

August 2014

## **UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS TODAY: A Demographic Profile**

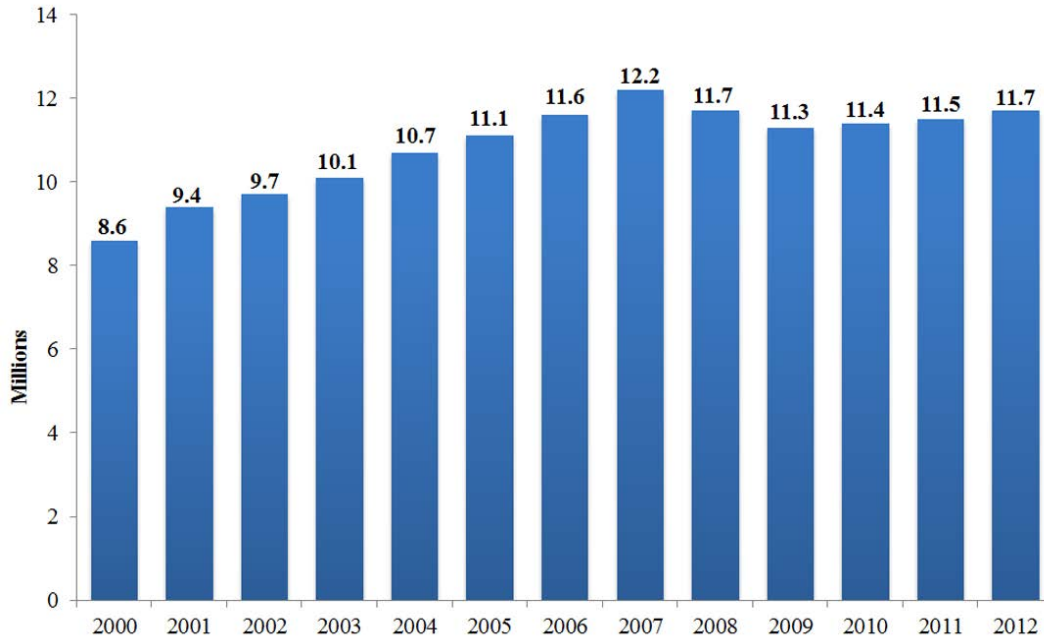
With Congress gridlocked on immigration reform, all eyes have turned to the White House to implement administrative reforms that will address some of the consequences of years of legislative stalemates. While it remains to be seen what those fixes will be, the central question—as always—will be what to do about some or all of the estimated 11.7 million unauthorized immigrants now living in the United States. Tackling this issue effectively involves overcoming a common misperception that unauthorized immigrants consist primarily of barely literate, single young men who have recently crossed the southern border and live solitary lives disconnected from U.S. society. The truth, however, is that unauthorized immigrants include adults and children, mothers and fathers, homeowners and people of faith, most of whom are invested in their communities.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources provide some much-needed social context to the immigration debate. The data reveal that three-fifths of unauthorized immigrants have been here for over a decade. One out of every 20 U.S. workers is an unauthorized immigrant. While unauthorized immigrants are concentrated in California, Texas, Florida, and New York, there are sizeable populations of unauthorized immigrants in other states across the country. Three-fifths of unauthorized immigrants come from Mexico, but significant numbers also come from Central America and the Philippines. Nearly half of all adult unauthorized immigrants have children under the age of 18, and roughly 4.5 million native-born U.S.-citizen children have at least one parent who is an unauthorized immigrant. More than half of unauthorized immigrant adults have a high-school diploma or more education. Nearly half of longtime unauthorized households are homeowners. And approximately two-fifths of unauthorized immigrant adults attend religious services every week. In other words, most unauthorized immigrants are already integrating into U.S. society not only through their jobs, but through their families and communities as well.

