



# **AMERICA'S VOICE**

**THE POWER TO WIN COMMON SENSE IMMIGRATION REFORM**

# America's Voice: Immigration 2008

Presented by Benenson Strategy Group and Lake  
Research Partners

November 13, 2008



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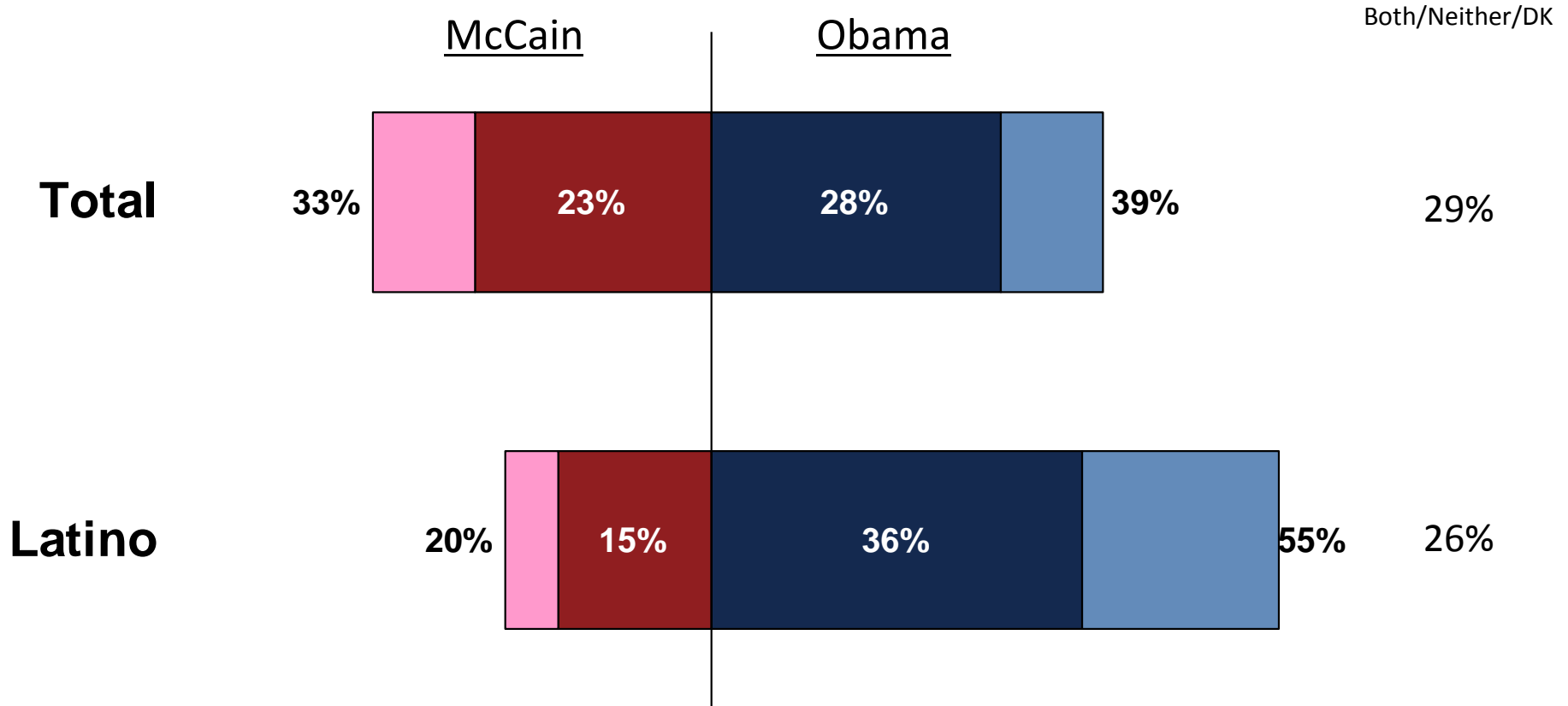
# National Survey Methodology

- Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey that was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers between November 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008.
- The Random Digit Dial (RDD) survey reached 1000 2008 general election voters and an oversample of 250 Latino voters with bilingual interviewing, for a total of 371 Latino interviews.
- The data were weighted by race, gender, age, presidential vote and region. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.1% for the base sample and 5.1% for Latinos.
- In interpreting survey results, all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question.

# Key Points

- **Like the electorate as a whole, Latino voters strongly support common sense comprehensive immigration reform.** The main difference between Latinos and the larger electorate is a heightened sense of urgency. Latinos are locked in on this issue, and they will reward politicians who work towards good solutions.
- **The Republican brand took a big hit among Latinos after the immigration fights of 2007.** Latinos, who were open to supporting George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004, largely abandoned McCain despite his personal support of comprehensive reform because they no longer trust the GOP.
- **Latinos are more likely to say immigration was a factor in their vote this year.** They broke heavily in favor of Obama particularly in battleground states such as Colorado and Nevada.

Voters tend to believe that Obama represents their views on immigration better than McCain by a small margin. However, the difference is much larger among Latinos.



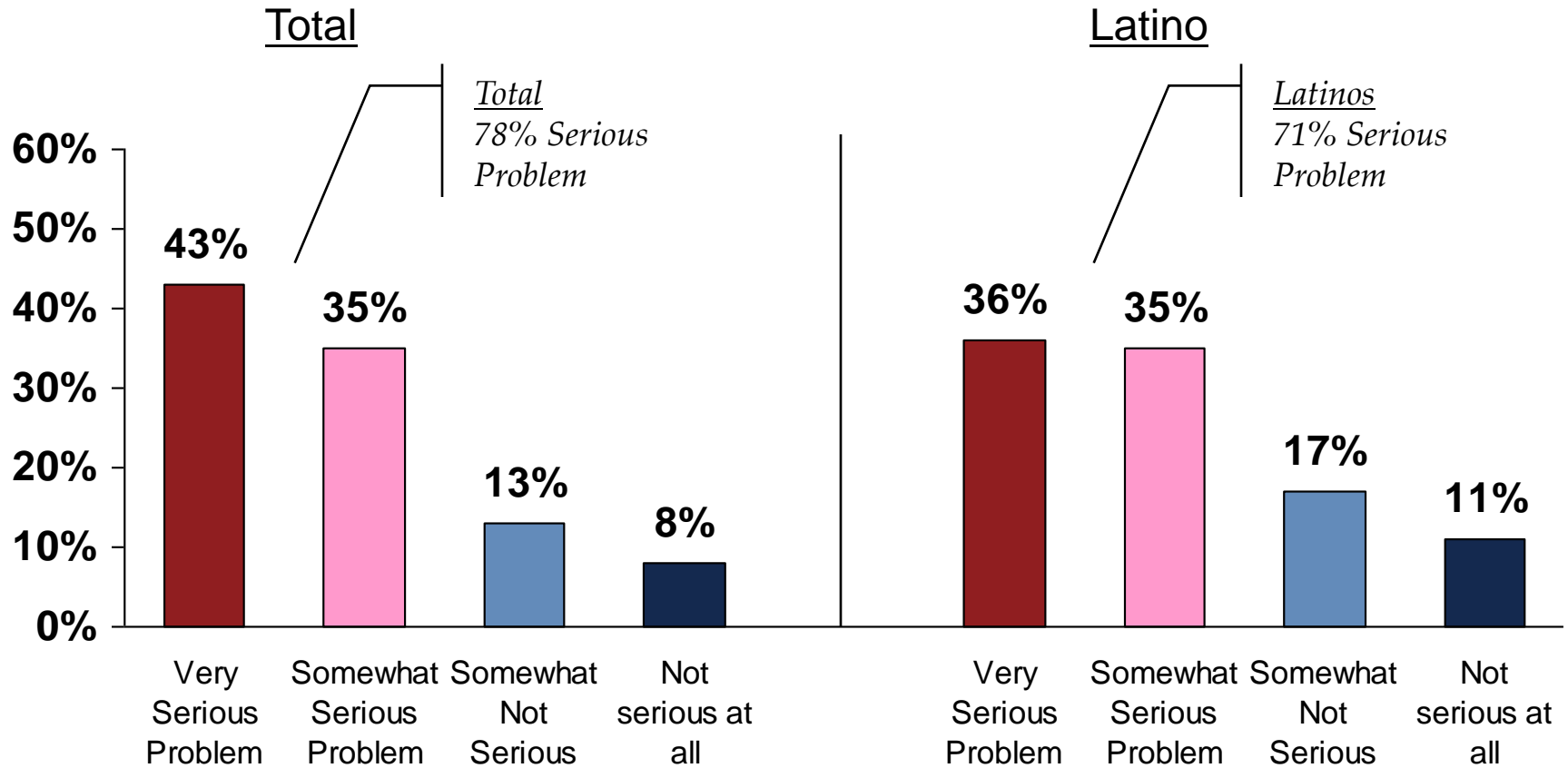
Now for something slightly different. I am going to read you a list of words and phrases. Regardless of which candidate you voted for, which candidate does this describe better: [ROTATE] \_Barack Obama or \_John McCain [Represents your views on immigration]?



