



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

PATH TO CITIZENSHIP & E-VERIFY NOVEMBER 2019

- QUESTIONNAIRE -

Fielded by: Nielsen Scarborough
Sample Size: 2,410 registered voters

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Margin of Error: +/- 2.0%

PATH TO CITIZENSHIP

We are going to look at a proposal for what the government should do about illegal, or undocumented, immigrants in the US. Currently, there are about 10.5 million immigrants in the US who do not have legal status. While the number increased in the 1990s, it stabilized around 2005 and more recently has come down a bit.

A bit less than half are people who entered the US legally with a work or travel visa and then overstayed, while a bit more than half are people who crossed the US border illegally. About two thirds of such adult immigrants have been here more than 10 years. Some people favor trying to deport most or all of these immigrants, but others say that they should be offered a way to live here legally.

We are now going to look at a proposal for a new type of long-term visa for immigrants who have been living in the US for some years without legal status.

Here are the basic elements:

Immigrants without legal status could apply for a new type of visa, if:

- they have been in the US for some years
- have not committed any serious crimes
- have paid a penalty and any taxes they may owe

This new type of visa would:

- allow them to live and work in the country legally
- require that they pay taxes

They would eventually be allowed to apply for citizenship, but they would have to go to the back of the line, like anyone who applies for citizenship.

[Pro 1]

Here is an argument in favor of the proposal:

Q1. We need to face the fact that it is simply not feasible to deport over 10 million people living and working here, most of them for more than a decade. These people have integrated into American society and are making valuable contributions to the economy and the society. If we were to try to deport them all it would undermine numerous industries and have very negative effects on the economy. If we give these immigrants legal status they would no longer need to live in the shadows and their children would not live in fear that their parents will be suddenly taken away. It would also benefit American workers, because they would be competing with immigrants on a level playing field, rather than competing with people who can be easily exploited and underpaid by employers. This proposal is a way to deal with immigrants in an orderly, realistic and humane fashion.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	38.3%	36.1%	74.4%	13.2%	11.0%	24.2%	1.4%
GOP	17.6%	40.0%	57.6%	20.4%	19.9%	40.3%	2.1%
Dem.	60.3%	29.9%	90.2%	5.4%	3.6%	9.0%	0.7%
Indep.	30.0%	42.8%	72.8%	16.7%	9.1%	25.8%	1.4%
Cook's PMI (D-R)							
Very red	37.6%	30.5%	68.1%	15.6%	14.6%	30.2%	1.8%
Red	35.3%	40.0%	75.3%	11.1%	11.9%	23.0%	1.7%
Somewhat red	33.7%	42.1%	75.8%	10.5%	11.8%	22.3%	1.9%
Somewhat blue	37.9%	34.8%	72.7%	15.4%	10.0%	25.4%	1.8%
Blue	44.1%	32.5%	76.6%	14.9%	7.9%	22.8%	0.7%
Very blue	43.3%	35.1%	78.4%	12.4%	9.2%	21.6%	0.0%

[Con 1]

Here is an argument against the proposal

Q2. We need to remember that these undocumented people are here illegally. If we let them stay that would be giving them amnesty. This will undermine the rule of law. It is simply surrendering in the battle to defend our borders and a country with undefended borders is not a real country. Furthermore, legalizing millions of illegal immigrants will only make the problem worse. It will encourage more immigrants to come here illegally. In the 1980's when we granted amnesty illegal immigrants kept on coming. Giving illegal immigrants a free pass, just because they have been here a few years, is not fair to those who are abiding by our laws and going through the proper channels. We should not let people, who knowingly broke our laws, live here and try to become citizens.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	28.0%	28.9%	56.9%	22.8%	18.9%	41.7%	1.5%
GOP	48.3%	32.4%	80.7%	13.6%	5.0%	18.6%	0.7%
Dem.	8.7%	25.2%	33.9%	28.8%	34.9%	63.7%	2.3%
Indep.	29.6%	30.0%	59.6%	28.8%	10.2%	39.0%	1.3%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	31.3%	27.6%	58.9%	22.4%	17.5%	39.9%	1.3%
Red	29.0%	29.4%	58.4%	19.6%	20.0%	39.6%	1.9%
Somewhat red	30.1%	28.4%	58.5%	24.9%	15.0%	39.9%	1.5%
Somewhat blue	30.0%	27.0%	57.0%	24.1%	17.0%	41.1%	1.9%
Blue	24.7%	32.2%	56.9%	21.8%	20.5%	42.3%	0.9%
Very blue	21.8%	29.3%	51.1%	23.3%	24.4%	47.7%	1.2%

[FINAL RECOMMENDATION]

Now that you have heard the arguments, here is the proposal again:

Immigrants without legal status could apply for a new type of visa, if:

- they have been in the US for some years
- have not committed any serious crimes
- have paid a penalty and any taxes they may owe

This new type of visa would:

- allow them to live and work in the country legally
- require that they pay taxes

They would eventually be allowed to apply for citizenship, but they would have to go to the back of the line, like anyone who applies for citizenship.

