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Chris Mitchell

(310) 367-6109

Editorial & Production Offices:

3415 S. Sepulveda Blvd. Suite 400 Los Angeles, CA 90034 (310) 391-2245

What the New FBI Crime Stats Suggest About Arizona, Immigrants, and Crime

Brian Doherty | May 25, 2010

Daniel Griswold at Cato's blog [looks at some numbers](#), and some suppositions:

One of the clinching arguments for Arizona's tough new law aimed at illegal immigration has been the perception in that state that crime has been rising, and that undocumented workers are largely to blame. Yet...the incidence of violent crime in Phoenix last year plunged 16.6 percent compared to 2008, a rate of decline that was three times the national average.

According to the Phoenix Police Department, the downward trend in crime has continued into 2010 even as the "illegal immigrant crime wave" story reverberates on cable TV and talk radio.

The *Wall Street Journal* story that Griswold relied on. Americans appear to be weathering this recession without an increased resort to violent crime. Who says Hit and Run never focuses on the good news?

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Max | 5.25.10 @ 3:58PM | #

Send this to Ron Paul and his idiot son Rand. They're both all for keepin' the Mexicans out.

reply to this

Pro Libertate | 5.25.10 @ 4:10PM | #

What about Mexican libertarians? Should they be allowed in?

reply to this

Episiarch | 5.25.10 @ 4:28PM | #

What about Professor Bernardo de la Paz?!?

reply to this

Pro Libertate | 5.25.10 @ 4:29PM | #

Was he Mexican?

reply to this

Episiarch | 5.25.10 @ 4:33PM | #

He has a Mexican-sounding name, just like everyone not American or Canadian!

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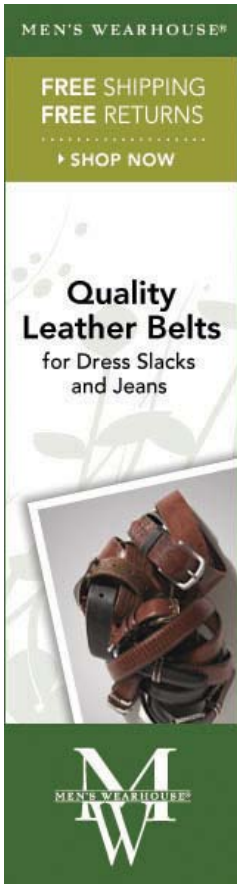
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(actually, I think he was Brazilian)

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Pro Libertate | 5.25.10 @ 4:33PM | #
Damned Mexican!

[reply to this](#)

Episiarch | 5.25.10 @ 4:40PM | #
Are you calling *me* an illegal?!? You're the one with the Panamanian wife that you had brought here by drug mules and then kept in your basement for the first few years!

[reply to this](#)

Pro Libertate | 5.25.10 @ 4:42PM | #
Half-Colombian, you half-wop racist.

[reply to this](#)

Pro Libertate | 5.25.10 @ 4:44PM | #
Insult-exchanging aside, she's never been to Colombia. We've talked about going (her dad is from Colombia, so she has relatives down there), but we both wonder how safe it is for family travel.

[reply to this](#)

Episiarch | 5.25.10 @ 4:49PM | #
Kidnappings are all the rage, I hear.

[reply to this](#)

Pro Libertate | 5.25.10 @ 4:52PM | #
Yeah, me, too. I got other places that interest me more, anyway.

Besides, I saw *Romancing the Stone*.

[reply to this](#)

Jeffersonian | 5.25.10 @ 6:18PM | #
If they're all like Old Mexican, I'm going to become a pro bono mule, I swear.

[reply to this](#)

MikeP | 5.25.10 @ 5:19PM | #
To be fair, the Pauls are for keeping the Mexicans out based on unsustainable welfare promises, not based on presumed criminal proclivities.

[reply to this](#)

Slumbuster | 5.25.10 @ 4:04PM | #
It seems to me that the illegal alien population has probably grown smaller in Arizona since the bust, since there are not that many construction jobs or service jobs for tourism available right now. I know the Republicans think differently, but the Mexicans who come up aren't going to hang around if they can't make money.

It would be interesting to see if there is any correlation between immigration outflow as a result of the crappy economy and the decrease in crime in Arizona.

Thus, the statistics could potentially support a showing that decreasing alien populations actually do correlate to a decrease in crime.

