

**Institute on  
Immigrant Integration  
Research and Policy**

SPECIAL REPORT

# **The Consequences of Mass Deportation in Each of the Ten Regions of New York State**

The opinions expressed in this article are  
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March 2026

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# Report Overview

This white paper, *The Consequences of Mass Deportation in Each of the Ten Regions of New York State*, written by Scott Fein examines the federal administration's mass deportation policy, termed "Operation Aurora," and its potential impacts on New York State's economic regions. By analyzing the policy's implications on the economy, labor force, education, health services, housing, and social structure, the report highlights significant challenges and consequences.

## Key Issues Identified

### 1. Unprecedented Scale and Scope

- The policy targets 15 to 20 million foreign-born noncitizens for deportation over a decade, including undocumented immigrants, legal residents, asylum seekers, and others with temporary protections, far exceeding the initial focus on 800,000 with criminal records.
- This represents 4-6 percent of the US population, making it the largest deportation effort in global history.

### 2. Economic Disruption

- Noncitizens constitute 14 percent of New York State's workforce and 22 percent in New York City, filling critical roles in construction (28 percent), transportation (25 percent), and other essential sectors.
- Deportation could eliminate 5.2 percent of the national workforce, exacerbating labor shortages with 8.5 million job openings and only 6.5 million unemployed workers nationwide.
- New York's noncitizens contribute \$18.5 billion in state/local taxes, \$33.1 billion in federal taxes, and \$120.5 billion in spending power annually, supporting economic stability.

### 3. Fiscal Cost

- The estimated cost of mass deportation is \$315 billion, covering arrests, detention, legal processing, and removals.

### 4. Social and Familial Impact

- Over 20 million people in mixed-status households, including 5.5 million US-born children under 18, face disruption due to family separations.

- Deportation of parents may lead to financial instability, child welfare system involvement, and long-term psychological harm to children, including increased anxiety, depression, and trauma.

## **5. Population Decline and Demographic Challenges**

- New York's population is projected to decline by 2-3 million by 2050, with immigration currently offsetting this trend (40 percent of US population growth).
- Deportation could accelerate population decline, reducing congressional representation (from 45 seats in 1940 to 26 in 2020, with 2 more projected losses by 2030) and straining tax revenues as the aging population requires more services.

## **6. Labor Market Strain**

- New York's unemployment rate of 4.4 percent indicates full employment, with 375,000 job openings statewide.
- Mass deportation could leave over 1 million jobs unfilled, particularly in labor-intensive industries like agriculture, construction, and human services, where noncitizens are vital.

## **7. Educational and Economic Contributions**

- Noncitizens, including 135,000 international students, contribute \$6.3 billion to New York's economy and support 51,719 jobs.
- Deportation policies targeting students or visa holders could weaken the state's higher education system and economic vitality.

## **8. Policy Implementation Challenges**

- The policy's broad scope, including legal residents and those with temporary protections, creates logistical complexities, requiring detention camps, hundreds of thousands of enforcement officers, and community raids.
- Recent federal actions, such as rescinding EIN confidentiality and canceling Social Security numbers for temporary legal residents, have as their objective to forcing self-deportation by cutting access to banking and financial systems.

## **Conclusion**

The mass deportation policy poses significant risks to New York State's economy, social fabric, and demographic stability. The report underscores the impact of the policy's far-reaching consequences on implementation, noncitizens who help sustain the state's workforce, tax base, and population growth.

# The Consequences of Mass Deportation in Each of the Ten Regions of New York State

A norm among automobile manufacturers is that new vehicles must be exhaustively road-tested before they are ready for prime time. Regrettably, it is less often true for the development of public policy. This paper endeavors to road test the federal administration's new mass deportation policy of immigrants on the roads of New York State, or more precisely, in each of the state's economic regions.

The United States' approach to immigration has vacillated over the decades, driven by security, cultural, and economic considerations. We were welcoming and charitable and embraced immigrants in great numbers, but when the economy softened, or we found ourselves at war, they became "the undesirable other." During the first 100 years of its existence, America's shores were open to almost anyone. Populating the colonies and the continent was the priority. Indeed, Great Britain's effort to impede immigration to the colonies was specifically mentioned in our Declaration of Independence as a grievance against the king, by preventing "migrations" into America and obstructing "laws for the naturalization of foreigners."<sup>1</sup>

Immigration climbed rapidly through the late 1800s, but then Americans began to fret about the impact of immigrants on the economy, culture, and national security. Congress in response prohibited Asians from entering the United States and began to restrict the number of newcomers other than from Western and Northern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Sixty years later, the pendulum swung, and Congress largely removed discriminatory limitations on entry of Southern and Eastern Europeans, Asians, and Central and South Americans. Since then, over 72 million immigrants arrived in the United States. Today our nation is home to seventeen percent of the world's international migrants.<sup>3</sup>

Although more muted, anti-immigration sentiment continued to periodically surface over the next sixty years. Today, approximately 70 percent of the population believe immigration benefits the nation and favors providing immigrants whether, documented or undocumented, an opportunity to become United States citizens if they meet certain requirements. At the same time approximately 30 percent of the population supports deporting undocumented immigrants and restricting new entries.<sup>4</sup> Why then the periodic surge of anti-immigrant legislation if the majority is supportive of immigrants? Political commentators have suggested that those holding anti-immigrant sentiments though fewer in number have typically been better organized with a more consistent message. Neuroscientists might attribute the phenomena to "negative bias," our instinct to respond more adversely to those things we are told could hurt us, even if we also know they could benefit us.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the basis, it was not lost on politicians who embraced the anti-immigrant narrative perceiving it as politically sound, because

“those who feel negative about immigration really feel negative and those who feel positive, only mildly so, which means the minority wins in a shouting match.”<sup>6</sup>

Today, the desirability of immigration, particularly the presence of the undocumented and noncitizens, is playing an outsized role in public debate and national politics. Discourse on issues of public import including immigration is healthy. Democracy relies upon robust public discussion by an informed electorate. But to be productive, it should include an analysis of the implications of the proposed policies on our national welfare, including its economy, local education, health services, labor, housing markets, public goods and social structure.<sup>7</sup> That is the objective of this paper.

## **An Overview**

A mass immigrant deportation initiative, initially referred to by the federal government depending upon the region as “Operation Aurora,” the “Midway Blitz,” “Patriot 2.0,” or “Catch of the Day” is underway. There was some confusion at its inception concerning the intended scope. As a presidential candidate, the current incumbent said he intended to target undocumented immigrants having a criminal history and specified the number expected to be deported. The target number he referenced, however, was according to statisticians much greater than the number of undocumented immigrants with criminal histories in the nation.<sup>8, 9, 10</sup> Not only were there many fewer immigrants with a criminal record than anticipated, but the act of being present in the United States in violation of immigration laws is not, standing alone, a crime and gives rise only to civil charges. Only if a person is apprehended during illegal entry without permission does a crime occur or if previously removed and entered without permission.

