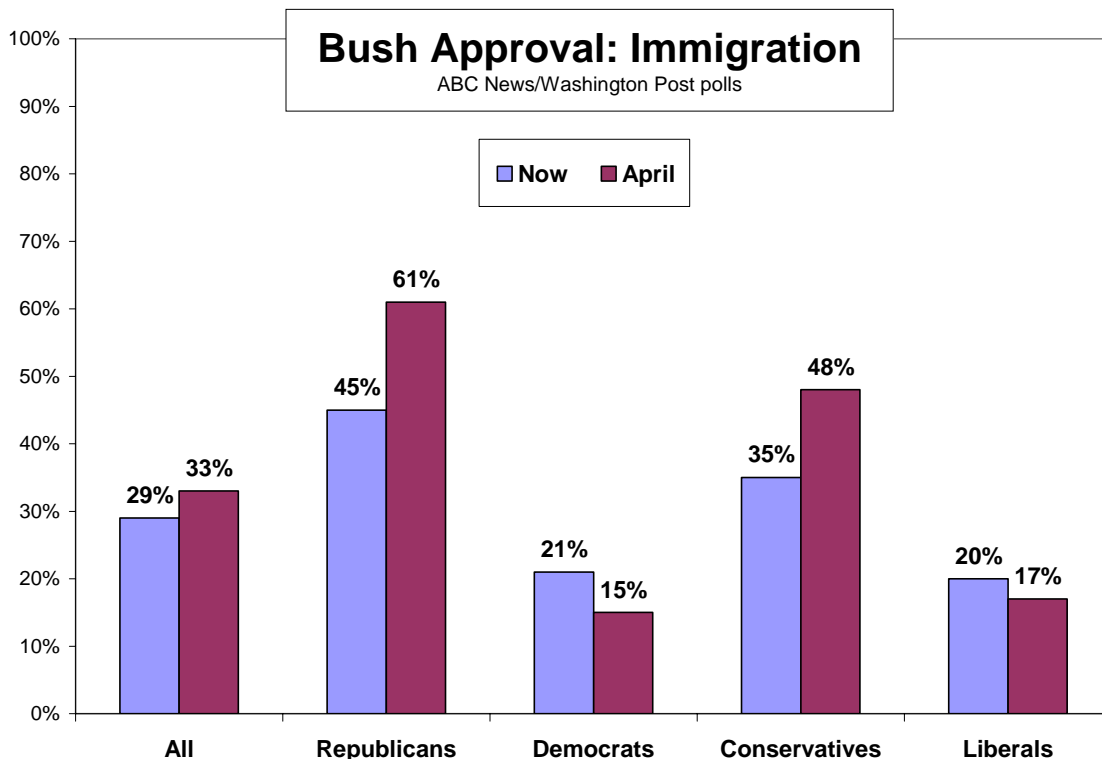


Bush Base Erodes On Immigration Debate

George W. Bush's immigration reform package has badly damaged his ratings on the issue from his core supporters, with his approval rating for handling immigration plummeting among Republicans and conservatives.

Fewer than half of Republicans, 45 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll, now approve of how Bush is handling immigration, down from 61 percent in April – a 16-point drop in six weeks. Just 35 percent of conservatives approve, down from 48 percent.

This marks one of the few times in his presidency Bush has received less than 50 percent approval from members of his own party on any issue in an ABC/Post poll. On handling the Iraq war, for comparison, he's never gone below 62 percent approval from Republicans.



