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Introduction

Illegal immigration to the U.S. has been an ongoing issue. This situation is by no means a simple one and will not be satisfied with simple solutions. This research sought to understand the factors causing individuals to come to the States illegally. In recent years we've witnessed an influx in the number of immigrants fleeing poverty and gang violence and desperately seeking to enter the U.S. by any means possible. Most undocumented immigrants would prefer to come here legally. But the failures and inefficiencies within the current immigration system leave them with limited choice. Our system is not working in favor of the local governments, border patrol agents, or the migrants themselves. The negative effects of Title 42, long wait times, and the backlog of immigration cases have resulted in a crumbling structure unable to keep up with the demand. The desperation faced by immigrants causes them to not follow the complex intricacies of the immigration system. For individuals who cannot afford to do things legally, time is of the essence and will determine life or death.

Data

Current data from the National survey of Latinos conducted in March of 2021 reveals that those subject to undergoing the processes of the immigration system agree that it is faulty and ineffective. They agree that the government needs to address immigration reform as a crucial top priority. The challenges faced by immigration courts seem insurmountable as they receive an overwhelming amount of cases and a system unable to process. The lack within the Border patrol system leads some to enter illegally and slip through the cracks as stations are limited in their capacity to conduct proceedings.

A Case for U.S. Immigration Reform: How the Current System Perpetuates Illegal Entry



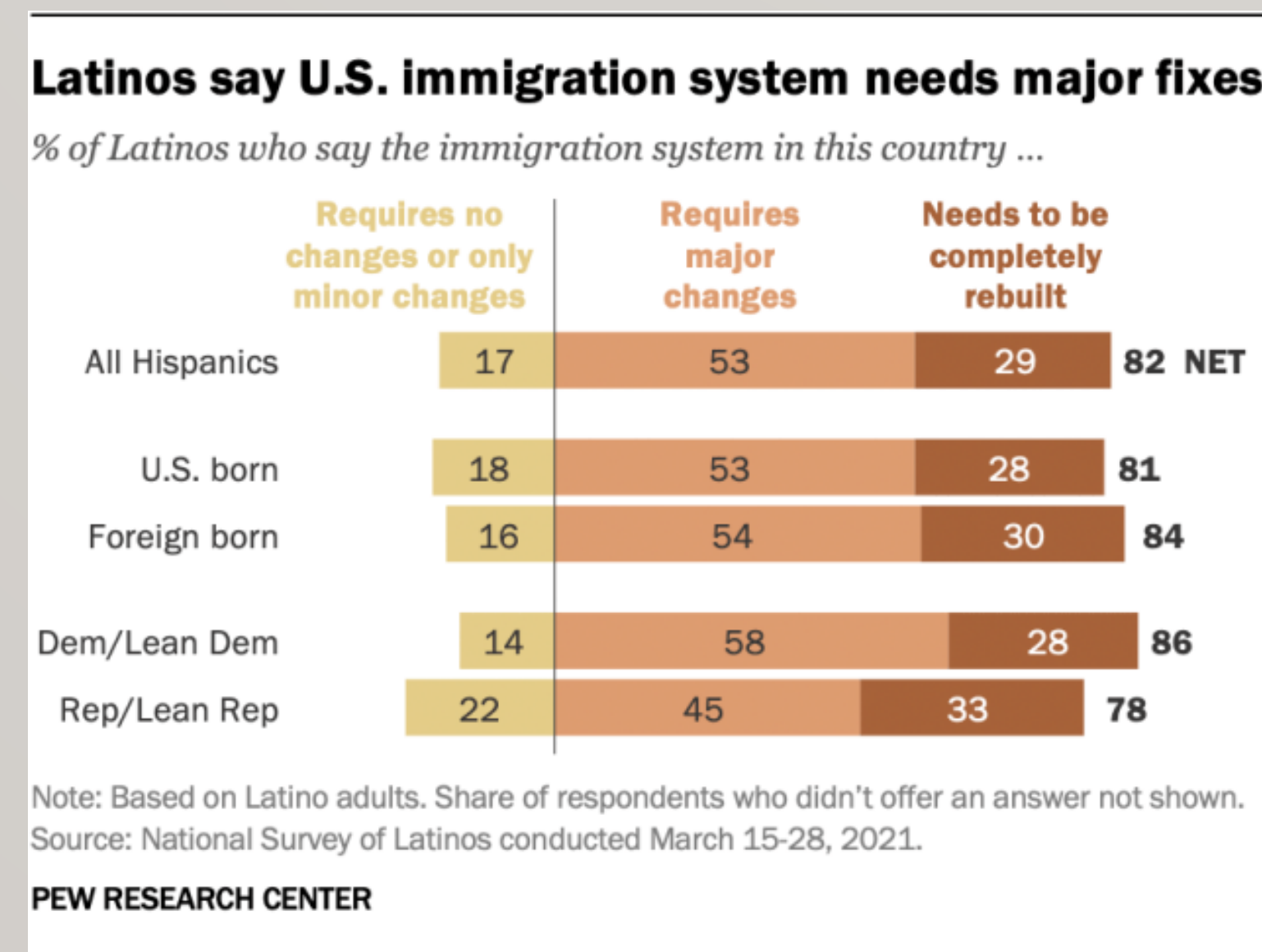
Photo by [Tim Mossholder](#)



