



Voters Want Congress to Move Forward With Immigration Overhaul, Poll Finds

Most voters want elected leaders to work on an overhaul of the nation's immigration system, including increased penalties for employers that knowingly hire illegal aliens, according to a poll released May 17 by ImmigrationWorks USA, a group that represents employers in favor of comprehensive immigration legislation.

A large majority of voters surveyed thinks the current immigration system needs to be "reformed," with 69 percent believing the system needs major reform and another 21 percent calling for minor reform, ImmigrationWorks USA said.

According to the poll, a majority of voters (52 percent) said immigration hurts the United States more than it helps, but an even greater number of likely voters (79 percent) said that they favor an overhaul of the nation's immigration system.

Only 17 percent preferred no change because an immigration overhaul is "too controversial to deal with right now," ImmigrationWorks USA said.

"Voters are ready for immigration reform in the United States," ImmigrationWorks USA said. The survey shows that voters "believe that the current immigration system is broken and that something must be done to fix it," the group said.

Of those surveyed, 87 percent said they want their member of Congress to work toward an immigration overhaul.

In addition, over three-fourths (77 percent) favor the immigration overhaul proposal that was issued in March by Sens. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.).

Schumer and Graham's immigration legislation framework included four main pillars: requiring all workers to obtain biometric Social Security cards, enhancing border security and interior enforcement, creating a process for admitting temporary guest workers, and implementing a path to legalization for the undocumented immigrants already in the United States (4 WIR 161, 3/22/10).

When asked about specific aspects of comprehensive immigration reform legislation, 87 percent favor stiff penalties for employers that knowingly hire illegal aliens, and 79 percent favor requiring employers to swipe a biometric card through a machine to confirm the employment eligibility of all new hires.

The poll, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, surveyed 800 likely voters between May 3 and May 5. The research group also conducted focus groups during the month of April in Dallas, Omaha, Neb., and Nashville, Tenn.

Results of the ImmigrationWorks USA poll may be accessed at <http://op.bna.com/dlrcases.nsf/r?Open=amky-85ruw3>.