdoing and are thus not defined as “criminal aliens” – who have attempted to enter, which routinely tumbles to the center of the immigration debate.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen called the ongoing immigration situation a “category five hurricane disaster” and illuminated the department’s push for “more military resources to the border.”

“We have to stop the drugs. We have to stop the smuggling and trafficking gangs,” she said.