Q3. Please select how acceptable or unacceptable this proposal would be to you on the scale below.

	Mean	0-4	5	6-10	Ref. / Don't know
National	6.9	16.2%	13.9%	69.7%	0.2%
GOP	5.7	27.0%	18.0%	54.8%	0.2%
Dem.	8.0	6.6%	8.4%	84.9%	0.1%
Indep.	6.6	15.5%	18.2%	65.8%	0.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					
Very red	6.7	18.6%	13.8%	67.2%	0.4%
Red	7.0	14.5%	14.6%	70.8%	0.1%
Somewhat red	6.8	16.8%	12.1%	71.0%	0.1%
Somewhat blue	6.9	16.6%	15.2%	68.1%	0.1%
Blue	6.8	16.5%	13.6%	69.3%	0.6%
Very blue	7.0	14.1%	14.7%	71.2%	0.0%

Q4. So, in conclusion, do you favor or oppose such a new type of long-term visa for immigrants who have been living in the US for some years without legal status?

	Favor	Oppose	Ref/ DK
National	73.9%	25.5%	0.6%
GOP	54.9%	44.2%	1.0%
Dem.	92.1%	7.6%	0.3%
Indep.	71.9%	27.5%	0.6%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	69.7%	29.6%	0.7%
Red	76.5%	22.9%	0.6%
Somewhat red	76.3%	22.3%	1.4%
Somewhat blue	69.7%	30.2%	0.2%
Blue	77.5%	21.7%	0.8%
Very blue	73.5%	26.5%	0.0%

[For those who selected “oppose” in Q4]

Q5. Do you oppose this proposal because:

	you would prefer that all illegal immigrants be deported	some other reason	Ref/ DK
National	14.0%	11.3%	0.2%
GOP	26.9%	17.1%	0.2%
Dem.	2.6%	4.9%	0.1%
Indep.	12.8%	14.5%	0.2%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	17.4%	11.9%	0.2%
Red	14.1%	8.8%	0.0%
Somewhat red	11.2%	10.9%	0.3%
Somewhat blue	14.3%	15.4%	0.5%
Blue	14.5%	7.2%	0.0%
Very blue	12.0%	14.4%	0.0%

E-Verify

We will now explore another major proposal. It seeks to discourage illegal immigration by requiring employers to use a government system to verify that the people they hire have the legal right to work in the US (by being a citizen, having a green card, or having a work visa).

Here is how this would work:

The employer would be required to go to an existing government website, called E-Verify, where the employer can enter the name and Social Security number of the people they want to hire. The website then verifies whether or not each employee has a legal right to work. All new job applicants would need to be checked out as well. Employers who do not verify their employees and are found to be employing undocumented immigrants will be fined. Employers who repeatedly fail to use the verification system and hire undocumented immigrants may be sentenced to up to 18 months in prison and their business license may be revoked.

Right now, federal contractors and subcontractors are already required to use the E-Verify system to verify the legality of their employees. Also, a few states require it.

Here are some arguments for and against this proposal.

[Pro – Expand Program]

Q6. The primary reason that people immigrate to the US illegally is because they are looking for a job. The reason that the US is such a job magnet is that so many employers do not bother to check whether the people they employ are legal—often turning a blind eye because they want to pay the lower wages that illegal immigrants will accept. Honest employers who do check to make sure their employees are legal are put at a disadvantage. This clearly needs to stop. All US employers should be required to verify that their employees are legal.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	48.8%	33.3%	82.1%	10.6%	6.9%	17.5%	0.4%
GOP	58.2%	25.9%	84.1%	9.6%	6.1%	15.7%	0.2%
Dem.	40.8%	38.6%	79.4%	11.7%	8.4%	20.1%	0.5%
Indep.	47.6%	37.0%	84.6%	10.1%	4.7%	14.8%	0.6%
Oct. 2018							
National	48.2%	31.4%	79.6%	13.1%	6.5%	19.6%	0.8%
GOP	60.4%	25.1%	85.5%	9.6%	4.2%	13.8%	0.7%
Dem.	39.7%	37.9%	77.6%	14.3%	7.3%	21.6%	0.8%
Indep.	42.0%	29.5%	71.5%	17.9%	9.5%	27.4%	1.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	46.9%	35.4%	82.3%	10.1%	7.0%	17.1%	0.6%
Red	49.3%	33.4%	82.7%	10.6%	6.4%	17.0%	0.4%
Somewhat red	58.7%	27.6%	86.3%	8.4%	5.2%	13.6%	0.0%
Somewhat blue	44.4%	35.3%	79.7%	13.0%	6.3%	19.3%	1.0%
Blue	46.8%	34.8%	81.6%	10.3%	7.5%	17.8%	0.6%
Very blue	44.8%	34.4%	79.2%	11.5%	9.3%	20.8%	0.0%

