UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge

STATE VARIATIONS IN ICE ARRESTS

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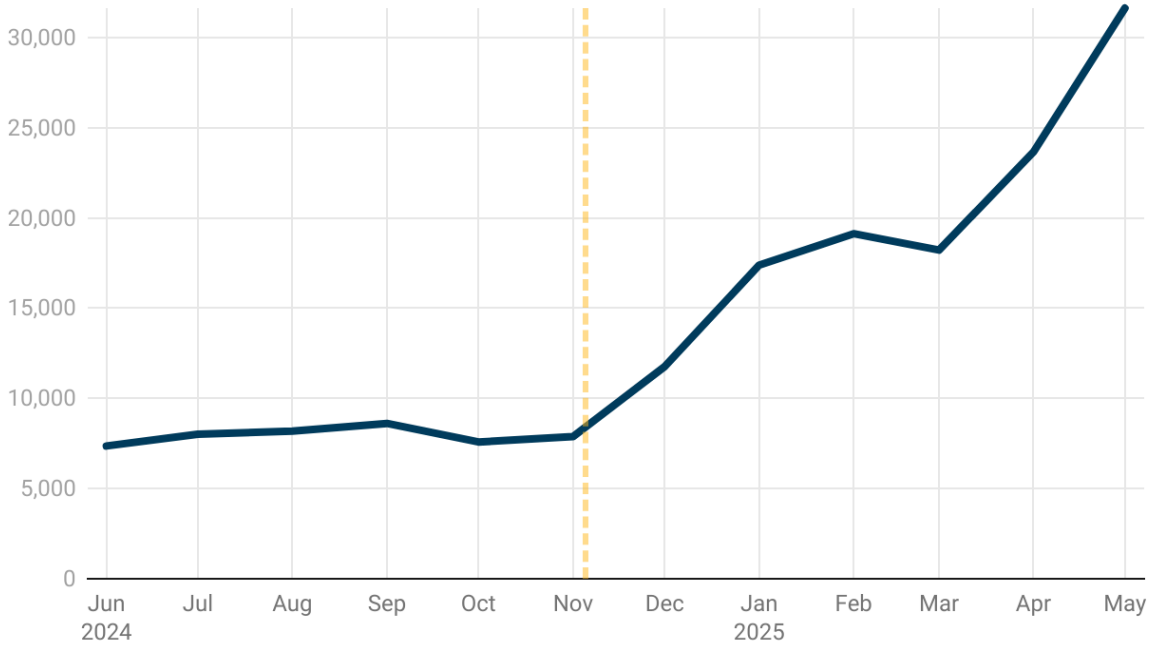
INTRODUCTION

The number of arrests for the purpose of deportation has surged since the 2024 election of Donald J. Trump. This trend is evident in the data on arrests by ICE[1] (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), the agency responsible for enforcing immigration laws in the interior of the United States. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Monthly ICE Arrests, June 2024 to May 2025

Arrests shown reflect ICE enforcement within the U.S. interior. Border-related apprehensions are excluded.



The gold dashed line marks the date of the 2024 presidential election (November 5, 2024)

Source: Analysis by the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge using data from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Syracuse University. Accessed July 21, 2025. • Created with Datawrapper

This technical brief presents findings from an analysis of the factors that explain the substantial variation across states in the proportion of non-citizen immigrants who were arrested. We use non-citizens because they represent the at-risk population. Many who had been previously granted at least temporary authorization to remain in the U.S. during the Biden administration have since been stripped of that status. The analysis spans the time period from February 2025 through approximately the first week of June 2025.

To analyze state-level outcomes, we calculate the number of arrests per 1,000 non-citizen immigrants, referred to as the arrest rate. Arrest data are drawn from ICE records[2], and the estimated number of non-citizen immigrants comes from the 2019-2023 5-year average estimates from the American Community Survey. This approach avoids the simple scale-driven correlation that can result from using absolute arrest counts (i.e., more populous states having more arrests simply because they have more people or more immigrants). We also use information from the Pew Research Center[3], the FBI[4], and additional ICE data.

