



Immigration Works National Survey



Key findings from a series of focus groups, conducted April 6, 12, and 15, 2010 and a national survey of 800 likely voters, conducted May 3-5, 2010

#10292



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Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies is pleased to present the key findings of a series of focus groups and a national telephone survey. The focus groups were completed on April 6, 2010 in Dallas, TX, April 12, 2010 in Omaha, NE, and April 15, 2010 in Nashville, TN. The survey was completed May 3-5, 2010 among 800 likely voters and has a margin of error of $\pm 3.46\%$.

Glen Bolger was the principal researcher on this project. Dave Wilson was the project director, and Bryan Kitz provided analytical support.

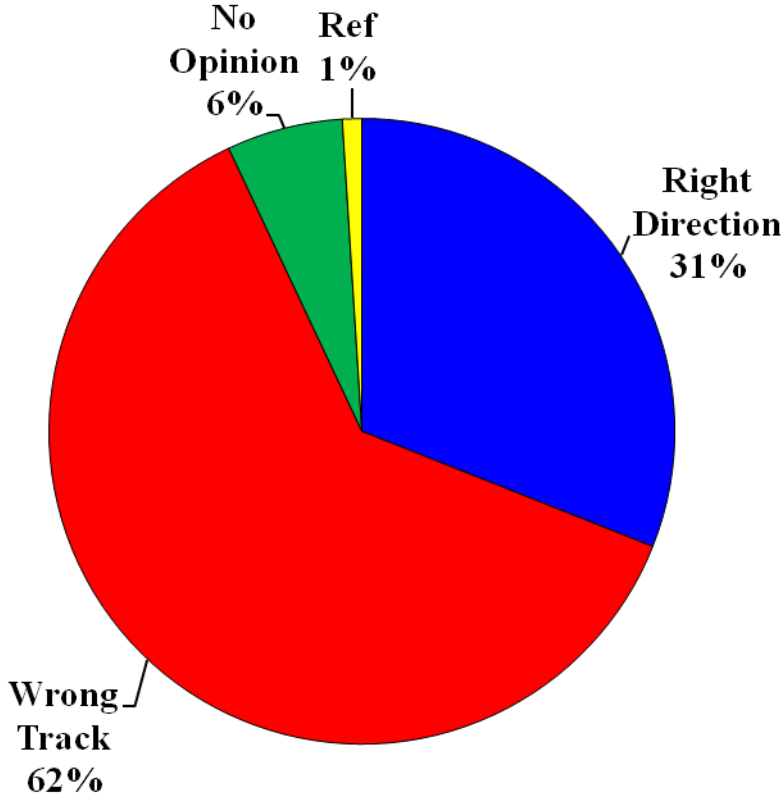


Political Environment

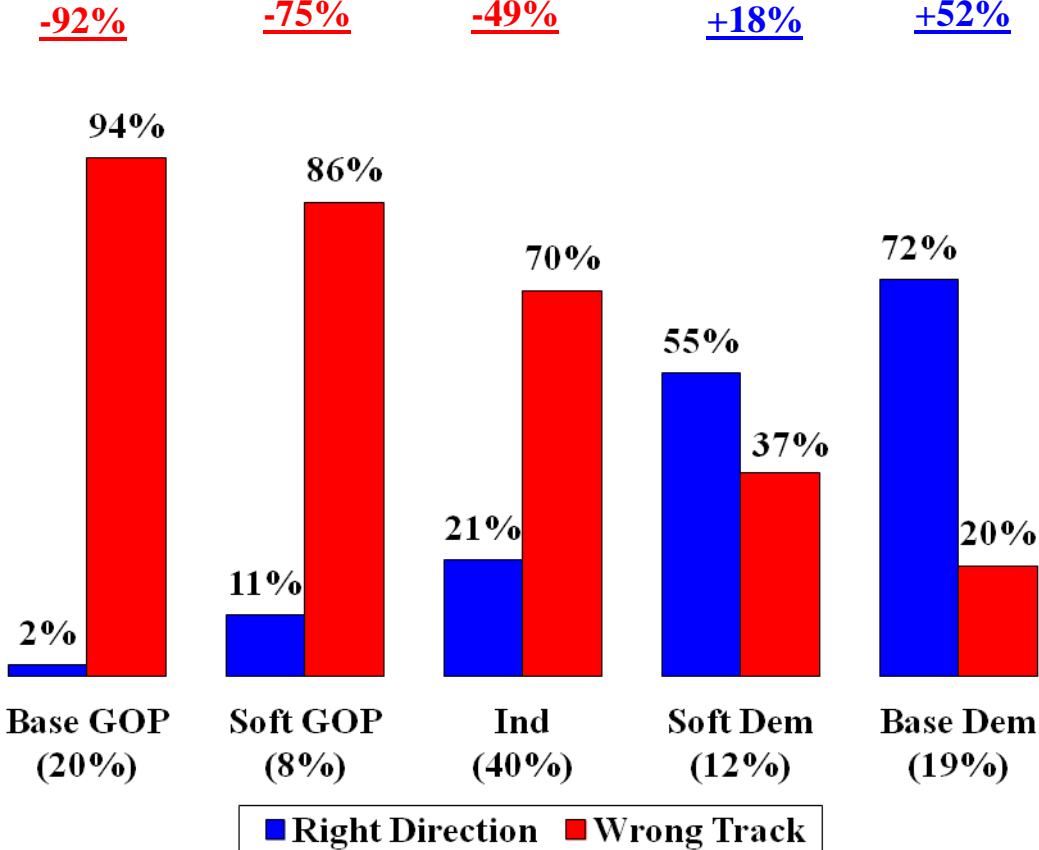
A majority of likely voters, including Independents, think the country has gotten off on the wrong track.

“Would you say that things in the country are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?”

Overall



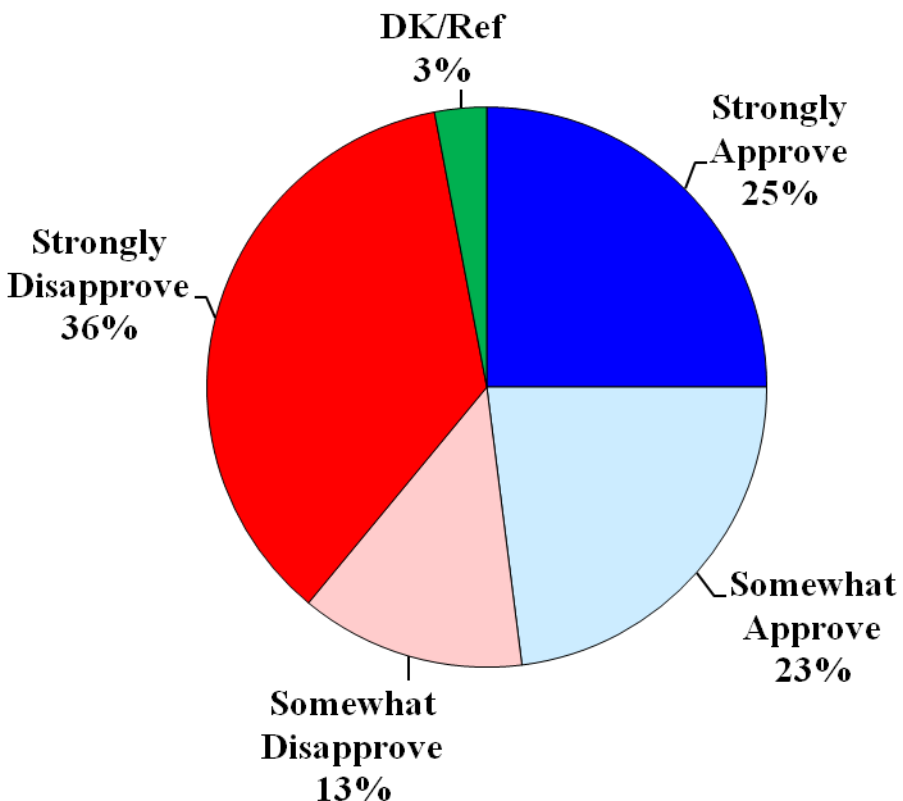
By Party



Voters are divided on Obama, but disapprove of Congress.

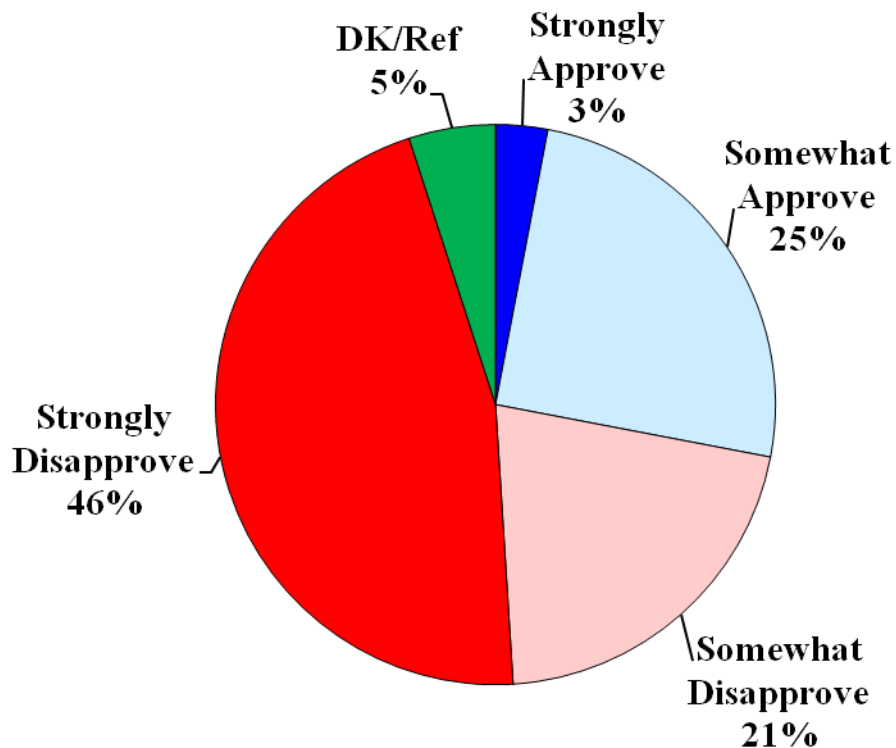
“Do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as President?”

Total Approve:	48%
Total Disapprove:	49%



“And, do you approve or disapprove of the job the U.S. Congress is doing?”

Total Approve:	28%
Total Disapprove:	68%*



**Denotes Rounding*



Issues

A majority of voters feel that immigration hurts the U.S. more than it helps.

“Thinking now about issues...Now, I am going to read a pair of statements. After I read them, please tell me which statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right...”

41%

Immigration helps the U.S. more than it hurts.

...OR...

52%

Immigration hurts the U.S. more than it helps.

Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

“When thinking about America’s immigration system, what one word or phrase comes to mind?”

Ineffectual

– Dallas Soft GOP Female

Out of control

– Dallas Soft GOP Male

Shortsighted

– Dallas Soft GOP Female

Broken

– Dallas Soft GOP Male

Unenforced

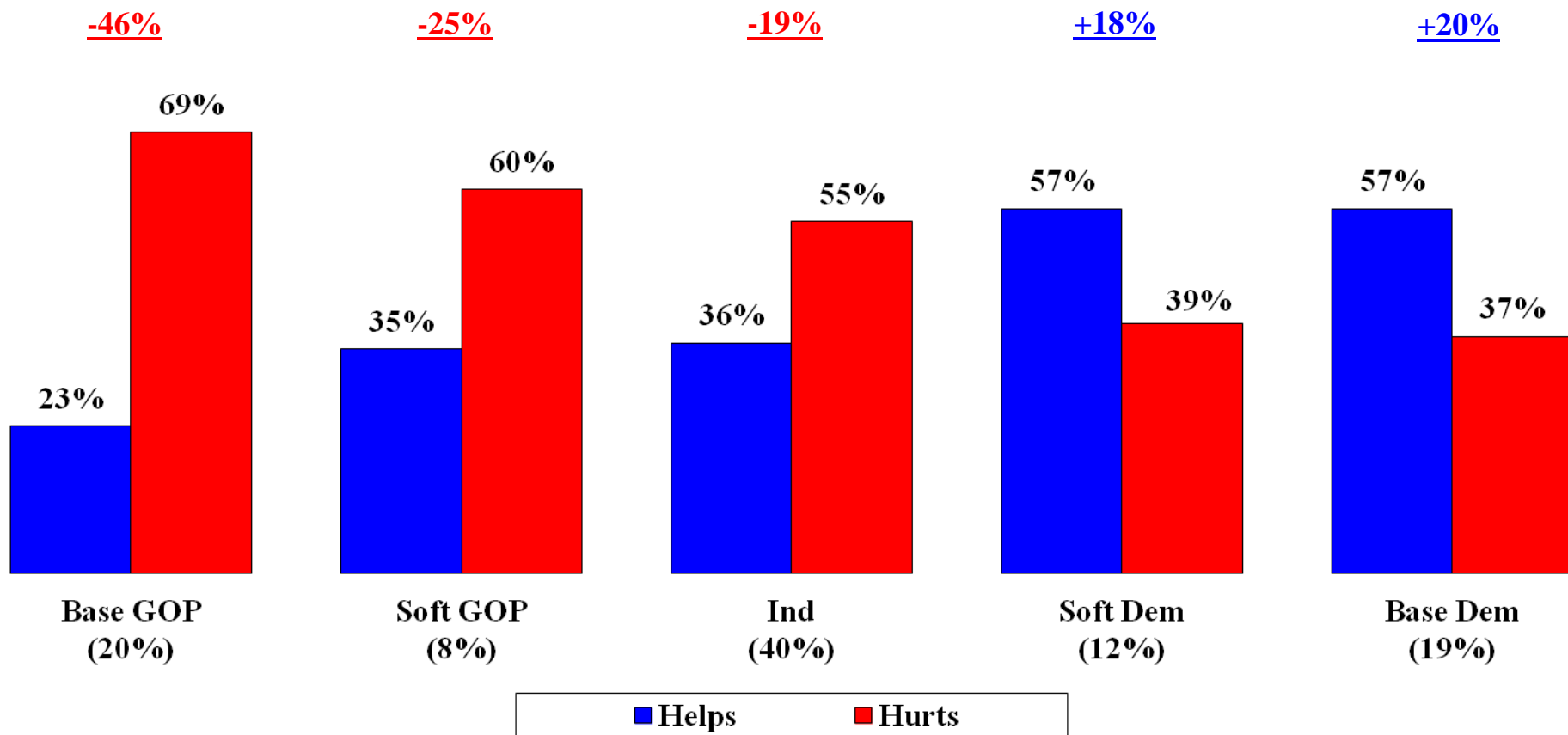
– Dallas Soft GOP Male

The laws aren’t in the right places

– Dallas Soft GOP Male

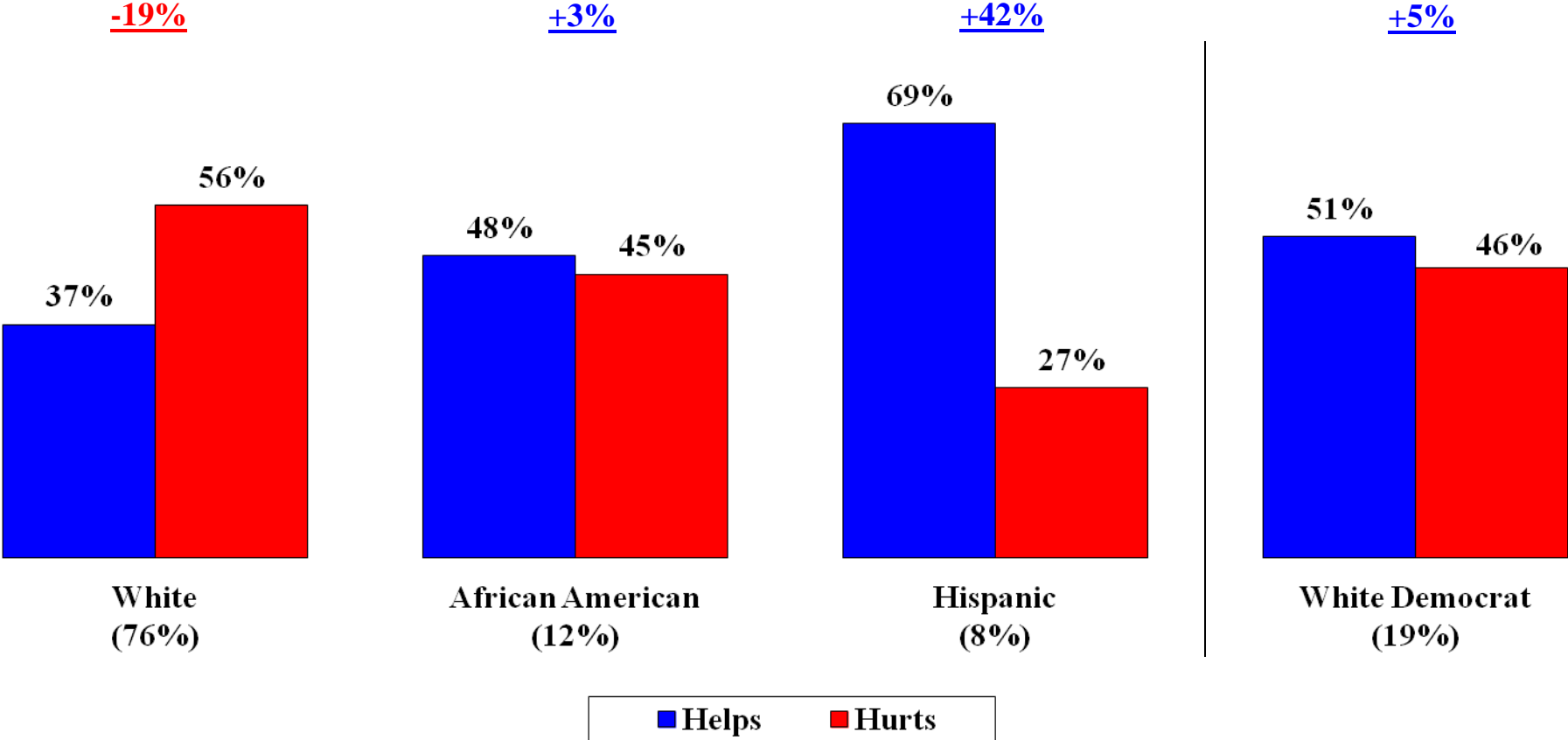
GOPers and Inds think immigration hurts the U.S. more than it helps. Dems think it helps.

