

## Research



# The Personnel and Infrastructure Needed to Remove All Undocumented Immigrants in Two Years

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We build on previous American Action Forum (AAF) research that found it would take at least 20 years and cost to federal government \$400 billion to \$600 billion to remove all undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States and to prevent all future unlawful entry. In this paper, we examine the personnel and infrastructure implications of removing all 11.3 million undocumented immigrants in a two-year time frame. In order to remove all undocumented immigrants, each immigrant would have to be apprehended, detained, legally processed, and transported to his or her country of origin. In order to remove all undocumented immigrants in only two years, the U.S. government would have to monumentally expand each of those stages of the removal process. In particular, based on FY 2013 levels it would require:

- **Federal immigration apprehension personnel to increase from 4,844 positions to 90,582 positions;**
- **The number of immigration detention beds to increase from 34,000 to 348,831;**
- **The number of immigration courts to increase from 58 to 1,316;**
- **The number of federal attorneys legally processing undocumented immigrants to increase from 1,430 to 32,445; and**
- **A minimum of 17,296 chartered flights and 30,701 chartered bus trips each year.**

More alarming would be the economic costs of this policy. In particular, in just two years it would shrink the labor force by 10.3 million workers and reduce real GDP by \$1 trillion.

# REMOVING ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN TWO YEARS WILL COST TAXPAYERS UP TO \$300 BILLION

## IT ALSO INCREASES



Federal Immigration  
Apprehension Personnel by

**85,738**

Immigration  
Detention Beds by

**314,831**



Federal Attorneys Processing  
Undocumented Immigrants by

**31,015**

Immigration Courts by

**1,258**

## AND REQUIRES ( PER YEAR )



**17,296**

Chartered Flights



**30,701**

Chartered Bus Trips

AMERICAN ACTION  
FORUM

## INTRODUCTION

Today, one of the largest issues on the campaign trail is unauthorized immigration. Specifically, what should policymakers do about the estimated 11.3 million undocumented immigrants living inside the United States? Some presidential candidates like Donald Trump and Senator Ted Cruz propose that the government fully enforce current law and remove all these immigrants from the country. Last year, AAF analyzed this proposal and found it would take at least 20 years to accomplish and cost the federal government [\\$400 billion to \\$600 billion](#). Meanwhile, Donald Trump plans to remove all undocumented immigrants from the United States in two years.<sup>[1]</sup>

Our 20-year time frame was simply based on the current Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) removal capacity of 400,000 per year. So if the federal government were to remove all undocumented immigrants in only two years, it would require a massive expansion in the federal government's immigration enforcement personnel and infrastructure. In this paper, we detail current enforcement operations and estimate exactly how large each aspect of the enforcement process would have to be in order to remove all 11.3 million undocumented immigrants in just two years. We find that to accomplish this the federal government would need among other things, 90,582 people working in apprehensions, 30,521 criminal investigators, 53,381 people working in custody operations, 348,831 beds and 2,565 detention facilities, 32,445 federal attorneys to legally process the undocumented immigrants, and 17,296 chartered flights per year to transport the undocumented immigrants to their country of origin.

## AAF'S PREVIOUS IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT RESEARCH

Last year, AAF estimated the budgetary and economic costs of fully enforcing current law toward undocumented immigrants.<sup>[2]</sup> We found that the federal government would have to spend \$400 billion to \$600 billion to deport all undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States and to prevent all future unlawful entry. Depending on how the government conducts its apprehensions, it would need to spend \$100 billion to \$300 billion arresting and removing all undocumented immigrants residing in the country, a process we estimate would take 20 years based on ICE's current removal capacity. In addition, to prevent any new undocumented immigrants going forward, the government at a minimum would have to maintain current immigration enforcement levels. This results in an additional \$315 billion in continuing enforcement costs over that time period.

Perhaps even more important are the economic costs associated with enforcing current law toward all undocumented immigrants. Removing all undocumented immigrants would cause the labor force to shrink by 6.4 percent, which translates to a loss of 11 million workers. As a result, 20 years from now the economy would be nearly 6 percent or \$1.6 trillion smaller than it would be if the government did not remove all undocumented immigrants.

