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Public's Priorities for U.S. Asylum Policy: More Judges for Cases, Safe Conditions for Migrants

Most continue to favor legal status for undocumented immigrants

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

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Public's Priorities for U.S. Asylum Policy: More **Judges for Cases, Safe Conditions for Migrants**

Most continue to favor legal status for undocumented immigrants

The American public is broadly critical of the way that the federal government is dealing with the increased number of people seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border. When it comes to what should be done about the situation, large majorities say it is important to increase the number of judges handling asylum cases and to provide safe and sanitary conditions for asylum seekers.

Nearly two-thirds of Americans (65%) say the federal government is doing a very bad (38%) or somewhat bad (27%) job dealing with the increased number of people seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border; just 33% say the government is doing a good job, according to the new survey by

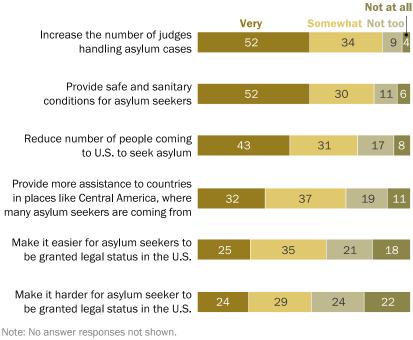
Pew Research Center conducted July 22-Aug. 4 among 4,175 adults.

In assessing the situation at the U.S.-Mexico border, the public views several goals as important. But more people give priority to addressing the backlog of asylum cases and improving conditions for asylum seekers than to making it harder - or easier - for asylum seekers to be granted legal status.

Overall, 86% say it is either very (52%) or somewhat (34%) important to increase the number of judges handling asylum cases. Nearly as many (82%) say it is important to provide safe and sanitary conditions for asylum seekers

Public's top priorities for dealing with asylum seekers: More judges for asylum cases, safe conditions

Thinking about the situation at the U.S. border with Mexico, % who say it is important to ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 22-Aug. 4, 2019.

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once they arrive in the United States, including 52% who say this is very important.

The public also emphasizes stemming the flow of people to the border: 74% say it is at least somewhat important to reduce the number of people coming to the U.S. to seek asylum, and 69% say it is important to provide more assistance to countries in places like Central America, where many asylum seekers are coming from.

Fairly similar shares of the public view as at least somewhat important the conflicting goals of making it easier (60%) or harder (53%) for asylum seekers to be granted legal status in the U.S. These views are deeply divided along partisan lines, with 77% of Republicans saying it is important to make it more difficult for asylum seekers to gain legal status and a comparable majority of Democrats (79%) saying it is important to make this process easier.

The survey also finds:

Broad public support for path to legal status for undocumented immigrants. Nearly three-quarters of Americans (72%) say undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in the U.S. legally if certain conditions are met. This is a modest decline from 77% in March 2017, with most of the change occurring among Republicans.

Most Americans say people who are in the U.S. illegally are no more likely than citizens to commit serious crimes. Nearly seven-in-ten (69%) say this. Large majorities also say undocumented immigrants mostly fill the jobs that American citizens don't want (77%) and are as honest and hardworking as American citizens (73%).

As many agree with the Republican Party as with the Democratic Party on illegal immigration. Among the public overall, 40% say they agree with the Democratic Party's policies on illegal

immigration and 39% agree with the GOP's positions; 19% don't agree with either party on this issue. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to agree with their own party on illegal immigration.

Partisans' priorities for U.S. asylum policy

In many respects, Republicans and Democrats differ in their priorities for the situation at the border, especially over the process for granting legal status to asylum seekers. However, there are some areas of general agreement.