Immigration by Party



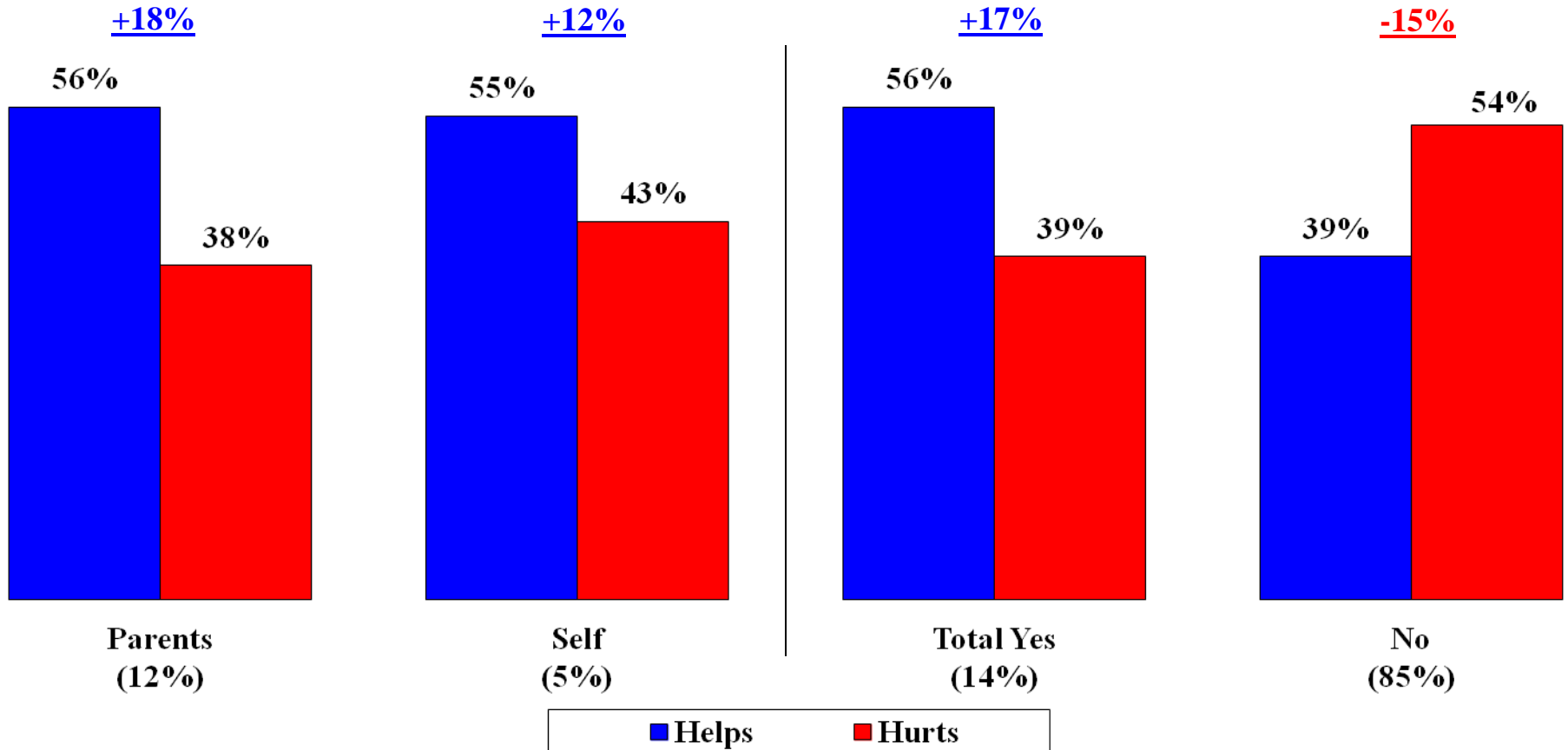
A majority of whites think immigration hurts more than it helps. Hispanics believe it helps more than it hurts, while African Americans are divided.

Immigration by Ethnicity



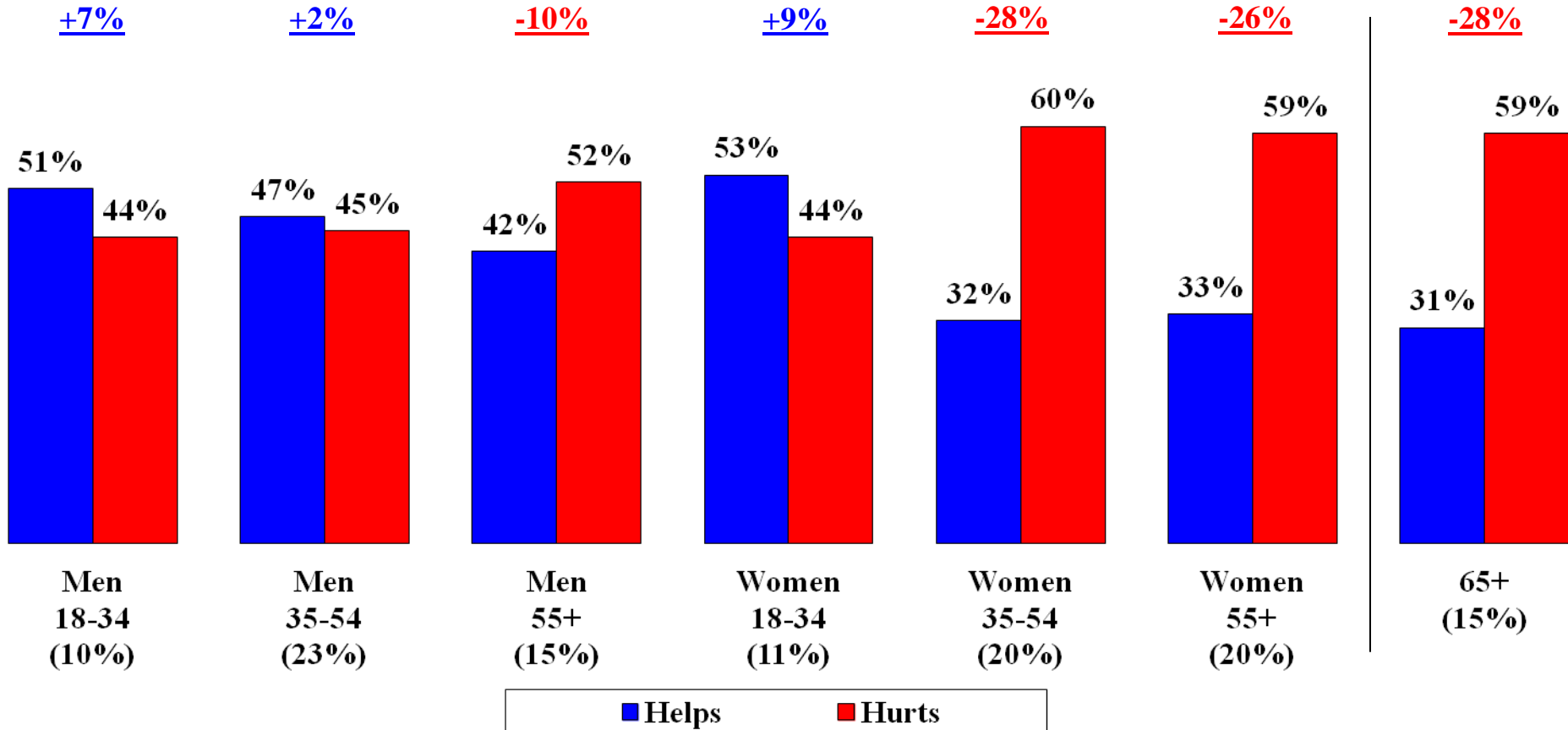
Voters with no recent immigrant background think immigration hurts the country.

Immigration by Immigrants



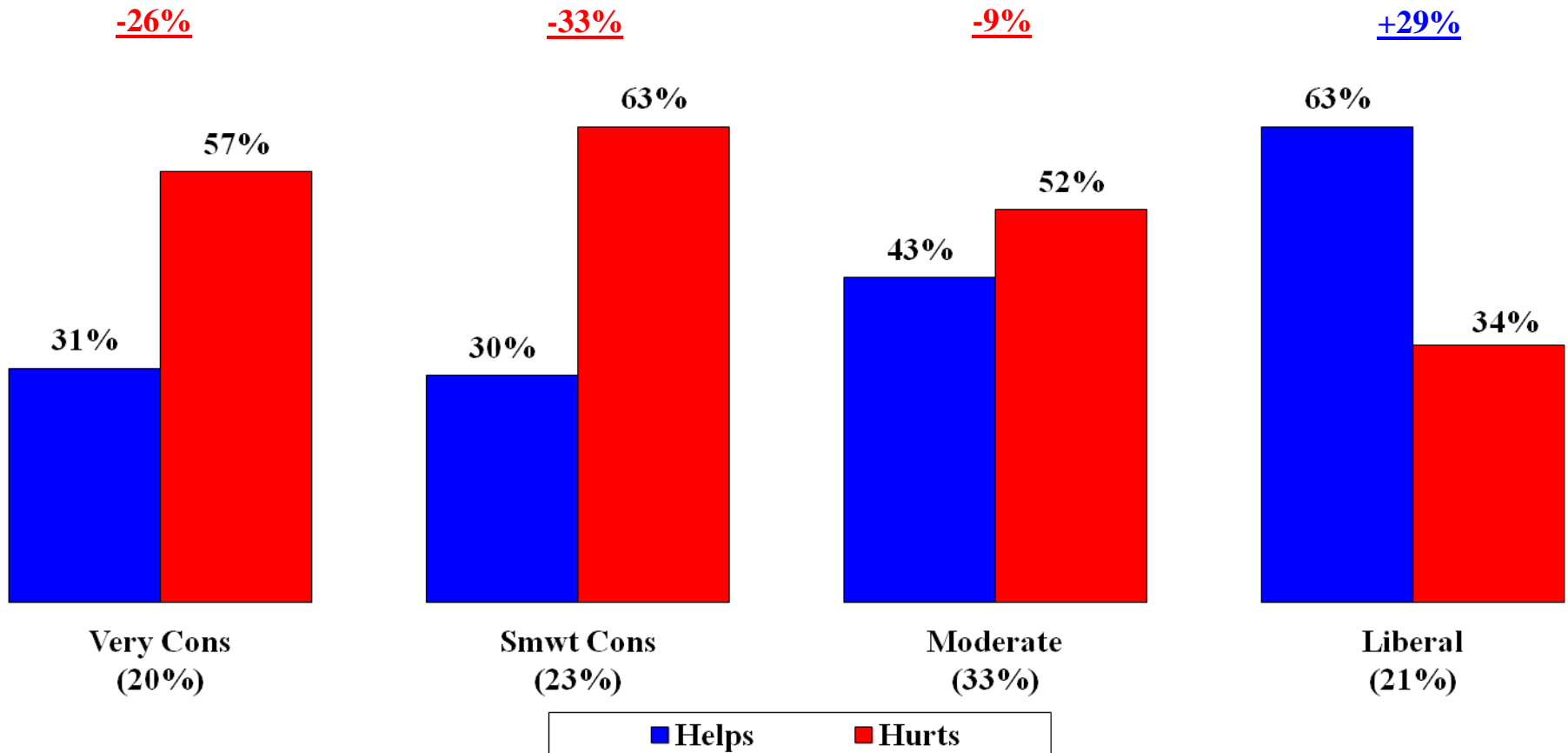
Only the youngest voters think immigration helps more than it hurts.

Immigration by Gender/Age + Seniors



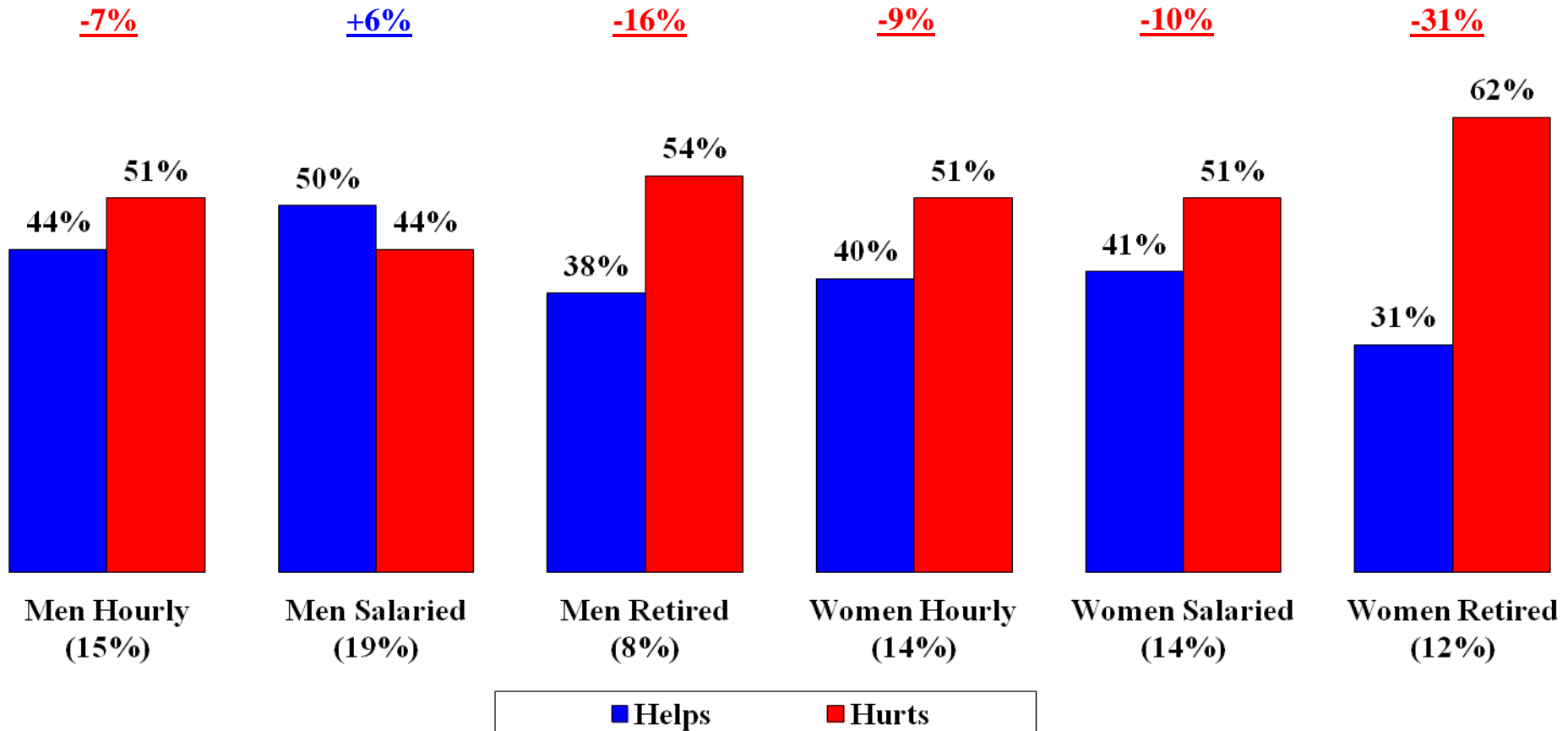
Conservatives think immigration hurts, while liberals think it helps. Moderates are more divided.

Immigration by Ideology



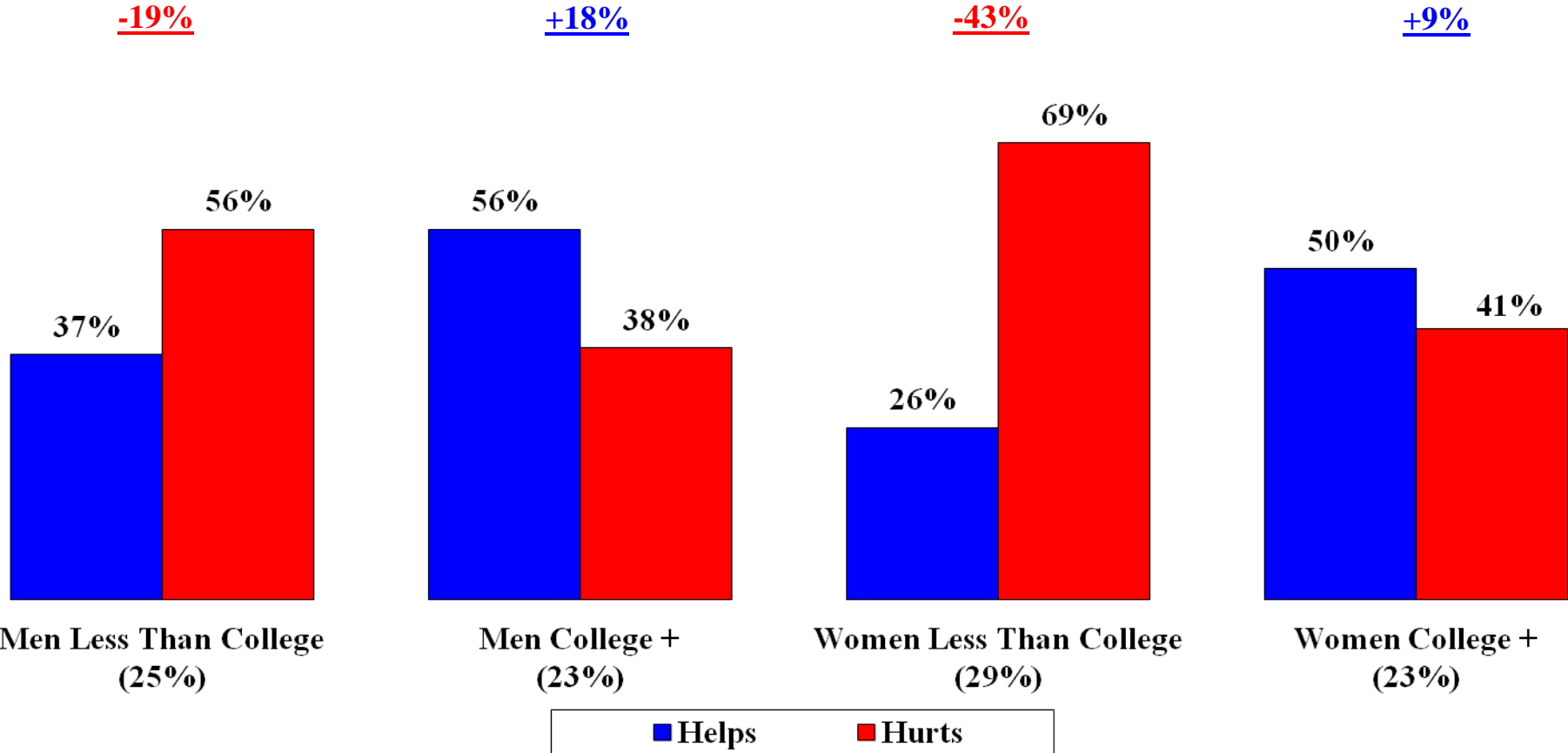
Only salaried men think immigration helps the U.S. more than it hurts. Retired women strongly believe it hurts.

Immigration by Employment/Gender



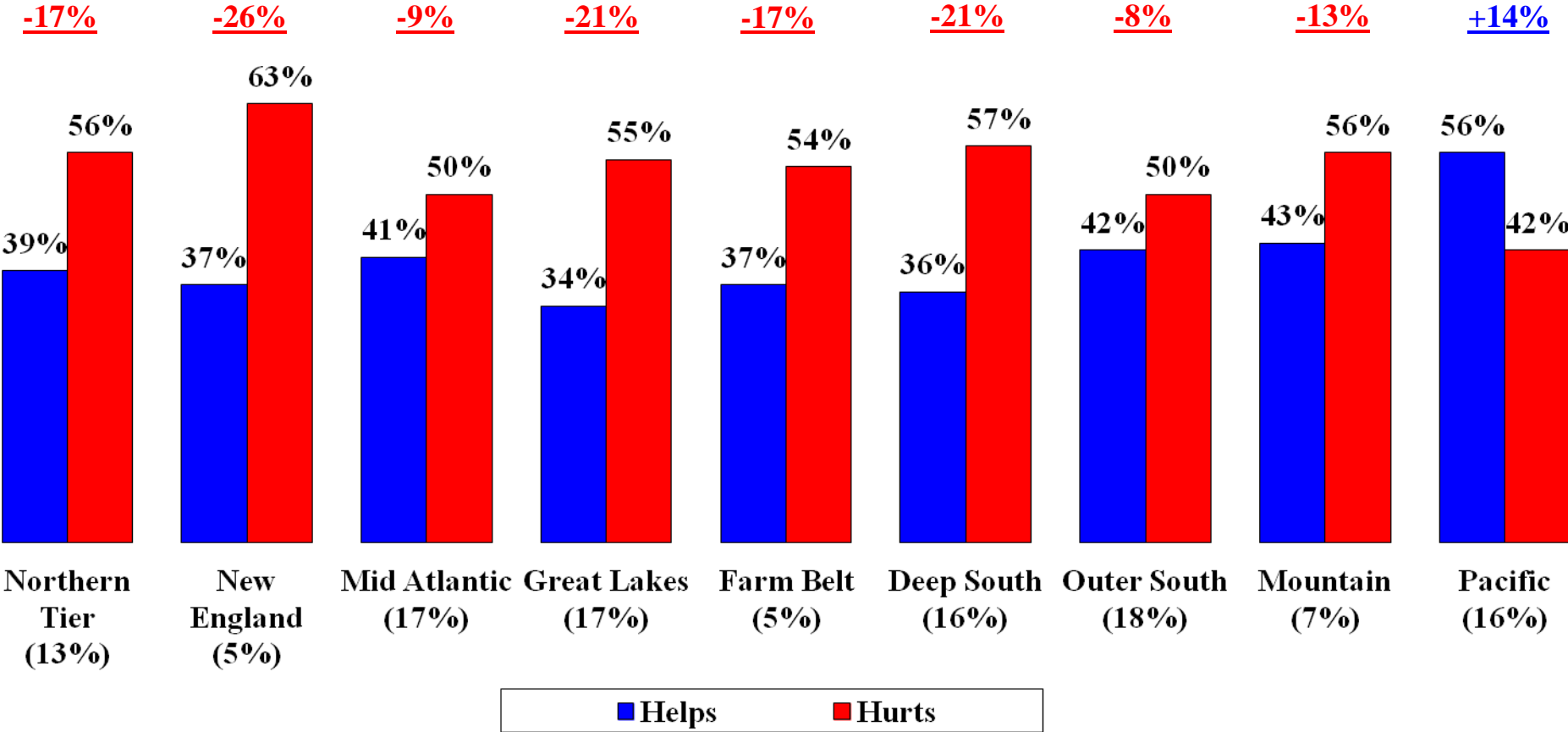
Across genders, upscale voters believe immigration helps and downscale voters think it hurts.

