



To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group
Date: April 2026
Re: NEW POLL RESULTS: Messaging Guidance on Immigration

Research from Global Strategy Group, conducted on behalf of the ACLU, shows that **candidates stand to benefit electorally from embracing pro-civil liberties positions on immigration.**

The following analysis is based on a survey of 1,006 likely 2026 general election voters in battleground House districts conducted between March 17-23, 2026. Additional information about the poll can be found at the end of this memo.

The winds are shifting around immigration and anti-immigrant hardliners no longer seem to have the electoral upper hand. Pro-civil liberties candidates should be more open to playing offense on this issue amid continued public disapproval of the Trump administration's excessively aggressive approach to enforcement. Indeed, candidates that stand up to the Trump administration's overreach on immigration and offer commonsense solutions for fixing our broken immigration system – including an earned pathway to citizenship – overperform on the ballot and are viewed more positively on key attributes compared to candidates who endorse a strict border control and deportation plan.

Battleground voters prefer a solutions-oriented vision on immigration over a candidate who supports ICE and backs the Trump administration's current immigration policies. Indeed, a Democrat who offers a solutions message on immigration always outperforms a Republican candidate. That said, there's little risk for a Republican candidate who embraces the solutions message – which performs just as well as the punitive pro-ICE one when pitted against a positive Democratic message.

Thinking about the November election for Congress, which kind of candidate would you prefer?	
Immigration	% Prefer
[SOLUTIONS DEM] A Democrat who says we need to stand up to the Trump Administration's cruel immigration policies while building a fair, functional immigration system with an earned pathway to citizenship.	54
[SOLUTIONS REP] A Republican who says we need a reset on federal immigration policy. Immigrants are essential to our economy and the fabric of local communities.	46
[SOLUTIONS DEM] A Democrat who says we need to stand up to the Trump Administration's cruel immigration policies while building a fair, functional immigration system with an earned pathway to citizenship.	53
[PUNITIVE REP] A Republican who says they support ICE and the Trump Administration's efforts to deport illegal immigrants and keep dangerous criminals out of the country.	47

In addition, candidates who embraced the solutions-oriented approach scored higher on key character attributes. Voters were more likely to rate a **Democratic** candidate who offered a solutions message on immigration as **authentic (+10 points)**, **trustworthy (+4)**, **principled (+4)** and **less willing to say whatever it takes to win (-14)** compared to a Democrat who proposed a “punitive” approach. Similarly, a pro-civil liberties **Republican** candidate was more likely to be seen as **thoughtful (+18)** and **principled (+8)**, and less likely to be seen as **weak (-12)** or **willing to say whatever it takes to win (-6)** compared to a “punitive” one.

Democratic Candidate Attributes			
NET Describes Well	Read Solutions Description	Read Punitive Description	Diff.
Authentic	+14	+4	+10
Trustworthy	+8	+4	+4
Principled	+20	+16	+4
Will say whatever it takes to win	+18	+32	-14

Republican Candidate Attributes			
NET Describes Well	Read Solutions Description	Read Punitive Description	Diff.
Thoughtful	+8	-10	+18
Principled	+16	+8	+8
Weak	-28	-16	-12
Will say whatever it takes to win	+20	+26	-6

Candidates can meet the median voter where they are on this issue—especially by connecting pro-civil liberties solutions to voters’ frustration with the current system. Right now, voters are more worried about extremism on immigration than candidates not having a plan (+6), creating an opportunity for pro-civil liberties candidates to own the “reasonable” high ground.

But while they want a system that works better, they’re not comfortable abandoning enforcement efforts if they think it will make them less safe. It’s important to be explicit that keeping our cities safe and upholding the rule of law is also a priority. To that end, expressing support for border security can help soothe concerns and inoculate against potential attacks when candidates push for comprehensive reforms and checks on aggressive tactics in American cities. We tested two messages that performed extremely well.

- **75% of battleground state voters** would be more likely (and 41% would be *much more likely*) to vote for a candidate who says “*Our immigration system is broken. We need secure borders and a fair, functional immigration system. One that keeps our communities safe and upholds the law, while treating people with dignity and creates a pathway to citizenship for families who have lived, worked, and paid taxes here for years.*”
- **71% of battleground state voters** would be more likely (and 45% would be *much more likely*) to vote for a candidate who says “*Our immigration system is broken. We need a fair, functional immigration system. One that keeps our communities safe and upholds the law, while treating people with dignity and creates a pathway to citizenship for families who have lived, worked, and paid taxes here for years.*”

When it comes to **immigration**, successful messaging should:

- **Diagnose the problem that impacts everyone:** *“Our immigration system is broken.”*
- **Align on a common villain that doesn’t immediately force voters into partisan camps:** *“Immigration hardliners in Washington are focused on extreme policies that create chaos but offer nothing to fix the broken system.”*
- **And offer a remedy (in a fair and functional system) without ignoring their safety concerns (support for border security gives credibility):** *“We need secure borders and a fair, functional immigration system. One that keeps our communities safe and upholds the law, while treating people with dignity and creates a pathway to citizenship for families who have lived, worked, and paid taxes here for years.”*

ABOUT THIS POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 1006 likely voters in House battleground districts between March 17-23, 2026. The survey has a margin of error of +/-3.4%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, political, and demographic divisions of the population of likely voters are properly represented.

The House battleground districts we sampled included:

AK-AL	CA-22	FL-07	IN-01	MN-02	NH-02	NV-04	OH-09	PA-10	TX-35	WI-03
AZ-01	CA-45	FL-13	ME-02	MT-01	NJ-07	NY-03	OH-13	TN-05	VA-01	
AZ-02	CA-48	FL-23	MI-04	NC-01	NJ-09	NY-04	OR-05	TX-15	VA-02	
AZ-06	CO-03	IA-01	MI-07	NC-11	NM-02	NY-17	PA-01	TX-23	VA-07	
CA-13	CO-05	IA-02	MI-08	NE-02	NV-01	NY-19	PA-07	TX-28	WA-03	
CA-21	CO-08	IA-03	MI-10	NH-01	NV-03	OH-01	PA-08	TX-34	WI-01	

In addition to the survey, Global Strategy Group conducted six focus groups with swing voters in House battleground states between February 26 and March 3, 2026