## ADDRESSING UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN 2 YEARS: THE SCALE OF THE TASK

It is important to point out that in our previous paper, we assumed that an announcement that the federal government would begin enforcing mass deportation would lead to 20 percent of undocumented immigrants leaving voluntarily. As a result, we conservatively assumed that the United States would only have to forcibly remove the roughly 9 million undocumented immigrants remaining in the country.

For this paper, we again assume that 20 percent of undocumented immigrants would leave voluntarily. According to the Pew Research Center's most recent estimate, in 2014 there were 11.3 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States.<sup>[3]</sup> Assuming that 20 percent would leave voluntarily, the federal government would have to forcibly remove the remaining 9.04 million immigrants.

It would still, however, take a massive expansion in the United States' immigration enforcement activities to deport those remaining 9.04 million undocumented immigrants in just two years. Consider that ICE has stated that it only has the capacity to remove a maximum of 400,000 undocumented immigrants per year.<sup>[4]</sup> That means that if ICE were to operate at its current maximum capacity, it would take over 20 years to remove 9.04 million undocumented immigrants. To remove those 9.04 million immigrants in two years, ICE would have to remove 4.52 million immigrants per year. That is 11.3 times larger than ICE's current maximum capacity.

In the following, we detail FY 2013 personnel and infrastructure levels and estimate how much they would need to increase by in order to apprehend, detain, legally process, and transport 4.52 million undocumented immigrants per year. In each stage of the removal process, we look at how many immigrants were processed in FY 2013 (e.g. the number of immigrants apprehended, the number detained, etc.) and match those figures with their personnel and infrastructure levels that year. Then for each stage, we calculate the factor the operation levels would need to increase by in order to process 4.52 million immigrants per year. We then assume that the personnel and infrastructure levels needed to accomplish this would have to increase by the same factor.

It is very important to understand the difficulty to precisely gauge how infrastructure and personnel requirements would actually change because the entire process relies entirely on how officials decide to conduct these removals. For instance, to reduce the number of chartered flights, ICE may add more seats in chartered planes. However, this analysis is a good place to start as it helps illuminate the magnitude of the task.

## WHAT IT TAKES TO ENFORCE CURRENT LAW IN TWO YEARS

Contrary to what many believe, deporting 9.04 million undocumented immigrants is not as simple as purchasing them all a bus ticket. When enforcing the legal prosecution of undocumented immigrants, there are four stages in the process. Local, state, and federal officers must investigate, pursue, and apprehend the undocumented immigrants currently living in within the United States. After apprehending the suspected undocumented immigrants, officials must detain them in a prison. Then the undocumented immigrants must be processed legally in the immigration courts. Finally, after a judge determines the suspects to be in the country unlawfully, the federal government must transport them to their countries of origin. While most of this is run through ICE, each step requires immense coordination between several offices, analysts, agents, attorneys, and judges.

### Apprehensions

There are two primary types of apprehensions made by ICE, criminal arrests and administrative arrests. Criminal arrests occur when federal ICE agents investigate undocumented immigrants, pursue them, and arrest them on their own. Administrative arrests frequently occur when state and local law enforcement officers arrest immigrants for another (often traffic) violation. If the local or state officers suspect the arrested persons are

inside the United States unlawfully, they contact ICE. Then if ICE determines the suspects are indeed undocumented immigrants, they conduct an administrative arrest in which custody of the prisoners change from the local officers to federal ICE agents.<sup>[5], [6]</sup>

In FY 2013, administrative arrests accounted for the vast majority of total arrests ICE made. In FY 2013, ICE apprehended 241,694 undocumented immigrants. Of those arrests, 11,996 of them were made by criminal investigators and 31,222 of them were made by Fugitive Operations Teams (FOTs).<sup>[7], [8]</sup> Outside of those apprehensions, the vast majority of arrests were made administratively.