The federal government faced with this dilemma decided that the scope of the catchment group subject to mass deportation had to be much, much larger to satisfy their prior campaign commitment. They ultimately decided to include not only the undocumented criminals but also millions of foreign-born noncitizens, many of whom possessed authorization to live or work legally in the United States. The expanded scope increased the number of those potentially subject to deportation from approximately 800,000 immigrants having criminal convictions, including driving violations to 15 to 20 million foreign-born noncitizens, many of whom would be stripped of their existing protection. The administration projects that deportation effort at a minimum will involve more than one million deportees per year for at least 10 years. The projected cost of the deportation initiative is projected at \$1 trillion excluding the economic impact of their absence.<sup>11</sup>

Immigrant deportation is not unknown in the United States. Over the past 70 years our nation has deported 50,000 to 300,000 immigrants annually, most with criminal records or court issued orders of deportation. The notable exception was the mass

deportation of Mexicans in 1954, comprised of both citizens and noncitizens.<sup>12</sup> The proposed deportation of approximately 15 to 20 million people during Operation Aurora would comprise 4 to 6 percent of our nation's population, the largest deportation effort in world history. The projected cost for detention and deportation of each immigrant will range according to the Department of Homeland Security between \$17,000 and \$20,000 per person, largely for the construction of detention camps, marshaling hundreds of thousands of enforcement officers, carrying out raids in communities across all 50 states and transporting the deportees.<sup>13</sup> In an effort to save money on the enforcement measures, the president has offered \$1,000 and travel assistance to migrants who agreed to self-deport.<sup>14</sup>

Academics and commentators believe mass deportation of the proposed scope would be a logistical nightmare and social tragedy. Consequences would reverberate well beyond deportees and impact the lives of over 20 million people living in mixed-status households, including 7.2 million children born in the United States, suddenly missing one or both noncitizen parents.<sup>15</sup> Deportation leading to family separation is likely to materially affect the welfare of children involved. If both parents are deported, or if the deported parent is the household's primary earner, children may face serious financial instability and, in some cases, risk placement in the child welfare system, including an emergency shelter or group home. Moreover, research shows that the detention or deportation of a parent causes long-term emotional and psychological harm to children, including increased rates of anxiety, depression, and trauma.<sup>16</sup> Economically, even if deportation were limited to undocumented immigrants rather than all noncitizens, it would eliminate approximately 5.2 percent of the nation's workforce and reduce our national workforce by 7 percent and Gross National Product between 4.2 and 6.8 percent. According to the United States Chamber of Commerce, currently there are 8.5 million job openings nationwide and only 6.5 million unemployed people to fill them.<sup>17</sup>

For many Americans, deportation may seem an abstract concern. There are many pressing issues that bear on our personal, family, and community welfare, including the daily flow of new government policies. The sheer number of new government initiatives can numb our capacity to understand the implications, and the mass deportation of "the others" may slip to the backburner of our consciousness. The question we asked is whether awareness of the issue might be aided if people could better grasp the implications of immigrant deportation on their own communities. At the outset, we considered providing information for each of the localities in New York State; however, given the 1,525 cities, towns, and villages, it proved unrealistic. Alternatively, we chose as a framework gathering the data for the 10 economic regions of our state. The approach would allow each of the smaller localities, should they choose to distill from the data and calculate the implications for their community.

The scope of the federal deportation initiative has not, to date, been fully articulated. Based upon the government's current conduct and public statements, detention and deportation will likely be imposed on a broad category encompassing many noncitizen residents including:

- i. Unauthorized immigrants who either came into the United States without being admitted through the legal admission process or were admitted as nonimmigrants and stayed past the date they were required to leave.
- ii. Unauthorized immigrants with a criminal history or judicial order of deportation.
- iii. Noncitizens including those who (1) fail to register with the federal government and, if over 18, fail to carry documentation of registration by the, president's April 25, 2025's executive order or, (2) if not obligated to register, fail to carry on their person a Permanent Residence Card, Employment Authorization document, or a Border Crossing Card. In both instances, such failure constitutes a federal misdemeanor, with a \$5,000 fine and imprisonment for up to 30 days.
- iv. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR), commonly known as "green card" recipients.
- v. Immigrants who have not yet applied for asylum or whose asylum applications are pending court review.
- vi. Immigrants admitted to the United States based upon humanitarian entry or Temporary Protective Status from specified nations.
- vii. The undocumented brought to this country as children and currently receiving protection under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy.
- viii. Immigrants who have, or are alleged to have, committed crimes while in the US, including whether this includes all violations and misdemeanors, and unauthorized border crossing.
- ix. Immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela among other nations who in 2023 were granted humanitarian admission to the United States.
- x. Long-term nonimmigrant visa holders, including international students and temporary workers.
- xi. Unaccompanied minors on immigration detention.

Throughout this article, those potentially at risk of deportation mentioned above are referred to as "noncitizens." This characterization most accurately describes the

breadth of the group at risk, and the terminology avoids use of more biased terms which tend to influence views.

## Caveats

Several notes, the first of caution and the latter of explanation.

This is a perilous time for noncitizens. Though it is important that our communities understand the implications of mass deportation, we cannot, in doing so, jeopardize the welfare of those at issue. As a safeguard, we (i) only use data that has been publicly available and, (ii) have not identified specific or personal information relating to any individual.

There is considerable data concerning noncitizen population in New York State available from the United States Census Bureau, state entities, demographers and think tanks. Relying upon that data, it has been estimated the number of noncitizens as a percentage of the immigrant population (approximately 41 percent of New York State's immigrant population),<sup>18</sup> their role in the labor force (which differs by economic region) and the number of children under 18 who are US citizens living with one or both noncitizen parents.