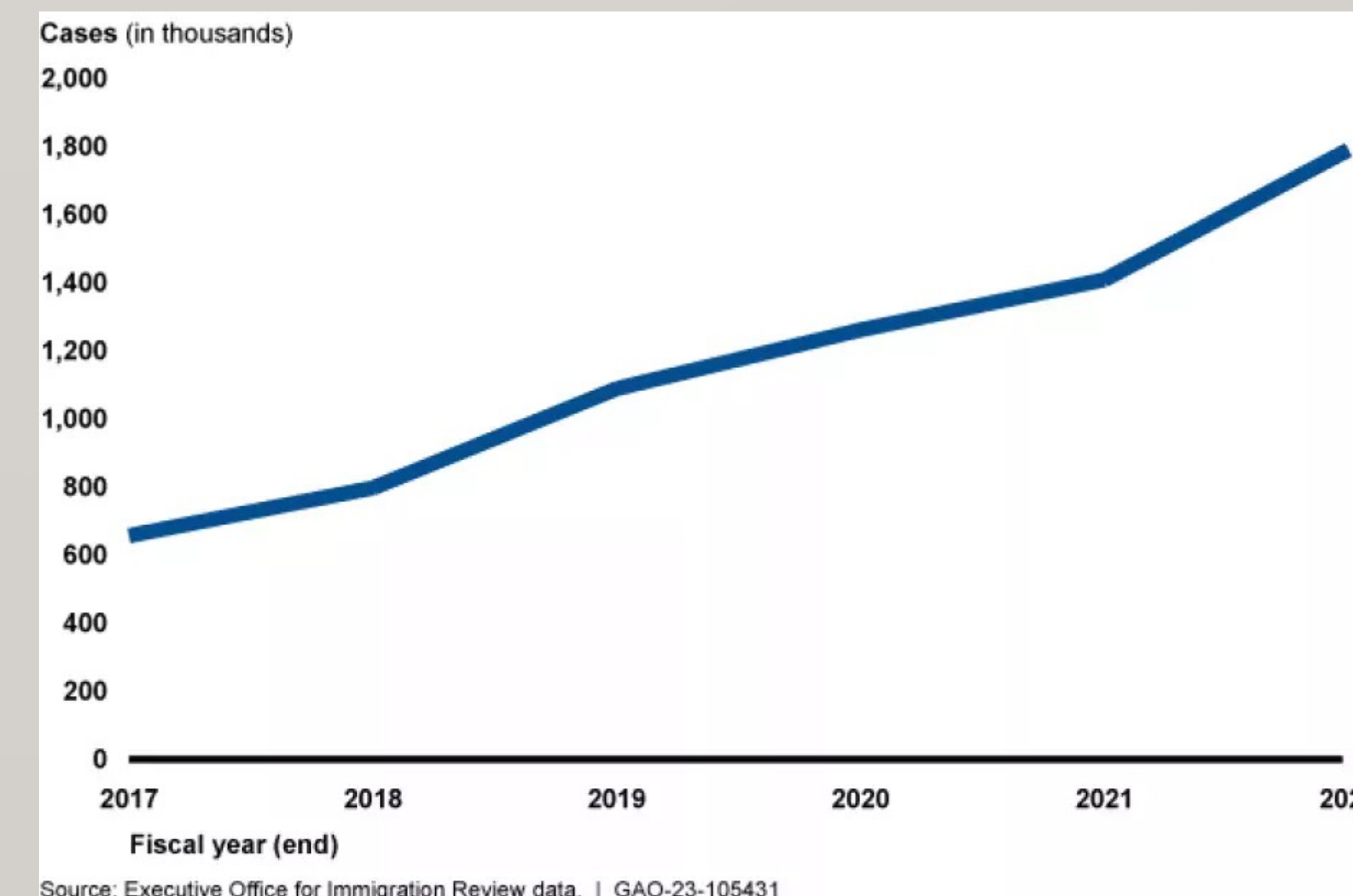
Photo by [Fabian Fauth](#)



