

Strategic Messaging

Immigration reform

Speaking to Americans about Immigration and American Values



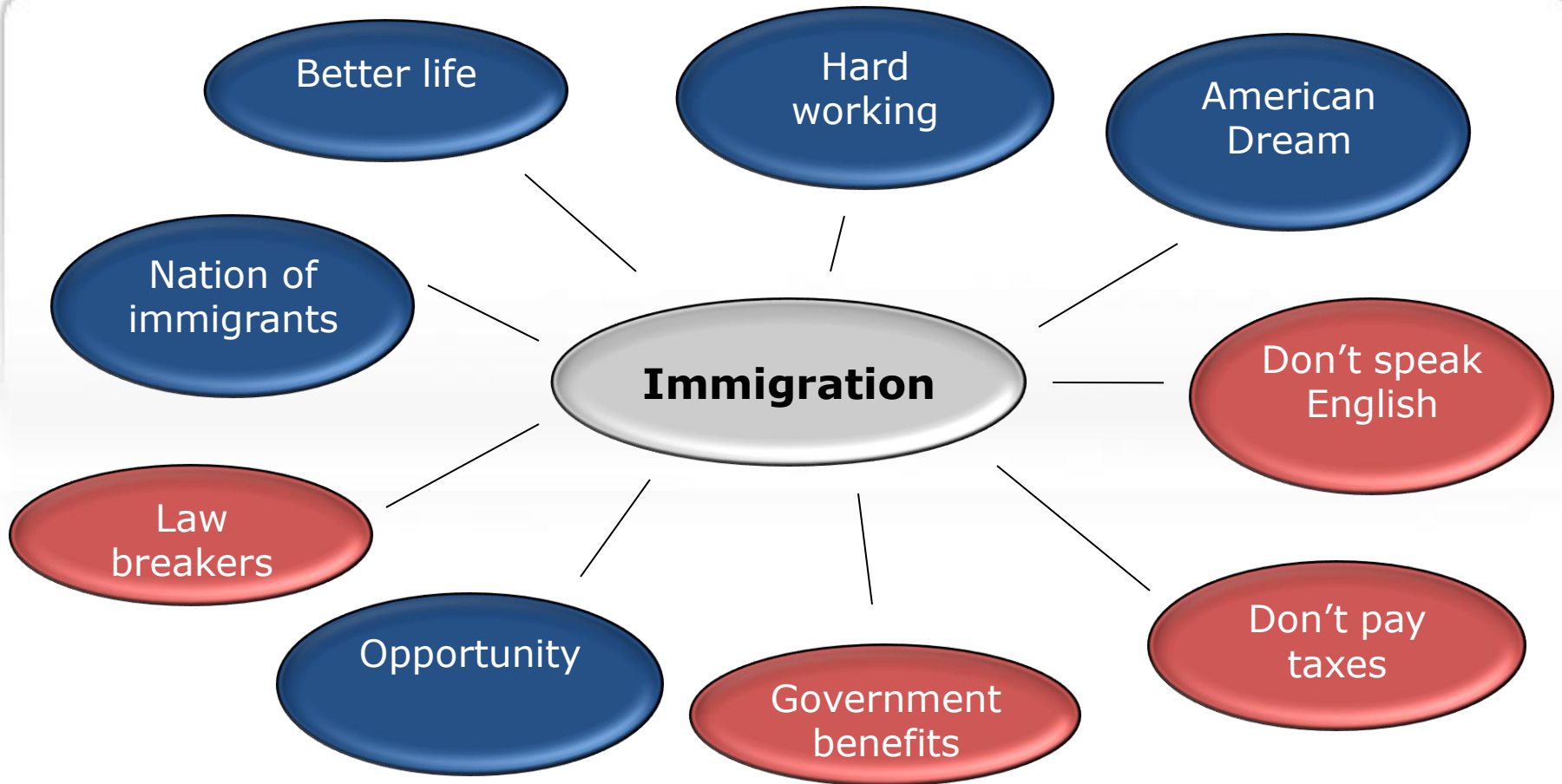
*Research conducted by Westen Strategies for America's
Voice and Media Matters*

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?

