

Public Opinion on Immigration Reform:

Research Reveals that Voters Support Both the Arizona Immigration Law *and* Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Three Presentations:

- I. Poll: In Arizona Aftermath, Public Demands National Immigration Reform

Lake Research Partners

- II. Poll: Americans in Moderate-Conservative States

Hart Research Associates

- III. Speaking to Americans about Immigration and American Values

Westen Strategies



THE POWER TO WIN COMMON SENSE IMMIGRATION REFORM

June 4, 2010

I. Bipartisan Poll: In Arizona Aftermath, Public Demands National Immigration Reform

America's Voice

Findings from a Survey of 800 Registered Voters Nationwide, with an oversample of 300 Latino Registered Voters

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Methods

- Lake Research Partners and Public Opinion Strategies designed and administered this survey that was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers May 13-19, 2010.
- The random digit dial (RDD) survey reached a total of 1100 registered voters nationwide, including a base sample of 800 and an oversample of 300 Latino voters.
- Twenty percent of the interviews were conducted via cell phone.
- The margin of error is +/-3.5%.
- The sample was stratified geographically by region based on the proportion of voters in each region. The data were weighted by age, party identification, household cell and landline usage, education, region, and race.

A Call to Action

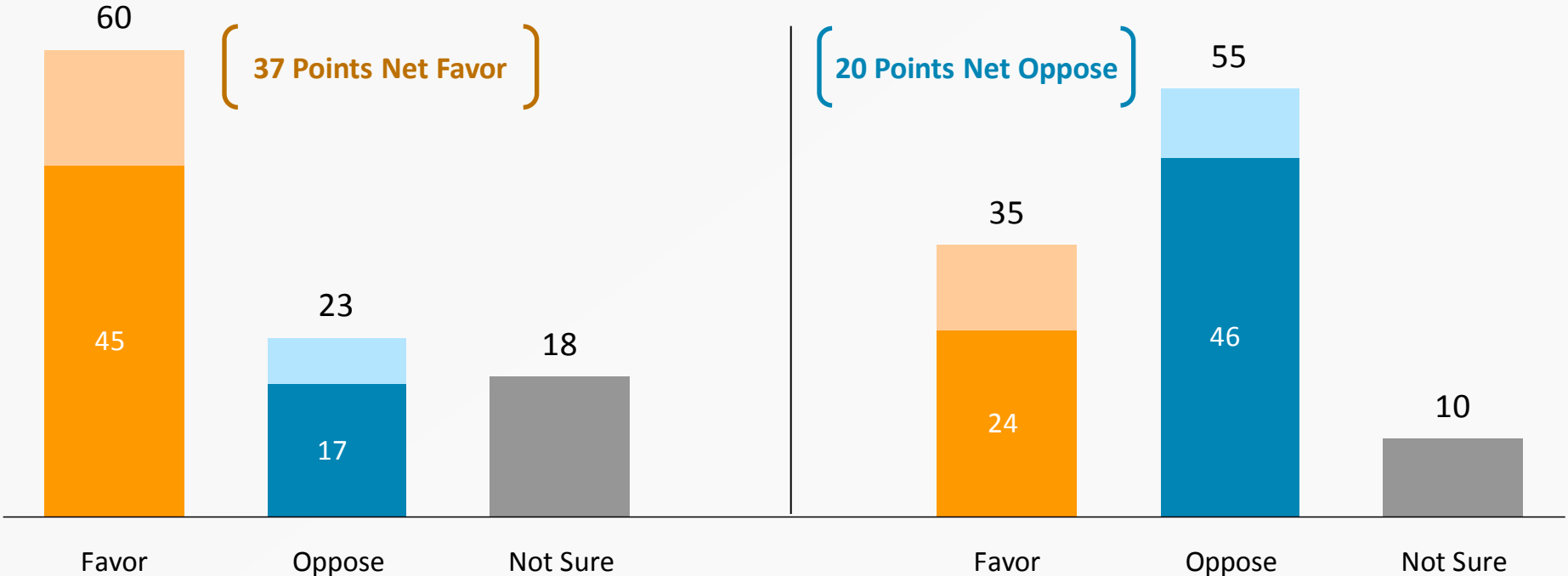
- Just as many other public polls have found, **a majority of voters support Arizona's new immigration law** that would require police to check immigration status and arrest anyone who cannot prove they are here legally.
- The conventional wisdom since the passage of Arizona's law has been that it represents a nationwide anti-immigrant wave and that it hurts the chances of passage of comprehensive reform. However, **the conventional wisdom is wrong**.
- We find that **support for comprehensive immigration reform is stronger than ever**, and, in fact, **those who support the Arizona law are actually more likely to support comprehensive reform** that strengthens border security, cracks down on employers who hire illegal immigrants, and requires those here illegally to register, pay taxes, learn English, and go to the back of the line for citizenship.
- **The support of the Arizona law comes out of a desire for action and frustration with inaction on an issue that demands a solution.**
- **Voters see this as a national issue and want federal action**, not state-by-state laws; **they want Congress to act now, and they are willing to vote on the issue in 2010.**

A majority of voters supports the new Arizona law. However, Latinos oppose the law in large numbers.

Arizona Law

All Voters

Latinos



Darker colors represent intensity.

