

Polls show most Americans believe migrants are invading the United States

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Migrants, some holding Red Cross blankets, are seen after arriving at Union Station near the US Capitol from Texas on buses, in Washington (File photo by AP)

Washington, August 21 (RHC)-- A majority of Americans believe that there is an "invasion" occurring at the southern border, as misleading claims and misconceptions about immigrants coming in from Mexico gain traction across the United States, according to a poll.

The survey, conducted by Ipsos and NPR from July 28-29 and released in Washington, found that large numbers of Americans hold a variety of misconceptions about immigrants, such as greatly exaggerating their role in smuggling illegal drugs into the US and how likely they are to use public benefits.

Overall, 53% of Americans believe it is “completely true” or “somewhat true” that the US is experiencing an “invasion” at the southern border, it said. Republicans are most likely to agree, with 51% saying it was a completely true statement and 25% saying it was somewhat true.

While studies have shown that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes or be incarcerated than native-born Americans, the NPR/Ipsos poll found that a majority of Republicans falsely believe that immigrants are more likely to commit crimes.

Democrats have occasionally blamed former US President Donald Trump for the rise in anti-immigration sentiments in the United States.

Back in 2015, then-presidential candidate Trump made the issue of immigration one of his top agendas. He promised to build a wall to keep Mexicans out, calling them “rapists.”

“When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best,” Trump said in June 2015. “They’re sending people that have a lot of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.”

Other observers, however, believe Trump was not the cause, but the symptom, of deep-rooted problems such as racism and nativism in the United States. According to the NPR/Ipsos poll, more than a third of all respondents agree that “native-born Americans are being systematically replaced by immigrants” – including more than half of Republicans.

More than half of Republicans also believe immigrants are “more likely” to use public assistance benefits than the native-born population, even though many immigrants are barred from using most federal benefit programs.

“These statements of false or misleading or incomplete information are definitely gaining more traction among Republicans,” said Mallory Newall, a vice president at Ipsos.

“What we’re seeing here in our polling is that your willingness to believe these misleading or incomplete statements around immigration not only depends on your partisan affiliation, but also where you are getting your news from,” Newall said.

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