

April 16, 2024

To: Interested Parties

Fr: Impact Research

Re: Messaging Recommendations on Public Safety and Immigration Based on Recent Polling in Battleground Congressional Districts

Recent polling in battleground congressional districts shows that voters in these districts would like Congress to prioritize the issues of immigration – and to a lesser extent – public safety. Voters currently trust Republicans significantly more than Democrats on these two issues.

It is imperative that candidates in battleground districts engage on these two issues, especially immigration, to help build trust with voters on the issues that they're concerned about.

- **Immigration is one of battleground voters' top concerns.** Voters in these battleground districts would like Congress to prioritize inflation (46%) and immigration (44%). Concerns about immigration are driven by Republicans (71%), but almost half (46%) of Independents would also like Congress to prioritize immigration. While crime / public safety is not a top concern overall (19%), it matters to some Independents (22%) and Republicans (27%).
- **Republicans have a double-digit trust advantage on the issues of immigration and public safety.** Republicans have a 17-point trust advantage on the issue of immigration overall and a 24-point advantage among Independents. Voters overall (+23 GOP) and Independents (+36 GOP) are also significantly more likely to trust Republicans when it comes to crime and public safety.
- **The path to victory in these battleground districts lies in engaging on these issues – especially immigration.** Given that immigration is tied for voters' top issue concern, candidates in battleground districts especially need to engage on this issue..

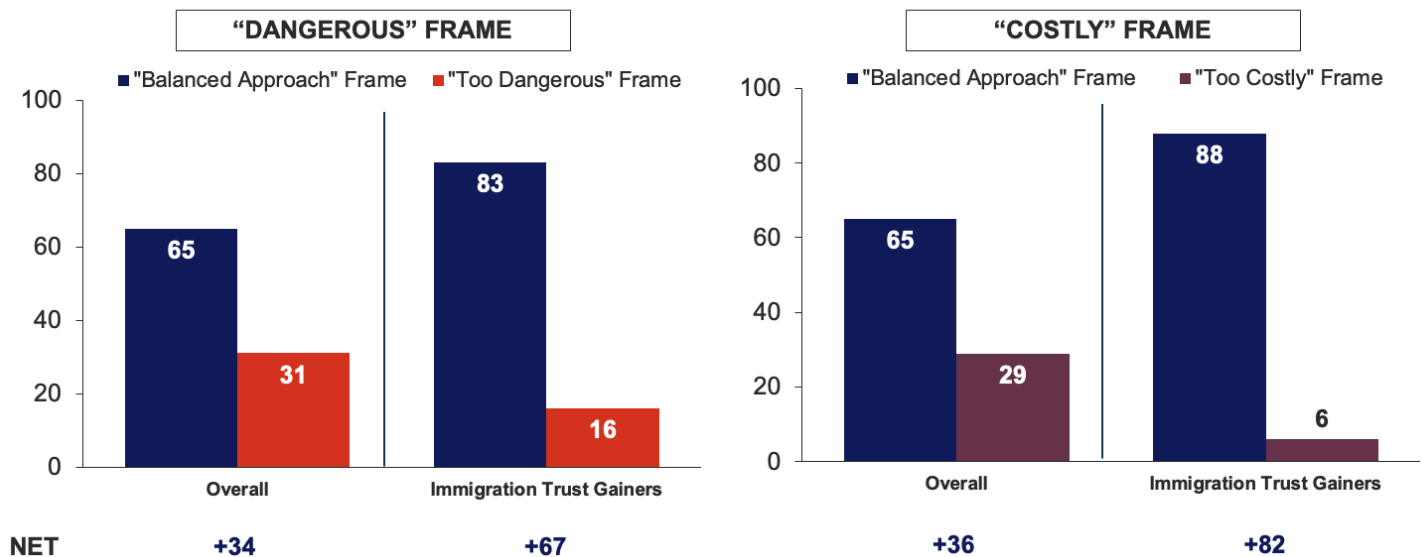
Messaging Recommendations

- **Immigration messaging about a “balanced approach” is more compelling to voters than messaging about the dangers posed by immigrants.** About two-thirds of battleground voters believe we need a balanced approach on immigration. This argument beats arguments that immigration is too dangerous (65% balanced approach / 31% too dangerous) and too costly (65% balanced approach / 29% too costly). Messaging on a balanced approach was also more compelling among the voters who are persuadable on immigration:

These findings are based on a multi-modal (phone and text-to-web) survey conducted by Impact Research among N=1800 likely voters in battleground congressional districts (AZ-01, AZ-06, CA-13, CA-27, NJ-07, OH-13). The poll was conducted March 11 - 18, 2024. The margin of error is $\pm 2.3\%$ for the full sample and higher among subgroups.

- “Balanced Approach” frame tested: *“The U.S. needs a balanced approach to immigration that addresses the challenges at the border and includes pathways to citizenship for Dreamers and other longtime residents.”*
- “Too Dangerous” frame tested: *“It is too dangerous to open up our country to more people from other countries.”* [-34 vs balanced approach]
- “Too Costly” frame tested: *“It costs too much to open up our country to more people from other countries.”* [-36 vs balanced approach]

Which of the following statements comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



- **Messaging on immigration should also acknowledge that there are issues with our current immigration system** while emphasizing that this balanced approach will create a fair and humane immigration system that addresses the issues at the border while providing a path to citizenship for longtime residents. This framework was our top-testing message among voters overall and among Independents.
 - Message tested: *“The immigration system is broken. We have many people who want to become citizens and who already contribute to our economy and communities. We need to create a fair, orderly, and humane immigration system that manages the border and provides a path to citizenship for longtime residents.”*

This message is particularly persuasive among Independents, Black voters, and white voters with college degrees.

- **Public safety messaging should be focused on investing in proven solutions to address the root causes of crime.** Messaging on public safety that emphasizes the need to invest in solutions that help stop crime before it

happens is most compelling overall and among voters who are persuadable between the parties on crime: Independents, younger men under the age of 55, and voters of color – especially Black voters.

- Message tested: *“We cannot arrest our way out of homelessness, unemployment, and poverty. Investing in services that will treat the root causes of these problems, like affordable housing and job training, is a more effective solution than relying on punishment and incarceration.”*
 - Message tested: *“Police are not the answer to every problem - they are not social workers or counselors. We need to end our over-reliance on police to fix problems that shouldn’t be their job to handle in the first place by funding more appropriate first responders for certain emergencies.”*
- **Messaging that highlights the need to invest in proven solutions that address the root causes of crime tests better than a “tough on crime” frame among voters who are persuadable between the parties on crime.** Trying to compete against a straight “tough on crime” message with a halfway message about community policing and gun control is less effective than talking about addressing the root causes of crime, as outlined above. Among voters persuadable between the parties on crime, the “root causes” message does better by an 11-point margin.