

# THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



## The Three Big Lies About Immigrants

By Sig Hernandez

August 1, 2025

The Trump 2024 campaign was full of misinformation about immigrants. Based on his 3 big lies Trump promised the deportation of 11 million undocumented immigrants.

### Big Lie #1: Immigrants are Criminals

Nothing further from the truth. Immigrants, whether documented or undocumented, are less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans. Not only that, when they move into a community, crime decreases in that community.

#### Arrest and Incarceration Data Studies

- The arrest rate for illegal immigrants was 40 percent below that of native-born Americans and the homicide arrest rate was 46 percent lower than the one for native-born Americans (Nowrasteh 2018).
- As a group, immigrants have had lower incarceration rates than the US-born for 150 years. Moreover, relative to the US-born, immigrants' incarceration rates have declined since 1960: immigrants today are 60% less likely to be incarcerated (Abramitzky, et al. 2023).

#### Higher Immigration and Lower Crime Rates

- Increased concentrations of undocumented immigrants are associated with statistically significant decreases in violent crime (Light and Miller 2018).
- As the number of immigrants in the United States has risen in recent years, crime rates have fallen. Between 1990 and 2013, FBI data indicate that the violent crime rate declined 48 percent. Likewise, the property crime rate fell 41 percent. This decline in crime rates in the face of high levels of new immigration has been a steady national trend and has occurred in cities across the country (Martinez and Rumbaut 2015).

The evidence is clear. We need to stop demonizing immigrants as criminals!

### Big Lie #2: Immigrants Are an Economic Burden to the Country

Although a city like NYC can in the short term get overwhelmed by a large influx of immigrants (Governors DeSantis & Abbot dumped thousands of migrants in NYC to create chaos), in the longer-term immigrants tend to migrate where labor is needed.

JD Vance accused immigrants during the campaign of being responsible for the high price of housing. That's part of the big lie too. Immigrants cannot afford the type of housing that the middle-class native-born demands. They often live in lower-quality dwellings that they rent. Also, they help build a lot of houses. Immigrants represent 33% of all construction workers.

In the longer term, the economic benefits of immigrants outweigh the costs. (1) *They contribute to our economic growth.* The recent surge in immigration is projected to expand our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by \$7.3 trillion in 2034. (2) Undocumented immigrants paid \$93 billion in 2023 in federal, state, and local taxes. Also, they *contribute, via their payroll taxes, to improving the solvency of our Medicare and Social Security Funds.* In 2023, undocumented immigrants alone contributed \$6.2 billion to the Medicare Fund and \$23 billion to the Social Security Fund—and they will never get a dollar back! (3) *They help reduce inflation by alleviating labor shortages.* (4) *They create businesses (and jobs) at a higher rate than the native-born population.* One quarter of American entrepreneurs are immigrants or children of immigrants.

### **Big Lie #3: Immigrants Are a Threat to American Culture**

Trump and Vance's claims Haitian immigrants eat cats and dogs is part of this Big Lie. The big lie is that immigrants do not acculturate/assimilate to the mainstream culture and that they want to replace it with their own. NOT TRUE! Let's take the largest immigrant group—Hispanics. Studies indicate Hispanics are assimilating to American culture as fast or faster than any previous immigrant group (Chinese, Italians, Irish, etc.).

I live near Bonita Middle School where 90% of the students are Hispanic. They are all bilingual. But what's interesting is that the kids are typically more fluent in English than in Spanish. Even their first names have Americanized. It's very rare to see second-generation Hispanics being named Maria or Jose. I'm Sig Hernandez. My name "Sifredo Augusto Hernandez Siragusa" has been Americanized as well! We are not trying to replace American culture; we are trying to adapt to it. We are as American as anybody else.

The story of America is IMAGA = Immigrants Make America Great Again, and Again, and Again...!

*Sig Hernandez is an Emeritus Professor in the Business School at Rider University and a resident of Bonita Springs.*