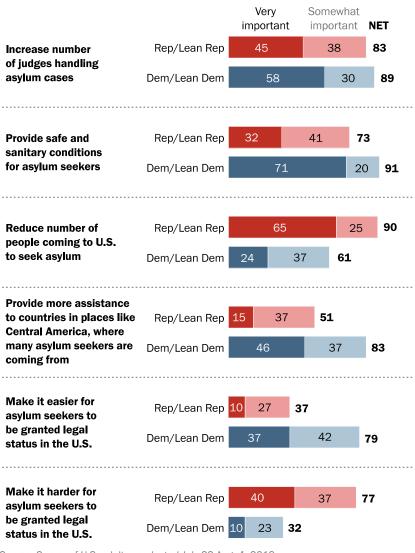
For instance, majorities of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (89%) and Republicans and Republican leaners (83%) say it is important to increase the number of judges handling asylum cases. However, a larger share of Democrats (58%) than Republicans (45%) rate this as *very* important.

On other dimensions as well, there are pronounced partisan differences in the intensity of sentiment. For example, majorities in each party say it is at least somewhat important that asylum seekers are provided safe and sanitary conditions once they arrive in the U.S. (91% of Democrats, 73% of Republicans).

However, Democrats are more than twice as likely as

Democrats prioritize safe, clean conditions for asylum seekers; Republicans focus on cutting flow of migrants

Thinking about the situation at the U.S. border with Mexico, % who say it is to ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 22-Aug. 4, 2019.

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Republicans to say providing safe and sanitary conditions for asylum seekers is very important (71% vs. 32%).

By contrast, while majorities in both parties say it is important to reduce the number of people coming to the U.S. to seek asylum, 65% of Republicans say this is very important, compared with just 24% of Democrats.

Partisans take opposing views on how difficult the process of asylum seekers being granted legal status should be. Most Republicans (77%) say it's important to make it harder for asylum seekers to be granted legal status in the U.S., though fewer than half (40%) say this is very important. Just a third of Democrats view this as important.

Most Democrats (79%) say it is important to make it easier for asylum seekers to be granted legal status; a much smaller share of Republicans (37%) say the same.

However, just 37% of Democrats say it is very important to make it easier for asylum seekers to get legal status; far larger shares of Democrats place high importance on increasing the number of

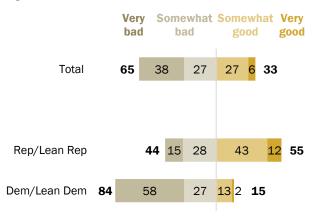
judges handling asylum cases (58%) and providing safe and sanitary conditions to asylum seekers (71%).

The public is highly critical of the way the government is dealing with asylum seekers. While there are clear partisan differences in these views, a sizable minority of Republicans and Republican leaners (44%) say the government is doing a bad job in dealing with the increased number of asylum seekers at the border; 55% say the government is doing a good job.

A substantial majority of Democrats and Democratic leaners (84%) say the government is doing a bad job – with 58% saying it is doing a very bad job.

Most say government is doing 'bad job' dealing with asylum seekers at border

% who say the U.S. government is doing a ____ job dealing with the increased number of people seeking asylum at the U.S. border with Mexico



Note: No answer responses not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 22-Aug. 4, 2019.

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Majority continues to favor path to legal status for undocumented immigrants in U.S.

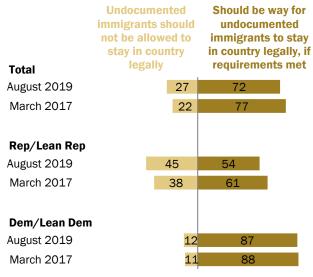
When it comes to undocumented immigrants who are currently living in the U.S. illegally, a majority of Americans continue to support a way for them to stay in the country legally.

Overall, 72% say there should be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the country legally, if certain requirements are met; far fewer (27%) say there should not be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the country legally. The share who supports a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants has edged lower since March 2017 (from 77%), driven by a shift in Republican views.

Among Republicans and Republican leaners, 54% say there should be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the country legally, compared with 45% who say there should not be a path to legal status. In March 2017, Republicans supported a path to legal status by a wider margin (61% to 38%).