The number of federal personnel that would be required to apprehend 9.04 million undocumented immigrants in two years depends entirely on how ICE would perform those arrests. In the following, we assume that ICE would continue to rely on local law enforcement officials and maintain the same mix of criminal and administrative arrests. As a result, federal apprehension personnel would have to be 18.7 times larger than it was in 2013 to apprehend 4.52 million undocumented immigrants per year.

It is important to note, however, that this assumption results in us greatly understating the potential personnel requirements for this task. First, it does not take into account the increase in state and local law enforcement officers that would be needed to make the initial arrests. And second, it does not take into account the strong likelihood that ICE would have to rely more heavily on its own officers to increase apprehensions by such a large degree. For instance, if ICE were to solely use its own criminal investigators and FOTs to arrest all 4.52 million undocumented immigrants each year, federal apprehension personnel would have to be 104.6 times larger than it was in 2013.

## ICE Apprehension Offices

The ICE offices that play a primary role in apprehending undocumented immigrants are Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO). We estimate that overall in FY 2013 there were 4,844 ICE personnel working on apprehensions. The hours worked by these personnel added up 4,478 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers. But to apprehend 4.52 million immigrants per year, ICE would need a staff of 90,582 people or 83,748 FTEs.

Table 1: Total Apprehensions Personnel

| Personnel | FY 2013 | Deport in 2 Years |
|-----------|---------|-------------------|
| Positions | 4,844   | 90,582            |
| FTE       | 4,478   | 83,748            |

## HSI

HSI is the central investigative team in the Department of Homeland Security. It pursues “transnational criminal enterprises seeking to exploit America’s legitimate trade, travel and financial system.”<sup>[9]</sup> In doing so, it investigates a mix of unlawful drug and immigration matters. In FY 2013, HSI arrested 47,052 individuals.<sup>[10]</sup>

Among those arrests, 11,996 or 25.5 percent were undocumented immigrants.<sup>[11]</sup> These 11,996 apprehensions represented about 5 percent of all ICE apprehensions in 2013. When annually apprehending 4.52 million undocumented immigrants, if ICE were to depend on HSI to continue to make 5 percent of apprehensions, HSI would have to make 224,341 arrests per year. Table 2 details HSI's FY 2013 personnel levels and the levels that would be required to arrest 224,341 undocumented immigrants per year.

| Table 2: HSI Personnel        |           |       |                   |        |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------------------|--------|
| Office                        | FY 2013   |       | Deport in 2 Years |        |
|                               | Positions | FTE   | Positions         | FTE    |
| <b>Total</b>                  | 2,429     | 2,189 | 45,418            | 40,940 |
| <i>Criminal Investigators</i> | 1,632     | –     | 30,521            | –      |
| Domestic                      | 2,211     | 2,002 | 41,351            | 37,435 |
| International                 | 82        | 71    | 1,526             | 1,326  |
| Visa Security Program         | 20        | 16    | 382               | 291    |
| Intelligence                  | 116       | 101   | 2,160             | 1,888  |

Again, HSI's 11,996 undocumented immigrant apprehensions accounted for 25.5 percent of all its arrests. Assuming HSI devoted 25.5 percent of its personnel to pursuing undocumented immigrants, in FY 2013 it had a staff of 2,429 people arresting them or 2,189 FTEs.<sup>[12]</sup> Out of all the personnel, 1,632 were criminal investigators.<sup>[13]</sup> These personnel include 2,211 in domestic investigations, 82 in international investigations, 20 in the Visa Security Program, and 116 in Intelligence.<sup>[14]</sup>

To arrest 224,341 undocumented immigrants per year, however, HSI would need 45,418 employees or 40,940 FTEs. The personnel include 30,521 criminal investigators. Among the HSI departments, 41,351 would be in domestic, 1,526 would be in international, 382 would be in the Visa Security Program, and 2,160 would be in Intelligence.