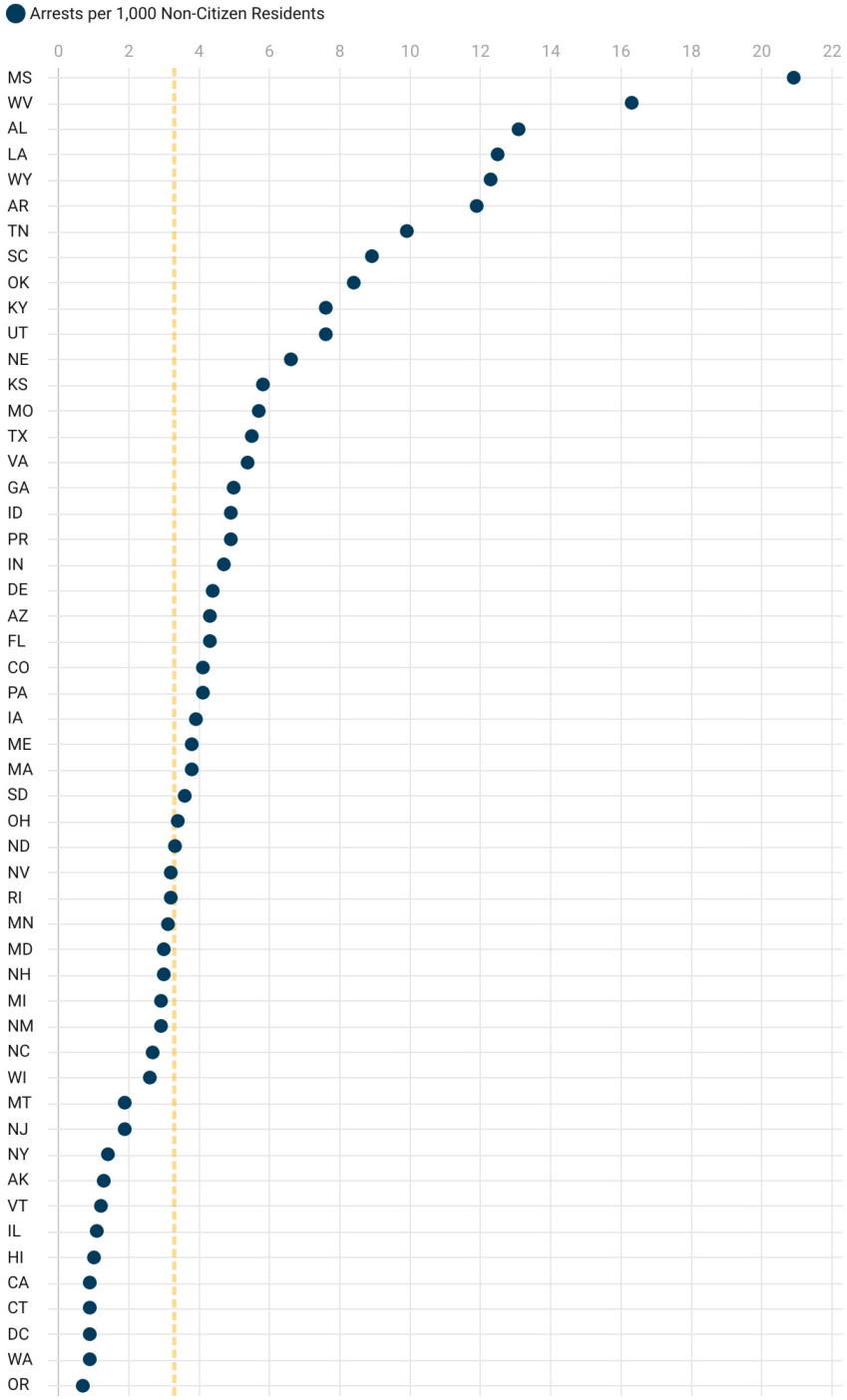
The results shed light on how actions have been carried out across the country. The analysis finds three statistically significant variables: (1) the proportion voting for Trump in 2024, (2) non-citizens as a share of the population, and (3) Latinos as a share of non-citizens.

