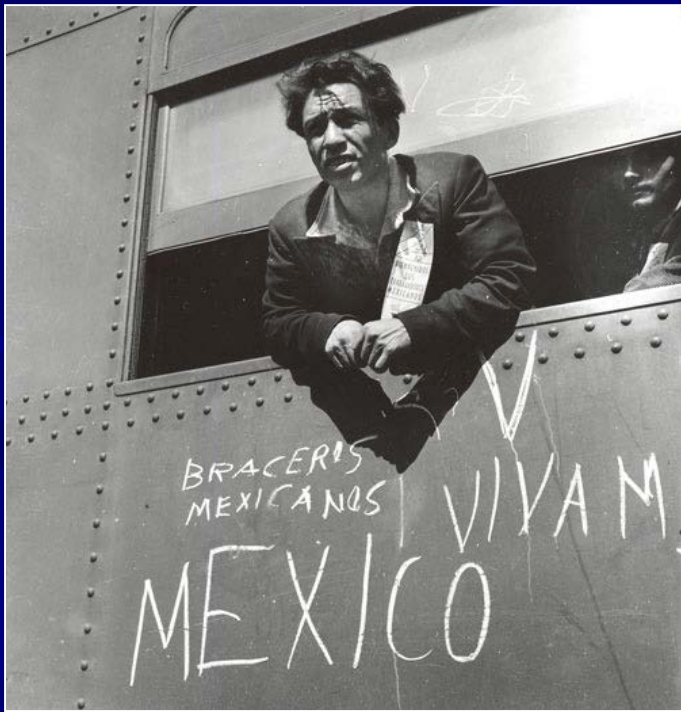# Mexico's Migration Narrative, 1880s – present

Wayne Cornelius
Director Emeritus, Mexican Migration Field Research Program, University of California-San Diego

Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UCSD, October 26, 2017

Key Questions

1. How did the Mexico-to-U.S. migration flow begin, and what kept it going?

2. How have U.S. government policies shaped migration flows between Mexico and the United States?

3. What are the unintended consequences of U.S. immigration control policies?

4. How can social science evidence be used to evaluate the efficacy and feasibility of immigration policies?

Fieldwork-based, interdisciplinary research programs on immigration policy issues

- Mexican Migration Field Research and Training Program, UC San Diego, est. 2004: Survey + open-ended interviews in 3 migrant-sending communities in 3 Mexican states, plus 6 U.S. destination cities, restudied every 3 years.

- Mexican Migration Project (MMP), Princeton U./U. de Guadalajara, est. 1982: One-shot surveys + qualitative interviews in 154 Mexican migrant-sending communities and (XX?) U.S. destinations.

- Migrant Border Crossing Study (MBCS), University of Arizona, est. 2007: Survey and ethnographic interviews with deported Mexican migrants, conducted in migrant shelters in 6 Mexican border cities.

Mexican Migration Field Research and Training program (MMFRP) at UC San Diego

Conducted 7,860 field interviews with migrants and potential migrants, 2005-15, in four Mexican states (Jalisco, Zacatecas, Oaxaca, Yucatan), and 2 U.S. states (California, Oklahoma)

Angela Garcia conducts Interview in Tunkás, Yucatán, 2009. She is now Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Chicago.

Chapter 1:
The Era of (Mostly) Free Labor Migration

- Mexican migrants flowed freely across U.S.-Mexico border.

- No border controls at all until 1924, when Border Patrol was established.

- Era defined by the "opening and closing of the door" policy:

  Door was closed to Mexican immigration during periods of economic contraction and anti-immigrant sentiment, but reopened when strong U.S. economic growth or wartime labor shortages generated strong employer demand for Mexican labor.

The opening and closing door

- Open door: 1880s to late 1920s.

- Closed door: 1929-1932 (Great Depression caused "Great Repatriation").

- Open door: 1942-1964 (WWII – Bracero program, except for 1954: Operation Wetback – 1.1 million apprehensions).

- Semi-open door: 1965-1992.

- Closed door: 1993-present (Prop. 187 in Calif., 1993-94; Clinton begins border enforcement build-up).

Direct labor recruitment:
early phase, 1880s-1924

- Railroad-building
- Mines
- Agribusiness
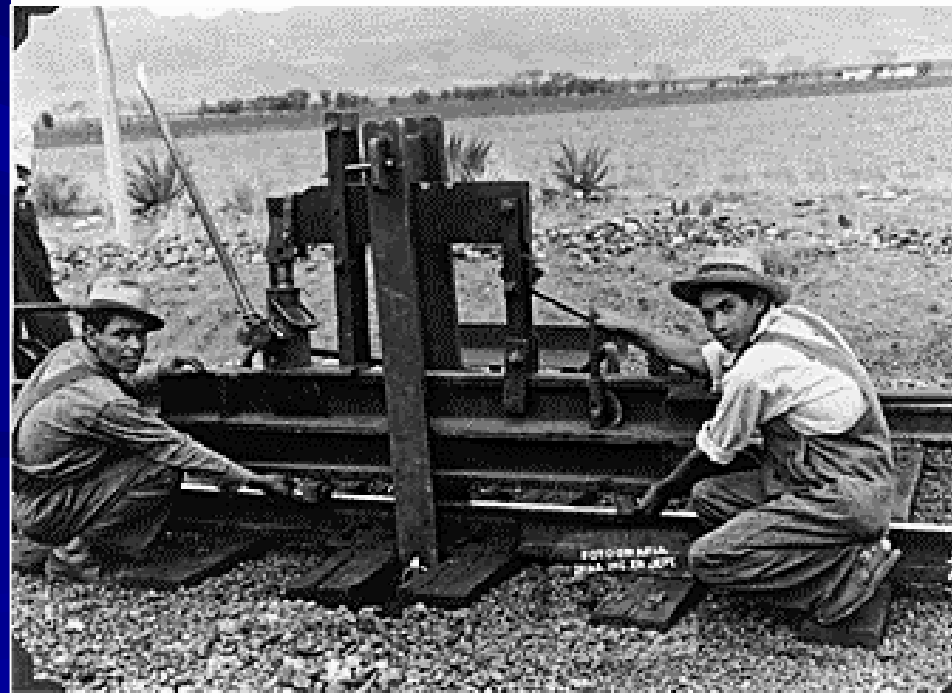
World War I: First U.S. government-sponsored temporary contract labor program, 1917-1921

Mexican migrants picking cotton in Texas, 1919

U.S. Border Patrol created in 1924

Why did U.S. start border enforcement?

- Began as attempt to keep Chinese and undesirable East Europeans (Poles, Russians) from entering illegally.

- Mexicans walking across border to work in RR construction, mining, agriculture were ignored. (U.S. Immigration Bureau described Southwest as "natural habitat" of Mexicans.)

- No significant deportations of illegal Mexican migrants until late 1920s.

The Great Repatriation of 1929-1925

At least 500,000 Mexican workers returned to Mexico, most of their own accord, due to lack of jobs – not forced out by U.S. authorities.

Mexican workers returning home from Los Angeles, 1931.

Bracero program, 1942-1964: <u>4.6 million</u> Mexicans admitted to do short-term agricultural work

"Bracero" contract workers arrive in U.S. by train, 1942

Year	Number of Braceros	Applicable U.S. Law
1942	4,203	(wartime)
1943	(44,600)[7]	(wartime)
1944	62,170	(wartime)
1945	(44,600)	(wartime)
1946	(44,600)	Public Law 45
1947	(30,000)[8]	PL 45, PL 40
1948	(30,000)	Public Law 893
1948-50	(79,000/yr)[9]	Period of administrative agreements
1951	192,000[10]	AA/Public Law 78
1952	197,100	Public Law 78
1953	201,380	Public Law 78
1954	309,033	Public Law 78
1955	398,650	Public Law 78
1956	445,197	Public Law 78
1957	436,049	Public Law 78
1958	432,491	Public Law 78
1959	444,408	Public Law 78
1960	319,412	Public Law 78
1961	296,464	Public Law 78
1962	198,322	Public Law 78
1963	189,528	Public Law 78
1964	179,298	Public Law 78

West-central Mexico: the cradle of Mexican migration to U.S.

STATE OF ORIGIN OF MIGRATORY AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ENTERING U.S., 1942-1968
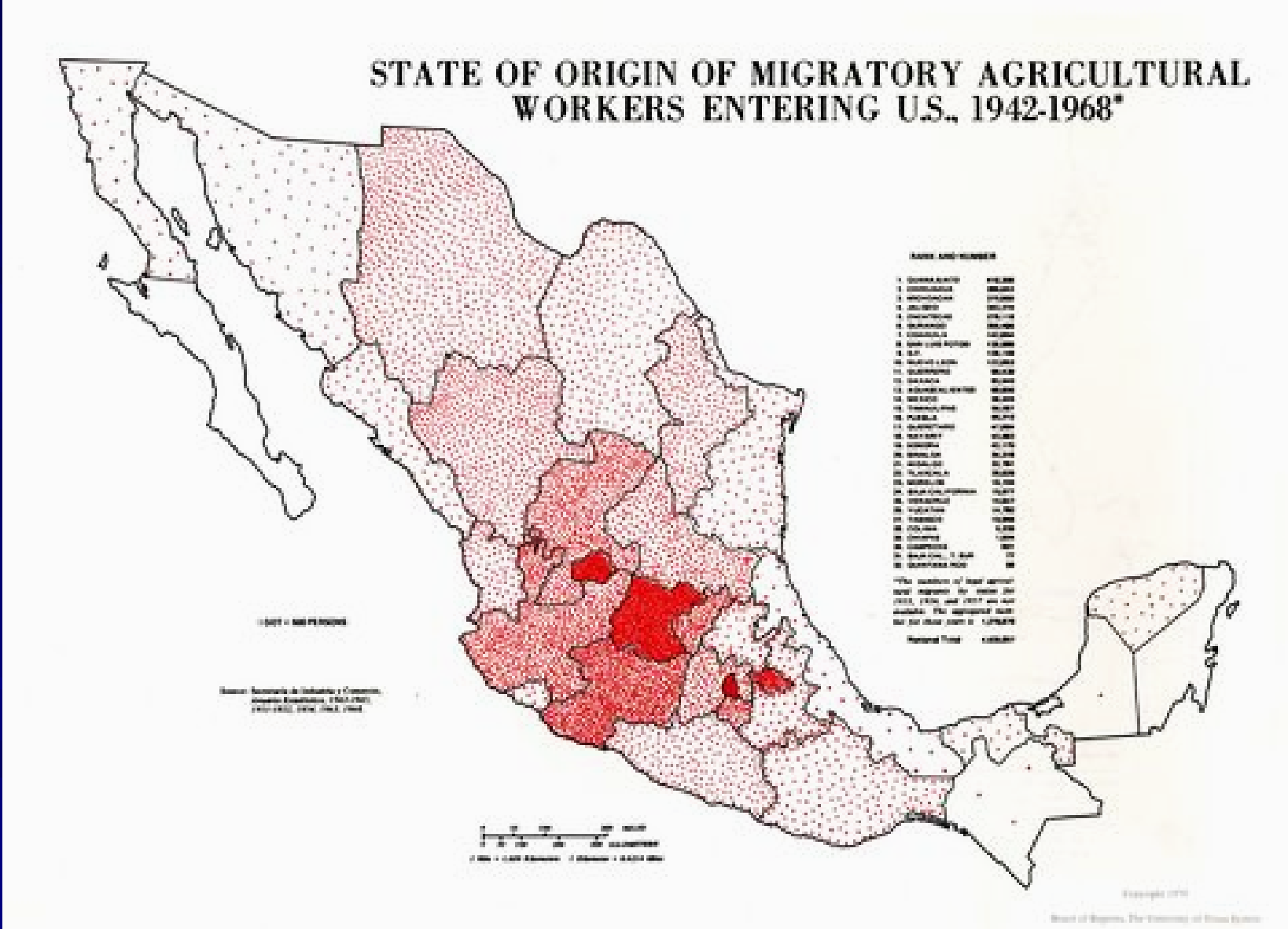
Ex-bracero from San Miguel Tlacotepec, Oaxaca, holding his bracero ID card