Immigration by Education/Gender



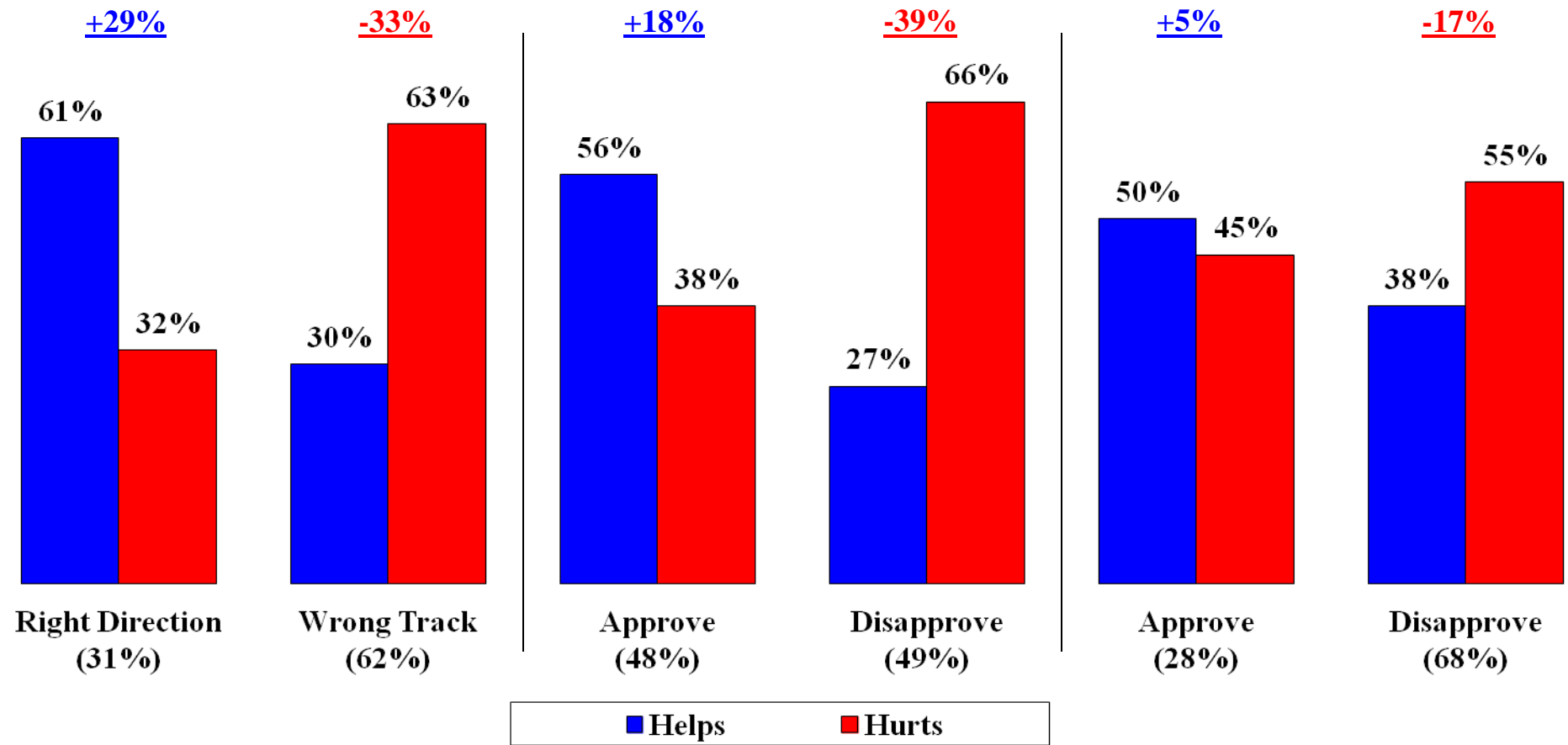
Voters in every region except the Pacific think immigration hurts the U.S. more than it helps.

Immigration by Nine Point Region



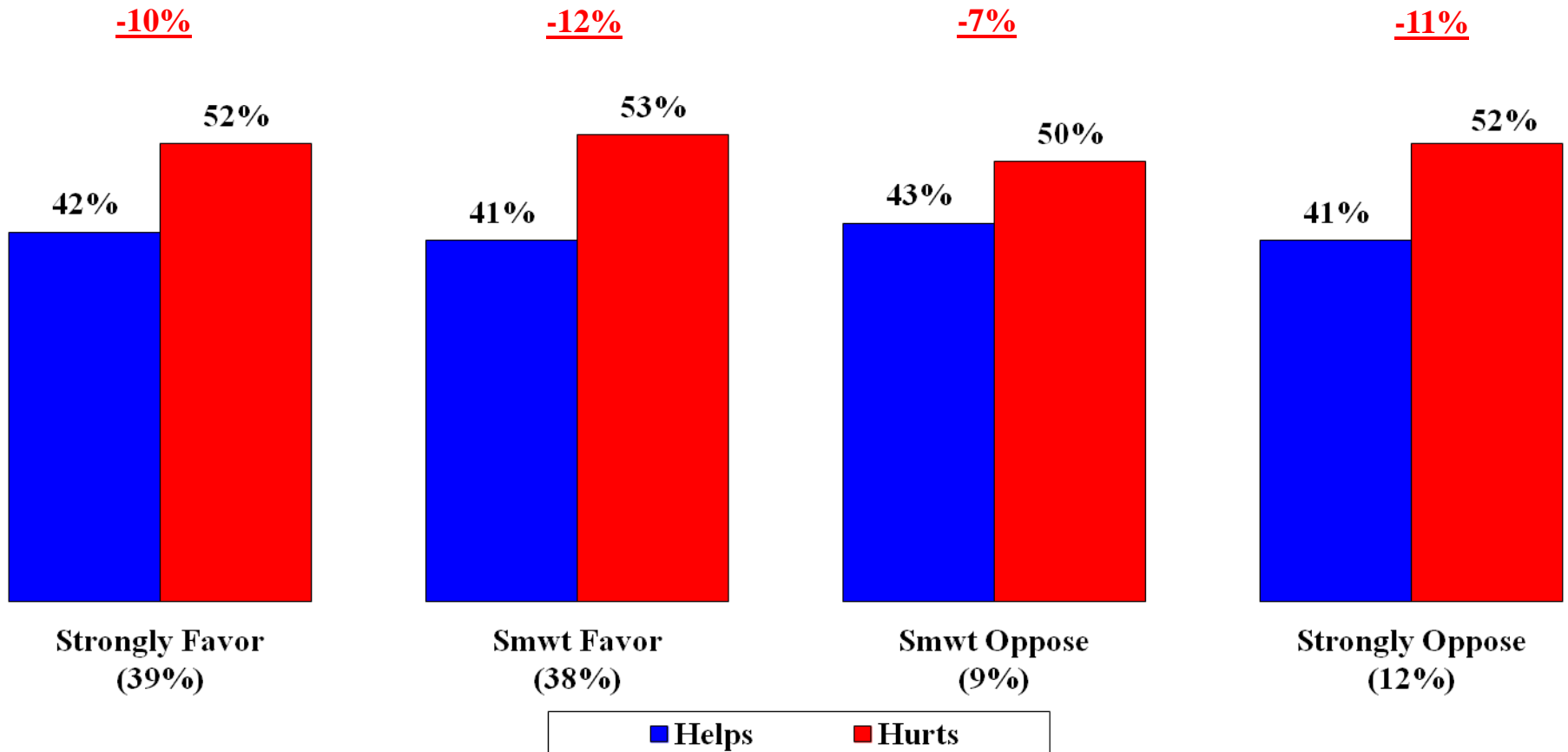
A majority of voters who think the country is on the wrong track, disapprove of Obama, and/or disapprove of Congress believe immigration hurts more than it helps.

Immigration by Mood/Obama Approval/Congress Approval



Voters on both sides of the proposal think immigration hurts the United States.

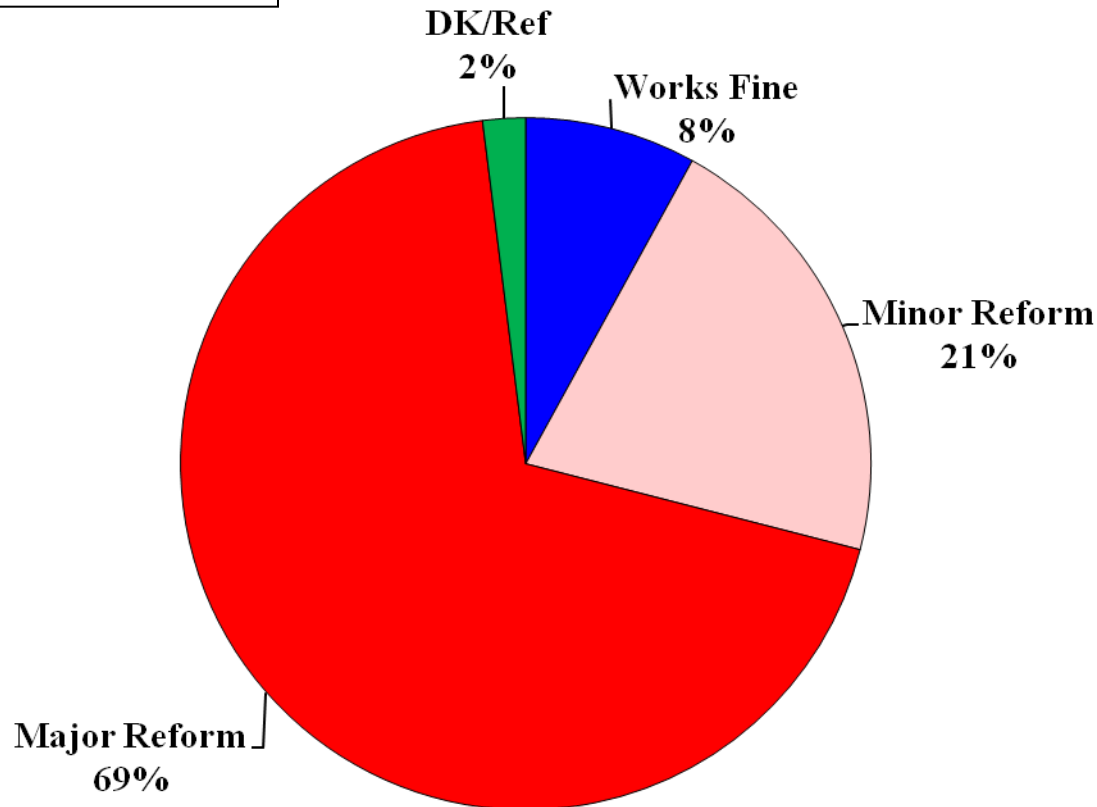
Immigration by Immigration Reform Proposal



A large majority of voters think the immigration system needs major reform.

“Do you think America’s current immigration system works fine, or do you think America’s current immigration system needs reform?”

Total Reform: 89%*



**Denotes Rounding*

The argument favoring the need to reform trumps the message favoring punting on the issue.

“Now, I’m going to read you two different opinions on immigration reform. . .”

79%

Some people say we need to reform the immigration system because the immigration system is outdated, too complicated, and encourages illegal actions while it instead should encourage legal immigration.

...Or...

17%

Other people say that immigration reform is too controversial to deal with right now. They say that any changes to the immigration system will just benefit people who are already here illegally, and that’s not a solution.

Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

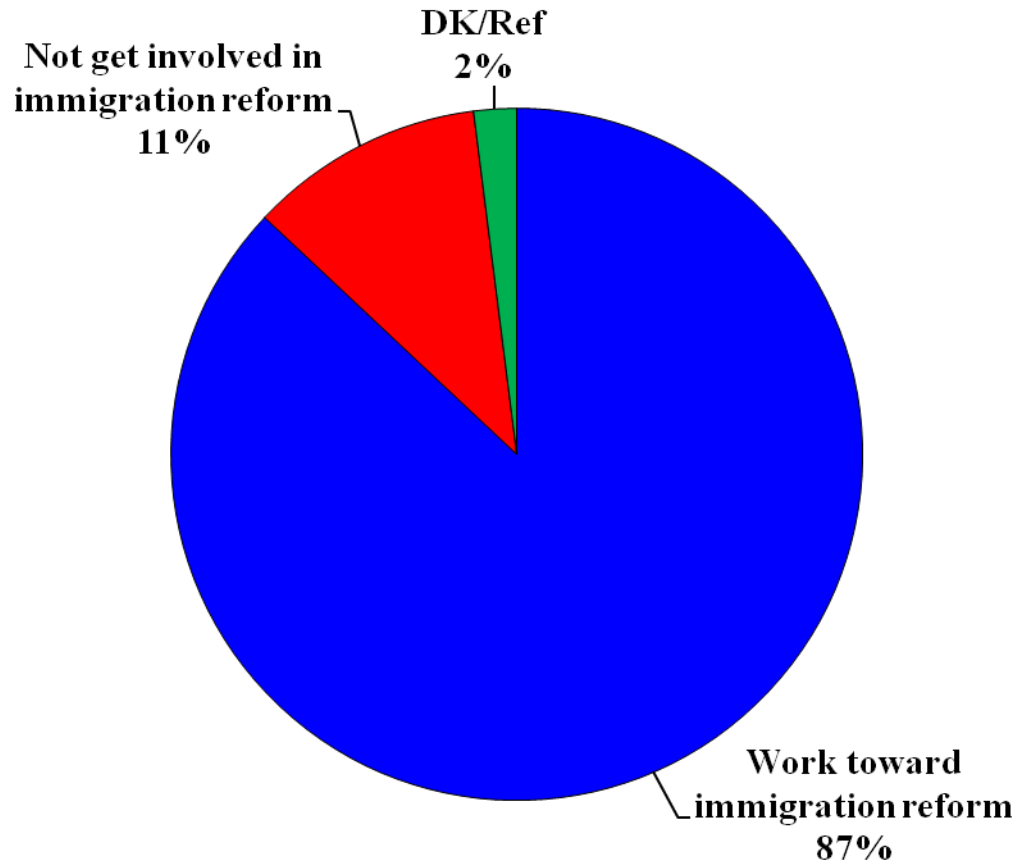
“When you’re thinking about America’s immigration system, what one word or phrase comes to mind?”

Leaky. I’m just thinking in terms of what Ron said about immigrants coming in unchecked. You know, I have no problem with people coming to our country, but there does need to be, you know, regulation or some sort of a system whether it’s regulated or not to control who and when and how many at a time. It’s just, it’s draining our resources all over the country that we need for our own citizens.

– Omaha Swing Voter Female

Voters decidedly want their member of Congress to work toward immigration reform.

“And, do you want your Member of Congress to work toward immigration reform, or do you want your Member of Congress to not get involved in immigration reform?”

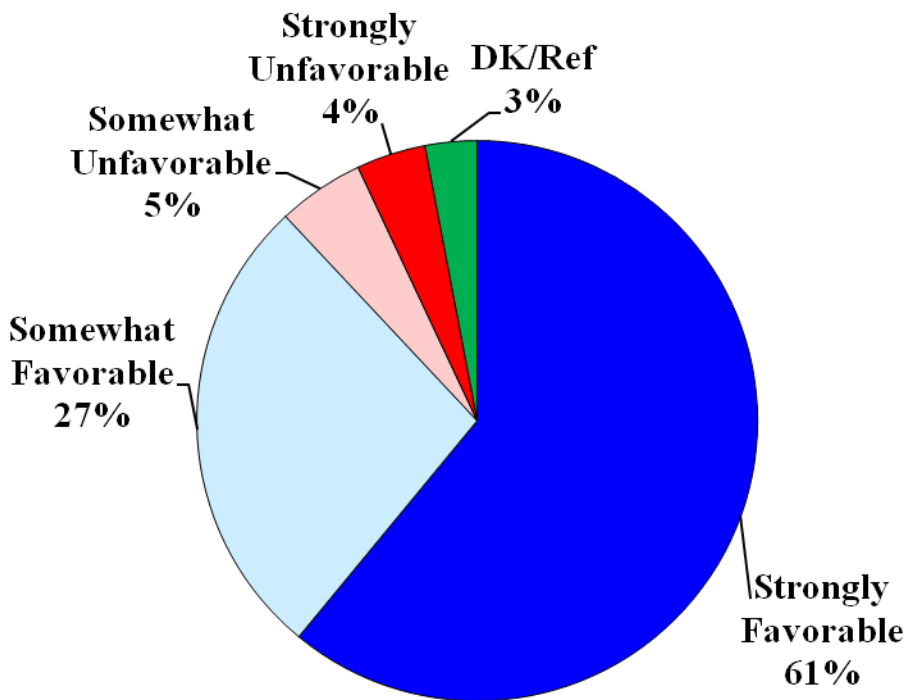


Voters' opinions of legal and illegal immigrants are completely opposite.

“Still thinking about immigration... As you may know, immigrants to the United States can be here legally, that is, they have been legally admitted to the country and are allowed to live and work here. Or, they can be here illegally, meaning they do not have papers allowing them to live and work here.”

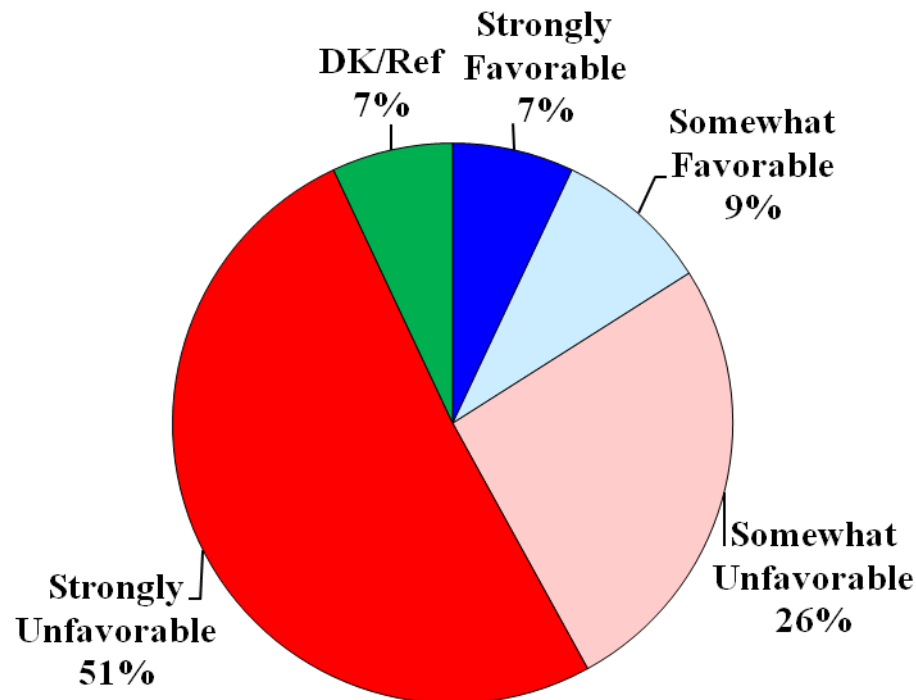
“Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of LEGAL immigrants?”

Total Favorable: 88%
Total Unfavorable: 8%*



“Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ILLEGAL immigrants?”