Acknowledgment: *We are grateful to Alycia Cheng for reviewing and designing the layout of this brief.*

STATE VARIATION

Figure 2 shows the variation in arrest rates across states, including Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. (For simplicity, we use "state" to refer to all 52 geographic areas). The values range from a rate of 0.7 arrests per 1,000 persons in Oregon to 20.9 in Mississippi. This means that a non-citizen in the state with the highest rate is 30 times more likely to be arrested than one in the state with the lowest rate. The 25th percentile is 2.7, the median is 3.9 and the 75th percentile is 5.8.

Figure 2: ICE Arrest Rates by State, February to Early June 2025

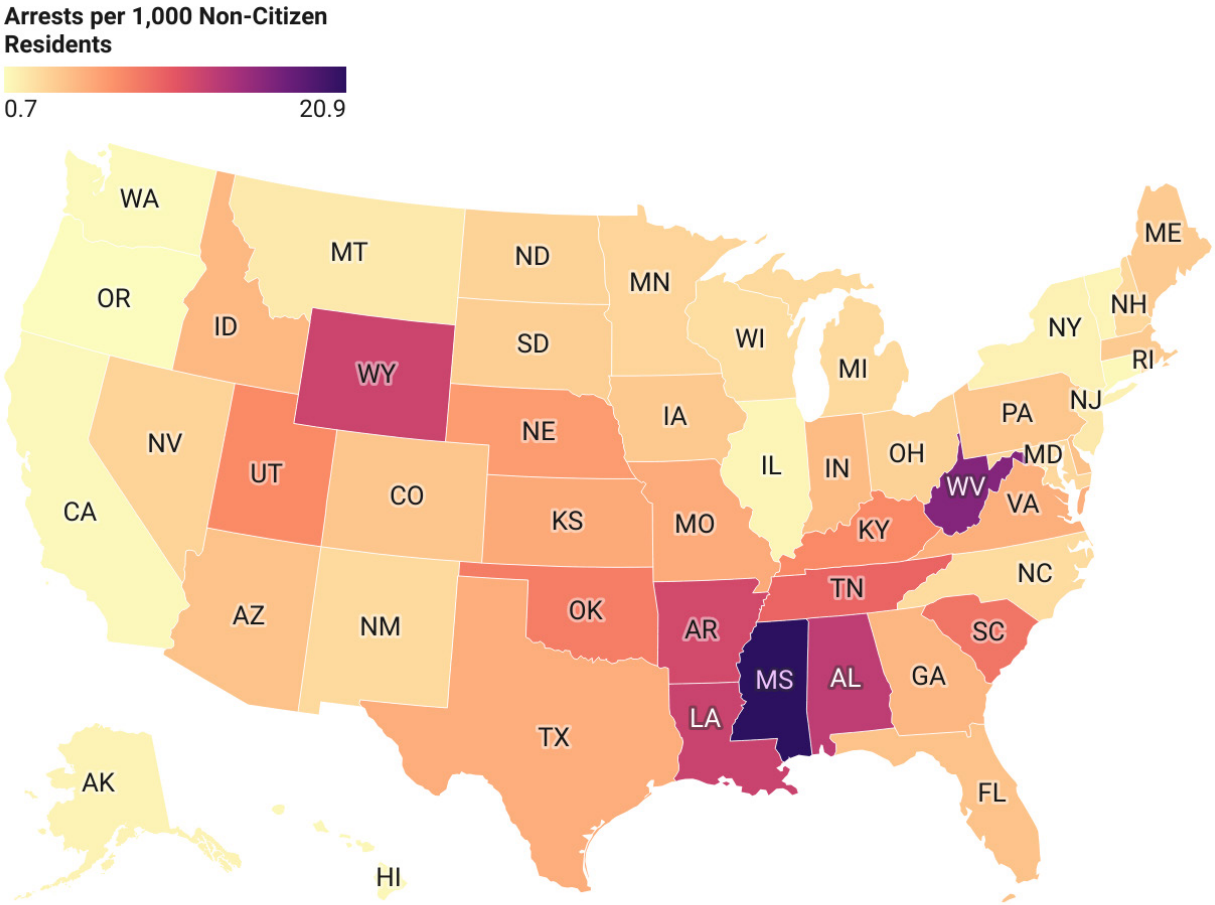


This chart includes all 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. The gold dashed line shows the national average arrest rate (3.3 per 1,000 non-citizen immigrants).

Source: Analysis by the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge using data from the Deportation Data Project (UC Berkeley Law School, accessed July 21, 2025) and 2019–2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates. • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 3 shows the geographic pattern of the arrest rates. The highest rates (darker shades) are concentrated in the Deep South, with another cluster in the Rocky Mountain region. The lowest rates are found along the Pacific Coast and in the greater New York area.

Figure 3: Map of ICE Arrest Rates by State, February to Early June 2025



Source: Analysis by the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge using data from the Deportation Data Project (UC Berkeley Law School, accessed July 21, 2025) and 2019–2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates. • Created with Datawrapper

Several factors could explain the variation in arrest rates across states:

Table 1: Potential Factors to Explain Variation across States

Factor	Description
Percent voting for Trump in 2024[5]	Measures the level of popular support for his deportation agenda
Normalized (per capita) number of local agencies working with ICE[6]	Measures the degree of subnational government cooperation, adjusted for state population size