Mexican "braceros" *vs.* undocs apprehended/removed (braceros = 400,000-450,000/yr, 1955-1960)
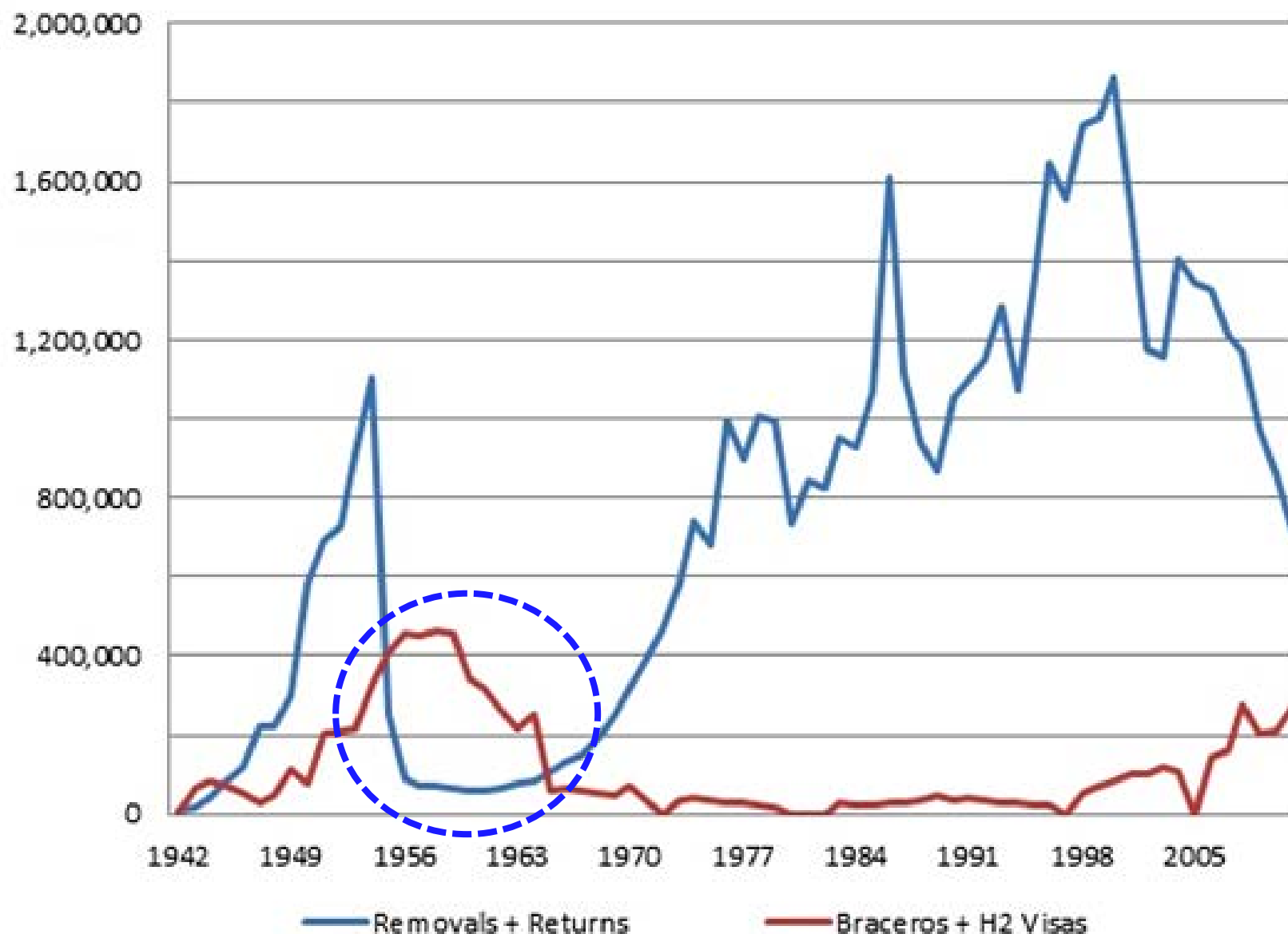
Temporary low-skilled agricultural worker program (H-2A)

- Visas issued in FY 2016: **134,368**

- Not used by most agricultural employers: too bureaucratic, inflexible, doesn't provide workers in timely manner.

Temporary low-skilled <u>non</u>-agricultural service worker program (H-2B)

Purpose: To fill short-term jobs in landscaping, hospitality, construction, and other non-agricultural service occupations.

Visas issued in FY 2016: **84.627** (capped).

Chapter 2:
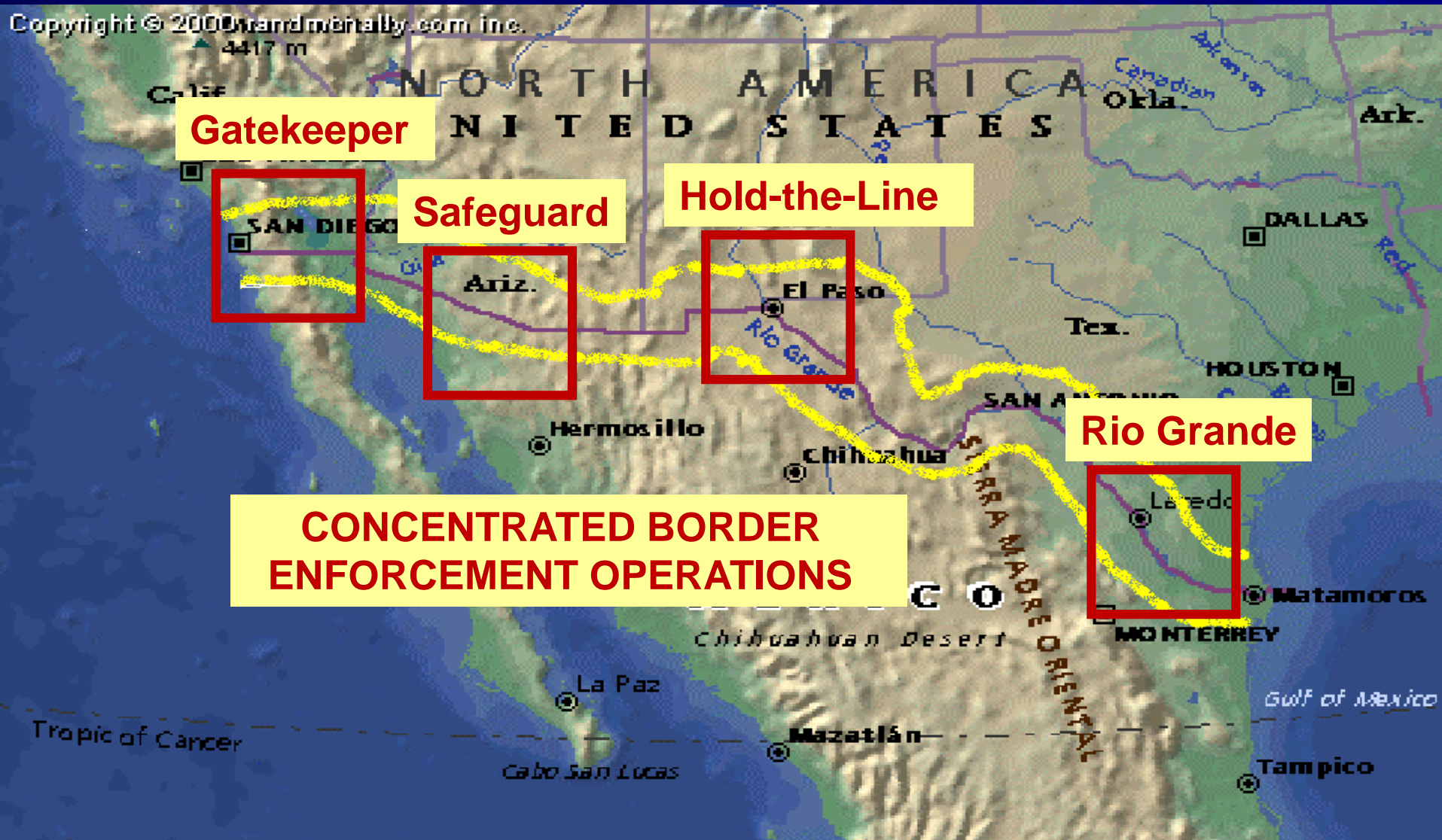# The border enforcement build-up, 1993-present

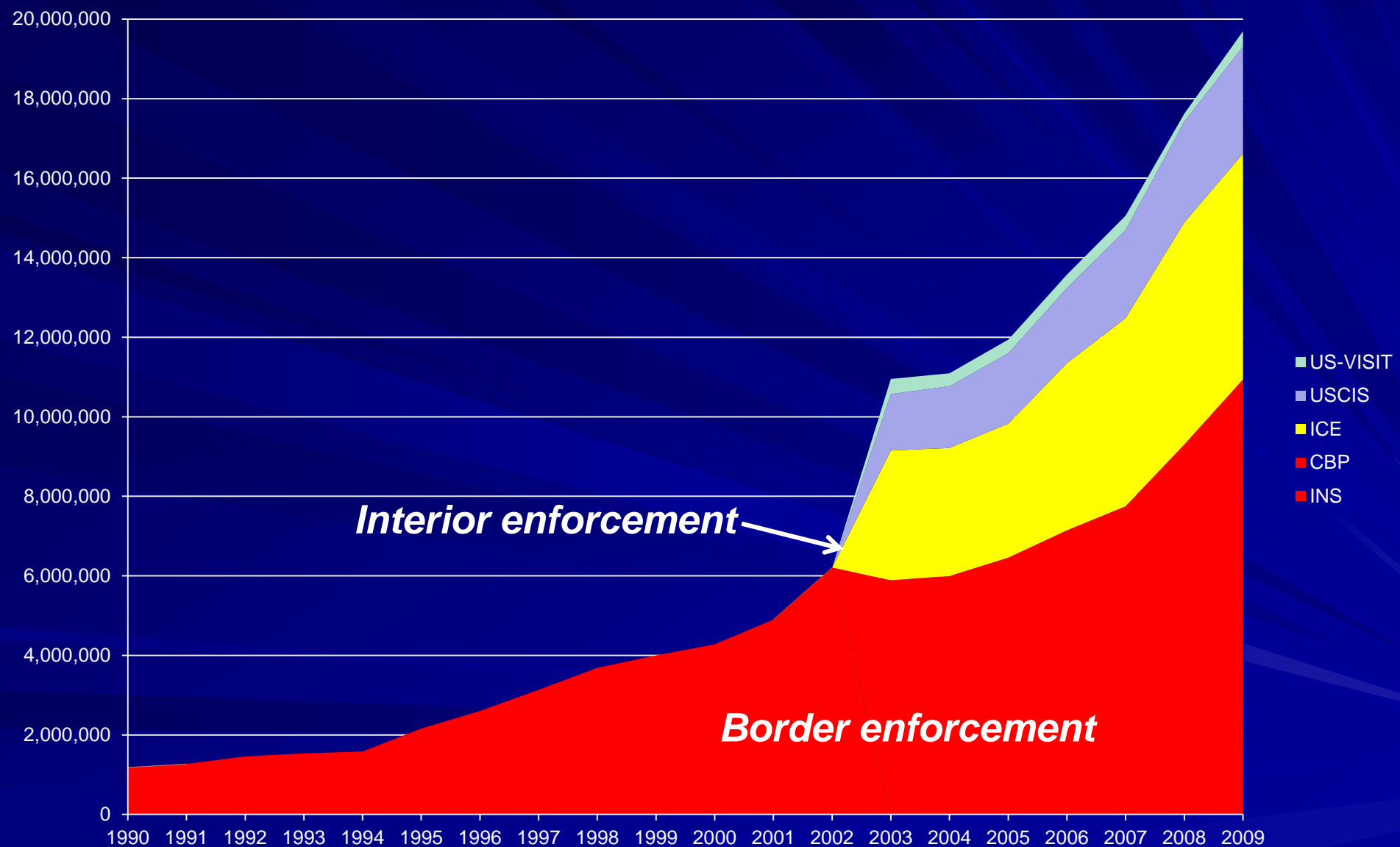*Through mid-1990s, U.S.-Mexico border remained highly porous*

Cerca fronteriza por el Rio de Tijuana, 1990

Concentrated Border Enforcement Operations began in 1993 with Operation "Hold-the-Line" (El Paso)

Gatekeeper

Safeguard

Hold-the-Line

Rio Grande

CONCENTRATED BORDER ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

Federal government spending on immigration enforcement, FY 2016

- Border Patrol + Interior surveillance and apprehensions (ICE): $18.7 billion

- Central administrative expenses: $1.4 billion

- Coastal surveillance: $799 million

- Immigration courts, U.S. marshals: $500 million

- Immigrant detention facilities: $1.75 billion

Total: **$23.2 billion** (*FY 2018:* + $5.4b = **$28.6b**)