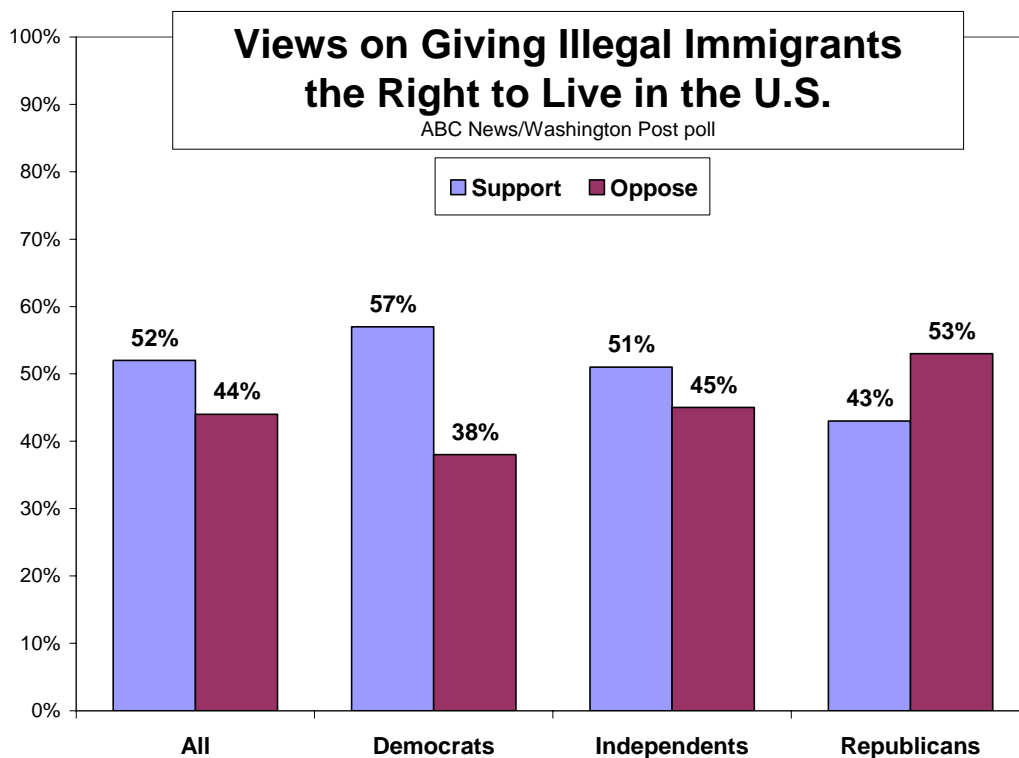
This being politics, Bush has not received much concomitant gain from Democrats or independents, who are more favorably inclined toward some of his immigration proposals but not to Bush himself. Among all Americans, just 29 percent now approve of his

handling of immigration, a career low. And the public trusts the Democrats in Congress over Bush to handle the issue by 48 to 31 percent, essentially the same as in December.

HOT POTATO – Congress takes up the immigration package this week, and it’s clearly a contentious one, with divisions among political, ideological and other groups.

Overall a narrow majority, 52 percent, favors giving illegal immigrants the right to live and work in the United States legally if they pay a fine and meet other requirements, as Bush, in a compromise plan with Democrats, has proposed. But Republicans around the country oppose the idea by 10-point margin, 53-43 percent.

