

THE CONTEMPORARY CUBAN IMMIGRATION CRISIS

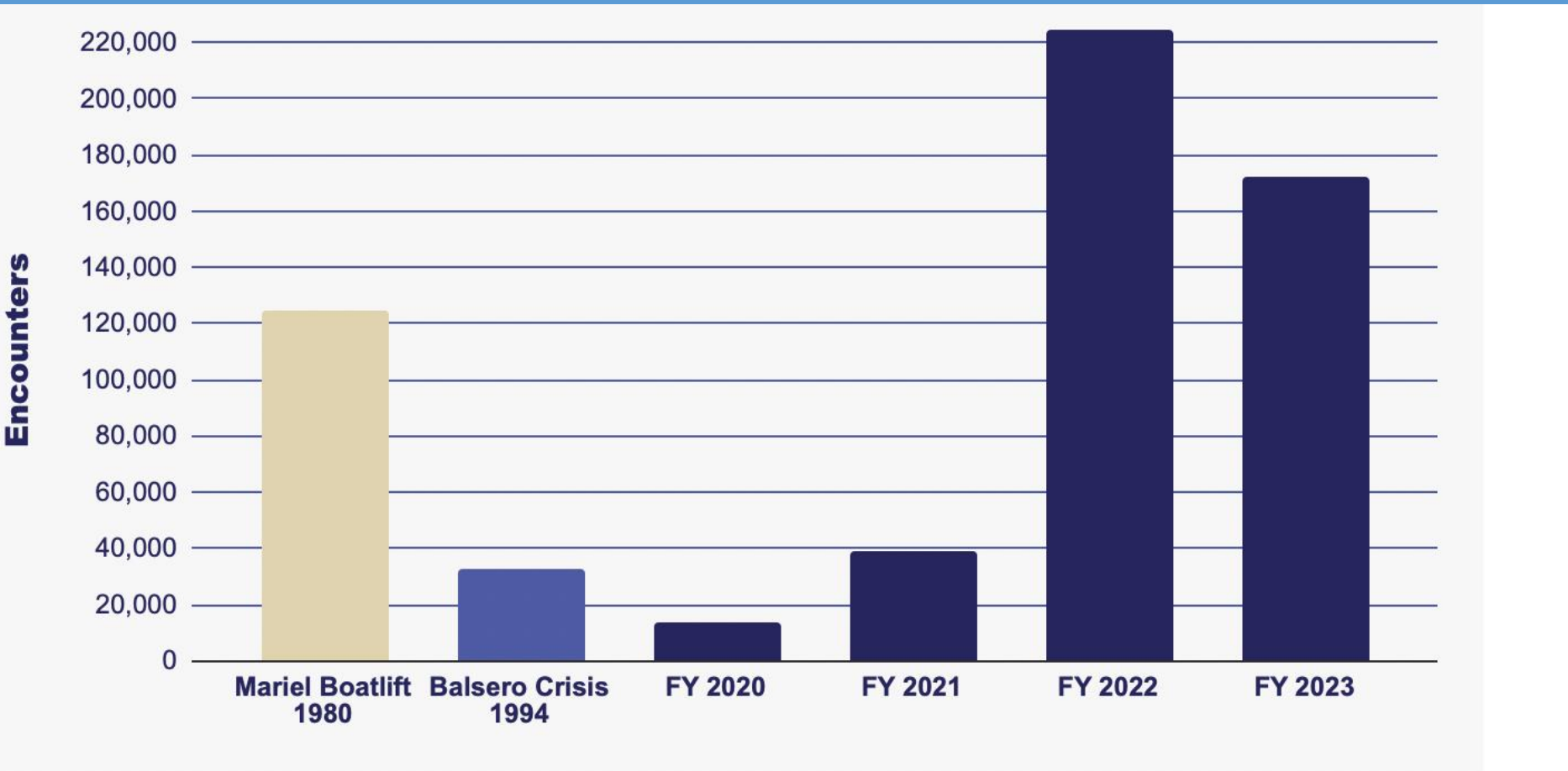
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CUBAN IMMIGRATION NOT NEW, SCALE IS UNPRECEDENTED

1. *1 of top 3 Latin American and 1 of top 10 global U.S. immigrant groups despite small size of country—for decades*
2. Immigration surged after 1959 revolution: currently in U.S. about *1.3 million Cuba-born, 1 million Cuban-descent born in U.S.*
3. ******Most Cubans have *come unauthorized, without immigration visas, but became LPRs [lawful permanent residents] after 1 year thanks to Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA)*
4. Unauthorized Cubans expelled far less than other nationals
5. FY 2022: largest unauthorized Cuban influx in any year, 225,000+; last 2 years: 425,000 Cubans left, nearly 4% of population

UNAUTHORIZED ARRIVALS



Source: Elaborated by CDA with data from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

CURRENT MIGRATION CRISIS: WHAT'S NEW?