Border Patrol grew by more than 700% from 1993-2014

Legend:
- # Border Patrol Agents
- Border Patrol Agents % Southern Border

21,444
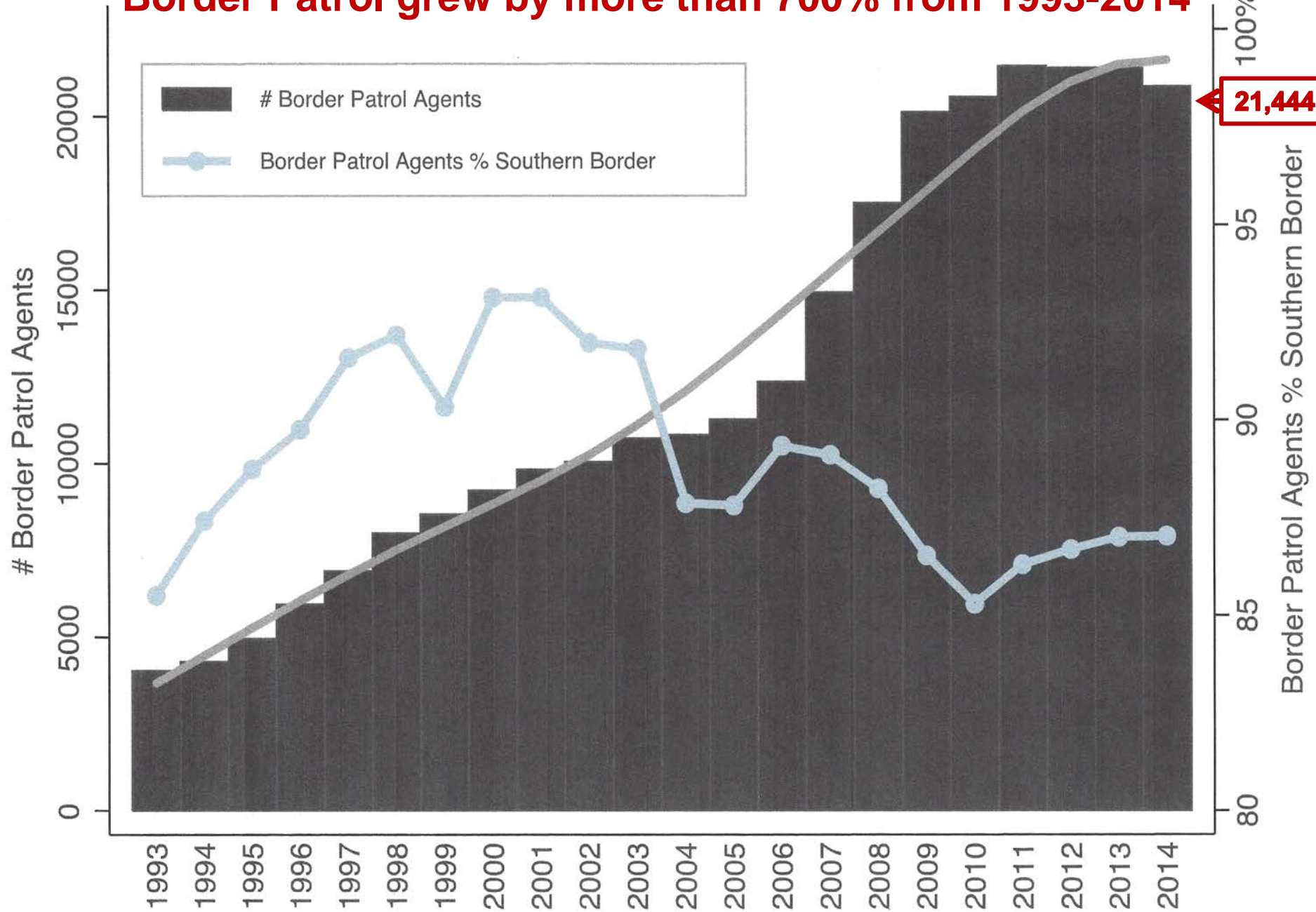
Remote video surveillance systems installed in urban areas along the U.S.-Mexico border

Heavy investments in high technology: Surveillance by advanced radar systems and unmanned drones
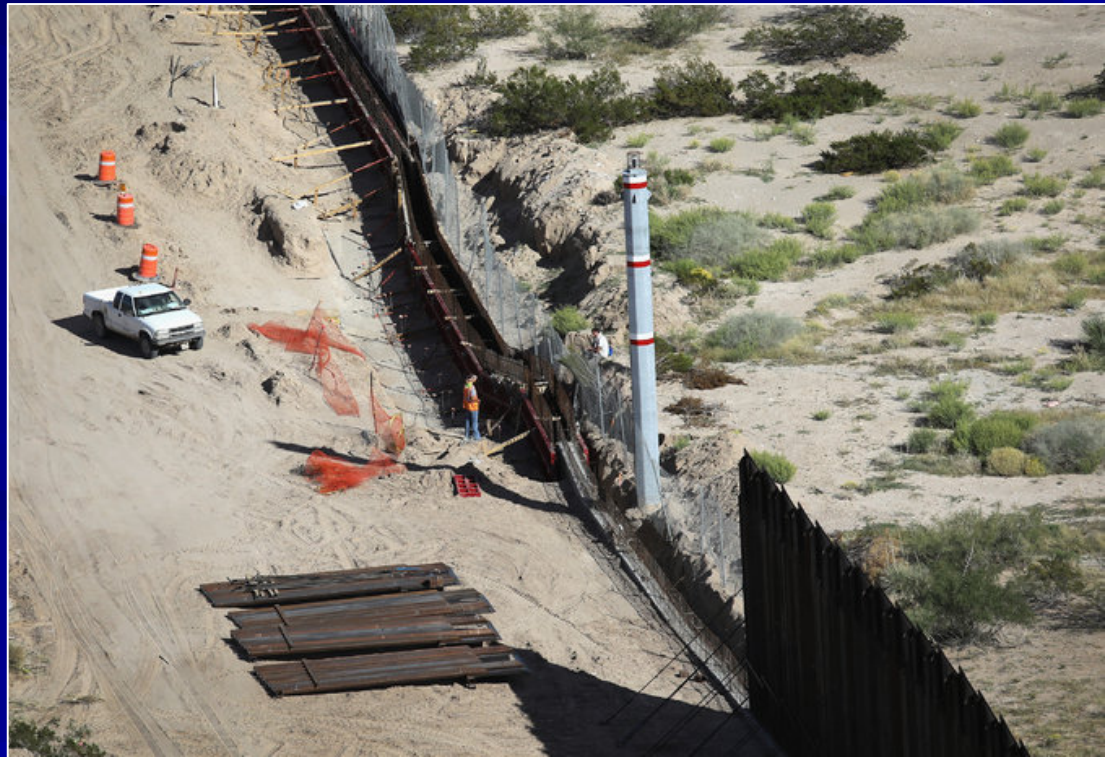
14 Predator drones now patrol 1,200 miles of SW border, from 19,000 feet. Cost per drone: **$18.5 million**

Physical fence construction

Total miles of fencing built through Sept. 2014: **687** (= **35%** of southwest border)

Construction cost **$3.9 - $16 million** per mile (recent average: $6.5 million/mile)

Border fence in New Mexico

Newest sections of border fence in San Diego/Tijuana are 20 feet tall

Trump's "Big, Beautiful Wall"

- *Specs:* 1,000 miles long, 18-30' tall.

- *Construction cost:* $26-40 billion, plus $500 million/year for maintenance.

- *Experts doubt project's feasibility, due to:*

  -- **Natural barriers**: irregular topography, rivers and streams flowing across border that can't be impeded – economic impacts + treaty obligations.

  -- **Huge land acquisition issues:** lawsuits + environmental conflicts would impede project.

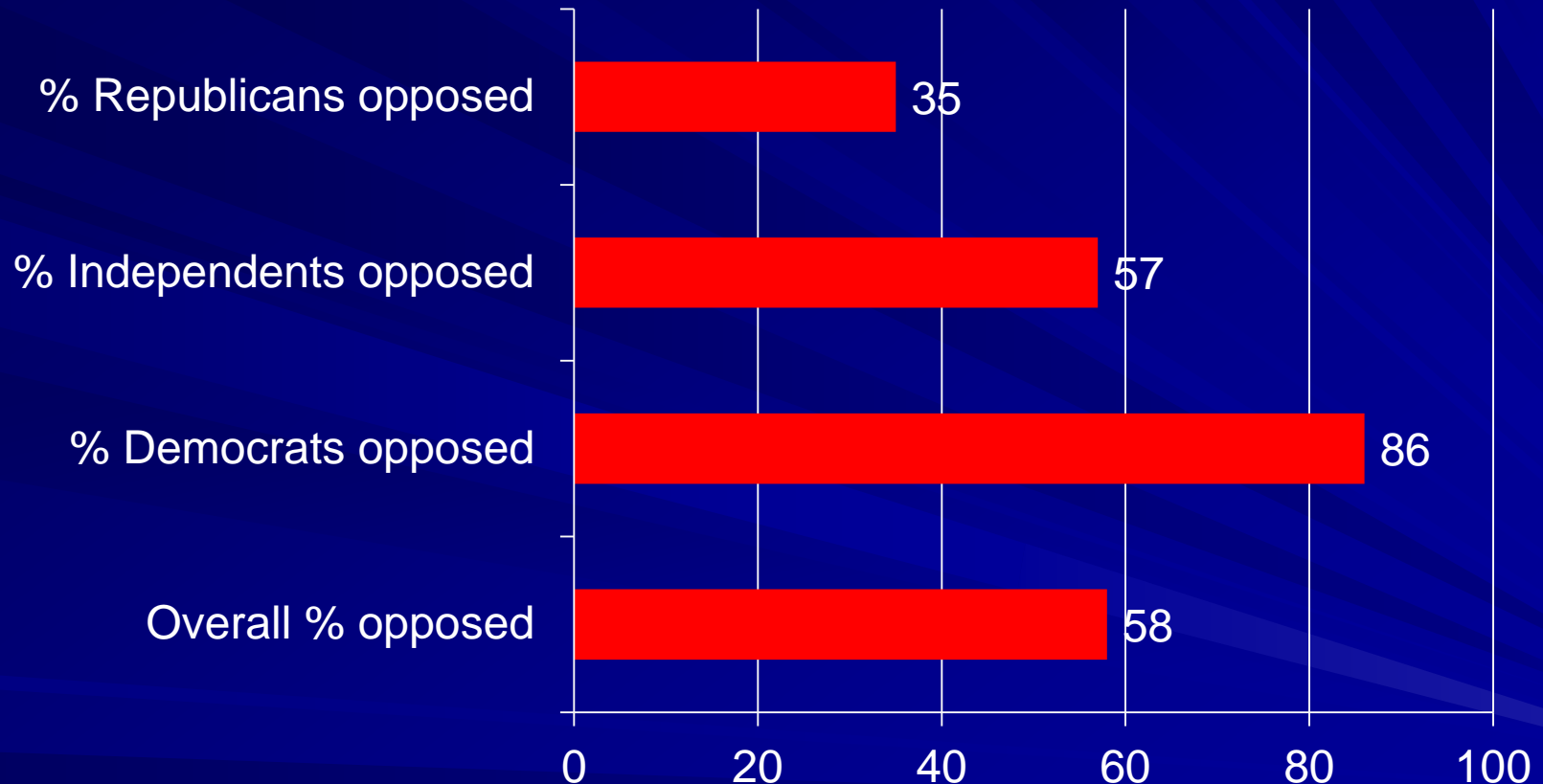- *Would not stop illegal entry attempts:* migrants + people-smugglers would go over, under, and around any wall.

