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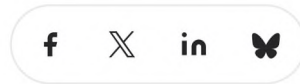
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# Trump copies Obama's playbook on counting deportations



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President Trump, flanked by White House 'border czar' Tom Homan (L) and US Secretary of Homeland Security Markwayne Mullin (R), speaks with workers who have been painting the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool in Washington, DC, on May 7, 2026. Photo: Kent NISHIMURA / AFP via Getty Images

The White House plans to start counting people who were quickly removed after crossing the border in its deportation statistics, a change that will put it closer to its goal of [one million deportations](#) a year.

**Why it matters:** Republicans fumed that former President Obama was "cooking the books" when he used the same playbook to tout record deportations during his administration.

- White House Border Czar Tom Homan told the [Washington Examiner](#) on Wednesday that Trump will count deportations by combining work from ICE in the country's interior with Customs



and Border Protection's quicker returns of people crossing at the borders.

- "Deportations are over 800,000, counting the Border Patrol too. We're trying to do the same thing we did during the Obama administration, looking at the numbers, pull the numbers together," he said.
- ICE data released in April showed the agency deported 442,000 people in fiscal year 2025.

**Catch up quick:** Homan was head of ICE's Enforcement and Removal team during Obama's tenure, the main unit that makes arrests for deportations.

- Homan regularly touts his success during that time, when he also received the [Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Service](#).

**Flashback:** "It is dishonest to count illegal immigrants apprehended by the Border Patrol along the border as ICE removals," then-House Judiciary Chair Lamar Smith (R-Texas) said in a 2012 [press release](#).

- The Judiciary committee obtained internal agency documents outlining the combined stats and the decision to count the quick border returns as formal removals. The committee alleged that this meant Obama's deportation numbers actually weren't higher than the previous administration.



- "It seems like President Obama is trying to trick the American people into thinking he is enforcing our immigration laws. But no amount of spin can cover up the facts," Smith's release continued.

**The intrigue:** Homan also pledged more transparency during the Examiner interview, which has been a major issue for people on both sides of the immigration debate.

- The Office of Homeland Security Statistics hasn't been regularly updated since late 2024.
- But Homan divulged that he receives a 22 page daily data brief that he is pushing the Homeland Security Department and the White House to make public.
- "There's no reason we shouldn't be sharing that with the American people," Homan said.

**What they're saying:** Republican House Homeland Security Committee Chair Andrew Garbarino, Committee Vice Chair Michael McCaul, Senate Homeland Security Chair Rand Paul, House Border Security Subcommittee Chair Michael Guest, and House Judiciary Committee Chair Jim Jordan, who was also a member during Smith's press release, did not respond to requests for comment made through their offices.



- The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

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