



MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Simon Rosenberg and Emma Buckhout

DATE: April 10, 2014

SUBJECT: NDN/NPI Analysis: Total Removals and Returns of Unauthorized Immigrants Plummet Under Obama Administration

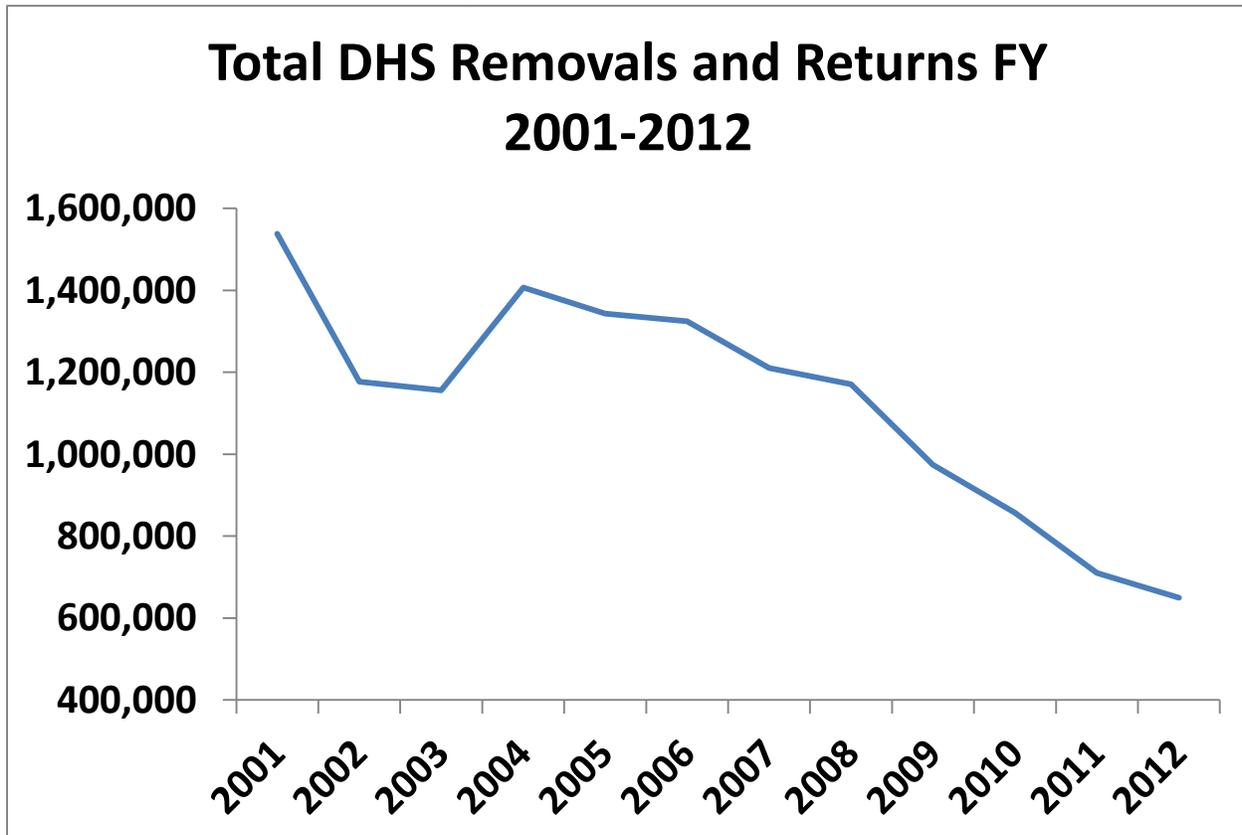
Over the past several months, NDN/NPI has published a [series of analyses](#) which argue that through greater investment, better strategies and deeper cooperation with Mexico, the Obama Administration has made the immigration system better and the border safer while seeing a dramatic expansion of trade with Mexico.