While the history of immigrant resettlement in New York State is uplifting and reflects our willingness and wisdom to embrace newcomers, as with all human endeavors, resettlement is not without its darker moments. In 2022, more than 237,000 migrants arrived in New York City, straining the city's resources and openness to further immigration.<sup>19, 20</sup> Among those who sent immigrants to both New York State and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were the governors of Florida and Texas who made clear their intention was to make a political point by turning migrants away from their states to be relocated in states with "liberal open border agendas." Their decision to transfer immigrants from their states to New York was not without irony. The governor of Florida has recently acknowledged that the reduction in the number of undocumented workers has deprived employers of low wage employees throughout key industries. Indeed, immigrants make up nearly a third of Florida's labor force and contributes \$179 billion to its economy annually. The governor's solution was to introduce legislation to loosen child labor laws to allow any child who is a US citizen as young as 16, or 14 if home or virtually schooled, to work more than 30 hours a week and overnight shifts on schools nights noting, "why do we need to import foreigners... when teenagers and college students used to be able to do this stuff...that's how it used to be when I was growing up."<sup>21</sup>

Public officials in Texas found themselves in a similar dilemma. Despite full-throated support of the president's deportation policy, the governor is confronting the reality that the undocumented who may be subject to deport comprise 30 to 50 percent of the laborers in the construction and agricultural industry and the loss of this informal labor market could be devastating.<sup>22</sup> Responding to the concern from employers, officials from the governor's administration have suggested that mass deportation will have only a negligible impact on for example the agricultural industry because,<sup>23</sup> "We used to use a lot of illegal labor, but we really don't anymore. We have gotten ourselves into, 'agriculture three-point-O' which is technology. So, we got cows that milk themselves. Tractors that drive themselves." Farmers and ranchers said that while that explanation from public officials sounds good, the reality is that most crops are labor intensive and require hand picking and delicate handling and the dairy industry requires hands on workers of whom 50 percent are undocumented.<sup>24</sup>

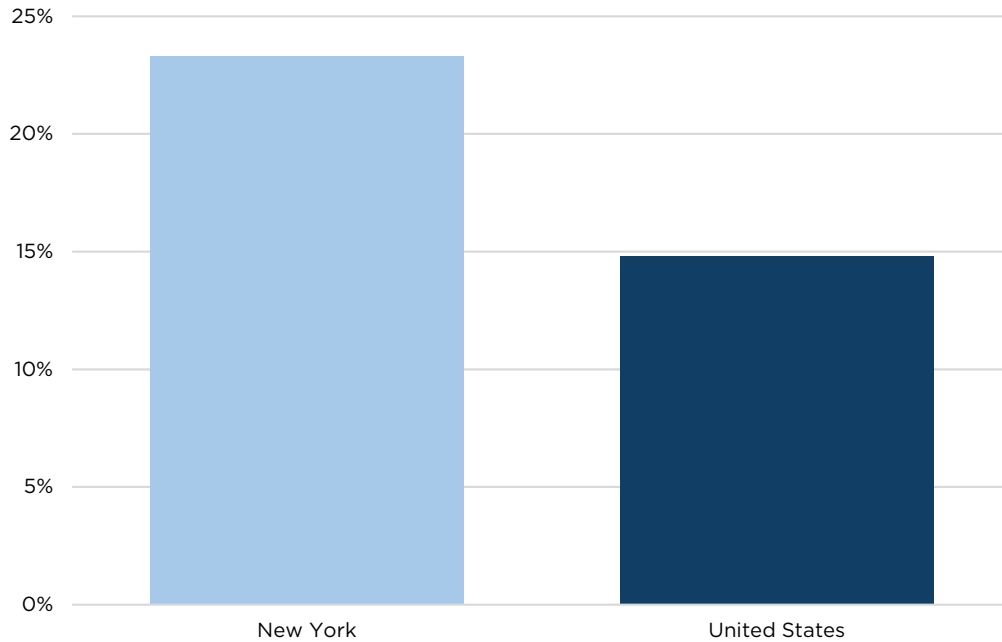
In any event, the new arrivals filled New York City's shelters and taxed its fiscal resources. The city's mayor turned to the governor for assistance. New York identified businesses willing to hire thousands of new immigrants. Yet, the issue of available housing remained. The city sought to move 1,500 immigrants to temporary shelters, often hotels and motels in counties outside the city. Many of these counties, including a number upstate, said they had neither the fiscal or structural resources to house immigrants, objected to the relocation, and often brought legal action. As the crisis abated, most of those relocated returned to New York City.<sup>25</sup>

## **An Overview of the Foreign-Born in New York State**

Foreign-born Americans and their descendants have been a main driver of population growth in New York State and the balance of the nation.

According to the Pew Research Center immigrants, their children and, grandchildren accounted for 55 percent of the population increase in the United States between 1965 and 2018.<sup>26</sup> New York State has a foreign-born population of 4.52 million people comprising 23.1 percent of the state's total population, second only to California. It is estimated by the American Immigration Council that two in five residents of New York's foreign-born population are noncitizens, and thus 1.8 to 2.25 million people are potentially at risk for deportation.<sup>27</sup> Two-thirds of the immigrant in New York State entered the Country prior to 2000.<sup>28</sup> Sixty-two percent of the foreign-born noncitizen population in New York State is between the ages of 25 and 64. Their labor participation rates are greater than the general population, comprising 14 percent of the labor pool statewide and 22 percent in New York City.<sup>29</sup> Fifty-four percent of the foreign-born in New York have been in the United States for 10 years or more.

Figure 1. Foreign-Born Population in New York vs. United States



SOURCE: “How many immigrants are in New York?” USAFacts, accessed January 30, 2029, <https://usafacts.org/answers/how-many-immigrants-are-in-the-us/state/new-york>.

One in 12 children in New York State, approximately 500,000, was born in the United States and lives with at least one undocumented family member. Slightly less than one-third of undocumented immigrants live with a child who is a US citizen, and 18 percent are married to a US citizen or permanent resident.<sup>30</sup> The children of noncitizens in New York State are typically enrolled in public or private schools. Of the adults, 32 percent have less than a high school education, 24 percent have less than a high school diploma or equivalent, 25 percent have high school diploma, 18 percent have some college, and 33 percent have a college degree or more.

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## Fact Sheet

In 2022, noncitizens in New York State contributed:<sup>31, 32, 33, 34</sup>

- \$3.1 billion in combined state and local taxes
- \$33.1 billion in federal taxes
- \$25.6 billion to Social Security
- \$6.4 billion to Medicare
- \$1.8 billion to unemployment insurance (through their employers)

The Congressional Budget Office projects that over the long run the recent increase in the number of documented and undocumented immigrants will increase federal revenues by \$1.2 trillion and only add less than \$1 billion in additional expenses.<sup>35</sup>

Not only do New York's colleges benefit from the children of immigrants, but the state is also a major destination for international students, with more than 135,000 enrolled—ranking second in the nation. These students contribute significantly to the state's economy, generating \$6.3 billion and supporting 51,719 jobs.<sup>36, 37</sup> Restricting or limiting the entry of foreign nationals seeking to study in the US or revoking student visa as part of a deportation initiative would materially weaken the state's higher education system.