Violent crime rate and estimated non-citizen share	Related to Trump's "worst of the worst" campaign slogan
Non-citizen-to-population ratio	Captures the relative size of the potential target population
Estimated undocumented share of non-citizens	Represents the relative size of the high-risk subgroup within the non-citizen population
Latino share of non-citizen population	Reflects the size of a potentially racially targeted group
Population density	Denser areas allow for more efficient operations
Proportion living in a metropolitan area	Higher urbanization can make it easier for ICE to carry out operations

Because of the small sample size (52 total — 50 states plus Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico), and high collinearity among the explanatory factors, we first used stepwise ordinary least squares and stepwise weighted least squares regressions to identify potential predictors. This process yielded four candidate variables. We then finalize the analysis using parsimonious unweighted and weighted regressions models.

ANALYTICAL RESULTS

The top panel of Table 1 reports the regression results that include all four explanatory factors, while the bottom panel shows the results using only the statistically significant variables. The final regressions perform well, with adjusted R-squared values ranging from 0.49 to 0.67.[7]

Table 2: Regression Results

	Unweighted		Weighted	
Model 1: All Explanatory Variables Included	**Coefficent**	**P-Value**	**Coefficient**	**P-Value**
Intercept	-3.655	0.216	-5.699 **	0.008
Percent Voting for Trump	0.139 **	0.001	0.148 ***	<0.001
Non-citizen Share of Population	-0.574 **	0.003	-0.260 *	0.029
Latino Share of Non-citizens	0.082 **	0.004	0.042	0.107
Undocumented Share of Non-citizens	-0.054	0.992	3.199	0.276
Adjusted R-Sq	0.487		0.666	

	Unweighted		Weighted	
Model 2: Only Statistically Significant Variables	**Coefficent**	**P-Value**	**Coefficient**	**P-Value**
Intercept	-3.672	0.136	-4.430 *	0.012
Percent Voting for Trump	0.139 **	0.001	0.151 ***	<0.001
Non-citizen Share of Population	-0.574 **	0.003	-0.324 **	0.002
Latino Share of Non-citizens	0.082 **	0.001	0.054 *	0.024
Adjusted R-Sq	0.497		0.664	

