



2M Immigrants Released Into US 'Here Indefinitely'

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An estimated 2 million immigrants released from the southern border into the interior U.S. likely will not face removal, The Washington Post reported.

Immigration experts told the outlet that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers likely will do little as the record number of immigrants since President Joe Biden took office await court dates.

Of 11 million illegal immigrants residing in the U.S., 1.9 million have been given a final order of removal by a federal judge but remain in the country, according to the American Immigration Council.

"Given existing staffing constraints and the redirection of ICE resources to the southern border, it's highly unlikely that the agency will be able to keep up with removal orders now or ahead without the allocation of major new resources for interior enforcement," Colleen Putzel-Kavanaugh, Migration Policy Institute's research assistant, told the Washington Examiner in an email.

Andrew Arthur, a fellow at the conservative Center for Immigration Studies agreed with Putzel-Kavanaugh.

"Those aliens are here indefinitely, if not forever," Arthur, a former immigration judge, told the Examiner.

David Bier, associate director of immigration studies at Washington-based libertarian think tank Cato Institute, said that he thinks some immigrants will leave on their own.

"In general, it's quite unlikely that someone released at the border would be put on an ICE plane and flown out of the country, though a very substantial number of those ordered removed do leave voluntarily after some time," Bier told the Examiner.

Although Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has vowed to deport immigrants approved for deportation, the legal process can take five to 10 years.

Roughly 5 million people have been encountered attempting to cross at the U.S.-Mexico border without documents since February 2021. The majority of the 2 million people released into the U.S. were discharged under a process informally known as "catch and release."

Illegal immigrants apprehended by Border Patrol agents are processed, fingerprinted, and checked against U.S. criminal databases. Those released are either let into the community by Border Patrol or physically transferred to ICE and then released, the Examiner said.

"Once someone is processed and released into the U.S. interior, they have one year to apply for asylum, so the current numbers available are not necessarily an indicator of recent arrivals applying for asylum," Putzel-Kavanaugh told the Examiner.

If an immigration judge determines someone meets the criteria for deportation, ICE is supposed to take action within 90 days, the Examiner reported.