# Key Points

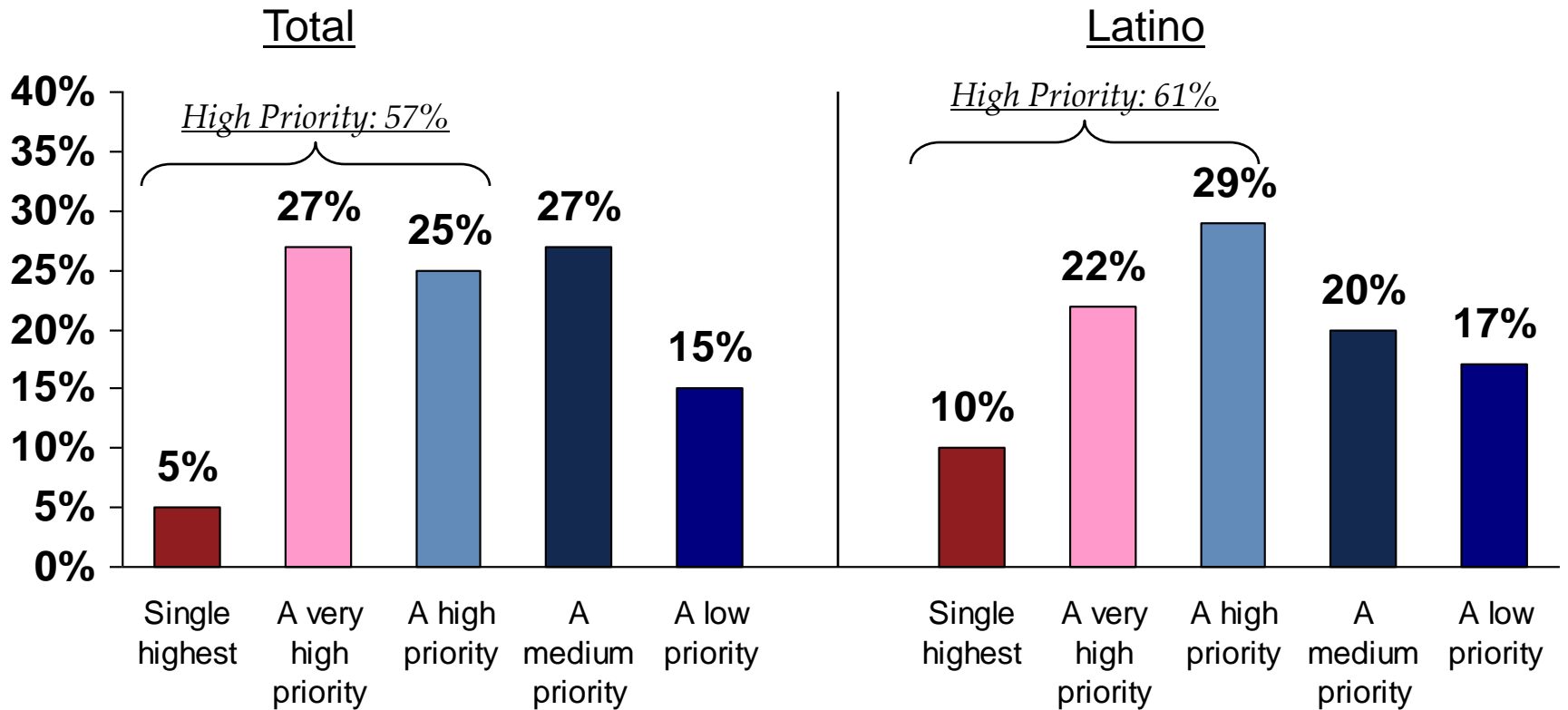
- **A large majority of voters broadly supports comprehensive immigration reform.** Supporters of enforcement only policies may be loud, but there are not very many of them.
- **Though the economy dominates the issue landscape, immigration is still seen as a very serious problem and a high priority.** Voters want the new President and Congress to shore up the crumbling economy. However, voters do want comprehensive immigration reform passed in this session of Congress.
- **In this difficult economy, voters are more likely to support immigration reforms that move undocumented workers out of the shadows and onto the tax rolls.** Common sense solutions that help the economy and immigration policy are a win-win.

# Voters do believe that illegal immigration is a serious problem.



*In your view, is illegal immigration a (READ CHOICES) problem facing the country?*

While voters believe that solving the problem of illegal immigration should be a high priority, they do not believe it should be “the single highest” priority.

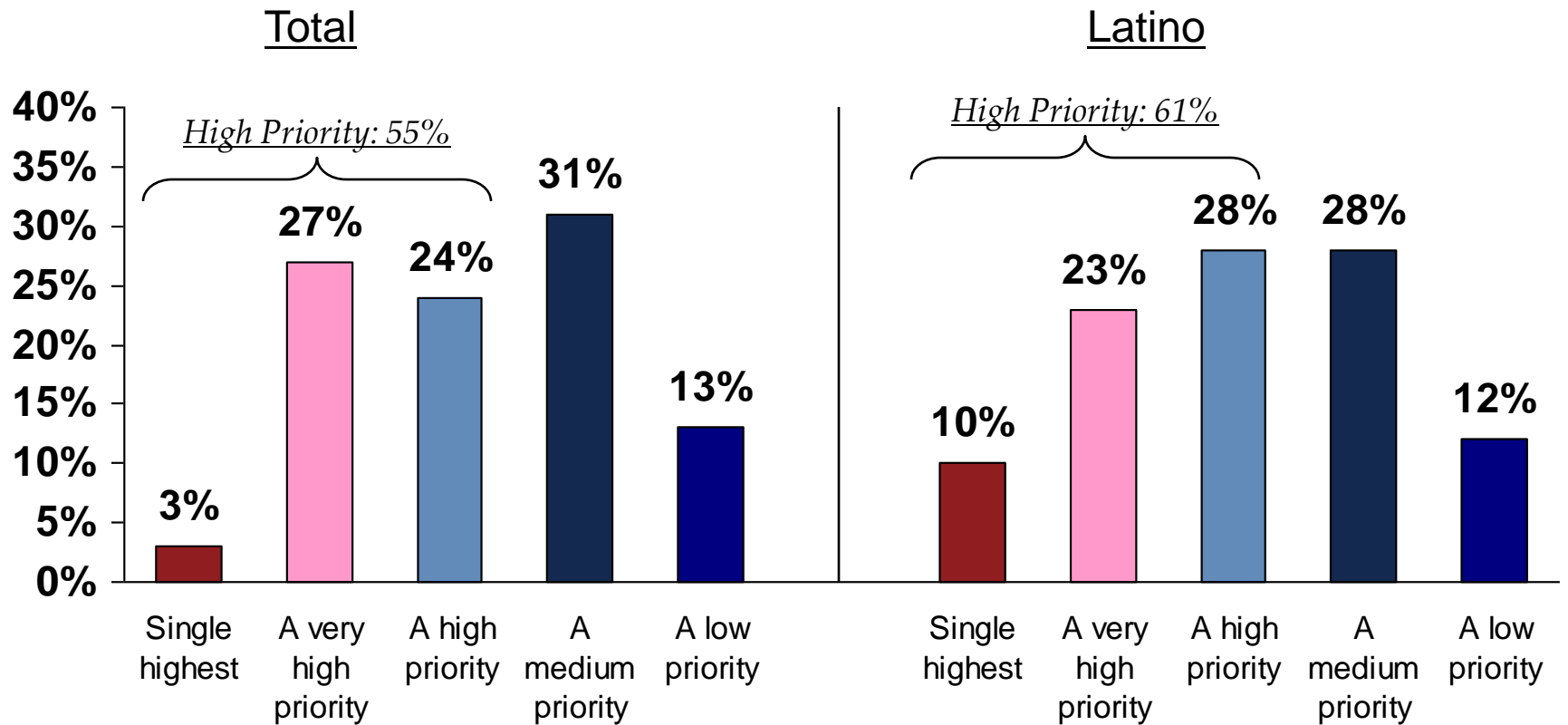


*Now thinking about all the issues that will face the NEW Congress after this election, how high a priority should solving the issue of illegal immigration be, compared to all the other issues -should it be the single highest priority, a very high priority, a high priority, a medium priority, or a low priority for the NEW Congress?*





The numbers are not significantly different if the question specifically addresses “enacting immigration reform.”