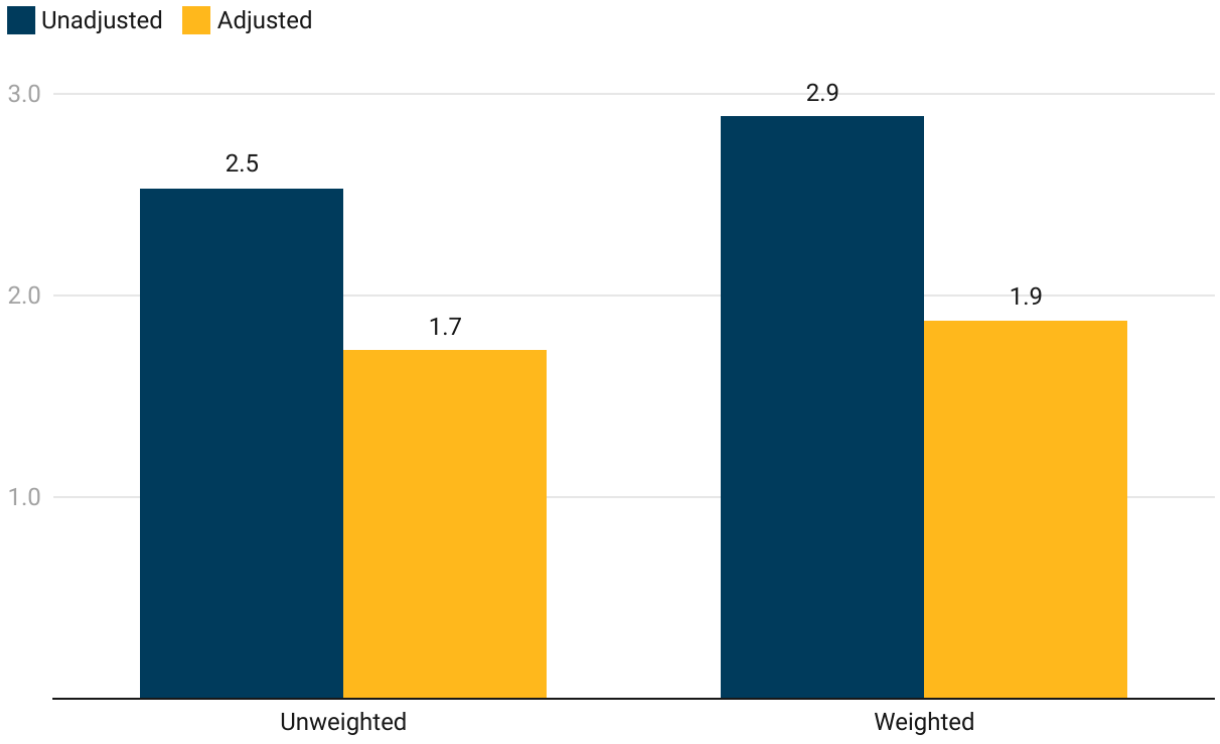
*Asterisks indicate statistical significance levels: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*

Source: Analysis by the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge. See endnotes corresponding to each variable for data sources used in the regression models. • Created with Datawrapper

The analysis finds a **strong positive association** between ICE arrest rates and the percentage of voters who supported Trump in 2024. Without accounting for the other factors, a one standard deviation increase (12.4 percentage points) in Trump vote share corresponds to an increase of 2.5 to 2.9 arrests per 1,000 non-citizens. After adjusting for the other factors, the increase is lower but still substantial—1.7 to 1.8. arrests per 1,000. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4: Change in ICE Arrest Rates and Higher Trump Vote Share

Bars show the increase in arrests per 1,000 non-citizen residents for a one standard deviation (12.4 percentage point) increase in Trump vote share. "Unadjusted" refers to models without controls; "Adjusted" includes other explanatory factors.