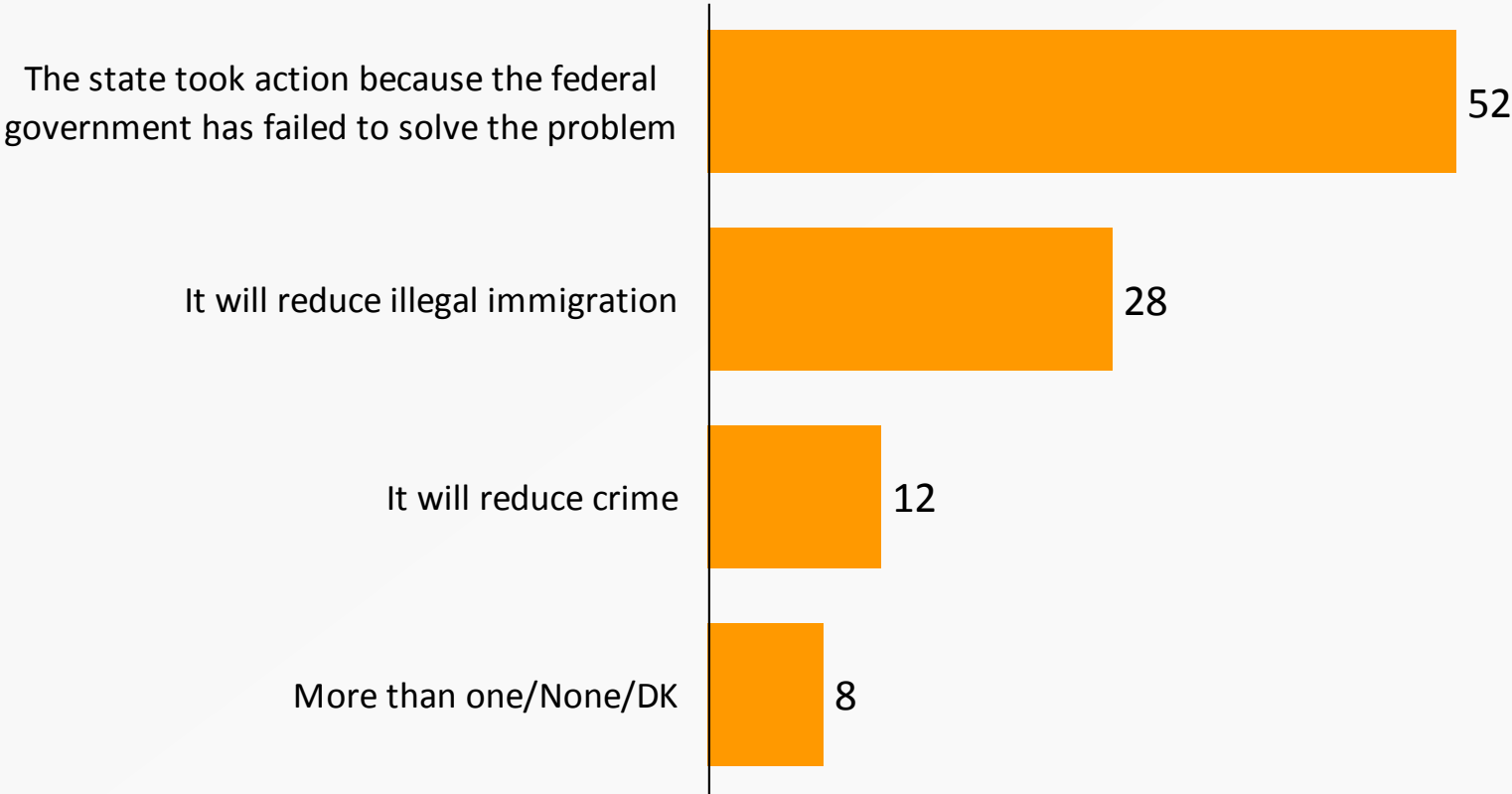
Now I'd like to read you a description of Arizona's new immigration law. <...> Do you favor or oppose Arizona's new immigration law, or aren't you sure? IF FAVOR/OPPOSE, ASK: Do you feel strongly or not so strongly about that choice?

Tested Description of Arizona's Immigration Law

- According to the law recently passed in Arizona, law enforcement officers will be required to ask for proof of immigration status of people they have a “reasonable suspicion” is an illegal immigrant. If the individual is unable to produce identification that proves their legal status, they will be arrested. The law says that officers are not allowed to ask for identification based solely on ethnic background. The law allows any citizen to file lawsuits against local government or law enforcement agencies that they believe are not enforcing the law strictly enough.

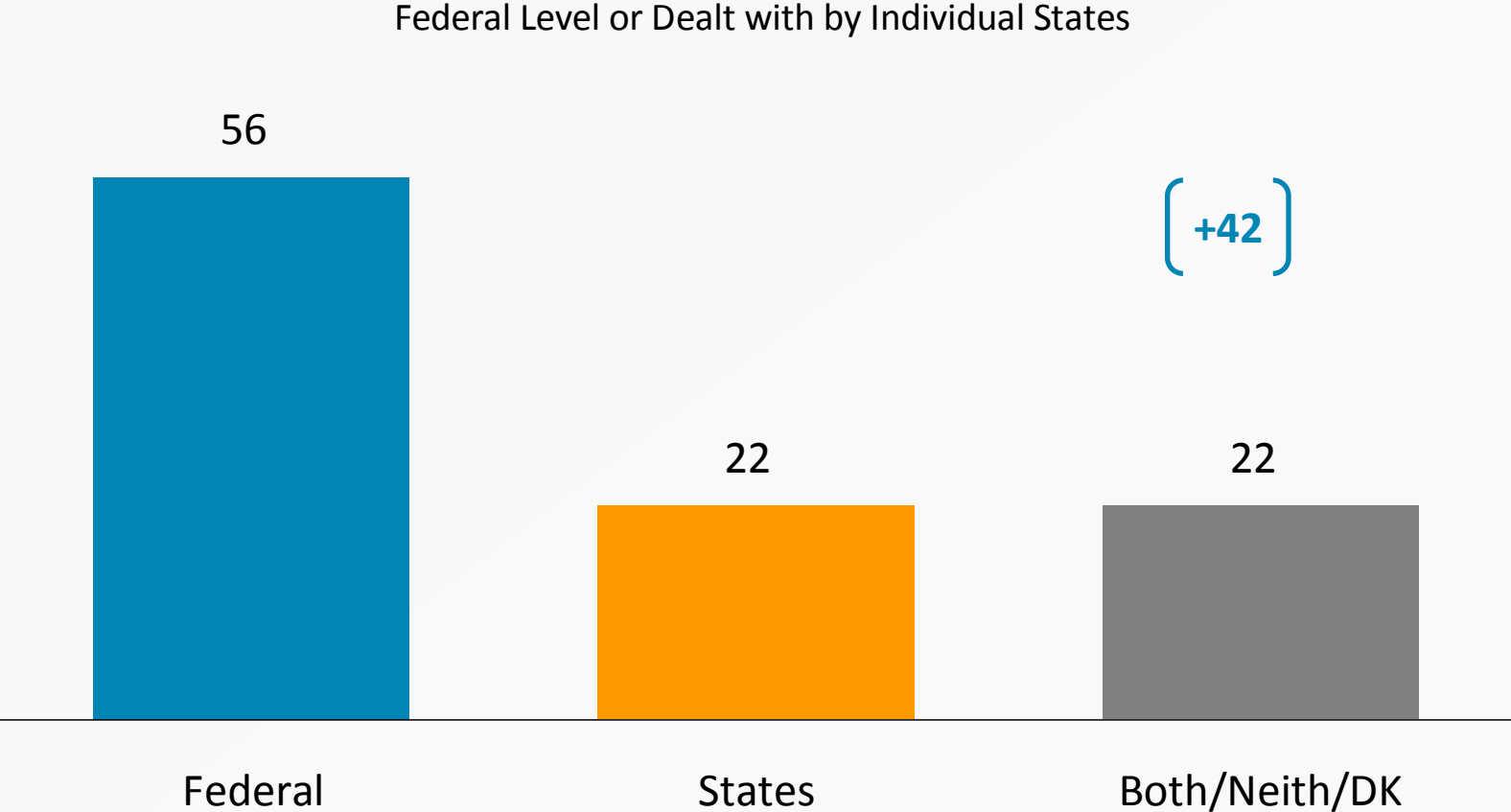
When asked why they support the Arizona law, a majority of those in support report that they support the law because the federal government has failed to solve the problem and the state of Arizona took action.

