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Consensus among Californians that immigrants make the U.S. a better place.

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, Berkeley IGS Poll
and Cristina Mora, Co-Director, Institute of Governmental Studies

There is a clear consensus among the state's voters that immigrants make the U.S. a better place to live. More than eight in ten Californians (82%) feel this way, while just 14% disagree.

At the same time, a two-to-one majority of registered voters (58% to 29%) thinks immigrants are treated unfairly in the U.S. However, there are generational and political differences in voter views about this. Among millennials a three-to-one majority believes immigrants are unfairly treated, while older voters in the boomers plus generation are more divided. There are even wider differences relating to party registration and political ideology, with Democrats and liberals more likely than Republicans and conservatives to believe they are treated unfairly.

In addition, greater than seven in ten voters (72%) don't feel it is likely that they or a family member will miss out on job or other opportunities due to the presence of immigrants. Here too opinions are tied to a voter's political orientation, with larger proportions of Republicans and strong conservatives inclined to say this than Democrats and liberals.

These findings come from the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted online in English and Spanish September 13-18, 2019 among 4,527 registered voters statewide.

Greater than eight in ten voters feel immigrants make the country a better place

Greater than eight in ten of the state's registered voters (82%) feel the U.S. is a better place to live because of immigrants, while just 14% think immigrants make the country a worse place to live.

Majorities across all segments of the voting population hold to this view, although variations are observed relative to a voter's political ideology. Nearly all liberals believe immigrants make the country a better place to live, while just 51% of strong conservatives say this and 40% maintain that they make the U.S. a worse place.

Table 1
Do immigrants make the United States a better or worse place to live?
(among registered voters in California)

	Better place %	Worse place %	No opinion %
Total registered voters	82	14	4
Party registration			
Democrats	92	6	2
Republicans	60	31	9
No Party Preference/other	83	12	5
Political ideology			
Very conservative	51	40	9
Somewhat conservative	69	24	7
Moderate	77	17	6
Somewhat liberal	96	3	1
Very liberal	99	1	--
Gender			
Male	82	14	4
Female	81	14	5
Age			
18-29	90	9	1
30-39	84	13	3
40-49	77	19	4
50-64	80	15	5
65 or older	78	15	7
Generation			
Millennial (age 23-37)	86	11	3
Generation X (age 38-53)	80	16	4
Boomer Plus (age 54+)	79	15	6
Educational attainment			
Not a college graduate	79	16	5
College graduate	86	10	4
Race/ethnicity			
White non-Hispanic	80	14	6
Latino	84	13	3
Asian American	88	11	1
African American	76	19	5
Nativity			
Born in the U.S.	81	15	4
Born outside U.S.	86	11	3

Two-to-one majority believes immigrants are treated unfairly in the U.S.

The survey also asked voters how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “immigrants are unfairly treated in the United States.” By a two-to-one margin (56% to 28%) California voters agree, with 30% agreeing strongly, 26% agreeing somewhat. Of those who disagree, 9% disagree somewhat and 19% disagree strongly. Another 16% say they neither agree nor disagree or have no opinion.

Table 2
“Immigrants are unfairly treated in the United States?” (agree/disagree)
(among registered voters in California)

	Total registered voters %
<u>Agree</u>	<u>56</u>
Strongly agree	30
Somewhat agree	26
<u>Disagree</u>	<u>28</u>
Somewhat disagree	9
Strongly disagree	19
Neither agree nor disagree/ no opinion	16

Generational and political differences in opinions about unfairness

While most Californians agree that immigrants are treated unfairly, there are significant differences in views about this by generation, party and political ideology.

For example, while a three-to-one majority of millennials believes that immigrants are unfairly treated, voters in the boomers plus generation are more divided, with 49% agreeing, 34% disagreeing and 17% having no opinion.

There are even wider differences in relation to a voter’s party registration and political ideology. Eight in ten Democrats (79%) believe that immigrants are unfairly treated, while just 9% disagree. Republicans hold an opposite view, with only 14% believing immigrants are treated unfairly and 65% saying they are not.

Similar large differences are found between the views of the state’s liberals and conservatives, with liberals generally maintaining that immigrants are unfairly treated and conservatives saying they are not.

