

For Immediate Release

Arizona's Punishing Law Doesn't Fit the Crime
Studies Show Decrease in Arizona Crime Rates Over
Time

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Washington, D.C. - Supporters of Arizona's harsh new immigration law claim that it is, in part, a crime-fighting measure. However, people like Republican State Senator Russell Pearce of Mesa, the bill's author, overlook two salient points: crime rates have already been falling in Arizona for years despite the presence of unauthorized immigrants, and a century's worth of research has demonstrated that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes or be behind bars than the native-born.

Furthermore, while much has been made about kidnappings in Arizona, law-enforcement officials indicate that most of these involve drug and human smugglers, as well as smuggled immigrants themselves - not the general population of the state.

The Immigration Policy Center releases a [fact sheet](#) which shows the decrease in Arizona crime rates over time. The fact sheet also indicates that states with high immigration have the lowest crime rates and that unauthorized immigration is not associated with higher crime rates.

Highlights include:

* According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, violent crimes in Arizona fell from 512 per 100,000 people in 2005 to 447 per 100,000 people in 2008, the last year for which data is available.

* According to a 2008 report from the conservative Americas Majority Foundation, crime rates are lowest in states with the highest immigration growth rates, such as Arizona. From 1999 to 2006, the total crime rate declined 13.6 percent in the 19 highest-immigration states (including Arizona), compared to a 7.1 percent decline in the other 32 states.

* Although the unauthorized immigrant population doubled to about 12 million from 1994 to 2004, data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that the violent crime rate in the United States declined by 35.1 percent during this time and the property crime rate fell by 25.0 percent.

Combating crime related to human smuggling requires more trust between immigrants and the police, not less. Yet the undermining of trust between police and the community is precisely what Arizona's new law accomplishes. In the final analysis, immigration policy is not an effective means of addressing crime because the vast majority of immigrants are not criminals.

To read the fact check in its entirety, see:

* [Arizona's Punishment Doesn't Fit the Crime: Studies Show Decrease in Arizona Crime Rates Over Time](#)
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For press inquiries contact Seth Hoy at <mailto:shoy@immcouncil.org> or 202-507-7509.