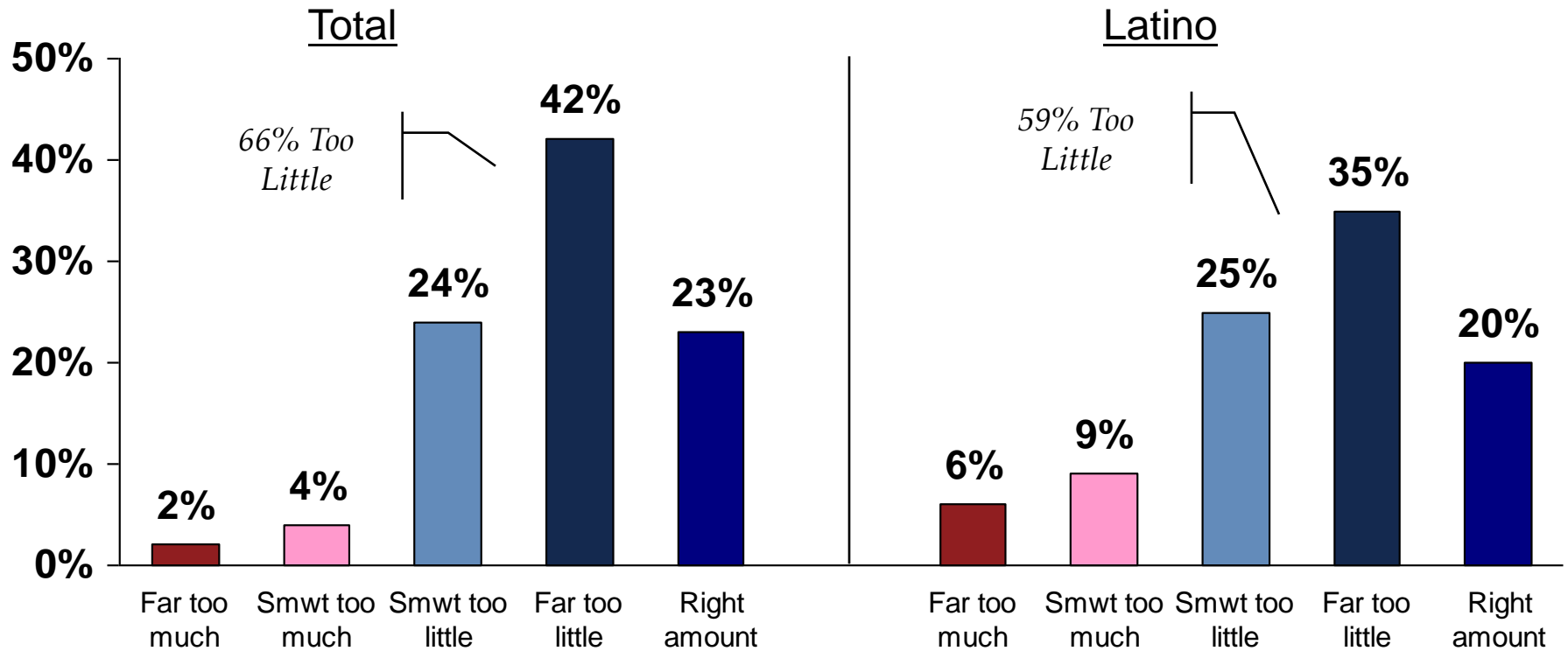


*Now thinking about all the issues that will face the NEW Congress after this election, how high a priority should enacting immigration reform be compared to all the other issues -should it be the single highest priority, a very high priority, a high priority, a medium priority, or a low priority for the NEW Congress?*



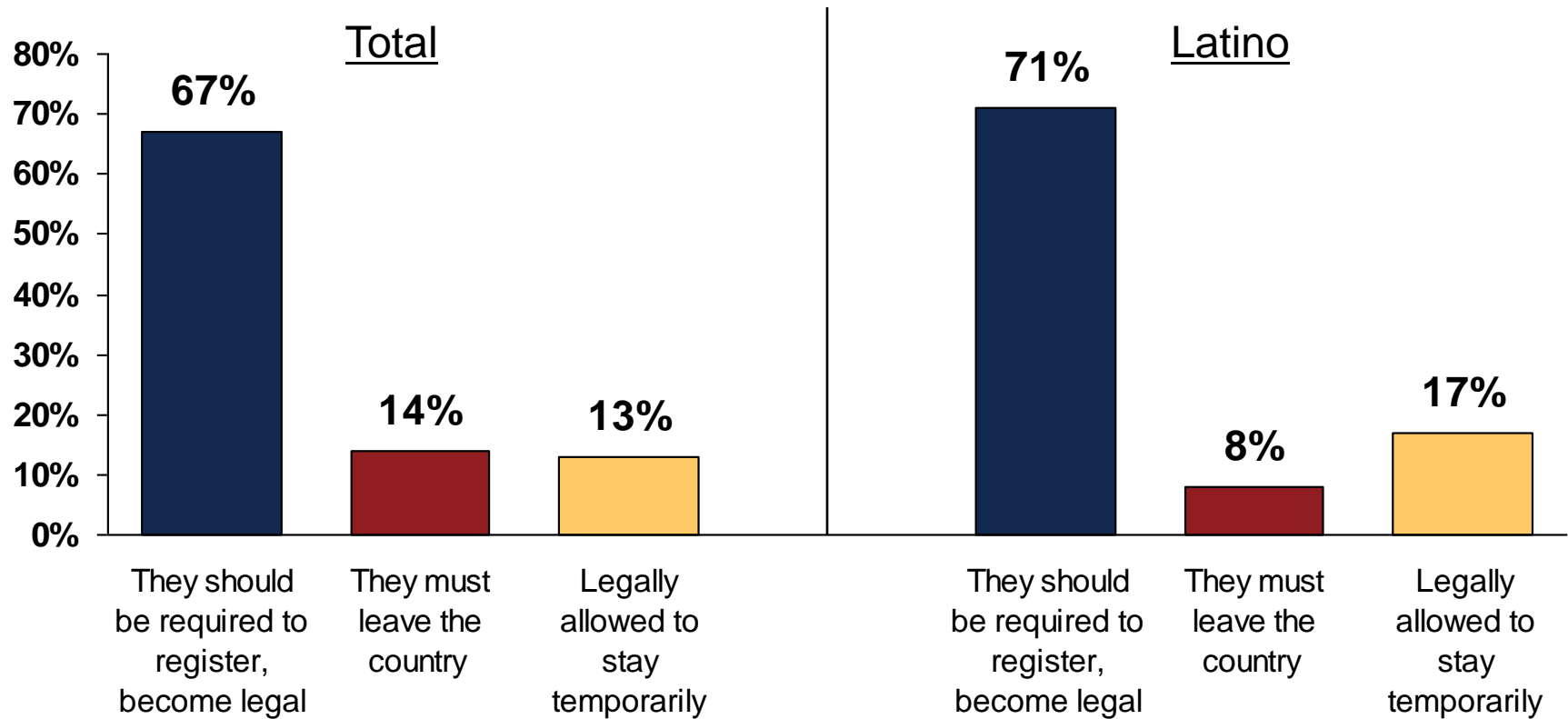
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# A plurality of voters believe immigration was discussed too little this election season.



Overall, during this election season, do you think the issue of immigration was discussed too much, too little, or about the right amount? FOLLOW UP: And is that far (too much/too little) or somewhat (too much/too little)?