Total Favorable: 16%
Total Unfavorable: 76%*



**Denotes Rounding*

Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

“Describe an illegal immigrant for me. Where do they come from? Why do they come to America? And some of you have touched on this already, but I still I want to hear. What kind of jobs do they do while they’re here, and do they take jobs from Americans?”

Most of them come here for work. I’m in the business. I put people to work, mostly manufacturing, light industrial type of companies. The work that most of the people who are illegal go to work, and even people that are here correctly but don’t speak the language or whatever, they’re doing jobs that Americans won’t do.

– Dallas Soft GOP Male

So I did want to add, and you were saying that most of them come here to work, I believe that’s true. I think they also come though for the benefits of being in a, you know, that they can take advantage of being an immigrant, the food stamps and welfare. Once your child is born in this country, they become a citizen and can’t be deported.

– Dallas Soft GOP Female

Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

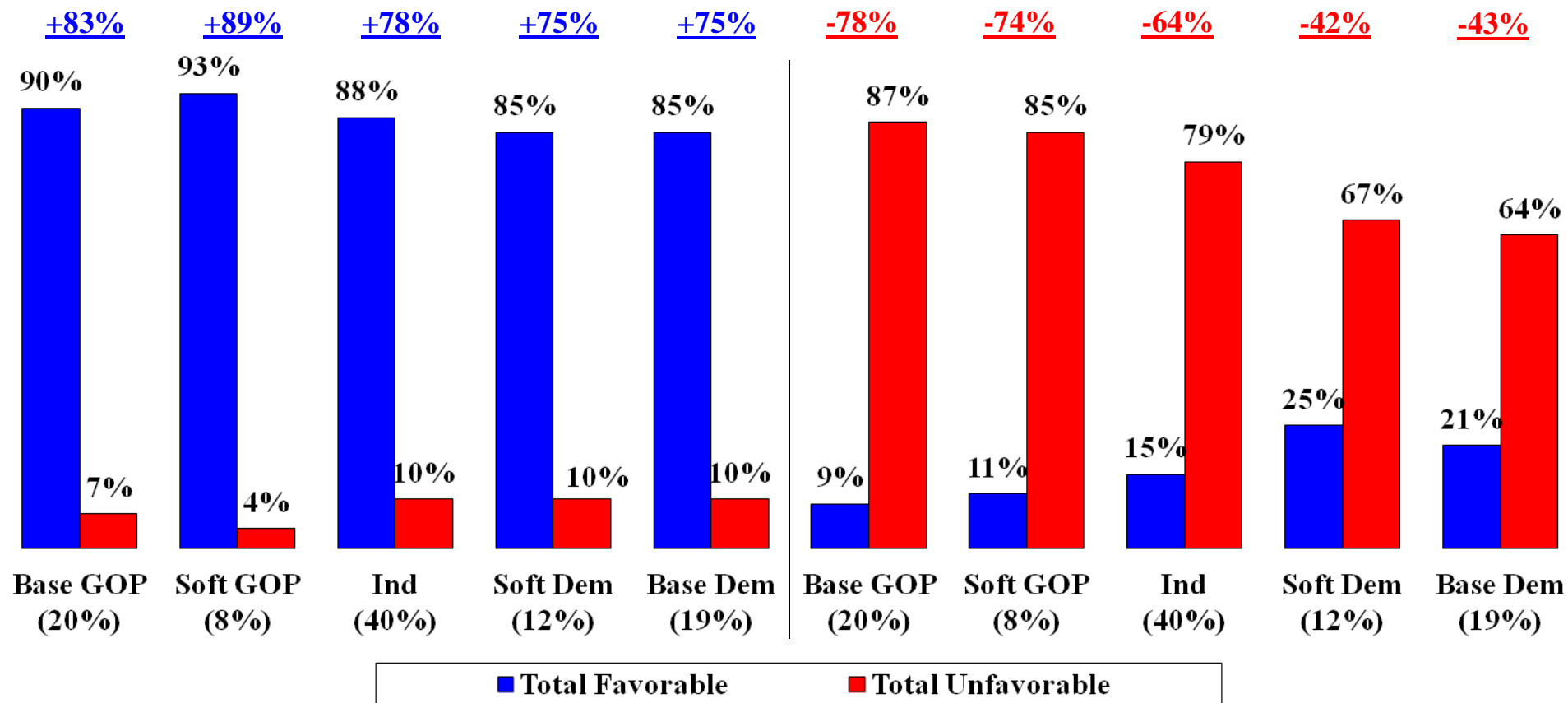
You hear on the news they pick fruit and all this, but you see them in every, I see them in construction, everywhere you go. If any construction, they're working. You see them on the streets working in the potholes and things like that. Those are jobs, even with Metro, those are jobs that American people could be having. I'm not opposed to them working. I want them to work, but I want them to pay taxes too. But I just think that they are taking jobs from American people.

– Nashville Base GOP Female

Voters across the partisan divide reflect national opinion toward legal and illegal immigrants.

Legal Immigrants by Party

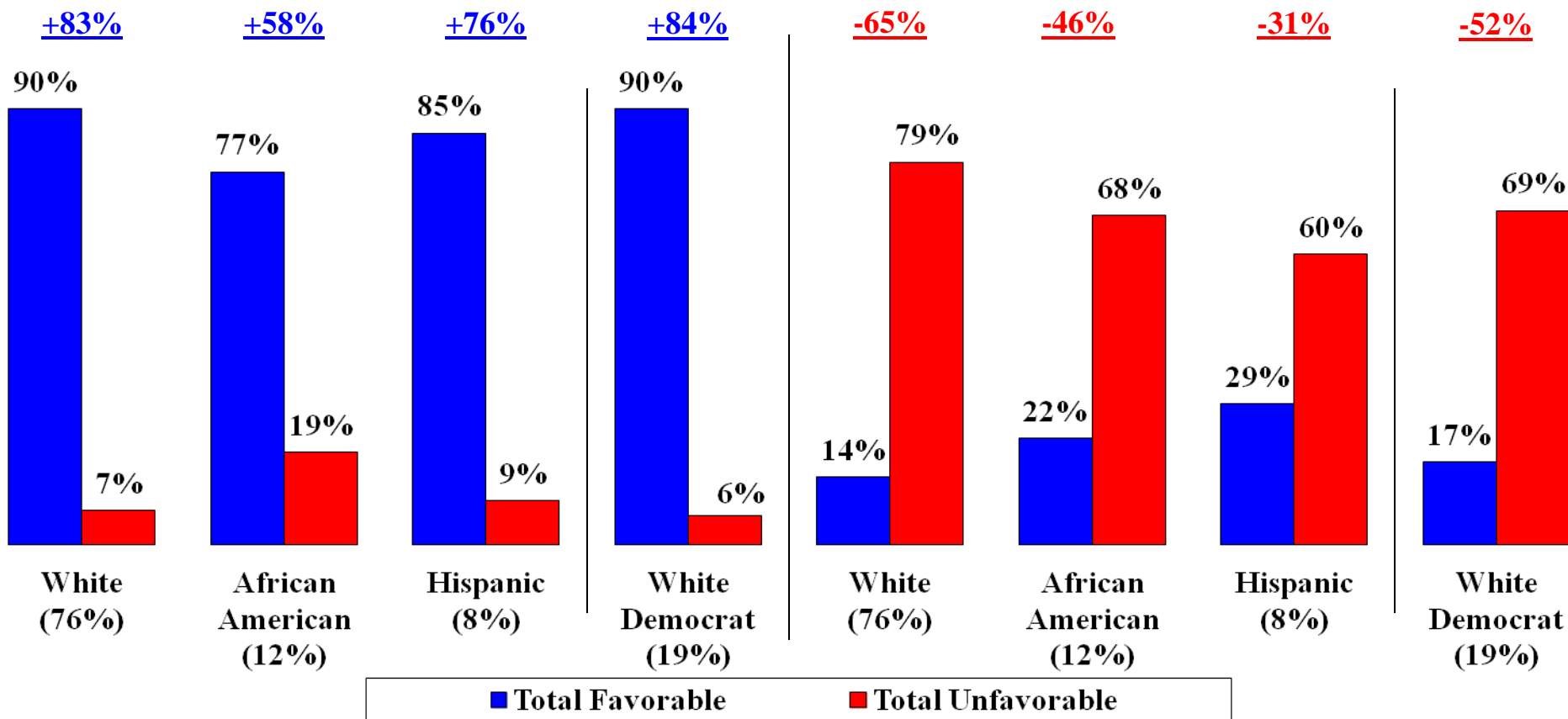
Illegal Immigrants by Party



A majority of each ethnic groups – including Hispanics – have a favorable opinion of legal immigrants and an unfavorable opinion of illegal immigrants.

Legal Immigrants by Ethnicity

Illegal Immigrants by Ethnicity



Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

“Describe a legal immigrant for me. Where do they come from? Why do they come to America? What kinds of jobs do they do while they’re here, and do they take jobs from Americans?”

When I think of a legal immigrant, I think of someone who comes here maybe to go to school or do work in a more white-collar type job. And then they take those skills, and they leave the country and go back to their own country, you know. I don’t know that they take jobs away, but they take their skills.

– Omaha Swing Voter Female

A lot of people in medicine and engineering and science come from other countries, particularly from the Asian continent. And they’re highly sought after, because we don’t really have, we’re not producing students in that caliber at this point in time, and a lot of companies seek those people.

– Omaha Swing Voter Female



Immigration Reform Proposal

Immigration Reform Proposal

The bill has three parts:

- *Requiring biometric Social Security cards to ensure that illegal immigrants cannot get jobs,*
- *Strengthening border security and enforcement in the U.S. ...and...*
- *Creating a process to admit temporary workers.*

All U.S. citizens and legal immigrants who want jobs would have to obtain a high-tech, fraudproof Social Security card with biometric identifiers, such as a fingerprint, on the card. No government database would house that information – it will be a high tech version of the current Social Security card.

Prospective employers would be responsible for swiping the cards through a machine to confirm a person's identity and immigration status. Employers who knowingly hire illegal workers would face stiff fines and prison sentences for repeat offenders.

There would be zero tolerance for gang members, smugglers, and those who commit felonies after coming here illegally. The Border Patrol's staffing and funding would be increased.

The legislation would award green cards to immigrants who receive a PhD or master's degree in science, technology, engineering, or math from a U.S. university.

Lower-skilled immigrants would be allowed to come to the U.S. to work, participating in a program designed to give the kinds of workers who now come illegally a way to enter the country legally. This new worker-visa program would be flexible in size, allowing more workers to come when the economy is creating jobs and fewer during a recession. Some of these workers would stay in the U.S. for a while and then return home; some who succeeded on the job and contributed in their communities would eventually be given the opportunity to stay permanently.

Important Note

The “Immigration Reform Proposal” mentioned on the previous page – and subsequent pages – refers to the bipartisan reform plan outlined in the op-ed piece written by Senators Schumer and Graham and published in the Washington Post on March 19th.

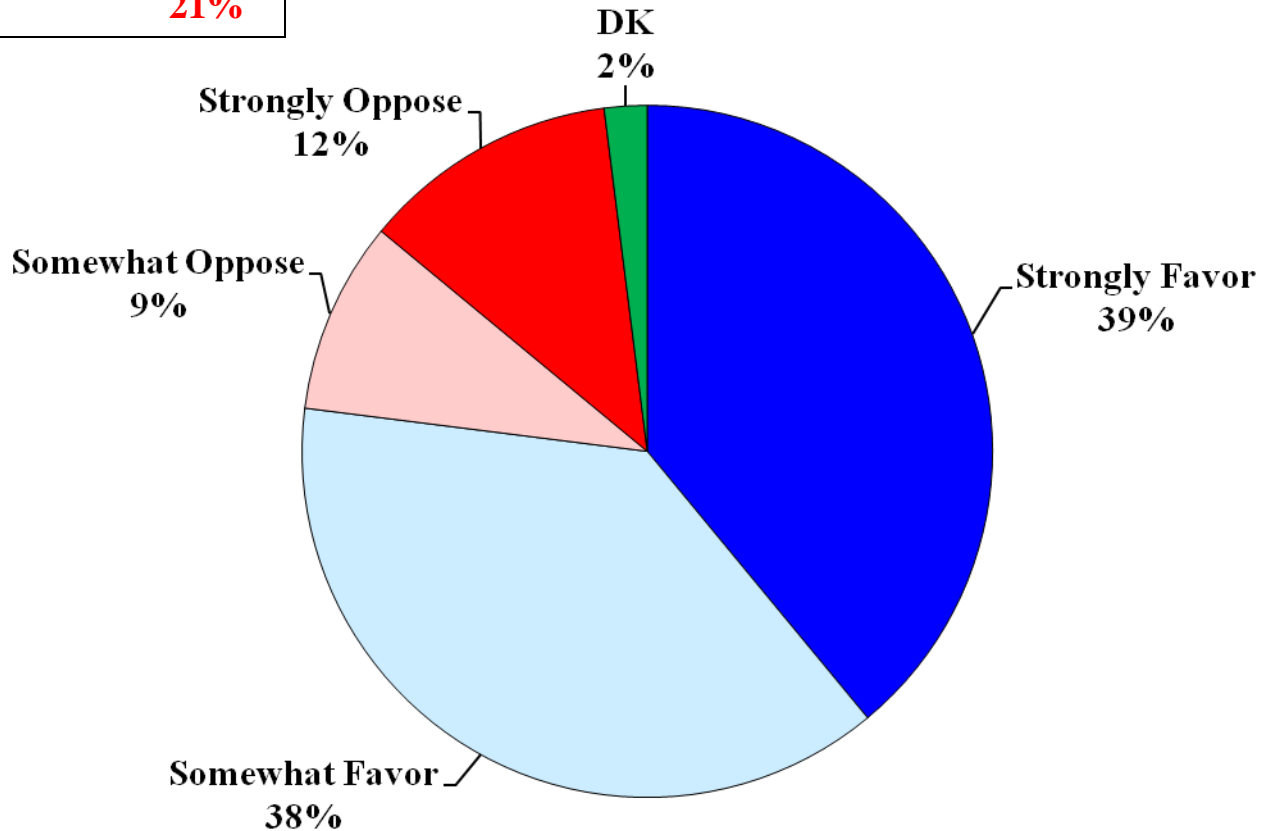
This bipartisan proposal was tested among survey respondents in two separate parts:

- ✓ **First was the three pillars of reform – border security, work site enforcement, and a way for future workers to enter the country legally.**
- ✓ **Second was the fourth pillar – what to do about illegal immigrants already in the country**

A majority of voters support the proposal. Intensity in favor is strong.

“Thinking now about a bill that was proposed in the U.S. Senate to reform immigration laws...I’m going to read you a description of the bill and please tell me if you favor or oppose it.”

Total Favor:	77%
Total Oppose:	21%



Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

I'm a law-abiding citizen. And when the laws aren't enforced across the board, equally to everybody, it really bothers me.

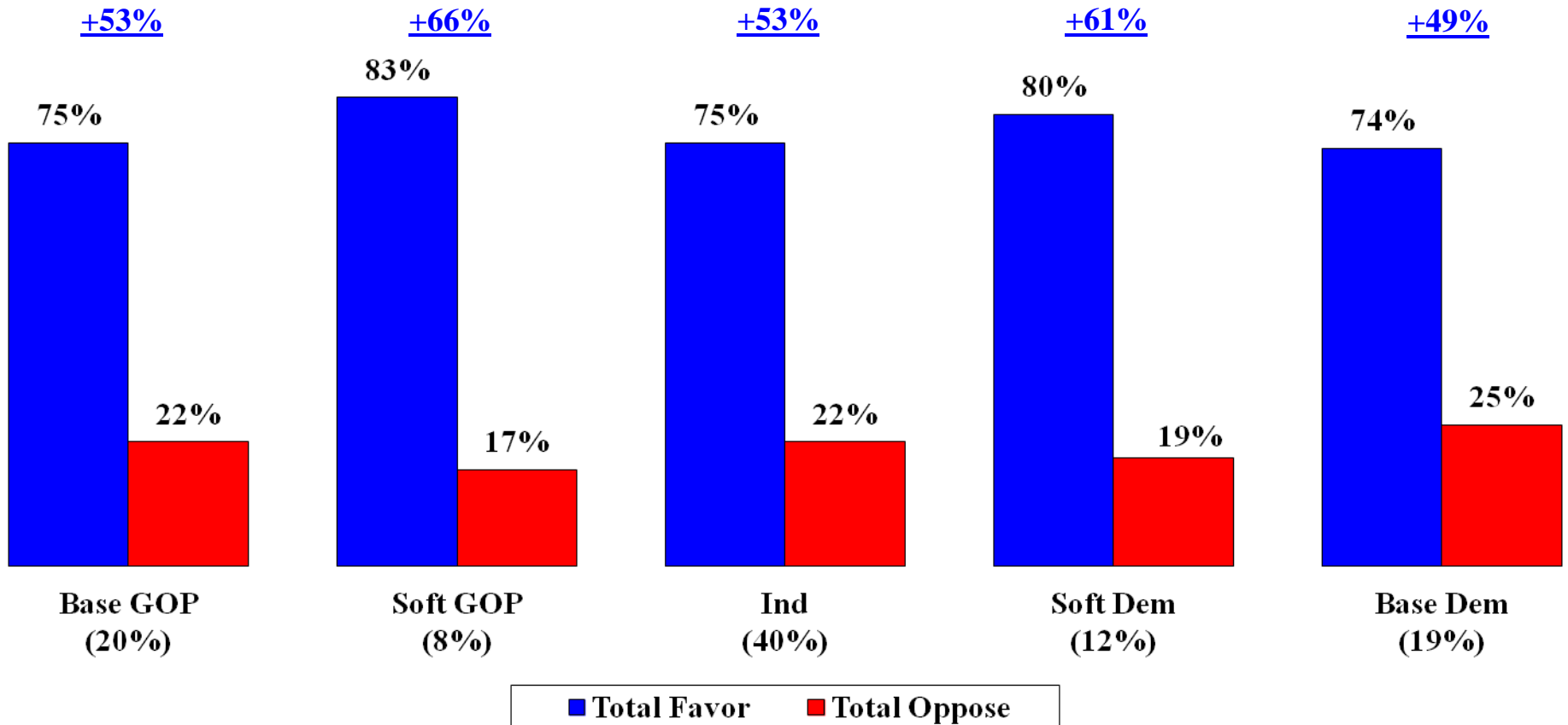
– Nashville Base GOP Female

I'm in favor of immigration if it's legal. But I don't like them coming in and changing all the signs, and where we don't even recognize that at all. And then like I think she said, they go into, when they have healthcare issues, they go into the emergency room.