Reasons Support AZ Law



Which one of these reasons is the most important reason you support Arizona's new immigration law? (READ CHOICES)

Voters believe that immigration should be handled by the federal government rather than by individual states.



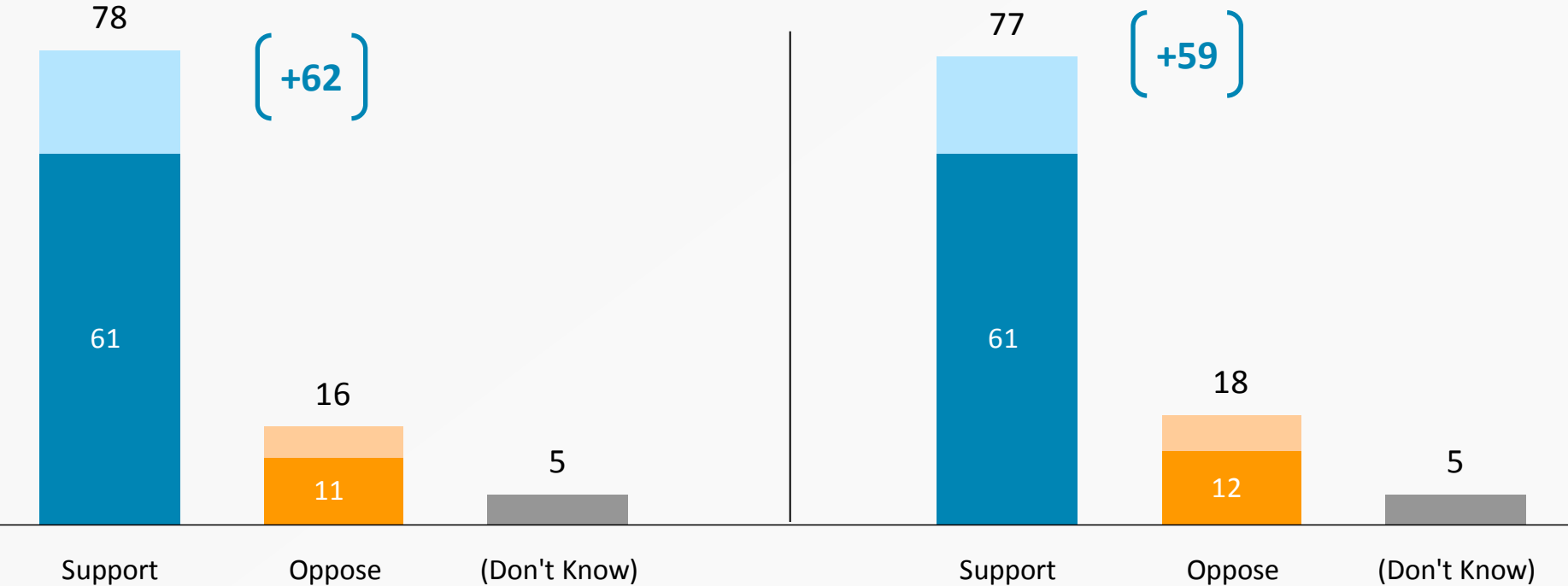
Do you think immigration is a national problem that should be dealt with at the federal level, or should it be left up to individual states?

When voters hear a description of comprehensive reform, support increases to some of the highest levels we have ever seen. This support is broad-based, with the electorate as a whole supporting reform in almost the exact same proportion and intensity as Latino voters.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform - Informed

All Voters

Latinos



Darker colors represent intensity.

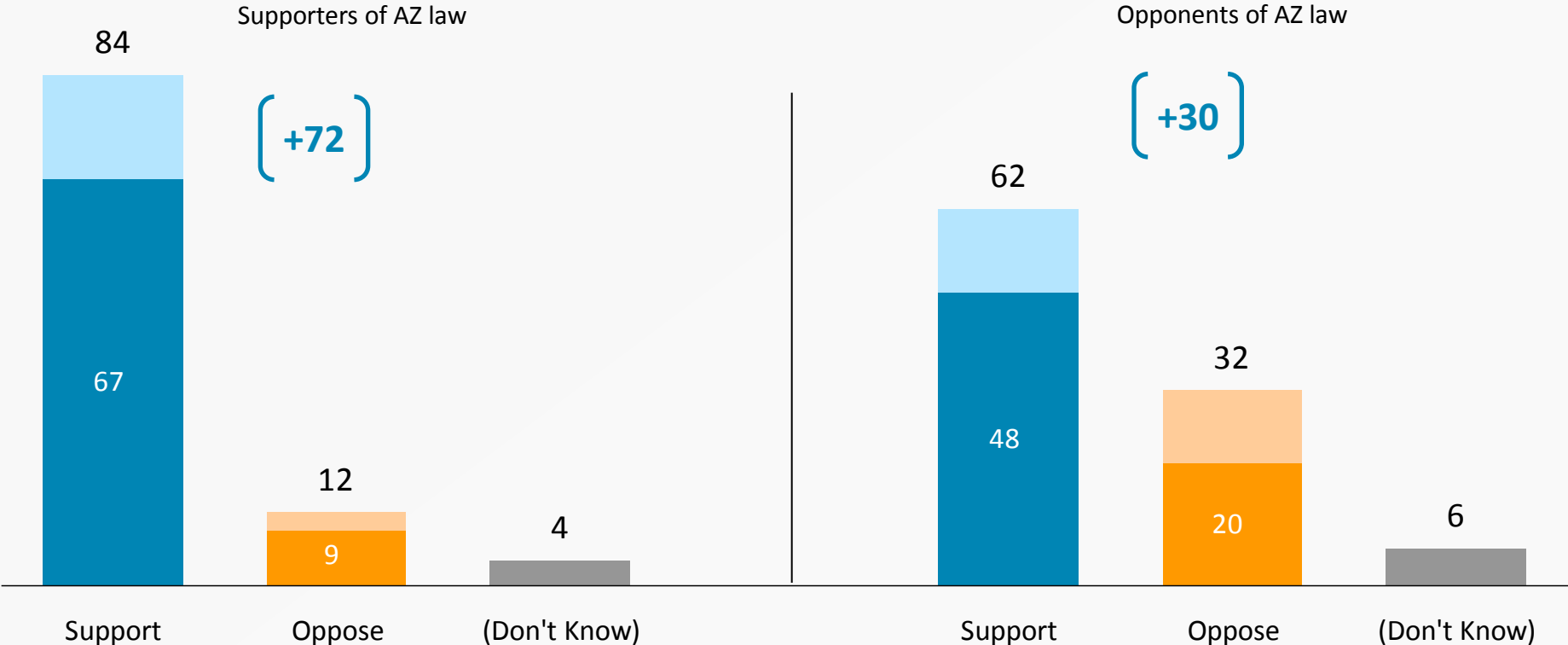
Now I'd like to read you a description of comprehensive immigration reform. <...> Do you support or oppose Congress passing comprehensive immigration reform? [IF SUPPORT/OPPOSE, ASK:] Do you feel strongly or not so strongly about that choice?