8 Trump border wall prototypes built in San Diego sector (construction began Sept. 2017, finished October 2017)

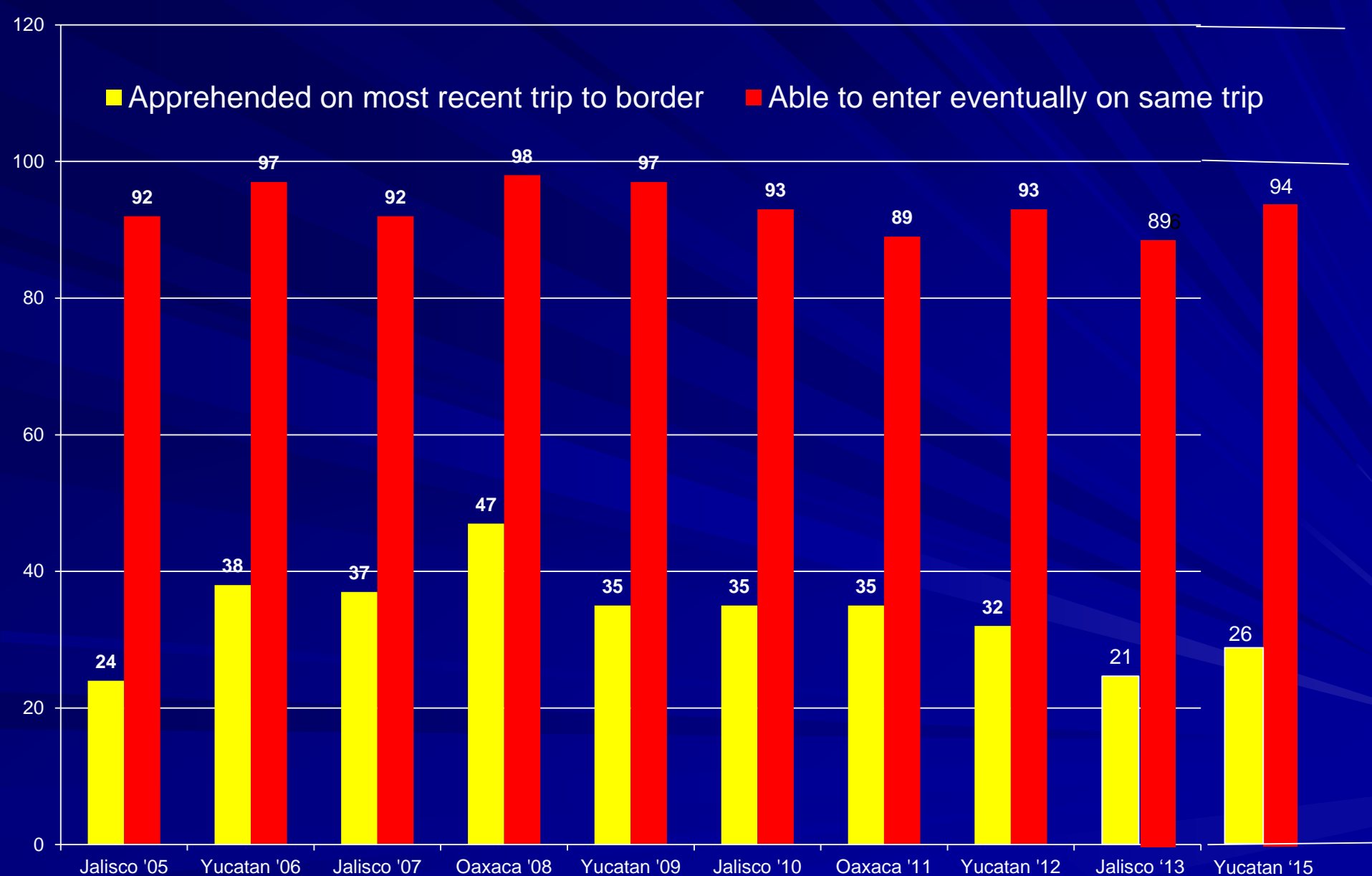% of migrants apprehended on most recent trip to the border, and % of those who succeeded in entering on the 2nd or 3rd try

■ Apprehended on most recent trip to border   ■ Able to enter eventually on same trip

|	Jalisco '05	Yucatan '06	Jalisco '07	Oaxaca '08	Yucatan '09	Jalisco '10	Oaxaca '11	Yucatan '12	Jalisco '13	Yucatan '15
Apprehended	24	38	37	47	35	35	35	32	21	26
Able to enter	92	97	92	98	97	93	89	93	89	94

Key take-away from MMFRP field research:

Even at unprecedented levels, border enforcement doesn't keep the great majority of would-be unauthorized Mexicans out of the country!
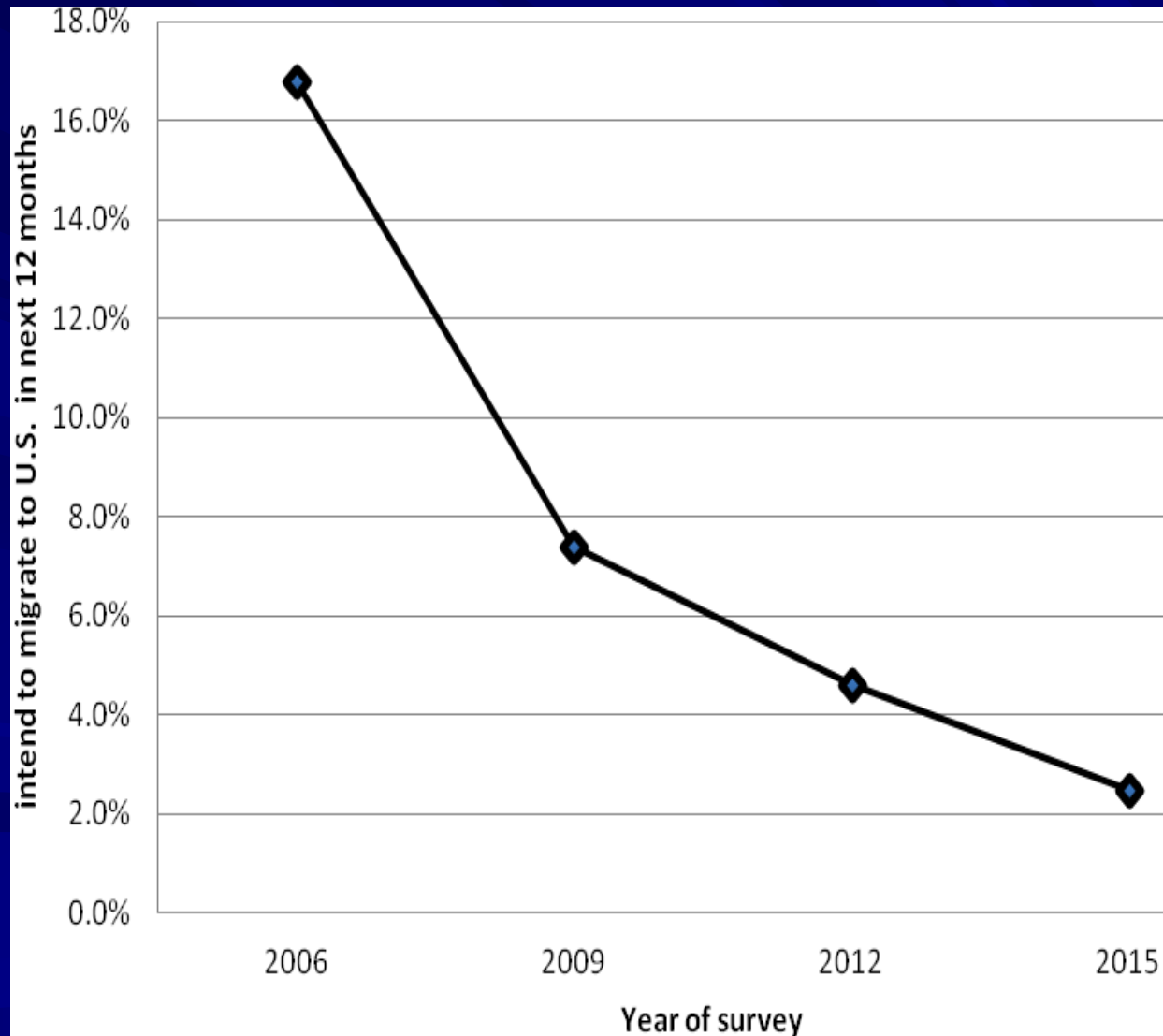
Since 2007, Border Patrol apprehensions have dropped to early 1970s levels
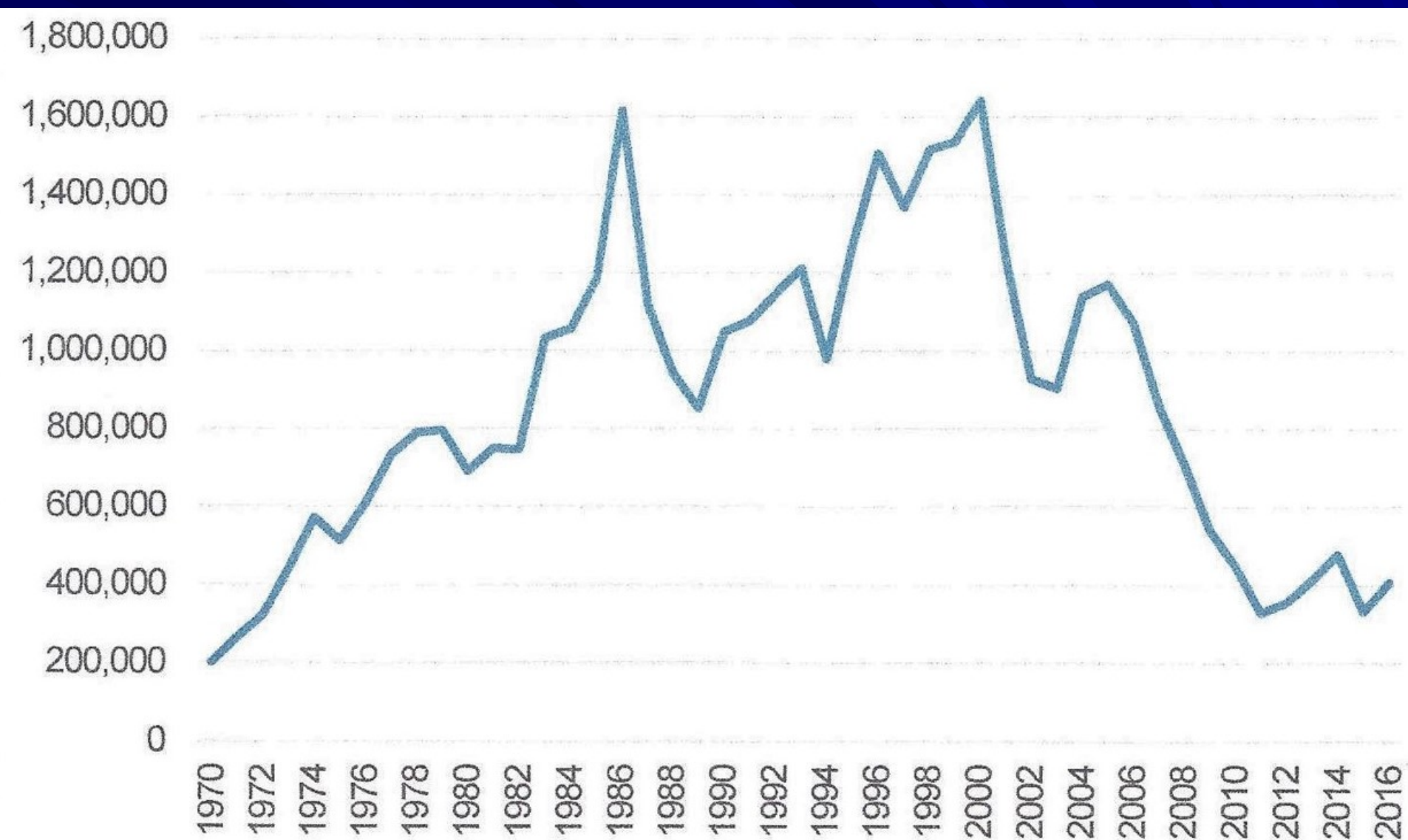
Source: U.S. Border Patrol.

