

10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT: MEASURING SUCCESS ON IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

BPC's new report, *Measuring the Metrics: Grading the Government on Immigration Enforcement*, highlights the need for the federal government to make better use of the data it collects on unauthorized immigration. Better data reporting will give policymakers—and the American public—a clearer picture of how successful immigration enforcement efforts have been. Here are ten things you need to know from BPC's report:

- 1** Immigration spending is seven times higher today than in 1986 and now accounts for nearly half of all federal law enforcement spending.
- 2** Whether or not current immigration enforcement efforts have been successful—and to what extent—has been a key point of disagreement in the current debate on immigration reform.
- 3** The federal government has not consistently reported statistics that measure whether efforts to combat unauthorized immigration are working. This means that policymakers don't have the best information available to help them make smart decisions about funding and other resources for immigration enforcement.
- 4** Currently, assessments of the border rely too heavily on what are called “input-based” measures, such as the amount of funding directed at border enforcement, the number of border patrol agents, or the number of miles of border fencing. These statistics alone provide no information on whether increased resources have led to better results.
- 5** BPC believes that “outcome-based” metrics, like the total number of unauthorized entries, the number of new visa overstays, and the probability of being stopped at the border, provide more useful information on which immigration enforcement efforts are showing positive results.
- 6** Measuring performance in the same way over time is essential to understanding whether specific programs, efforts or techniques are having the desired effect.
- 7** The federal government already collects much of the data necessary to establish outcome-based immigration enforcement performance metrics, but is not analyzing it consistently or releasing it publicly. External researchers also collect data that could be combined with government data to evaluate outcome measures.
- 8** In fact, federal agencies have been developing outcome measures since the 1980s, but reporting has been spotty and agencies have never published a consistent set of outcome metrics that show performance over time.
- 9** BPC recommends that Congress require regular reporting on a similar set of outcome-based metrics to measure the performance of immigration enforcement efforts over time.
- 10** BPC believes that the best tool for determining resource levels for immigration enforcement would be models that link the underlying reasons people migrate to the United States, U.S. policies that create incentives or disincentives to migrate, and outcome-based metrics.

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