



INDEPENDENT

Trump's immigration chief says President is wrong on level of crime committed by undocumented immigrants

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The Acting Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said that Donald Trump is wrong about undocumented immigrants - they do not commit more crimes than those born in the US.

Thomas Homan was speaking during an off-camera news briefing, according to CNN.

The comment contradicts Mr Trump's nearly two years of campaign and White House rhetoric that the presence of undocumented immigrants in the US is a matter of safety to Americans.

The President started his campaign in June 2015 by saying: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best...They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

Mr Trump made families of victims of crimes committed by undocumented immigrants a constant on the campaign trail and has now done so in the White House, hosting some on 28 June.

Mr Homan himself testified in front of the House Appropriations Committee that undocumented immigrants, predominately but not exclusively from Central America, "need to be worried".

"If you're in this country illegally and you committed a crime by being in this country, you should be uncomfortable, you should look over your shoulder". In fact, under the Trump administration, ICE reported 40 per cent more arrests in the first quarter of this year compared to 2016.

President Obama however did deport 2.5 million people in the period between 2009 to 2015, prompting some to call him the "Deporter in Chief."

Mr Trump has made it more difficult for people who entered the country and now remain without proper documentation, often fleeing their home countries due to violence and poverty.

The government's own census data from 1980 to 2000 showed though that US-born men aged 18 to 39 were two to five times more likely to be incarcerated than undocumented immigrants in the same demographic, according to *Newsweek*.

A study from libertarian think tank Cato Institute also showed that undocumented immigrants have an incarceration rate .85 per cent compared to 1.53 per cent for the general American-born population.

The crime rhetoric also extends to terrorism for the Trump administration. Mr Trump's latest travel ban on citizens from Syria, Libya, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen is supposedly to stem a threat to national security.

In reality, the majority of terrorists who carry out and plan attacks on US soil are not Muslim and if they are only one per cent of "perpetrators or alleged perpetrators" come from one of the six countries in the ban.

The House also voted into law two pieces of legislation regarding undocumented immigrants.

Kate Steinle was fatally shot in 2015 by an undocumented immigrant who was deported, but re-entered the US with seven criminal convictions. Named "Kate's Law," the new legislation institutes larger penalties on deported criminals who return to the US and commit a crime.

The second bill requires local police to detain undocumented immigrants who have committed crimes longer in jails in order to leave time for ICE to pick them up for deportation as well as ensures these people are detained during deportation proceedings.

Mayors of cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York have declared themselves "sanctuary cities" because under the bill federal grants would be withheld from local law enforcement agencies that do not comply. Local police have largely been ignoring ICE priorities, considering it out of their bounds of responsibility.

The bills now go to the Senate for a vote.

Earlier this month, Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly quietly announced the programme created to protect young people who came to the US as undocumented immigrants as children, known as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). will "remain in effect."

These children are often referred to as 'Dreamers.' The programme was launched in 2012 by Mr Obama and has protected about 787,000 young immigrants from deportation.

The information about DACA was almost a footnote to the main announcement about the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) programme to protect parents of Dreamers from deportation as well.

DAPA was never implemented and the administration has said it will not do so.