% of interviewees who intend to migrate to U.S. in next 12 months *(MMFRP surveys in Tunkas, Yucatan, 2006-15)*
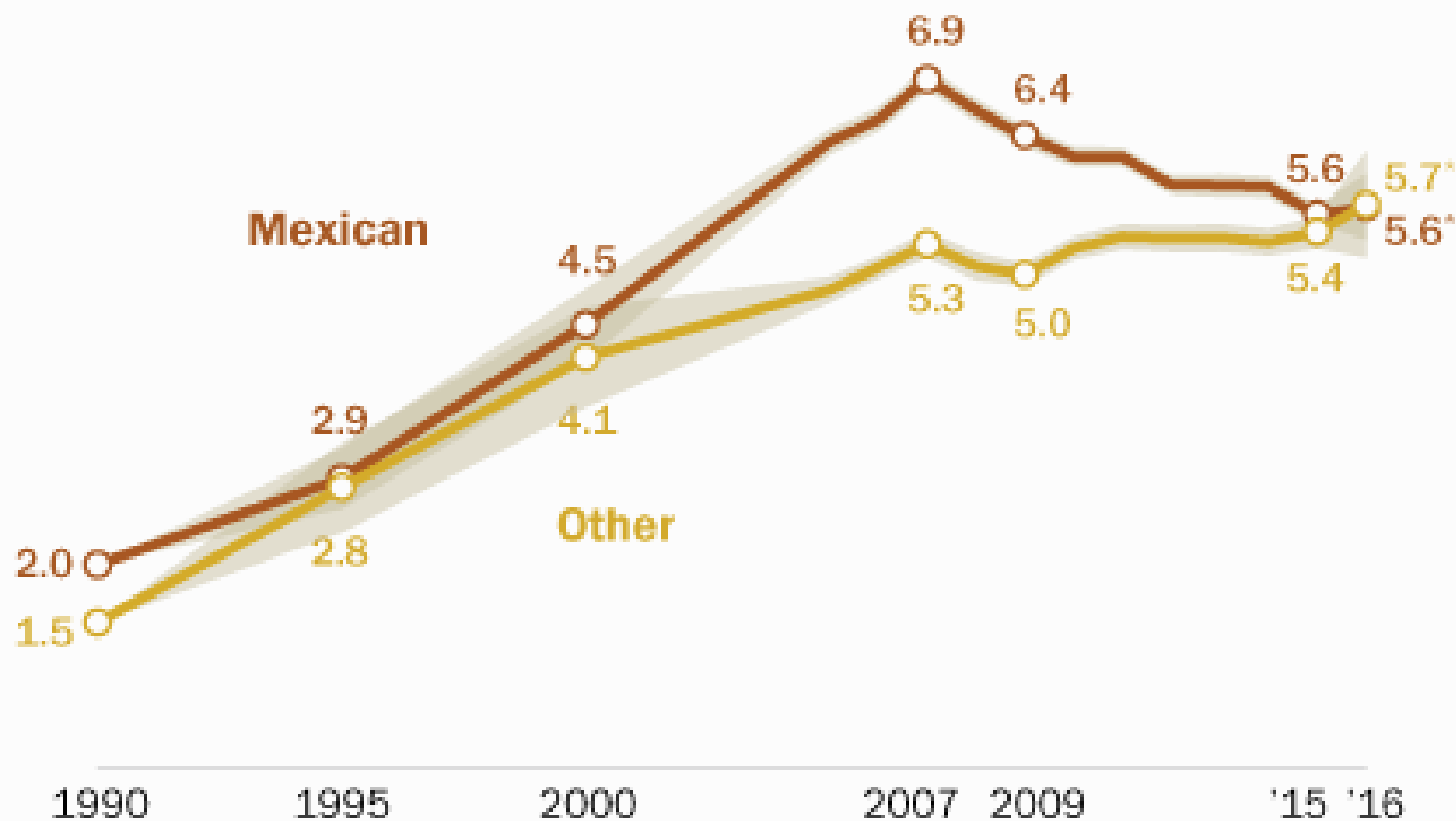
Estimated unauthorized immigrant population in the U.S. lower in 2015 than in 2009

In millions
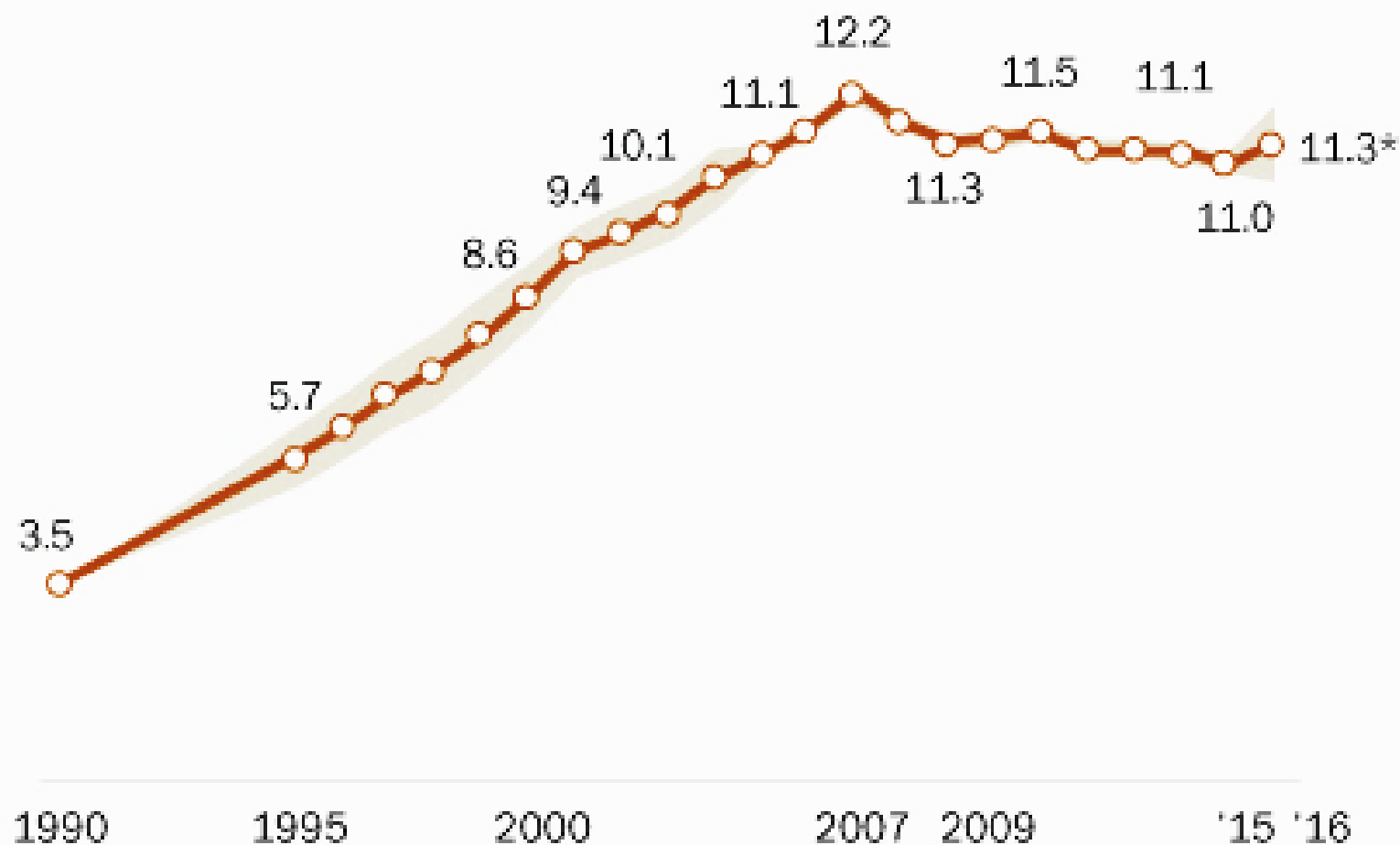
Among unauthorized immigrants, Mexicans may no longer be the majority

In millions

Mexican: 2.0, 2.9, 4.5, 6.9, 6.4, 5.6, 5.7*

Other: 1.5, 2.8, 4.1, 5.3, 5.0, 5.4, 5.6*

1990 1995 2000 2007 2009 '15 '16

Estimated unauthorized immigrant total from Mexico declined from 2009 to 2015, but rose from Asia and Central America

In thousands

	2015	2009	Change*
Latin America			
Mexico	5,550	6,350	-800
Central America	1,800	1,600	+180
South America	650	725	-90
Caribbean	425	400	N.S.
Other regions			
Asia	1,500	1,300	+220
Europe, Canada	550	550	N.S.
Middle East	130	110	N.S.
Africa	250	200	N.S.
U.S. total	**11,000**	**11,300**	**-375**

More non-Mexicans than Mexicans apprehended in '16

Border Patrol apprehensions, 1970-2016

MEXICANS

NON-MEXICANS

1.75 million
1.50
1.25
1.00
.75
.50
.25
0

219,254
11,862

222,847
192,969

'70   '80   '90   '00   '10   '16
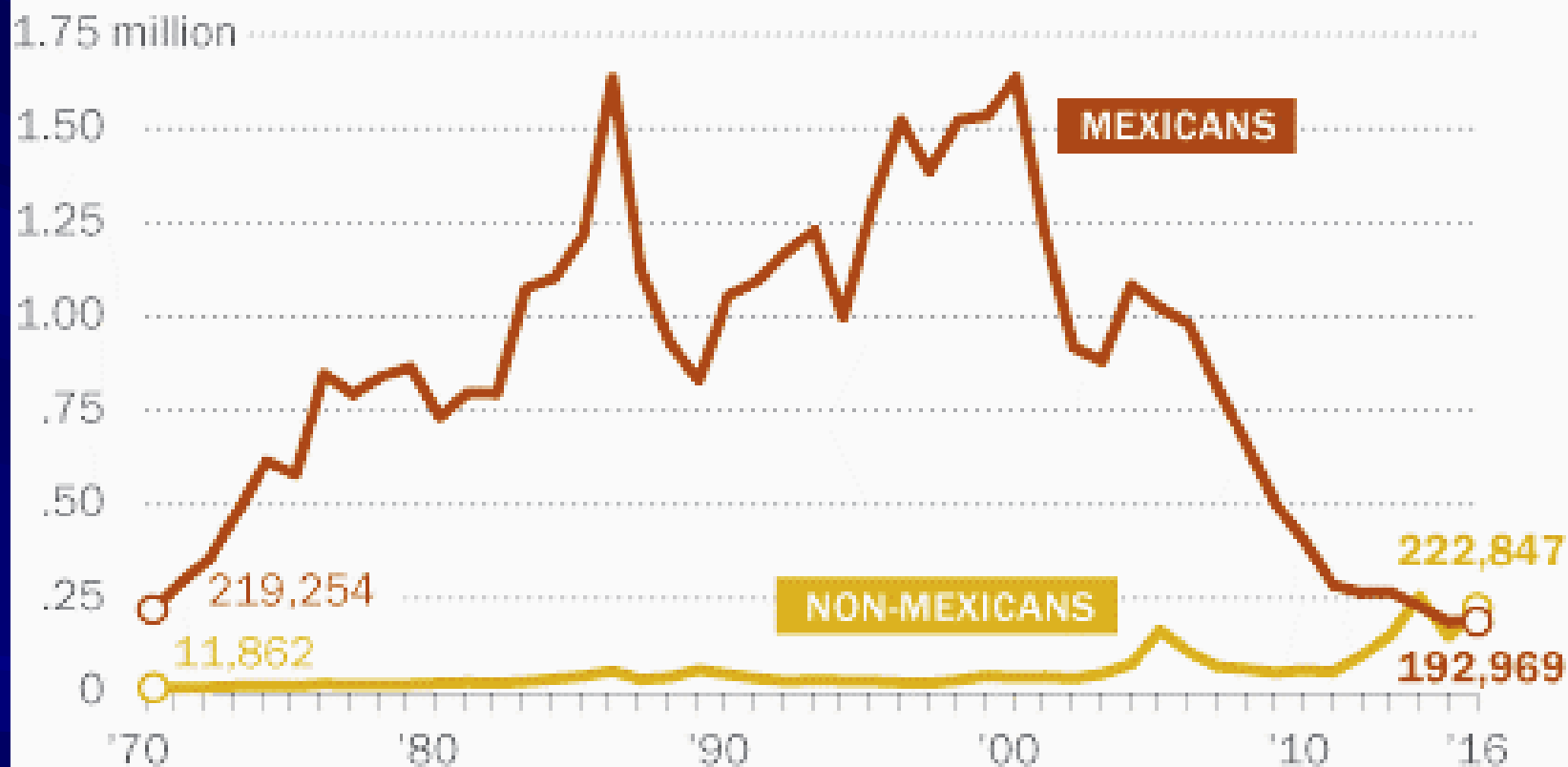
Note: 1976 covers 15 months due to change in fiscal year period.
Source: U.S. Border Patrol apprehensions table, FY 2000-2016; Immigration and Naturalization Service statistical yearbooks, FY 1970-2000.

Why has Mexican migration to the U.S. fallen so much?

1. Persisting perception that jobs are still hard to come by in the U.S. (residue of the Great Recession).

2. Growing attractiveness of migration to nearby cities within Mexico, less costly alternative to going to the U.S.

3. High cost of migrating to U.S. without papers ($3,000-6,000 to hire people-smuggler).

4. Organized crime gangs in Mexico that prey on migrants en route to U.S. (robberies, assaults, kidnappings).

5. *Depleted pool of potential migrants, due to:*
   -- huge wave of migration to U.S. in 1990s-early 2000s; those most
       likely to migrate have already gone, stayed in U.S.
   -- falling birth rates + slower labor force growth in Mexico since
       1970s (= weaker push factors).

Who are the stay-at-homes?
(MMFRP research, 2006-Yucatan, 2013-Jalisco)

- Locus of family ties/obligations: People with weakest social network ties to the U.S. Most or all nuclear family members live in Mexico, vs. U.S.

- Least likely to have spouse-partner living in U.S.

- Older people with significant, chronic health issues.

- Preference for life in Mexico: Negative perceptions of life in U.S. (esp. education system) and of changes in returning migrants (language, dress, family life).

- No perceived economic need to migrate: doing OK financially in Mexico.

What does <u>not</u> affect the decision to migrate or stay home in Mexico?

- Tougher U.S. border enforcement

- Interior enforcement (worksites, traffic stops, etc.)

- Large-scale deportations

- Likelihood of prolonged incarceration and criminal prosecution if apprehended (new Border Patrol policy)

- Expectations of a legalization program for undocumented.

