

ICE Activity in Trump 2.0 is Increasing Employment and Decreasing Full-Time School Enrollment for Teens in Mixed-Status Families

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The second Trump Administration has promised, and is on their way to delivering, immigration enforcement activity at levels not seen before in modern U.S. history. [Evidence](#) points to heightened immigration enforcement in 2025 not only impacting those arrested, detained, and deported, but their families—including their children—as well.

In this piece, we explore whether heightened immigration enforcement under the second Trump Administration is affecting U.S.-born teenagers with undocumented parents, including whether these teens increased their employment and decreased their school enrollment in 2025 compared to 2024. We specifically examine this because the arrest, detention, and deportation of a parent or other family member reduces family income; and even if a family member is not detained or deported, undocumented adults may work less due to [chilling effects](#) or a [reduction in their legal ability to work](#). Thus, U.S.-born teenagers may need to work to help their family make up for lost income.

To analyze the impacts in Trump 2.0, we used Current Population Survey (CPS) data from 2024 and 2025. We calculated employment and full-time school enrollment (including high school and college enrollment) rates and examined changes in these outcomes over time.

Our Key Findings:

- U.S.-born teenagers in mixed-status households worked at much higher rates in the first 11 months of 2025 than they did in the same months of 2024. Compared to 2024, 25,000 more teens in mixed-status households worked each month in 2025.
- U.S.-born teenagers in mixed-status households were also enrolled in high school and college at lower rates in 2025 than in 2024. We estimate that in 2025 there were approximately 20,000 fewer teens in mixed-status households enrolled in school full-time compared to 2024.
- These changes are not seen for U.S.-born teenagers with U.S.-born parents, or foreign-born parents with likely legal status.

Research shows that graduating high school is a key determinant of later life outcomes, and that high school graduates [earn more](#) and are [healthier](#) later in life. **We conclude that heightened immigration enforcement is harming U.S.-born teenagers in mixed-status households today, and setting them up for worse long-term outcomes.**

Research Methods

We used three main samples in this analysis focusing on U.S.-born teenagers, where we define teenagers to be between the ages of 15-19. This is because the CPS begins asking people about their work behavior at age 15, and, after age 19 teenagers may live on their own, so we would not have information about their parents. The samples include:

1. U.S.-born teens with U.S.-born parents
2. U.S.-born teens with foreign-born parents
3. U.S.-born teens with likely undocumented mothers

We focused on mothers' information instead of fathers, since fathers are more likely to be missing from the household due to evidence demonstrating that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) primarily targets and arrests men.

