

MORE ALIENS DEPORTED FOR CRIMES

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

August 27, 1995, Sunday, THREE STAR Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8A

Length: 252 words

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

Deportations of illegal aliens convicted of serious crimes are expected to reach 30,000 this fiscal year, 5 percent more than projected, immigration officials report.

More aggressive enforcement enabled the Immigration and Naturalization Service to send 8,134 convicted aliens home in April, May and June, an increase of more than 10 percent over the previous quarter.

New rules mandated by last year's anti-crime law could push those numbers up even higher, said Alexander Aleinikoff, the INS executive associate commissioner of programs. "We believe this is the beginning of a trend which will result in the doubling of the number of criminal aliens removed next year. A criminal conviction means jail time and a one-way ticket home."

INS had expected to deport 28,579 convicted aliens this fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30.

Rules that went into effect Thursday created "administrative deportation," a new and faster way to deport aliens convicted of aggravated felonies such as murder, armed robbery and narcotics violations, the INS said.

The aliens now can be deported without a hearing before an immigration judge, if they are not permanent U.S. residents and don't qualify for any program that would allow them to stay in the United States.

The INS didn't release figures on how many aliens are incarcerated, but said federal prisons house about 29,000 foreign-born inmates; about 72, 000 are being held in state prisons.

Not all are illegal aliens, INS spokesman Greg Gagne said.

Classification

Language: English

Subject: NEGATIVE PERSONAL NEWS (91%); IMMIGRATION (90%); CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS (90%); CRIMINAL OFFENSES (90%); DEPORTATION (90%); IMMIGRATION LAW (90%); JAIL SENTENCING (88%); CORRECTIONS (88%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (88%); PRISONS (86%); CITIZENSHIP (76%); PRISONERS (74%); FELONIES (74%); JUDGES (74%); CRIMINAL LAW (74%); TRENDS (73%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (73%); MURDER (69%); CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES CRIME (69%); ROBBERY (50%)

Company: IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (84%)

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Organization: IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (84%)

Geographic: UNITED STATES (79%)

Load-Date: August 27, 1995

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