## ERO

If HSI were to apprehend 224,341 undocumented immigrants per year, that would leave ERO with roughly 4.3 million apprehensions to make. Within ERO, the two entities primarily responsible for apprehending undocumented immigrants are the FOTs and the Criminal Alien Program (CAP). FOTs are made up of federal

agents who pursue and apprehend undocumented immigrants on their own.[15] Meanwhile, CAP employs advanced criminal screening capabilities in order to detect undocumented immigrants arrested by state and local police officers and to conduct administrative apprehensions.[16] Table 3 details the FOT and CAP personnel in FY 2013 and what would be required to apprehend 4.3 million undocumented immigrants in two years.

| Table 3: ERO Apprehension Personnel |           |       |                   |        |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------------------|--------|
| Office                              | FY 2013   |       | Deport in 2 Years |        |
|                                     | Positions | FTE   | Positions         | FTE    |
| <b>Total</b>                        | 2,415     | 2,289 | 45,164            | 42,807 |
| Fugitive Operations                 | 788       | 739   | 14,737            | 13,820 |
| <i>Fugitive Operations Teams</i>    | 129       | –     | 2,412             | –      |
| Criminal Alien Program              | 1,627     | 1,550 | 30,427            | 28,987 |
| <i>CAP Officers</i>                 | 1,200     | –     | 22,442            | –      |

Overall in FY 2013, ERO had 2,415 people or 2,289 FTEs working on apprehending undocumented immigrants. There were 129 FOTs that employed 788 people.[17] This means the average FOT consisted of about 6 people. Meanwhile, there were 1,627 positions in CAP, of whom 1,200 were CAP officers.[18]

But to apprehend 4.3 million undocumented immigrants per year, ERO would require 45,164 personnel or 42,807 FTEs working to make apprehensions. Among those personnel, 14,737 would be in FOTs. If ERO were to keep the average personnel size of its FOTs the same, then the number of FOTs would have to grow from 129 to 2,412. Conversely, if ERO were to keep the number of FOTs constant at 129, then the personnel size of each would have to grow from 6 to 114 people.

Meanwhile, CAP personnel would have to increase to 30,427 workers. Of those personnel, 22,442 would be CAP officers.

## Custody Operations

ICE custody operations and detention facilities are administered by ERO personnel. According to ICE, ERO detained a total of 440,557 undocumented immigrants in FY 2013.<sup>[19]</sup> If ICE were to remove 4.52 million undocumented immigrants per year, then it would have to somehow detain all of those immigrants after they were apprehended. This means that ERO’s detention personnel and facilities would have to become 10.3 times larger than they were in FY 2013.

First, let’s start with the bed spaces and detention facilities, detailed in Table 4.

| <b>Table 4: Bed Spaces and Detention Facilities</b>                              |         |
|--|---------|
| <b>FY 2013</b>   |         |
| Bed Spaces   | 34,000  |
| Detention Facilities   | 250     |
| Bed Spaces per Detention Facility  | 136     |
| <b>Deport in 2 Years</b>   |         |
| Bed Spaces   | 348,831 |
| Detention facilities if average bed spaces per facility remained constant at 136 | 2,565   |
| Average bed spaces per facility if number of facilities remained constant at 250 | 1,395   |

In FY 2013, ERO had 34,000 beds<sup>[20]</sup> and used 250 detention facilities.<sup>[21]</sup> This means it used an average of 136 beds in each detention facility. Meanwhile, the average detention period for an undocumented immigrant was 28.7 days.<sup>[22]</sup>

Assuming that the average stay would remain constant at 28.7 days, in order to detain 4.52 million undocumented immigrants, ERO would need to increase the number of bed spaces from 34,000 to 348,831. To accommodate that extra bed space, ERO would either need to use more detention facilities, use more bed space within each detention facility it already uses, or a mixture of the two. For instance, if ERO kept its average bed spaces per detention facility constant at 136, then it would have to increase the detention facilities it uses from 250 to 2,565. Conversely, if ERO were to continue only using 250 detention facilities, then the average number of bed spaces it would need to use within each facility would need to increase from 136 to 1,395.

On the other hand, what if ICE wanted to detain all 4.52 million undocumented immigrants without expanding its detention space? In order to accomplish this, the average stay for each immigrant would have to shrink astronomically. Specifically, the average stay would have to decrease from 28.7 days to less than 3 days. That means that ICE would only have 3 days to legally convict each undocumented immigrant and arrange



transportation to his or her country of origin.