– Nashville Base GOP Female

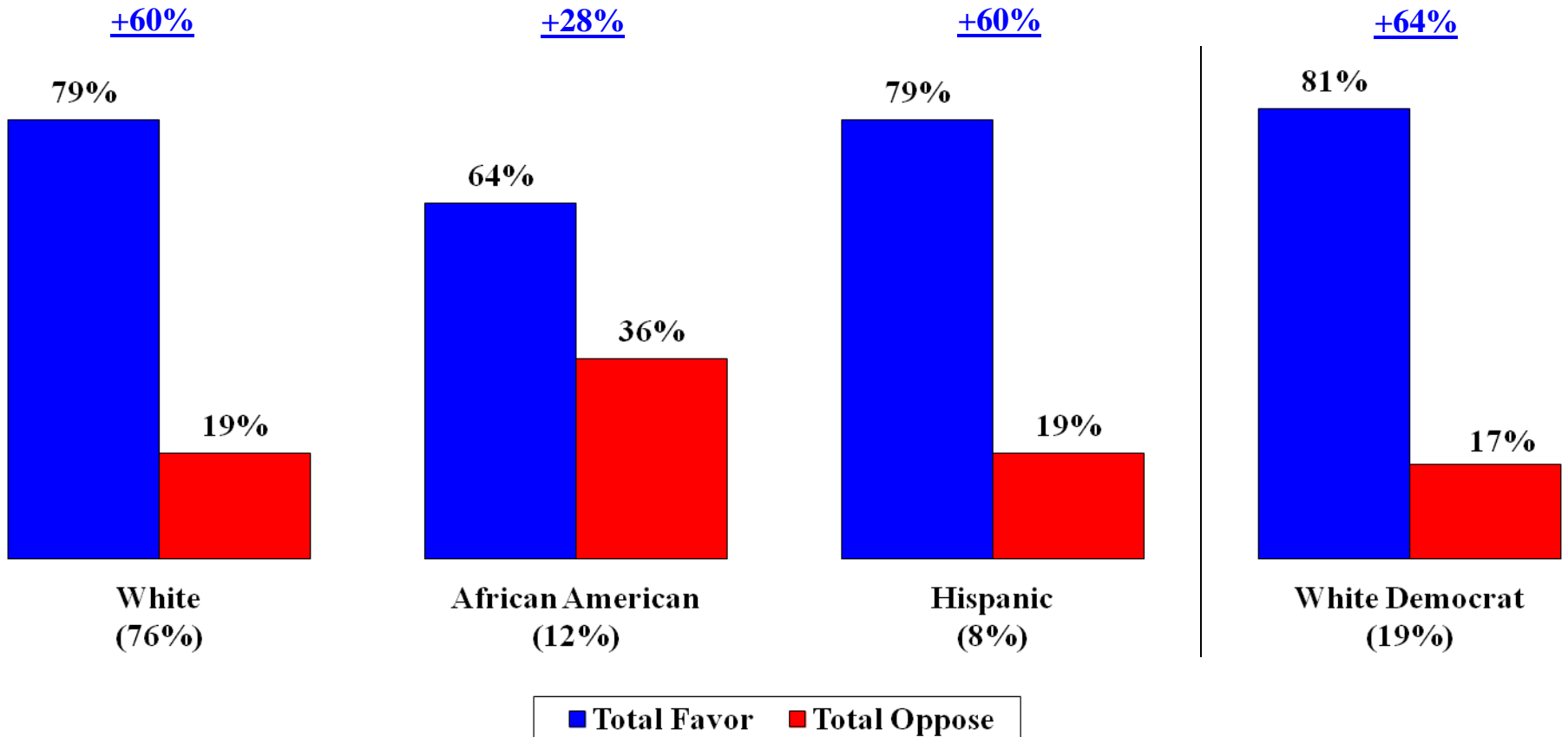
The immigration reform proposal receives broad, bipartisan support.

Immigration Reform Proposal by Party



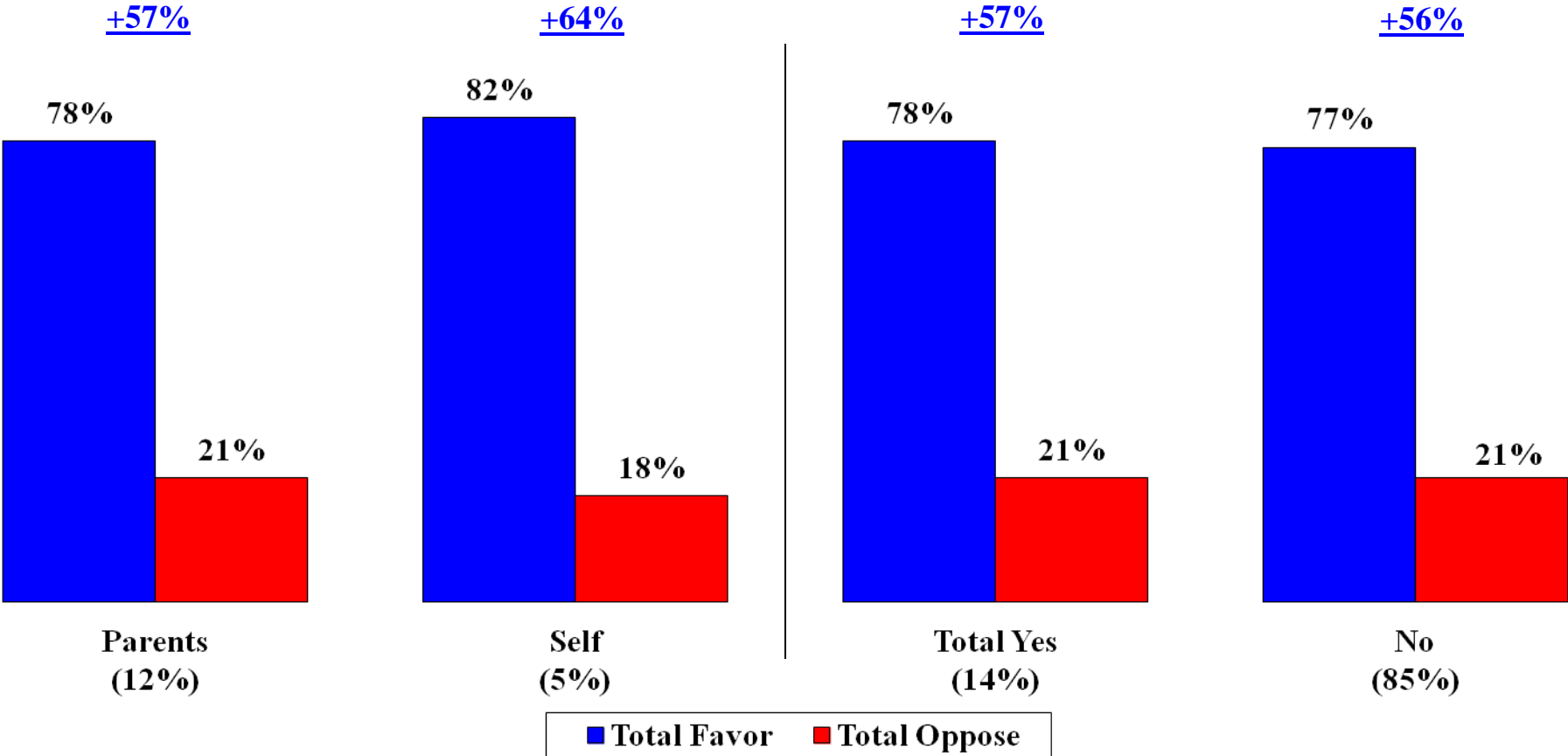
A majority of voters of all ethnicities favor the proposal. Support is a bit softer with African Americans.

Immigration Reform Proposal by Ethnicity



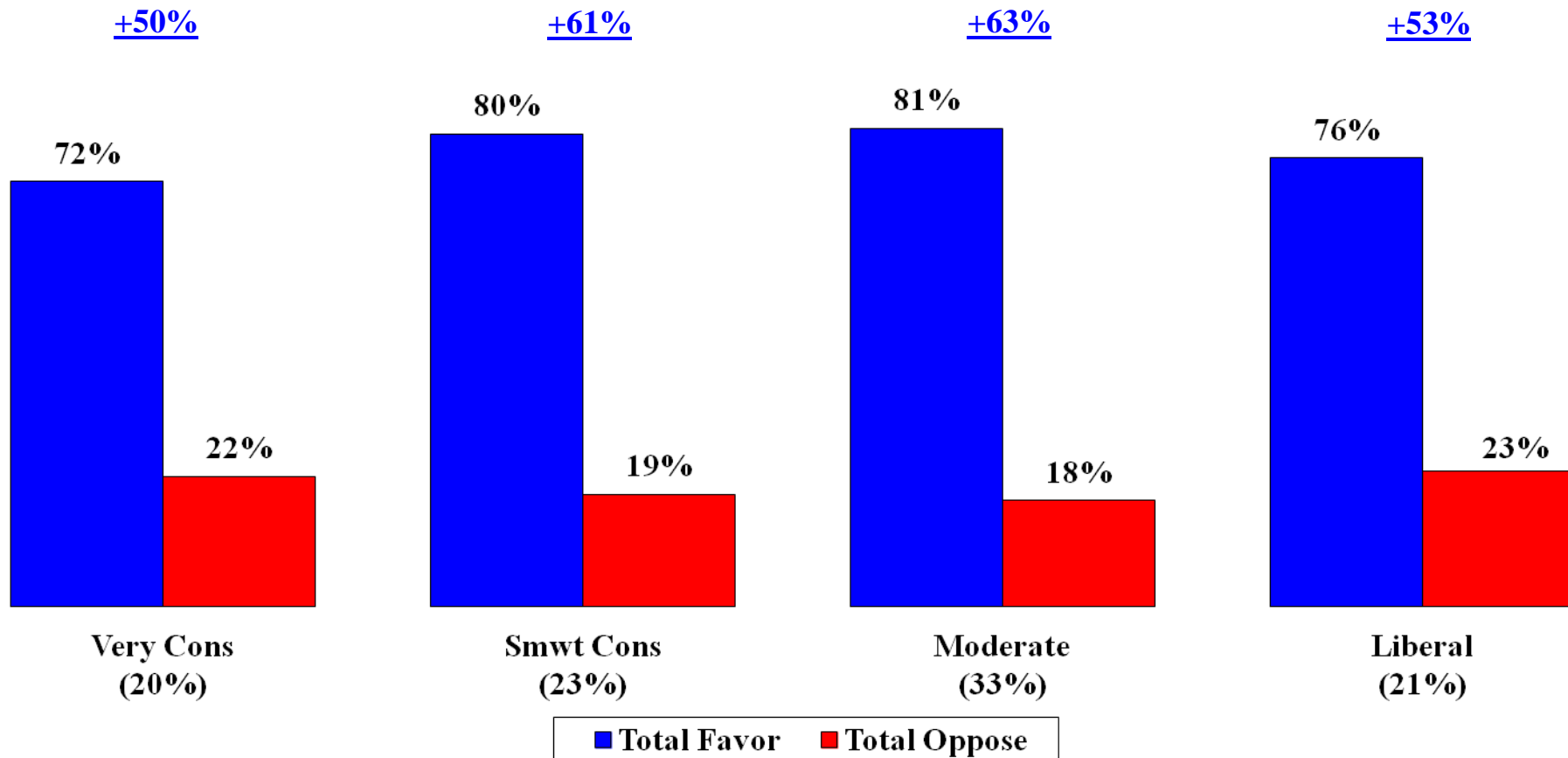
Support for the proposal is equally high among voters with and without immigrant backgrounds.

Immigration Reform Proposal by Immigrants



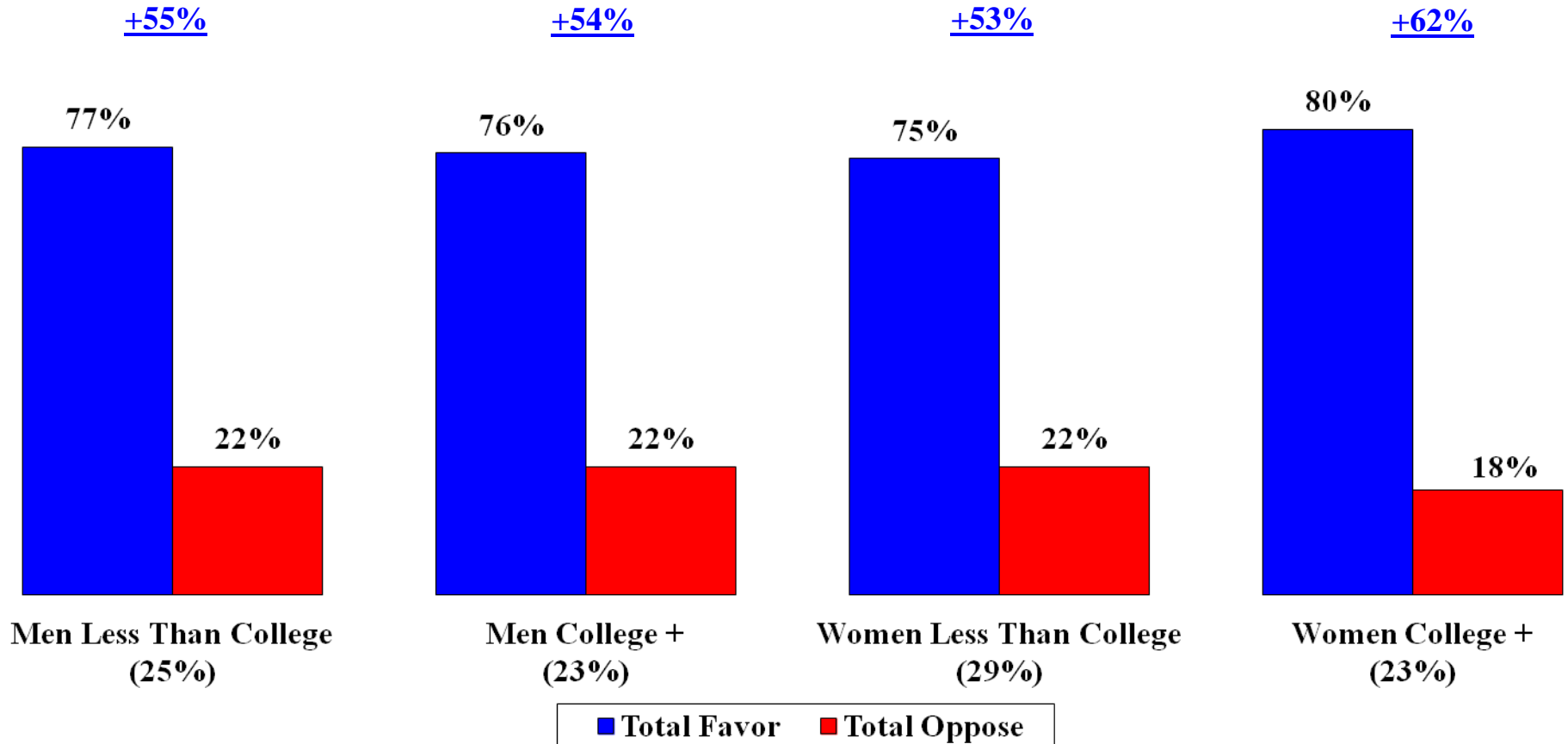
Support for the proposal is not impacted by ideology.

Immigration Reform Proposal by Ideology



A solid majority of voters across education/gender lines favor the proposal.

Immigration Reform Proposal by Education/Gender



Zero tolerance for crime, penalties for hiring illegals, and strengthened Border Patrol are the strongest individual portions of the bill.

“Thinking more about this proposed bill...I am going to read you each part of the proposal and after I read each one please tell me if you favor or oppose that part of the proposal.”

Ranked by % Strongly Favor

There would be zero tolerance for gang members, smugglers, and those who commit felonies after coming here illegally.



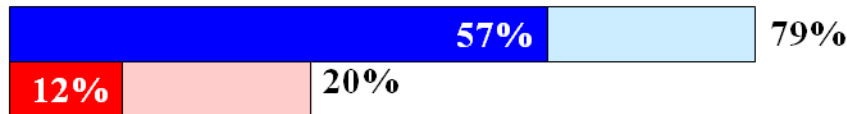
Employers who knowingly hire illegal workers would face stiff fines and prison sentences for repeat offenders.



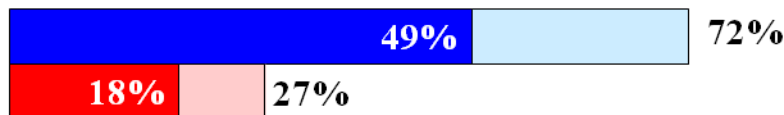
The Border Patrol's staffing and funding would be increased.



Prospective employers would be responsible for swiping the cards through a machine to confirm a person's identity and immigration status.



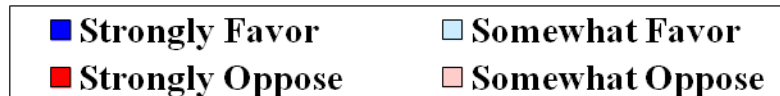
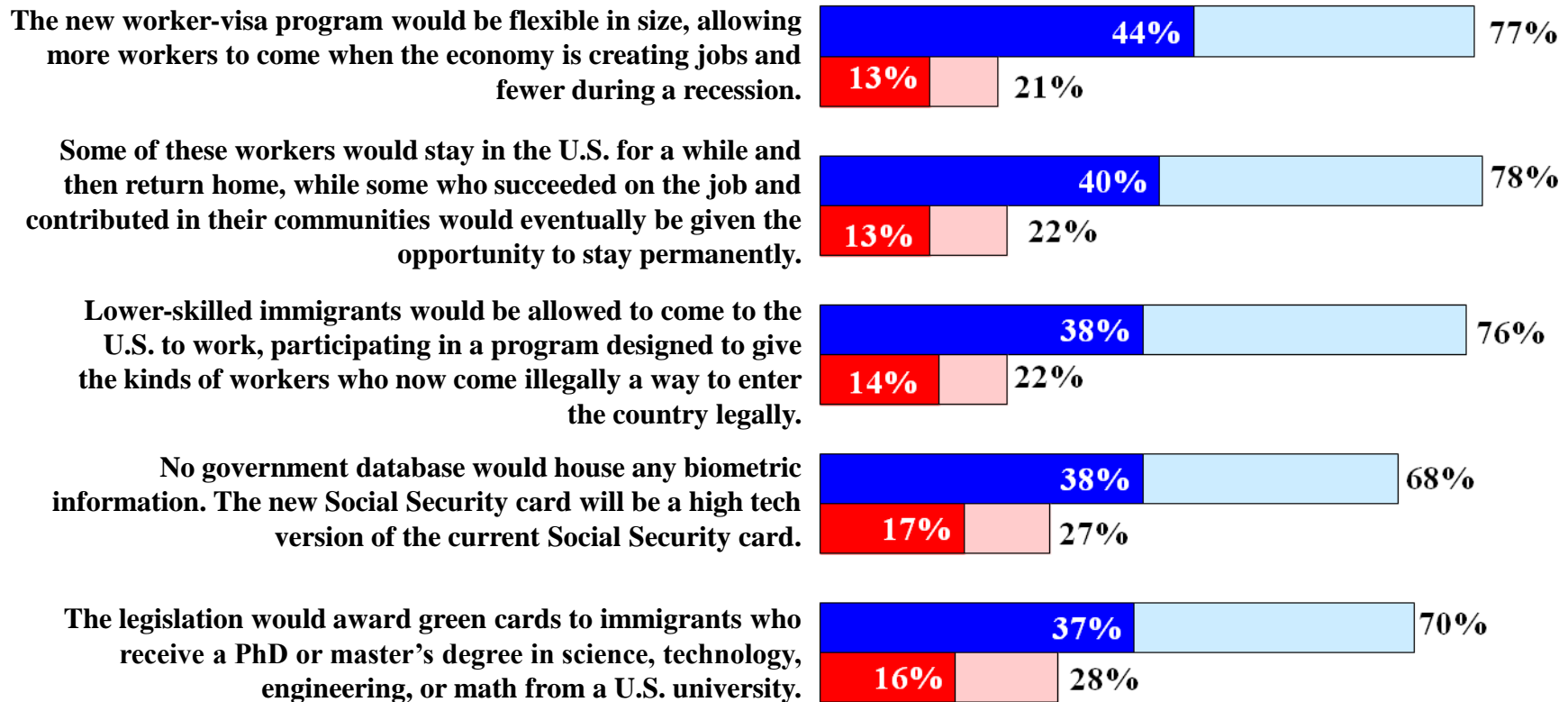
All U.S. citizens and legal immigrants who want jobs would have to obtain a high-tech, fraudproof Social Security card with biometric identifiers, such as a fingerprint, on the card.



The flexible worker visa program and allowing some workers who succeed to stay permanently are popular as well.

“Thinking more about this proposed bill...I am going to read you each part of the proposal and after I read each one please tell me if you favor or oppose that part of the proposal.”