Results of multivariate analysis: *Potential migrants know about U.S. immigration policies, but knowledge doesn't significantly affect behavior (= no deterrent effect).*

New Border Patrol/ICE strategy of immigration control: "Enhanced consequences delivery"

- Entering U.S. "without inspection" = civil offense, not a criminal violation.

- In 2012, Border Patrol implemented strategy of "enhanced legal consequences delivery."

- Goal is to create criminal records for apprehended migrants, by denying them "voluntary return" and prosecuting them in federal criminal courts.

- In FY 2008, criminal charges brought against **25%** of apprehended migrants who had no criminal record. In FY 2013, criminal charges filed against over **90%**.

- Stated rationale: reduce repeat illegal entries (recidivism).

Research demonstrates futility of using deportation as a tool for discouraging migration to U.S. or return migration following deportation:

MMFRP findings, 2012-15:
No evidence that higher probability of being prosecuted for illegal entry, or being incarcerated for extended periods, has deterred undocumented migration.

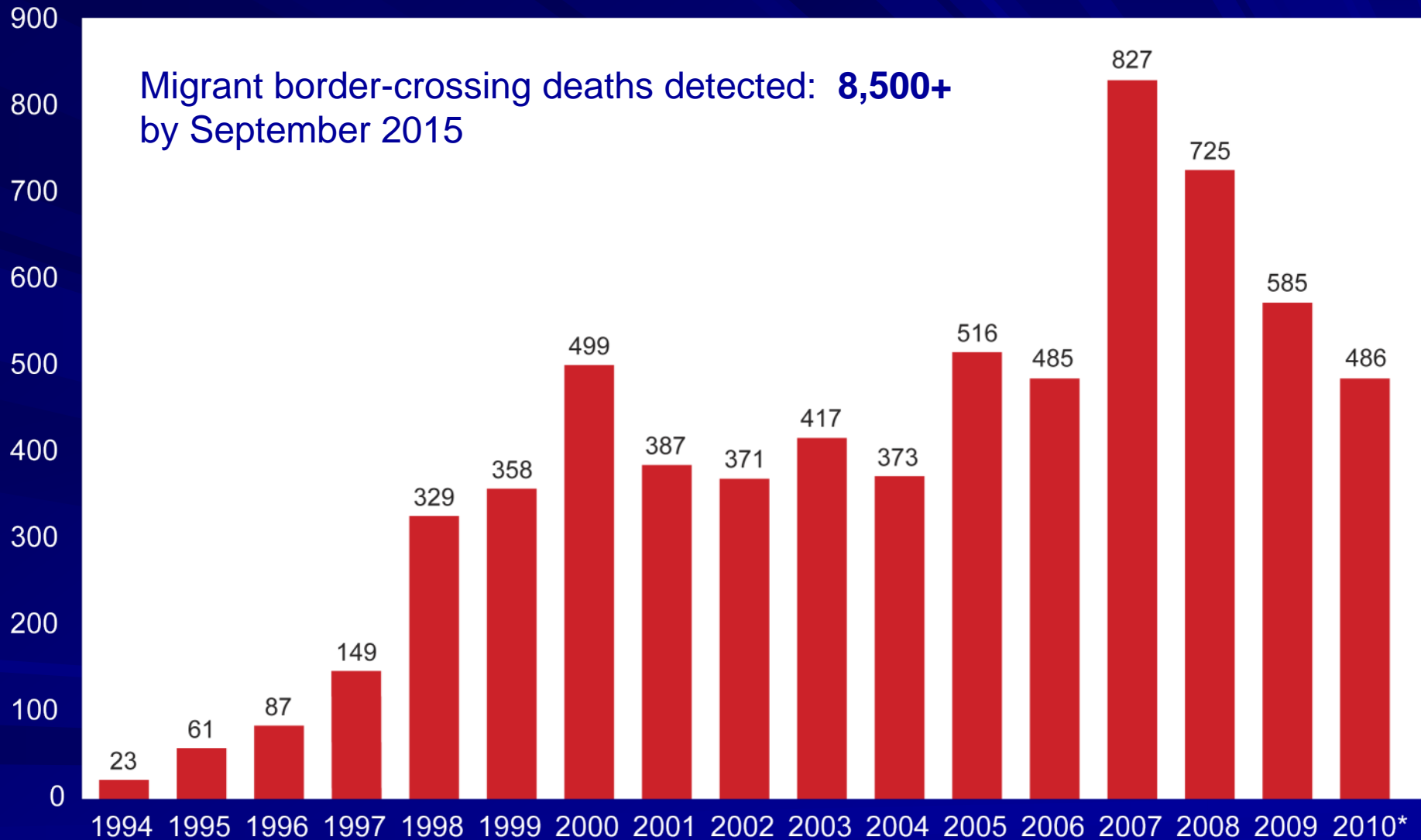**Border Crossing Study (U. of Arizona), 2007-12:**
Deportation has no deterrent effect on re-entry. Deportees' deep ties to U.S. pull them back immediately. (49% had at least one U.S.-citizen family member.)

Unintended Consequences of U.S. Immigration Control Policy, 1993-present

- Sharp increase in border-crossing fatalities.

- Enriching people-smugglers (can charge 8-10 times what they charged in 1993).

- Diverted unauthorized crossings through legal ports-of-entry (= ⅓ to ½ of illegal entries).

- Higher rate of permanent settlement in United States (caging effect of tougher border enforcement).

Tougher border enforcement puts migrants at risk

Migrant border-crossing deaths detected: **8,500+** by September 2015

Year	Deaths
1994	23
1995	61
1996	87
1997	149
1998	329
1999	358
2000	499
2001	387
2002	371
2003	417
2004	373
2005	516
2006	485
2007	827
2008	725
2009	585
2010*	486

Data sources: Maria Jimenez, *Humanitarian Crisis: Migrant Deaths at the U.S.- Mexico Border*, October 1, 2009, p.17; *Arizona Republic*, 9/22/10; Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico.

Border-crossing deaths are up 17% in 2017
(first six months -- UN migration agency)

- Border Patrol apprehensions down by **48%** in 2017)

- Fatalities per (detected) entry attempt up by **54%**

Unidentified migrants' remains in Pima County, AZ, coroner's dept.

Why have fatalities been increasing?

- 2017 weather conditions: especially hot summer in Texas.

- Coyotes taking migrants on longer hikes through life-threatening conditions to evade Border Patrol.

- More Central American women and children making dangerous crossings because immigration officials have been turning back asylum-seekers at SW border, under Trump.

More than 9 out of 10 unauthorized migrants hire people-smugglers; fees charged by coyotes have risen from $600 to $3,500-$5,000

Figure 7: Average Fees Paid to Migrant Smugglers at Southwest Border
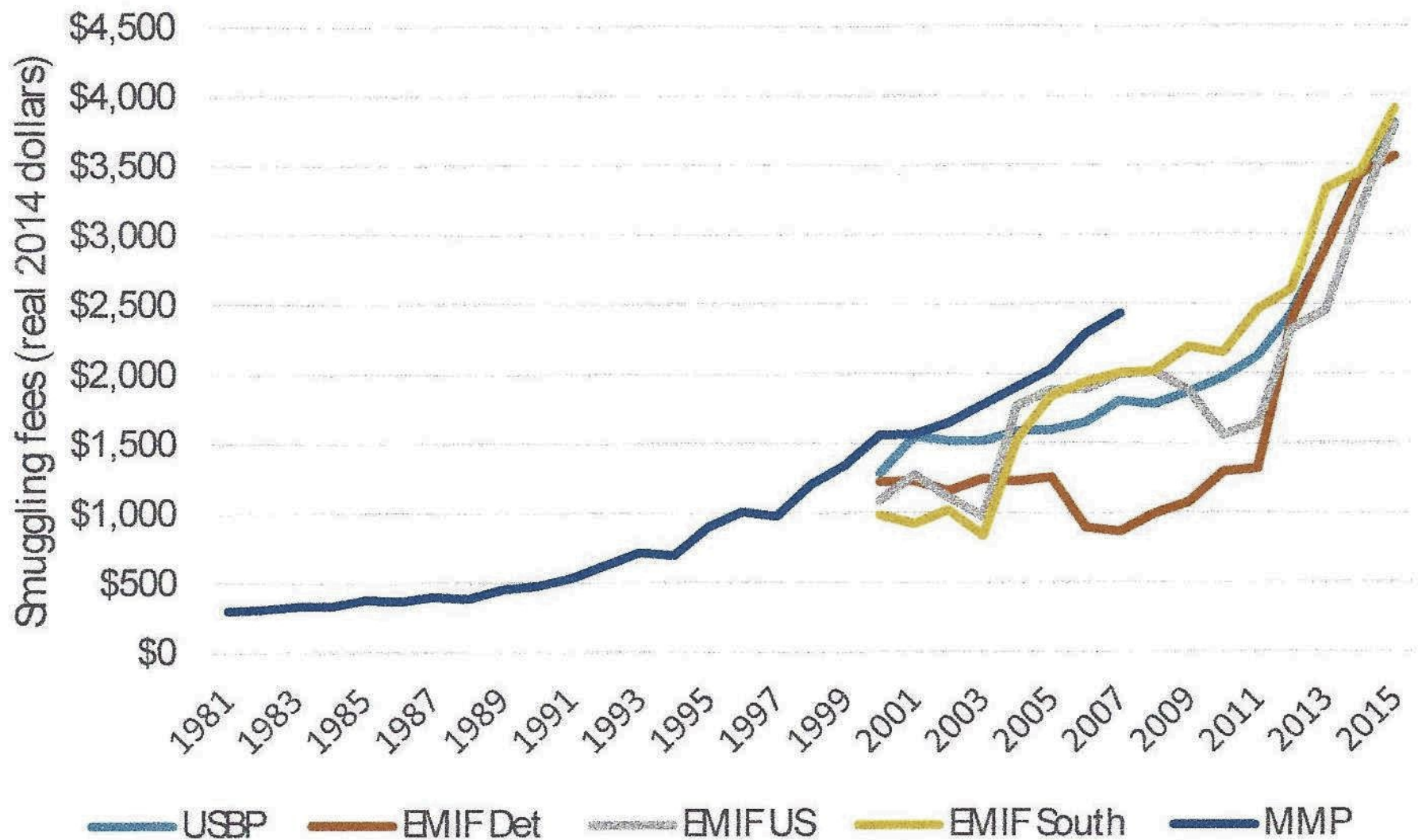
Risk-reduction strategy #2:

Nearly half of illegal entries by Mexicans occur through legal ports-of-entry, using false/borrowed documents or hidden in vehicles

Those entering through ports-of-entry have lower probability of being apprehended, and avoid life-threatening hazards of crossing through desert/mountainous areas
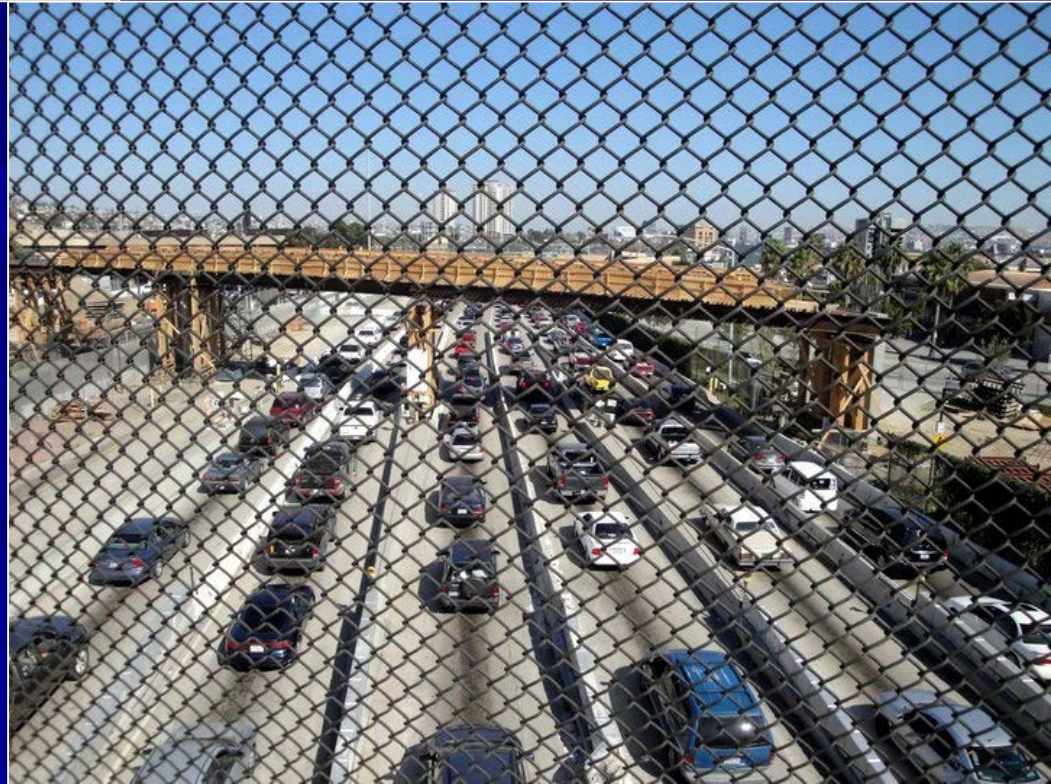
Unauthorized entries are being made through legal ports of entry because they are more likely to succeed + reduce physical risk
## *(mean number of apprehensions on most recent trip to border)*

	Crossed through POE	Crossed away from POE
Pooled dataset (2007-10)	0.69	0.88
Yucatan migrants (2009)	0.36	0.73
Jalisco migrants (2010)	0.51	0.70

Caging effect of U.S. border enforcement

- Traditional pattern of circular, short-stay migration (6 months in U.S, 6 months in Mexico) depended on a porous border, giving easy access to the U.S. labor market.

