

# Immigration Policy Center (IPC)

*...providing factual information about immigration and immigrants in the United States.*

*For Immediate Release*

## **Attrition Through Recession:**

*New CIS Report Suggests Spend More, Say Nothing,  
and Hope for a Recession*

July 30, 2008

**Washington, DC** – A new report released by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) on Wednesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, claims that stepped-up enforcement measures account for much of the recent decline in the undocumented immigrant population. The following is a statement by Angela Kelley, Director of the Immigration Policy Center, an immigration research organization in Washington.

“CIS implies that the illegal immigrant population could drop to half of what it is now within the next five years if only presidential candidates keep silent about the details of comprehensive immigration reform, taxpayers continue to pour billions of dollars into enforcement, and the U.S. economic recession persists—according to CIS, reducing illegal immigration apparently comes with a cruel price tag.

[Most researchers agree](#) that undocumented immigration to the United States is driven largely by economics. Yet, in a new report entitled *Homeward Bound: Recent Immigration Enforcement and the Decline in the Illegal Alien Population*, CIS dubiously claims that undocumented immigrants decide where to live and work based more on the politics of immigration enforcement than the economics of their own survival. CIS concludes that the recent decline in the “likely illegal population” (which it defines as less-educated, foreign-born Hispanics age 18 to 40) is largely the result of new immigration-enforcement efforts rather than the downturn of the U.S. economy, including [job losses in the construction sector](#) that had been absorbing many less-skilled Hispanic immigrants.

The persuasiveness of CIS’ argument is undermined not only by an absence of hard data, but by the faulty logic and contradictory statements of the report itself. The authors report confidently about a population that is nearly impossible to accurately measure. They admit they did not include data about any population other than Hispanics. They provide no evidence for their assertion that the immigration debate in Congress last summer spurred an increase in undocumented immigration.

CIS provides no real solutions to the nation’s immigration problems. They insult thoughtful Americans when they seemingly hope for continued unemployment and recession, promote harsh enforcement measures that separate families and destroy communities, and suggest that politicians should not even talk about real solutions. By requiring undocumented immigrants to come forward, legalize their status, and learn English, we would strengthen the rule of law and turn undocumented immigrants into taxpayers. The U.S. must enact a practical, fair, and reasonable solution that includes smart enforcement measures.”

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