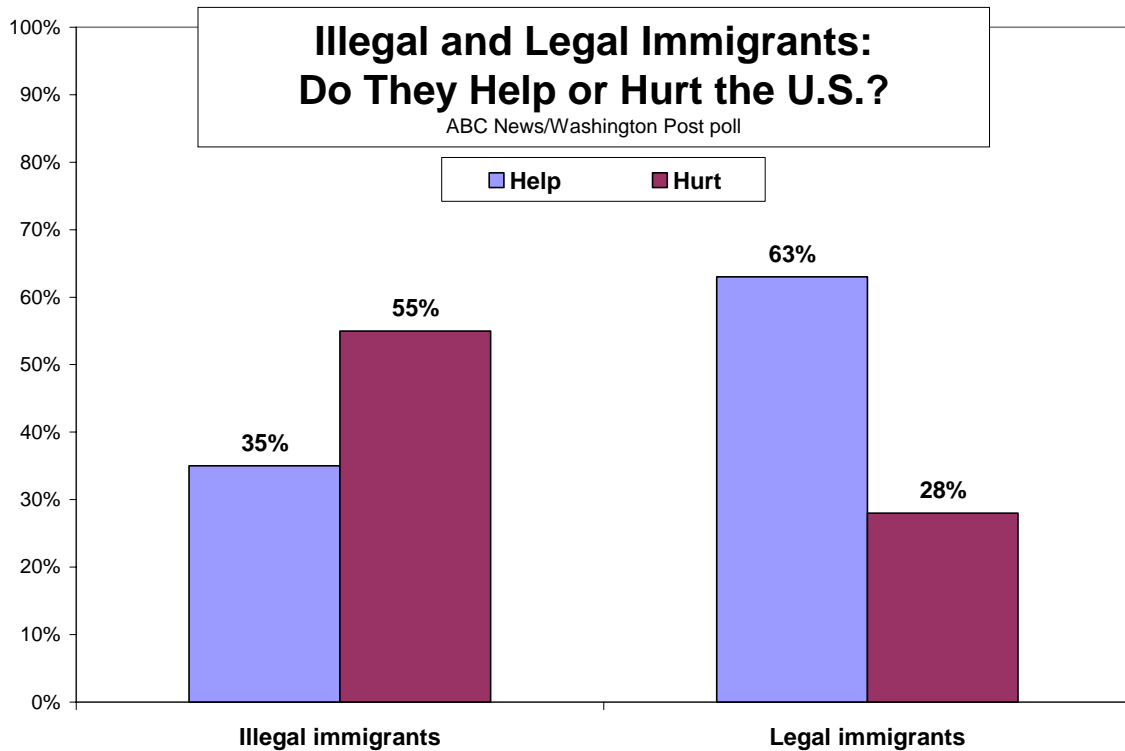
Democrats, by contrast, favor it, by 57-38 percent.



Yet the immigration plan may have something for everyone to dislike. Among people who support a legal-status program, most Democrats and independents would not include a provision requiring illegal immigrants to return to their native country in order to apply to return legally. Republicans are much more apt to like that idea.

Require home country return to apply for legal status? (% support, among legal-status supporters)	
All	40%
Democrats	34
Independents	40
Republicans	53

WELCOME? – Overall, it’s clear that most Americans are not anti-immigrant, but anti-*illegal* immigrant. While 55 percent think illegal immigrants do more to hurt than to help the United States, legal immigrants get a much warmer welcome: they’re broadly – by 63-28 percent, or better than 2-1 – seen as helping the country.



In a departure from other political and ideological gaps, there’s essentially no difference between Democrats and Republicans, or between liberals and conservatives, in the view that legal immigrants help the country. But there are differences in views of illegals; Republicans and conservatives view them negatively by especially wide margins.

	Impact of illegal immigrants	
	Help the country	Hurt the country
All	35%	55
Democrats	40	49
Independents	37	51
Republicans	23	71
Liberals	42	44
Moderates	40	49
Conservatives	26	67

In terms of legal entry for workers, there's modest support, 53-43 percent, for significantly expanding the guest worker program that provides temporary work visas to people from other countries, another part of the proposal. Support grows substantially – to 64 percent – if the program is targeted to specific industries in which the government determines there's a shortage of workers.

SKILLS – There's further division on another aspect of immigration reform – the idea of giving preference to legal immigrants who have needed skills, rather than to those who have a sibling, parent or grown child already living here legally. Overall, Americans split evenly on which is preferable – 35 percent for skills, 34 percent for family, with the rest further split between preferring both equally as criteria, or neither.

Among groups, women are 11 points more apt than men to stress family ties, while men are nine points more apt to focus on skills. And there are political splits here as well; in the sharpest gap, Republican men by 2-1 favor job skills more than family ties as a criterion for entry, while Democratic women take the opposite position, by a 13-point margin. (Substantial numbers of Republicans and conservatives – one in five – say neither should be a criterion.)