- Migrants today are staying longer in each trip to the U.S. to amortize the costs/physical risk of illegal entry over a longer period.

- The longer they stay, the more likely they will remain indefinitely, try to bring wives and children to live in U.S., and have children born in U.S.

- Result is a much more diverse, more stable Mexican immigrant population, compared with pre-1993 era.

- Higher % of **"mixed legal status"** families, in which at least one parent is undocumented and children are U.S.-born citizens.

Probability of returning to Mexico within 12 months from making 1st undocumented trip (data from MMP migration histories)
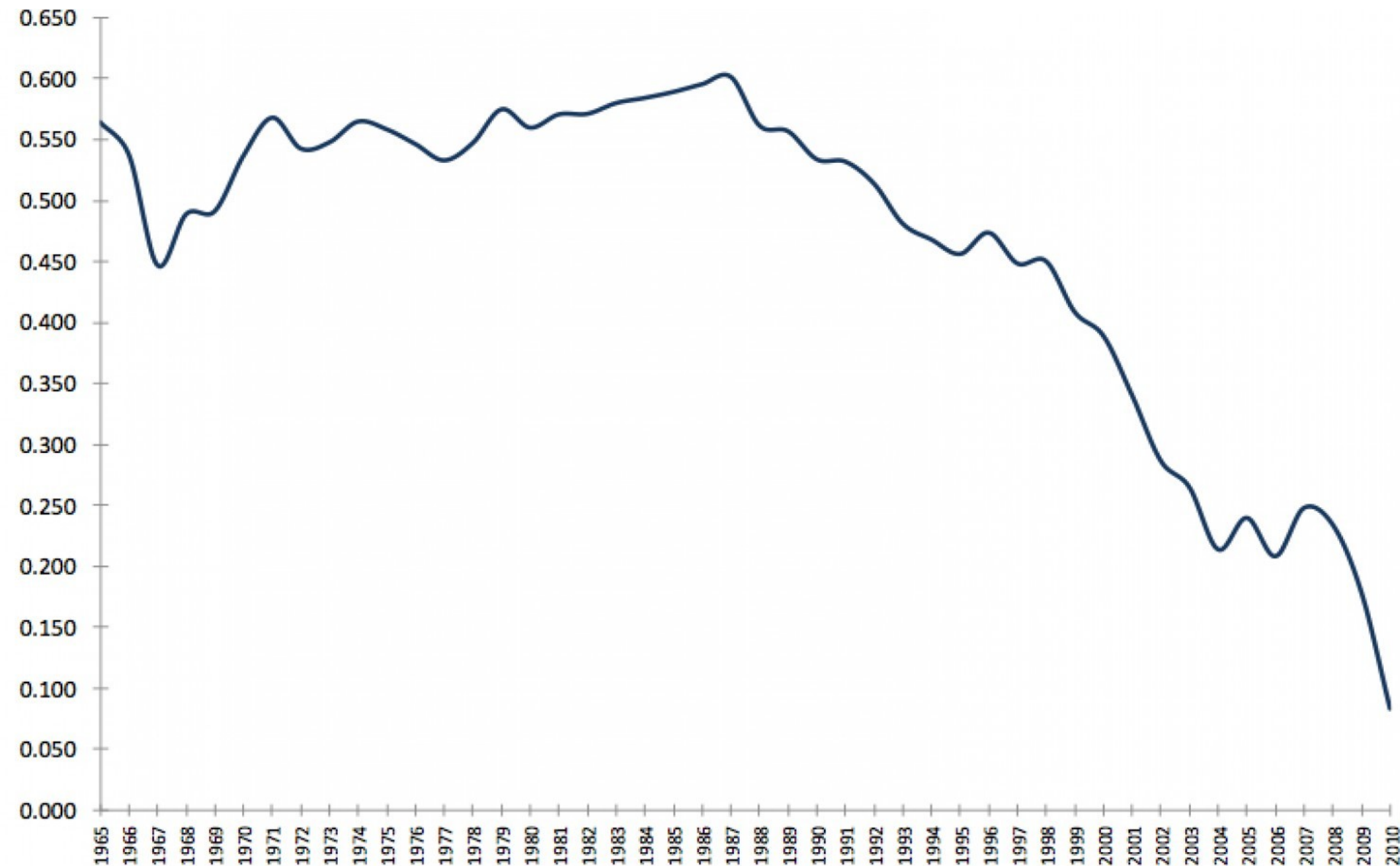
National-level data (estimates by Pew Research Center) show sharp increase in "long-stayers," beginning in 2004.

2/3 have been here for at least 10 years; median stay = **13.6 yr.**

Among *Mexicans,* **78%** had lived in U.S. for **10+ yr.**

DACA recipients: median stay = 18.8 yrs.

Larger share of unauthorized immigrants are long-term residents

% of adult unauthorized immigrants, by duration of U.S. residence

10 years or more
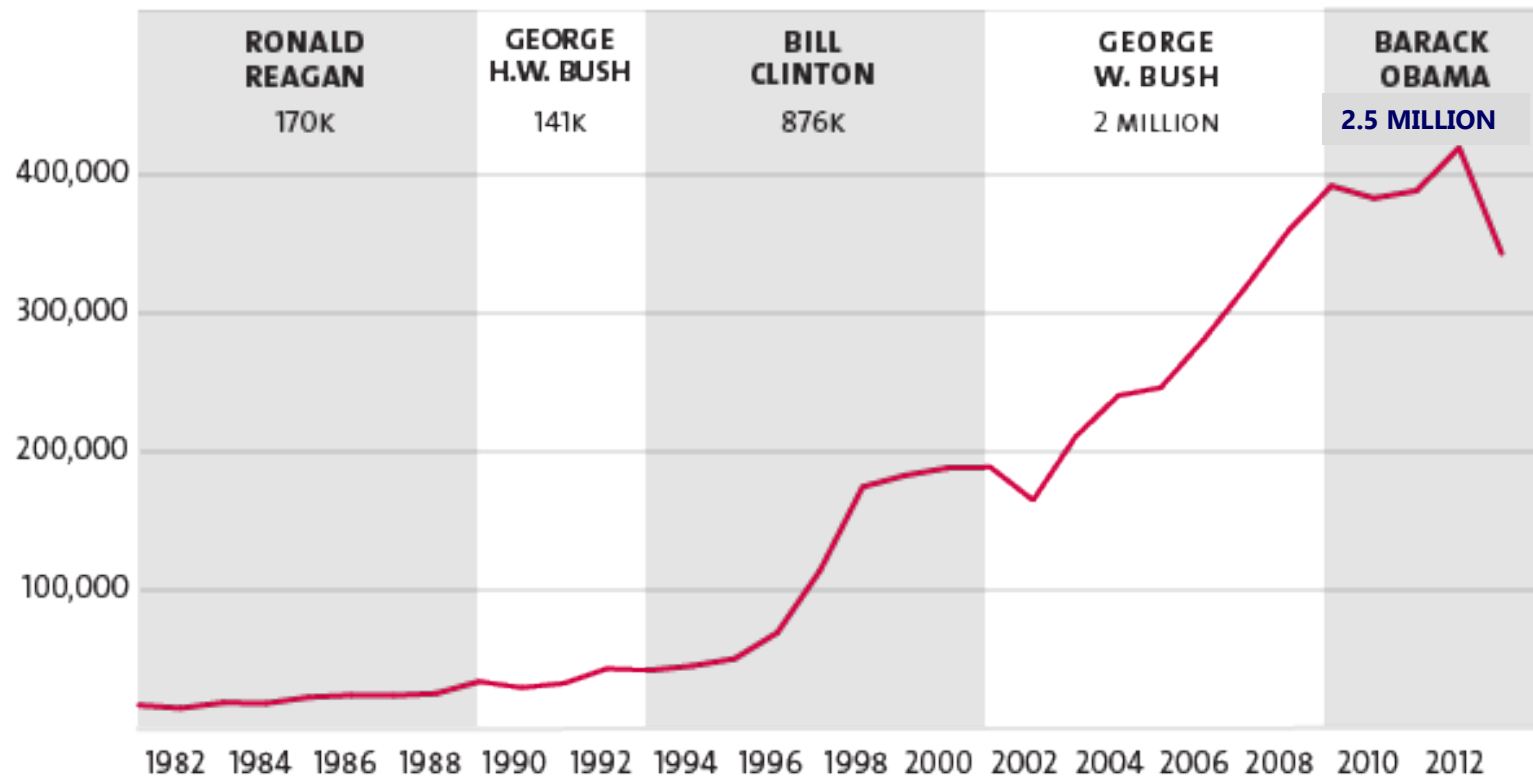
Less than 5 years
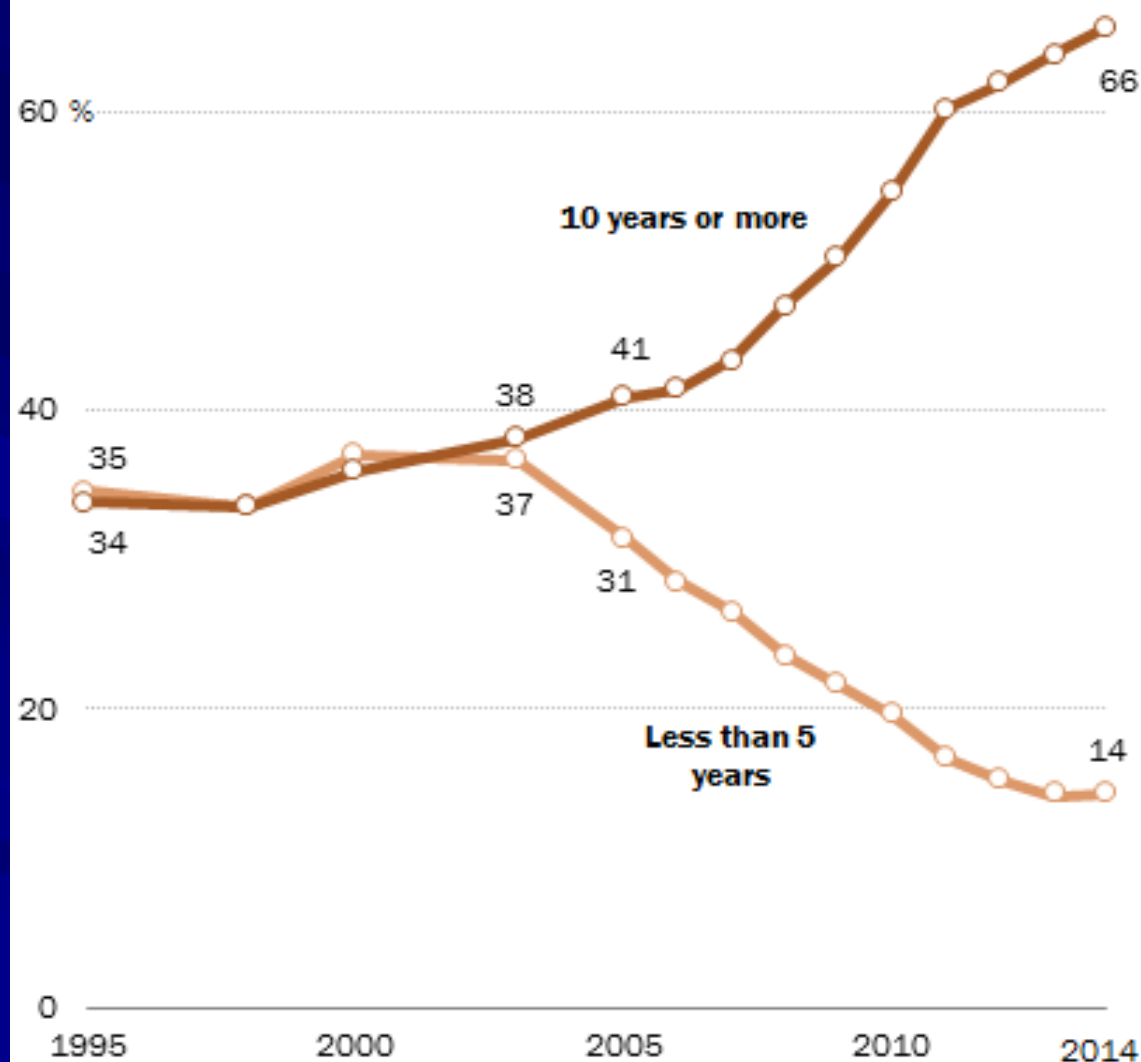
Chapter 3:
The Era of Mass Deportation

Deportations by presidential administration

Approximate number of deportations by fiscal year, 1981-2013*

RONALD REAGAN	GEORGE H.W. BUSH	BILL CLINTON	GEORGE W. BUSH	BARACK OBAMA
170K	141K	876K	2 MILLION	2.5 MILLION

*Includes official removals only; 2013 numbers through September 7, 2013
Source: Department of Homeland Security

Obama's Deportation Program

- Total of 2.5 million deportations, FY 2008-16.

