



behavior research center's

Rocky Mountain Poll

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MARICOPA COUNTY RESIDENTS SAY POLITICIANS ARE RACE BAITING ON IMMIGRATION

Phoenix, Arizona, December 12, 2007 Two thirds of Maricopa County residents have no question that the immigration debate is a very serious issue, but they as well believe that some politicians have worked to turn it into "an ugly racial issue."

At the same time, the public is unwavering in its belief that US immigration laws need to be reformed in a way that will allow immigrant workers to come and go without breaking U.S. laws and that humane and fair treatment of foreign workers is important in our endeavors to secure the borders.

Two thirds also believe that it is wrong to characterize people illegally entering the US in pursuit of jobs as "common criminals". These views are highly consistent, indeed literally unchanged, with what was found in the summer of 2006 and as such reveal a public whose fundamental beliefs have remained unshaken by the vitriolic rhetoric of the debate of the past 18 months. They remain firmly of the belief that while our borders need to be secured, politicians should tone down the rhetoric that characterizes illegal immigrant workers as little better than common criminals.

The study also finds that by 52 to 39 percent, Maricopa County residents hold the view that the only long term solution to illegal immigration is for the economies of Mexico and Central America to strengthen - if necessary through U.S. economic help.

Finally, views are divided as to whether the United States must look to immigration as a means to fulfill its future labor needs. Yet the study finds that a plurality of 44 percent already hold that view that the role and importance of immigrant labor must be taken more seriously. Some economists argue that because more Americans are exiting the labor force than are being replaced by young Americans, immigration laws must be reformed to take up slack in the supply. Otherwise, America will continue to lose ground in the world economy.

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EDITORS NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll Arizona (2007-V-01) is based on 500 interviews conducted with Maricopa County residents between November 16 and 27, 2007. In a sample of this size one can say with a 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of +/-4.47 percent of what they would have been had the entire population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

ENCLOSED: Statistical tables.

STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center
 Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona
 RMP (2007-V-01)

For this and other polls, see www.brcpolls.com/results.

“Next, would you say you personally agree or disagree with the following statements about immigration?”

		AGREE	DISAGREE	UNSURE
<p>“Immigration law should find a way for immigrant workers to come and go without breaking U.S. law.”</p>	12-07	76%	16%	8%
	5-06	73	25	2
<p>“Securing our borders should be our top priority, but humane and fair treatment of foreign workers is also very important.”</p>	12-07	83	13	4
	5-06	84	14	2
<p>“People who enter the United States illegally to seek work are no better than common criminals.”</p>	12-07	27	64	9
	5-06	27	69	4

The questions below were asked only in the current survey.

<p>“Illegal immigration is a serious issue but some politicians are turning it into an ugly racial use.”</p>		66	24	10
<p>“In the long run, the only lasting solution to illegal immigration is for the United States to help strengthen the economies of Mexico and Central America so their people do not have to go elsewhere to find work.”</p>		52	39	9
<p>“There are currently more Americans retiring from the labor force than there are young Americans entering the labor force, so immigrant labor is a necessity if the United States wants to keep a strong economy.”</p>		44	40	16

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