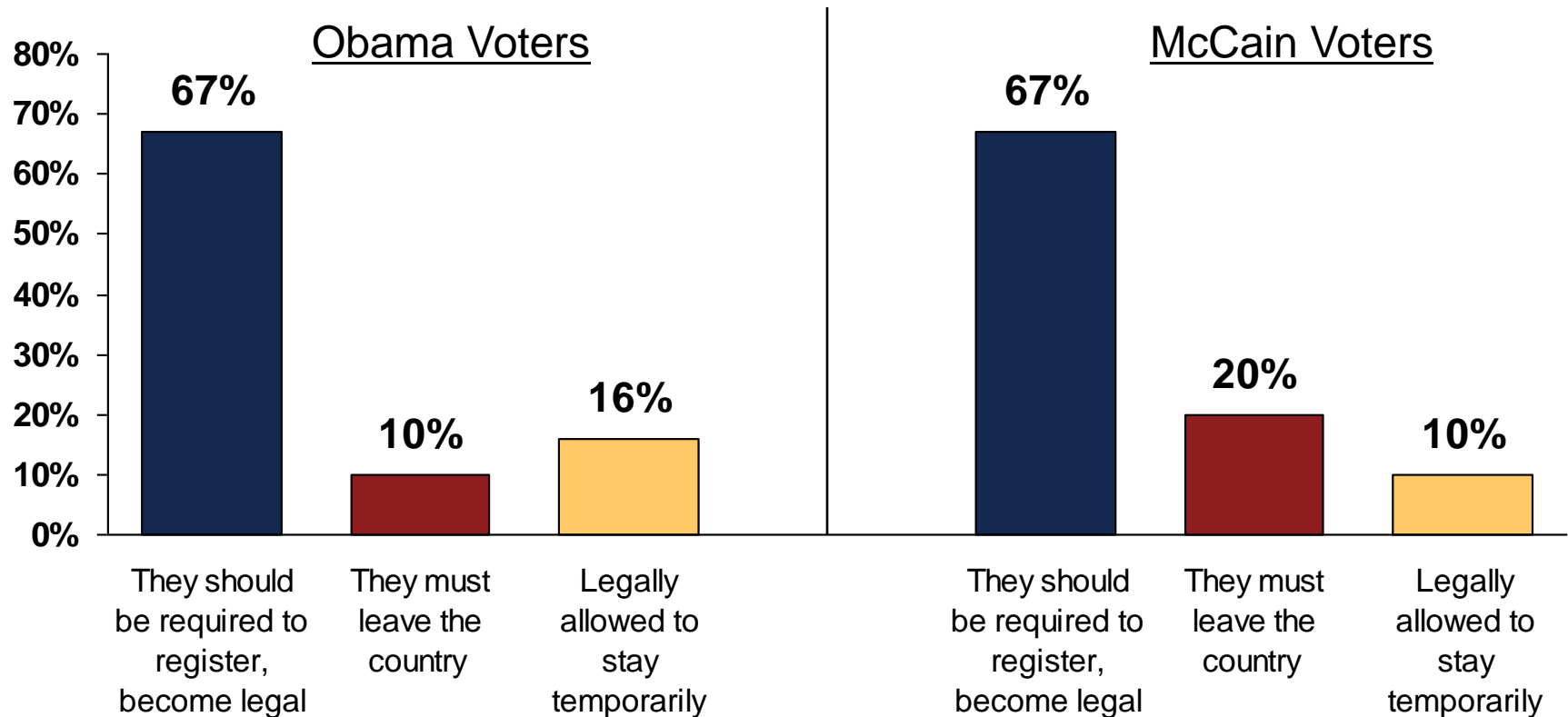
# There is a broad consensus behind a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants.



*Most government officials believe that to deal with the problem of illegal immigration, we need to make our borders secure, crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants, and deport illegal immigrants who commit crimes. In addition to these steps, what should be done about the 12 million illegal immigrants here in the United States?*



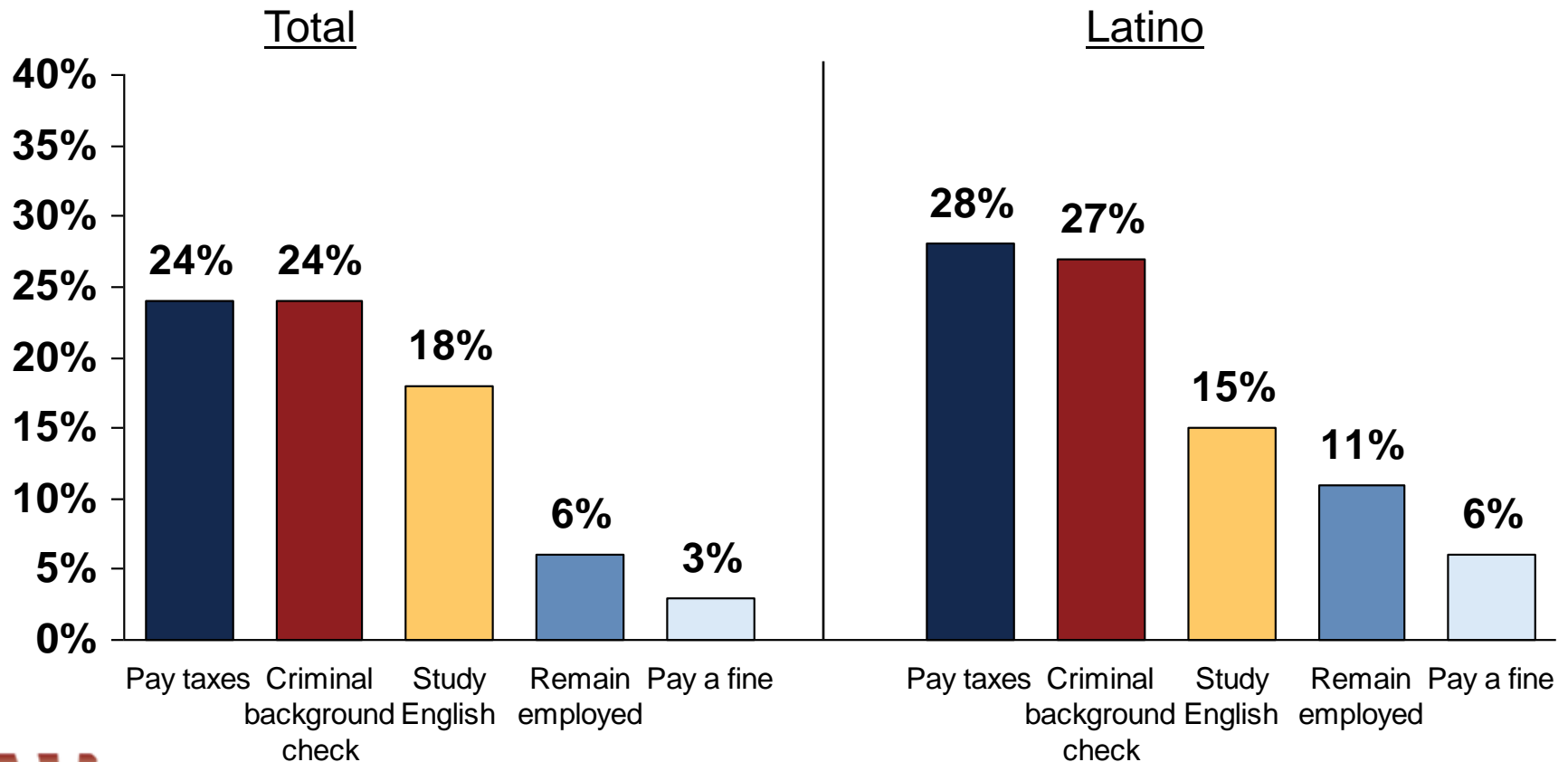
# Obama and McCain voters largely agree on a path to citizenship.



*Most government officials believe that to deal with the problem of illegal immigration, we need to make our borders secure, crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants, and deport illegal immigrants who commit crimes. In addition to these steps, what should be done about the 12 million illegal immigrants here in the United States?*



In terms of steps to become legal, paying taxes and passing a criminal background check are the most important.

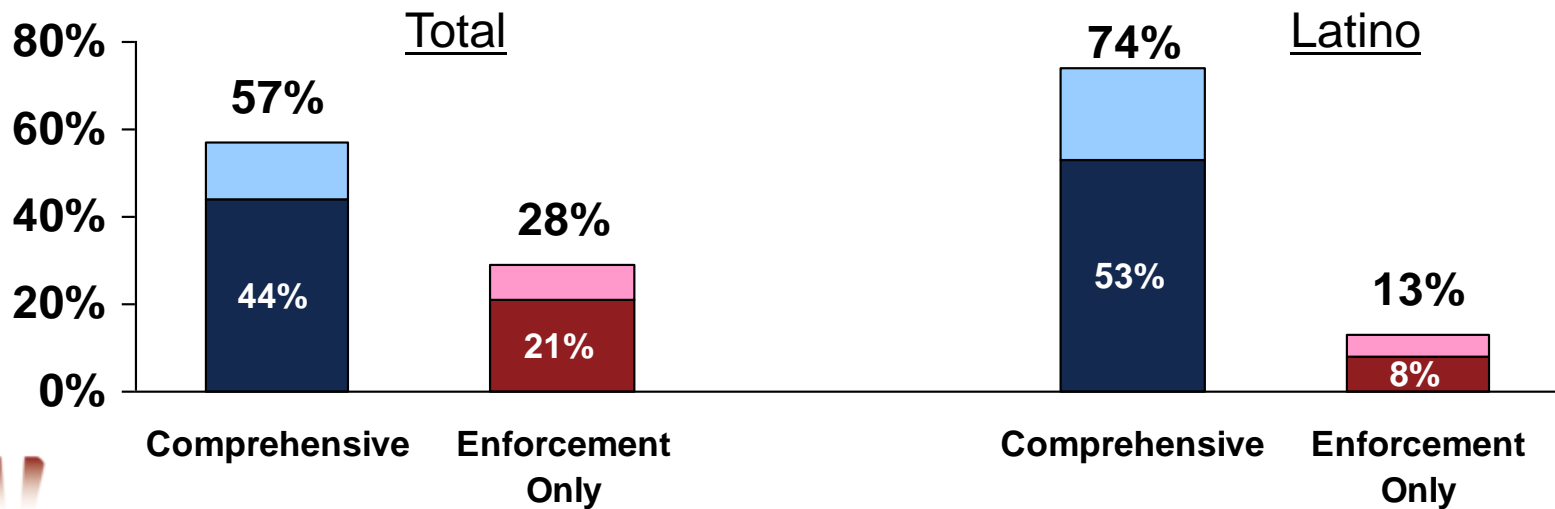


*Which of the following is the most important condition an immigrant should have to meet to become legal?*