Photo by [Alejandro Cartagena](#)



Pew Research Center. (April 20, 2021). Most Latinos say U.S. immigration system needs big changes. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/04/20/most-latinos-say-u-s-immigration-system-needs-big-changes/>



U.S. Government Accountability Office. (October 19, 2023). Pending cases in immigration courts, fiscal years 2017-2022. <https://www.gao.gov/blog/u-s-immigration-courts-see-significant-and-growing-backlog>

Number of IV applicants whose cases are documentarily complete at NVC and ready for interview as of October 31	353,362
Number of documentarily complete IV applicants scheduled for November 2023 interview appointments	41,812
Number of eligible IV applicants still pending the scheduling of an interview after November 2023 appointment scheduling was completed	311,550

U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs. (November, 2023). National visa center (NVC) immigrant visa backlog report. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visas-backlog.html>

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- American Immigration Council. (2023, October 23). *Beyond a border solution*. American Immigration Council. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/beyond-border-solutions>
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- Smith, C. M. (n.d.). *Why don't unauthorized migrants come here legally?* USCCB. <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/whydonttheycomeherelegally>

Analysis

In recent years, the efficiency of USCIS and Customs & Border Protection in preventing illegal immigration to the United States has been severely low. This has affected the lives of thousands of immigrants as well as the infrastructure of our country's trust and safety. There are several reasons why the cycle of illegal immigration has been perpetuated. The major reason is the failing system we have in the U.S. The number of immigration cases filed in 2022 were about 700,000. However, judges were able to only complete around 400,000, leaving a backlog of around 300,000. The data reveals that if things continued at this rate, it would take at least 5 years to clear the backlog, even if no additional new cases were accepted. Another factor perpetuating illegal immigration is the limited number of categories individuals can fit under. Many immigrants are ineligible to enter as an asylum, highly-skilled worker, or family relative. The wait time for unskilled labor visas are extreme for those living in destabilized countries.

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”

Discussion on Ethics & Faith

There must be a call to action for immigration reform. This is crucial not only for the sake of those seeking to immigrate to the United States, but also for the country itself as we desire a strengthened economy and border system. The system we have in effect now is not sustainable for the foreseen future. In the bible we are called to treat refugees, the marginalized, and oppressed in a way that honors God. Authors like James Cone and Tim Keller provide insight into how God intends the pursuit of justice to be ingrained in every one of his children. As citizens, we have a responsibility to provide an immigration system that is not only effective, but also just. We must provide an easier way for legal entry.



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