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Enforcing immigration law “isn’t smart,” President Barack Obama told law enforcement officials Tuesday, just one day after the public learned he had released 36,007 illegal-immigrant murderers, rapists, thieves and other criminals into the nation’s communities.

Cops should be going after major criminals, not the many illegal immigrants that are quietly living in their districts, said Obama, who has twice sworn to uphold the nation’s laws.

“You’ve got to spend time dealing with somebody who is not causing any other trouble other than the fact that they were trying to make a living for their families,” Obama said.

“That’s just not a good use of our resources. It’s not smart. It doesn’t make sense,” said Obama, who has already directed immigration police to minimize enforcement of illegal living far from the border.

The statement will likely spur concerns among Republicans and the public that Obama can’t be trusted to implement the enforcement features of any immigration compromise.

A March 2013 Gallup poll showed that 138 million foreigners would like to settle in the United States. The total included an estimated 18 million people in China, 13 million people in Nigeria and three million people in Kenya.

Polls consistently show the public favors a stronger crackdown on employment of illegal immigrants.

On May 12, the Center for Immigration Studies released government documents showing that Obama’s deputies released foreign 36,007 foreign criminals who had

committed crimes in the country, instead of deporting them.

The 88,000 convictions included 193 murders, 426 sexual assaults, 303 kidnappings, 1,075 aggravated assaults, 1,160 vehicle thefts, and 16,000 convictions for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Obama's call to end the enforcement of immigration law came during a staged event at the White House. The purpose was to stimulate his supporters' declining interest in the largely defunct and unpopular 18-month campaign to sharply increase the inflow of immigrants and guest-workers. Obama needs to keep the issue boiling to boost turnout by Latinos in November.

During the May 13 event, Obama reprised his familiar claims that adding roughly 33 million people to the population of 315 million would stimulate the economy and create new jobs.

But his audience consisted of state and local law enforcement officials, so he also argued that conditional legalization for the nation's illegal immigrants would make the cops' jobs easier. The large number of illegal immigrants inside the country — estimated at more than 11 million people — “makes it harder for law enforcement to do their jobs,” Obama said.

“Large segments of the community are afraid to report crimes or serve as witnesses because they fear the [possible deportation] consequences for themselves or their families,” Obama said.

The illegals “are folks who are woven into the fabrics of our communities,” he said. “Their kids are going to school with our kids. Most of them are not making trouble; most of them are not causing crimes. And yet, we put them in this tenuous position, and it creates a situation in which your personnel, who have got to go after gang-bangers and need to be going after violent criminals and deal with the whole range of challenges, and who have to cooperate with [the federal government] around our counterterrorism activities.”

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