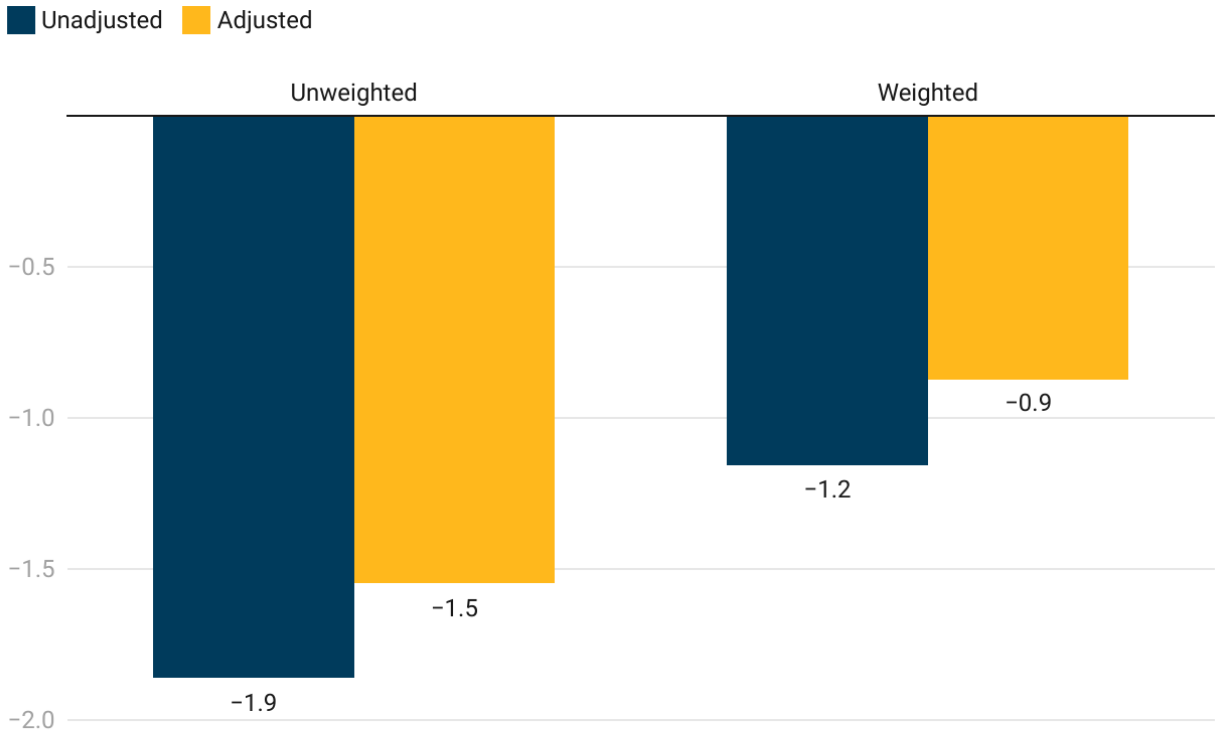


Source: Analysis by UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge. See endnotes corresponding to each variable for data sources used in the regression models. • Created with Datawrapper

ICE arrest rates are **negatively associated** with the share of non-citizens in the total population, contrary to the a priori expectation. Without accounting for the other factors, a one standard deviation (2.7 percentage points) translates into 1.2 to 1.3 fewer arrests per 1,000 non-citizens, and 1.0 to 1.6 fewer, *ceteris paribus*. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5: Change in ICE Arrest Rates with Higher Non-Citizen Share of Population

Bars show the decrease in arrests per 1,000 non-citizens residents for a one standard deviation (2.7 percentage point) increase in the non-citizen share of the total population. "Unadjusted" refers to models without controls; "Adjusted" includes other explanatory factors.

