

Editorial: President Trump's Attack on Mexican Immigrants Is an Attack on America

Living simultaneously in two countries is unfathomable to most people, but fellow Boston University student, Marina Ramirez, can speak from personal experience. Ramirez was born and raised in Tijuana, Mexico, but she attended middle school and high school in San Diego, California. Every day, Ramirez and thousands of others just like her, would cross the U.S.-Mexico border to go to school or to work in the United States.

The employment opportunities and quality of education in San Diego are much higher than that of Tijuana, but the cost of living in Tijuana is substantially cheaper than that of San Diego. If this was anywhere else in the world, most people would have to make a tradeoff by choosing one of the two cities. However, Ramirez reaps the benefits of what both cities have to offer through the Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) program. SENTRI is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection program that allows "expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States," and it is what allows many Mexican-Americans, like Ramirez, to live a "binational existence."

SENTRI also helps Ramirez's parents, because it means her parents can work in the United States but live in Mexico. By working in the United States, Ramirez's parents are not only earning more for the same jobs that exist in Mexico, but they are being paid in U.S. Dollars, which amounts to more Mexican pesos after conversion. This allows her family to afford a big home, amongst other things, in Mexico that are traditionally more expensive in the United States.

According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the San Ysidro Port of Entry in San Diego allows between 75,000 and 100,000 Mexicans to cross into the United States every day, which makes it one of the busiest border crossings in the world. Most Americans are unaware of how many thousands of Mexicans cross the border on a daily basis, nor do they know that this is the reality of many Mexicans in the United States.

When President Trump said "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're sending people that have lots of problems. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists," he was not only wrong, but it showed that he fails to recognize that Mexican immigrants are an integral part of American society.

According to the Pew Research Center, there are 4.5 million Mexican immigrants residing in California, which is the largest population of any immigrant group in the United States. Like most immigrants, Mexicans are coming to the United States in search for better employment opportunities. According to an article by The Washington Post, many Mexican immigrants, particularly those who are undocumented, are seeking employment in low-wage industries for jobs that are less desired by American born citizens. These industries include construction and mining, crop picking and farming, and fishing and forestry. As a result, Mexican immigrants are crucial to the American workforce, and many Americans are oblivious to the extent that Mexican immigrants contribute to the U.S. GDP.

Trump's derogatory and baseless remarks about Mexican immigrants' contributions to rising crimes rates in the United States display his own ignorance. According to the Migration Policy Institute, Mexican immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than American born citizens and the incarceration rate for Mexican immigrants is lower than the rate for American born citizens. Additionally, research from the Public Policy Institute of California also show that Mexican and other Latin American immigrants are one of the least represented groups in prisons around the country. Studies also show that cities with substantial Mexican populations have some of the lowest crimes rates in the country, such as El Paso, Texas and San Diego, California.

Other large American cities known for their low crime rates include Santa Ana, California, and Mesa, Arizona, which also have considerable Mexican populations. These facts do not only disprove Trump's claims, but they irrefutably contradict his claims and actually appear to illustrate that cities with significant Mexican immigrant populations are actually making American cities *safer*.

In an effort to reduce Mexican immigration and the "high crime rates" associated with Mexican immigrants, Trump has utilized a variety of deterrents to limit the amount of Mexicans coming into the United States. These deterrents include the U.S.-Mexico border wall, which Trump has vehemently pushed for since the beginning of his presidential campaign, the termination of DACA, increased deportations by ICE (particularly in cities that have sanctuary policies to protect undocumented individuals), and the separation of immigrant parents and children at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Trump's ultimate goal with these tactics is to keep Americans safe, and he believes that deportations are the most effective in controlling Mexicans who are already in the United States. However, the majority of the Mexican immigrants who are being affected are innocent individuals who have never committed a crime in their lives. Consequently, he only appears to be making Americans feel less safe by instilling fear and wreaking havoc on the Mexican-American community. It's disgraceful that innocent Mexican immigrants who are instrumental to American communities aren't deserving of the same rights and protections as other Americans. As a result, Trump is ultimately hurting Americans by splitting apart families and deporting immigrants who have strong ties with their local communities.

Reports by the Migration Policy Institute say that there are approximately 12 million Mexican immigrants in the United States. That represents 28% of the entire foreign born population of the United States, which makes Mexican immigrants the single largest immigrant group by *far*. Although Mexico is no longer the top immigrant providing country in the United States (China and India have been leading Mexico since 2013), Mexican immigrants are only becoming more assimilated into American communities and they deserve the same rights and respect that every American is entitled to. They are not drug smugglers, rapists or criminals, and they are not any less American than you and I.