

# Report: Nearly 90,000 Illegal Immigrant Criminals Released Last Year

Caroline May writes in [reports](#).

Jessica Vaughan, the director of policy studies at the Center for Immigration Studies, [notes](#), even more criminal aliens are released by local jails, despite immigration requests for local authorities to hold deportable criminal aliens.

*Under Obama's recently announced Priority Enforcement Program, officials work with local police to arrest and deport criminal immigrants. In reality, that amounts to a phone call from ICE requesting local authorities hold the suspect for 48 hours after they're set to be freed.*

*But several sheriffs from around the country say that just 35-40 percent of those held are ever seized by ICE, even after they've been released.*

The executive actions on immigration Obama announced in 2014 also brought an end to the Secure Communities program and shifted immigration enforcement to illegal immigrants deemed "priorities." In Secure Communities' place the administration implemented the Priority Enforcement Program (PEP).

The Obama administration has been criticized by immigration hawks for years over its lack of immigration enforcement and propensity to release criminal aliens back into U.S. communities. Republican lawmakers have, for example, slammed the PEP program as a threat to public safety as many criminal immigrants are required to simply be

released.

Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) has called the program, a “a game of Russian roulette.”

“By defining its ‘priorities’ to exclude large categories of illegal immigrants, including those who have already been ordered deported or those who illegally reenter after having been deported, PEP ensures that countless more dangerous aliens will be released into U.S. communities—allowing otherwise entirely preventable crimes, including some of the most violent and egregious, to occur,” Sessions over the summer.

As of March 2015 more than 347,000 convicted criminal immigrants [remained](#) at large in the U.S. And as of September 2015, 918,369 illegal immigrants [with](#) final orders of deportation remained in communities across the U.S.