

Washington MONTHLY

Trump-Induced Fear Is Literally Making Latinos Sick

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July 23, 2019

On June 27th, Dallas-born high school senior Francisco Galicia drove with some friends from Edinburg, Texas to a soccer scouting event at Ranger College in North Texas. They were stopped at a Border Patrol checkpoint in Falfurrias, about 65 miles north of their hometown, and were asked for papers, according to several media outlets. Even though Galicia—a U.S. citizen—provided his Texas birth certificate, a Texas ID card and social security card, he was detained. Almost a month later, he is still in custody because Border Patrol and ICE think his papers are fraudulent.

While this travesty is garnering some attention since Galicia's story appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*, it is not that uncommon.

Although U.S. citizens make up only a small fraction of the total number of arrests made by ICE, it's not necessarily a rare event, according to recent reports. In an April 2018 investigation, the Los Angeles Times found that ICE had released more than 1,480 people from its custody since 2012 after investigating their citizenship claims. In Texas alone, the Cato Institute estimated that ICE had wrongfully placed detainers — requests to local jails to hold a person in custody so ICE can pick them up — on hundreds of U.S. citizens between 2006 and 2017.

If you are brown in America—regardless of your legal status—you have reason to be afraid. Even traveling with a copy of your birth certificate is not enough to protect you from detention and possible deportation if you run across a checkpoint with a demand of “papers, please!” The fear is even more palpable if you are undocumented, or have legal status and hope to apply for citizenship.

Things are only going to get worse. Under a new rule proposed by the Trump administration, Galicia might have already been deported.

The Trump administration is planning to expand a procedure to speed up deportations to include undocumented immigrants anywhere in the US who cannot prove they've lived in the US continuously for two years or more.

The change casts a wider net of undocumented immigrants subject to the fast-track deportation procedure known as “expedited removal,” which allows immigration authorities to remove an individual without a hearing before an immigration judge.

In doing so, the administration would be provided greater latitude in quickly deporting undocumented immigrants.

Living with that kind of fear on a constant basis takes a toll on human beings. Recent studies are pointing to the consequences for Latinos in this country.

Trump's presidency may be making some people sick, a growing number of studies suggest. Researchers have begun to identify correlations between Trump's election and worsening cardiovascular health, sleep problems, anxiety and stress, especially among Latinos in the United States.

A study published Friday using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found the risk of premature birth was higher than expected among Latina women following Trump's election...

Beyond pregnancies, other studies have found increased fear, anxiety and anger among Latino youth since Trump's election. One pediatric study of nearly 400 U.S.-born adolescents with at least one immigrant parent found increased blood pressure and problems sleeping. Another looking at more than 200 Latino parents noted increased psychological distress.

A paper published last year in the Annals of Behavioral Medicine found a correlation between deportation worries and higher blood pressure among Latina women, as well as a greater risk of obesity.

Notice that none of those studies distinguish between documented and undocumented Latinos. The toll is being felt by anyone who is brown in America these days.

Trump's hate-filled rhetoric is not just a matter of racist words being spewed by the most powerful man in this country. Combine that with fears of deportation, as well as a rise in hate crimes, and it should not come as a surprise that fear-induced health problems are on the rise in the Latino community. Let's not mince words: this is just one manifestation of what it means to have a racist in the White House.