Republican support for path to legal status for undocumented immigrants has slipped since 2017

Which comes closer to your view ... (%)



Note: No answer responses not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 22-Aug. 4, 2019.

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In the current survey, conservative Republicans are especially skeptical about legal status for undocumented immigrants living in the U.S.: 47% support a way for them to stay in the country legally, while 52% are against this. By comparison, 63% of moderate and liberal Republicans say there should be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the country legally.

Democrats and Democratic leaners overwhelmingly support a way for undocumented immigrants to gain legal status, if certain requirements are met: 87% support this, which is virtually unchanged from two years ago. Comparable majorities of liberal Democrats (91%) and conservative and moderate Democrats (85%) back a path to legal status.

In a follow-up question, most of those who are against a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants say they would support a national law enforcement effort to deport all immigrants who are now living in the U.S. illegally. Overall, 23% of the public opposes legal status for undocumented immigrants *and* supports a national effort to deport all immigrants living in the country illegally. Among Republicans and Republican leaners, 42% – including nearly half (49%) of conservative Republicans -- would support an effort to deport all undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

Most say undocumented immigrants fill jobs U.S. citizens don't want

The public expresses relatively positive views of undocumented immigrants currently in the U.S. when asked to consider traits such as honesty and hard work, their likelihood to commit serious crimes and their impact on jobs.

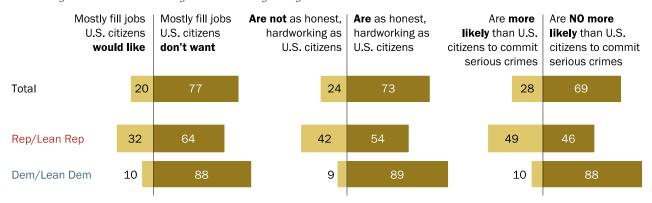
About three-quarters (77%) say undocumented immigrants mostly fill jobs American citizens don't want; just 20% say they fill jobs citizens would like to have. In addition, 73% say undocumented immigrants are as honest and hardworking as American citizens and 69% say they are no more likely than citizens to commit serious crimes.

Nearly nine-in-ten Democrats say undocumented immigrants are as honest and hardworking as U.S. citizens (89%), mostly fill jobs citizens do not want (88%) and are no more likely than citizens to commit serious crimes (88%).

Republicans are less positive in their views of undocumented immigrants. Still, nearly two-thirds of Republicans (64%) say undocumented immigrants in the U.S. mostly take jobs citizens do not want, and a narrow majority (54%) say they are as honest and hardworking as U.S. citizens.

Majorities say undocumented immigrants are as honest and hardworking as U.S. citizens, no more likely to commit serious crimes

% who say undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S. ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 22-Aug. 4, 2019.

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Republicans are divided on whether undocumented immigrants are more likely than U.S. citizens to commit serious crimes: 49% say they are more likely to do this, while 46% say they are not. Among conservative Republicans, 54% say undocumented immigrants are more likely than citizens to commit serious crimes; fewer moderate and liberal Republicans (43%) express this view.

Similar shares of the public agree with each party's approaches in dealing with illegal immigration

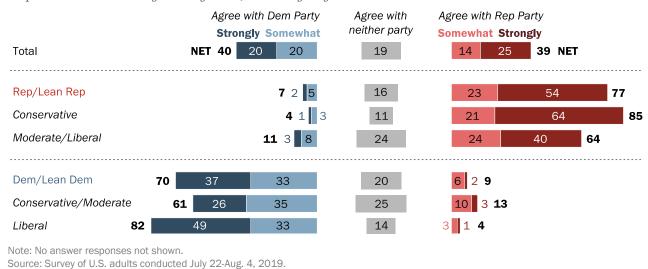
Republicans are more likely than Democrats to agree with their own party's policies on illegal immigration. The gap is especially wide on *strong* agreement with their party on this issue.