# A comprehensive approach handily beats the enforcement only position.

**Comprehensive:** We need a comprehensive approach that secures the border, cracks down on employers who hire illegal immigrants, and requires all illegal immigrants to register and meet certain requirements to become legal, including working, paying taxes and learning English.

**Enforcement Only:** We need to secure our border, stop giving taxpayer funded benefits to illegal immigrants, and make sure that those who broke our laws by entering this country illegally are forced to leave.

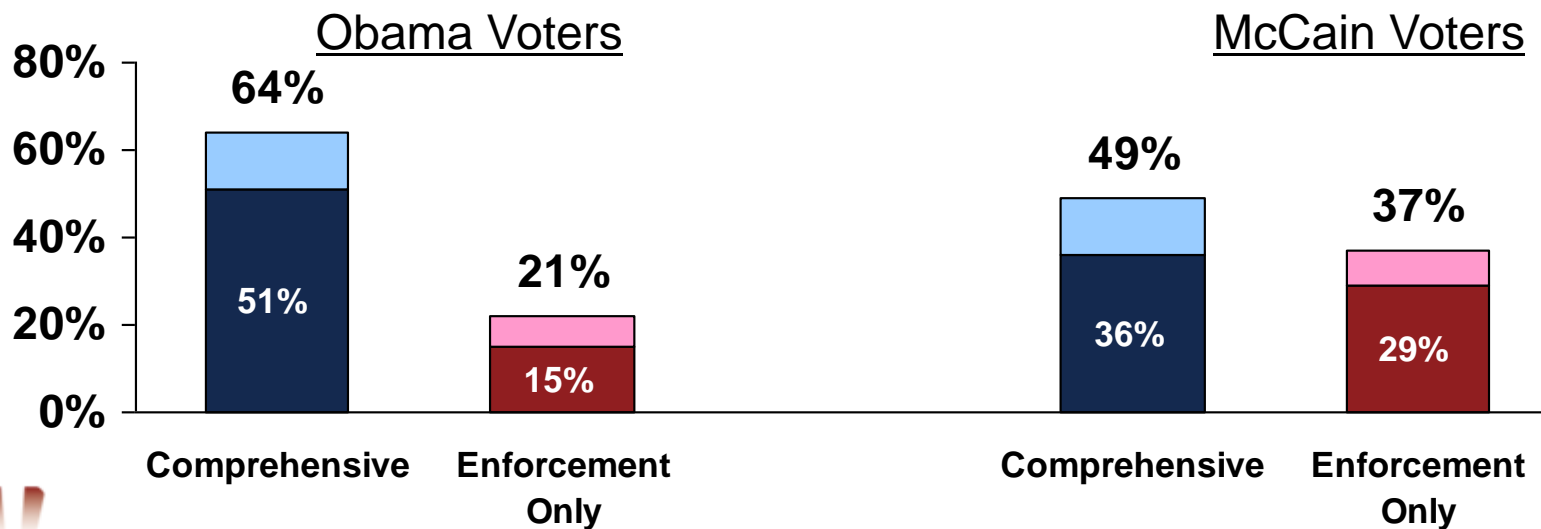


*Now I'd like to read you a pair of statements. Of the two, please tell me which statement is closer to your own views.*

# Both Obama and McCain voters support a comprehensive solution to the immigration problem over enforcement-only, McCain voters more narrowly.

**Comprehensive:** We need a comprehensive approach that secures the border, cracks down on employers who hire illegal immigrants, and requires all illegal immigrants to register and meet certain requirements to become legal, including working, paying taxes and learning English.

**Enforcement Only:** We need to secure our border, stop giving taxpayer funded benefits to illegal immigrants, and make sure that those who broke our laws by entering this country illegally are forced to leave.

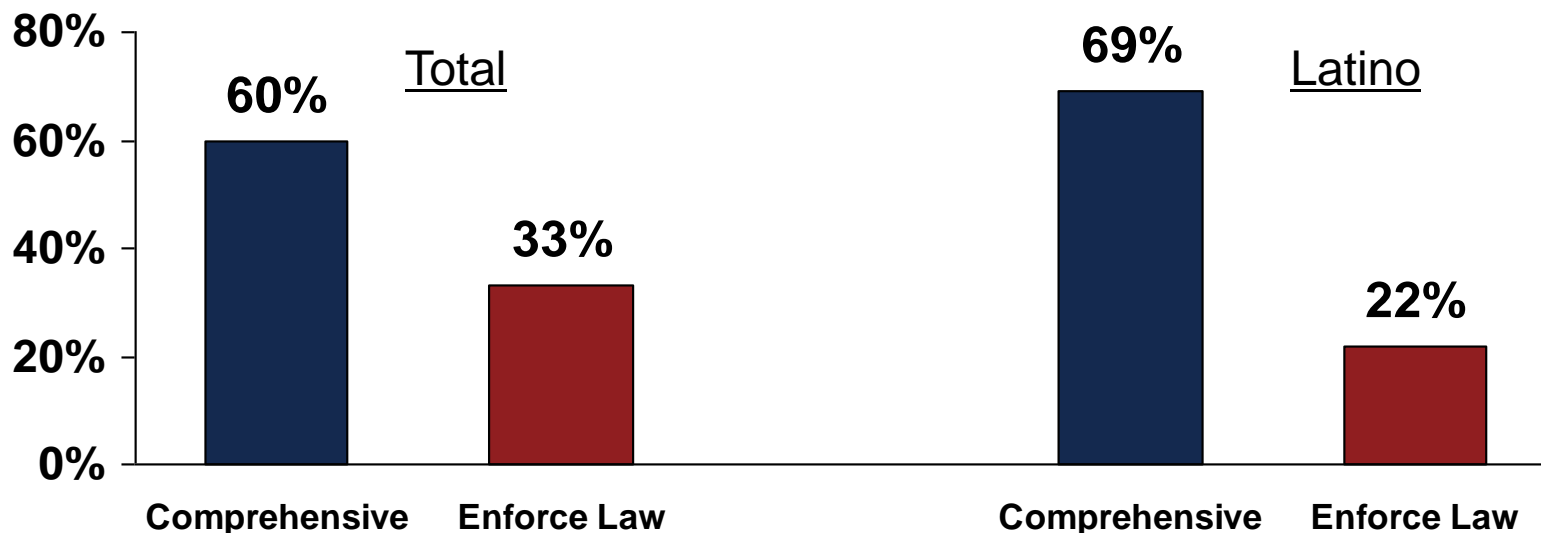


*Now I'd like to read you a pair of statements. Of the two, please tell me which statement is closer to your own views.*

When given a choice between Congress passing comprehensive reform or enforcing current law, voters choose comprehensive reform by a large margin.

**Comprehensive:** Congress should pass comprehensive reform that includes tighter border security, employer enforcement, and requires some people who are now in the country illegally to apply for citizenship.

**Enforce Law:** Congress should not pass amnesty of any kind. Instead, they should enforce the laws currently on the books.