Now let's look at the personnel, detailed in Table 5.

| Table 5: Detention Personnel |         |                   |
|------------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Personnel                    | FY 2013 | Deport in 2 Years |
| Positions                    | 5,203   | 53,381            |
| FTE                          | 5,112   | 52,448            |
| Medical Staff                | 847     | 8,690             |
| Detention Service Managers   | 40      | 410               |

In FY 2013, ERO had 5,203 personnel or 5,112 FTEs working in custody operations. The personnel are not just guards at the detention centers. Rather, ERO is also responsible for the health and safety of these prisoners. This means they need to provide life essentials, such as food and health care. For instance, among the 5,203 personnel, 847 are medical staff. Meanwhile, 40 are Detention Service Managers.[\[23\]](#)

In order to detain 4.52 million undocumented immigrants per year, detention personnel would have to grow from 5,203 to 53,381. This includes 8,690 medical staff and 410 Detention Service Managers.

## Legal Processing

Once ICE apprehends and detains undocumented immigrants, they must be legally prosecuted. There are two offices responsible for legally processing undocumented immigrants. ICE's Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA) represents the U.S. government in prosecuting undocumented immigrants.[\[24\]](#) Meanwhile all removal cases are adjudicated in the Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). In FY 2013, EOIR received 199,215 new cases.[\[25\]](#) In order to remove 9.04 million immigrants in two years, EOIR would need to receive 4.52 million new cases per year. That would make the immigration courts caseload and its operations 22.7 times larger than it was in 2013 and require operations in both OPLA and EOIR to be 22.7 times their levels in 2013.

This has major implications for the size of the immigration legal system. First let's look at the number of OPLA Offices of Chief Counsel, EOIR immigration courts, and EOIR Immigration Judge Teams required for the removal proceedings, which are illustrated in Table 6.

**Table 6: Immigration Legal Processing Entities**

| <b>Entity</b> | <b>FY 2013</b> | <b>Deport in 2 Years</b> |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|
|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|

**Table 6: Immigration Legal Processing Entities**

|                               |     |       |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------|
| OPLA Offices of Chief Council | 26  | 590   |
| EOIR Immigration Courts       | 58  | 1,316 |
| EOIR Immigration Judge Teams  | 254 | 5,763 |

In FY 2013, OPLA had 26 Offices of Chief Counsel.[26] But, in order to remove all undocumented immigrants in two years, OPLA would need to have 590 of these offices. Meanwhile, EOIR in FY 2013 had 58 Immigration Courts[27] and 254 Immigration Judge Teams.[28] In order to remove 4.52 million undocumented immigrants per year, EOIR would need 1,316 immigration courts and 5,763 Immigration Judge Teams.

Table 7 illustrates the FY 2013 personnel levels in both OPLA and EOIR and the levels needed to legally process 4.52 million undocumented immigrants per year.

**Table 7: Legal Processing Personnel**

| Personnel  | FY 2013 | Deport in 2 Years |
|--|---------|-------------------|
| <b>Total</b>   |         |                   |
| Positions  | 2,854   | 64,755            |
| FTE  | 2,596   | 58,901            |
| Attorneys  | 1,430   | 32,445            |
| <b>Office of Principal Legal Advisor (ICE)</b>           |         |                   |
| Positions  | 1,272   | 28,860            |
| FTE  | 1,241   | 28,157            |
| Attorneys  | 900     | 20,420            |
| <b>Executive Office for Immigration Review (Justice)</b> |         |                   |

Table 7: Legal Processing Personnel

|           |       |        |
|-----------|-------|--------|
| Positions | 1,582 | 35,894 |
| FTE       | 1,355 | 30,744 |
| Attorneys | 530   | 12,025 |

Between OPLA and EOIR, in FY 2013, there were 2,854 personnel involved in legally processing undocumented immigrants, including 1,430 attorneys. To remove 4.52 million undocumented immigrants per year, combined the two offices would need 64,755 employees. Among those employees, 32,445 would have to be attorneys.