Ranked by % Strongly Favor



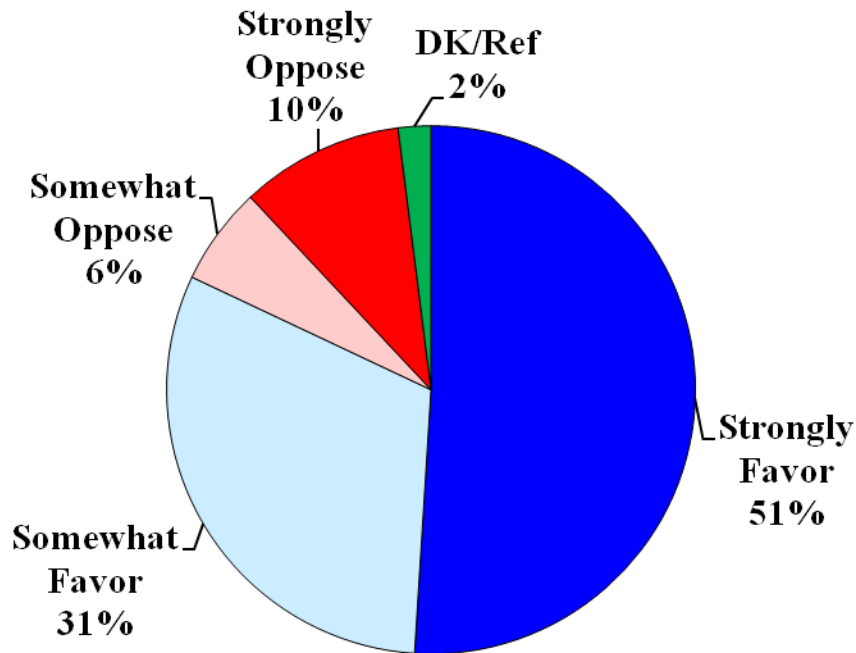
There is no difference between using “legal status” and “citizenship” in this proposed addition to the proposal.

“Thinking further about this, there is are additional parts that may be added to the proposal. After I read each of these new parts, please tell me if you favor or oppose it...”

This legislation would give illegal immigrants already in the country an opportunity to earn legal status. Under this part of the proposal, illegal immigrants would be required to pay fines and back taxes. They would also be required to pass background checks, be proficient in English and could not earn legal status before those who have already applied and are waiting for it.

Total Favor: 83%*
Total Oppose: 16%

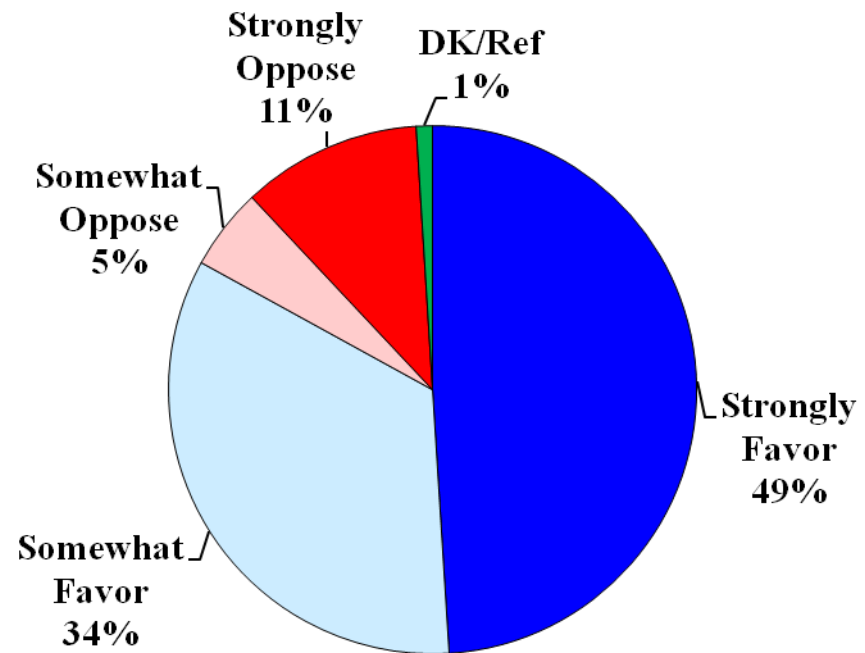
Split Sample, N=401



This legislation would give illegal immigrants already in the country an opportunity to earn citizenship. Under this part of the proposal, illegal immigrants would be required to pay fines and back taxes. They would also be required to pass background checks, be proficient in English and could not earn citizenship before those who have already applied and are waiting for it.

Split Sample, N=399

Total Favor: 83%
Total Oppose: 16%

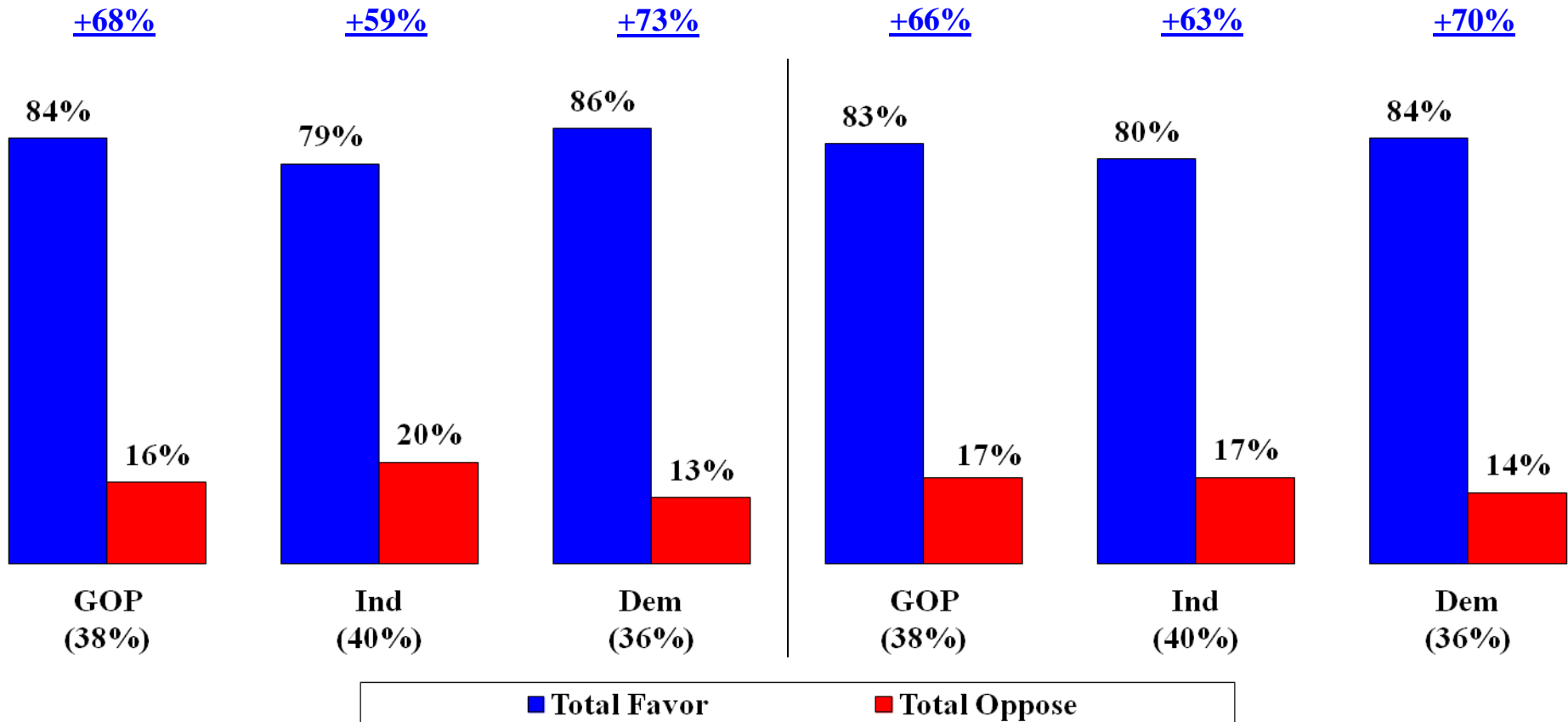


*Denotes Rounding

Both samples reflect broad bipartisan support for their respective proposals.

“Legal Status” by Party, N=401

“Citizenship” by Party, N=399



The “legal status” language only performs slightly better in this proposed addition.

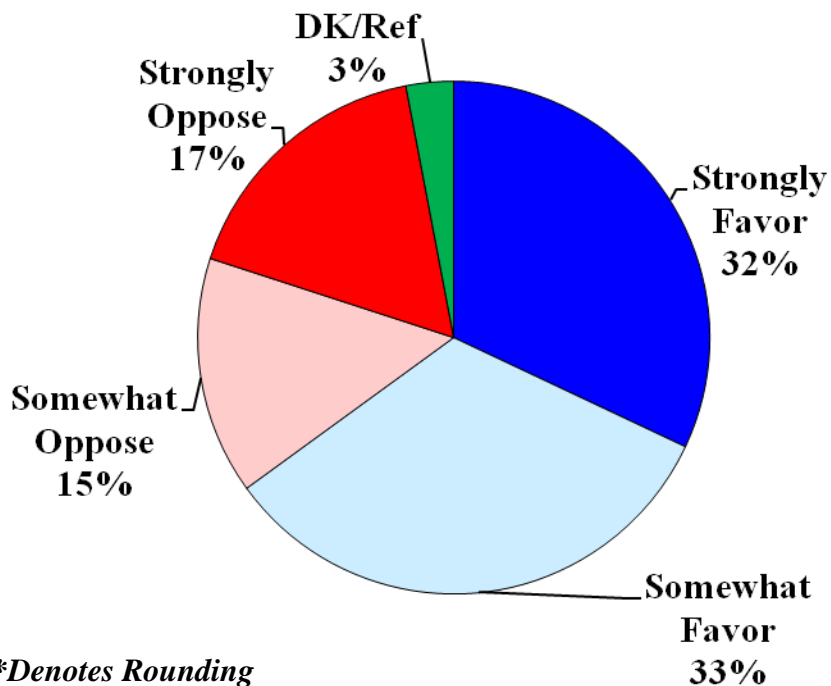
“Still thinking about this proposal, another new part would be...”

Before illegal immigrants already in the country could earn legal status, they would be required to admit they broke the law and perform community service.

Before illegal immigrants already in the country could earn citizenship, they would be required to admit they broke the law and perform community service.

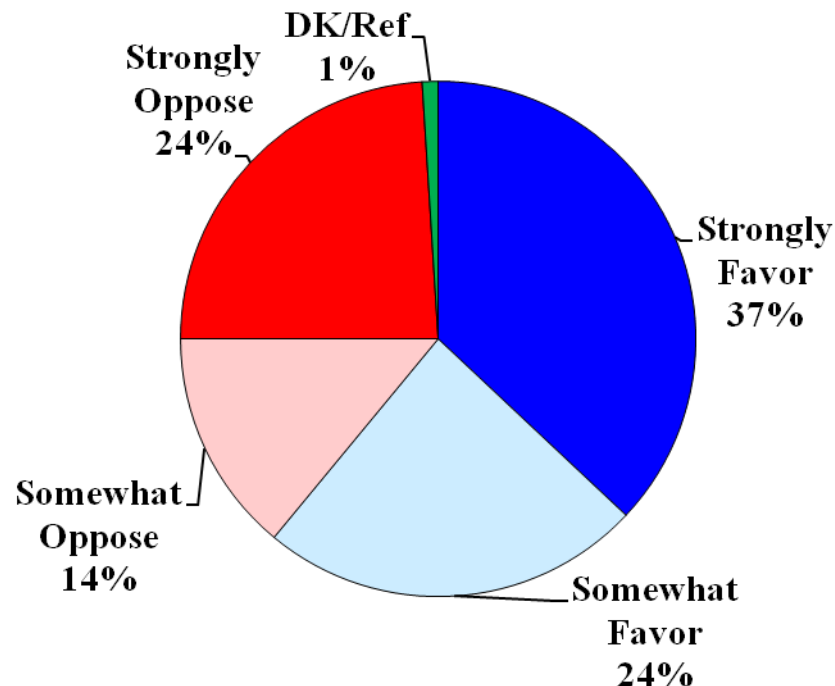
Total Favor: 65%
Total Oppose: 32%

Split Sample, N=401



Split Sample, N=399

Total Favor: 61%
Total Oppose: 37%*

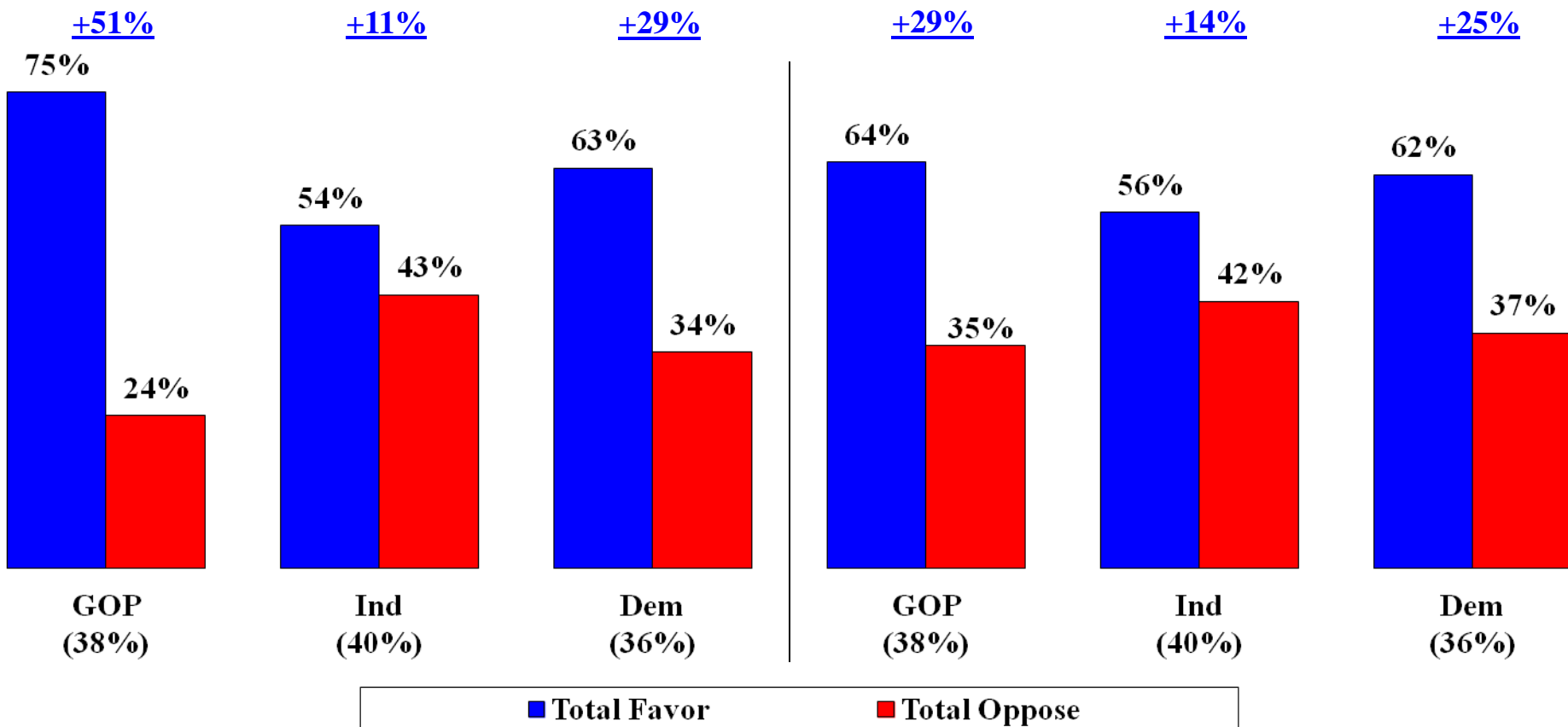


*Denotes Rounding

The “legal status” language tests much better with GOPers.

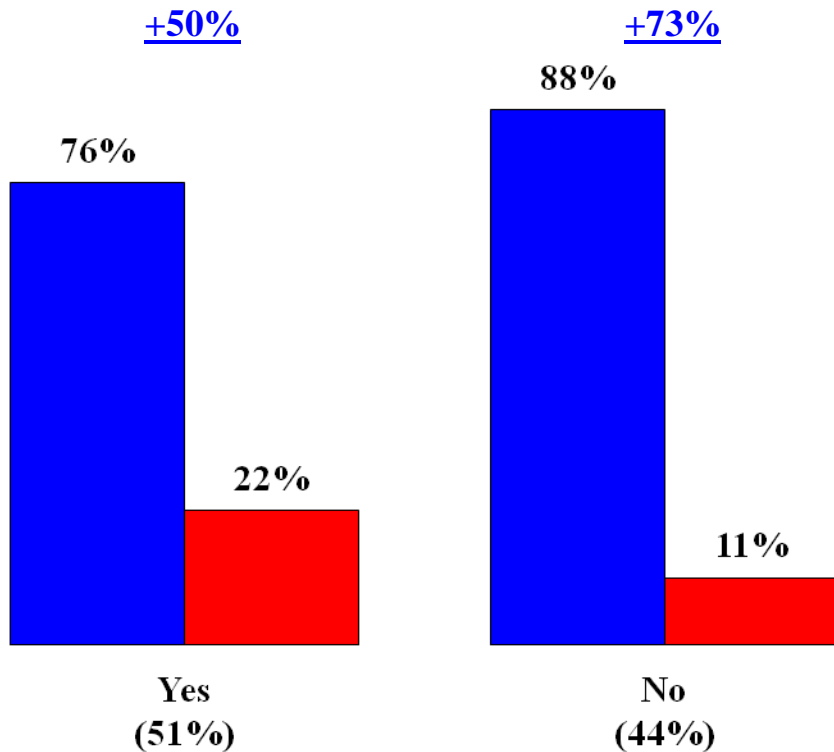
“Legal Status” by Party, N=401

“Citizenship” by Party, N=399

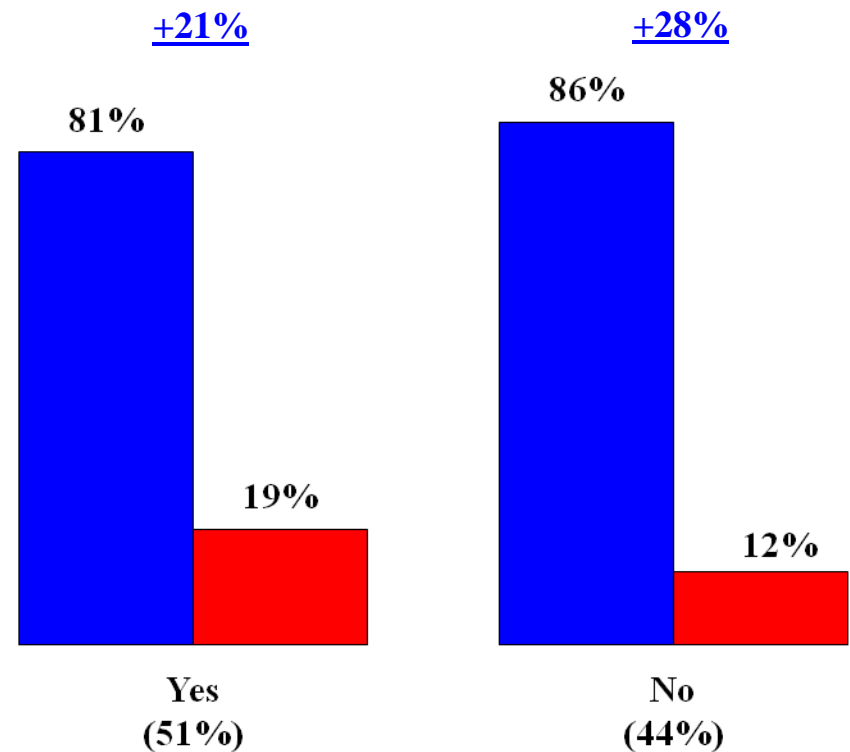


Voters who think the new parts of the proposal grant amnesty to illegals are a bit more supportive of the “citizenship” language.