Noncitizens in New York State, including the undocumented, pay approximately \$3.1 billion annually in federal, state, and local taxes at an effective tax rate of 10.6 percent, only slightly lower than the mean percentage of citizen filers. New York receives the fourth most tax revenue from households headed by unauthorized immigrants, following California, Texas, and Florida.<sup>38</sup>

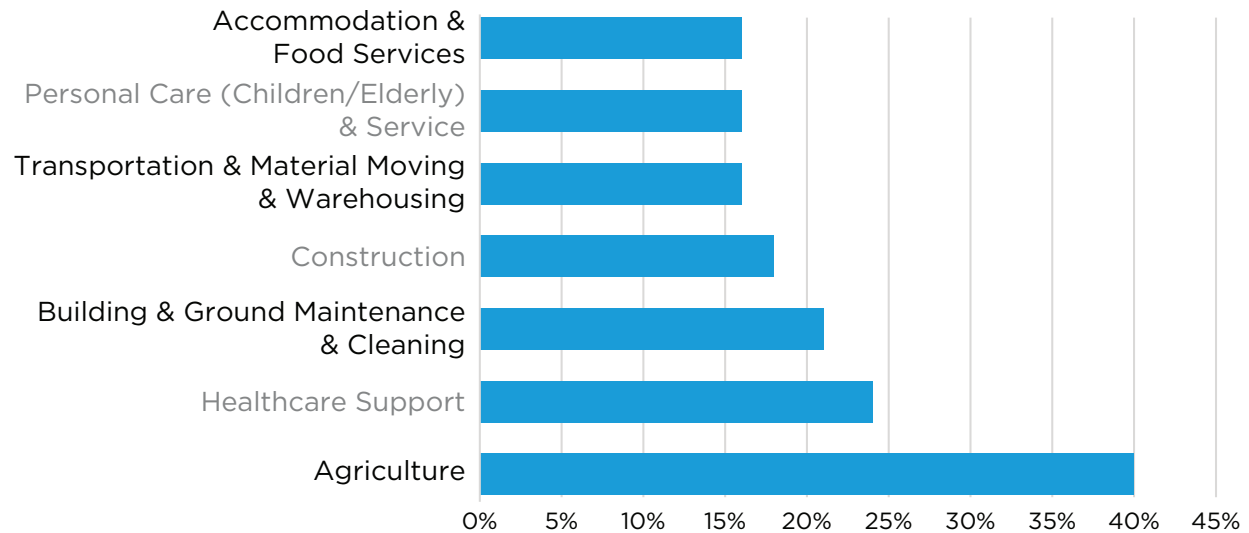
New York residents in immigrant-led households possess \$120.5 billion in spending power. Even though noncitizens pay into funds for Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment insurance, most are not able to access those benefits. Medicaid benefits are available to certain qualified immigrants, including those with Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, but only five years after arrival in the United States.<sup>39</sup>

New York and many other states seek to fill the gap by providing a range of benefits, including healthcare, food, legal assistance, and education, which may include admission to public colleges. The principal public expense of immigrant resettlement nationwide arises from the provision of housing and education. Studies reflect that the expenses of resettlement are in reality an investment more than offset by the taxes paid overtime. When compared with the total United States population on a per capita basis, immigrants' net fiscal burden is comparable if not less than that of the native born.

Federal law prohibits employing undocumented immigrants unless they are lawfully admitted for permanent residence or otherwise authorized, including asylum seekers possessing a federal work permit. Notwithstanding the restrictions, foreign-born noncitizens, including the undocumented, have, even in the absence of federal authorization, become a key segment of New York State's workforce, comprising 12 percent of the labor pool statewide and 22 percent in New York City. Noncitizens can be found in most occupations in the state, and it is worthwhile to show the percentage

they represent in the occupations that New York State has categorized as “essential” functions (See [Figure 2](#)).<sup>40, 41, 42, 43, 44</sup>

Figure 2. “Essential” Occupations



Interestingly, employment of the undocumented has been facilitated by a federal policy. Though barred from obtaining a Social Security number and thus from working as employees, undocumented immigrants may obtain a federal Employer Identification Number (EIN), which allows them to work as an “independent contractor” or own a business. The distinction between serving as an independent contractor rather than an employee can be significant. Both have to pay federal and state income taxes, but independent contractors do not enjoy many of the benefits and protections of being an employee.

EIN has long served as the means of entry of noncitizens into the American workforce. Since its inception in 1974, the identity of those holding an EIN, including the undocumented, has, as a matter of policy, been kept confidential by the Internal Revenue Service. Recently, the confidentiality provision has been rescinded by the federal government, and the IRS has been directed to grant access to the EIN list to federal law enforcement authorities to aid in tracking down and deporting those in the country without authorization.<sup>45, 46, 47</sup>

Even those authorized immigrants in legal possession of a Social Security number may now be at risk. The federal government recently decided to cancel Social Security numbers of thousands of unnaturalized immigrants with temporary legal status, including several hundred thousand immigrants admitted under the prior administration. This action has effectively canceled their access to bank accounts, credit cards, and federal benefits. These individuals have reportedly been added to the Social Security

Administration's Death Master File,<sup>48</sup> commonly referred to as the "death list"—a database used by financial institutions, credit agencies, and government programs to flag deceased individuals. Being erroneously listed as deceased results in frozen assets, loss of access to retirement and disability benefits, and immediate closure of financial accounts, effectively cutting people off from their own money and services. The stated federal objective is to eliminate access to banking and financial infrastructure and, in so doing, encourage this group to voluntarily leave the country.<sup>49</sup>

## **Key Factors Bearing on the Economic Importance of Foreign-Born Noncitizens in New York State**

Before beginning a region-by-region analysis of the implications of mass deportation in New York State, it would be worthwhile to consider two factors which underpin the importance of noncitizens to our state's economy: the decline in our population and the existence of full employment.

### **The Decline in Our Population**

Lower birth rates and increased longevity have impacted the demographic patterns of most developed countries, including the United States. Typically, populations are becoming smaller and older, immigration has helped offset the impact. Currently, immigration accounts for more than 40 percent of the growth of the population of our nation. Foreign-born and their descendants have been the main driver of population growth in the United States and that role will only increase in the future. According to the Pew Research Center, new immigrants and their children and grandchildren accounted for 55 percent of the US population increase from 1965 to 2015. Pew projects that our population will grow to 441 million in 2065, and 88 percent of the increase is linked to future immigrants and their descendants.