Tested Description of Comprehensive Immigration Reform

- Under this proposal, the federal government would strengthen border security and crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants. Illegal immigrants currently living in the United States would be required to register with the federal government, undergo criminal background checks, pay taxes, learn English, and go to the back of the line for U.S. citizenship.

Support for Arizona’s immigration law is not mutually exclusive with support for comprehensive immigration reform. In fact, those who support the Arizona law are actually more likely to support comprehensive immigration reform. This can only be understood as an expression of frustration and a desire for action.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform - Informed



Darker colors represent intensity.

Now I'd like to read you a description of comprehensive immigration reform. <...> Do you support or oppose Congress passing comprehensive immigration reform? [IF SUPPORT/OPPOSE, ASK:] Do you feel strongly or not so strongly about that choice?

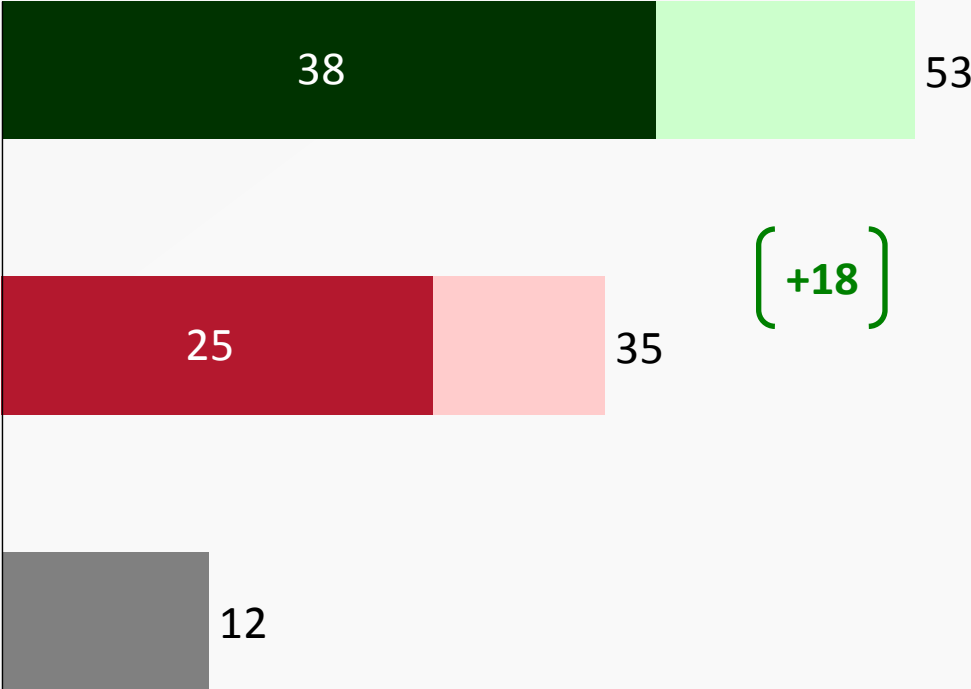
Voters are demanding a national solution on comprehensive immigration reform. A majority would prefer to see a national, comprehensive solution instead of a version of Arizona's law in their own states.

National Solution or Want in our state

A state by state approach just won't work. Immigration needs a national solution that tightens the border, cracks down on illegal hiring, and requires illegal immigrants to register, pay taxes, and learn English.

I think we need a version of Arizona's law in our state. We need to give police here the tools to enforce our laws and finally crack down on illegal immigrants.

Both/Neither/Don't Know



Darker colors represent intensity.

Now I'd like to read you a pair of statements. Of the two, please tell me which statement is closer to your own views.

II. Putting Immigration Reform To The Test

Key findings from survey conducted April 2010
for

Telephone survey among
1,608 voters in four key states
(405 AR, 401 CO, 401 MO, 401 OH),
Conducted April 14 – 18, 2010



Key Survey Findings

- ▶ The survey tested public support for a comprehensive immigration reform plan in four moderate-conservative states: Arkansas, Colorado, Missouri, and Ohio.
- ▶ The plan was described as an Obama/Democratic plan and subjected to very strong Republican criticisms throughout the survey.
- ▶ After equal exposure to criticisms and Democratic responses, voters in these states support reform by a solid 14-point margin, with clear majority support in Colorado, Missouri, and Ohio, while Arkansas voters are evenly divided.
- ▶ In *every* state, confidence in the Democrats to handle the immigration issue grows considerably after voters hear the plan and subsequent debate.

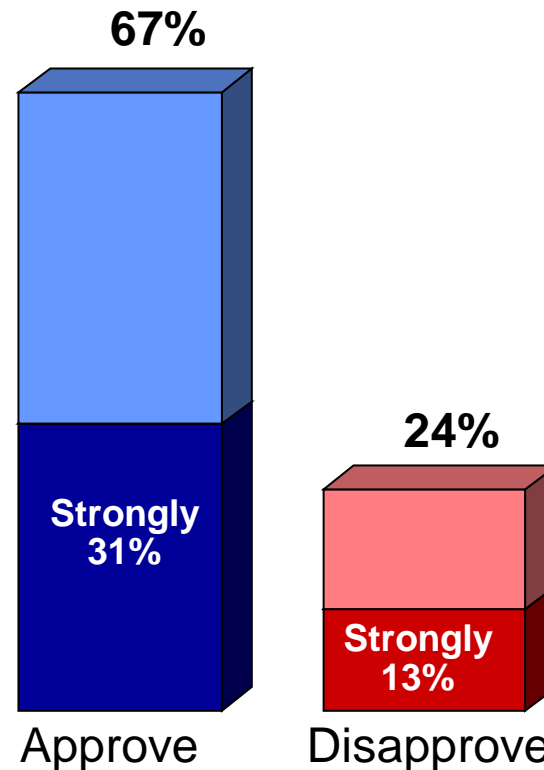
Strong Support For Obama/Democratic Immigration Reform Plan