*Congress may address immigration reform in the next session of Congress. Here are two statements about what Congress could do to address immigration. Please tell me which you agree with more: (READ AND ROTATE CHOICES)*

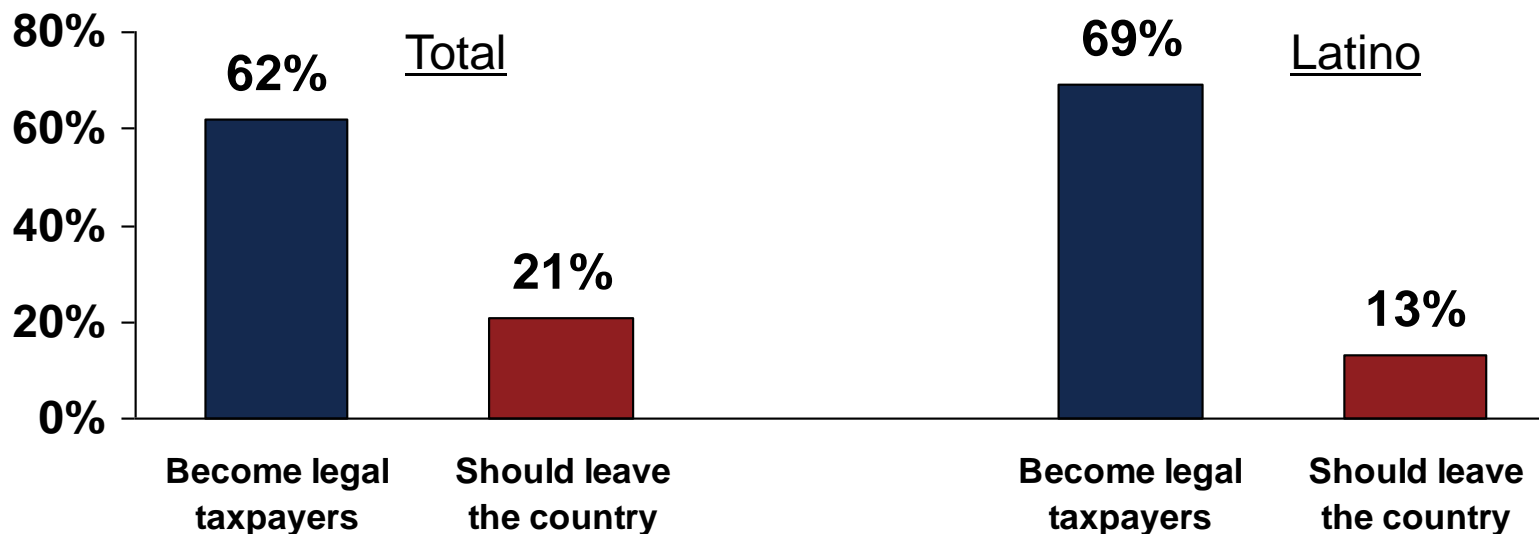




In this tough economic climate, voters are more interested in converting illegal immigrants into legal taxpayers than deporting them because they may be taking jobs.

**Should become legal taxpayers:** We would be better off if people who are in the United States illegally became legal taxpayers so they pay their fair share.

**Should leave the country:** We would be better off if people who are in the United States illegally left the country because they are taking away jobs that Americans need.



*Which is closer to how you think about the issue of immigration and this economy?*

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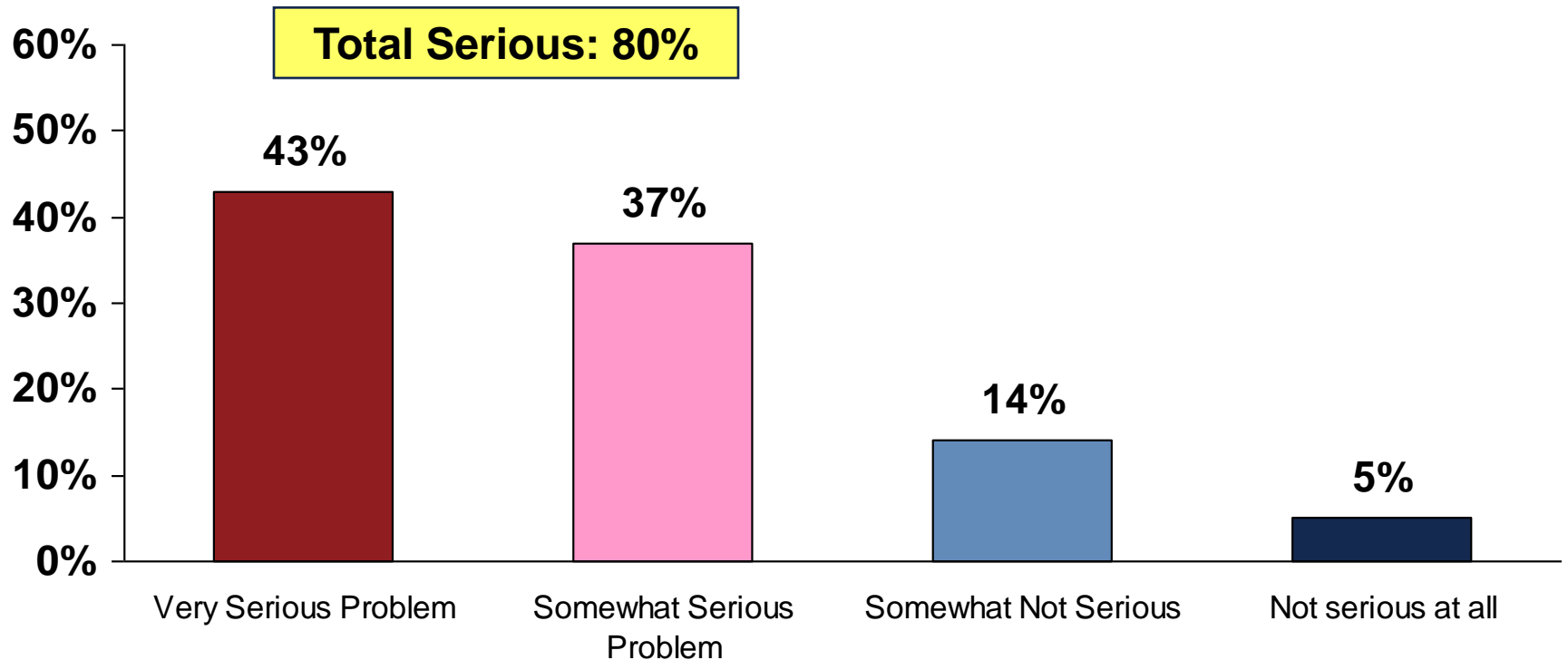
# Swing District Survey Methodology

- **BSG conducted 402 interviews with 2008 general election voters in Swing Districts between November 6<sup>th</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008.**
- **Congressional Districts included in this survey: VA-11, AZ-01, AZ-05, NM-01, WA-08, CO-04, IL-14, NV-03, PA-11**
- **The margin of error is  $\pm 4.89\%$  for the entire sample at the 95% confidence level.**

# Swing Districts: Key Points

- **The issue of immigration was a low priority relative to the economy, but battleground voters are looking for solutions to the issue, which they consider important, and they prefer a comprehensive solution over a more limited approach.**
- **Those who say the economic situation requires delaying immigration reform don't have the support of the public. Voters say the economy is the priority, but they also say comprehensive reform is consistent with helping the economy.**

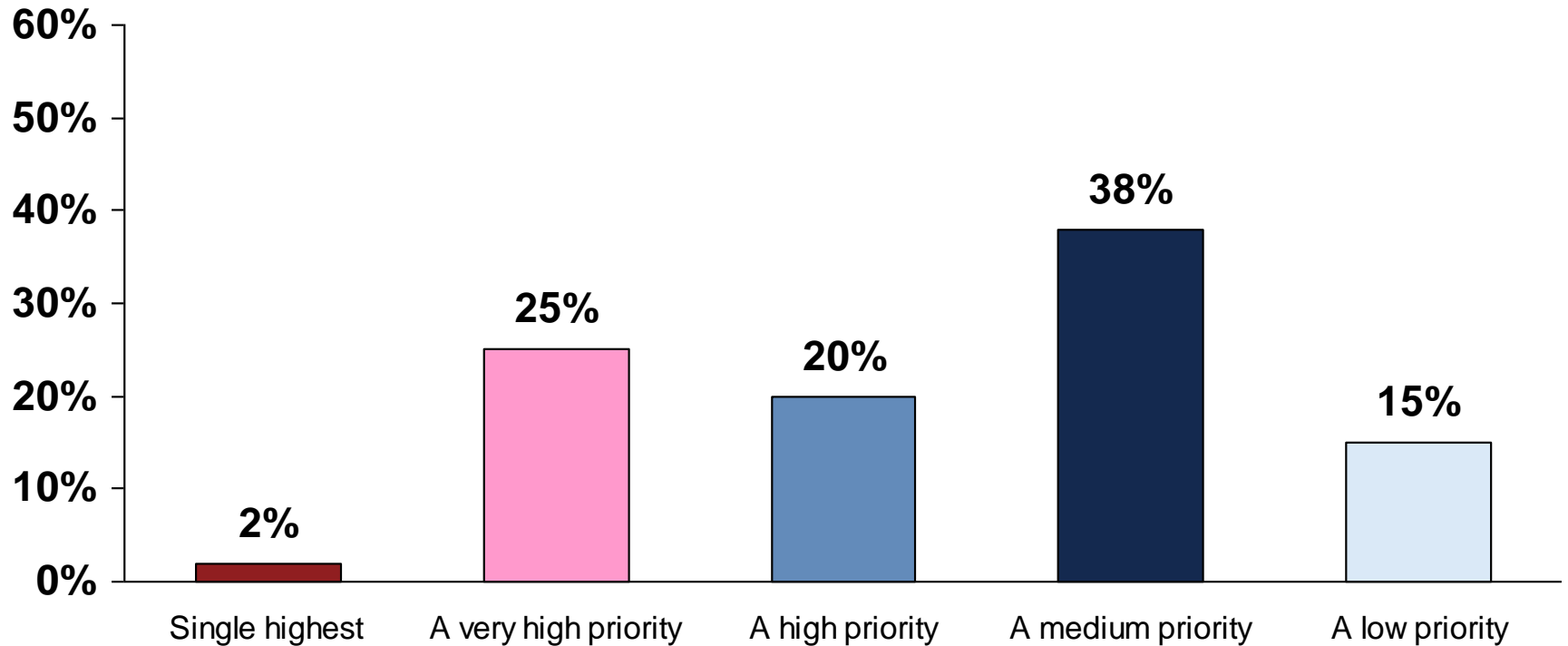
# 8 in 10 Swing District Voters Say Illegal Immigration is a Serious Problem



