A Presentation of Key Findings
From A National Survey of Likely Voters

V.K. Kriebel Foundation and Freedom Works

Bill McInturff, Partner
Patrick Lanne, Vice President
On behalf of the Vernon K. Krieble Foundation and Freedom Works, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a national survey of 800 likely voters. The survey was conducted March 14-16, 2006 and has a margin of error of ±3.46%.
As we have seen in our previous research, there are many opinions on the issue of immigration that closely divide the American electorate.

Americans are nearly equally divided on many key questions in this debate: The economic impact of immigration; the best way to protect our borders; and the question of citizenship for the illegal immigrants’ children who are born in this country.
Voters are evenly divided on whether they view immigration as an economic benefit or an economic threat to the country. Not only is the whole electorate split on this issue, but immigration creates divisions within both partisan and ideological bases.

Education is a key driver behind these differing attitudes toward immigration. Voters with a higher level of education feel immigration is an economic benefit to the country while lower educated voters see immigration as an economic threat.
There is no question, Americans believe an efficient guest worker program is key to the solution of the immigration problem.

Voters appear somewhat divided over whether an increase in law enforcement (41%) or a more efficient system of handling guest workers (51%) is the best way to secure the border. But, nearly eight in ten (78%) voters agree that it is not possible to have absolute border control without a better system for handling guest workers.

It is also apparent Americans want and expect a strong Federal government oversight of any private-sector based guest worker program.
The three potential aspects of a guest worker program – biometric identification (76% strongly favor), denying visas to people from countries who refuse to share databases (76%), and forcing guest workers to sign an deportation agreements (71%) – all receive overwhelming support.
Finally, a bare majority (55%) support changing the U.S. citizenship laws to deny automatic citizenship to children born in this country to illegal immigrants.

There is a more distinct partisan and ideological cut to the data on this question as Republicans and conservatives are more likely than Democrats and liberals to endorse a change.
Key Data
Americans are split on the economic impact of immigration.

Immigration as an Economic Benefit vs. Threat

- Immigration as an Economic benefit 47%
- Immigration as an Economic threat 47%
- Don't Know/Refused 6%

Some people say immigration is an economic benefit to the United States because immigrant workers fulfill jobs in America that citizens either do not want or cannot do. While other people say immigration is an economic threat to the United States because immigrant workers take jobs that would otherwise be fulfilled by American citizens. Which statement comes closer to your point of view?
While there is no real difference by partisanship...

Immigration as an Economic Benefit vs. Threat by Party

Republican (39%)  
46% Benefit, 45% Threat

Independent (15%)  
50% Benefit, 43% Threat

Democrat (45%)  
47% Benefit, 49% Threat

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...there is a slight ideological cut.

Some people say immigration is an economic benefit to the United States because immigrant workers fulfill jobs in America that citizens either do not want or cannot do. While other people say immigration is an economic threat to the United States because immigrant workers take jobs that would otherwise be fulfilled by American citizens. Which statement comes closer to your point of view?
But, the stark differences come by educational attainment.

*Immigration as an Economic Benefit vs. Threat by Education*

Some people say immigration is an economic benefit to the United States because immigrant workers fulfill jobs in America that citizens either do not want or cannot do. While other people say immigration is an economic threat to the United States because immigrant workers take jobs that would otherwise be fulfilled by American citizens. Which statement comes closer to your point of view?
There is also a regional divide.

*Immigration as an Economic Benefit vs. Threat*  
by Region and Geography

**By Region**

Northeast (23%)

+3%

49% Benefit, 46% Threat

Midwest (23%)

-12%

53% Benefit, 41% Threat

South (33%)

-12%

52% Benefit, 40% Threat

West (22%)

+26%

59% Benefit, 33% Threat

**By Geography**

Urban (28%)

+12%

52% Benefit, 40% Threat

Suburban (53%)

+4%

49% Benefit, 45% Threat

Rural (19%)

-30%

31% Benefit, 61% Threat

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Whether voters live in states on the border or not also drives attitudes towards immigration as a benefit or a threat.

*Immigration as an Economic Benefit vs. Threat by Border States*

Some people say immigration is an economic benefit to the United States because immigrant workers fulfill jobs in America that citizens either do not want or cannot do. While other people say immigration is an economic threat to the United States because immigrant workers take jobs that would otherwise be fulfilled by American citizens. Which statement comes closer to your point of view?

*Border states are Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas*

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Voters are also split on the best way to strengthen our borders.

*Strengthen Our Border Increasing Law vs. Handling Guest Workers*

-10%

41% 51%

Increasing presence of law enforcement officials Creating a more efficient system for handling guest workers

And, which one of the following do you think will do more to strengthen our border increasing the presence of law enforcement officials or creating a more efficient system for handling guest workers?
Again, voters are divided by education level.