Among the public overall, 40% say they agree with the Democratic Party on illegal immigration, while about as many (39%) agree with the Republican Party. Large shares of partisans favor their own side's positions, but views are not entirely parallel.

Overall, 77% of Republicans and Republican leaners say they agree with their own party's policies to deal with illegal immigration. A slightly smaller majority of Democrats and Democratic leaners (70%) say they agree with the Democratic Party's policies on the issue. In addition, a greater share of Republicans (54%) than Democrats (37%) say they strongly agree with their own party's stance on illegal immigration.

Republicans more likely than Democrats to strongly agree with their own party's policies on illegal immigration

On policies to deal with illegal immigration, % who say they ...



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Among Republicans, conservatives (85%) are more likely to agree with their party's positions on illegal immigration than moderates and liberals (64%). Similarly, a larger share of liberal Democrats (82%) than conservative and moderate Democrats (61%) agree with their own party's positions on the issue.

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted July 22 to August 4, 2019. A total of 4,175 panelists responded out of 5,766 who were sampled, for a response rate of 72%. This does

not include 12 panelists who were removed from the data due to extremely high rates of refusal or straightlining. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 5.1%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged onto the survey and completed at least one item is 1.6%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 4,175 respondents is plus or minus 1.9 percentage points.

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys				
Recruitment Dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,499
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,463
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	799
Aug. 8-Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	8,670
	Total	29,114	18,720	13,431

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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The subsample from the ATP was selected by grouping panelists into five strata so demographic groups that are underrepresented in the panel had a higher probability of selection than overrepresented groups:

- Stratum A consists of panelists who are non-internet users. They were sampled at a rate of 100%.
- Stratum B consists of panelists with a high school education or less. They were sampled at a rate of 98.6%.
- Stratum C consists of panelists that are Hispanic, unregistered to vote, or non-volunteers. They were sampled at a rate of 41.5%.

- Stratum D consists of panelists that are black or 18-34 years old. They were sampled at a rate of 20.4%.
- Stratum E consists of the remaining panelists. They were sampled at a rate of 15%.

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of which 9,942 agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample (ABS) of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. For a random half-sample of invitations, households without internet access were instructed to return a postcard. These households were contacted by telephone and sent a tablet if they agreed to participate. A total of 9,396 were invited to join the panel, and 8,778 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. Of the 18,720 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 13,431 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.¹

¹ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling."

Weighting

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 and 2017 some respondents were subsampled for invitation to the panel. The next step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on the dimensions listed in the accompanying table.

Sampling errors and test of statistical-significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the American Trends Panel's Hispanic sample is predominantly U.S. born and English speaking.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2017 American
Age	Community Survey
Education	·

Race/Hispanic origin Hispanic nativity Home internet

access	
Region x Metropolitan status	2018 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2016 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total US adult population.

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Group Total sample	Unweighted sample size 4,175	Plus or minus 1.9 percentage points
Half-form	2.086	2.7 percentage points
	,	h
Rep/Lean Rep	1,789	2.9 percentage points
Half-form	865	4.0 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	2,239	2.6 percentage points
Half-form	1,094	3.7 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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2019 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL WAVE 52 JULY FINAL TOPLINE JULY 22- AUGUST 4, 2019 N=4,175

Note: In several cases, questions from past surveys conducted by telephone are shown as trends for comparison. This is noted throughout this topline.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

PTYISSUE Which party would you say you agree with on each of the following policy areas?

[RANDOMIZE; REVERSE ORDER OF OPTIONS FOR RANDOM HALF SAMPLE, WITH OPTION 5 ALWAYS LAST; MAINTAIN SAME ORDER OF RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR SINGLE RESPONDENT]

a. Policies to deal with illegal immigration

July 22-		Apr 5-
Aug 4		May 2
2019		2016 ²
25	Strongly agree with the Republican Party	20
14	Somewhat agree with the Republican Party	17
20	Somewhat agree with the Democratic Party	21
20	Strongly agree with the Democratic Party	17
19	Don't agree with either party	23
2	No answer	2

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

LGLSTATUS Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.? [RANDOMIZE]

ASK IF NOT ALLOWED TO STAY IN COUNTRY LEGALLY (LGLSTATUS=1) [N=1,097]:

NATLDPRT Do you think there should be a national law enforcement effort to deport all immigrants who are now living in the U.S. illegally, or should that not be done?