[reply to this](#)

dfd | 5.25.10 @ 4:32PM | #
What? You mean they might actually move away to other places when work is hard to find, just like all those "real" 'mericans do? Since when are they here looking to work? I thought your



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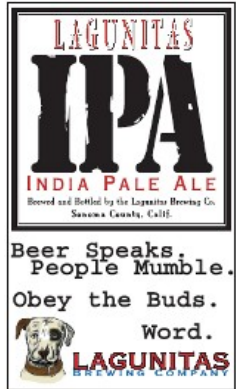
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types kept telling us they were just going to flood in endlessly to take advantage of welfare... Imagine, they almost sound like normal people just looking to get a job and support a family.



[reply to this](#)

Slumbuster | 5.25.10 @ 5:24PM | #

I actually don't support the bill. I just had that thought and wondered what I would have to make of it if the correlation turned out to be true. Some times facts don't work out as we want them to to fit our worldview, and this could be one.

Plus, I thought it worth noting that there could be another way to spin the statistics other than as noted in the post above.

[reply to this](#)

Slumbuster | 5.25.10 @ 5:25PM | #

And further to your post, I assume most illegals are rational, come here for work, and then move on if the work does not materialize or if the conditions in Arizona are not favorable to them for other reasons.

[reply to this](#)

dfd | 5.25.10 @ 5:45PM | #

My apologies for the incorrect imputation.

[reply to this](#)

Jason | 5.25.10 @ 4:06PM | #

Now if only Reason.tv focused on good news more often.

How about an un-nanny of the month?

[reply to this](#)

Kroneborge | 5.25.10 @ 4:07PM | #

It's all due to good ol Joe Shaprio (or whatever his name is)

[reply to this](#)

ClubMedSux | 5.25.10 @ 4:28PM | #

That's exactly what I was thinking. Heil Arpão!

[reply to this](#)

NoVAHockey | 5.25.10 @ 4:12PM | #

<http://www.politico.com/news/s.....37759.html>

Barack Obama orders Guard to Mexican border

[reply to this](#)

Pro Libertate | 5.25.10 @ 4:15PM | #

To stop the North Koreans?

[reply to this](#)

ClubMedSux | 5.25.10 @ 4:29PM | #

That's the BAD Korea!

[reply to this](#)

¢ | 5.25.10 @ 4:14PM | #

Why, it's almost as if the FBI fed a friendly at the *WSJ* those numbers to give a pretext for *this exact editorial*. And no one suspected it (in the morning links thread! especially not me!!)

[reply to this](#)

Devil's advocate | 5.25.10 @ 4:16PM | #

The Arizona decrease in violent crime corresponds with a rapidly decreasing illegal immigrant population as well as a nationwide decrease in violent crime.

<http://www.foxnews.com/politic.....declines/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C.....ted_States

The test of the new laws effect won't be realized until the change in violent crime in Arizona is compared to nationwide rates in the future.

[reply to this](#)

qwerty | 5.25.10 @ 4:20PM | #

"the downward trend in crime has continued into 2010 even as the 'illegal immigrant crime wave' story reverberates"

sounds like the law is working like it's supposed to.

[reply to this](#)

dfd | 5.25.10 @ 4:35PM | #

Again... What? You mean they might actually move away to other places when work is hard to find, just like all those "real" 'mericans do? Since when are they here looking to work? I thought your types kept telling us they were just going to flood in endlessly to take advantage of welfare... Why do they care if there are jobs? Imagine, they almost sound like normal people just looking to get a job and support a family.

[reply to this](#)

Episiarch | 5.25.10 @ 4:39PM | #

But they speak funny and park on their lawn and eat crazy food and have terrible, sparse mustaches!

[reply to this](#)

Pro Libertate | 5.25.10 @ 4:45PM | #

I can forgive much, but bad mustaches are a sin.

[reply to this](#)

Kroneborge | 5.25.10 @ 5:05PM | #

The food usually isn't too much of a problem either.

But the language thing chaps a lot of people. Driving by the local school and seeing the billboard instructons in Spanish is irking.

[reply to this](#)

Slumbuster | 5.25.10 @ 5:27PM | #

What are "our" types? People who try to look at evidence objectively and understand what it might mean rather than reflexively assuming everything supports our worldview and then cramming the facts into whatever box they need to fit in to confirm our biases?