Table 3
“Immigrants are unfairly treated in the United States?”
(across subgroups of the California registered voter population)

	<u>Agree</u> %	<u>Disagree</u> %	<u>Neither</u> <u>/ no opinion</u> %
Total registered voters	56	28	16
Party registration			
Democrats	79	9	12
Republicans	14	65	21
No party preference/other	57	25	18
Political ideology			
Very conservative	17	67	16
Somewhat conservative	22	58	20
Moderate	50	26	24
Somewhat liberal	81	10	9
Very liberal	87	6	7
Gender			
Male	52	32	16
Female	60	24	16
Age			
18-29	73	15	12
30-39	64	21	15
40-49	54	31	15
50-64	50	33	17
65 or older	47	34	19
Generation			
Millennial (age 23-37)	66	21	13
Generation X (age 38-53)	53	30	17
Boomer Plus (age 54 +)	49	34	17
Educational attainment			
Not a college graduate	54	29	17
College graduate	60	26	14
Race/ethnicity			
White non-Hispanic	53	32	15
Latino	65	20	15
Asian American	54	25	21
African American	66	20	14
Nativity			
Born in the U.S.	56	29	15
Born outside U.S.	56	24	20

Most voters don't feel they or a family member will miss out on job or other opportunities because of immigrants

By a nearly three-to-one margin (72% to 27%), California voters say it is unlikely that they or another member of their family will miss out on good opportunities in getting a job or promotion, getting into college or getting needed services because an immigrant receives the opportunity instead.

This includes 52% who believe that would be very unlikely, while 20% feel this is somewhat unlikely. Of the 27% who believe it is likely that they or a family will miss out on such opportunities because an immigrant will get it instead, 11% feel it's very likely, while 16% think this is somewhat likely.

Table 4
How likely is it that you or another family member will miss out on good opportunities, like getting a job or promotion, getting into college, or getting needed services, because an immigrant receives the opportunity instead?
(among registered voters in California)

	Total registered voters %
<u>Unlikely</u>	<u>72</u>
Very unlikely	52
Somewhat unlikely	20
<u>Likely</u>	<u>27</u>
Somewhat likely	16
Very likely	11
<u>No opinion</u>	<u>1</u>

Beliefs about missing out on job and other opportunities due to immigrants are tied to a voter's political views

The belief that it's likely that they or a family member will miss out on job or other opportunities because an immigrant will receive the opportunity instead is highly correlated with a voter's political views. While majorities of the state's Republicans and strongly conservative voters believe they are likely to miss out on such opportunities due to immigrants, only small proportions of Democrats and liberals say this.

There are no large generational or gender differences in concerns about missing out of such opportunities. However, some differences are seen in relation to voter's educational attainment, with college graduates somewhat less likely than non-college graduates to express concerns about missing out on opportunities because of immigrants.

Table 5			
Likelihood of missing out on good opportunities because an immigrant receives the opportunity instead (across subgroups of the California registered voter population)			
	<u>Unlikely</u>	<u>Likely</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Total registered voters	72	27	1
Party registration			
Democrats	84	15	1
Republicans	47	52	1
No party preference/other	73	26	1
Political ideology			
Very conservative	40	59	1
Somewhat conservative	54	45	1
Moderate	65	33	2
Somewhat liberal	91	9	--
Very liberal	91	9	--
Gender			
Male	72	27	1
Female	72	27	1
Age			
18-29	78	22	--
30-39	76	24	--
40-49	66	33	1
50-64	68	30	2
65 or older	72	26	2
Generation			
Millennial (age 23-37)	75	25	--
Generation X (age 38-53)	68	31	1
Boomer Plus (age 54 +)	70	38	2
Educational attainment			
Not a college graduate	67	32	1
College graduate	79	20	1
Race/ethnicity			
White non-Hispanic	71	28	1
Latino	73	26	1
Asian American	79	21	--
African American	70	28	2
Nativity			
Born in the U.S.	71	28	1
Born outside U.S.	74	24	2

Questions Asked

In your opinion do immigrants make the United States a worse or better place to live?

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Immigrants are unfairly treated in the United States?”

How likely do you feel it is that you or anyone in your family will miss out on good opportunities, like getting a job, getting a promotion, getting into college or getting needed service, because an immigrant receives the opportunity instead?

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish September 13-18, 2019 among 4,527 registered voters statewide.

The survey was administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state’s registered voters. Once the questionnaire and email invitations had been finalized, they were translated into the Spanish and reviewed for cultural appropriateness. Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by IGS and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters over the data collection period. An opt out link was provided at the bottom of each invitation for voters not wishing to participate or not wanting to receive future emails from IGS about the survey.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of registered voter lists in California. The email addresses of voters were derived from information contained on the state’s official voter registration rolls. The overall sample of voters with email addresses was stratified in an attempt to obtain a proper balance of respondents across major segments of the registered voter population by age, gender and race/ethnicity.

To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, voters’ email addresses and all other personally identifiable information were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. At the conclusion of the data processing phase, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample to population characteristics of the state’s overall registered voter population.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely due to the effects of sample stratification and the post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that the results from the overall registered voter sample are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/- 2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Results based on subgroups of this population would be subject to larger margins of sampling error.

Detailed tabulations reporting the results to each question in this report can be found at the *Berkeley IGS Poll* website at <https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll>.

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. The co-directors of the Institute of Governmental Studies are Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor Cristina Mora.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a complete listing of stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* go to <https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll>.