“Legal Status” by Amnesty, N=401



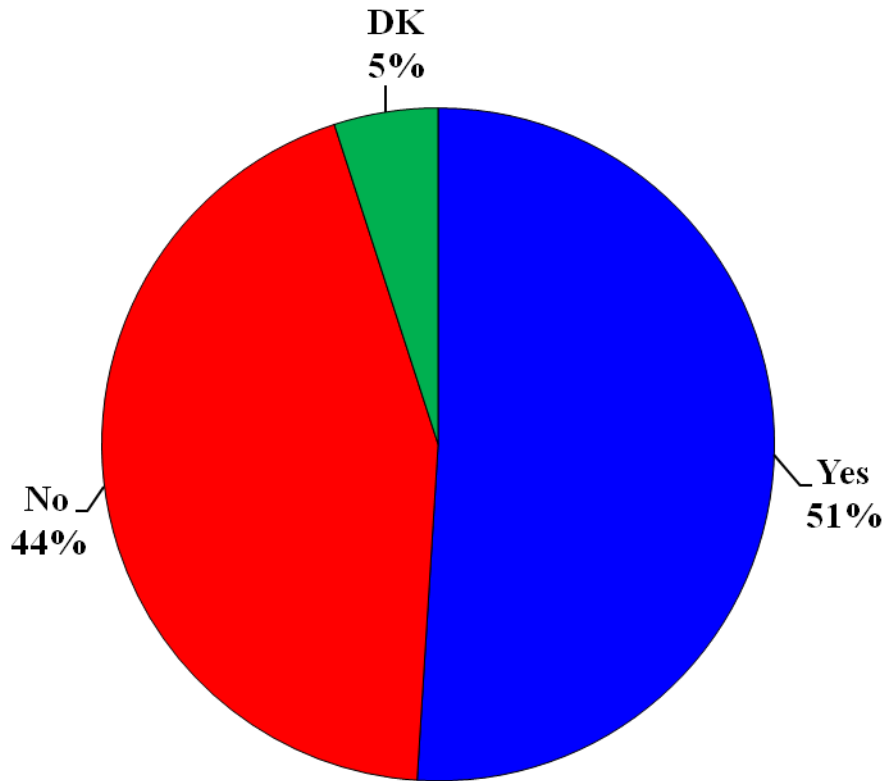
“Citizenship” by Amnesty, N=399



■ Total Favor ■ Total Oppose

Women – especially Hispanics, base GOPers, and conservatives are the most likely to consider the new parts of the proposal amnesty.

“And, do you consider these new parts of the proposal to be amnesty for illegal immigrants?”



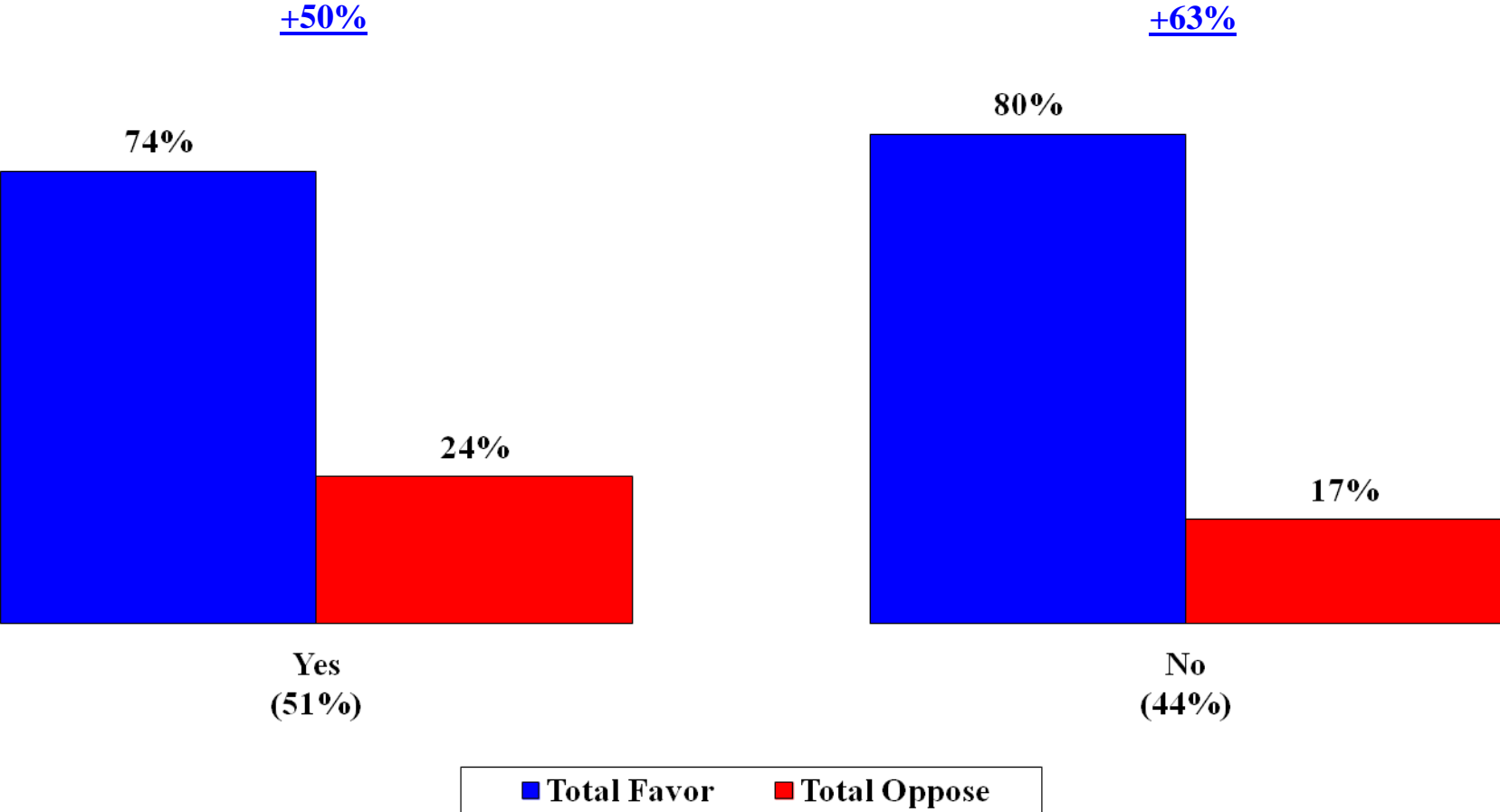
Top Groups

Yes (51%)

Hispanic Women	75%
Women 18-34	63%
Base GOP	61%
Very Cons	61%
Part Time Emp	60%
Cons/Ind Dems	59%
Hispanic	58%
Mid West Region	58%
18-34	58%
African American Men	57%
Immigrant Parents	57%
Ind Women	56%
Ind 55+	56%
Women Hourly Emp	56%
HS or Less Educ	56%
Mother	56%
Single w/o Kids	56%
Urban Women	56%
Suburban Women	56%

While, “amnesty” may be a radioactive word, those who view this proposal as being amnesty are not opposed to the proposal.

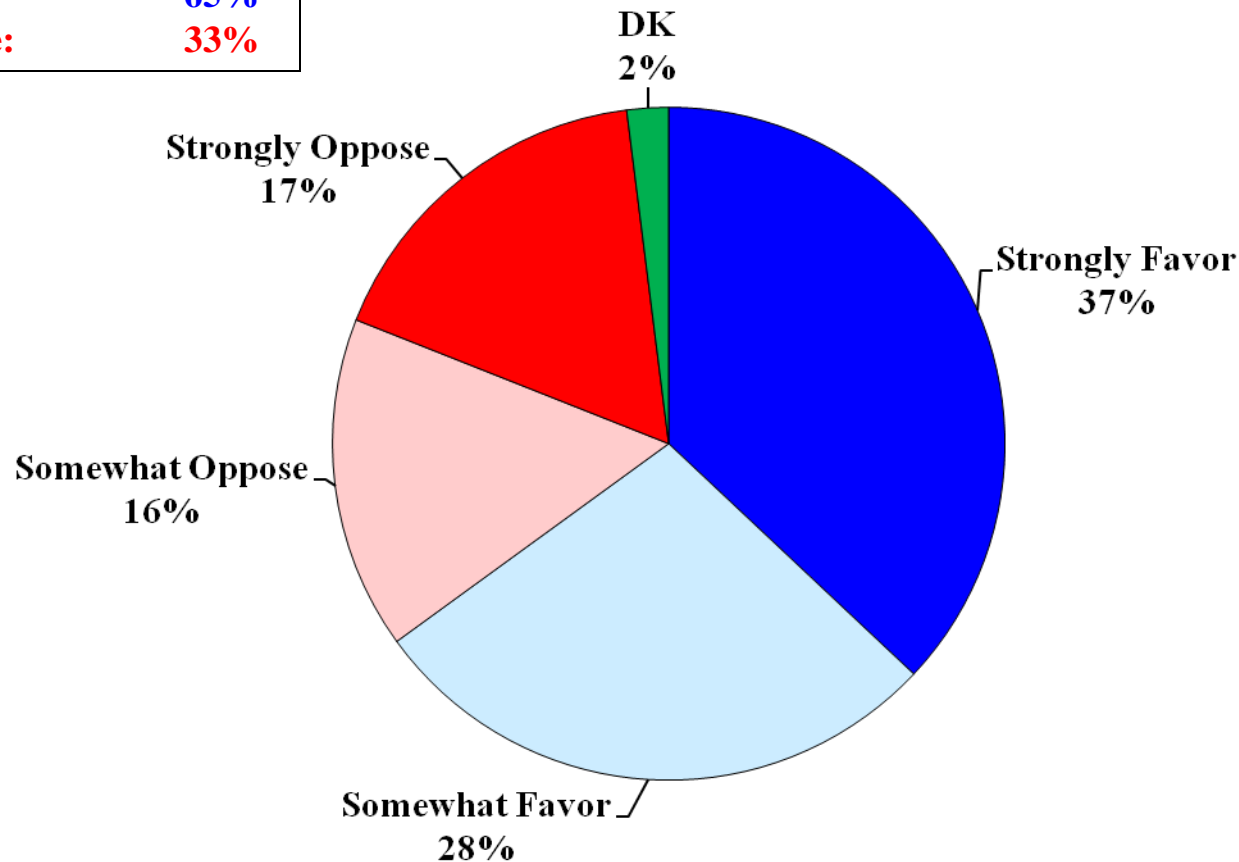
Immigration Reform Proposal by Amnesty



Tightening border security before implementing the other proposals is popular as well.

“The next new part would be...None of these proposals would go into effect until after border security was significantly tightened by additional manpower, resources, and technology – even if this meant significant delays in implementing the other elements. Would you favor or oppose this new part of the proposal?”

Total Favor:	65%
Total Oppose:	33%



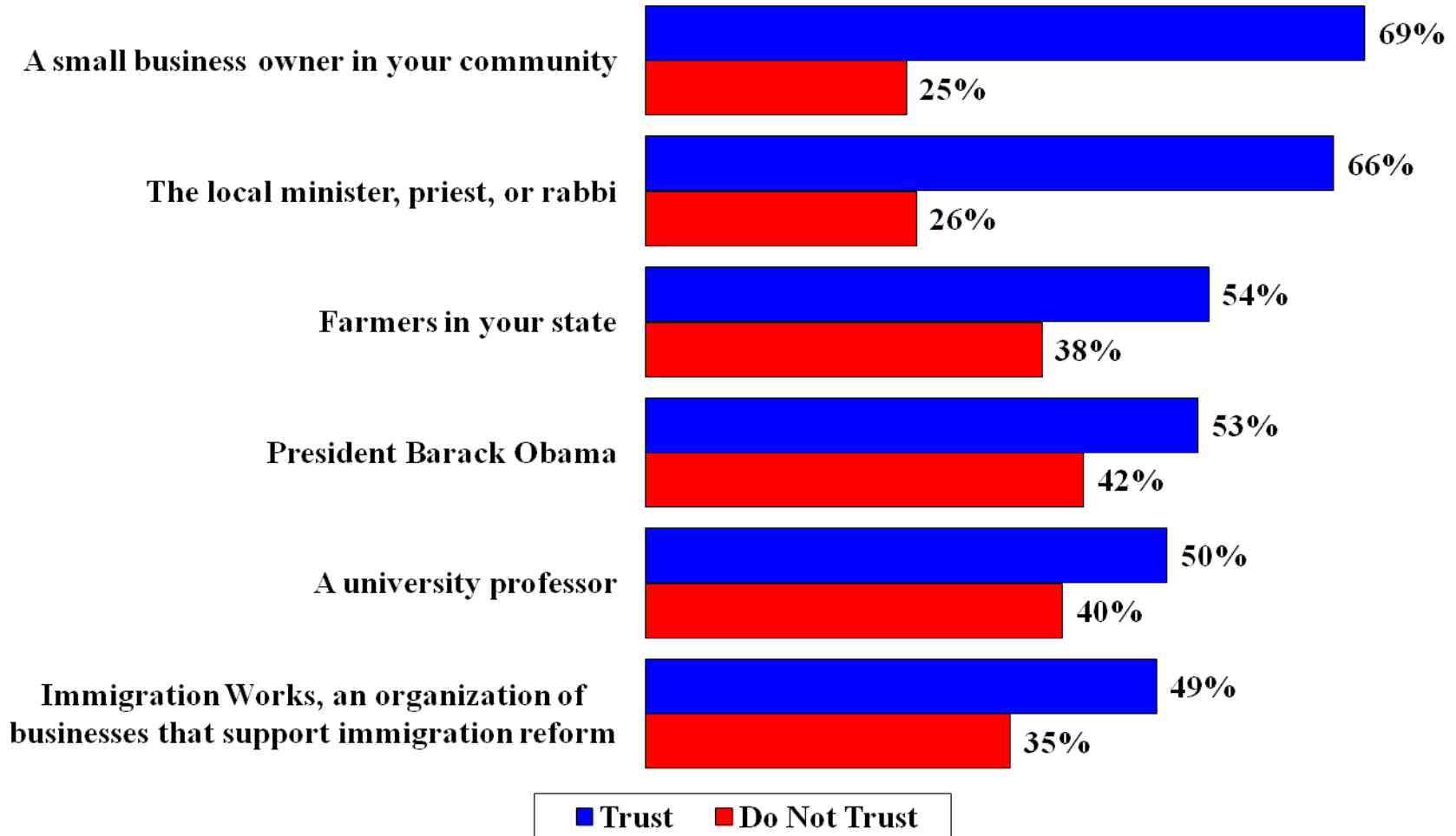


Message Testing

Voters trust the opinions of small business owners and their religious leaders on immigration reform.

“Now, I would like to read you some people or groups of people, and for each one, please tell me if you trust or do not trust their opinions on immigration reform.”

Ranked by % Trust

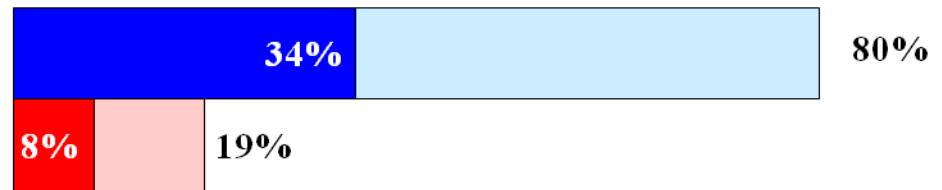


Voters believe that skilled immigrants make valuable contributions to our society, but don't think that there are too few domestic workers for high tech companies.

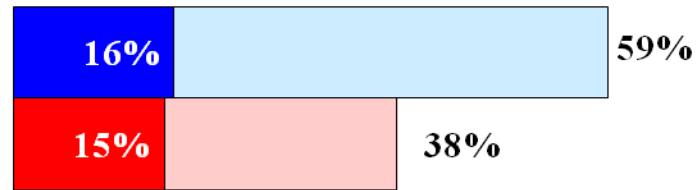
“Let’s talk for a while just about skilled immigration. I would like to read you some statements made about skilled immigrants, and for each one I read you, I would like you to tell me how believable you find that statement to be...”

Ranked by % Very Believable

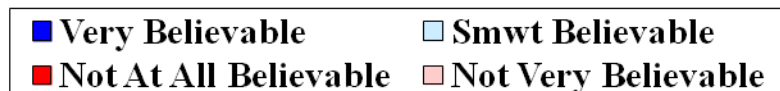
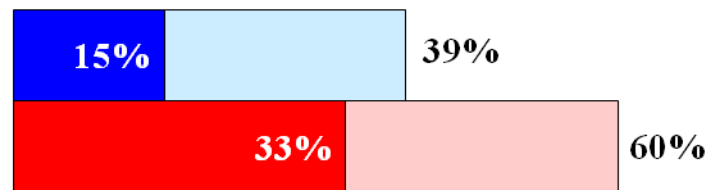
Skilled immigrants make a valuable contribution to the American economy. Skilled immigrants who come to this country are involved in starting engineering and technology companies, they are doctors in areas that don't have enough doctors, and they are involved in research and development for many American companies.



The number of skilled and highly educated immigrant workers allowed legally into the country each year is too low. Many engineers and technology experts who want to come to America are turned away by a broken immigration system and go to other countries where they help companies that compete with American technology and engineering companies.

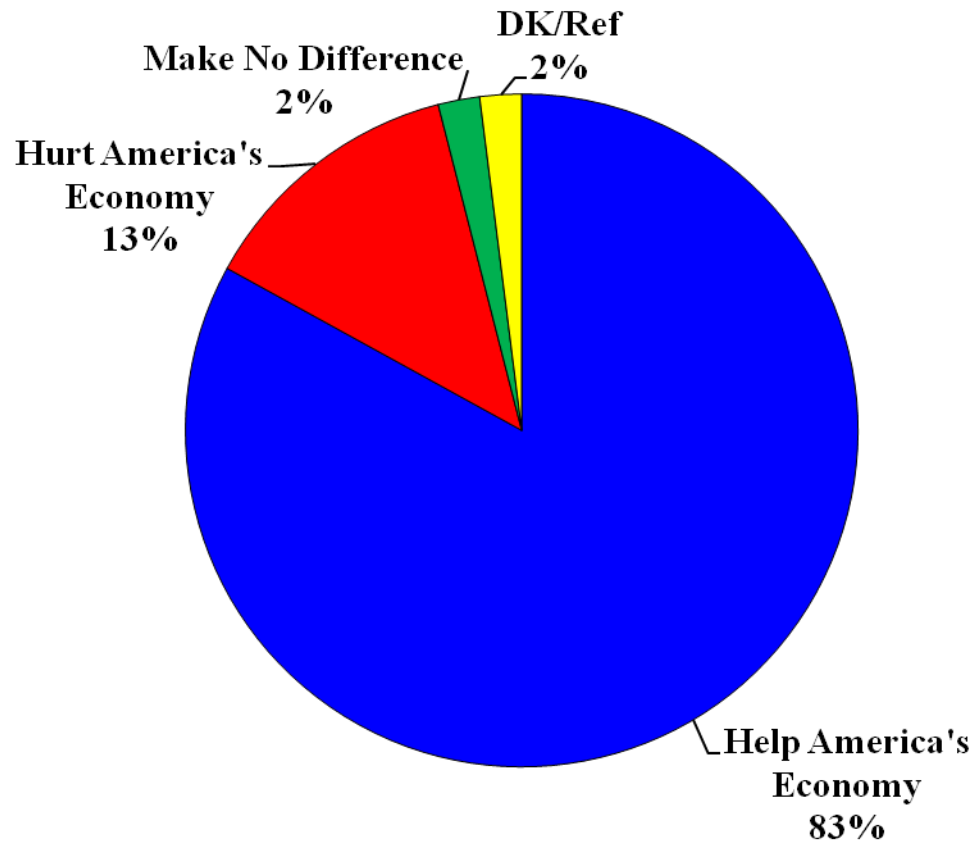


High tech companies are increasingly moving part of their operations to other countries because they can not get enough American or skilled immigrant software engineers for their high-tech workforce.



Voters overwhelmingly think allowing foreign students with degrees in math, science, and engineering to stay in America will help the economy.

“Do you think allowing foreign students who graduate from American universities with degrees in math, science, and engineering would help or hurt America’s economy if they stayed and worked in this country after graduation?”



Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

“Do you think that the U.S. is in competition with, let’s say England for, to attract highly skilled scientists, engineers, or medical professionals?”

