Editors' Note

Even among the most cynical of Americans, there's probably no avoiding that warm patriotic rush when visiting the Statue of Liberty and reading Emma Lazarus's sonnet, with its now-famous invitation to "your tired, your poor, your huddled masses." Although the country's open-border policy ended long ago, the ideal of a nation that openly welcomes immigrants is still far from empty.

But we've arguably reached a moment in history in which the gap between this welcoming ideal and the country's existing immigration policy seems especially large and glaring. For some Americans (although certainly not all), it has become difficult to reconcile this ideal with immigration policies that, rightly or wrongly, have increasingly focused on deportation. With the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act in 2001, the number of deportations surged to an all-time high of 438,000 in 2013, a roughly 15-fold increase from the average of approximately 29,000 per year from 1975 to 1995.

The key policy question of our time, and the one taken on in this issue, is whether this focus on deportation has compromised other policy objectives, especially that of ensuring that immigrants can fully exploit their talents and succeed in the labor market. It may well be asked, as Doug Massey indeed does in our lead article, whether a deportation-focused policy can even succeed in its stated objective of reducing the number of unauthorized immigrants. As important as that question is, most of the articles in this issue focus on the *unintended consequences* of our country's current immigration policy, with the recurring worry being that an aggressive deportation policy may slow down immigrant assimilation and incorporation.

Does our immigration policy undermine, for example, the safety net's capacity to address poverty? The main function of the safety net is of course to reduce poverty by providing opportunities to return to school, secure vocational training, receive childcare or housing assistance, or otherwise make ends meet. These objectives may be compromised, however, when a country is running a "deportation net" as well as a safety net. As Francisco Pedraza and Ling Zhu show, many eligible Latinos opt against using public support, presumably out of concern that any involvement with the state would expose their friends or family to deportation.

The safety net is not the only institution that may be affected by the long reach of immigration policy. For the children of immigrants, the standard pathway to integration has been to attend school and secure a mainstream job, a pathway that's difficult to achieve for those who are undocumented and cannot qualify for financial aid or pass a background check. It is unsurprising in this context that Van C. Tran reports that immigrant groups with many undocumented members (e.g., Mexicans) are faring more poorly. Likewise, Marybeth Mattingly and Juan Pedroza show that poverty rates among Hispanics, although not increasing, are nonetheless higher than they likely would be if our immigration policy didn't suppress citizenship rates. In an especially perverse result, Fernando Riosmena and his colleagues note that stricter enforcement has reduced return migration to Mexico, thus increasing immigrant exposure to unhealthy behaviors in the United States.

This is all to suggest the standard social science result that big-reach policies, like ramped-up deportation, tend to have multifarious effects that can be unanticipated. The simple purpose of this issue is to lay out the current science on these effects and thereby allow for as informed policy as possible. As always, no one would pretend that policy is based on evidence alone, but it can and should at least be informed by it.

—*David B. Grusky, Charles Varner, and Marybeth Mattingly*