[Con – Expand Program]

Q7. Employers should not have the responsibility to enforce US immigration laws. It is also costly for the employer. According to one study, requiring employers to use E-Verify would cost small businesses \$2.7 billion to implement, an average of \$127 per new employee. It is the government's job to ensure that illegal immigrants do not come into the US in the first place, rather than expecting employers to police them.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	14.5%	25.6%	40.1%	26.8%	31.7%	58.5%	1.4%
GOP	14.6%	21.5%	36.1%	25.2%	36.9%	62.1%	1.8%
Dem.	13.4%	29.2%	42.6%	27.5%	28.4%	55.9%	1.4%
Indep.	16.8%	26.1%	42.9%	28.4%	28.1%	56.5%	0.6%
Oct. 2018							
National	48.2%	31.4%	79.6%	13.1%	6.5%	19.6%	0.8%
GOP	60.4%	25.1%	85.5%	9.6%	4.2%	13.8%	0.7%
Dem.	39.7%	37.9%	77.6%	14.3%	7.3%	21.6%	0.8%
Indep.	15.2%	29.5%	44.7%	25.0%	28.5%	53.5%	1.7%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	13.6%	28.4%	42.0%	21.8%	34.0%	55.8%	2.2%
Red	10.8%	24.4%	35.2%	23.5%	39.0%	62.5%	2.2%
Somewhat red	14.2%	22.2%	36.4%	31.0%	31.0%	62.0%	1.6%

Somewhat blue	17.0%	26.2%	43.2%	26.1%	29.5%	55.6%	1.2%
Blue	16.8%	23.7%	40.5%	35.4%	23.6%	59.0%	0.5%
Very blue	16.1%	28.9%	45.0%	23.8%	30.9%	54.7%	0.4%

[Pro – Expand Program]

Q8. Approximately 7 million illegal immigrants hold jobs in the U.S. At the same time there are 23 million American citizens and legal residents who are currently unemployed or can't find full-time work. This is not right. Requiring employers to verify that their employees can work legally, would open up millions of jobs for citizens and legal immigrants, lowering their unemployment rate. Our first responsibility should be to ensure that legal workers have a job.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	35.8%	34.6%	70.4%	17.5%	10.0%	27.5%	2.1%
GOP	47.4%	35.6%	83.0%	10.0%	5.7%	15.7%	1.2%
Dem.	24.1%	35.0%	59.1%	23.0%	15.3%	38.3%	2.7%
Indep.	38.6%	31.4%	70.0%	21.0%	6.4%	27.4%	2.7%
Oct. 2018							
National	37.2%	33.7%	70.9%	18.3%	8.1%	26.4%	2.7%
GOP	51.0%	32.3%	83.3%	11.3%	3.0%	14.3%	2.3%
Dem.	26.1%	35.1%	61.2%	23.9%	11.9%	35.8%	2.9%
Indep.	33.3%	33.2%	66.5%	20.1%	10.3%	30.4%	3.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	39.9%	36.1%	76.0%	15.6%	8.0%	23.6%	0.3%
Red	33.3%	33.2%	66.5%	21.4%	9.4%	30.8%	2.7%
Somewhat red	35.0%	35.2%	70.2%	18.2%	8.4%	26.6%	3.1%
Somewhat blue	37.4%	36.2%	73.6%	14.3%	10.8%	25.1%	1.4%
Blue	35.3%	32.5%	67.8%	17.5%	11.5%	29.0%	3.1%
Very blue	34.1%	35.1%	69.2%	16.8%	12.6%	29.4%	1.4%

[Con – Expand Program]