[reply to this](#)

dfd | 5.25.10 @ 6:08PM | #

I shouldn't have used the "your types" presumptively, and I apologize. Further, it wasn't needed at all for the overall point, which stands. If lack of work really does result in immigrants going somewhere else, than the entire "they're only coming here for welfare" argument goes out the window.

Of course I'm not assuming this is true or not true, nor do I know if the crime statistics are or are not true, and if they are whether they're connected to the immigrant issue. For me, those are essentially irrelevant, as freedom of movement and association are fundamental individual human rights not subject to collectivist arguments about group characteristics. I'm simply pointing out the implications of your, and others, suggestion that maybe immigrant numbers are falling because of the lack of jobs with respect to a *very* common argument around here over many years.

[reply to this](#)

qwerty | 5.25.10 @ 5:49PM | #

What the New FBI Crime Stats Sugges...

Yeah, a minimum wage job where they will still be a net drain on the economy. They'll pay almost no taxes, but get free health care, education, ect.

If your reply is, "Well, government shouldn't supply those things.", my response is, "Then why do you want to let in a group that voted 70% for Obama?"

[reply to this](#)

zoltan | 5.25.10 @ 6:46PM | <#>

What group of immigrants *aren't* going to vote for him/free shit?

[reply to this](#)

NRO | 5.25.10 @ 4:26PM | <#>

But they're illegal, dammit! Every freakin' one of em's a criminal!

[reply to this](#)

dfd | 5.25.10 @ 4:38PM | <#>

Ah yes, the old they're all illegal bit...great to see the statistis are well represented around here.

[reply to this](#)

Neu Mejican | 5.25.10 @ 4:28PM | <#>

Correlation between two sets of very fuzzy numbers...always a path to the truth - no matter how you see it.

(~_~^)

[reply to this](#)

Slumpbuster | 5.25.10 @ 5:29PM | <#>

Correlation may or may not have anything to do with causation, obviously. If there is any causal link, it may be secondary.

One could imagine the link is that with less immigrant traffic, the violence of the gangs who exploit them (human smugglers, etc.) also decreases, since there is less business to fight over.

[reply to this](#)

Neu Mejican | 5.25.10 @ 5:49PM | <#>

Or more violence as there is less business to fight over, so you fight harder...would be a tough case to make one way or the other.

[reply to this](#)

P Brooks | 5.25.10 @ 4:37PM | <#>

I have been told (OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN): illegul Messikins are responsible for a crime spree that makes John Dillinger look like a golderned Sunday School teacher.

Are you trying to say that's not true?

[reply to this](#)

Astrid | 5.25.10 @ 4:55PM | <#>

It's a crazy thing, but it seems they come here for jobs.

[reply to this](#)

MatTrue | 5.25.10 @ 6:25PM | <#>

Jobs aren't the only reason. They want the best America has to offer. That includes free education for their children, emergency room care, and more honest police.

Shit, do you only live where you do for your job?

[reply to this](#)

Astrid | 5.25.10 @ 7:15PM | <#>

Shit, do you only live where you do for your job?

Yes. It turns out that one starves very quickly on hopes and dreams.

[reply to this](#)

Mat True | 5.25.10 @ 11:02PM | #

Are you actually implying every illegal who comes here would be starving had they not crossed the border?

Or, in your situation, your skills are so unique, that there's only one location in the world that needs them? Despite the totalitarian urge of our governments, most of us have a choice where to live.

I'll grant you that the vast majority probably come here because they are close to starving. But it's not like the U.S. is just a place where you exchange labor for food and shelter. The extras are definitely attracting more than would come otherwise.

[reply to this](#)

R C Dean | 5.25.10 @ 5:18PM | #

The Arizona decrease in violent crime corresponds with a rapidly decreasing illegal immigrant population as well as a nationwide decrease in violent crime.

IOW, no valid conclusions can be drawn from this data as presented. Sure, the decrease in crime in Phoenix was more than the nationwide decrease, but what about other big cities with comparable crime rates? How much has the illegal immigrant population in Phoenix gone down?

Cato plays a dangerous game, here, if a correlation* can be drawn between Phoenix's dramatic drop in crime and a dramatic drop in its illegal immigrant population.

*Note the use of the word "correlation", which literate folk know does not imply causation.

[reply to this](#)

Marshall Gill | 5.25.10 @ 5:38PM | #

Dammit, RC, did it to me again!