In two decades, deaths are projected to offset births and, absent immigration, national growth will stall. This will be hastened by the shift of baby boomer workers to retirement, prompting a decline in the worker-to-retiree ratio from 3.0 today to 2.0 by 2075. Demographers suggest the only way currently available to offset this decline is a 37 percent increase (approximately 370,000 a year) in the current immigration level, which would prevent the US from falling into a demographic deficit and socioeconomic decline.<sup>50</sup>

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## Projected Population in New York

The Cornell Program on Applied Demographics recently concluded that in 2050<sup>51</sup>:

- The population in New York State is likely to decline by an additional 2 and 3 million people.
- As tax revenues decline, there will be increasing demands on government revenues to aid the growing number of residents older than 65 who require social and medical services.
- Enrollment in public schools is projected to decline by almost 25 percent.
- The population decline will leave an additional 1 million or more jobs unfilled.

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The president has suggested that increasing immigration is not necessary to offset population decline; rather, an increased domestic birthrate is all that is necessary. He has proposed a seven-point plan to encourage “marriage and baby making” including a “national Medal of Motherhood” for women with at least six children, a \$1,000 baby bonus has been enacted, an affirmative action program that would set aside one third of Fulbright scholarships for people who are married and have children and “other tremendous goodies in the bag for women.”<sup>52</sup>

The United States Census Bureau estimates that since 2010, New York lost 884,000 residents to other states. In relative terms, New York’s domestic migration loss has been the largest of any other state. In addition to out-migration, virtually all the regions of New York State since 2011 experienced a “natural decrease” in population as a result of deaths exceeding births. Recently, there has been some population growth, particularly in New York City, as a result of international migration.<sup>53</sup> Should New York State’s population continue to decline, as is anticipated, its congressional influence will weaken. From 1940 to 2018, New York went from 45 congressional seats to 26 seats. In 2020, an additional congressional seat was lost. By 2030, if the current decline continues, it is expected that New York will lose two additional seats. Fewer congressional representatives result in less influence on federal policy and greater difficulty in attracting federal fiscal and programmatic assistance.<sup>54, 55, 56</sup>

# The Existence of Full Employment

Given a declining population, or as a result, New York State’s unemployment rate is quite low at 4.4 percent. Economists have determined that full employment exists when the unemployment rate is 5 percent or lower, a circumstance that reflects all available labor resources are being used, and there is no significant surplus of unemployed workers. It does not mean zero unemployment; some level of unemployment is considered normal due to job transitions and labor market dynamics. Since the pandemic, the overall share of the population participating in the workforce has dropped. Thirty-seven percent of all businesses in the United States currently struggle to fill open positions. In New York State alone, there are almost 375,000 job openings.<sup>57, 58</sup>

## Impact on the Ten Economic Development Regions in New York State

### Downstate Region

The Downstate Region of New York State comprises approximately 69 percent of the state’s total population and is home to 92 percent of the state’s immigrants.<sup>59</sup>

### New York City

New York City has historically been among the most significant points of entry for immigrants. With an estimated population in 2025 of 8.48 million spread over 300.46 square miles, New York is the most populous city in the United States, of which approximately 38 percent are foreign-born. Today, it is home to 3.2 million immigrants, of whom approximately 1.28 million are noncitizens.<sup>60</sup>

Noncitizen workers represent approximately 44 percent of New York City’s labor force, reflecting a labor force participation rate of roughly 70 percent, higher than the participation rate of 60 percent for native born in part because much of the noncitizen population is in their prime working age. New York City’s population has yet to fully recover from the economic contraction and population decline following the pandemic, but recent census data reveal that it is growing again largely because of the increasing number of immigrants.<sup>61</sup>

28%	Construction
25%	Transportation and Warehousing
17%	Sewing Machine Operators
16%	Restaurant and Institutional Cooks
16%	Food Preparers
15%	Owners of Smaller Retail & Wholesale Businesses
15%	Family-Based Care Workers
14%	Waiters and Waitresses
13%	Housekeepers
13%	Automobile Technicians
6%	Childcare Workers

One million immigrants in New York City are homeowners, and a third of these are entrepreneurs. The immigrants pay \$84.5 billion a year and possess \$182.6 billion in spending power. Noncitizens in New York pay an estimated \$3.12 billion in federal, state, and local taxes.<sup>62</sup> New York City's unemployment rate is 5.1 percent, slightly above the full employment level. In that range, labor supply and demand are approximately equal, and theoretically, everyone who wants a job at the prevailing rate can find one. In New York City, approximately 4.4 percent of current jobs remain unfilled.<sup>63</sup>

It is estimated that deporting even 40 percent of the noncitizens will result in a predictable decline of 40,000 jobs for citizens because businesses that cannot be minimally staffed cannot remain open.<sup>64</sup> Employers who are already straining to find employees are likely to confront insurmountable problems. The human cost of deportation to the migrant families in New York City will be dramatic. In New York City, it is estimated that 27 percent of undocumented immigrants live with one or more US citizens under 18, that is, approximately 345,600 children.

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### **Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for New York City**

1. Jeopardizing the presence of 3.2 million foreign-born noncitizens,
2. eliminating 44 percent of the city's workforce, and
3. jeopardizing the welfare of 345,600 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.

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### **The Long Island Region**

The Long Island Region consists of Nassau and Suffolk counties and is home to approximately 2.9 million people, of whom one in five are immigrants. Approximately 85 percent of the immigrants who reside on Long Island and entered after 2000 are noncitizens.<sup>65, 66</sup> Immigrants account for 20 percent of Long Island's labor force, 21 percent of the region's economic output, 23 percent of its business owners, and 37 percent of its homeowners.<sup>67, 68</sup> Approximately 63,180 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.

Long Island's economy is performing well. The economy added approximately 69,300 jobs over the past three years, while the unemployment rate also decreased from 4.6 percent to 3.3 percent, well below the full employment level. As the number of jobs grew, Long Island's population growth stalled. Between 2011 and 2023, Long Island lost over 100,000 residents between the ages of 35 and 54. It is estimated that there are

approximately 645,040 noncitizens comprising 20 percent of the labor force on Long Island. The noncitizens contribute each year \$920 million in sales taxes, \$1 billion in property taxes, and \$1.2 billion in personal and business income taxes.<sup>69, 70</sup>

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### **Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for Long Island**

1. Jeopardizing the presence of the 474,000 foreign-born noncitizens,
  2. eliminating 20 percent of the region's workforce, and
  3. jeopardizing the welfare of 63,180 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.
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### **Upstate New York: An Overview**

The decline of the population in Upstate New York has been significant. Following the recession of 2008-09, the United States experienced 128 consecutive months of growth. Private sector jobs in the nation grew by 12.3 percent and in New York State by 14.1 percent. However, in Upstate New York, growth was only 3.5 percent, less than one-third the national average. Even prior to the recession, Upstate had lost more than 100,000 residents. For 18 counties outside of the Upstate New York metropolitan areas, aggregate job growth is still below 2008 levels.<sup>71, 72</sup>

The problem has been longstanding. Upstate urban areas were largely industrial, and as companies closed and communities aged, younger residents and the remaining large employers drifted away. Some cities, including Buffalo and Utica, lost close to half their population. To prevent further depopulation, a number of the larger upstate cities chose an unusual strategy, one that relied upon immigrant resettlement to energize their economy, renovate homes, populate schools, start businesses, and much more. The citizens and public officials of Albany, Buffalo, Binghamton, Rochester, Syracuse, Schenectady, and Utica are happy to share their experiences if asked. It is an inspiring story worth retelling.