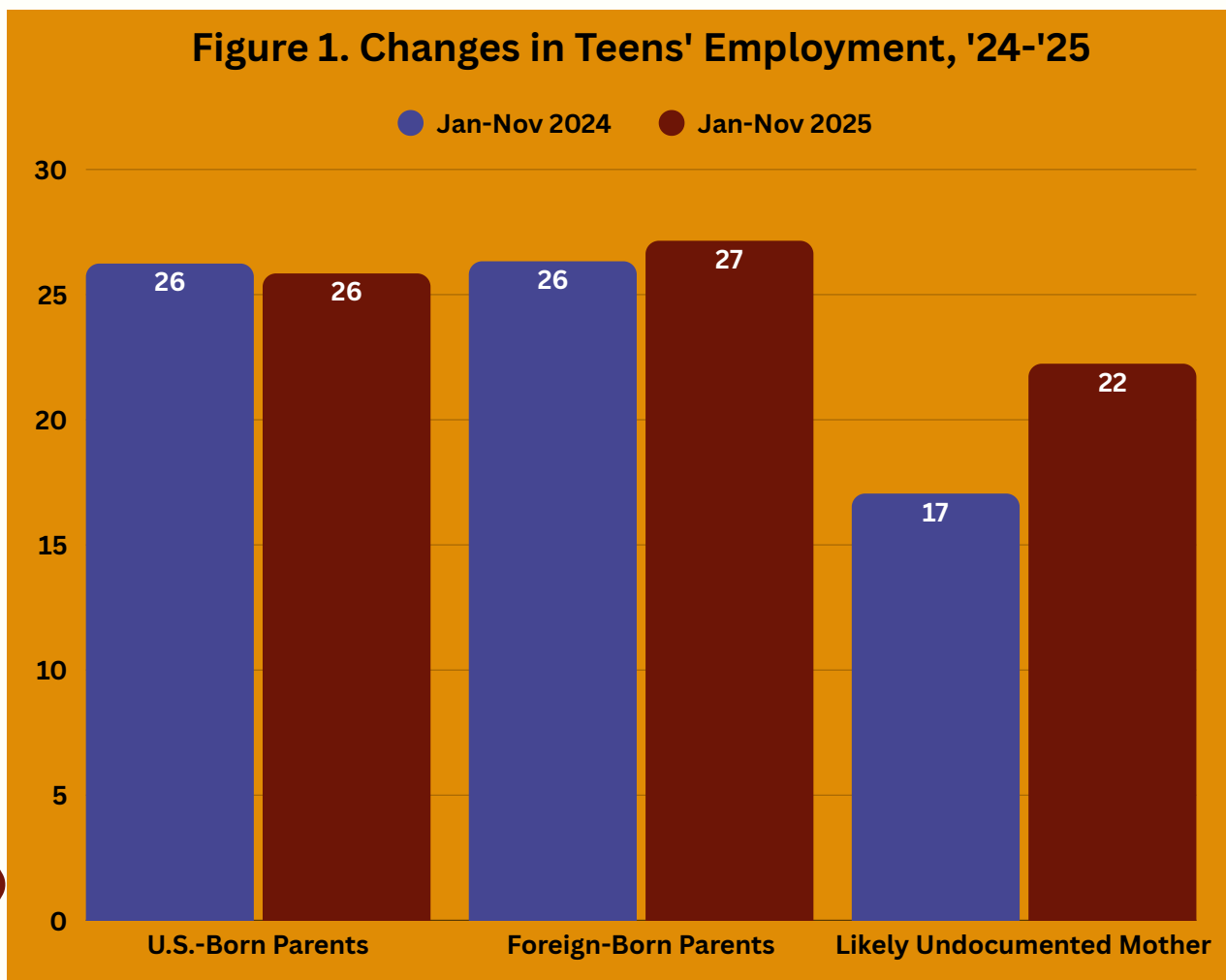
We considered samples 1 and 2 to be placebo samples—that is, teenagers who were likely not directly affected by changes in immigration enforcement. We defined mothers in sample 3 as likely undocumented if they are Hispanic, have at most a high school degree, and report being a non-citizen. We used these demographics because the data does not directly identify whether someone is undocumented. Sample 3 is where we anticipated we would observe any effects.

We examined the employment rates and full-time school enrollment rates among each of these samples in January 2025-November 2025 compared to January 2024-November 2024. We omitted October from both years because the 2025 October CPS data was never collected due to the government shutdown. We used a national sample and weight using the CPS-provided survey weights.