**Strengthen Our Border Increasing Law vs. Handling Guest Workers by Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Increase Law</th>
<th>Guest Workers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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And, which one of the following do you think will do more to strengthen our border increasing the presence of law enforcement officials or creating a more efficient system for handling guest workers?
There are some differences by partisanship and ideology.

**Strengthen Our Border Increasing Law vs. Handling Guest Workers**  
*by Party and Ideology*

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<tr>
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And, which one of the following do you think will do more to strengthen our border increasing the presence of law enforcement officials or creating a more efficient system for handling guest workers?
Voters living in the border states are more likely to want a better system for guest workers.

**Strengthen Our Border Increasing Law vs. Handling Guest Workers by Border States**

- **Border States**
  - 36% Increase Law
  - 55% Guest Workers
  - 19% increase

- **Non-Border States**
  - 42% Increase Law
  - 50% Guest Workers
  - 8% decrease

*Border states are Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas*

And, which one of the following do you think will do more to strengthen our border increasing the presence of law enforcement officials or creating a more efficient system for handling guest workers?
Overwhelmingly, voters agree a more efficient guest worker system is essential to border control.

Absolutely Border Control Not Possible Without Better System for Handling Guest Workers

+62%

Now, please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement... It is not possible to have absolute border control without a better system for handling guest workers.
If private companies administered a guest worker program, Americans still want a federal oversight agency.

Now, let's assume for a moment Congress allowed private companies to administer a guest worker program – which is a program that gives temporary work status to foreign nationals who pass a security background check. If Congress allowed private companies to administer this program... do you think the federal agency in charge of immigration should be downsized to save taxpayers money or do you think the federal agency in charge of immigration should remain intact so it can provide adequate oversight of the private companies?

Allow Private Companies to Administer a Guest Worker Program
Federal Agency in Charge Should Downsize vs. Remain Intact

-61%

16%
Downsize

77%
Remain Intact
The three guest worker proposals we tested receive overwhelming support.

% Strongly Favor

- Requiring guest workers to submit biometric information, such as fingerprints or iris scans, so they can be readily identified later. 76%

- Denying visas to the residents of countries which refuse to share their criminal databases with the U.S. which are needed for the purpose of conducting background checks. 76%

- Requiring all guest workers to sign an agreement that if they break laws in the U.S., they can be returned to their home country immediately, without appeal. 71%

Now, as you may know the U.S. Congress is considering creating a guest worker program. I would like to read you a few proposals which may or may not be part of a guest worker program passed by Congress. After I read each one, please tell me if you favor or oppose that specific proposal.
Finally, as you may know, under our constitution and current laws, all children born in the United States are automatically granted citizenship. Do you think we should continue to grant citizenship to all children born in the U.S. or do you think it is time for this to be changed so children of illegal immigrants are not automatically granted citizenship?
As you might expect, it is the “threat” voters who are leading the charge for change.

Grant Citizenship for All Children Born in U.S. by Attitude Towards Immigration

Finally, as you may know, under our constitution and current laws, all children born in the United States are automatically granted citizenship. Do you think we should continue to grant citizenship to all children born in the U.S. or do you think it is time for this to be changed so children of illegal immigrants are not automatically granted citizenship?
Republicans and conservatives are more likely to endorse changes to the citizenship rules.

Grant Citizenship for All Children Born in U.S.
by Party and Ideology

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<td></td>
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There is even significant support for changes among higher educated voters.

Grant Citizenship for All Children Born in U.S. by Education

- High School or Less (29%): +24% Change, +24% Continue
- Some College (30%): +13% Change, 13% Continue
- College Graduate (24%): +14% Change, 14% Continue
- Post Graduate (17%): -4% Change, -4% Continue

Finally, as you may know, under our constitution and current laws, all children born in the United States are automatically granted citizenship. Do you think we should continue to grant citizenship to all children born in the U.S. or do you think it is time for this to be changed so children of illegal immigrants are not automatically granted citizenship?
Voters not living in the border states are more likely to favor a change to the citizenship rules.

**Grant Citizenship for All Children Born in U.S.**

*by Border States*

- Border States (22%): 50% Change, 47% Continue
- Non-Border States (78%): 56% Change, 40% Continue

*Border states are Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas*

Finally, as you may know, under our constitution and current laws, all children born in the United States are automatically granted citizenship. Do you think we should continue to grant citizenship to all children born in the U.S. or do you think it is time for this to be changed so children of illegal immigrants are not automatically granted citizenship?
Finally, voters who regularly speak a language other than English, agree on all the issues with those who do not speak another language, except for two key measures: Immigration as an economic benefit or threat, and changes to the citizenship rules.

Some people say immigration is an economic benefit to the United States because immigrant workers fulfill jobs in America that citizens either do not want or cannot do. While other people say immigration is an economic threat to the United States because immigrant workers take jobs that would otherwise be fulfilled by American citizens. Which statement comes closer to your point of view?

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For more information about this presentation or about Public Opinion Strategies, please give us a call.

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