

VIEWS ON IMMIGRATION

April 6-9, 2006

A majority of Americans - both Republicans and Democrats -- favor allowing illegal immigrants to stay in the U.S. and work, with conditions. Most are not concerned about competition in the workplace: over half say immigrants take jobs that Americans do not want.

But President Bush's push for immigration reform has not helped him with the public, even though immigration is now one of the three top responses when Americans are asked to name the country's most important problem. Only 26% approve of the way the President is handling immigration, and Democrats - not the President's Republican Party -- are more often seen as the party better able to handle the issue.

Most Americans - 74% - think illegal immigrants in the U.S. should be able stay and work in this country if the following criteria are met: they pay a fine, they've been in the U.S. for at least five years, paid any back taxes owed, can speak English, and have no criminal record. Those criteria match those in the Senate compromise bill that was shelved last week.

FAVOR ALLOWING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO STAY AND WORK IN THE U.S. IF CERTAIN CRITERIA ARE MET?

Favor	74%
Oppose	23

FAVOR ALLOWING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO APPLY FOR WORK PERMITS?

Favor	49%
Oppose	43

When asked the question with no specific criteria, about half still favor allowing illegal immigrants to apply for work permits, while 43% oppose the idea. Republican and Democrats favor allowing this in both circumstances, while Americans living in the Midwest give it less support in principle than other Americans.

In the case of both legal and illegal immigrants, more than half of Americans say they take jobs that Americans don't want. About three in 10 say they take jobs away from Americans.

IMMIGRANTS AND JOBS

	<u>Take jobs away from Americans</u>	<u>Take jobs Americans don't want</u>
Legal immigrants	29%	55
Illegal immigrants	34%	53

However, Americans prefer limits on immigration. 45% think the level of LEGAL immigration into the U.S. should be decreased although that is down six points from last October. 33% say it should be kept at the present level, while fewer than one in five say there should be more legal immigration into this country. In the months following the terror attacks of September 11th, 2001 the percentage who wanted to decrease immigration was at its highest ever.

LEGAL IMMIGRATION INTO THE U.S. SHOULD BE...

	Now	10/2005	12/2001
Kept at present level	33%	30%	29%
Increased	16	11	9
Decreased	45	51	59

Nearly all Americans think ILLEGAL immigration is a serious problem for the country, including 62% who say it is very serious. That marks an 11-point increase since January, when President Bush first made his immigration reform proposals, including a temporary worker program.

HOW SERIOUS A PROBLEM IS ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION?

	Now	1/2006
Very	62%	51%
Somewhat	25	33
Not very/not at all	12	16

In fact, when asked to volunteer the most important problem facing the country today 7% say immigration - the highest number ever in the CBS News Poll.

There is no consensus on whether or not a 700-mile long security fence should be built along the U.S.-Mexico border to stop illegal immigrants from entering the country. 48% favor the idea, which the House of Representatives approved last December, but the same number opposes it. More than half of Southerners favor building a security fence while those residing in other parts of the country are more likely to oppose the idea. Republicans favor erecting a fence along the border, while both Democrats and Independents are against it.

FAVOR BUILDING A 700-MILE LONG FENCE ALONG U.S. - MEXICO BORDER?

Favor	48%
Oppose	48

Six in ten Americans do not think such a fence would be effective in stopping illegal immigrants from entering the U.S. Among those who favor a security fence, more than a third don't think it would be effective, while 59% think it will be. Just 12% of opponents say a fence would be effective.

WOULD SECURITY FENCE ALONG U.S. - MEXICO BORDER BE EFFECTIVE?

	All	Support fence	Oppose fence
Yes	35%	59%	12%
No	60	34	88

Two in three Americans do not think it should be a criminal offense for a U.S. citizen to provide food, shelter and medical care to an illegal immigrant.

SHOULD IT BE A CRIMINAL OFFENSE TO PROVIDE FOOD AND SHELTER TO AN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT?

Yes	27%
No	67

There is less agreement on the role of religious organizations in preaching about immigrants. 46% say it is appropriate for religious leaders to take a public position on immigration, but 47% say it is not.

IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO TAKE A PUBLIC POSITION ON IMMIGRATION?

Yes	46%
No	47

Protestants and Catholics are divided on this question, but more than half of those with no religious preference say it is not appropriate for religious leaders to take a public position on the issue of immigration.

IMMIGRATION AND POLITICS

President George W. Bush receives low ratings for his handling of the overall issue of immigration. Only 26% of Americans approve of his handling of it, while 53% disapprove. 21% are not sure. His approval ratings on the economy, Iraq and terrorism are higher.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S HANDLING OF IMMIGRATION

	Now	10/2005
Approve	26%	21%
Disapprove	53	53
Don't know	21	26

Even some members of the President's political base do not approve of the job he is doing on immigration. 44% of conservatives disapprove of his handling of the issue; and while 42% of Republicans approve, almost as many - 41% - disapprove.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S HANDLING OF IMMIGRATION

	All	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
Approve	26%	42%	18%	20%
Disapprove	53	41	63	55
Don't know	21	17	19	25

Those who disapprove of President Bush's handling of immigration are more likely than those who approve to say illegal immigrants take jobs away from Americans. They are also more likely to describe the problem of illegal immigration as very serious.