July 22-		Feb 28-
Aug 4,		Mar 12,
2019		2017 ³
27	They should not be allowed to stay in the country legally	22
23	Should be a national law enforcement effort to deport	19
4	Should not be a national law enforcement effort to deport	3
*	No answer	*
72	There should be a way for them to stay in the country legally, if certain requirements are met	77
1	No answer	1

² In 2016, each PTYISSUE item was asked on a separate screen; question was programmed: "Would you say you agree with the [RANDOMIZE TO MATCH RESPONSE OPTIONS: Republican Party or the Democratic Party] on the following policy area?" with response options listen in order that they appeared in question stem

³ The W24.5 Mode Study survey was administered by web and phone. Results reported here are from web mode only. In W24.5, both questions were asked of all adults. Results for NATLDPRT shown only of those who answered, "They should not be allowed to stay in the country legally."

LGLSTATUS/NATLDPRT CONTINUED...

PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON:

Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.?

ASK IF NOT ALLOWED TO STAY IN COUNTRY LEGALLY (Q75=1):

Do you think there should be a national law enforcement effort to deport all immigrants who are now living in the U.S. illegally, or should that not be done?

	Allowed	Not allowed	l Should be	Should NOT be		
	to stay	to stay	law enforcement	law enforcement	(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	<u>legally</u>	<u>legally</u>	effort to deport	effort to deport	DK/Ref	DK/Ref
July 10-15, 2019	76	23	19	4	1	2
Oct 20-25, 2016	80	18	13	4	*	2
Mar 17-26, 2016	75	23	17	5	1	2
Sep 22-27, 2015	74	24				3
May 12-18, 2015	72	27				2
Dec 3-7, 2014 (U)	70	27				3
Oct 15-20, 2014	71	25				3
Jul 8-14, 2014	68	30				3
Feb 14-23, 2014	73	24				3
Jun 12-16, 2013	71	27				2
May 1-5, 2013	73	25				3
Mar 13-17, 2013 ⁴	71	27				2

RANDOMIZE UNDCIMPCTa-c

ASK ALL:

UNDCIMPCTa

When it comes to undocumented immigrants currently in the U.S, which comes closer to your view? **[RANDOMIZE]**

	Undocumented	Undocumented	
	immigrants mostly fill jobs	immigrants mostly fill jobs	
	that American citizens	American citizens	
	would like to have	<u>don't want</u>	No answer
July 22-Aug 4, 2019	20	77	3

PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON:

When it comes to <u>undocumented</u> immigrants currently in the U.S which comes closer to your view — even if neither is exactly right. **[READ AND RANDOMIZE PAIRS; RANDOMIZE ORDER OF STATEMENTS WITHIN PAIRS].** Next, **[NEXT PAIR] [IF NECESSARY:** "Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?"]

		Undocumented	Undocumented	
		immigrants mostly fill jobs	immigrants mostly fill jobs	(VOL.)
		that American citizens	American citizens don't	Both/Neither/
a.		would like to have	<u>want</u>	DK/Ref
	July 10-15, 2019	22	71	7
	Jun 5-12, 2018	20	71	9
	Aug 9-16, 2016 ⁵	24	71	5

⁴ In May 2013 and March 2013, question read "Which comes closer to your view about how to handle immigrants who are now living in the U.S. illegally?" and the second answer choice read "There should be a way for those who meet certain requirements to stay in the country legally."

⁵ In August 2016 surveys, question was worded: "When it comes to <u>undocumented</u> immigrants currently in the U.S. which comes closer to your view –even if neither is exactly right?"