In FY 2013, OPLA had a total of 1,272 positions, of whom 900 were attorneys.<sup>[29]</sup> To remove all undocumented immigrants in two years, it would need 28,860 positions, including 20,420 attorneys.

EOIR in FY 2013 had a total of 1,582 positions, of whom 530 were attorneys.<sup>[30]</sup> To remove 4.52 million immigrants per year, it would need 35,894 positions, including 12,025 attorneys.

## Transportation

After undocumented immigrants have been apprehended, detained, and legally processed, ICE must transport them back to their countries of origin. The burden of transporting undocumented immigrants out of the United States is quite high because contrary to popular perception, not all undocumented immigrants are originally from Mexico. Pew reports that in 2012, 52.4 percent were from Mexico and the rest were from all over the world. 15.2 percent were from Central America, 12.4 percent were from Asia, 6.3 percent were from South America, and the remaining were from Europe, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Africa, and others.<sup>[31]</sup>

As a result, officials cannot simply purchase bus tickets for all the undocumented immigrants and drop them off in Mexico on the other side of the border. Rather it takes a mix of chartered planes, chartered buses, and escorted and unescorted commercial removals in planes and buses.

The U.S. government, on the other hand, would not be required to transport all 9.04 million undocumented immigrants. In some cases, a judge determines that an immigrant who is being forced to leave is eligible for a voluntary departure order.<sup>[32]</sup> These types of orders allow immigrants who have been found guilty of being inside the United States unlawfully to leave the country on their own, giving them more time and flexibility to leave for their departure.

In FY 2013, in addition to ICE’s 330,651 removals, 35,292 undocumented immigrants were allowed to return on their own.<sup>[33]</sup> So 9.6 percent of ICE’s 365,943 forced departures in FY 2013 were able to leave the country voluntarily. Assuming that 9.6 percent of the 9.04 million undocumented immigrants would be able to return voluntarily, the total number ICE would have to transport would be 8.17 million or 4.08 million per year.<sup>[34]</sup> However, this still means that ICE would have to annually transport 12.4 times more undocumented immigrants than they did in FY 2013.

To our knowledge, ICE does not provide very detailed information about the number of transportation operations and how transportations are distributed between flights and buses. However, ICE Air Operations (IAO), which coordinates removals by air transportation, does provide enough data for us to piece together some important information. In FY 2013, IAO transported 189,041 or 57.2 percent of the 330,651 removals on chartered planes. In addition, IAO coordinated 2,077 escorted commercial removals and 5,311 unescorted removals by aircraft.<sup>[35]</sup> Those removals were equivalent to 0.6 percent and 1.6 percent of all removals respectively. We could not find information that directly indicates the number of removals conducted with ground transportation, but we assume that the remaining 134,222 removals were transported on buses. That's equivalent to 40.6 percent of the removals that year.

**Table 8: FY 2013 ICE Transportation Distribution**

| Transportation Category           | Removals | Percent of Total |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Total                             | 330,651  | 100.0%           |
| Chartered Aircraft                | 189,041  | 57.2%            |
| Escorted on Commercial Aircraft   | 2,077    | 0.6%             |
| Unescorted on Commercial Aircraft | 5,311    | 1.6%             |
| Bus                               | 134,222  | 40.6%            |

Table 9 indicates the minimum number of chartered planes and buses that would be required to transport 4.08 million undocumented immigrants out of the United States each year.

**Table 9: Chartered Plane Flights and Bus Trips Required**

| Transport               | FY 2013 | Deport in 2 Years |
|-------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Chartered Plane Flights | 1,400   | 17,296            |
| Flights per Day         | 4       | 47                |
| Bus Trips               | 2,486   | 30,701            |
| Bus Trips per Day       | 7       | 84                |

According to IAO, each of its chartered planes can hold up to 135 undocumented immigrants.[36] Using this information, we know that if every seat was always filled on each chartered plane, at a minimum IAO had to coordinate 1,400 chartered flights in FY 2013. If the federal government were to transport 4.08 million undocumented immigrants per year and 57.2 percent of removals were completed with a chartered aircraft, IAO would at a minimum need to coordinate 17,296 chartered flights per year. That’s an average of 47 chartered flights per day.