Q9. The idea that the government is going to effectively keep track of who is and who isn't legal is really dubious. There are many cases of the E-Verify system saying that someone is not legal, when they really are. For example this can happen when someone changes their name—something that is particularly likely to happen to women. Also the idea that driving illegal immigrants out of their jobs is going to free up jobs for Americans is doubtful. Americans do not want many of the jobs they take —like farm work—and driving them out will likely lead to major labor shortages that will hurt American businesses.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	20.1%	37.5%	57.6%	25.0%	15.1%	40.1%	2.3%
GOP	9.3%	32.0%	41.3%	35.7%	21.5%	57.2%	1.5%
Dem.	31.9%	41.7%	73.6%	16.0%	7.3%	23.3%	3.1%
Indep.	15.6%	39.3%	54.9%	22.9%	20.1%	43.0%	2.2%
Oct. 2018							
National	17.6%	37.5%	55.1%	25.9%	16.5%	42.4%	2.6%
GOP	7.5%	32.0%	39.5%	30.8%	27.6%	58.4%	2.1%
Dem.	28.3%	41.6%	69.9%	20.4%	6.9%	27.3%	2.8%
Indep.	14.0%	39.8%	53.8%	28.3%	14.9%	43.2%	3.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	20.1%	32.5%	52.6%	27.8%	19.4%	47.2%	0.3%
Red	21.4%	33.3%	54.7%	25.4%	16.3%	41.7%	3.6%
Somewhat red	14.8%	40.5%	55.3%	27.9%	14.3%	42.2%	2.6%
Somewhat blue	18.7%	41.1%	59.8%	24.5%	13.6%	38.1%	2.1%
Blue	23.5%	35.0%	58.5%	24.7%	13.1%	37.8%	3.6%
Very blue	23.6%	42.9%	66.5%	18.5%	13.9%	32.4%	1.2%

[Pro – Expand Program]

Q10. The E-Verify system has proven to work very well. An overwhelming 87% of employers who use the system report satisfaction. There have been few cases of legal workers being flagged as illegal. In any case, as we make a commitment to use the system and it plays a more important role, improvements will be made and new technology will raise the performance level every year just as is the case with all technology. It can also catch people who are already here, which other systems, like a wall, cannot do. And its cost for taxpayers is quite low.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	35.2%	44.8%	80.0%	12.9%	5.1%	18.0%	2.0%
GOP	41.8%	42.3%	84.1%	10.6%	3.8%	14.4%	1.6%
Dem.	30.5%	46.9%	77.4%	13.8%	6.7%	20.5%	2.1%
Indep.	31.9%	45.5%	77.4%	16.1%	4.1%	20.2%	2.4%
Oct. 2018							
National	33.8%	43.8%	77.6%	14.0%	5.0%	19.0%	3.4%
GOP	42.2%	42.7%	84.9%	9.3%	2.8%	12.1%	3.0%
Dem.	29.2%	45.9%	75.1%	15.5%	5.8%	21.3%	3.6%
Indep.	26.2%	41.1%	67.3%	21.3%	8.0%	29.3%	3.4%
Cook's PMI (D-R)							
Very red	33.0%	43.0%	76.0%	16.5%	5.2%	21.7%	2.3%
Red	34.5%	44.3%	78.8%	13.5%	5.9%	19.4%	1.8%
Somewhat red	39.8%	45.3%	85.1%	9.6%	3.7%	13.3%	1.6%
Somewhat blue	33.7%	48.4%	82.1%	12.0%	4.3%	16.3%	1.5%
Blue	35.0%	43.9%	78.9%	13.9%	5.1%	19.0%	2.1%
Very blue	35.4%	43.8%	79.2%	12.3%	6.5%	18.8%	2.0%

[Con – Expand Program]

Q11. While the E-Verify system sounds good on paper it can be easily fooled. A government funded study found that E-Verify mistakenly approved of 54 percent of unauthorized immigrants, mostly due to the fraudulent use of Social Security numbers. Such numbers are readily available on the black market from people who, for example, find ones associated with people who have died. Also, employers can evade some E-Verify requirements by hiring people as contractors rather than employees, which is probably why states that currently have E-Verify mandates have seen increases in the use of contractors.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Refused / Don't know
National	17.2%	42.0%	59.2%	26.9%	11.4%	38.3%	2.4%
GOP	14.4%	40.3%	54.7%	28.7%	14.5%	43.2%	2.1%
Dem.	20.5%	43.5%	64.0%	24.1%	9.4%	33.5%	2.5%
Indep.	15.5%	42.3%	57.8%	30.0%	9.5%	39.5%	2.8%
Oct. 2018							
National	16.6%	43.5%	60.1%	26.7%	9.7%	36.4%	3.5%
GOP	12.6%	41.9%	54.5%	28.5%	14.3%	42.8%	2.7%
Dem.	21.2%	44.2%	65.4%	25.7%	5.3%	31.0%	3.6%
Indep.	14.3%	45.2%	59.5%	25.2%	10.4%	35.6%	4.9%
Cook's PMI (D-R)							
Very red	19.5%	40.4%	59.9%	24.1%	13.5%	37.6%	2.6%
Red	15.8%	40.8%	56.6%	29.7%	10.9%	40.6%	2.7%
Somewhat red	16.0%	42.1%	58.1%	29.5%	10.7%	40.2%	1.6%
Somewhat blue	16.1%	40.1%	56.2%	31.2%	9.9%	41.1%	2.7%
Blue	17.8%	42.2%	60.0%	25.3%	11.3%	36.6%	3.4%
Very blue	19.4%	47.1%	66.5%	19.5%	12.5%	32.0%	1.4%

So, here again is the proposal.