The federal government determines the number of refugees to be admitted annually to the United States and, in consultation with national resettlement agencies, selects where the refugees should be resettled in the nation. On average, approximately 6 percent of all refugees to the United States were, over the past 20 years, resettled in New York State. The number was not unexpected, given New York's history as a city that welcomed immigrants and the large number of established refugee communities. However, the second aspect of the resettlement effort was not fully anticipated. Ninety

percent of those refugees and asylum seekers sent to New York State were resettled in Upstate New York.

New York State is a cultural and political mosaic. Downstate is typically, but not always, left of center, while upstate, less populated and in many areas more conservative. Cynics said that introducing thousands of refugees into Upstate communities would be a combustible combination. They were correct, combustion followed, according to many long-term residents and city officials, in a form that released energy that began to buoy many Upstate communities. Yet cynicism lingered. How could Upstate communities benefit from the Afghans, Bengalis, Bhutanese, Bosnian, Egyptians, Guyanese, Jamaicans, Syrians, Iraqis, Somalians, Asians, Russians, and South and Central Americans, among others? Studies found that refugees and migrants help arrest declining populations, pay taxes, rebuild housing stock, open stores, take unfilled jobs both in urban and agrarian areas, and inject much-needed energy into their new communities. It does take time, support, and patience, but in relatively short order, refugees are helping to rejuvenate many Upstate communities. Today, it is estimated that of the 7 million people living in Upstate New York, 475,000 are foreign-born.<sup>73</sup> Of those approximately 190,000, some may not be naturalized and potentially subject to the current deportation initiative.

## The Capital District Region

The Capital Region is home to approximately 1,115,663 people and comprises eight counties: Albany, Columbia, Fulton, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, and Washington. The region is the size of Connecticut, spanning 5,336 square miles. Approximately 11 percent of the population, 127,000 people, are foreign-born. Coming from more than 50 nations, they constitute more than 4.5 percent of the region's labor pool. Of the foreign-born, approximately 38,000 are noncitizens and constitute about 6 percent of the labor pool. Sixty-five percent of this region's immigrants arrived in the United States before 2010. Approximately 13,716 first-generation immigrant children under 18 in the Capital Region were born in the United States and reside with parents, one or both of whom may be noncitizens.

Since 2011, the Capital Region has gained population, most of whom are immigrants. The Capital Region had among the largest increases in the upstate labor force.<sup>74, 75</sup> Among the successful resettlement efforts in the Capital Region are those in Schenectady and Albany. In 2001, the Republican mayor of Schenectady worked to recruit immigrants from Guyana to live in Schenectady in the hope of rejuvenating neighborhoods. The strategy met with success. Today, more than 5,600 residents, about 10 percent of the city's population, were born in Guyana, and Schenectady's prosperity is on the upswing.

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## Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for the Capital Region

1. Jeopardizing the presence of the 38,000 foreign-born noncitizens,
2. eliminating 4.5 percent of the workforce, and
3. jeopardizing the welfare of the more than 13,716 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.

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The City of Albany, not to be outdone, established a newcomer program. A voluntary two-year program for students K-12 who are new to the country and just learning English. The goal was to provide intensive literacy instruction before they returned to their neighborhood schools. Today, almost 8.52 percent of Albany's citizens are foreign-born, and students in the city's schools speak 45 different languages.

Noncitizens in the Capital Region upon their arrival are typically employed in lower-income and often physically demanding jobs, including more than 6,000 as agricultural workers and, between 600 and 1,000 in each of the following fields: cleaning services and building maintenance, food preparation and waitstaff, healthcare for the elderly and homebound, childcare, construction, and transportation. Unemployment in Albany is approximately 3.8 percent, which suggests that a reduction of 12 percent in the workforce would materially impact the city's economy. Compounding the impact would be the approximately \$60 million loss in state and local taxes should the noncitizens be deported. Given that 5,000 or more noncitizens are homeowners, the impact on real estate and neighborhood revitalization would be significant.<sup>76</sup>

## Mohawk Valley Region

The Mohawk Valley Economic Region of New York State comprises 5,882 square miles and is surrounded by the Mohawk River, sandwiched between the Adirondack Mountains and Catskill Mountains, northwest of the Capital District. The region comprises Schoharie, Montgomery, Fulton, Herkimer, Oneida, and Otsego counties and has a combined population of approximately 486,158, who account for 2 percent of the state's population. It consists primarily of suburban and rural land surrounding the industrialized cities of Schenectady, Utica, and Rome, among others. Approximately 5 percent of the population is foreign-born, which is 21,600, and constitutes 9 percent of the labor force. Noncitizens number 8,640 and constitute 10 percent of the workforce. Approximately 2,332 American-born children under 18 are living with a noncitizen parent.

Over the past three decades, Rochester (in the Finger Lakes region), Syracuse (in the Central Region), and Utica experienced the perfect storm of shuttered factories and businesses, disinvestment, and declining population. Since 2011, the population of the Mohawk Valley has declined by approximately 7.7 percent or about 20,000 residents. Only the larger urban areas in the region—with relatively high numbers of immigrants—have experienced an economic resurgence, marked by new restaurants, businesses, investments, housing, and a more vibrant downtown overall. The residents of the region, on average, are older than the state, and those older than 65 constitute an increasing percentage of the population. Consequently, social assistance commands the second largest percentage of employees, after increasing government funding. The unemployment rate in the Mohawk Valley is approximately 4.6 percent.

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### **Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for the Mohawk Region**

1. Jeopardizing the presence of 8,640 noncitizens,
2. eliminating 9 percent of the region’s workforce, and
3. jeopardizing the welfare of 2,332 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.

