

Rolling Stone

Study: There's No Correlation Between Undocumented Immigration and Violent Crime

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Donald Trump's never-ending crusade against **immigration** has focused primarily on **crime**. Since he first described Mexicans as "rapists" while announcing his candidacy three years ago this June, the idea that brown people are storming the border to kill innocent Americans has been the thrust of Trump's political appeal. At any given point of his presidency, he's never been more than a few days removed from belaboring the point. "The crime that comes in is unbelievable," he said last week during an anti-immigration rant at **a rally in Panama City Beach, Florida**.

But **studies have shown** there is no correlation between immigration and rising crime rates. Republicans have countered by saying that though this may be true of legal immigration, there is indeed a relationship between crime and *undocumented* immigration. But this isn't true, either, according to **a new study by the Marshall Project**.

Using new Pew Research Center estimates of the population of undocumented immigrants in 180 metropolitan areas, the Marshall Project looked at local rates of violent crime and property crime published by the FBI to assess the impact of undocumented immigration. Not did crime rates decrease in accordance with decades-old trends regardless of whether an area's population of undocumented immigrants rose or fell, "areas with more unauthorized migration appeared to have larger drops in crime rates, although the difference was small and uncertain."

The Marshall Project went on to cite other studies that have reached similar conclusions: a Cato Institute study that found undocumented immigrants in Texas commit fewer crimes than natives; another Cato Institute study that found undocumented immigrants are **less likely to be incarcerated** than natives; and an analysis by the Criminology academic journal that found, if anything, undocumented immigration **led to a decrease in violent crime**.

None of this should be that hard to believe. Migrants seeking asylum in the United States are largely doing so to escape their crime-ridden home countries. They are coming to America because of the opportunity it provides them to work. As the Marshall Project writes, if an undocumented immigrant is arrested, it "would mean facing eventual deportation — and for some a return to whatever danger or deprivation they'd sought to escape at home."

As far as Trump is concerned, this is all irrelevant. Acknowledging the reality of undocumented immigration would undercut his talking points about the crisis at the border, as well as deprive him of one of the biggest needles he uses to jab Democrats. "The Democrats stand in our way,"

he tweeted last year. “They want people to pour into our country unchecked...CRIME!” He’s since made countless similar accusations while alleging current U.S. border policy “brings massive Crime,” results in “Unlimited Crime,” causes “killings and crime being caused by gangs and thugs” and more.

Just as he did prior to last year’s midterm, Trump is poised to make immigration a central issue of the 2020 election cycle. He better not crack down too much, though, lest the president be forced to hire Americans to work at his golf properties, which **have relied largely on undocumented labor**.

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