



To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group on behalf of Immigration Hub
Date: March 24th, 2021
Re: NEW SURVEY - Opportunity for Biden and Democrats to win immigration debate

Global Strategy Group recently partnered with Immigration Hub to conduct public opinion research related to proposed citizenship legislation and the situation at America's southern border. What we found is continued, widespread support for the various citizenship proposals facing Congress, support for President Biden's solutions to address the border, and disapproval of Republicans' obstructionism on immigration. President Biden and Democrats have an opportunity to win the immigration debate by clearly defining their position. Recent findings from a survey fielded just this week (March 18-22) among 1,000 voters nationwide are as follows:

Support for citizenship proposals for a range of undocumented workers is holding strong, even in the face of the situation at the border.

In keeping with data from other recent surveys, strong, bipartisan support exists for providing pathways to citizenship to different groups. Note that this survey was fielded over the last week, showing how support for these proposals remains strong even in the face of an immigration news environment focused on the migrant situation at the border. **Nearly three-quarters of voters (72%) support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. if certain requirements are met, while just 28% support deporting them.** Further, when independently testing support for a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers, essential workers, and farmworkers, roughly two in three voters support each proposal:

- 67% support the DREAM Act (just 23% oppose), including 88% of Democrats, 64% of Independents, and 45% of Republicans.
- 67% support citizenship for undocumented essential workers (just 24% oppose), including 91% of Democrats, 71% of Independents, and 40% of Republicans.
- 65% support citizenship for undocumented farm workers (just 27% oppose), including 91% of Democrats, 62% of Independents, and 38% of Republicans.

Voters see these citizenship proposals as an opportunity to help America's economic recovery. By a strong margin, voters see providing a pathway to citizenship to the aforementioned groups as helping our economic recovery over hurting it (64% help/23% hurt), with significant numbers of Democrats (87% help), Independents (58%), and Republicans (39%) saying it will help more than hurt.

Voters view the situation at the southern border as a serious and urgent one. While few voters currently know where Biden stands on the issue, once given the opportunity, support for Biden's plans is substantial.

The situation at the border is serious to voters, and many are still unsure of where Biden currently stands. Few outside of Republican voters see the situation at the southern border as a “crisis” (60% of Republicans see it this way, versus 22% of Democrats and 33% of Independents), but a strong majority views it as a “very serious situation” (67% of voters see it as either a “crisis” or a “very serious situation, but not a crisis”). At the same time, few voters (30%) know “very well” what President Biden stands for on immigration, giving him an opportunity amongst the public to lay out his plans.

Biden’s proposed solution to the border is popular with the public. Once voters hear Biden’s stance on the border, they are very supportive of it – **63% approve and just 28% disapprove of Biden’s approach to the border when explained in this way:**

President Biden says that what is happening at the border is a direct result of a broken immigration system that has been ignored for too long. That’s why Biden is working to safely and securely manage the southern border with new investments in technology and infrastructure, while also addressing the root causes of migration and building capacity to process migrants and children in a humane way that is in line with American values.

In thinking more about Biden and Democrats’ introduction to their border plan, several key elements stand out. First, it is important to stand for solving the problem at the border. In poll after poll, it is clear that voters believe our immigration system is broken. As such, voters are far more supportive of an approach that builds a functioning and humane immigration system over the Republican “crackdown” approach:

- 58% agree that *“the best way to handle migrants at the border is to build a functioning immigration system to process people in a humane way, while developing a robust plan to address the root causes of migration.”*
- Just 42% agree that *“we need to combat migrant surges at the border with more border security, more border patrol agents, and crackdowns on illegal immigration.”*
- With Independents, the progressive solution wins by a 63% to 37% margin.

Second, the solutions we introduce to fix the problem should balance the *humanity* in keeping migrant families together while also offering *safe and orderly* ways to address what voters see as disorder at the border. The following are examples of ideas that resonate with the public:

- 62% say it is an “excellent” or “good” idea to be *“prioritizing keeping families together in all aspects of our approach to immigration,”* including 81% of Democrats and 57% of Independents.
- 66% say it is an “excellent” or “good” idea to be *“creating a new, fair, and orderly process for those seeking asylum to apply in their home country to come to the United States legally,”* including 74% of Democrats and 63% of Independents.

Finally, voters prefer *smarter* over *stronger* management of the border. By a 52%-41% margin, voters prefer “smart border management” to “strong border security,” disproving the idea that all the public wants is strength at the border.

- 73% of voters agree that *“improving technology and infrastructure at the border to modernize the way the border is managed”* is an “excellent” or “good” idea.

Republicans in Congress are vulnerable on immigration should they continue to act as obstructionists and refuse to fix the problem. Democrats should be prepared to go it alone as voters prioritize effective solutions over bipartisanship.

Voters see Republicans as blocking President Biden on immigration when they want to see Republicans working with the President. Consider the following:

- By a 47% to 23% margin, voters see Republicans in Congress as *“blocking President Biden from taking action” instead of working “with Biden on bipartisan solutions.”*
- But they want the opposite -- by a 62% to 25% margin, they want Republicans to be working with Biden instead of blocking him.

In the end voters, want solutions. So if Republicans are unwilling to come to the table and help fix the problem, the public would prefer Biden solve the problem without Republican support than to do little on the issue.

- 64% prefer Biden and the Democrats *“focus on doing what’s necessary to fix the country’s immigration system, even if it means doing so without Republican support.”*
- Just 36% prefer Biden and Democrats *“focus on doing things that have Republican support on immigration, even if very little or nothing gets done.”*
- Among Independents, Biden and Democrats focusing on “doing what’s necessary” wins by a 70% to 30% margin.

In message-testing, Republicans’ greatest vulnerability on immigration is their refusal to work with Biden on solutions to the problem -- instead opting to score political points.

When presented with a range of criticisms of Republicans’ approach to the southern border, the following item is most concerning:

That Republicans in Congress refuse to work with President Biden on solutions to address what's happening at the border, instead opting to block everything Biden is doing on immigration to score political points

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1,000 nationwide voters between March 18-22, 2021. The survey had a confidence interval of +/- 3.1%. All interviews were conducted via web-based panel. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, political, and demographic divisions of the electorate are properly represented.