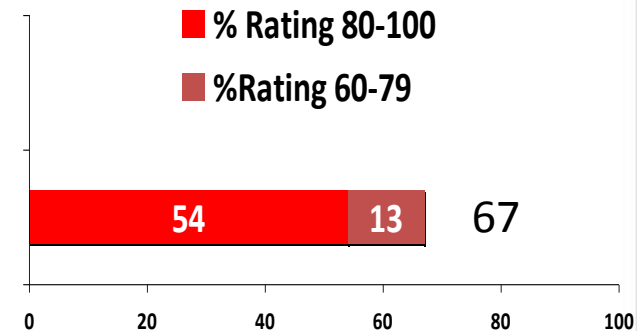
1st tier messages

	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.

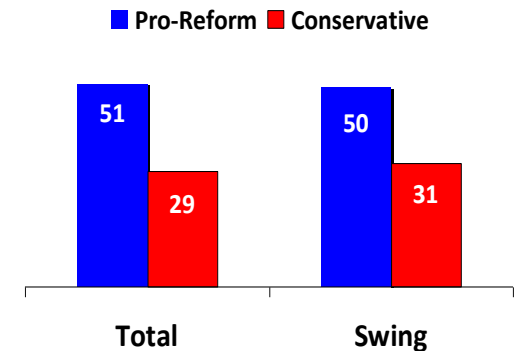
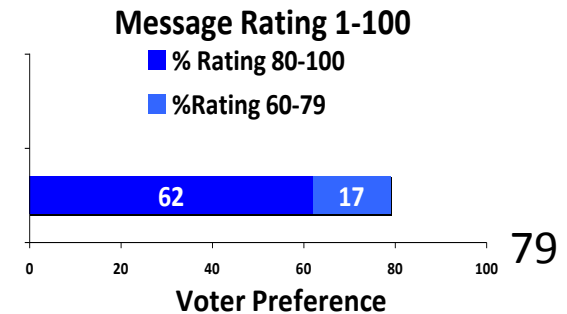
Message Rating 1-100



1st tier pro-reform messages

Our interests and values

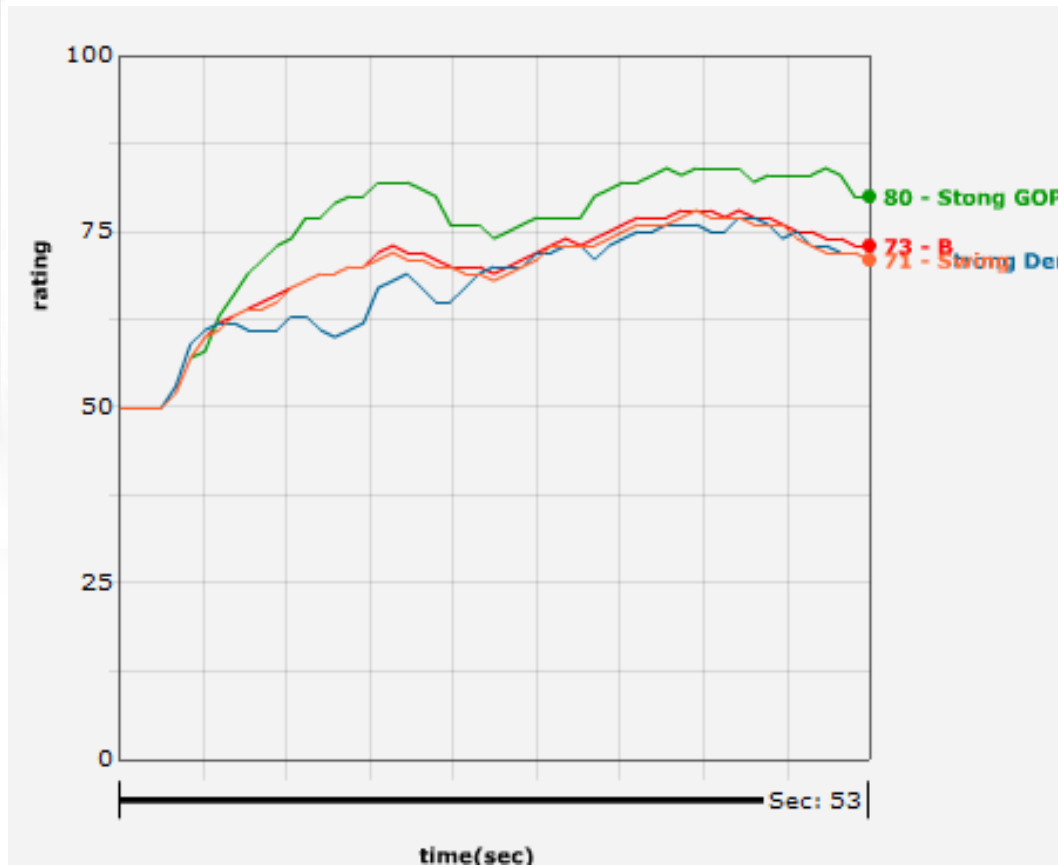
Our immigration laws ought to reflect both our interests and our values as Americans. *A nation can't be secure if its borders aren't secure. In the wake of September 11th, it's unbelievable that we've lost control over who is in our country and where they are....* But **we need to treat this as a problem 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

