



## **Immigrants don't commit more crime than native-born Americans, research says**

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After it was announced Cristhian Bahena Rivera, 24, who resides in Poweshiek County, was arrested and charged in relation to Mollie Tibbetts' death, discussion sparked surrounding undocumented immigrants and crimes rates.

These discussions have stemmed from authorities reporting Rivera is an undocumented immigrant.

Donald Trump was speaking at a rally in West Virginia on Tuesday, Aug. 21 and commented on Tibbetts' death.

"You heard about today, with the illegal alien coming in from, very sadly, from Mexico," Trump said. "And you saw what happened to that incredible, beautiful young woman, should have never happened."

Rick Exner, leader of the "A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy," AMOS, issue team on immigration, commented on the conversations surrounding the case.

AMOS is based in Des Moines, Ames and Norwalk.

"Different AMOS clusters are working on different projects, which they generally select through a grassroots process. In Ames, AMOS has or is working on affordable housing, access to healthcare, job creation, mental health, and immigration, to name a few areas," Exner said.

There is one paid organizer and the rest are volunteers, mostly church members and leaders.

"I am not an expert in immigration; I just coordinate a group of Story County faith communities with members who are concerned with immigration issues," Exner said.

“Those who are seeing this as an opportunity to say ‘I told you so’ are distracting our attention from the fact that immigrants, both documented and undocumented, are more law abiding than the native-born population, and this statistic includes violent crimes.”

Gov. Kim Reynolds also spoke on the matter.

“As Iowans, we are heartbroken, and we are angry. We are angry that a broken immigration system allowed a predator like this to live in our community, and we will do all we can bring justice to Mollie’s killer,” Reynolds said.

Immigration experts and studies report national crime statistics show immigrants commit fewer crimes than native-born Americans.

"There's 100 years of data from all different sources that all point in the same direction," said Walter Ewing, senior researcher at the American Immigration Council, which advocates on behalf of immigrants, said in an interview with the Des Moines Register, "If you don't believe one study, there's 10 more behind it that say the same thing."

A 2018 study published in criminology, a journal “devoted to the study of crime and deviant behavior,” reported on 50 states from 1990 to 2014 and found “increases in the undocumented immigrant population within states are associated with significant decreases in the prevalence of violence,” according to the study.

The Cato Institute is “a public policy research organization — a think tank — dedicated to the principles of individual liberty, limited government, free markets, and peace. Its scholars and analysts conduct independent, nonpartisan research on a wide range of policy issues,” has also published a study about immigrants titled, Criminal Immigrants: Their Numbers, Demographics, and Countries of Origin.”

Michelangelo Landgrave and Alex Nowrasteh, the researchers, found that “legal and illegal immigrants are less likely to be incarcerated than natives,” according to the study.

“Our numbers do not represent the total number of immigrants who can be deported under current law or the complete number of convicted immigrant criminals who are in the United States, but merely those incarcerated.”

“The family, and really all Iowans, need space to grieve and absorb the horrible event,” Exner said.