In addition, large chartered buses tend to have 54 seats.[37] If ICE conducts all of its ground transportation with chartered buses, in FY 2013 ICE at a minimum had to charter 2,486 bus trips. If the federal government were to transport 4.08 million undocumented immigrants per year and 40.6 percent of transportations were conducted via chartered bus, ICE would need to charter at least 30,701 bus trips per year or 84 bus trips per day.

Table 10 provides information about the federal personnel involved in coordinating transportation in immigrant removals.

| Table 10: Federal Transportation Coordinators |         |                   |
|---|---------|-------------------|
| Personnel                                     | FY 2013 | Deport in 2 Years |
| Positions                                     | 59      | 729               |
| FTE   | 47      | 581               |

In FY 2013, ERO had 59 positions or 47 FTEs working on coordinating undocumented immigrant transportation.[38] In order to annually transport 4.08 million undocumented immigrants to their country of origin, ERO would need 729 employees working in transportation or 581 FTEs.

## ECONOMIC COSTS

Undocumented immigrants comprise a significant portion of the U.S. labor force and deporting all of these individuals will have negative effects on the economy as a whole. In our previous paper, we cited findings from the Bipartisan Policy Center to demonstrate that over the 20 years it would take to remove all undocumented immigrants, there would be substantial economic consequences.[39] Specifically, by the end of the 20-year period the U.S. labor force and, as a result, the economy would respectively be 6.4 percent smaller and 5.7 percent smaller than they would be if the government did not remove all undocumented immigrants. This means that after the 20-year period, the labor force would be 11 million workers smaller and the real GDP would be about \$1.6 trillion lower than the Congressional Budget Office’s (CBO’s) baseline projections.

Removing all undocumented immigrants in two years instead of 20 years would have similar effects on the economy. Except, instead of gradually reducing the labor force and the economy over twenty years, the effects would be far more acute and occur over two years. The result is a sudden and deep recession similar to what the United States recently experienced during the Great Recession. Let’s say that full immigration enforcement starts at the beginning of 2017 and the U.S. government successfully removes all undocumented immigrants by the end of 2018. At the end of 2018, the labor force would be 6.4 percent smaller than if the government had not

removed those immigrants. Relative to CBO baseline projections,[40] the labor force would decrease by 10.3 million workers. As a result, the labor force would fall to its lowest level since 2006. In addition, the labor force participation rate would fall from about 62.3 percent to 60.7 percent, the lowest level since the 1970s.

The steep decline in the labor force would cause the economy to decline sharply. At the end of 2018, the economy would be 5.7 percent smaller than it would be if the government did not remove all undocumented immigrants. For purposes of comparison, note that the decline in real GDP during the Great Recession was quite similar – 6.3 percent. This suggests that real GDP would be about \$1 trillion lower in 2018 than CBO’s baseline estimate, wiping out all economic growth that would have occurred during the previous three years.[41]

## CONCLUSION

Fully enforcing current law towards all 11.3 million undocumented immigrants in only two years is a monumental task that would require an unprecedented expansion in U.S. immigration enforcement personnel and infrastructure. Even when assuming 20 percent of undocumented immigrants go home voluntarily, federal immigration apprehension personnel would have to increase from over 4,800 to almost 90,600. In federal detention facilities, bed spaces would have to increase from 34,000 to over 348,800. The number attorneys required to legally process all of these undocumented immigrants would have to increase from 1,430 to over 32,400. Finally, the U.S. government would have to charter at a minimum of 17,300 flights and 30,700 bus trips per year to transport all undocumented immigrants to their country of origin. Not only would it strain federal government resources, but it would also greatly burden the economy. The labor force participation rate would fall to its lowest level since the 1970s and, as a result, at the end of the two years the U.S. economy would be \$1 trillion lower than it would be without fully enforcing current law.

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[1] See <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/donald-trump-it-would-take-up-to-2-years-to-deport-millions-of-undocumented/>