

TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Global Strategy Group  
DATE: November 2015  
RE: **NEW POLL RESULTS — Battleground Voters Overwhelmingly Oppose Mass Deportation**

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The issue of mass deportation presents a new opportunity for pro-reform voices to reframe the immigration debate as a choice between mass deportation and a pathway to legal status. Voters have a clear preference for a pathway when presented with these two choices, and a strong negative reaction to mass deportation. Seizing this opportunity, supporters of reform can swing intensity in the debate to their side for the first time and make immigration a more salient issue for traditionally passive supporters.

Beyond opposing mass deportation, voters in key swing states are less likely to vote for a Presidential candidate who supports the policy. Opposition to mass deportation is a strong message for Democrats to use to push for reform, and for pro-reform Republicans to use to distance themselves from the fringe of their party. Arguments against mass deportation hold appeal among swing voters, and are also viewed credibly by many conservative Republican voters. Key findings from Global Strategy Group's recent poll of 600 likely 2016 General Election voters in Colorado, Nevada, and Florida are as follows:

#### KEY SURVEY FINDINGS:

- **Mass deportation has little support beyond the very far right:** A majority of voters oppose the government “rounding up” (35% support/59% oppose) or “arresting” (34% support/62% oppose) the 11 million immigrants living in the country illegally to deport them. Only very conservative Republicans, who make up 14% of the electorate in these states, support these measures (63% support/29% oppose), while swing voters roundly oppose them (34% support/60% oppose). This widespread opposition to mass deportation offers an opening for pro-reform Republicans to distance themselves from controversial figures like Donald Trump. For Democrats, it makes for a politically safe messaging frame that they can also use in the context of the DACA/DAPA court case.
- **No major voting group wants to revoke birthright citizenship:** Across the board, voters oppose revoking the citizenship of Americans born to immigrants living in the U.S. illegally (32% support/61% oppose). This includes swing voters (29% support/60% oppose) as well as very conservative Republicans (40% support/50% oppose), who find the fact that revoking birthright citizenship violates the Constitution to be the most troubling aspect of the proposal (35%).
- **Presidential candidates support mass deportation at their own peril:** There are twice as many votes to be lost as there are to be gained for a candidate coming out in favor of mass deportation, with only 20% of voters more likely to vote for a presidential candidate who supports the policy and 41% less likely to vote for such a candidate. Mass deportation is also a losing proposition among swing voters (18% more likely/38% less likely) and Republicans who are “not very conservative” (17% more likely /32% less likely), making it a serious electoral risk for any candidate to support the policy.

- **Voters overwhelmingly view mass deportation as unrealistic and prefer a pathway to citizenship:** A large majority (77%) find mass deportation to be an unrealistic solution to the nation's immigration problem, including a majority of very conservative Republicans (58%) and over eight in ten swing voters (82%). These widespread doubts about mass deportation provide an opportunity to augment support for more balanced reform plans. By an overwhelming margin, voters prefer a presidential candidate that supports providing immigrants with an earned pathway to citizenship over one who supports mass deportation (74% earned pathway/18% deport).
- **Arguments against mass deportation hold appeal across the political spectrum:** Framing mass deportation as an unworkable idea that has major human and economic costs compared to an earned pathway makes for credible arguments among key voting groups including Hispanics, swing voters, and Republicans of all ideologies.
  - Hispanics are receptive to notions that mass deportation would tear apart millions of families and create a foster care crisis (giving 63% major doubts about the proposal), in addition to leading to the underreporting of sexual assaults for fear of deportation (62%).
  - Swing voters and not very conservative Republicans are bothered by the imposition of a U.S. police state (55% major doubts among swing/46% among not very conservative GOP) with internment camps at the border (61% swing/53% not very conservative GOP).
  - Very conservative Republicans are most concerned about the fiscal impact of mass deportation (41% major doubts) after learning that it would require an estimated \$600 billion dollars in federal spending.
- **Voters recoil from Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric:** Trump's statements involving his controversial model for deportation and labeling immigrants as criminals are especially offensive to Hispanics and swing voters.
  - Trump's statement that his deportation plan would be modeled after a 1950's law enforcement operation officially titled "Operation Wetback" offends Hispanics (61% very offensive), swing voters (54%), and not very conservative Republicans (45%).
  - Trump's statement that immigrants from Mexico are bringing drugs, crime, and rapists is also very offensive to significant numbers of Hispanics (61%) and swing voters (44%).

### **The Case against Mass Deportation**

Summarizing the most persuasive messaging against the proposal, the most effective argument against mass deportation is as follows:

The proposal to deport 11 million immigrants living here illegally would not only tear apart millions of families and separate 4.5 million U.S. citizens from their parents, it would require a series of unrealistic measures the country could never actually implement. This awful and impractical "plan" calls for the U.S. to be effectively turned into a police state, with hundreds of thousands of immigration police, mass surveillance of the general population, and massive new prison camps along the entire border like the Japanese internment camps during World War II. And it would cost \$600 billion in spending and \$1.7 trillion in lost economic productivity that we can't afford. Our immigration system is broken and we need reasonable solutions to the problem, not this plan with its astronomical human, economic and political costs.

#### **ABOUT THIS POLL**

*Global Strategy Group conducted a survey between October 8-11, 2015 among 600 likely 2016 General Election voters in Colorado, Florida, and Nevada. The results have a margin of error of +/-4.0%, and care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the expected electorate are properly represented based on past voter turnout statistics.*