Plan Supported by Obama, Most Democrats, Some Republicans

All Voters

Description of Main Elements:

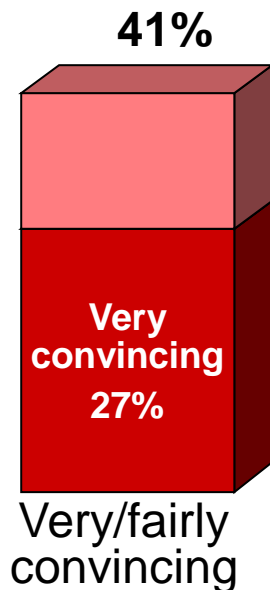
1. Strengthens border security
2. Requires employers to ensure all employees legal; companies that employ illegal immigrants face steep fines and penalties
3. Illegal immigrants already in the U.S. required to register for legal status, learn English, pay taxes, or face deportation
4. Establishes process to increase legal immigration into the U.S. only when employers are unable to fill job positions with citizens/legal residents



Approve	
Arkansas	66%
Colorado	69%
Missouri	69%
Ohio	67%

Strong Republican Criticism Of Plan Concerns 4 in 10 Voters

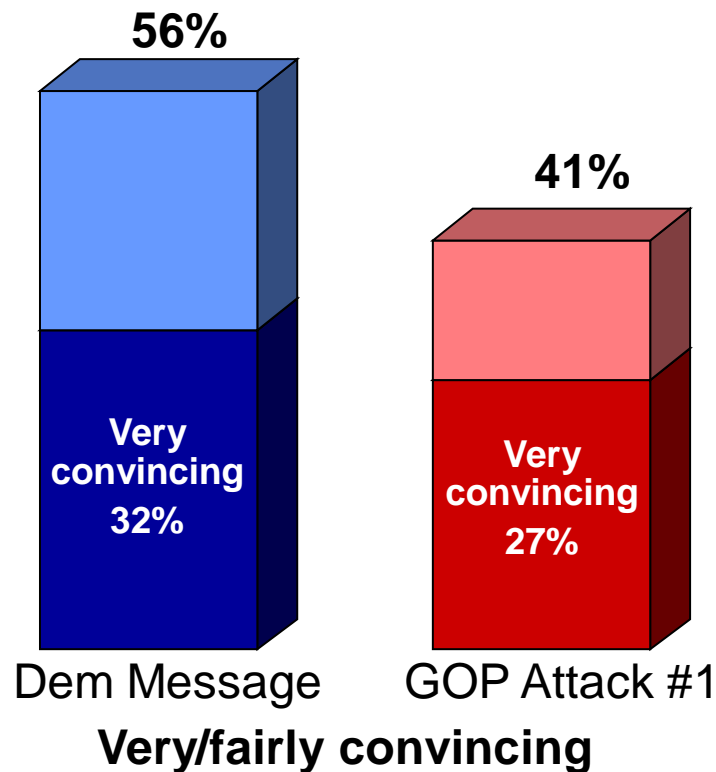
All Voters



REPUBLICANS say this plan is really just another **amnesty** proposal that gives a **slap on the wrist** to people who have been breaking our laws for years. It rewards people who came into the country illegally by giving them citizenship and **taxpayer-funded benefits**, like the new Obama health care plan. It allows millions of illegal workers to **compete with American citizens** for hard-to-find jobs when 15 million of our citizens are unemployed. And it **opens the floodgates** to millions more coming in, because the 12 million illegal immigrants who receive amnesty will then bring in their family members still living overseas.

But Democratic Message Is Rated More Convincing

All Voters



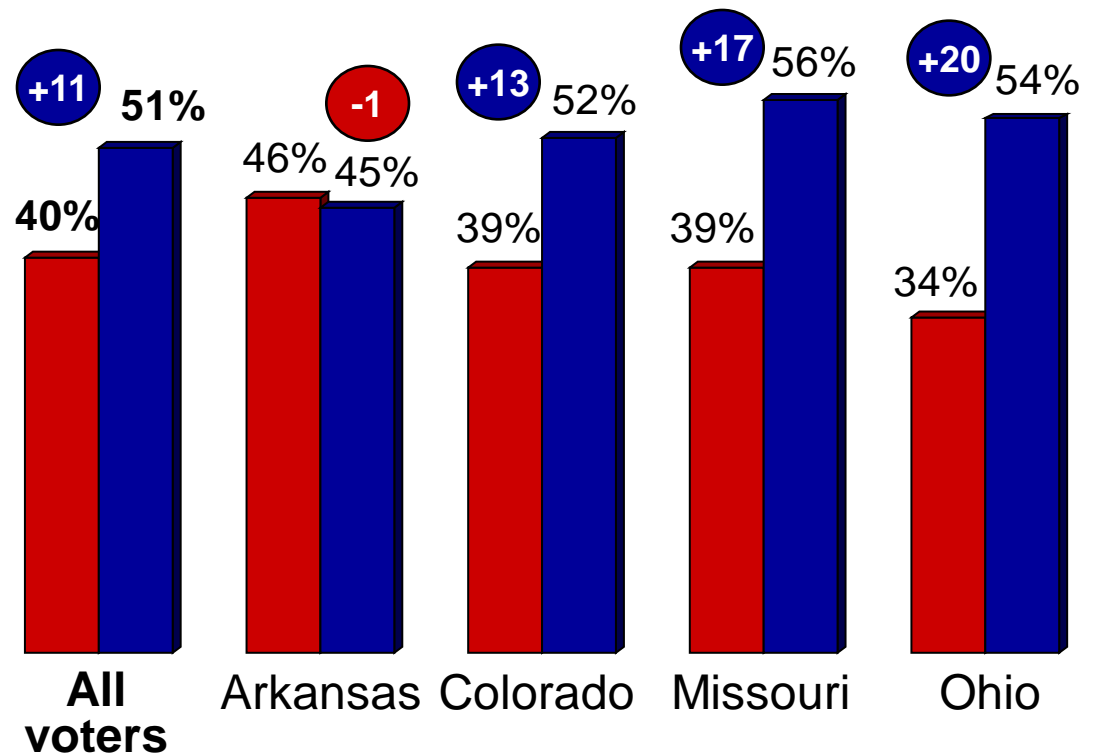
DEMOCRATS say they are offering a tough, fair, and practical plan to get the broken immigration system under control. We must secure our borders and crack down on employers that hire illegal immigrants to drive down wages. It is unacceptable to have 12 million people in our country who are outside the system. We must require illegal immigrants to register for legal status, pay their taxes, learn English, and pass criminal background checks to remain in the country and work toward citizenship. Those who have a criminal record or refuse to register should be deported.