### **The size of the unauthorized population stands at just under 12 million.**

- The Pew Research Center estimates that there were 11.7 million unauthorized immigrants in the country as of 2012; virtually the same as in 2008.
- This was down from a high of 12.2 million in 2007, but up from 8.6 million in 2000 {Figure 1}.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1: Unauthorized Immigrants in the U.S., 2000-2012**

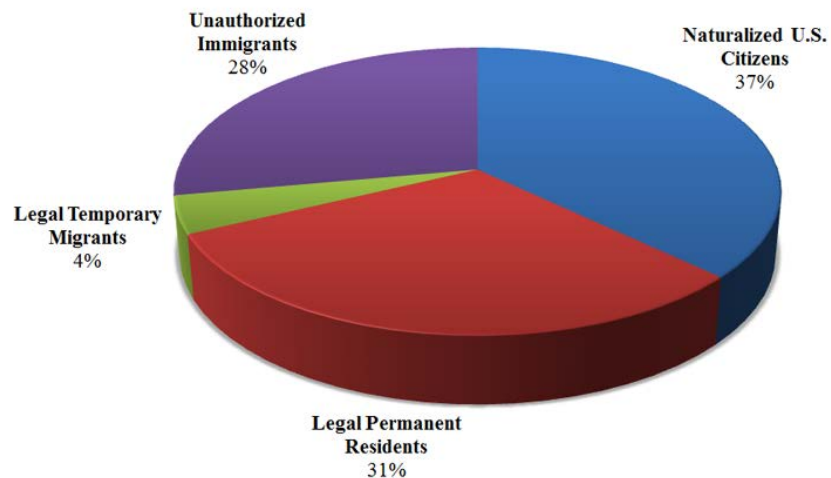


Source: Jeffrey S. Passel, D’Vera Cohn, and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, *Population Decline of Unauthorized Immigrants Stalls, May Have Reversed* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, September 23, 2013), p. 9.

**Unauthorized immigrants account for over a quarter of the foreign-born in the United States.**

- According to Pew, unauthorized immigrants comprised 28 percent of the foreign-born population in 2010.
- Naturalized U.S. citizens accounted for 37 percent of the foreign-born population, and Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) were 31 percent {Figure 2}.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 2: Foreign-Born Population by Legal Status, 2010**

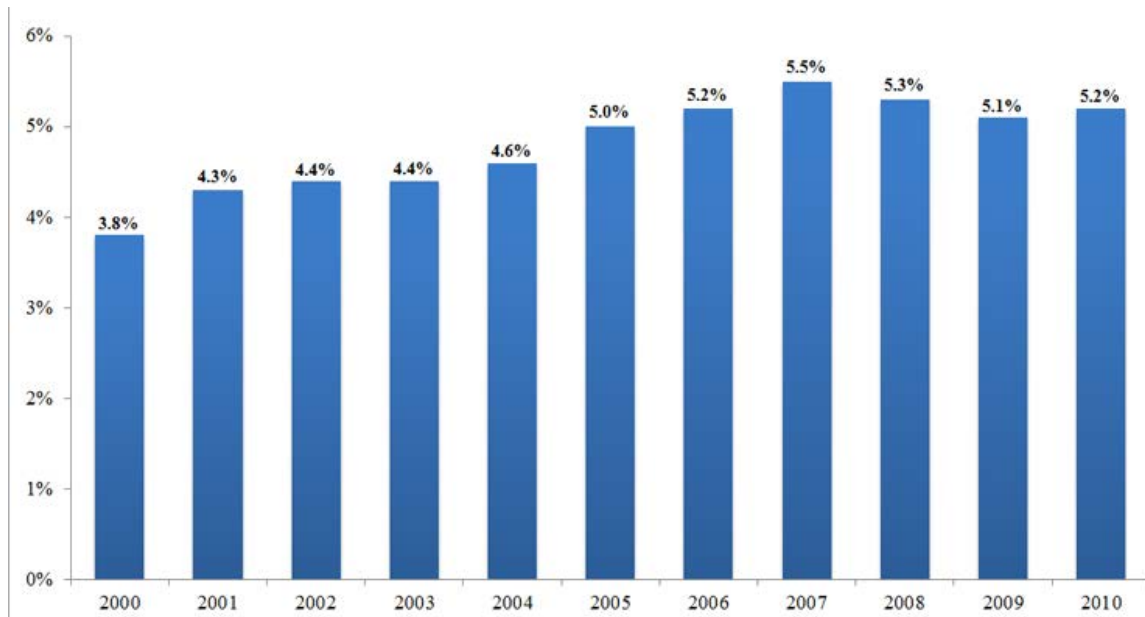


Source: Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, *Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 10.