ASK ALL:

UNDCIMPCTb W

When it comes to undocumented immigrants currently in the U.S, which comes closer to your view? **[RANDOMIZE]**

In general, undocumented	In general, ur
immigrants are as honest	immigrants
and hardworking as	honest and h
American citizens	as America
73	24

n general, undocumented immigrants are NOT as nonest and hardworking as American citizens

as American citizens No answer 24 3

No answer

PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON:

July 22-Aug 4, 2019

When it comes to <u>undocumented</u> immigrants currently in the U.S which comes closer to your view — even if neither is exactly right. **[READ AND RANDOMIZE PAIRS; RANDOMIZE ORDER OF STATEMENTS WITHIN PAIRS].** Next, **[NEXT PAIR] [IF NECESSARY:** "Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?"]

b.		In general undocumented immigrants are as honest and hardworking as <u>American citizens</u>	In general undocumented immigrants are not as honest and hardworking as American citizens	(VOL.) Both/Neither/ <u>DK/Ref</u>
	July 10-15, 2019	73	19	8
	Aug 9-16, 2016	76	18	6

ASK ALL:

UNDCIMPCTc

When it comes to undocumented immigrants currently in the U.S, which comes closer to your view? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Undocumented	Undocumented
immigrants living in the	immigrants living in the
U.S. are more likely than	U.S. are NO more likely
American citizens to	than American citizens to
commit serious crimes	commit serious crimes

July 22-Aug 4, 2019 28 69 3

PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON:

When it comes to <u>undocumented</u> immigrants currently in the U.S which comes closer to your view — even if neither is exactly right. **[READ AND RANDOMIZE PAIRS; RANDOMIZE ORDER OF STATEMENTS WITHIN PAIRS].** Next, **[NEXT PAIR] [IF NECESSARY:** "Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?"]

		Undocumented	Undocumented	
		immigrants living in the	immigrants living in the	
		U.S. are more likely than	U.S. are NO more likely	(VOL.)
		American citizens to	than American citizens to	Both/Neither/
c.		commit serious crimes	commit serious crimes	DK/Ref
	July 10-15, 2019	28	66	6
	Jun 5-12, 2018	26	65	10
	Aug 9-16, 2016	27	67	6

ASK ALL:

ASYLUMHA How much, if anything, have you heard about the increase in the number of people seeking asylum at the U.S. border with Mexico?

July 22Aug 4
2019
54 A lot
34 A little
11 Nothing at all
1 No answer

ASK ALL:

BRDERJOB How would you rate the job the U.S. government is doing dealing with the increased number of people seeking asylum at the U.S. border with Mexico?

July 22-	
Aug 4	
<u>2019</u>	
6	Very good job
27	Somewhat good job
27	Somewhat bad job
38	Very bad job
2	No answer

ASK ALL:

BRDERVAL Thinking about the situation at the U.S. border with Mexico, how important, if at all, are each of the following for the U.S.? [RANDOMIZE]

	Very <u>important</u>	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	No <u>answer</u>
a. To reduce the number of people coming to the U.S. to seek asylum July 22-Aug 4, 2019	43	31	17	8	1
 To provide safe and sanitary conditions for asylum seekers once they arrive in the U.S. July 22-Aug 4, 2019 	52	30	11	6	1
c. To increase the number of judges handling asylum cases July 22-Aug 4, 2019	52	34	9	4	1
d. To provide more assistance to countries in places like Central America, where many asylum seekers are coming from July 22-Aug 4, 2019	32	37	19	11	1
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=2,089]: e. To make it harder for asylum seekers to be granted legal status in the U.S.					
July 22-Aug 4, 2019	24	29	24	22	1

BRDERVAL CONTINUED...

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	No answer
ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=2,086]: f. To make it easier for asylum seekers to be granted legal status in the U.S.					
July 22-Aug 4, 2019	25	35	21	18	1

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:		
(U)	Pew Research Center/USA Today polls	