Attack #2: Border Security First

■ Agree more with Republican statement ■ Agree more with Democratic statement

REPUBLICANS say a secure border is essential for our national security, so before we do anything else we must secure our borders. Only after the border is sealed should we begin taking steps to deal with the illegal immigrants already here.

DEMOCRATS say strengthening border security is essential, and our plan does that, but that's only part of the solution. Fixing our broken immigration system also means cracking down on illegal hiring and requiring illegal immigrants to become legal taxpayers.



Bottom Line: Voters Favor Plan By 14-point Margin After Debate

Final Support for Immigration Reform Proposal, *Among Key Subgroups*

	Approve	Disapprove	Differential
All voters	52%	38%	+14
Democrats	86%	8%	+78
Independents	45%	39%	+6
Republicans	22%	68%	-46
Preferred Majority in Congress			
Democrats	86%	8%	+78
Republicans	24%	66%	-42
No preference	50%	33%	+17
Liberals	82%	13%	+69
Moderates	66%	24%	+42
Conservatives	27%	62%	-35

Democrats Improve Position On Immigration In Every State

Which party would do a better job handling illegal immigration?

	Initial Reading			Final Reading		
	Democrats	Republicans	Dem advantage	Democrats	Republicans	Dem advantage
All voters	24%	36%	-12	38%	34%	+4
Arkansas	21%	41%	-20	31%	36%	-5
Colorado	23%	32%	-11	40%	31%	+9
Missouri	22%	42%	-20	41%	39%	+2
Ohio	28%	29%	-1	41%	27%	+14

Strategic Messaging

Immigration reform

III. Speaking to Americans about Immigration and American Values



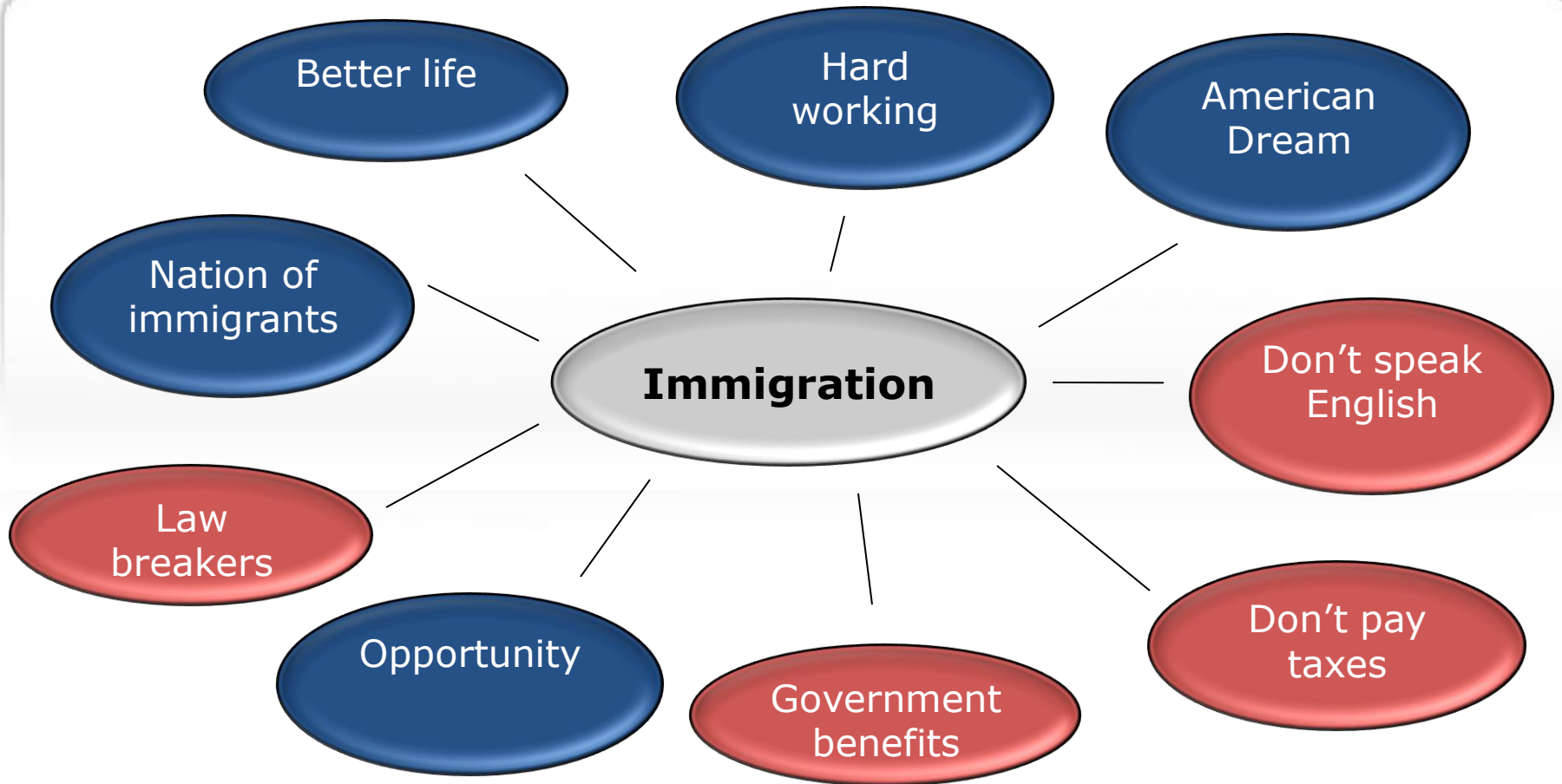
Research conducted by Westen Strategies for America's Voice and Media Matters

Presented for America's Voice, June 4, 2010



Ambivalence toward immigrants

Immigration reform



National sample

Data collected January 20-26, 2010

- Random national representative sample
- **900** likely voters
- **Gender:** *Male: 47%* *Female: 53%*
- **Partisan identification:** *Strong Dem* *Strong GOP* *Swing*
18% 14% 68%
- **Age:** *18-24* *25-39* *40-54* *55-64* *65+*
8% 19% 44% 18% 10%
- **Ethnicity:** *White* *African American* *Hispanic* *Other*
77% 12% 9% 2%
- **Education:** *HS or Less* *Tech/2yr* *Undergrad* *Post Grad*
19% 38% 29% 13%
- **Region:** *Northeast* *Midwest* *South* *West*
20% 26% 36% 18%

How did pro-reform vs. opposition messages fare?

