

# Post-9/11 immigration enforcement lowered demand for undocumented workers

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A recent study in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* shows that as a result of a variety of interior enforcement initiatives implemented in 2002-2005, such as the ramping up of the Social Security no-match program, employers' demand for undocumented workers fell. This led to an erosion of the wages and employment opportunities of recent low-education male immigrants from Latin America with potentially negative implications for U.S. taxpayers.

The study's results show that increases in immigration-related law enforcement since September 2001 unfavorably affected the labor market for low-education, male [immigrants](#) from Latin America, a group that composes the bulk of undocumented workers in the U.S.

Consequently, their wages, employment, and hours worked all fell relative to similar low-education black and Hispanic native men and immigrants who have been in the U.S. longer.

"Interior enforcement without comprehensive immigration reform can be a lose-lose proposition," the authors conclude. "As illegal immigrants and their families are pushed closer to poverty and into greater dependence on public assistance, both the [immigrant](#) and the taxpayer may lose out."

Pia Orrenius, Ph.D., and Madeline Zavodny, Ph.D., used Current Population Survey data and statistical estimation techniques to examine

whether immigration laws since 2001 have affected the demand for undocumented workers.

More information: This study is published in the Spring 2009 issue of the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

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