

Poll finds little support for Republicans who favor S. 744 bill to increase immigrant workers and give work permits to illegal aliens

Republican senators considering voting for the S. 744 immigration bill will find little support among the voters on whom they most depend for both Primary and General elections, according to a Pulse Opinion Research survey of 1,000 likely voters on June 17.

"Perhaps Republicans' corporate donors are cheered by a bill that the Congressional Budget Office finds would lower the wages of American workers by pouring too many foreign workers into the labor market," said Roy Beck, president of NumbersUSA, a grassroots organization that sponsored the poll and which favors lower immigration levels. "But the poll shows that the demographic groups who tend to provide the votes to put Republicans into office won't be at all pleased if Senators vote for the bill's huge increases in immigrant workers."

The poll found that arguments for the legislation were exceptionally unpopular not only with Republicans and conservatives but with Independents and moderates, and with Catholics as well as Protestants and Evangelicals. This was also true of those with working-class identities -- such as those in union households and with less education -- swing voters with whom Republicans did so poorly in last year's elections.

The poll found the least support for arguments in favor of the bill's increases in foreign workers and overall immigration. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the bill would award around 28 million green cards in the first decade, compared with about 11 million over the previous decade.

- Given two options, only 14% of all likely voters chose the S. 744 supporters' claims that "labor shortages require increases in less-educated foreign workers" for "construction, hospitality and other service occupations." But 73% chose the opponents' claim that there are "plenty of unemployed less-educated Americans to fill the jobs."

Every demographic group showed low support for the bill's increase in less-educated foreign workers, including Republicans (7%), moderates (8%), high school grads (4%), Hispanics (19%) and the young age 18-39 (14%).

- Only 22% of all likely voters agreed with supporters of the bill who say "bringing in more immigrant workers would create economic growth which would provide more jobs for unemployed Americans." But 66% agreed with opponents of the bill who say "adding more immigrant workers would increase job competition for unemployed Americans, making it harder for them to find jobs."

The bill's idea that more immigration will put more Americans to work was supported by only 24% of union households, 23% of Catholics, 14% of Evangelicals, 8% of high school grads, 14% of both conservatives and moderates, 18% of Independents and 13% of Republicans.

- The most consistent finding across demographic groups in the poll was in response to a question of whether, before seeking new foreign workers, businesses should try harder to recruit from among Black and Hispanic Americans who suffer the nation's highest unemployment rates. Among all likely voters, 82% agreed. The only demographic group with a significant difference was Hispanic voters, 67% of whom said businesses should do more to hire from among the seriously unemployed Americans.
- On the most contentious issue thus far in Senate floor debate, only 32% of all likely voters chose the bill's priority of giving "work permits for illegal immigrants first, followed by 10 years of implementing enforcement" at the "workplace and border." But 58% said they prefer "full enforcement first, before considering work permits" for illegal immigrants.

The bill's work-permits-first approach is supported by only 31% of union households, 32% of Catholics, 18% of high school grads, 9% of conservatives, 8% of moderates, 7% of Republicans and 14% of Independents.

- Offered four choices for dealing with the estimated 11 million illegal immigrants, only 21% of all likely voters chose "give most full legal status and work permits." 26% chose "deport most", while 13% chose "try to persuade most to leave voluntarily by denying them jobs," and 28% chose "let most stay as visitors with their families but no jobs or public assistance."

Agreeing with the S. 744 solution of legal status and work permits for illegal immigrants were only 14% of Republicans, 18% of Independents, 11% of conservatives, 13% of moderates, 15% of Blacks, 44% of Hispanics, 11% of Evangelicals, 24% of Catholics, 9% of high school grads and 25% of union households.

"On none of these issues did the majority of Democratic voters support the arguments for S. 744, although they were more supportive than most demographic groups," Roy Beck said.

"Democratic senators gain little with Democratic voters by supporting S. 744 and they risk a lot with Independent voters, but the poll results show that Republican senators are at the most political risk by voting for S. 744."

The poll's full questions and answers are shown on the next pages.

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National Survey of 1000 Likely Voters

Conducted June 17, 2013

By Pulse Opinion Research

NOTE: Margin of Sampling Error, +/- 3 percentage points with a 95% level of confidence

1* In recent years, the government has issued permanent green cards to around 1 million new immigrants each year. Should the government reduce that number, increase it, or keep it about the same?

47% Reduce the immigration number

18% Increase it

27% Keep it about the same

9% Not sure

2* Do less-educated immigrant workers compete with less-educated Americans for construction, hospitality and other service jobs?

56% Yes

25% No

19% Not sure

3* SUPPORTERS of legislation being considered in the Senate say the country faces labor shortages in construction, hospitality and other service occupations and needs to increase the number of LESS-educated foreign workers to fill the jobs. OPPONENTS say the jobs should be filled from the 10 million LESS-educated Americans that the government says currently want a full-time job but cannot find one. Which do you agree with more: we have labor shortages that require increases in less-educated foreign workers, or there are plenty of unemployed less-educated Americans to fill the jobs?

14% Labor shortages require increases in less-educated foreign workers

73% Plenty of unemployed less-educated Americans to fill the jobs

13% Not sure

4* The Senate bill would increase total long-term foreign work permits for all education levels from 10 million a decade to more than 30 million over the next decade. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose this increase?

12% Strongly support

25% Somewhat support

21% Somewhat oppose

31% Strongly oppose

12% Not sure

5* SUPPORTERS of the Senate bill say bringing in more immigrant workers would create economic growth which would provide more jobs for unemployed Americans. OPPONENTS of the bill say adding more immigrant workers would increase job competition for unemployed Americans, making it harder for them to find jobs. Will bringing in more immigrant workers create more jobs for unemployed Americans or make it harder for them to find a job?

22% More immigrant workers would create more jobs for unemployed Americans
66% More immigrant workers would make it harder for unemployed Americans to find a job
12% Not sure

6* The Senate bill also deals with the 11 million foreign citizens who are in this country illegally. The bill would offer work permits in the first year, followed by 10 years of implementing border and workplace enforcement to stop future flows of illegal workers. OPPONENTS of the bill say they want enforcement at the borders and workplace to be fully implemented BEFORE considering giving work permits. Which do you prefer for dealing with the illegal population, work permits first or enforcement first?

32% Work permits for illegal immigrants first, followed by 10 years of implementing enforcement
58% Full enforcement first, before considering work permits
10% Not sure

7* In terms of dealing with the current illegal population of 11 million, would you prefer that the United States deport most, that it try to persuade most to leave voluntarily by denying them jobs, that it let most stay as visitors if they have families here but deny them jobs and public assistance, or give most full legal status and work permits?

26% Deport most
13% Try to persuade most to leave voluntarily by denying them jobs
28% Let most stay as visitors with their families but no jobs or public assistance
21% Give most full legal status and work permits
12% Not sure

8* The nation's highest unemployment and poverty rates are among Black and Hispanic Americans, among younger Americans of all ethnicities, and among Americans with disabilities. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that businesses should try harder to recruit these unemployed Americans before seeking new foreign workers?

58% Strongly agree
24% Somewhat agree
8% Somewhat disagree
3% Strongly disagree
7% Not sure

NOTE: Margin of Sampling Error, +/- 3 percentage points with a 95% level of confidence