1. *scale* of unauthorized influx reflects massive *resistance to US efforts to contain* Cuban immigration since Obama retracted parole rights
2. *expensive & dangerous* “land [versus sea] Mariel” [2000+]:
 - involve human smugglers & transit government profiteering
 - BUT nearly 600% increase in maritime interdictions between FY 2021-22
3. *asylum seekers: new entry path*
 - why? response to Obama’s ending parole entry rights & Trump closing lawful entry path;
 - CAA enables Cubans to become LPRs after 1 year without winning asylum cases.

WHY RECENT MIGRATION SURGE? “Push & Pull Factors”

1. “PUSH Factors”: conditions in Cuba a “perfect storm”

a. **economic****: crisis in Cuba, exacerbated by pandemic, with drop in tourism; blackouts, scarcities, high inflation, decline in value of peso; Trump increase in U.S. sanctions, i.e. U.S. exacerbates Cuba’s economic problems

b. **social-psychological****:

loss of hope;

migration contagion;

decline in fear of retribution if try to leave

c. **political**: widespread disillusionment with Cuban government but relaxation of exit restrictions;

2. “PULL Factors”

a. lure of *longstanding unique* entitlements: e.g. near-automatic path to LPR & citizenship; work, welfare, political rights; rarely detained for any length of time or deported

in FY2022 98% of Cubans apprehended at border admitted (versus over 1.8 million other nationals expelled under Title 42)

b. Cubans development of effective *new immigration strategy* following retraction of parole rights: as asylum-seekers, with unique rights to LPR after 1 year owing to CAA, independent of winning asylum case

c. improved unauthorized immigration route: Nicaragua drops visa requirement, shortens unauthorized path to U.S.[and able to avoid Darien Gap]

d. development of expansive human smuggler networks, that guides journey by land, though dangerous & expensive [e.g. 17,000 suspected smugglers arrested April 2022-September 2023]

e. transnational personal networks to finance migration

BIDEN JANUARY 2023 REFORMS, RESPONSE TO CUBAN (and other) MIGRATION CRISIS AT U.S.-MEXICAN BORDER

1. Expansion of legal pathways: “carrot”

- a. partial reactivation of *bilateral immigration accord* Trump disregarded: though still not issuing minimum of 20,000 visas yearly
- b. reactivation of *consular services* in Havana [need not go to Guyana]
- c. revival of Cuban Family Reunification Program [can move to US before visa awarded]
- d. CBP One: new 2-year parole program to admit 30,000 Cubans, Venezuelans, Haitians, & Nicaraguans monthly, if have US sponsors—with temporary entry & work rights

2. Constrict unlawful entry: “stick”

- a. *expel* if arrive unauthorized at border or if enter US illegally, 5-year ban on reentry
- b. “*asylum ban:*” if pass through “3rd country” must seek asylum there (ineligible in U.S.)
- c. if interdicted at sea, ineligible for parole entry

3. Ways Cubans benefit more than the 3 other nationals

a. *formally*: unique *path to LPR* & unique rights (along with Haitians) to refugee-equivalent benefits

b. *informally*: wealthiest, largest, & most active U.S. networks to sponsor immigrants

4. Politics behind new policies: block aspiring immigrants from the border

a. to undermine Republican critique of Biden's border crisis, in view of upcoming 2024 presidential election

b. to preempt new surge in unauthorized immigration with ending of Title 42 (which allowed Trump & Biden to expel unauthorized immigrants without entitling them to asylum claims)