### Unauthorized immigrants account for roughly 1-in-20 workers.

- Pew estimates that unauthorized immigrants comprised 5.2 percent of the U.S. labor force in 2010, nearly unchanged from the 2009 estimate of 5.1 percent.
- This is down from a high of 5.5 percent in 2007 and up from 3.8 percent in 2000 {Figure 3}.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 3: Unauthorized Share of U.S. Labor Force, 2000-2010**

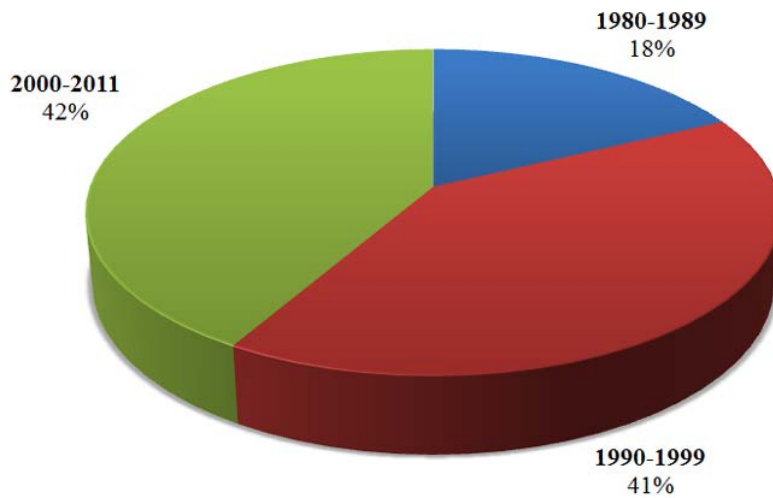


Source: Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, *Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 17.

### Three-fifths of unauthorized immigrants have been in the United States for more than a decade.

- According to estimates from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 41 percent of unauthorized immigrants in the United States as of 2012 had arrived in the United States during the 1990s, and another 18 percent during the 1980s.
- 42 percent of unauthorized immigrants had arrived in the United States between 2000 and 2011 {Figure 4}.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 4: Unauthorized Population by Period of Arrival, 2012**

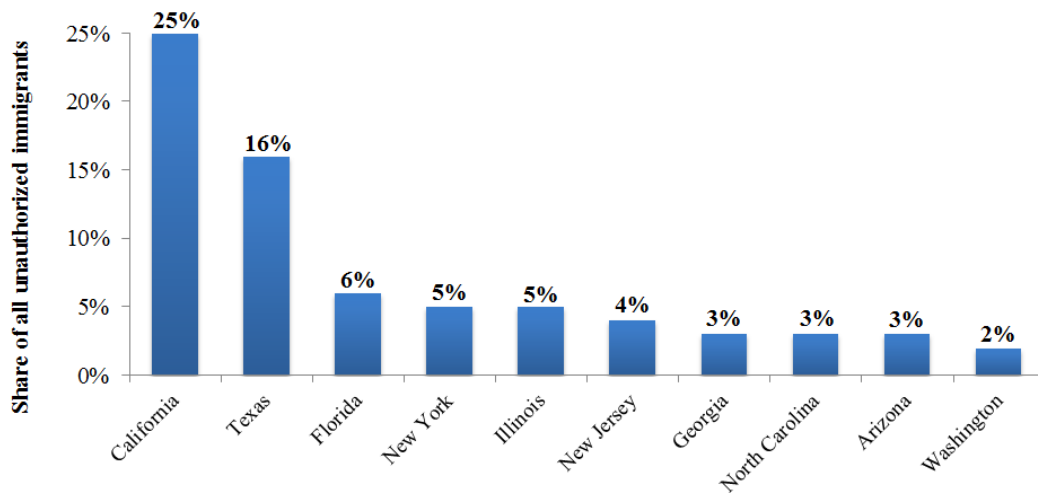


Source: Bryan Baker and Nancy Rytina, *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2012* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, March 2013), p. 3.