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Since 2000, more than 10,000 noncitizens have resettled in Syracuse, a significant influx for a city of 145,000. Rochester has seen a similar boon. Utica has become the poster child of the benefits of urban immigrant resettlement. Since 1975, more than 16,500 noncitizens have been resettled in Utica. The foreign-born make up nearly 20 percent of the population, a percentage comparable to the largest East Coast and West Coast cities. The tax implications of their absence would be significant. Nearly 39 percent of the total taxes the immigrant population pays go to state and local governments.

### **Southern Tier Region**

The Southern Tier Region is geographically situated along or very near the state border with Pennsylvania. The region consists of eight counties: Alleghany, Broome, Chenango, Chemung, Delaware, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins. European settlers moved to the region after the Revolutionary War. Over time, the region supported a combination of farms and manufacturing facilities, the latter having materially declined over the decades. The loss of industry, including IBM and GE facilities, hastened the decline.<sup>77</sup> The region’s population, currently 575,594, has declined by about 23,000 residents since 2011.

Approximately 28,779 immigrants live in the Southern Tier, of which 11,511 are noncitizens. Approximately 3,107 children born in the United States live with a parent who is a noncitizen. The region has a higher proportion of younger immigrants than most other parts of the state, with 30 percent under the age of 25, potentially fueling future growth of the labor pool.<sup>78</sup> On a regional basis, the Southern Tier has the lowest proportion of immigrants who are unemployed.

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### **Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for the Southern Tier Region**

1. Jeopardizing the presence of the 11,511 foreign born noncitizens,
2. eliminating 10 percent of the region's workforce, and
3. jeopardizing the welfare of 3,107 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.

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In urban areas of the Southern Tier, immigrant employees are concentrated in healthcare and manufacturing fields. Farm and food production and processing are a mainstay of the rural economy in the Southern Tier, home to the second largest number of farms in New York State. There are more than 1500 farms covering 51,500 acres and employing more than 10,000 people. Noncitizens comprise 50 percent or more of the agricultural labor pool. The challenge for urban and rural areas remains population decline. Current projections reflect shrinkage in the population of the Southern Tier over the next 20 years, declining at a steeper rate than any other region of the state.<sup>79, 80</sup>

### **The Finger Lakes Region**

The Finger Lakes Region, covering 4,676 square miles, includes nine counties and is home to over 1.28 million people, 6.1 percent of the state's population. The population is concentrated largely in Rochester and its suburbs. The economy of the metropolitan area has historically been industrial and focused on advanced technologies. However, industrial downsizing over the last 30 years has created economic challenges. Outside of the metropolitan area, the economy is largely agricultural, involving 1.5 million acres of farmland, comprising roughly 21 percent of the state's total farmland.

Since 2010, the region has lost approximately 1.4 percent of its residents. At this rate, it is projected that by 2040, the region may lose an additional 7 to 13 percent of its working population, combined with a 34 percent increase in its older nonworking population.<sup>81</sup> It has long had a significant immigrant population numbering approximately 78,000,

of which approximately 17,159 are noncitizens. The highest percentage of naturalized immigrants in the state lives in this region. More than 60 percent of immigrants are in the region's labor force.<sup>82, 83</sup> Approximately 3,775 American-born children reside with one or both parents who are noncitizens.

The Region's agricultural sector, including vineyards, dairy farms, and fruit orchards, relies heavily on immigrant labor. It remains New York's largest wine-producing area. Four hundred wineries and vineyards dominate the countryside. The prospect of deportation of noncitizens has prompted those in the wine industry to express concern, in one case observing that, "You need to understand the status of Finger Lakes area agriculture. Thirty or 40 years ago, teenagers would spend school vacations working in the vineyards to earn money. Today, most citizens are not willing to work hard for so little money. Our wine industry, which provides us with a substantial tax base in addition to bringing in thousands of tourists, will be perhaps the hardest hit (by deportation)."<sup>84</sup>

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### **Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for the Finger Lakes Region**

1. Jeopardizing the presence of 17,159 foreign born noncitizens,
2. eliminating 1.5 percent of the region's workforce, and
3. jeopardizing the welfare one 3,775 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.

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The City of Rochester and its suburban and urban neighborhoods have a dominant role in the region. Rochester's community of immigrants has grown materially over the past 20 years. Currently, almost 40 percent of the population, approximately 62,000 people, are foreign-born. As a result of the immigration wave in the latter part of the 20th century, "Rochester's population grew for the first time in 70 years."<sup>85, 86</sup> The region hosts 12 colleges and universities that have a sizeable immigrant student population and generate considerable revenue. Throughout New York's institutions of higher education, first and second-generation immigrants comprise 31 percent of all the students enrolled. A material loss in student population would likely present a peril for these institutions and our society.

## The North Country Region

The North Country is a seven-county area in northern New York bordering Canada and encompassing Lake Champlain and parts of the Adirondack Mountains. It is home to approximately 420,311 residents, just 2 percent of New York State's population. Since 2011, the population of the North Country Region has declined by approximately 13,000 residents. Deportation poses a particular concern to the dairy industry, a key economic driver of the region.<sup>87</sup>

Immigrants comprise approximately 3 percent of the population of the region, with approximately 14,000 people. Of those, it is estimated that 5,600 are noncitizens. Approximately 1,512 children under 18 reside with one or both parents who are noncitizens. It is estimated that 2,000 noncitizens work on dairy farms and in related food processing operations.

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### **Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for the North Country Region**

1. Jeopardizing the presence of 5,600 noncitizens,
2. eliminating close to 5 percent of the region's agricultural workforce, and
3. jeopardizing the welfare of 1,512 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.

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Others in a sizeable number are employed in hospitality, retail trade, sawmills, and as laborers. The noncitizen workforce faces challenges due to the lack of a visa program authorizing year-round farm employment. The farmers have said that mass deportation of the existing foreign workforce could devastate their industry.<sup>88</sup>

## The Western Tier Region<sup>89, 90</sup>

The Western Tier Region of New York State includes 17 counties, the cities of Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Jamestown, and outlying suburbs and rural areas, with an aggregate population of 2.6 million in 15,107 square miles. The region, particularly Buffalo, has a rich history of immigration. With waves of settlers including the Dutch, English, German, Irish, Swedish, Polish, and more recently, Puerto Rican, Burmese, Thai, Ethiopians, Sudanese, and Pakistani immigrants. Hispanics have been part of the fabric of the Western Tier since 1930. Approximately 130,000 immigrants live in the Western Tier, of which approximately 72,800 are noncitizens living in the urban area of the region. It is estimated that 19,656 children under 18 live with at least one noncitizen parent.