*In your view, is illegal immigration a (READ CHOICES) problem facing the country?*

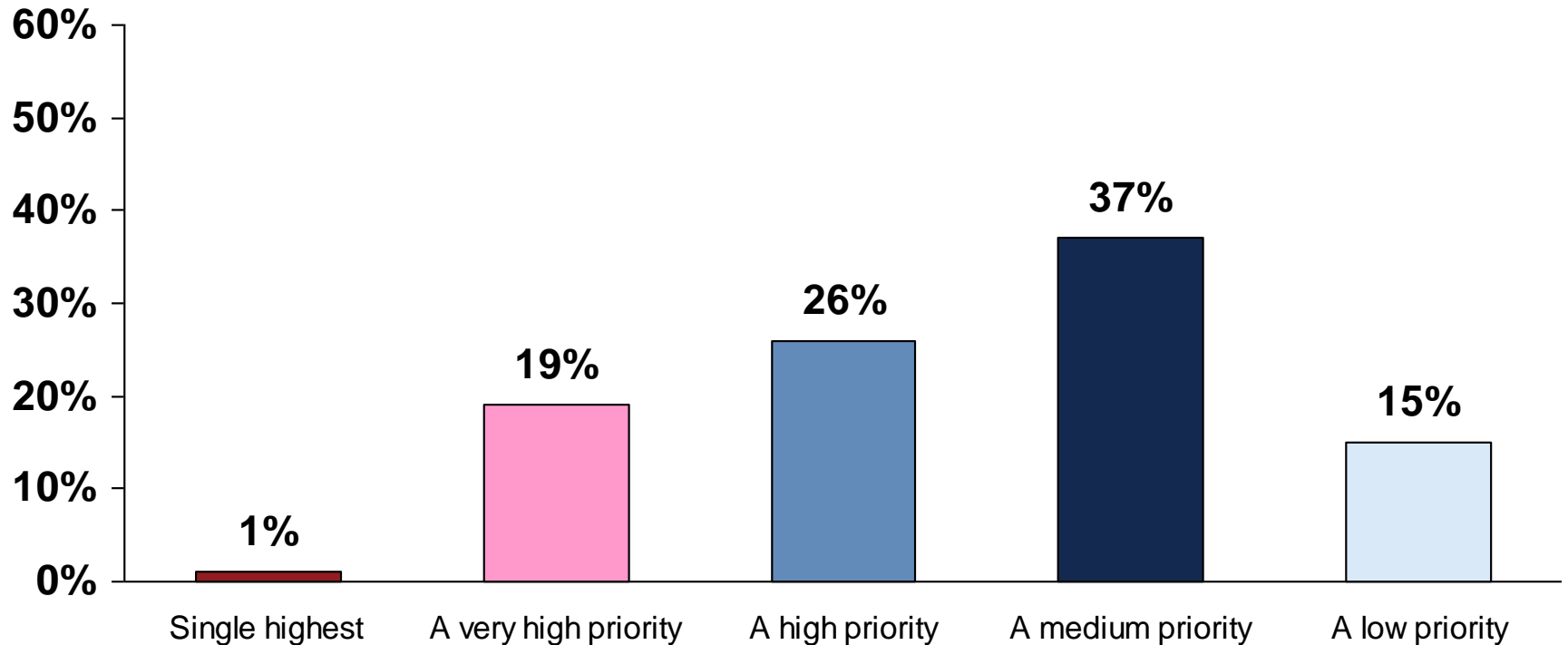
# Swing Districts: Solving the Issue of Immigration

## 47% Consider it a High Priority



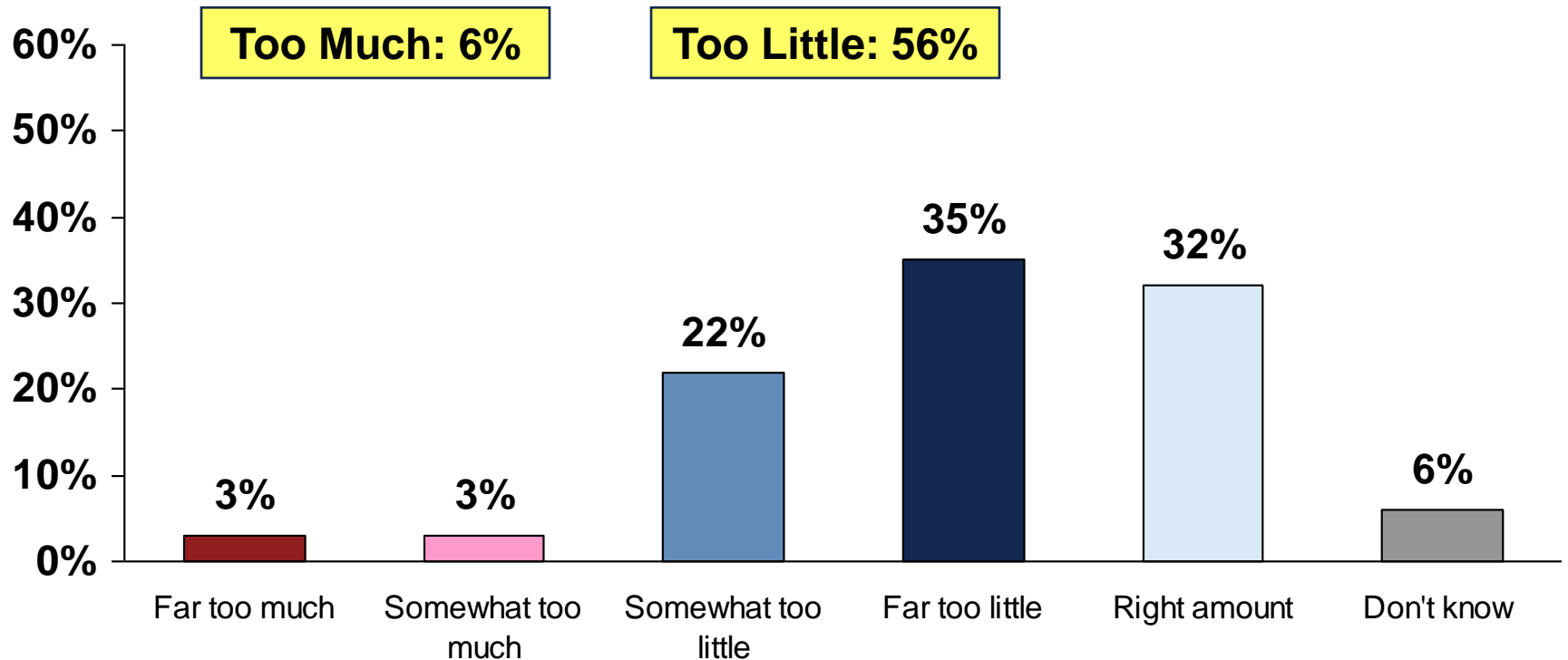
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# Swing Districts: Enacting Immigration Reform 46% Consider it a High Priority