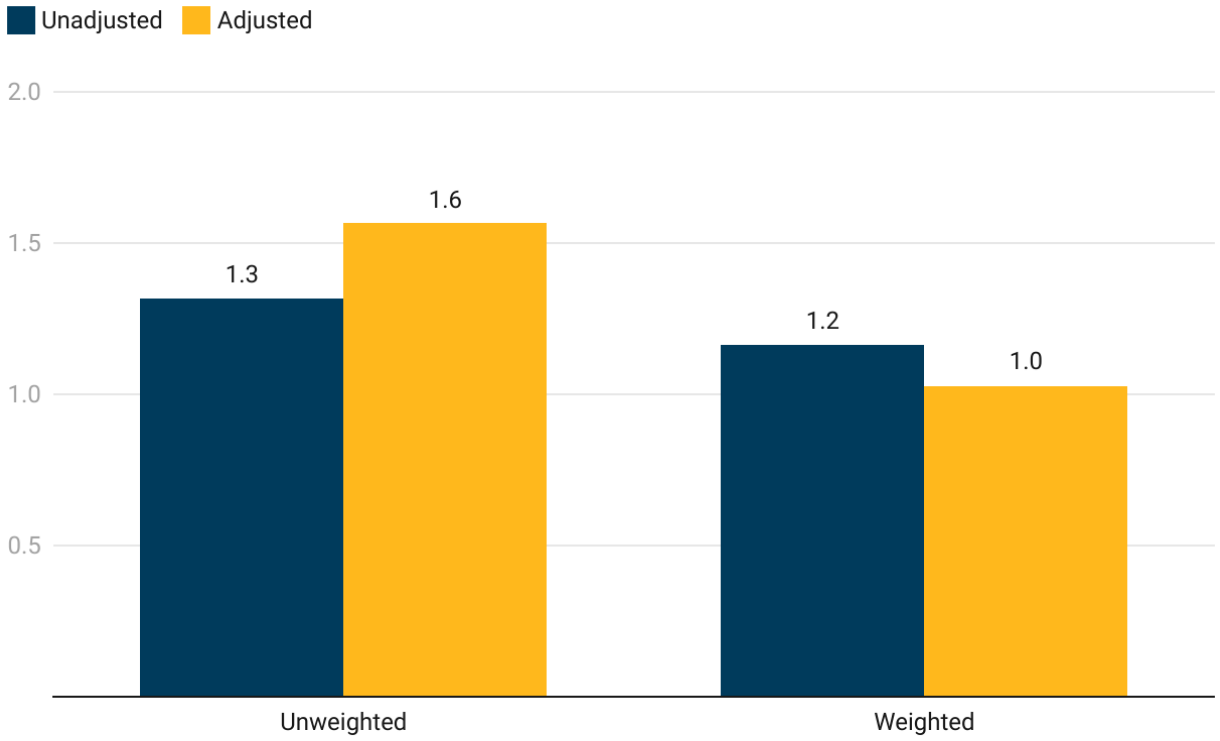


Source: Analysis by UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge. See endnotes corresponding to each variable for data sources used in the regression models. • Created with Datawrapper

ICE arrest rates are **positively associated** with the Latino share of the non-citizen population. Without adjusting for the other factors, a one standard deviation increase (19.1 percentage points) is associated with an increase of 1.2 to 1.3 arrests per 1,000 non-citizens. When controlling for other variables, the increase ranges from 1.0 to 1.6 arrests per 1,000 non-citizens. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6: Change in ICE Arrest Rates with Higher Latino Share of Non-Citizen Population

Bars show the increase in arrests per 1,000 non-citizens residents for a one standard deviation (19.1 percentage point) increase in the Latino share of the non-citizen population. "Unadjusted" refers to models without controls; "Adjusted" includes other explanatory factors.