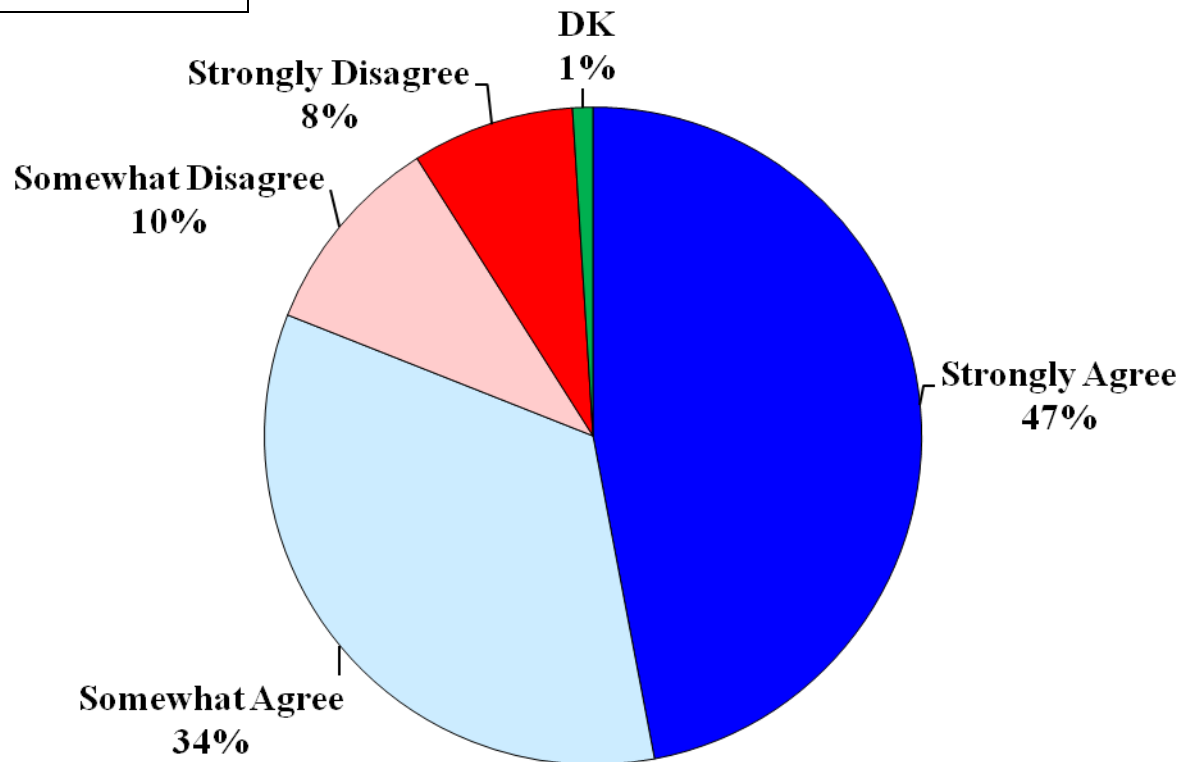
Yeah. I mean, I think we’re in competition with every country around the world. I mean, it’s no longer just a United States economy. It’s a world economy. And I think everybody’s looking for the brightest to help their country make a move forward.

– Omaha Swing Voter Male

A large majority of voters agree that American companies need both American-born and foreign-born workers to compete in the global economy.

“And, now, I’m going to read you a statement, and after I read it, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with that statement. The statement is...American companies are competing in a global economy, and need both American-born and foreign-born scientists, software engineers, and other high tech workers to be able to grow.”

Total Agree:	82%*
Total Disagree:	17%*



**Denotes Rounding*

Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

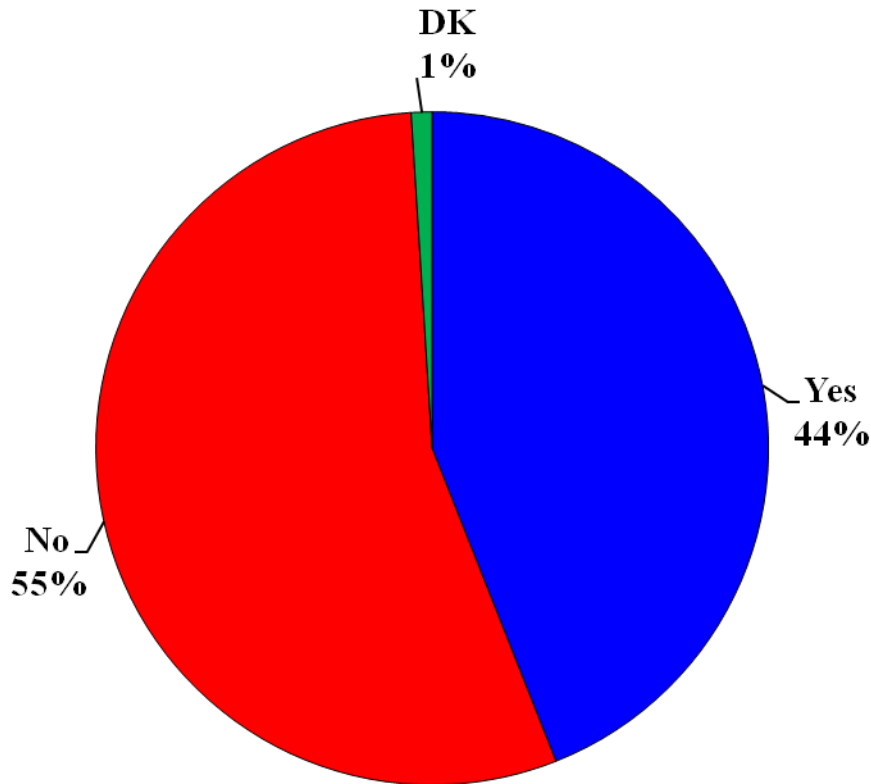
“Does immigration help or hurt America’s competitiveness with the rest of the world, or does it not have much impact?”

I think it hurts, to some degree. I think that the people that we ought to allow to immigrate, it should be like he was saying like if they’re here because there’s a job that an American can’t do, or there’s something that they can teach, you know, Americans to do. Because there’s probably a lot of knowledge in, you know, some of the other countries, in the high-tech areas, that it would be a benefit for us to have them here in teaching positions. But on the most part, I think it hurts us because it keeps us from accomplishing that.

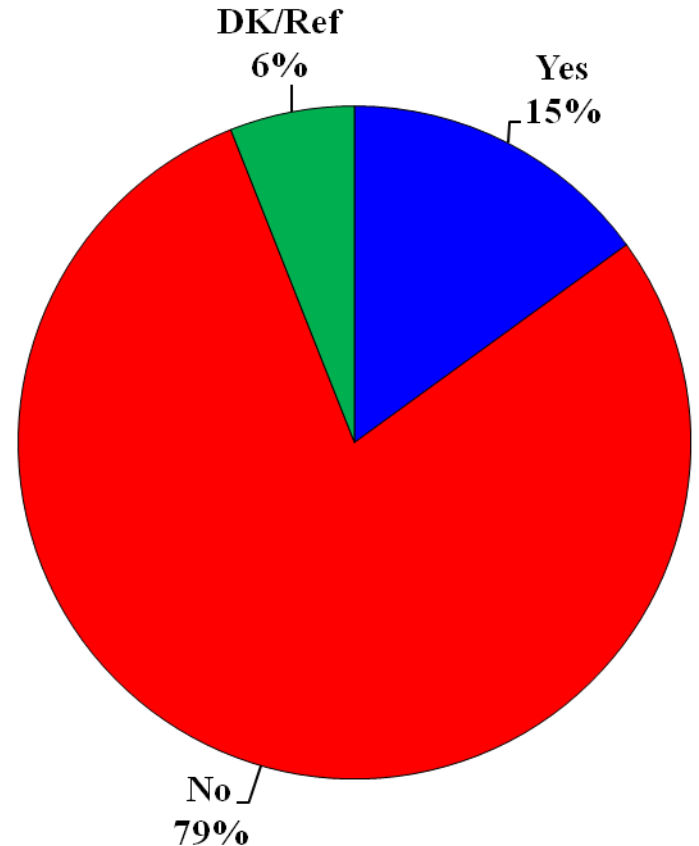
– Dallas Soft GOP Female

A slim majority of voters do not think it is easy for businesses to find American workers for low skill jobs, but most agree that children don't aspire to low skill jobs.

“Now, thinking about less skilled workers...Do you think that it is easy for businesses to find Americans who are willing to do farm labor, clean hotel rooms, or move around the country for short-term, low-paying menial jobs?”



“And, now thinking about the children in your neighborhood...when they grow up, will they want to do farm labor or seasonal low-paying jobs?”



Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

“Why is it that farmers find it so hard to find people who, to pick their crops, or why is it that hotels find it so hard to find people to clean hotel bathrooms and, you know, hotel rooms and stuff?”

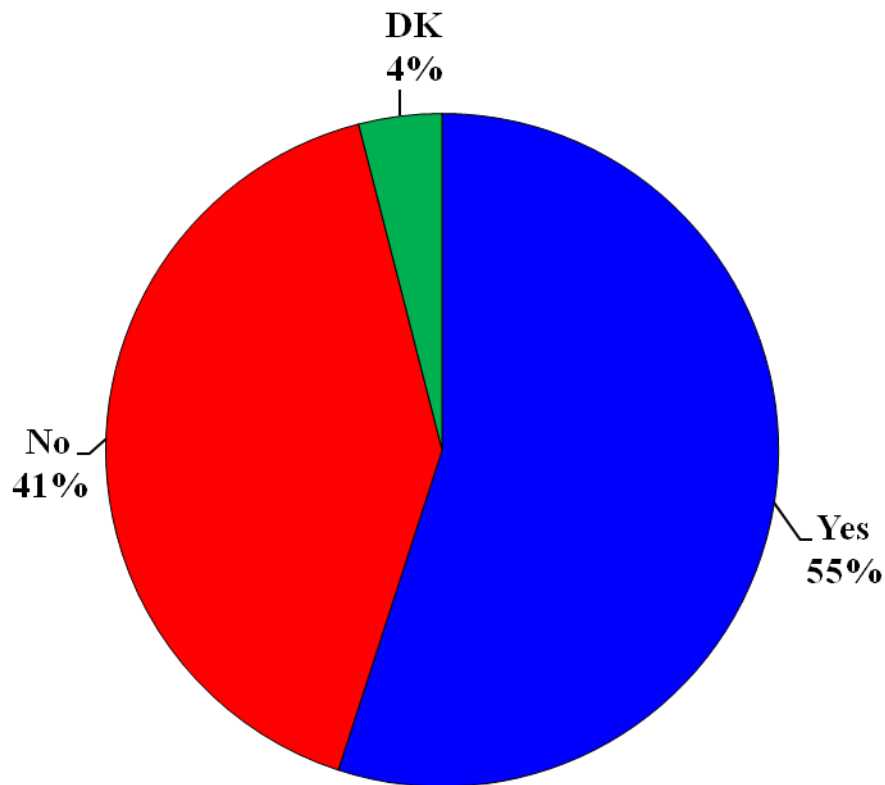
With the migrant workers, in particular, it's horrible, backbreaking work in horrible conditions. Nobody with intelligence, or the ability to get a better job is going to work that. And if you don't have someone out there picking those crops, they're going to rot. And the farmers, I don't know, well, someone's going to have to do that, that backbreaking work.

– Omaha Swing Voter Male

A majority, including many older voters and GOPers, are willing to pay more for produce/housing in exchange for American workers being used.

“And, as you may know, low skilled immigrants come to America because there are jobs available in this country that pay so low that businesses and farmers cannot find Americans willing to do the work. If employers have to raise wages to hire Americans instead of immigrants, would you be willing to pay approximately twenty percent more for fruit and vegetables, and ten percent more for housing?”

Overall

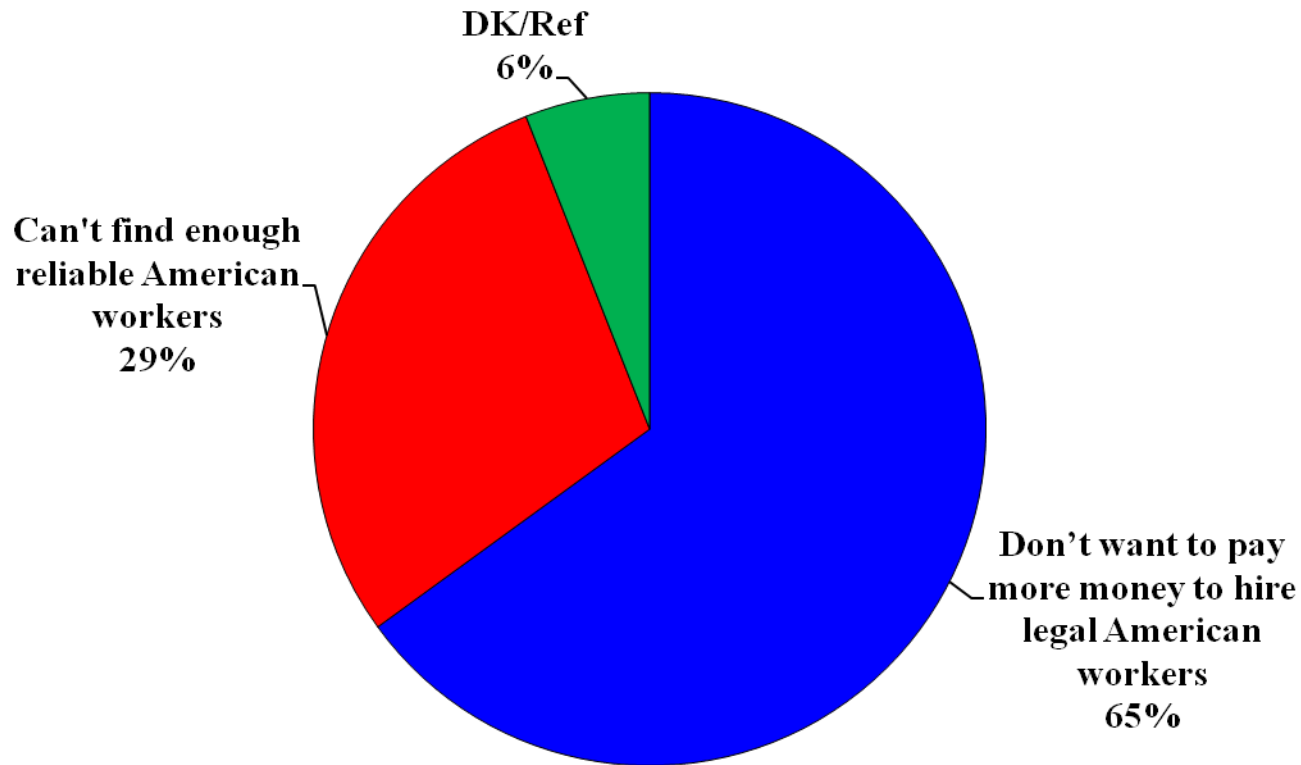


Top Groups: Yes (55%)

Ind 55+	68%
55-64	68%
Men Hourly Emp	68%
Ind Women	66%
Rural Men	65%
Women 55+	63%
Base GOP	62%
Mod/Lib Ind	62%
White Men	61%
> College Educ	61%
GOP 55+	61%
Cons GOP	61%
GOP Men	60%
White	60%
Retired Women	60%

Voters think businesses hire illegals because they don't want to pay more money for legal American workers.

“And, do you think that most businesses that hire illegal immigrants do so because they don't want to pay more money to hire legal American workers, or because they can't find enough reliable American workers willing to do low wage, menial work?”



Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

“Is it businesses’ fault for hiring these illegal workers, or is it government’s fault for not enforcing the law?”

No. It’s businesses’ fault, I think. I think that they are bad employers, because a friend of mine works in industry, and he said they’ve got Hispanics that can hardly speak English, and they’ve got a Social Security card that says John Miller or Al Sorenson. You know, give me a break. The guy in personnel is not stupid.

– Omaha Base GOP Male

Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

“Let’s talk about businesses that hire immigrants. Do you think that most of them, illegal immigrants, do you think that most of them are bad employers who knowingly hire workers who are here illegally so they can underpay and exploit them, or do you think that they are companies who want a legal workforce, but can’t find legal workers to fill those menial jobs?”

They should be fined, and after the second conviction, they should be put in jail.

– Nashville Base GOP Female

They’ll hire illegal immigrants every time they can, because they can pay them so much less, no benefits. He doesn’t pay anything to Uncle Sam for these guys that are working for him, so he’ll take the chance as long as there’s no teeth in the law to kick him.

– Omaha Base GOP Male

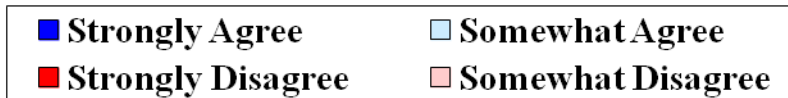
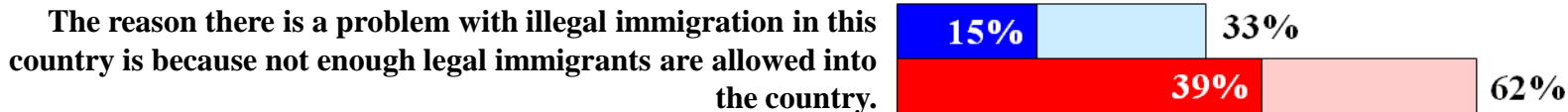
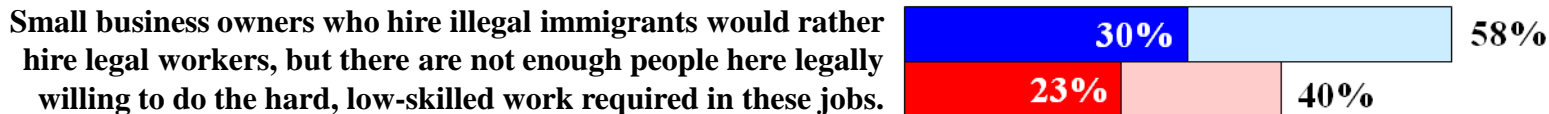
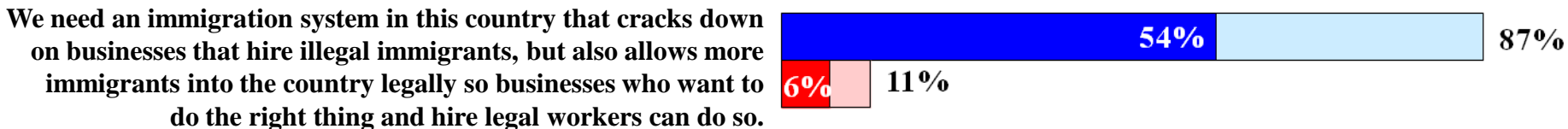
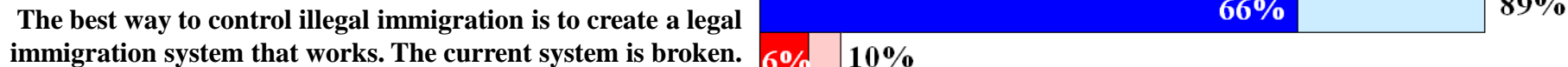
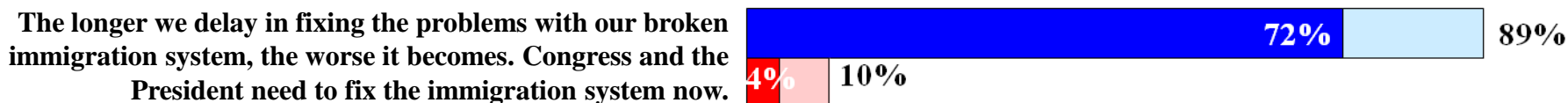
Harsher penalties. I don't blame the illegal immigrants, I blame the employers.

– Nashville Base GOP Female

Stop delaying fixing the problem as it becomes worse and creating an immigration system that works resonate with voters the most strongly.

“Now, I would like to read you various statements about America’s immigration system. After I read each statement, please tell me if you AGREE or DISAGREE with that statement.”

Ranked by % Strongly Agree

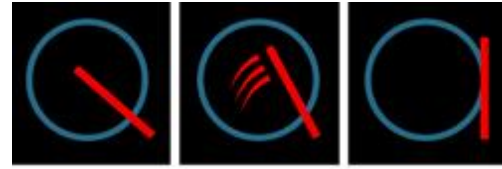


Listening to America: Focus Group Quotes

“If you were giving your U.S. Senator one piece of advice on the issue of immigration, what would you tell him or her?”

And I think that it, if we pass a bill like this, that we would also, we have to find a way to include the illegal immigrants that are here now also. That would have to be part of the bill.

– Omaha Swing Voter Female



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