



## **School Rape Case Fuels Myth that Immigrants are Dangerous**

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A criminal incident in a school outside Washington, D.C., has fueled allegations that illegal immigrants are dangerous despite evidence that immigrants — legal and illegal — commit crimes at lower rates than the rest of the population, according to research from several organizations.

Parents, protesters and activists have descended on schools in Montgomery County, Maryland, where a 14-year-old girl allegedly was raped last week by two classmates, at least one of whom was an undocumented immigrant.

The incident even grabbed the attention of the White House earlier this week. Spokesman Sean Spicer said the rape is exactly why President Donald Trump is pushing for a "crackdown" on illegal immigration.

The narrative from the Trump administration has emphasized the criminal threat posed by illegal immigrants.

### **Homeland Security report released**

Just this week, the Department of Homeland Security released its first weekly report that names cities and other sanctuary jurisdictions that did not cooperate with federal immigration authorities in apprehending illegal immigrants. According to the report, illegal immigrants were either charged or convicted of a total of 206 crimes.

The administration plans to collect data on the perceived threats of foreign nationals in its executive orders on immigration.

But “immigrants — regardless of legal status — do not have higher crime rates than native-born citizens,” writes the Sentencing Project in its report, *Immigration and Public Safety*, published this month. Increased immigration may, in fact, be responsible for a drop in crime, according to the lobbying group's report, which states:

“The violent crime rate began to fall in the mid-1990s, and by 2014 it was half of its 1990 level, at 362 offenses per 100,000 residents. By that year, the foreign-born population had more than doubled, reaching 42.2 million people (including 11.1 million undocumented people).”

### **CATO institute offers study**

In addition, a study by the CATO institute released last week found that undocumented immigrants are 44 percent less likely to be incarcerated, and legal immigrants 69 percent less likely to be incarcerated than American natives.

Montgomery County School officials have called on the media to keep the alleged rape case out of the current national debate on immigration.

“We would like to change the conversation,” said Jack Smith, superintendent of the schools system. “Some have tried to make this into a question and issue of immigration ... but we serve every student who walks through our doors.”