Source: Analysis by UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge. See endnotes corresponding to each variable for data sources used in the regression models. • Created with Datawrapper

INTERPRETATION

The multivariate analysis shows that arrest rates do not have a statistically significant association with overall crime rates nor estimated immigrant crime rates. This suggests that implementation across states did not prioritize arresting the so-called "worst of the worst". Instead, the findings indicate that arrests patterns were more strongly driven by political alignment, specifically by states most supportive of the President's anti-immigrant rhetoric. This political factor is the most statistically significant in the analysis and produced the largest estimated impacts in the simulations. This resulting geographic pattern is a manifestation of the broader Red-Blue polarization afflicting America.[8] Despite having relatively fewer non-citizens, these states implemented Trump's policy more effectively and likely more aggressively.

Surprisingly, the arrest rates were inversely related to the relative size of the non-citizen population, *ceteris paribus*. In other words, implementation did not target this group in general. Instead, the findings suggest that the surge disproportionately targeted states with higher shares of Latino non-citizens, even after controlling for other variables. In this way, implementation appears to have been shaped more by ethnicity than by immigration status. This *de facto* bias contributed to a disproportionate impact on immigrants from Latin America. Although Latinos make up 60% of non-citizen immigrants[9] and 71% of the undocumented popula-

tion[10], they accounted for 92% of ICE arrests. This disparity aligns with widespread anecdotal evidence, including reports in the media of ICE agents stopping individuals based on phenological appearance (that is, racial profiling) and by targeting Latino work and residential places.[11]

Endnotes

1 Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), Syracuse University. https://tracreports.org/immigration/, accessed July 21, 2025.

2 Deportation Data Project, UC Berkeley Law School. https://deportationdata.org/index.html, accessed July 21, 2025

3 Jeffrey S. Passel and Jens Manuel Krogstad. "What We Know About Unauthorized Immigrants Living in the U.S." Pew Research Center.https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/07/22/what-we-know-about-unauthorized-immigrants-living-in-the-us/, accessed July 23, 2025.

4 FBI violent crime data for U.S. states (2022) from: "Rate by crime for year 2022," in List of U.S. states and territories by violent crime rate, Wikipedia, accessed July 23, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_violent_crime_rate. Underlying data from the FBI Crime Data Explorer, https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/downloads. Violent crime data for Puerto Rico (2016) is from: "U.S. State Crime Rates – Comparing Types of Crimes Across the States," Muninet Guide, January 5, 2018, https://muninet.harris.uchicago.edu/2018/01/05/u-s-state-crime-rates/. Underlying data from the FBI's 2016 Uniform Crime Reports, https://ucr.fbi.gov/.

5 The American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections/2024, accessed July 25, 2025.

6 Mohamed Al Elew and Wendy Fry, "Here's Every Local Police Agency Enforcing for ICE," The Markup, April 16, 2025, https://themarkup.org/tools/2025/04/16/law-enforcement-ice-cooperation-tracker, accessed July 23, 2025. Underlying source data from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, https://www.ice.gov/identify-and-arrest/287g.

7 We obtain similar qualitative results when analyzing arrests per estimated number of undocumented immigrants.

8 J. Baxter Oliphant, Jocelyn Kiley, Ted Van Green, Shanay Gracia and Joseph Copeland. "Americans Have Mixed to Negative Views of Trump Administration Immigration Actions," Pew Research Center, https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/06/17/how-the-u-s-should-handle-immigrants-living-in-the-country-illegally/, accessed July 23, 2025.

9 Percentage calculated by the authors using data from the 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, retrieved via Social Explorer.

10 Percentage calculated by the authors using 2022 data published by Pew Research Center (see endnote 3). The estimate sums the unauthorized immigrant populations from Mexico, Central America, and South America, and divides by the total U.S. unauthorized immigrant population.

11 Zurie Pope. "Latino Neighborhoods Overwhelmingly Targeted in Immigration Raids, Rights Group Says," Los Angeles Times, July 22, 2025. https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-07-22/data-shows-evidence-of-racial-profiling-in-ice-raids-immigrant-rights-group-says, accessed July 23, 2025.