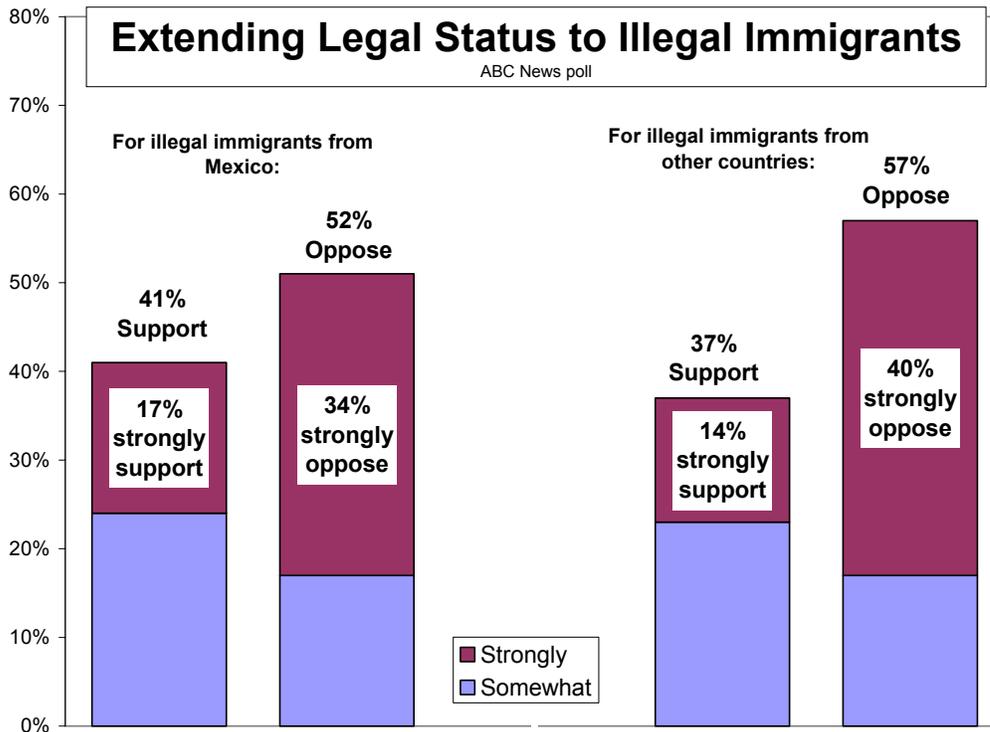


Most Oppose Bush Immigration Plan; If Created, 2/3 Favor a Limited Period

Most Americans oppose George W. Bush’s proposal to offer legal status to illegal immigrants – and if it does happen, two-thirds favor a limited-duration program, not an open-ended one.

Fifty-two percent oppose an amnesty program for illegal immigrants from Mexico; 57 percent oppose one for illegal immigrants from other countries. Both results are roughly the same as when the administration floated the idea two and a half years ago.

Moreover, in a finding that suggests a difficult political sell, at least twice as many Americans “strongly” oppose the proposal as strongly support it . For Mexicans, 34 percent are strongly opposed, 17 percent strongly in favor. For other illegal immigrants, 40 percent are strongly opposed to the idea, while 14 percent are strongly in favor.



Bush today and tomorrow is visiting Mexico, where President Vicente Fox welcomed his immigration proposal as “a very important step forward.” It’s been seen as an effort to boost Bush’s popularity among Hispanic Americans, a growing group.

There's an insufficient sample of Hispanics in this poll for reliable analysis. But, in terms of a program for Mexicans, support rises to a majority among nonwhites, 53 percent, compared with 37 percent among whites and a low of 33 percent among white men. Support also is higher in the West (48 percent) than in other regions.

Opposition peaks in Bush's own party: Fifty-eight percent of Republicans oppose his immigration proposal for Mexicans, compared with 50 percent of Democrats. For illegal immigrants other than Mexicans, 63 percent of Republicans are opposed.

Bush reportedly will disclose more details of the plan in his State of the Union address Jan. 20. This poll phrased it broadly, asking if respondents support or oppose a program in which illegal immigrants "would be allowed to live and work legally in the United States."

A follow-up asked how long legal status should be provided if such a program is created. Sixty-seven percent prefer that it be for "a limited period of time, say six years," compared with 25 percent who favor an unlimited program. Even among those who support the idea, a majority says it should be for limited duration. Most of those who "strongly" support it, however, say it should be unlimited.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Jan. 7-11, 2004, among a random national sample of 1,142 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:
http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/Poll_Vault/Poll_Vault.html

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Results follow:

1. Would you support or oppose a program in which illegal immigrants from Mexico would be allowed to live and work legally in the United States? Would you support/oppose it strongly or only somewhat?

	-----Support-----			-----Oppose-----			No opin.
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
1/11/04	41	17	24	52	17	34	8
8/26/01	43	13	30	49	20	30	7

2. Would you support or oppose a program in which illegal immigrants from countries other than Mexico would be allowed to live and work legally in the United States? Would you support/oppose it strongly or only somewhat?

	-----Support-----			-----Oppose-----			No opin.
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
1/11/04	37	14	23	57	17	40	7
8/26/01	38	10	28	56	21	35	6

3. If this program is created, do you think immigrants who apply for it should be allowed to live and work legally in the United States for (a limited period of time, say six years); or for (an unlimited period of time)?

	Limited	Unlimited	No opinion
1/11/04	67	25	8

END