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Matter of Facts: Border Security, Immigration and New Mexico's Economy

Recent actions by the President of the United States signal a dramatic shift in domestic and foreign policy that will have a wide-sweeping impact on New Mexicans. The Office of the State Auditor has assembled data that may be relevant as state and local elected officials grapple with the potential effects of these policies, and to help New Mexicans understand how our State may be affected.

Border Trade: According to the [US Census Bureau](#) and the [Albuquerque Journal](#):



Share of New Mexico's Exports that go to Mexico: 44.5%

New Mexico Exports to Mexico, 2013: \$593 million

New Mexico Exports to Mexico, 2015: \$1.68 billion

Exporting businesses around New Mexico: 1,343 nearly 83 percent of them small- and medium-sized companies.



Costs to Local Law Enforcement: There is little comprehensive data on the costs to local law enforcement related to federal immigration enforcement. The [University of North Carolina](#) and the Martin Luther King-founded [Drum Major Institute for Public Policy](#) have prepared insightful case studies.

The 287(g) Program trains local police officers to enforce federal immigration laws. According to the [Major Cities Chiefs Association](#), a group that represents the nation's 56 largest police departments, most law enforcement agencies have elected not to participate in 287(g) because "enforcing federal law is an unfunded mandate that most agencies just cannot afford to do." Similarly, unfunded cross-deputization agreements give local law enforcement powers related to immigration laws. For example, [Maricopa County, Arizona](#) created a \$1.3 million deficit in just *three months* of an operation to arrest illegal immigrants, including 9,000 hours of overtime at a cost of \$373,757 for *just one pay period* in 2007.

State and local governments also bear the significant costs of defending against lawsuits brought by immigrant detainees based on the actions of police and conditions of confinement, even if the detainee is only in the facility as part of a federal immigration-related program. This includes lawsuits for abuse and excessive force. These risks arise through federal programs like the Priority Enforcement Program, through which the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) may ask local correctional facilities to extend the detention through "ICE detainers," which pose constitutional challenges as well.

Immigrant Communities in New Mexico: According to the [Partnership for a New Economy](#):

Size of New Mexico's foreign-born population (2013): 203,532

Percent of state's population that is immigrant: 9.8%

Top countries of origin: Mexico, Germany, Vietnam

Share of business owners in New Mexico who are immigrants: 12.6%

Number of businesses founded by immigrants, 2006-2010: 11,440

Undocumented immigrants' contributions to state and local taxes: in New Mexico: \$67,999,000

It is estimated that creating a path to citizenship and expanding the high-skilled visa program would add a total of more than \$109 million to New Mexico's Gross State Product.



"We have committed to building a binational community along the southern border and are experiencing a booming corridor of trade. . . . Knocking down barriers has been a critical part of New Mexico's new business-friendly attitude." — Governor Susana Martinez, June 24, 2015, [CNBC](#).

The Context

January 25, 2017: The President issues an Executive Order instructing the Secretary of Homeland Security to "take all appropriate steps to immediately plan, design, and construct a physical wall along the southern border," challenging the ability of local governments to establish sanctuary cities, and instructing the Secretary of Homeland Security to arrange for more detention facilities related to border law enforcement.

January 26, 2017: The White House states that the President is considering a 20% tax on imports from Mexico.

January 27, 2017: The President issues an Executive Order that suspends visas to immigrants from certain Muslim countries, throws into question the visa and green card status of many thousands of US residents, expands the use of biometric tracking for "all travelers to the United States," suspends any refugee entry "until such time as [the President] determine[s] that additional admissions would be in the national interest."



In 2012 more than one in six physicians in New Mexico were graduates of foreign medical schools, a population that is overwhelmingly immigrant.

"Public accountability is based on the belief that the taxpayer has a 'right to know,' a right to receive openly declared facts that may lead to public debate by the citizens and their elected representatives." — GASB Concept Statement No. 1.

Matter of Facts is an initiative from State Auditor Tim Keller to help New Mexicans understand how our State may be affected by Federal policies.