



IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER

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

For Immediate Release

Pew Report Shines Light on Failed Immigration Policy

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Washington, D.C - *Today the Pew Hispanic Center issued a report on the ethnic composition of people caught up in the federal prison system. The Immigration Policy Center's Director, Angela Kelley, issued the following statement:*

"A new report from the Pew Hispanic Center entitled [A Rising Share: Hispanics and Federal Crime](#) analyzes the ethnic composition of those sentenced in federal courts. Beneath the startling headline, however, is a familiar story. Immigrants do represent a disproportionate share of the federal prison population because immigration law is under the purview of the federal courts. Furthermore, what the report illustrates is the degree to which the U.S. government is wasting money and manpower on the pursuit and punishment of undocumented immigrants who are non-violent and pose no threat to public safety or national security. According to the data in the Pew report, the federal government's ever-intensifying (and unsuccessful) effort since the early 1990s to stop undocumented immigration through deportation-only policies has flooded the federal courts with immigrants from south of the border who are charged only with unlawfully entering or remaining in the United States. Filling federal courts and prisons with non-violent undocumented immigrants is the primary reason that 'immigration offenders' accounted for 24% of all people sentenced in federal courts in 2007- up from 7% in 1991. From the standpoint of immigration policy, it is telling that 61% of the non-U.S. citizen Latino immigrants sentenced in federal courts in 2007 were sentenced for immigration offenses.

The Pew report also reinforces the conclusion of a [study](#) released earlier this month by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), which found that the federal fugitive operations budget ballooned from \$9 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 to \$218 million in FY 2008, yet 73% of the 96,000 persons arrested so far have no criminal convictions. Rather, they are simply undocumented immigrants who were "unlawfully present" in the United States.

Our broken immigration system is largely to blame for the rise in our federal prison population. Deportation-only policies are clogging our courts and jamming our jails by rounding up immigrant workers and pulling resources away from prosecuting serious criminals. This report is further evidence of our failed deportation-only approach which has become too expensive and ineffective to sustain."

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Read more analysis of the Pew Report on our blog, <http://immigrationimpact.com/>.
View IPC's fact sheet on immigrants and crime: [From Anecdotes to Evidence: Setting the Record Straights on Immigrants and Crime.](#)

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