- Deportations reached 400,000 per year; averaged 313,000/yr.

- Especially in Obama's last two years, enforcement was targeted: priorities were those convicted of serious crimes (aggravated felonies), national security risks, gang members.

- Rationale: building enforcement credibility in Congress as condition for comprehensive immigration reform.

Trump's mass deportation plan

- Increase number of ICE deportation agents from 20,000 to 30,000.

- Drop targeted deportation strategy: Every undocumented person now a priority for deportation. No criminal conviction needed. Any criminal offense (incl. traffic violations, jaywalking) = grounds for deportation. Prosecutorial discretion in deciding whom to deport is rescinded. More "at-large" arrests in immigrant communities. Go after after visa-overstayers (= 40% of undocs) more aggressively.

- Finding and detaining millions requires extensive use of local police as force-multipliers, e.g., to check immigration status in traffic stops. Coerce local police participation in immigration enforcement by denying federal funds to cities and states with sanctuary laws (e.g., CA, Oregon).

- Requires dramatic expansion of federal immigrant detention facilities, from 34,000 beds per night to at least 300,000. (ICE seeking space in county + local jails.)

- Since deportations must be approved by immigration court judges, need huge expansion of courts, *plus* create "off-ramps" from immigration court system, allowing more "expedited removals" without due process.

Results so far:

- Extremely aggressive + less-targeted enforcement increased immigration arrests (nationally) by **38%** in first half of 2017. Now 400 arrests per day.

- % of those arrested who had *no* criminal record nearly doubled. Many *with* criminal records had been convicted of illegal re-entry into U.S. – an immigration offense – or minor drug possession.
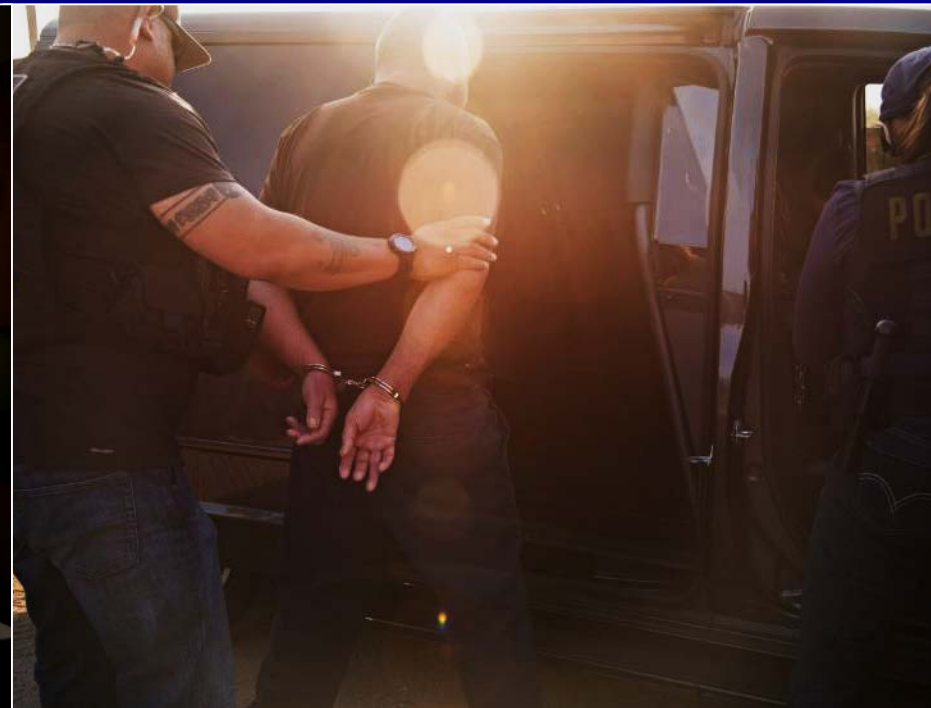
Fidel Delgado, undocumented dairy worker, is dragged out of his house in Riverside, Calif., in July 2017.

An alternative? -- Mass self-deportation!

"The jobs are going to dry up, the welfare benefits are going to dry up, and a lot of people who may not be criminal aliens may decide, hey, it's getting hard to disobey federal law, and may leave on their own."
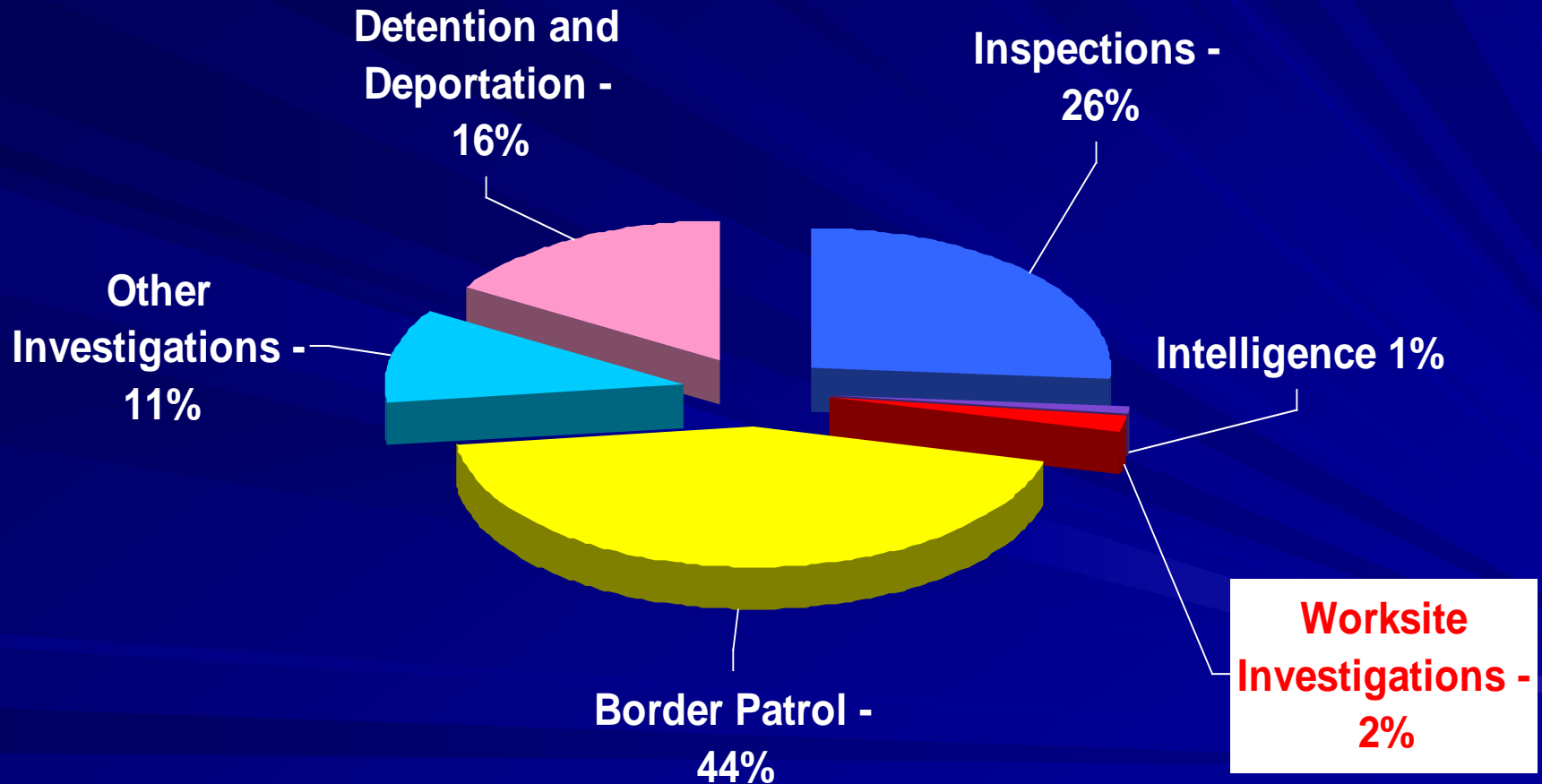
– *Kris Kobach, Kansas Secretary of State, key Trump immigration adviser, statement to Fox News, November 2016)*

A faulty historical analogy

- Only one historical precedent for mass self-deportation: 1929-1935 "Great Repatriation."

- Most returnees left voluntarily, due to lack of work – not forced out by U.S. authorities.

- Short of another depression, unrealistic to expect mass self-deportation.

- Federal government would have to make undocs truly *unemployable*, in all businesses and places, requiring systematic, aggressive enforcement against employers. *How likely?*

Federal immigration enforcement effort
(work years in fiscal year 2012)

Detention and Deportation - 16%

Inspections - 26%

Other Investigations - 11%

Intelligence 1%

Border Patrol - 44%

Worksite Investigations - 2%

No real effort to purge U.S. labor force of undocumented immigrants!

- Individual taxpayer's probability of being audited by IRS, in 2014: **0.84%**

- Employer's probability of being investigated for immigration law violation (2014): **0.03%**

Why such a weak workplace enforcement effort?

1. <u>Huge (and deliberate) loophole in immigration law:</u>
   1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act makes it illegal to hire undocumented immigrants, but allows employers to escape penalties if they just examine documents presented by job applicants and certify that "on their face" they appear to be valid. (Provides an affirmative defense against prosecution. This loophole makes the law virtually unenforceable.)

2. General <u>public + Congressional resistance</u> to cracking down on employers (pillars of local economy, campaign contributors, etc.)

3. DHS has had "<u>other enforcement priorities</u>": tracking down and deporting immigrants who have committed serious crimes or pose national security risks.

E-Verify: *Magic bullet for making undocumented immigrants unemployable?*

- Electronic employment eligibility verification system, established by federal government in 1996.

- On-line system compares information provided by job applicants (name, date of birth, Social Security number) with info in federal databases.

- Employer participation is currently <u>voluntary</u>, except in 7 southern states, where mandated by state law.

- About 670,000 employers now participate in E-Verify. (= **10%** of U.S. employers use it)

Fact check

Fake fact:

- We can eliminate the "jobs magnet" for undocumented migrants by making *E-Verify* system mandatory for all employers.

Real fact:

- E-Verify would not prevent undocumented immigrants who present borrowed (but valid) docs from getting jobs. Even if required to use program, most employers wouldn't use it to deny jobs to the undocumented, *absent* aggressive worksite enforcement.

Many employers of unauthorized workers would not change their hiring practices

Migrant presented false documents to get current job: **46%**

(remainder were not asked for any documents).

In current U.S. workplace:

Employer knew *for sure* that worker <u>was</u> authorized to work in U.S.: **30.7%**

Employer *probably* knew that worker <u>was</u> authorized: **8.8%**

Employer *probably* knew that worker <u>was not</u> authorized: **11.0%**

Employer knew *for sure* that worker <u>was not</u> authorized: **49.6%**

60.6%

How could we test the mass self-deportation hypothesis?

Predictors of propensity to self-deport

- How long has undocumented immigrant lived in U.S.?

- When arrived, intended to stay indefinitely or temporarily?

- What keeps them in U.S.? – Relatives here, want to finish education (immigrant or children), holding job that pays more than in Mexico, own a house or business, no family or economic base in Mexico? Trying to get a green card or become U.S. citizen.

- Under what circumstances might they self-deport?
  -- More aggressive immigration enforcement (contacts with immigration agents/police since coming to U.S.?)
  -- Losing job (economic downturn in U.S.)
  -- Stronger economic growth in Mexico.
  -- Failure to legalize status in U.S..

For further information:

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