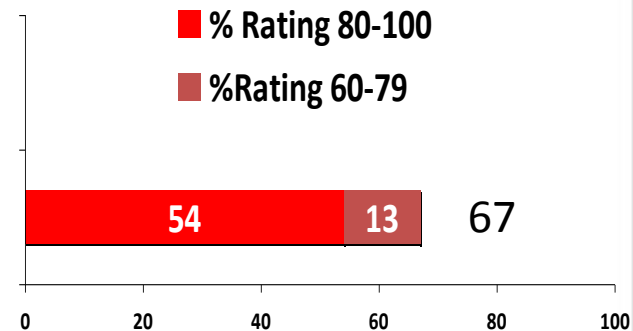
1st tier messages

	Mean Rating	Percent preferring pro-reform	Percent preferring opposition	Margin
Opposition message	69.7			
Interests, values, concerns, prejudices	77.6	51	29	+22
Tough, fair, practical	78.7	48	31	+17
Protect our borders	76.3	46	30	+16
Empathy and rights	57.3	33	56	-23

Opposition message

Illegal aliens broke the law to come here, and we have no business granting them amnesty. All that does is to increase the incentives for future illegal immigration. Illegals are law breakers, and they need to be sent back to where they came from. The last thing we need to do when 15 million Americans are out of work is to give amnesty to millions of illegal aliens, who take our jobs, cost American taxpayers, and add to the deficit. They drain our tax dollars by getting government services without paying taxes. They drain our education dollars by requiring that we teach every class in 200 languages. They drain our health care dollars by filling up our emergency rooms. And they demand rights, as if illegals have the right to demand anything. I'm tired of spending my tax dollars on services for lawbreakers who slipped across our borders illegally and don't belong here. We have to restore the rule of law, and that means stopping illegals before they cross the border and deporting those who are already here. Good fences make good neighbors, and it's time we built ourselves a good, long fence.

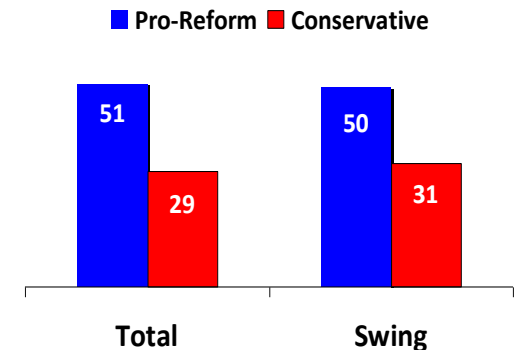
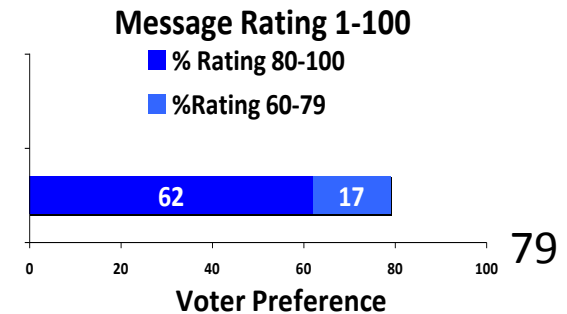
Message Rating 1-100



1st tier pro-reform messages

Our interests and values

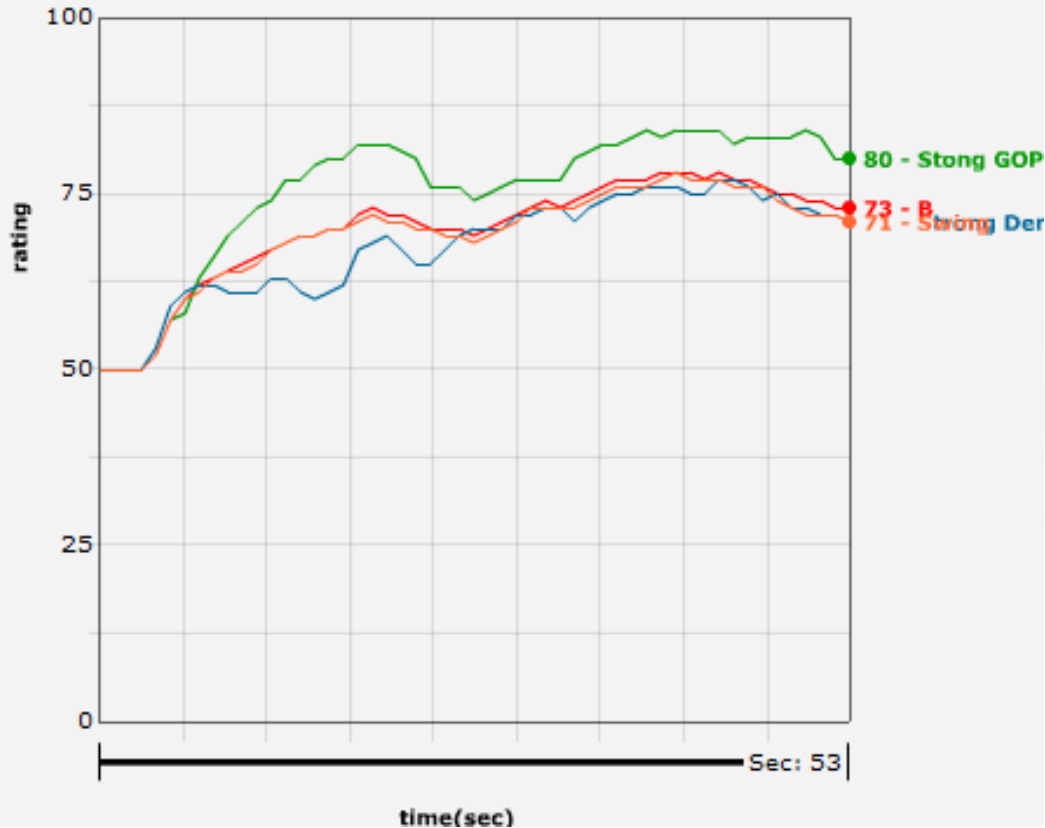
Our immigration laws ought to reflect both our interests and our values as Americans. *A nation can't be secure if its borders aren't secure. In the wake of September 11th, it's unbelievable that we've lost control over who is in our country and where they are....* **But we need to treat this as a problem to be solved, not as an opportunity for politicians to score political points by preying on both our legitimate concerns and our prejudices. We are a nation of laws, but we're also a nation of immigrants...** *So let's secure our borders, crack down on employers who hire illegal immigrants, and require those who came here without our permission to pass background checks, learn our language, and pay extra taxes... while they earn the chance to become taxpaying American citizens.*



GOPs particularly liked this message, which they liked as much as the opposition message

Dial-test results

Our interests and values



Note: Voters of all partisan orientations went up from start to finish, with strong GOPs consistently the highest.