Results

Change in Teens' Employment Rate

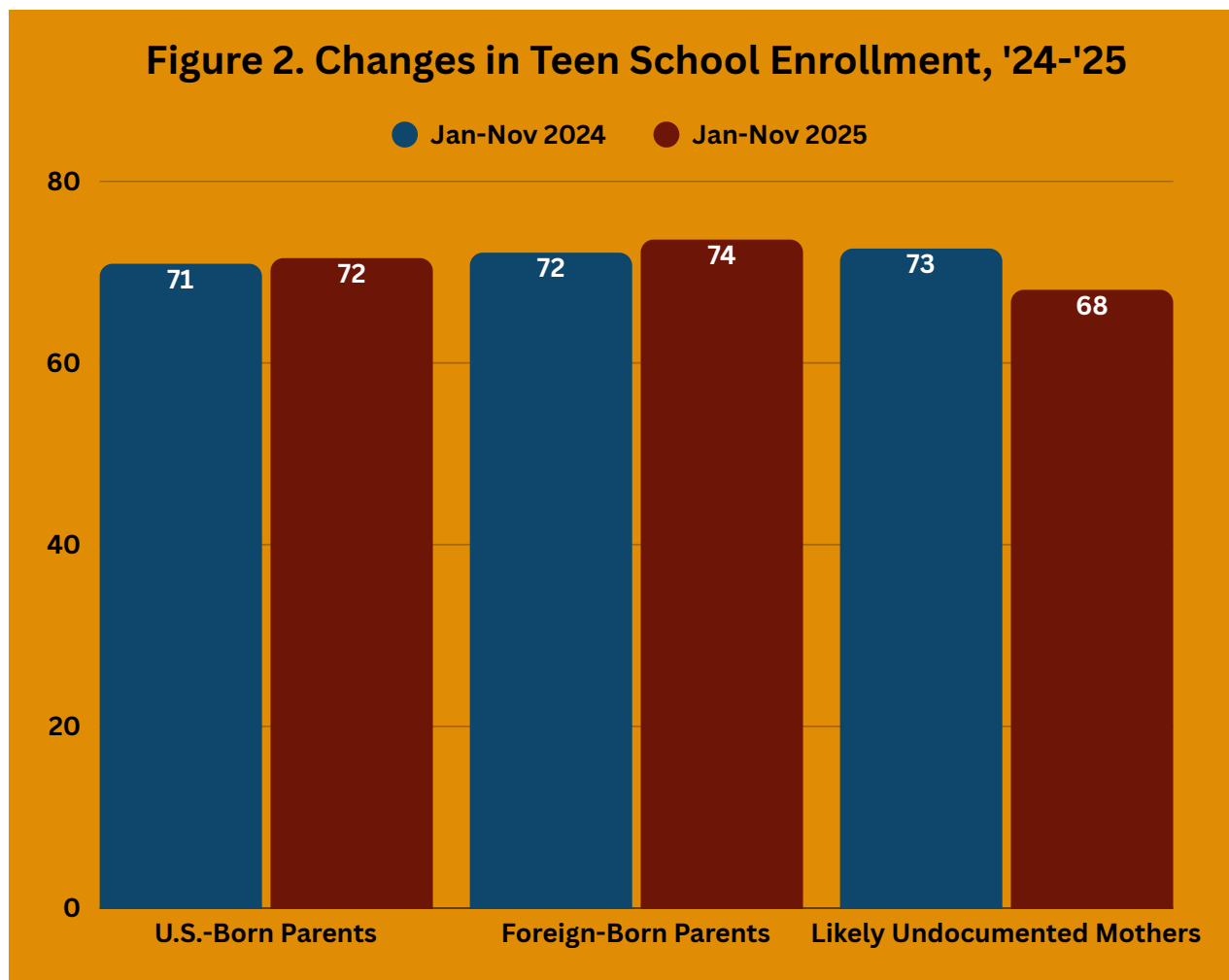
In Figure 1, we compare average employment for these three samples between 2024 and 2025. There are no large changes in the percent employed from 2024-2025 in the two placebo samples, but there is a large increase for sample 3 in 2025. For teens with likely undocumented mothers, we find the employment rate increases by 5.1 percentage points, or 30 percent. We estimate there are roughly 492,000 teenagers in the U.S. who are in this type of mixed-status family, so this means 25,000 more were working in 2025 compared to 2024.



Results, continued

Change in Teens' Full-Time School Enrollment

Next, in Figure 2, we look at full-time school enrollment for each sample. If teens are working more, they may reduce their school enrollment as a result; indeed, this is what the analysis reveals. Full-time school enrollment rates fell from 73 percent to 68 percent between 2024 and 2025 for teens with likely undocumented mothers. This translates to roughly 20,000 fewer teenagers in mixed-status families enrolled in school full-time in 2025 compared to 2024. On the other hand, school enrollment increased for the two other samples.



Discussion

Overall, we document that immigration enforcement and other anti-immigration policies in 2025 are leading to worse outcomes for U.S.-born teenagers in mixed-status families. These findings align with prior research that demonstrates the relationship between immigration enforcement, youth labor force participation, and school drop-out patterns. Studying past mass deportation efforts, other [research](#) found U.S.-born Hispanic youths in mixed-status families increased labor force participation by 6 percentage points and hours worked per week by 20 percent in the face of heightened enforcement. Additionally, teenagers in mixed-status families were almost [20 percent more likely](#) to drop out of school.

It is particularly notable to consider these findings in light of a [push](#) by many states to lower the minimum working age and reduce restrictions on the hours and schedule that teens can work. This leaves teens in mixed-status families particularly [vulnerable](#) to pressures to drop out of school and work to support their families in this climate of increased ICE activity and reductions in immigrants' legal ability to work. These pressures on teens in mixed-status families will additionally make them vulnerable to workplace exploitation and narrow their opportunities for furthering their education and career. **Policymakers must pay attention to the cascading impacts that immigration enforcement is having on children, as this is only one example of the far-reaching harmful effect of these activities.**

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