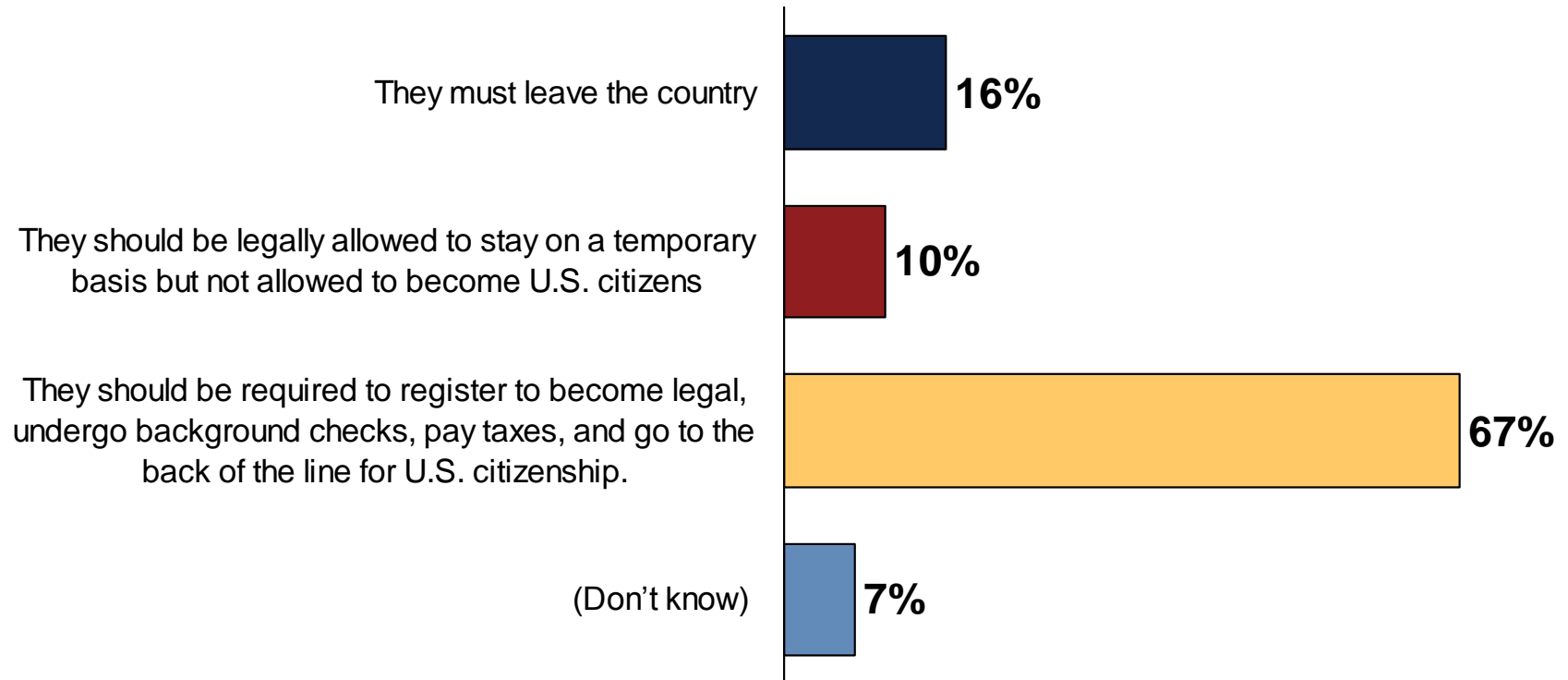
*Now thinking about all the issues that will face the NEW Congress after this election, how high a priority should enacting immigration reform be compared to all the other issues - should it be the single highest priority, a very high priority, a high priority, a medium priority, or a low priority for the NEW Congress?*

# More than half of Swing District Voters believe Immigration has been talked about too little



*Overall, during this election season, do you think the issue of immigration was discussed too much, too little, or about the right amount? [FOLLOW UP:] And is that far (too much/too little) or somewhat (too much/too little)?*

# Swing Districts: 12 million remaining after initial steps should...



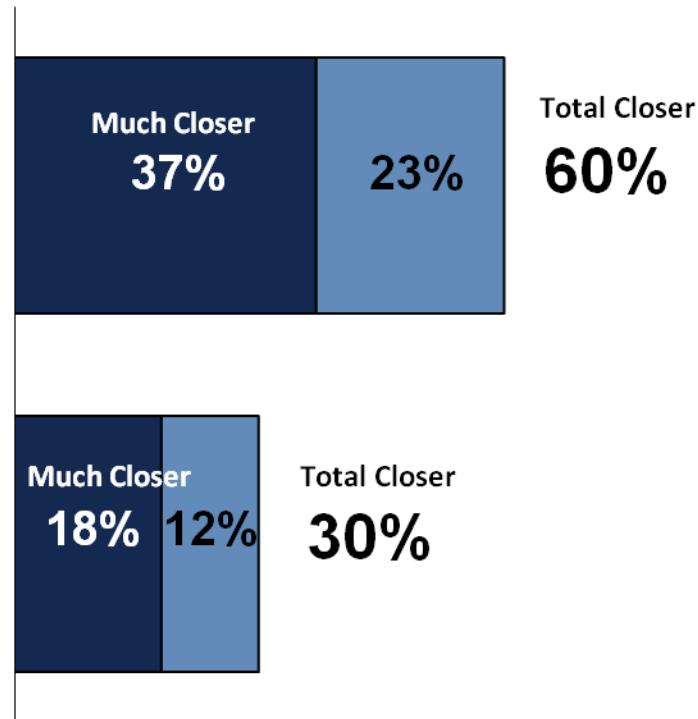
*Most government officials believe that to deal with the problem of illegal immigration, we need to make our borders secure, crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants, and deport illegal immigrants who commit crimes. In addition to these steps, what should be done about the 12 million illegal immigrants here in the United States?*



# Swing Districts: Comprehensive Vs. Forced to Leave

We need a comprehensive approach that secures the border, cracks down on employers who hire illegal immigrants, and requires all illegal immigrants to register and meet certain requirements to become legal, including working, paying taxes and learning English.

We need to secure our border, stop giving taxpayer funded benefits to illegal immigrants, and make sure that those who broke our laws by entering this country illegally are forced to leave.



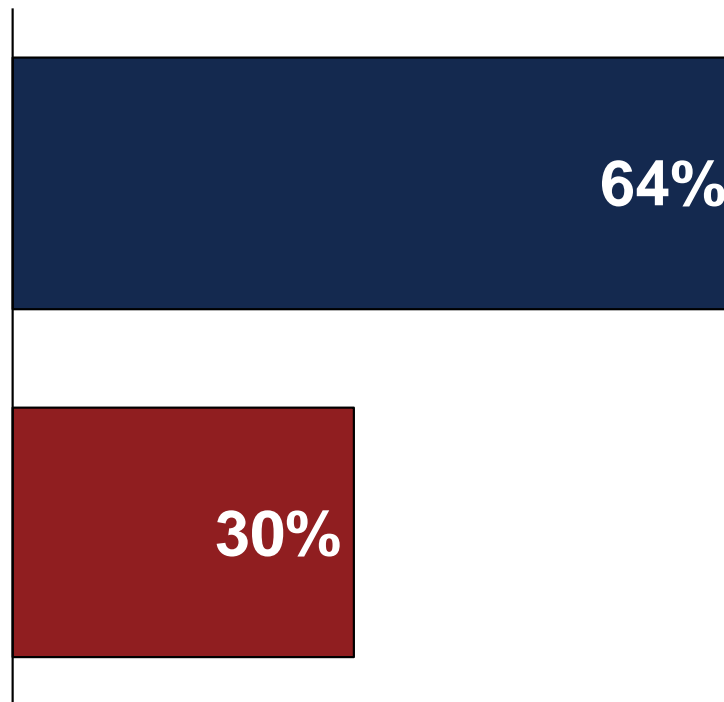
*Now I'd like to read you a pair of statements. Of the two, please tell me which statement is closer to your own views.*

# Swing Districts: What Congress Should Do

**Comprehensive:** Congress should pass comprehensive reform that includes tighter border security, employer enforcement, and requires people who are now in the country illegally to apply for citizenship.

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**No Amnesty:** Congress should not pass amnesty of any kind. Instead, they should act to secure the border and enforce the laws currently on the books.



*The Congress may address immigration reform in the next session of Congress. Here are two statements about what Congress could do to address immigration. Please tell me which you agree with more:*

# Swing Districts: Economic Impact - Two Thirds Want Them to Become Taxpayers and Pay Their Fair Share

We would be better off if people who are in the United States illegally left the country because they are taking away jobs that Americans need.

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We would be better off if people who are in the United States illegally became legal taxpayers so they pay their fair share.