As for the political parties, the Democrats have a growing advantage over the Republicans on the issue of immigration. 43% say the Democrats are more likely to do a better job making the right decisions dealing with immigration, while 31% say the Republicans are likely to do a better job. The Democrats held a smaller edge on this issue back in December.

WHICH PARTY IS MORE LIKELY TO DO A BETTER JOB ON IMMIGRATION?

	Now	12/2005
Republican party	31%	32%
Democratic party	43	38
Both (vol.)	4	4
Neither (vol.)	8	9

This poll was conducted among a nationwide random sample of 899 adults, interviewed by telephone April 6-9, 2006. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. Error for subgroups may be higher.

CBS News Poll
Views on Immigration
April 6-9, 2006

q1-q5 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q6 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the issue of immigration?

	*** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ***				
	**** Party ID ****				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Oct05a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	26	42	18	20	21
Disapprove	53	41	63	55	53
DK/NA	21	17	19	25	26

q7-q12 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q13-q16 BLANK

q17 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q18 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q19 BLANK

q20-21 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q22 Should LEGAL immigration into the United States be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased?

Present level	33	29	35	36	30
Increased	16	18	19	12	11
Decreased	45	48	39	47	51
Don't know/No answer	6	5	7	5	8

q23 What about ILLEGAL immigration? How serious a problem do you think the issue of ILLEGAL immigration is for the country right now very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not at all serious?

					Jan06a
					%
Very serious	62	66	57	63	51
Somewhat serious	25	29	26	21	33
Not too serious	9	3	12	12	13
Not at all serious	3	2	2	4	3
Don't know/No answer	1	0	3	0	0

q24 BLANK

q25 Do you think legal immigrants coming to this country today take jobs away from American citizens, or do they mostly take jobs Americans don't want?

	***** HALF SAMPLE C *****			
Take jobs away	29	30	27	30
Take jobs Americans don't	55	54	60	52
Both (vol.)	7	8	6	6
Don't know/No answer	9	8	7	12

q26 Do you think illegal immigrants coming to this country today take jobs away from American citizens, or do they mostly take jobs Americans don't want?

***** HALF SAMPLE D *****				
	**** Party ID ****			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Take jobs away	34	30	36	34
Take jobs Americans don't	53	55	57	46
Both (vol.)	11	11	4	18
Don't know/No answer	2	4	3	2

q27 Would you favor or oppose allowing immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally to apply for work permits which would allow them to stay and work in the United States?

***** HALF SAMPLE E *****				
Favor	49	48	50	49
Oppose	43	42	42	44
Depends (Vol.)	4	5	5	4
Don't know/No answer	4	5	3	3

q28 Would you favor or oppose allowing illegal immigrants who have done the following to stay and work in the United States: paid a fine, been in the U.S. for at least five years, paid any back taxes they owe, can speak English, and have no criminal record?

***** HALF SAMPLE F *****				
Favor	74	71	73	78
Oppose	23	27	23	18
Don't know/No answer	3	2	4	4

q29 Would you favor or oppose building a 700-mile-long security fence along the U.S.-Mexico border to try to stop illegal immigration?

*** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ***				
Favor	48	58	46	41
Oppose	48	37	51	54
DK/NA	4	5	3	5

q30 Do you think a 700-mile-long security fence along the U.S.-Mexico border would be effective in stopping illegal immigrants from crossing the border into the U.S., or not?

Yes, effective	35	42	29	35
No	60	52	66	61
DK/NA	5	6	5	4

q31 Do you think is should or should not be a criminal offense if a U.S. citizen provides food, shelter, or medical care to an illegal immigrant?

Should	27	35	24	22
Should not	67	60	69	71
DK/NA	6	5	7	7

q32 Religious leaders often take positions on public issues. Do you think it's appropriate or not appropriate for religious leaders to take a public position on the issue of immigration?

	*** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ***			
	Total	**** Party ID ****		
	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%
Appropriate	46	49	43	46
Not appropriate	47	43	49	49
DK/NA	8	8	8	5

q33 & q34 BLANK
 q35-q39 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q40 Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions when it comes to dealing with immigration issues?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Dec05a
					%
Republican party	31	60	10	24	32
Democratic party	43	17	70	41	38
Both (Vol.)	4	4	4	4	4
Neither (Vol.)	8	7	4	13	9
Don't know/No answer	14	12	12	18	17

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	899	
Total Republicans	298	277
Total Democrats	288	292
Total Independents	313	330
Half Sample C (q25)	435	441
Half Sample D (q26)	464	458
Half Sample E (q27)	472	475
Half Sample F (q28)	427	424