

INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY®

Yes, There Is A Crisis At The Border — The Numbers Show It

January 10, 2019

Illegal Immigration: Democrats and the mainstream press accuse President Donald Trump of manufacturing a crisis at the border. The numbers tell another story.

As soon as the words "growing humanitarian and security crisis at our Southern border" left Trump's lips in his Oval Office address this week, Democrats and media "fact-checkers" were trying to dispel it as a deliberate lie.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Trump "must stop manufacturing a crisis, and must reopen the government."

Border Crossings Climbing

NPR's "fact check" — like countless others — dismissed Trump's claim as false because "illegal border crossings in the most recent fiscal year (ending in September 2018) were actually lower than in either 2016 or 2014."

What they aren't telling you is **border patrol agents apprehended** more than 100,000 people trying to enter the country illegally *in just October and November of last year*. Or that that number is way up from the same two months the year before.

Nor do they mention that last year, the border patrol apprehended *more than half a million* people trying to get into the country illegally. And that number, too, is up from the year before.

Downplaying Number Of Illegals

Trump's critics certainly don't bother to mention that those figures only count illegals the border patrol caught. It does not count *the ones who eluded border patrol agents and got into the country*.

The **Department of Homeland Security** claims that about 20% of illegal border crossers make it into the country. Other studies, however, say border agents fail to apprehend as much as 50% of illegal crossers.

Even at the lower percentage, that means that 104,000 illegals made it into the country in 2018 alone.

Is that not a crisis at the border?

Massive Illegal Population

Pelosi and company also don't bother to mention the fact that there are already between 12 million and 22 million illegals — depending on which study you use — in the country today.

Let's put that number in perspective.

At the high end, it means that the illegal population in the U.S. is larger than the *entire population* of countries like Syria, Chile, the Netherlands and Ecuador. Even if the number is just 12 million, that's still more than the entire population of Sweden, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Ireland and New Zealand.

It is, in short, a massive number.

Here's more perspective. The U.S. is virtually alone in the world in having such a large share of its population in the country illegally.

An analysis by the nonpartisan **ProCon.org** found that in 2010 almost 4% of the U.S. population was in the country illegally. The average for 13 other countries it analyzed was just 1.3%.

In France, for example, illegals make up just 0.9% of its population. It's 0.3% in Germany, 0.8% in Spain, and 0.5% in the Netherlands.

Isn't having millions in the country illegally, with thousands joining them every day, not a crisis at the border?

Illegals and Crime

Critics also complain that Trump overstated the risk of illegal immigrants committing crimes. They all point to a report from the Cato Institute, a pro-immigration libertarian think tank. Cato did a statistical analysis of census data and concluded that incarceration rates for Hispanic illegals were slightly lower than those of the native-born.

But the **Center for Immigration Studies** looked at federal crime statistics. It found that noncitizens accounted for more than 20% of federal convictions, even though they make up just 8.4% of the population.

"It is almost certain that a majority of noncitizens convicted of federal crimes are illegal immigrants," said Steven Camarota of the CIS.

Texas also has been monitoring crimes committed by illegals. **It reports that** from 2011 to 2018, it booked 186,000 illegal aliens. Police charged them with a total of 292,000 crimes. Those included 539 murders, 32,000 assaults, 3,426 sexual assaults, and almost 3,000 weapons charges.

Even if Cato is right that the crime rate among Hispanic illegals is a bit lower than for natives, that's cold comfort to victims of these crimes, which would not have happened had the border been more secure. They would likely agree with Trump about their being a crisis at the border.

Past Presidents Promised To Fix This

Here's another problem with claims that we don't have a crisis at the border.

Past presidents all treated it like one.

In 1982, for example, President Ronald Reagan said that "The ongoing migration of persons to the United States in violation of our laws is a *serious national problem* detrimental to the interests of the United States."

President Bill Clinton said in his 1995 State of the Union address that "All Americans ... are rightly disturbed by the large numbers of illegal aliens entering our country." That's why, he said, "our administration has moved *aggressively* to secure our borders."

President George Bush, in a prime-time Oval Office speech in 2006, declared that securing the U.S. border is a basic responsibility of a sovereign nation. It is also an *urgent requirement of our national security*."

Bush also promised to end the practice of catch-and-release "once and for all." He said that "people will know that they'll be caught and sent home if they enter our country illegally."

President Barack Obama in 2005 declared that "we simply *cannot allow people to pour into the United States* undetected, undocumented, unchecked." And in 2014 even he admitted there was a crisis on the border — one that he did virtually nothing to fix. (Apprehensions at the border last year were almost the same as in 2014.)

What Is A Crisis?

Yet despite repeated promises by presidents and Congress for the past three decades, the border remains nearly as porous as ever. And catch-and-release is still alive and well. Is it any wonder so many try to cross the border illegally every month.

Isn't the failure of leaders to do what they all say is necessary to protect national security interests the very definition of a crisis at the border?

Democrats, it seems, want to label everything a crisis. We have a health care crisis. A clean water crisis. A "food desert" crisis. An infrastructure crisis. A homelessness crisis.

Democrats label just about *everything* a crisis. Why? Because they want to whip up public support for bigger, more expensive, more intrusive government programs.

Everything, that is, except for the very real, long-standing crisis posed by a porous border that each year lets in tens of thousands of illegals.