



# IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER

*...providing factual information about immigration and immigrants in America*

*For Immediate Release*

## **Undocumented Immigration Stunts in Face of Slowing Economy Pew Report Shows Fewer Job Openings Equals Fewer Immigrants**

**October 1, 2008**

**Washington, DC**— A new study on undocumented immigration from the Pew Hispanic Center repeats what serious researchers have been saying for years: It's the economy stupid. According to [new estimates](#) from the Pew Hispanic Center, the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States did not increase between 2007 and 2008, and may actually have fallen by several hundred thousand in the face of a sluggish U.S. economy.

"This potential decline in undocumented immigration comes as no shock. The U.S. economy is in a slump and immigrants are smart. They come here to work," said Angela Kelley, Director of the Immigration Policy Center. "Immigrants have always responded predictably and rationally to economic downturns and the current crisis is no exception."

While some [critics](#) attribute the decrease in immigration to highly criticized stepped-up enforcement measures—or "attrition through enforcement"—there is an overwhelming cadre of evidence showing that undocumented immigration to the United States is driven largely by economics, including [recent findings](#) by Wayne Cornelius, Director of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California-San Diego, showing that undocumented migration clearly responds to changing U.S. economic conditions, not policy decisions.

A [second study](#) put out by Pew showing that the immigrants that are already here are having a harder time making a living evidences the current economic disincentives contributing to Pew's estimated decline in undocumented immigration. Pew has also reported a decrease in remittances sent from U.S. immigrants to Latin America which the Bank of Mexico [predicts](#) will likely continue in the coming months because of the "difficult problems the U.S. economy faces." It's no wonder that immigration is slowing down when [Pew is also reporting](#) that 63% of foreign-born Latinos say the situation of Latinos in the U.S. has gotten worse over the past year.

All of these factors point to one clear conclusion: undocumented immigrants choose where to live and work based on the fluctuating economics of survival, not on the politics of ineffective immigration enforcement.

### **Fact Sheet from the Immigration Policy Center:**

- ["Fewer Job Openings Equals Fewer Immigrants: Undocumented Immigration Slows Along With the U.S. Economy"](#) (Washington, DC: October 2008).

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*For more information contact Andrea Nill, 202-507-7520 or Wendy Sefsaf, 202-631-0358 or email [anill@aifc.org](mailto:anill@aifc.org)*

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**THE IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER**

1331 G STREET • WASHINGTON, DC 20005 • TEL: (202) 507-7500 • FAX: (202) 742-5619

[www.immigrationpolicy.org](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org)