

TALKING POINTS

PUBLIC OPINION ON IMMIGRATION: WHAT THE POLLS SAY ON COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

AMERICANS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

In 2009 as in previous years, voters want the President and Congress to advance a solution that legalizes the undocumented workforce, requires them to pay taxes, levels the playing field for workers and employers, and restores the rule of law. The same was true in the run-up to the 2008 elections, when swing voters chose candidates who offered practical solutions to the broken immigration system over those who offered just empty rhetoric.

- **Americans know the system is broken, and they want it fixed.** If you ask the average American about “comprehensive immigration reform,” 2/3 support it. If you describe what it means, over 3/4 support it.
- **Americans – whether Democrats, Republicans, or Independents – want to see our nation’s problems solved, and this is a problem they want solved now.** By a 3 to 1 margin, voters nationwide want to turn illegal immigrants into taxpaying American citizens. Americans blame our dysfunctional immigration system on partisan bickering, and they are right. They want leadership. Now is the time to lead.

RECENT OPINION POLLS ON IMMIGRATION REFORM SHOW

December 2009 – America’s Voice National Poll (Benenson Strategy Group)

Benenson Strategy Group conducted a national poll from December 19 to 21, 2009 for America’s Voice, following up on questions asked in May 2009. The December poll surveyed 800 likely voters and had a margin of error of ±3.46%.

According to the December poll, 65% of voters prefer for Congress to take up the immigration issue this year rather than wait until later.

- 66% of respondents supported comprehensive immigration reform before even hearing details of the plan.
- Support for reform continued to cut across party lines, with 69% of Democrats, 67% of independents, and 62% of Republicans supporting comprehensive reform.
- When given details, support for comprehensive reform climbed. Requiring undocumented immigrants to register with the government and meet certain conditions including working, paying taxes and learning English in order to apply for citizenship, was supported by 87% in December.

A Majority of Voters Said the Issue Was Crucial Due to the Poor Economy

- 55% of respondents said that the poor economy makes it more crucial that Congress address immigration reform.
- 67% of voters prefer that undocumented immigrants take steps to become legal taxpayers over an option to deport them because they are “taking jobs.”

ADDITIONAL 2009 POLLING DATA

75% of Respondents Supported Congressional Action on Immigration Reform In 2009; 57% Said the Issue Was Crucial Due to Economic Situation.

- 75% of respondents believed Congress should tackle immigration reform in 2009.
- 57% of respondents said that the poor economy makes it more crucial that Congress address immigration reform. In general, voters support a member of Congress willing to tackle immigration more so than one who will not. [America's Voice, Benenson Strategy Group Poll, 5/14/09]

68% Support Pathway to Citizenship for Undocumented Immigrants

- Support for comprehensive immigration reform has remained stable since a previous poll taken in November 2008. Roughly the same percentage of voters, 68%, support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants allowing them to register, meet certain requirements and become legal taxpayers.
- Support is bi-partisan, as 62% of Republicans support the same position. [America's Voice, Benenson Strategy Group Poll, 5/14/09]

71% of Voters Preferred That Illegal Immigrants Become Legal Taxpayers.

- An overwhelming margin of voters, 71% to 26% believed that illegal immigrants should take steps to become legal taxpayers.
- 71% of respondents also believe that those illegal immigrants should not be forced to leave and were not responsible for taking American jobs. [America's Voice, Benenson Strategy Group Poll, 5/14/09]

63% Of Respondents Supported a Pathway to Citizenship, Up 5% from 2007.

- The Pew Research Center polling results show that support for a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants has risen from 58% in 2007 to 63% in 2009. 73% of Democrats support this position along with 50% of Republicans and 61% of Independents. [Pew Research Center, 5/21/09]

Support for a Pathway to Citizenship For Undocumented Immigrants Rose in 2009.

- A telephone survey of roughly 1,000 adults conducted by the New York Times / CBS found that 44% of respondents supported a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
- 21% believed that they should be given temporary legal status, while 30% believed they should be required to leave the country. [New York Times, 4/27/09]