Today we release a simple analysis which sheds new light on the hotly debated issue of deportations. Using a broader, more accurate measure of the number of unauthorized immigrants removed from the country since the first year of the Bush Presidency, we find that in fact the total number of “removalsⁱ” and “returnsⁱⁱ” has actually plummeted during the Obama Presidency. In 2012, the Obama Administration removed and returned almost a million people less than the height of the Bush Presidency. And every year of the Obama Presidency has seen a sizable decline in the total number of unauthorized migrants removed or returned to their countries.

Unauthorized Migrants Removed or Returned, FY 2001-2012ⁱⁱⁱ

Year	Removals	Returns	Total
2001	189,026	1,349,371	1,538,397
2002	165,168	1,012,116	1,177,284
2003	211,098	945,294	1,156,392
2004	240,665	1,166,576	1,407,241
2005	246,431	1,096,920	1,343,351
2006	280,974	1,043,381	1,324,355
2007	319,382	891,390	1,210,772
2008	359,795	811,263	1,171,058
2009	391,932	582,648	974,580
2010	383,031	474,275	857,306
2011	388,409	322,164	710,573
2012	419,384	229,968	649,352

Total DHS Returns and Removals, FY 2001-2012^{iv}



So while we do not yet have the full picture of 2013, it is unlikely that the total number of removals and returns increased, as the total number of “removals” (deportations) measured by ICE fell by ten percent from 409,849 to 368,644 from FY 2012 to 2013.

For years, NDN has argued that the Obama Administration’s management of its border and immigration enforcement responsibilities deserves far more praise it has received. Despite deeply rancorous politics, a very real set of operational and security challenges, and the Republicans’ refusal to adopt long overdue and thoughtful reform, things in the border region are clearly better today. Crime on the US side of the border is down; net migration is zero today; only 10,000 or so non-border-crosser non-criminal unauthorized migrants were deported in 2013; while US trade with Mexico has almost doubled. It is our belief that history will declare the Administration’s management of this tough basket of issues a resounding policy success. For more on this record of success and progress, see below.

Obama Administration Immigration and Border Enforcement: Key Stats

- Crime is down along the US side of the border. The two largest border cities, El Paso and San Diego, are the two safest large cities in America today.
- Four of the five high-traffic migration corridors across the US-Mexico border are already at or near the Senate bill's goal of a 90% effectiveness rate.
- Net migration from Mexico has fallen from its 2001 peak of 770,000 people per year to zero today.
- Since President Obama took office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has made steps to prioritize removing criminals and recent border crossers. ICE reports that in FY 2013, 82% of the unauthorized immigrants it arrested and removed from the interior US had a criminal conviction. About two thirds of all 2013 ICE removals were people arrested at the border. Of 368,644 removals, only 10,336 individuals were not convicted of a crime, repeat immigration violators, immigration fugitives, or at the border.
- In 2012 the Obama Administration implemented Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) to allow about one million DREAMers, unauthorized immigrants brought to the US as youths, to work and study legally in the US.
- Trade with Mexico has jumped from \$340 billion in 2009 to about \$550 billion in 2013. Mexico is America's 3rd largest trading partner, and 2nd largest export market. \$1.3 billion worth of goods and 1 million people cross the 2000 mile US-Mexico border each day.

ⁱ "Removals are the compulsory and confirmed movement of an inadmissible or deportable alien out of the United States based on an order of removal. An alien who is removed has administrative or criminal consequences placed on subsequent reentry owing to the fact of the removal" (DHS).

ⁱⁱ "Returns are the confirmed movement of an inadmissible or deportable alien out of the United States not based on an order of removal" (DHS).

ⁱⁱⁱ Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, ENFORCE Alien Removal Module (EARM), February 2013; Enforcement Integrated Database (EID), November 2012.

^{iv} Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, ENFORCE Alien Removal Module (EARM), February 2013; Enforcement Integrated Database (EID), November 2012; FY 2013 ICE Immigration Removals. Graph prepared by NDN/NPI staff.