CIVIQS

MEMORANDUM

To: Immigration Hub
From: Drew Linzer, Civiqs
Date: October 22, 2020
RE: Results of Seven-state Survey, October 2020

Major Findings

A Civiqs poll conducted for the Immigration Hub from October 8-13, 2020 finds that Americans in seven key election battleground states hold positive views of immigrants and immigration. Voters support making it easier to immigrate to the United States legally. They are interested in maintaining or expanding current levels of legal immigration.

Swing-state voters consistently prioritize citizenship over deportation as a response to undocumented immigration. For undocumented immigrants who are long-standing members of their communities, voters want the government to extend a pathway to citizenship. The DACA program receives overwhelming support in every state surveyed.

Although attitudes are divided towards the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE), there is a prevailing view that immigration enforcement has grown too extreme in the United States, and needs to be reevaluated. A large majority of voters believe that the U.S. government needs to do more to ensure that ICE personnel abide by professional standards and are held accountable for their conduct.

Over 60% of voters in every battleground state are opposed to jailing families who are seeking asylum. Similarly large proportions oppose family detention and separation at the U.S.-Mexico border. These results are all in line with the 62% of voters who opposed for-profit prisons in the September surveys. There is strong support for a moratorium on deportations while the Department of Homeland Security reviews enforcement policies.

Battleground state voters remain dissatisfied with President Trump's job performance, compared to the results of Civiqs' September surveys. Trump's overall job approval rating in the seven states surveyed is unchanged at 44%. His job approval ratings range from 41% in Colorado to 46% in Arizona and Florida. On his handling of immigration, Trump is viewed positively by 45% and negatively by 53%.

Making it Easier to Immigrate

Voters are supportive of legal immigration. By a margin of 58% to 26% in the surveyed states, voters agree that "We should make it easier for people to immigrate to the U.S. legally, so that they will not try to come to this country without documentation." This message resonates very well with Democrats (82% agree), but it also receives support from a large majority (58%) of Independents, and even 31% of Republicans.

When asked what they think should be the top priority for U.S. border security policy, nearly half (48%) respond that it is creating "safe, legal channels for people to enter the country legally." By comparison, only 38% would prioritize increased patrols and barriers. Voters want to maintain—or even increase—legal immigration to the United States. By 32% to 17%, battleground state voters support increasing over decreasing legal immigration, with a plurality (35%) supporting maintaining current levels.

These policy preferences are consistent with voters' perception that immigrants are contributors to their local communities and a benefit to their local economy. By over 2-to-1, voters say that immigrants come to the U.S. to work hard and fill jobs that Americans don't want. Nearly half (49%) say that immigrants to the United States contribute more to the economy than they take. And 34% of voters believe that immigrants in their local communities have bade things better, versus 16% who say that immigrants have made things worse.

Citizenship for Undocumented Immigrants

A pathway to citizenship is preferred to deportation as a policy response to undocumented immigrants currently residing the United States. Between the options of offering citizenship to long-standing undocumented immigrant members of their communities, and having law enforcement deport those community members, nearly two-thirds of voters (63%) prefer citizenship. Only 29% support deportation.

Citizenship also wins out for immigrants involved in the pandemic response. With 58% support, as part of an economic recovery bill, voters would extend a path to legal status and citizenship to undocumented immigrant workers who have been essential to the pandemic response. This proposal unifies Democrats (88%), wins majority support from Independents (60%), and gains the support of 25% of Republicans as well.

Voters are so interested in pathways to citizenship that it is their top policy priority for addressing the issue of immigration in the United States, as a whole. Nearly one in three voters (31%) say that creating a pathway to citizenship is their top priority, including 49% of Democrats, 30% of Independents, and 13% of Republicans. The second-most selected priority, deportation, is chosen by 25% of voters; mostly Republicans.

Over 60% of voters in every state support continuing the DACA program.

A More Fair and Humane Immigration System

Voters want to reform and reevaluate immigration enforcement policies in the United States. Majorities in every battleground state agree that "immigration enforcement has become too cruel and extreme; we should have a system that is more fair and humane." As two examples, 62% of voters oppose jailing families who have committed no crimes and are seeking asylum; and 59% of voters oppose the practice of detention and family separation at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Voters' preferences for a more fair and humane immigration system are consistent and clear. There is strong support for a moratorium on deportation until the Department of Homeland Security can review enforcement policies (53% support, 37% oppose). We find voters' attitudes divided towards ICE, with 43% favorable and 47% unfavorable. However, a large majority—fully 61% of battleground state voters—believe that the U.S. government needs to do more do ensure that ICE personnel abide by professional standards, and are held accountable for inhumane treatment.

Governance and Statehood

This round of surveys contained a series of questions focused on issues of governance, as well as statehood for Washington, DC and Puerto Rico. Most battleground state voters support eliminating the senate filibuster. The survey asked: "Do you support or oppose removing rules in the U.S. Senate that enable a minority of Senators to block legislation that has broad public support?" This received 44% support, with 29% opposed, and a substantial number, 27%, indifferent or unsure.

Gerrymandering is viewed as a problem by an overwhelming 74% of swing-state voters, increasing to 80% in Colorado. Nearly every Democrat surveyed (95%) across the swing states agreed that the way congressional districts are drawn produces unfair election results. A majority (51%) of Republicans and 73% of Independents share this view.

Voters support statehood for both Washington, DC and Puerto Rico—but more strongly for Puerto Rico. Washington, DC statehood has 49% in support and 38% opposed. For Puerto Rico, 57% support statehood, with only 31% opposed. In both cases, statehood is supported by over 85% of Democrats.

Methodology

Civiqs interviewed 7,287 registered voters in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin from October 8-13, 2020. The survey was conducted online, among selected members of the Civiqs research panel. Sampled individuals were emailed by Civiqs and responded using a personalized link to the survey at civiqs.com. The

survey results are weighted by age, race, gender, education, and party identification to be representative of the population of registered voters in each state.

State	Sample size	Design effect	Margin of error
Arizona	1,026	1.42	±3.6%
Colorado	1,164	1.29	±3.3%
Florida	1,011	1.16	±3.3%
Michigan	1,022	1.40	±3.6%
North Carolina	1,000	1.34	±3.6%
Pennsylvania	1,018	1.10	±3.2%
Wisconsin	1,046	1.24	±3.4%

More information about Civiqs can be found online at civiqs.com/methodology.