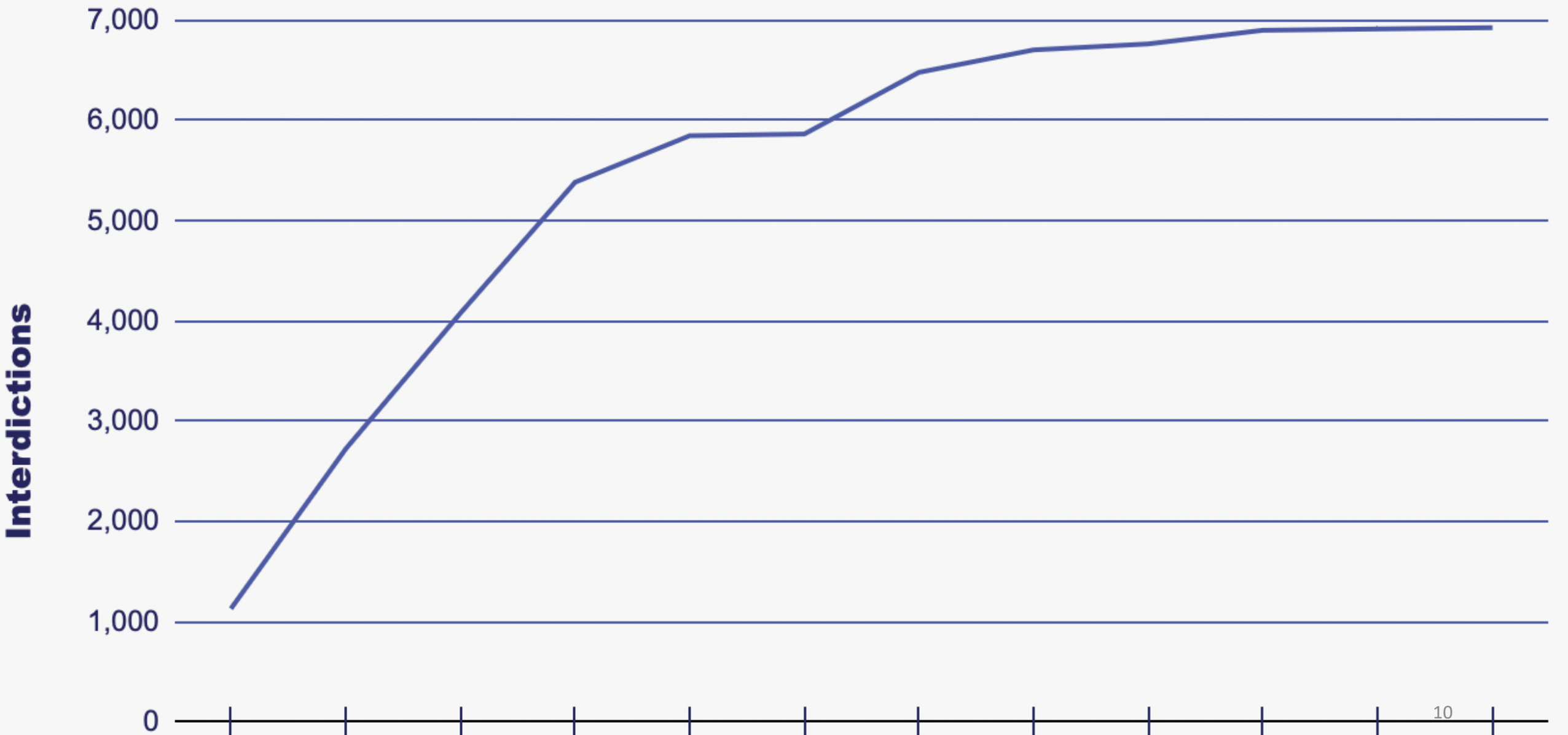
4. INITIAL IMPACT OF REFORMS:

- a. “wealth test”: need cell phone, U.S. sponsor, need pay costs in dollars
- b. as of June 2023 more Venezuelans & Haitians than Cubans arrived with parole entry

5. PROGNOSIS?

- a. Cubans securing *new unique immigration path* with LPR, citizenship, “refugee,” welfare, work, & other rights
- b. reform ineffective in stopping unauthorized immigration:
 - nearly as many unauthorized arrivals in FY 2023 as in FY 2022, before reform
- c. unauthorized migration by sea may soar with clamp-down on land entry--already on rise
- d. legal challenges to the reforms

Cubans Interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard (FY 23)



PERSONS OBTAINING LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENT (LPR) STATUS BY CLASS OF ADMISSION, COUNTRY OF BIRTH (%)