**Over half of unauthorized immigrants live in four states: California, Texas, Florida, and New York.**

- According to DHS, California was home to 25 percent of all unauthorized immigrants in 2012, followed by Texas (16 percent), Florida (6 percent), New York (5 percent), and Illinois (5 percent).
- Other states with significant unauthorized immigrant populations included New Jersey, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Washington {Figure 5}.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 5: Ten States with Largest Populations of Unauthorized Immigrants, 2012**

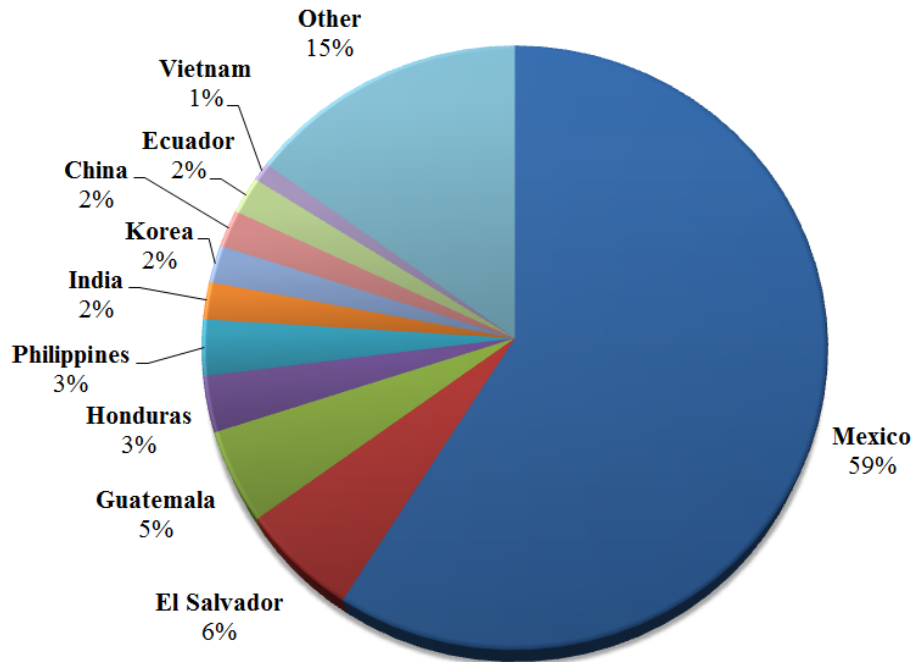


Source: Bryan Baker and Nancy Rytina, *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2012* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, March 2013), p. 5.

### Three-fifths of unauthorized immigrants are from Mexico.

- DHS estimates that 59 percent of unauthorized immigrants were from Mexico as of 2012.
- The other top countries of origin were El Salvador (6 percent), Guatemala (5 percent), Honduras (3 percent), and the Philippines (3 percent) {Figure 6}.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 6: Unauthorized Population by Country of Origin, 2012**



Source: Bryan Baker and Nancy Rytina, *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2012* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, March 2013), p. 5.

### Nearly half of adult unauthorized immigrants live in households with children under the age of 18.

- According to Pew, 46 percent of unauthorized immigrant adults had minor children in 2010.
- In comparison, 38 percent of legal immigrants (including naturalized U.S. citizens) and 29 percent of U.S. natives had minor children {Figure 7}.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 7: Share of Adults Who Are Parents of Minor Children, by Legal Status, 2010**