[reply to this](#)

The Gobbler | 5.25.10 @ 5:35PM | #

Miami Company Creates "Gringo Masks" for Illegals

<http://www.nbcmiami.com/news/w.....82694.html>

[reply to this](#)

Marshall Gill | 5.25.10 @ 5:37PM | #

This again? Why the insistence on presenting possible correlation as causation? Saying "there are a lot of *immigrants* in Arizona" doesn't tell us what percentage of the population they are. It also makes no distinction between illegal and legal. Obviously, if you believe that there should be open borders you are opposed to the distinction. If you are trying to convince the unconverted, however, articles like these fail terribly.

I have no idea if immigrants, illegal or otherwise, are more prone to crime than citizens. I would be happy to be convinced that they are not, but, for some reason, I never see articles that actually try and count the percentage of illegals to the percentage of overall crimes committed by the same. If non-immigrant crime has been going down (it has) then immigrant crime *could* be increasing with a net decrease in crime. I don't know, but this study doesn't say, either.

As has been discussed here in the comments section, demographics plays a huge part in crime. I forget the exact number but I believe that around 75% of all violent crime is committed by young men. If the majority of immigrants are young men, the chances are greater that they will commit more crimes. If they are not it should be big news. Are they not? This study doesn't say anything about percentages of crimes committed by type, only the overall number of crimes.

So, is the data unavailable? I admit I am to lazy to look for it myself but I am curious as to it's

absence. Is there data that actually shows that illegal immigrants commit less crime, or only studies that show that some cities with high numbers of immigrants have had a reduction in crime in the entire population?

[reply to this](#)

Kroneborge | 5.25.10 @ 5:41PM | #
+1000

[reply to this](#)

Neu Mejican | 5.25.10 @ 5:45PM | #
Also too lazy to look it up right now..But I will just say that the only time I have seen numbers presented, they indicated that immigrants (including illegals) commit fewer crimes than native borns no matter how ya slice it.

Someone will chime in that being here illegally make 100% of illegals criminals...but we'll ignore them.

[reply to this](#)

qwerty | 5.25.10 @ 6:51PM | #
The stats I've seen show that the immigrants themselves have lower crime rates, but their kids have higher rates (and higher dropout rates and higher out-of-wedlock birthrates and higher unemployment rates...)

[reply to this](#)

meathead | 5.25.10 @ 6:38PM | #
Can we just outlaw Mexican music? It's really horrible.

[reply to this](#)

zoltan | 5.25.10 @ 6:48PM | #
Seriously, I want to go back in time and murder the Eastern Europeans who introduced polka music to them.

[reply to this](#)

Douglas Fletcher | 5.25.10 @ 11:07PM | #
Actually the old traditional stuff isn't bad (see Arhoolie records), it's this 4th degeneration crap with synthesized tubas for bass that's just fucking awful...

[reply to this](#)

IceTrey | 5.25.10 @ 7:45PM | #
Those stats actually make a case FOR the tough new law. As several above have pointed out fewer Mexicans because of the crash, means less crime. So Mexicans ARE the source of crime the law is trying to control.

[reply to this](#)

MikeP | 5.25.10 @ 7:59PM | #
Since most crime happens to poor people, and one would especially expect crime to happen to poor people who are wary about reporting it to the police, illegal aliens are at least as likely to be the *targets* of the crime the law is trying to control.

[reply to this](#)

Libertymike | 5.25.10 @ 7:58PM | #
First rule of critical thinking, don't take as fact an assertion emanating from the state.

[reply to this](#)

LeRoy | 5.25.10 @ 8:47PM | #
The issue is not the increase in crime due to the number of illegals in AZ; rather, it is the millions it costs the state in having to provide social services.

[reply to this](#)

Slap the Enlightened! | 5.25.10 @ 9:43PM | #

Hmmm.... seems to be at odds with what's being [reported in the CS Monitor](#)

[reply to this](#)

MikeP | 5.25.10 @ 11:24PM | #

You mean the facts are at odds with political grandstanding? Très surprise!

[reply to this](#)

Douglas Fletcher | 5.25.10 @ 11:05PM | #

"the perception in that state that crime has been rising, and that undocumented workers are largely to blame"

I don't think it's the undocumented workers being blamed, it's the drug gangs and such with snakes tattooed on their faces that kind of gives you pause...

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