

# C4FE ECONOMIC INSIGHTS

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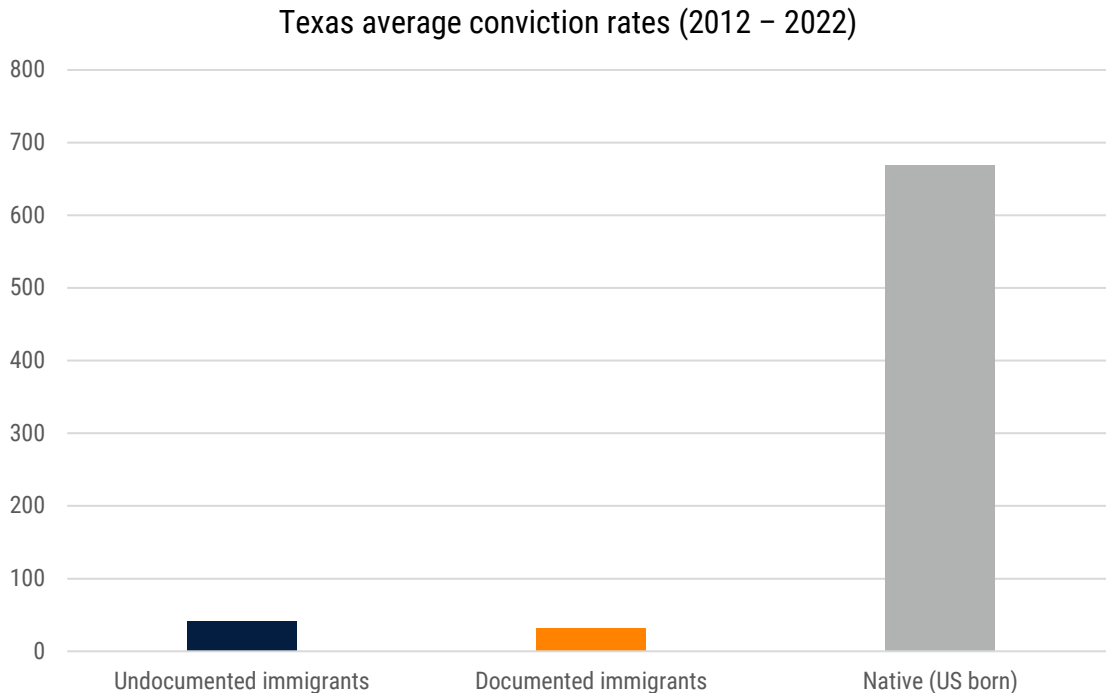
## The Reality Beyond Rhetoric: Revealing Immigration and Crime

The increase in migrant arrivals at the U.S.-Mexico border has fueled anti-immigrant sentiment, notably among some U.S. politicians. They have harnessed escalating frustrations linked to crimes reportedly committed by undocumented migrants, such as the [murder of a college student in Georgia](#) and the recent [border breach in El Paso, Texas](#). However, research contradicts this narrative, indicating that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than their U.S.-born counterparts. Moreover, studies find no evidence of a crime surge attributable to migrants in the United States.

Most of the data on crime and immigration in the U.S. comes from the [Texas Department of Public Safety](#). The Texas DPS has one of the most robust documentations of the immigration statuses of people in the country, most likely due to the state having the second-largest population of undocumented immigrants. Researchers, upon analyzing crime data from the Texas Department of Public Safety, are finding a discrepancy between the actual statistics and the allegations of widespread criminal activity by undocumented migrants made by numerous U.S. politicians.

[Alex Nowrasteh \(Cato Institute\)](#), utilizing Texas DPS data, observes that between 2012 and 2022, the homicide conviction rate for undocumented immigrants was 2.4 per 100,000 in 2015, below the 2.8 rate for U.S.-born citizens. Nowrasteh's findings include three critical insights: Undocumented immigrants in Texas have lower homicide conviction rates than native-born

Americans; lawful immigrants have even lower rates than both groups; and these figures suggest that undocumented immigrants have generally lower criminal conviction rates.



Source: [Alex Nowrasteh](#).

Similarly, [Michael Light \(University of Wisconsin\)](#) examined crime data covering various offenses from 2012 to 2018. He discovered that U.S.-born citizens are significantly more likely to be arrested for crimes such as robbery, burglary, and drug offenses. In fact, the felony drug arrest rate for U.S.-born citizens rose by nearly 30%, while rates for undocumented immigrants appear to be falling. These findings challenge the notion that undocumented immigrants represent a distinct criminal threat, suggesting instead that they pose substantially fewer criminal risks than U.S.-born citizens.

The findings of researchers on the crime rates of illegal immigrants should not be surprising. The cost of an undocumented immigrant committing a crime is far too high, as they risk being deported back to the countries they immigrated from. The cost of committing a crime for an illegal immigrant is higher than the cost of committing the same crime for a native American. This fear of deportation acts as a significant deterrent, leading many undocumented individuals to avoid criminal activities that could jeopardize their chances of obtaining legal status in the United States. Moreover, immigrants often leave their home countries in pursuit of better educational and

economic opportunities in the U.S. They are driven to improve their socioeconomic status, making them less likely to engage in criminal behavior that could hinder their progress toward achieving legal status and assimilation into American society. Additionally, immigrant communities often have strong family and community ties, which provide social support and discourage criminality. These factors collectively contribute to the observed lower crime rates among undocumented immigrants who want to remain under the radar compared to native-born citizens.

Certainly, crimes are committed by individuals from all backgrounds, including undocumented immigrants and U.S.-born citizens. However, criminal behavior should not be the litmus test for immigration policy. Policymakers would better serve society by consulting empirical data rather than yielding to emotive anti-immigrant rhetoric.

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## The Center for Free Enterprise on the Road



The Center for Free Enterprise is hitting the road to showcase its policy-impact work, with Director Nicolas Cachanosky leading the charge. Recently, Dr. Cachanosky delivered the Friedrich A. Hayek Memorial Lecture at the Mises Institute, explaining the mechanics and implications of dollarizing the Argentine economy in the future. Following this engaging presentation, Dr. Cachanosky also delivered a plenary talk at the Association for Private Enterprise Education.

Impactful policy analysis underscores the Center's commitment to advancing knowledge and fostering meaningful dialogues on issues central to free enterprise and economic prosperity.

Stay tuned for more updates and initiatives as we work towards a better understanding of the dynamics of economic freedom and its transformative potential.

