



# Maricopa County Attorney

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## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Landmark Research Shows Relationship between Crime, Illegal Immigration** *Analysis Documents High Illegal-Immigrant Crime Rate*

County Attorney Andrew Thomas released today the results of research by his office showing the illegal immigrant crisis is having a profound impact on crime. An analysis of all defendants sentenced for felonies in 2007 in Maricopa County Superior Court shows 18.7% to be in the United States illegally. Factoring in a random sample of those whose immigration status was initially unknown and later determined to be illegal, the study finds that number rises to 21.8%. By comparison, illegal immigrants constitute an estimated 9% of the total population.

The analysis found that in 2007, illegal immigrants accounted for:

- 16.5% of those sentenced for violent crimes
- 18.5% of those sentenced for property crimes
- 33.5% of those sentenced for the manufacture, sale or transport of drugs
- 50% of those sentenced for crimes related to “chop shops”
- 35.8% of those sentenced for kidnapping
- 20.3% of those sentenced for felony DUI.

Likewise, for crimes more generally associated with illegal immigration, illegal immigrants accounted for:

- 44.4% of those sentenced for forgery and fraud
- 85.3% of those convicted of criminal impersonation or false ID
- 96% of those convicted of human smuggling.

It is estimated that each violent crime costs citizens about \$20,000, and each property crime costs citizens \$4,363 per offense.

Thomas stated, “This landmark research belies the claim that illegal immigration and crime are not related. To the contrary, our border crisis is directly fueling Arizona’s crime rates. While all of us should welcome legal immigrants as a source of great economic and social vitality for our country, we must at the same time acknowledge the high price we are paying for illegal immigration.”

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These figures are in stark contrast to figures cited in an *Arizona Daily Star* news report on illegal immigration and crime in Pima County. Pima County's Presiding Superior Court Judge claims illegal immigrants account for 11% of suspects with pending criminal cases. The paper quotes the judge as saying the number is based on defendants who have *acknowledged* they are in the country illegally. The numbers cited by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office are based on *legal findings*.

Thomas took issue with the Pima County Attorney's claim that "only an itty-bitty, tiny fraction" of illegal immigrants commit crimes, and that illegal immigration is "not driving the crime rate." Thomas stated, "That's not our experience in Maricopa County, and I frankly doubt it's the case in Pima County either."

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