For decades, the population of the Western Tier has struggled to increase. The population of Buffalo-Niagara Falls is less than half of what it was in 1950 and would have declined more sharply were it not for the addition of immigrants. Since 2000, the urban areas have witnessed a 33 percent increase in immigrants. Erie County resettled 9,723 refugees between 2003 and 2013, receiving slightly over one-third of the total refugee flow into New York State.

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### **Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for the Western Tier Region**

1. Jeopardizing the presence of 72,800 noncitizens,
2. eliminating 10 percent of the region's workforce, and
3. jeopardizing the welfare of 19,656 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.

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Noncitizen immigrants constitute 1,600 of the store owners in both Buffalo and Niagara. In Buffalo alone, 36,000 residents will turn 65 over the next decade, well more than those entering the working population. In the Buffalo Metro Area, immigrants paid \$643.3 million in state, local, and federal taxes, had \$1.5 billion in spending power, and comprised 3,288 entrepreneurs as of 2019.<sup>91</sup> In the nonurban areas of the Western Tier, including rural areas of Erie and Niagara County, immigrants have been key to maintaining a stable labor supply. Agriculture, construction, healthcare, and food service have depended heavily on their presence.

### **Central New York Region<sup>92</sup>**

The Central New York Region, located in mid-New York State, includes five counties, covers 3,622 square miles, and has a population of 784,000. Immigrants comprise 7 percent of the region, with noncitizens constituting 21,600 residents. Approximately 5,832 American-born children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents. Central New York, particularly Syracuse, has a long history of welcoming immigrants and providing them both a home and an opportunity to become active community residents. Under the federal US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), more than 7,000 immigrants have come to Syracuse during the past decade, and the city is expected to accept an additional 1,000 each year.<sup>93</sup> Since 2011, the Central Region, even with the addition of newcomers, has lost approximately 12,000 residents.

In 2014, foreign-born residents in Syracuse contributed \$1.7 billion to the gross domestic product of the metropolitan area, including \$89.2 million to Social Security and \$22.4 million to Medicare.<sup>94</sup> Metro Syracuse experienced depopulation for decades, but over the past decade, this trend has reversed. During this period, the foreign-born population grew by 42.5 percent. Immigrants currently make up 6.2 percent of the population and 7 percent of the working-age population. They have preserved approximately 1,877 jobs that would otherwise have moved elsewhere.

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### **Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for the Central New York Region**

1. Jeopardizing the presence of 21,600 foreign-born noncitizens,
2. eliminating 10 percent of the region’s workforce, and
3. jeopardizing the welfare of 5,832 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.

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More than 1,681 immigrants in Syracuse are self-employed, generating \$22.3 millions of business income. Immigrants are disproportionately represented in several key industries, including manufacturing, wholesale trade, and health and home services. Among the 21,000 noncitizens, it appears that 17,240 are currently eligible to naturalize.

### **Mid and Lower Hudson Region<sup>95, 96</sup>**

Researchers spent more than a year studying the demographics of the Hudson Valley. Their findings revealed “fewer kids” and that “we are aging and getting much older.”<sup>97</sup>

As of 2024, the region has 3,000 fewer annual births compared to 1997 and has experienced a net loss of 135,505 people due to outward migration. Offsetting these trends is an increase in immigration, which, as one local expert notes, “might be our only chance to fill the widening gap in our labor force.”<sup>98</sup>

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## Potential Implications of the Federal Immigration Policy for the Mid and Lower Hudson Region

1. Jeopardizing the presence of 132,000 noncitizens,
  2. eliminating 10 percent of the region's workforce, and
  3. jeopardizing the welfare of 35,640 children under 18 predominantly born in the US and living with one or both noncitizen parents.
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Immigration has long been a significant presence in the Hudson Valley for hundreds of years. The high-growth occupations in the region have become dependent upon immigrants. Of the 3 million people living in the region, 330,000 are immigrants, comprising between 10 and 22 percent of the region's population, depending upon the area. It is estimated that 132,000 noncitizens reside in the region, and 35,640 children under 18 reside with a noncitizen parent.

## Conclusion

The federal mass deportation policy, initially termed "Operation Aurora," threatens to undermine the fabric of New York State and the nation's economy, social cohesion, and demographic future. The unprecedented deportation of 15 to 20 million noncitizens nationwide—many integral to our workforce, tax base, and communities—could trigger an economic crisis, with a \$315 billion price tag. The loss of 14 percent of New York's workforce, including 28 percent of construction and 25 percent of transportation workers and health support personnel, may cripple industries already facing 500,000 unfilled jobs. Beyond economics, the policy's human toll is difficult to describe, with over 20 million in mixed-status households, including 5.5 million US-born children, facing devastating family separations, plunging them into financial ruin and emotional trauma. New York's projected population decline of 2-3 million by 2050, in addition to undermining the economy, will erode congressional representation and thus the state's influence and strain public services as our aging population grows.

The data is clear; it is not merely a policy misstep that can easily be corrected in the future, but rather a self-inflicted wound that is likely to fracture the welfare of our state and nation for the foreseeable future. New York has weathered poor policy judgments before. With an informed citizenry that recognizes immigration as a strength rather than a burden, we may do so again.



# APPENDIX

## **Organizations whose Source Material May Prove Particularly Useful for Those Who Wish to Further Explore the topic**

American Immigration Council

Amirian Research Initiative

Brookings Institute

Capital District Planning Commission

Center for Immigration Studies

Center for Migration Studies

Cornell University Program on Applied Demographics

Empire State Development Corporation

Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council

Fiscal Policy Institute

Hofstra University

Immigrant Research Library

Metropolitan Transportation council

Mid-Hudson Valley Community Profile

Migration Policy Institute

New American Economy

New York City Bar Association

New York State Bar Association

New York Office of the State Comptroller

New York State Department of Labor

New York State Empire Development Corporation

New York State Department of Labor

New York State Office of Temporary and Permanent Disability

The New York Times

New York University Brennan Center for Justice

North Country

Pew Research Center

Rockefeller Institute of Government

Southern Tier Regional Plan

United States Archives

United States Census Bureau

United States Chamber of Commerce

United States Department of the Treasury

United States Department of Homeland Security

The Washington Post

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## Author Acknowledgments

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I would like to express our gratitude for the assistance provided by Dr. Dina Refki, the executive director of the State University of New York’s Institute on Immigration Integration Research and Policy, Guillermo Martinez, deputy director of the Institute, and Meg Tylenda, an attorney at Whiteman Osterman and Hanna LLP. The research underlying this paper is drawn from the work of many others who have left few stones unturned in their desire to validate the facts relating to immigration, but two merit particular mention, David Dyssegaard Kallick, director at the Immigration Research Initiative, and Matthew Hall, director of the Program on Applied Demographics at Cornell University.



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