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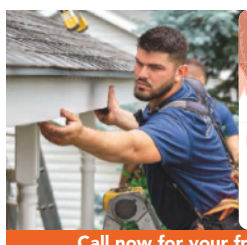
Sunday

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS



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MICHIGAN IMMIGRATION

Nearly 38,000 migrants said 'Michigan' after crossing the southern border

Shutterstock illustration

Data shows they named the state when asked their destination by border officials, but they did not necessarily end up here.

Rose White *rwhite@mlive.com*

Over the past decade, millions of migrants from around the globe entered the United States by crossing the border with Mexico.

Newly obtained records offer one of the clearest looks yet at how this historic wave of migration at the southern border touched Michigan.

After being released, nearly 38,000 migrants told federal officials they planned to head to Michigan, sharing addresses that spread far beyond Detroit and Grand Rapids, into smaller communities across both peninsulas.

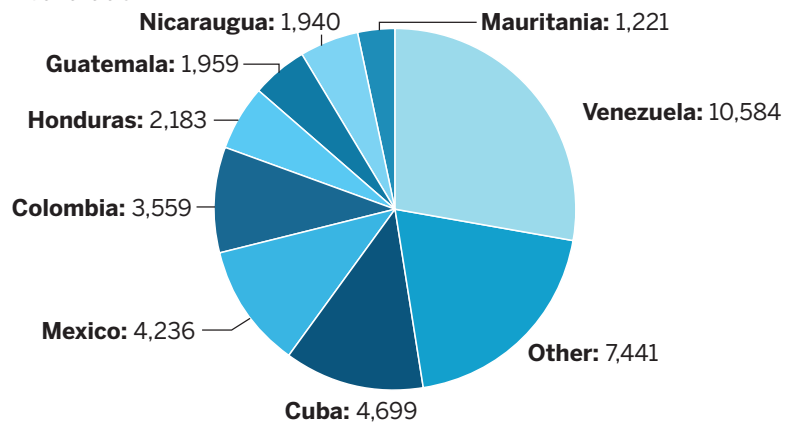
"They might have a family member, a friend, someone from their village who they know in Michigan. So, that's the address they put, because it's their proposed destination," said Ruby Robinson, from the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center.

MLive's findings are based on federal records that contain details of about 4.5 million migrants who crossed into the United States from Mexico between October 2018 and July 2025 and stayed in the U.S.

The Associated Press obtained the data under a Freedom of Information Act request and shared it with MLive.

Top citizenship for migrants

About 28% of the migrants who listed Michigan as their initial destination came from Venezuela.



Source: Associated Press, U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Rose White / Advance Local

FROM FAR AND WIDE

Nationally, migrants came from more than 150 countries, a departure from earlier patterns showing most were from Mexico. In another change, more women and children than men arrived. Many people went to areas with established foreign-born populations, but elsewhere they transformed blocks, neighborhoods and sometimes cities.

The surge made immigration a defining feature of the Biden administration and a

SEE MICHIGAN IMMIGRATION, A3

ELECTION 2026

New polling finds Michigan Senate race a unique animal

The political environment favors Democrats. Michigan doesn't fit that mold.

Erin Cox and Scott Clement
Washington Post

Democrat Abdul El-Sayed holds a narrow edge over Republican Mike Rogers in Michigan's nationally watched Senate race despite a political environment that heavily favors Democrats, a Washington Post-Schar School poll finds.

El-Sayed's three percentage-point lead over Rogers — 48% to 45% among likely voters — puts the contest within the poll's 3.9-point margin of error. That's a small gap at a time when economic worries and frustrations with President Donald Trump have voters viewing Republicans unfavorably.

The tight Senate race stands in contrast to another Democrat's wide lead in the governor's race and voters' clear preference for Democrats to control the Senate.

While 53% of Michigan's likely voters say they want the Democrats to control the Senate next year, El-Sayed has support from a smaller share of voters.

While both parties have a negative image with Michigan's likely voters, Republicans are viewed worse: 47% view Democrats unfavorably compared with 51% who view Republicans that way.

But in the more lopsided governor's race, Democrat Jocelyn Benson holds a 12 percentage-point lead over Republican Rep. John James. Compared with El-Sayed, Benson gets slightly more support from Black voters, independents and voters who say they are unwilling to support a Muslim for president.

The depressed support among those constituencies suggests an electoral opportunity, both for Rogers, a former congressman who narrowly lost the 2024 Senate race, and El-Sayed, a former public health official who has run as a populist.

It also illustrates the headwinds each face as the increasingly caustic Senate race enters its final stage.

AN OPPORTUNITY

Republicans see the race to succeed retiring Democratic Sen. Gary Peters as their best opportunity to flip a swing-state seat held by Democrats. They view El-Sayed, who would be the country's first Muslim senator and has drawn support from his party's left flank, as a vulnerable general election candidate. Their ads highlight his liberal policy ideas and attack him in ways that evoke anti-Muslim stereotypes.

SEE ELECTION 2026, A2

Advice, E6 **Comics**, F1 **Obituaries**, B2 **Opinion**, E1 **Puzzles**, F9 **Sports**, C1 **Weather**, B5
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