All employers must use the E-Verify system to verify that current employees and all new job applicants have the legal right to work in the US. Employers who do not verify their employees and are found to be employing undocumented immigrants will be fined. Employers who repeatedly fail to use the verification system and hire undocumented immigrants may be sentenced up to 18 months in prison and their business license may be revoked.

Q12. Please select how acceptable or unacceptable this proposal is to you on the scale below.

	Mean	0-4	5	6-10	Ref. / Don't know
National	6.8	16.9%	16.2%	66.6%	0.3%
GOP	7.4	11.7%	13.1%	75.0%	0.2%
Dem.	6.3	21.4%	18.1%	60.4%	0.2%
Indep.	6.7	17.6%	18.6%	63.0%	0.9%
Oct. 2018					
National	6.1	30.9%	13.3%	55.0%	0.9%
GOP	7.0	20.9%	10.1%	68.4%	0.6%
Dem.	5.5	36.8%	16.9%	45.7%	0.6%
Indep.	5.5	38.7%	11.8%	47.4%	2.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					
Very red	7.0	13.5%	20.0%	66.2%	0.4%
Red	6.8	15.3%	17.4%	67.1%	0.3%
Somewhat red	7.2	13.0%	14.5%	72.5%	0.0%
Somewhat blue	6.6	19.4%	17.7%	62.5%	0.4%
Blue	6.7	18.4%	12.0%	69.3%	0.3%
Very blue	6.5	24.1%	15.0%	60.7%	0.3%

[Final Recommendation]

Q13. In conclusion, do you favor or oppose this proposal?

	Favor	Oppose	Ref / DK
National	73.1%	25.4%	1.5%
GOP	79.9%	18.9%	1.2%
Dem.	67.5%	31.2%	1.3%
Indep.	71.6%	25.9%	2.4%
Oct. 2018			
National	72.0%	26.1%	1.9%
GOP	82.6%	16.5%	0.9%
Dem.	65.5%	32.3%	2.2%
Indep.	64.1%	32.6%	3.4%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	71.0%	27.2%	1.8%
Red	72.4%	25.3%	2.2%
Somewhat red	80.3%	19.2%	0.5%
Somewhat blue	70.0%	29.2%	0.7%
Blue	75.1%	23.3%	1.6%
Very blue	69.0%	29.5%	1.5%

[Those who responded "Oppose" in Q4 AND "Favor" in Q13]

Q14. If employers were required to use the E-verify system to discourage people from coming to the US or staying illegally, would you then favor or oppose such a new type of long-term visa for immigrants who have been living in the US for some years without legal status?

	Favor	Oppose	Ref / DK
National	6.7%	12.9%	0.3%
GOP	10.8%	24.4%	0.4%
Dem.	2.6%	2.6%	0.0%
Indep.	7.6%	12.7%	0.6%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	6.8%	15.7%	0.4%
Red	5.5%	11.8%	0.4%
Somewhat red	4.3%	14.2%	0.0%

Somewhat blue	9.4%	12.2%	0.3%
Blue	5.8%	12.1%	0.0%
Very blue	9.0%	11.4%	0.6%

[Those who responded “Favor” in Q4 AND “Oppose” in Q13]

Q14a: If immigrants who have been living in the US for some years without legal status would be able to get a long-term visa, would you then favor or oppose the proposal requiring employers to use the E-verify system?

	Favor	Oppose	Ref/ DK
National	10.4%	9.4%	0.4%
GOP	6.0%	4.6%	0.4%
Dem.	14.9%	13.2%	0.7%
Indep.	9.0%	10.8%	0.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	10.9%	10.2%	0.0%
Red	11.6%	8.8%	0.0%
Somewhat red	6.7%	8.3%	0.4%
Somewhat blue	12.0%	8.2%	0.8%
Blue	10.3%	8.4%	1.4%
Very blue	11.4%	13.0%	0.3%

Thank you so much for completing the survey! Your response is very valuable to us.