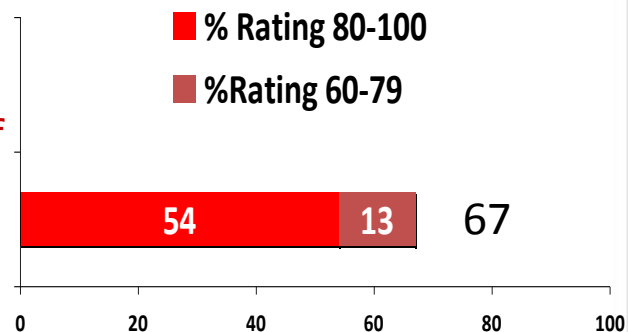
Speaking of Arizona

	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

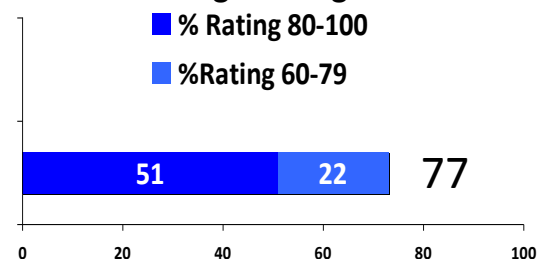


Top message against the Arizona law

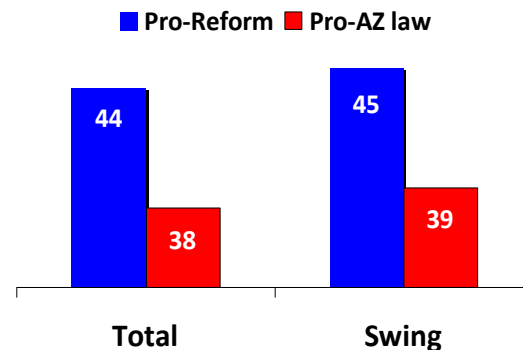
Turn frustration into action

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



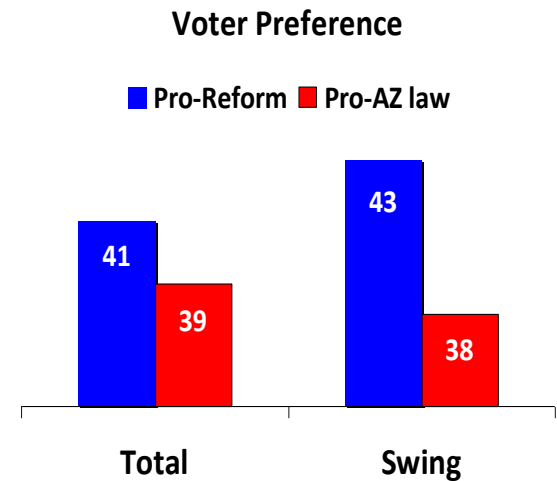
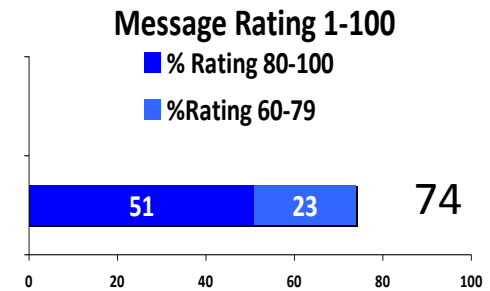
Voter Preference



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