



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION
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To Regulate Immigration, Only 4 in 10 Favor Building a Wall, While 7 in 10 Favor Requiring Employers to Use E-Verify System, More Guest Worker Visas

Washington, DC – An in-depth survey finds that, to discourage illegal immigration, only 4 in 10 favor building a wall, rather a bipartisan majority of 72% favor requiring employers to use the E-Verify system to ensure that the people they hire have the legal right to work in the United States. At the same time, to meet demands for labor 69% favor substantially increasing guest worker visas.

The survey of 2,407 registered voters, conducted by the Program for Public Consultation (PPC) at the University of Maryland, was released today by the nonpartisan organization Voice of the People.

To ensure that respondents understood the issue, they were given a short briefing on the US immigration program and a number of possible reforms in proposed Congressional legislation. The content was reviewed by proponents and opponents of the proposals, to ensure the briefing was accurate and balanced, and the strongest arguments were presented.

“Democrats and Republicans in Washington DC are at loggerheads on whether to build a border wall to impede illegal immigration. This survey reveals a nuanced bipartisan public consensus for a combination of steps to legally regulate the flow of immigrant labor that both discourages the hiring of undocumented workers and opens channels to meet the demand for migrant workers,” commented Steven Kull, director of PPC.

To discourage the hiring of undocumented workers 83% of Republicans and 66% of Democrats favor proposed Congressional legislation requiring employers to use the E-Verify system. Employers who do not verify their employees and are found to be employing undocumented immigrants would be fined.

But to meet the demand for labor through legal channels, 73% of Republicans and 67% of Democrats support proposed legislation calling for substantial increases in the number of temporary work visas, called H-2B visas, for industries such as landscaping,

construction, hotels, conservation, and amusement parks. Such increases would only be allowed if the government verifies that there are no American workers who want those jobs and employers pay the same wage that is paid to American workers in those jobs.

Fifty-four percent overall and 63% of Democrats also favor increasing the number of green cards provided to immigrants who are selected because the Department of Labor has verified that there is a need for their skill in the US economy and that hiring them will not have a negative effect on the wages of American workers. Also included would be investors that will invest at least \$500,000 in the US and create at least 10 jobs. However, in this case 53% of Republicans are opposed.

Asked to evaluate a number of proposals that have been put forward in Congressional legislation for dealing with immigrants who arrived here illegally as children (aka “Dreamers”), the most popular idea for both Republicans and Democrats is one that provides a path to citizenship, provided that the Dreamers have not committed any crimes and pose no security threat. According to this plan, they would first be allowed to apply for a special eight-year green card and if they meet certain requirements related to education, work history, or military service, after a period they could apply for citizenship. Overall, 70% find this proposal at least tolerable, as do 67% of Republicans, as well as 74% of Democrats.

Not surprisingly, there are also some significant partisan divergences.

- 59% overall, and 85% of Democrats oppose spending \$25 billion “to build a stronger barrier along the US southern border with Mexico, primarily by building a wall,” however, 74% of Republicans favor doing so.
- 55% overall, and 69% of Republicans favor replacing the current farm guest worker program that requires farmers to pay workers about \$11-14 per hour and provide housing and transportation, with one that allows farmers to pay \$8.43 an hour and removes the requirement to provide housing or transportation. However 55% of Democrats are opposed.

For the current programs that provide green cards to family members of citizens and permanent residents, large bipartisan majorities oppose eliminating any of the programs, and overall majorities opposed reducing their current numbers. However, majorities of Republicans favor reducing the number of green cards granted in these programs.

The survey was conducted online from October 1 through 16, 2018 with a national probability-based sample of 2,407 registered voters, provided by Nielsen Scarborough

from Nielsen Scarborough's sample of respondents, who were recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of households.

Survey Questionnaire: http://www.publicconsultation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Immigration_QuaireJan19.pdf

Slides with Findings: http://www.publicconsultation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Immigration_SlidesJan19.pdf

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