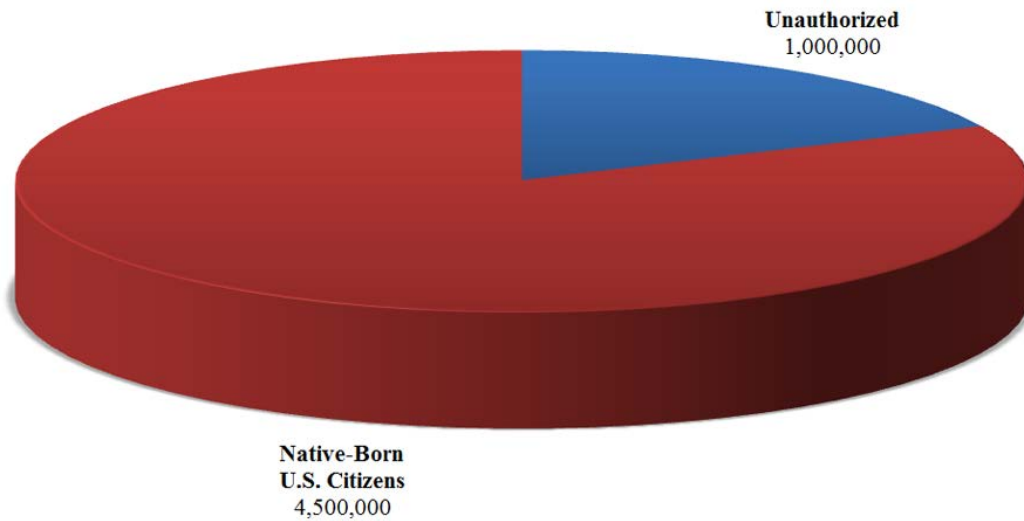


Source: Paul Taylor, et al., *Unauthorized Immigrants: Length of Residency, Patterns of Parenthood* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, December 1, 2011), p. 5.

**Roughly 4.5 million native-born U.S.-citizen children have at least one unauthorized parent.**

- Pew estimates that unauthorized immigrants already in the United States had approximately 5.5 million children in 2010.
- Roughly 1 million of those children were themselves unauthorized immigrants, while the remaining 4.5 million were native-born U.S. citizens {Figure 8}.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 8: Children of Unauthorized Immigrants, by Legal Status, 2010**

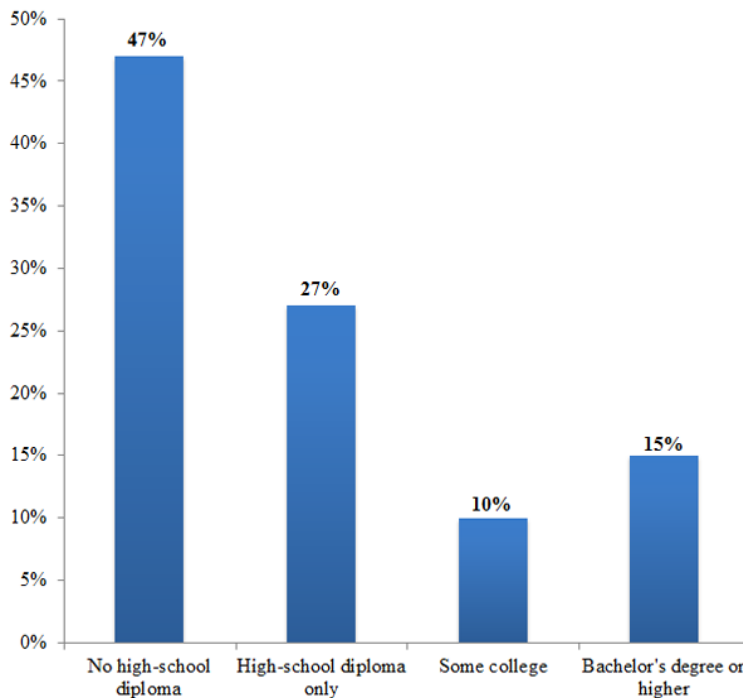


Source: Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, *Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 13.