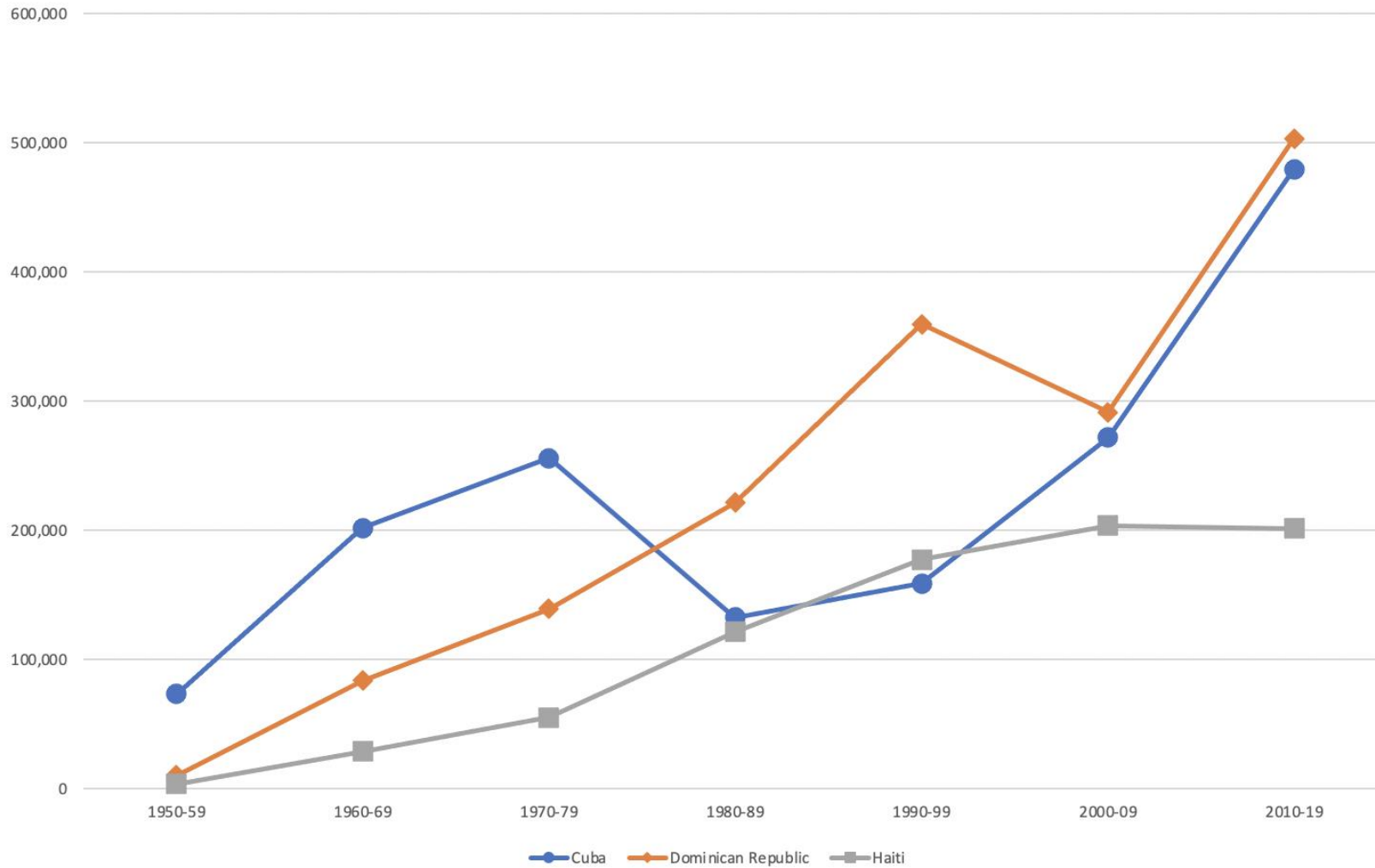
	immed. family of US citizens & fam- sponsored preferences	refugees & asylee adjustments	other
CUBA			
2000	14	69	17
2016	13	86	1
2020	24	74	2
2021	14	84	2
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC			
2000	98	.1	2
2016	94	.2	1
2020	98	.2	2
2021	98	.2	2
HAITI			
2000	95	1	3
2016	95	4	1
2020	96	.1	3
2021	97	1	2

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS), *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 2010, 2016, 2021*
www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2000, 2016, 2021

CUBAN AND HAITIAN *REFUGEE* ARRIVALS FISCAL YEARS 1984-2020, SELECT YEARS

	Cuba	Haiti
• 2020	7	-- [neither country among top 10
•		
• 2015	1,527	-- sources of refugee admissions]
•		
• 2010	4,818	18
•		
• 2005	6,360	8
•		
• 2000	3,184	49
•		
• 1995	6,133	1,485
•		
• 1990	3,980	11
•		
• 1985	158	1
•		
• Sources: Department of Homeland Security, <i>Yearbook of Immigration Statistics</i> and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), <i>Statistical Yearbook of INS</i> , select years.		

PERSONS OBTAINING LPR STATUS BY COUNTRY OF LAST RESIDENCE CUBA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, HAITI, FY 1950-2019



Total immigration 1950-2019: 1,574,210 from Cuba, 1,609,388 from the Dominican Republic, and 729,110 from Haiti.

sources: Department of Homeland Security (DHS), *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* Table 2 (dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2005, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019)

IN SUM:

1. Surge in Cuban emigration
2. Cubans turn to creative ways to get around U.S. obstacles
3. Building on unique U.S. entitlements of the past, Cubans continue to receive unique entitlements

HERE'S HOPING for safer, legal, more equitable immigration