Strategic Messaging

National sample, N=900

Raising Arizona: Speaking to Americans about Arizona and Immigration



Research conducted May 4-10, 2010

Effective and ineffective messages

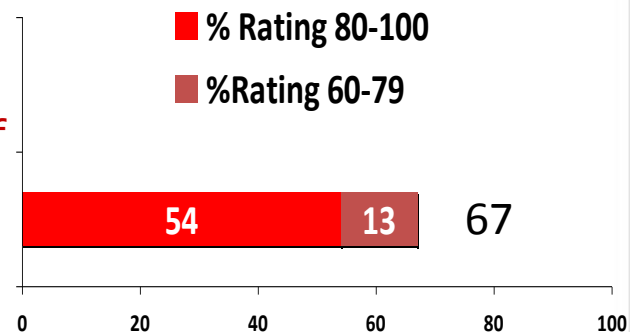
Speaking of Arizona

	Mean Rating	Percent preferring pro-reform	Percent preferring opposition	Margin
Opposition message (pro-Arizona law)	68.6	-	-	-
Turn frustration into action	70.8	44	38	+6
Arizona politicians	71.6	41	39	+2
Un-American	60.8	35	53	-18
Irish	57.7	35	55	-20

Opposition message

For years, Americans have been pleading for the federal government to secure the border and tackle the problem of illegal immigration, but those pleas have gone unanswered. With this law, Arizonans have stood up and declared that if Congress won't act, we will. Illegal immigrants are bankrupting our state, stealing our jobs, and even killing our neighbors. Once-peaceful Arizona towns are overrun with drugs, vandalism, and gang violence. Every night, hospital emergency rooms across the state are flooded with hoards of illegals seeking health services paid for by hardworking Arizona taxpayers. And those very same taxpayers are losing their jobs because illegal immigrants will do the same work for a fraction of the pay. The Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act simply empowers police to verify the immigration status of those already in our state, all while protecting the civil liberties that make this country great. This law may not be perfect, but it is a crucial step in the right direction.

Message Rating 1-100

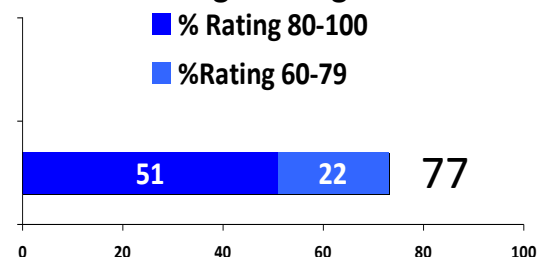


Top message against the Arizona law

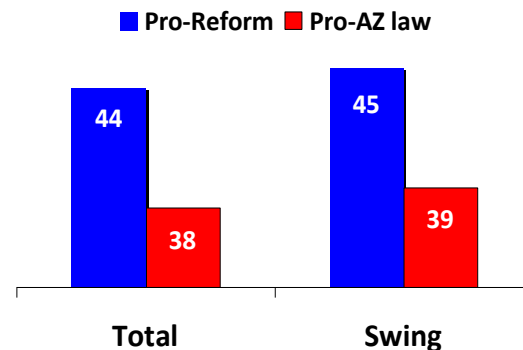
Turn frustration into action

I understand why the people of Arizona are frustrated. For years, politicians in Washington have used immigration to play politics rather than to fix what they all know is a broken system. But the solution to partisan posturing and bills designed to sound tough but not solve the problem isn't to do the same thing they've done in Washington at the state and local levels... And the solution isn't to turn this into a police state, where we all have to carry national identity papers with us at all times or risk being hauled off by the police in handcuffs... while taking a walk in our own neighborhood. The solution is to solve the immigration problem, and to do it now. That means securing our borders so we don't ever have this problem again, and requiring that anyone who is here without papers get legal, by obeying our laws, paying our taxes, and learning our language, so we stop spending tens of billions a year on enforcement programs that aren't working....

Message Rating 1-100



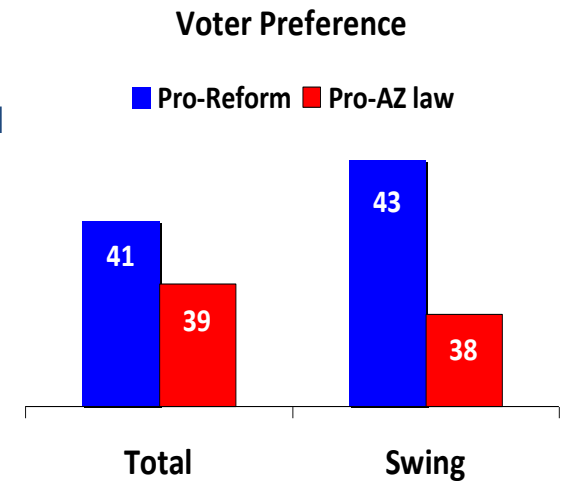
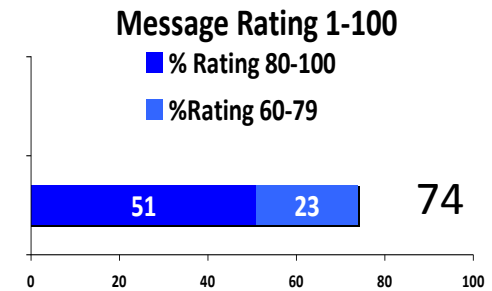
Voter Preference



2nd-best message against the Arizona law

Arizona politicians

The people of Arizona, like the people of every state, have every reason to be frustrated that politicians in Washington haven't solved the immigration problem. But the same politicians who passed this law in Arizona also passed a bill requiring President Obama to show his birth certificate to be on the ballot in 2012. And they're the same politicians who've been arguing against immigration reform for years in Washington, proposing solutions they know won't work, like somehow magically finding and deporting 12 million illegal immigrants, which would cost nearly 500 billion dollars we don't have, and cause millions of American citizens to be mistakenly detained until they could prove that they were Americans. **We don't need politicians to feed on our legitimate concerns or our prejudices. We need leaders who will solve this problem once and for all**, by securing our borders, cracking down on employers who hire illegal immigrants, and requiring those who came here years ago and want to become American citizens *to show their commitment to this country by obeying our laws, paying our taxes, and learning our language*, so we turn illegal immigrants into taxpaying American citizens.



Conclusions

Key findings

- We can beat a very strong opposition message in hard economic times by strong double-digits, and win with all demographics
- The strongest messages are tough but not overly punitive
- Voters respond well to the idea of illegal immigrants paying extra income taxes while working toward citizenship
- Americans want to hear that immigration reform will first and foremost reflect *American* interests and values
- The strongest messages evoke values from both the right and left, such as hard work and our heritage as a nation of immigrants
- The strongest messages address Americans' concerns that illegal immigrants learn our language and pay their fair share of taxes, which signal commitment and willingness to pull their own weight
- Voters are tired of this issue being used for political purposes and want to see problem solving
- We should use Arizona to pivot to federal immigration reform