



Celinda Lake
President

Alysia Snell
Partner

Michael Perry
Partner

David Mermin
Partner

Robert G. Meadow, Ph.D.
Partner

Daniel R. Gotoff
Partner

Joshua E. Ulibarri
Partner

Tresa Udem
Vice President

Rick A. Johnson
Managing Director

Robert X. Hillman
Chief Financial Officer

To: Interested Parties

From: Celinda Lake, David Mermin and Zach Young

Re: Voter Support for Comprehensive Immigration Reform¹

Date: November 10, 2010

- **Despite conventional wisdom to the contrary, voters still strongly support comprehensive immigration reform.** With conservatives and Republicans making large gains in the midterm elections, many have made the mistake of assuming voters have turned against comprehensive immigration reform. In fact, those who voted in the election this week support comprehensive reform at the highest rate we have yet seen—and Republicans are among the strongest supporters.
- **Support for comprehensive immigration reform is broad-based and crosses party lines.** When we simply ask voters whether they support or oppose comprehensive immigration reform without describing it, 67% support it (55% strongly support). However, when we provide a description², support jumps to 81%, with 68% strongly in support. Republicans are the most intense supporters, with fully 72% strongly supporting comprehensive reform.
- **Voters prioritize passing comprehensive immigration reform that includes border security above border security alone, and they believe deporting 11 million illegal immigrants is unrealistic.** When we ask whether the federal priority should be securing the country's borders, passing comprehensive

¹ This LRP survey reached a total of 1,200 likely, registered voters nationwide. The sample consisted of 1,000 interviews among voters who were reached on landline phones and an oversample of 200 interviews among voters reached on cell phones. The survey was conducted October 31st through November 2nd, 2010.

² "Under this proposal the federal government would strengthen border security, and crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants. Illegal immigrants currently living in the United States would be required to register with the federal government, undergo criminal background checks, pay taxes, learn English, and go to the back of the line for U.S. citizenship."

immigration reform legislation, or doing both at the same time, 56% believe both should be done at the same time. Additionally, 76% (62% strongly) agree with the statement that “deporting all 11 million illegal immigrants currently in the United States is unrealistic.”

- **The DREAM Act enjoys strong support across party lines.** After hearing a brief description³, sixty-six percent of voters support the DREAM Act, including majorities of Democrats (81%), independents (60%), and Republicans (57%).
- **A majority of voters believes that immigration is a national issue that should be left up to the federal government rather than left to the states.** Fifty-six percent of voters believe that immigration is best dealt with at the federal level, compared to only 20% who believe it should be dealt with by states and 19% who believe it is both a federal and state issue.
- **The economy, not immigration, was the deciding issue in this election.** While many candidates tried to use immigration to attack opponents, their efforts were mostly wasted. For one, voters overwhelmingly support comprehensive immigration reform. Secondly, immigration was not a top issue for the vast majority of voters. Immigration was the most important issue for only 2% of voters overall, including 1% of independents and 3% of Republicans. By contrast, the economy was the top issue for 27%, followed by jobs at 15%.

³ “Congress is considering a proposal known as the DREAM Act. This bill provides illegal immigrant students who were brought here as young children with the opportunity to earn permanent legal resident status if they meet certain requirements. To earn legal status, students must have been brought to the U.S. when they were very young, lived here for at least five years, stayed out of trouble, earned a high school diploma or GED, and completed at least two years of college or military service.”