**Over half of unauthorized immigrants age 25-64 have a high-school diploma or more education.**

- Pew estimates that, in 2008, over one-quarter (27%) of unauthorized immigrant adults had a high-school diploma only, while 10 percent had some college short of a bachelor's degree and 15% had a bachelor's degree or more.
- Just under half of unauthorized immigrant adults lacked a high-school diploma {Figure 9}.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 9: Educational Attainment of Unauthorized Immigrants Age 25-64, 2008**

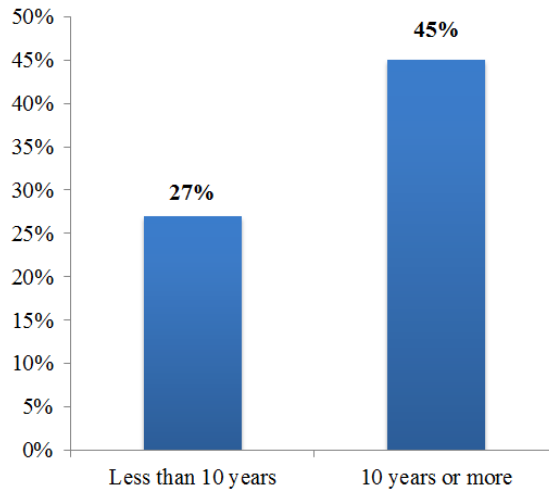


Source: Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, *A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, April 14, 2009), p. 11.

**Nearly half of longtime unauthorized immigrant households are homeowners.**

- According to Pew, 45 percent of unauthorized immigrant households that had been in the United States for 10 years or more were homeowners in 2008.
- Over one-quarter (27 percent) of unauthorized immigrant households that had been in the United States for less than 10 years were homeowners {Figure 10}.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 10: Homeownership Rates of Unauthorized Immigrant Households by Time in U.S., 2008**

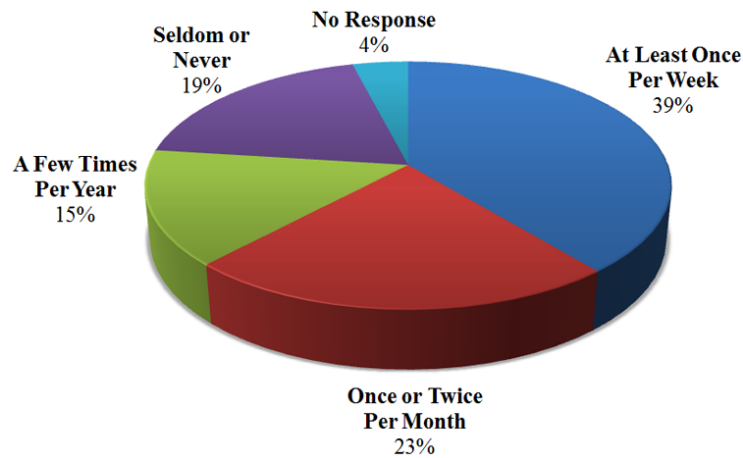


Source: Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, *A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, April 14, 2009), p. 19.

**Approximately two-fifths of unauthorized immigrant adults attend religious services every week.**

- Pew estimates that 39 percent of non-U.S. citizen/non-LPR Latino adults attended religious services at least once a week in 2010, while another 23 percent attended services once or twice per month.
- 15 percent attended a few times per year, while only 19 percent seldom or never attended {Figure 11}.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 11: Religious Attendance by Non-Citizens/Non-LPR Latino Adults, 2010**



Source: Paul Taylor, et al., *Unauthorized Immigrants: Length of Residency, Patterns of Parenthood* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, December 1, 2011), p. 7.



## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey S. Passel, D’Vera Cohn, and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, [\*Population Decline of Unauthorized Immigrants Stalls, May Have Reversed\*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, September 23, 2013), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, [\*Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010\*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Bryan Baker and Nancy Rytina, [\*Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2012\*](#) (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, March 2013), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Taylor, Mark Hugo Lopez, Jeffrey S. Passel, and Seth Motel, [\*Unauthorized Immigrants: Length of Residency, Patterns of Parenthood\*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, December 1, 2011), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, [\*Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010\*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, [\*A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States\*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, April 14, 2009), p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

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