AGE – Beyond politics, there are substantial differences among other groups in some views on immigration. In one notable division, young adults are much more favorably disposed toward illegal and legal immigrants alike.

Younger adults are more than twice as likely as seniors to say illegal immigrants do more to help than to hurt the country. And by a 2-1 margin, 64-33 percent, people age 18-29 support giving illegal immigrants the right to apply for legal status. That falls to about an even split among middle-aged adults, and seniors oppose it by nearly a 20-point margin.

On legal immigration, Americans younger than age 40 broadly support significantly expanding the guest worker program, 61-34 percent. People 40 and over, by contrast, divide evenly on the idea.

There are differences among other groups as well. The idea of a legal-status program is somewhat less popular (although not broadly so) among less-educated and lower-income adults. And 55 percent of evangelical white Protestants (another core Republican group) oppose the idea, while, for comparison, 55 percent of non-evangelical white Protestants support it.

UNIONS – Some unions have viewed immigrants as competitors for jobs and a downward force on wages. Attitudinally, however, the differences between people living in union and non-union households is fairly muted – possibly reflecting the emergence of more immigrant-friendly service industry unions, with immigrant members.

	Union household	Non-union
Support legal-status program for illegals	48%	53
Support expanded guest worker program	51	54

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone May 29-June 1, 2007, among a random national sample of 1,205 adults, including an oversample of African-Americans for a total of 284 black respondents. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1 Held for release.

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling (ITEM)?

b. Immigration issues

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
6/1/07	29	64	8
4/15/07	33	64	4
5/15/06	34	56	10
4/9/06	33	61	5
1/26/06	34	57	9
12/18/05	33	58	9
8/28/05	33	57	10
1/16/05	33	54	13
1/18/04	34	56	10

3-7 Held for release.

8. Who do you trust to do a better job handling (ITEM), (Bush) or (the Democrats in Congress)?

b. Immigration issues

	Bush	Dems	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
6/1/07	31	48	2	13	5
12/11/06	34	49	1	10	6
1/18/04	38	44	2	8	8

9-18 Held for release.

19. On another subject: Would you support or oppose a program giving ILLEGAL immigrants now living in the United States the right to live here LEGALLY if they pay a fine and meet other requirements?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
6/1/07	52	44	4

20. (IF SUPPORT, Q19) Do you think these illegal immigrants should or should not be required to return to their home countries before they can apply to return legally under this program?

	Should	Should not	No opinion
6/1/07	40	56	4

19/20 NET

	NET	Should	Should not	No op.	Oppose	No opinion
6/1/07	52	21	29	2	44	4

21. What kind of immigrants should get preference to live in this country - those who already have a brother, sister, parent or grown child living here legally, or those who have no such relatives in the U.S. but have skills and education that are in need here?

	Certain family member here legally	Skills and education that are in need	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
6/1/07	34	35	13	14	3

22. Would you support or oppose significantly expanding the guest worker program that allows people from other countries to work in the U.S. on a temporary basis?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
6/1/07	53	43	4

22a. (IF OPPOSE, Q22) What if the government determines that there is a shortage of workers in specific industries - in that case would you support or oppose significantly expanding a guest worker program for those industries?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
6/1/07	26	72	2

22/22a NET

	NET	Support	Support if need	Oppose NET	No opinion
6/1/07	64	53	11	31	4

23. (ASKED OF HALF SAMPLE) Overall, do you think ILLEGAL immigrants do more to (HELP) the country or do more to (HURT) the country?

	Help	Hurt	Neither helps nor hurts (vol.)	No opinion
6/1/07	35	55	8	3
12/18/05	37	56	5	2

24. (ASKED OF HALF SAMPLE) Overall, do you think LEGAL immigrants do more to (HELP) the country or do more to (HURT) the country?

	Help	Hurt	Neither helps nor hurts (vol.)	No opinion
6/1/07	63	28	6	3

25-26 Held for release.

27-46 Previously released.

END