

Voters Shift Rightward on Immigration

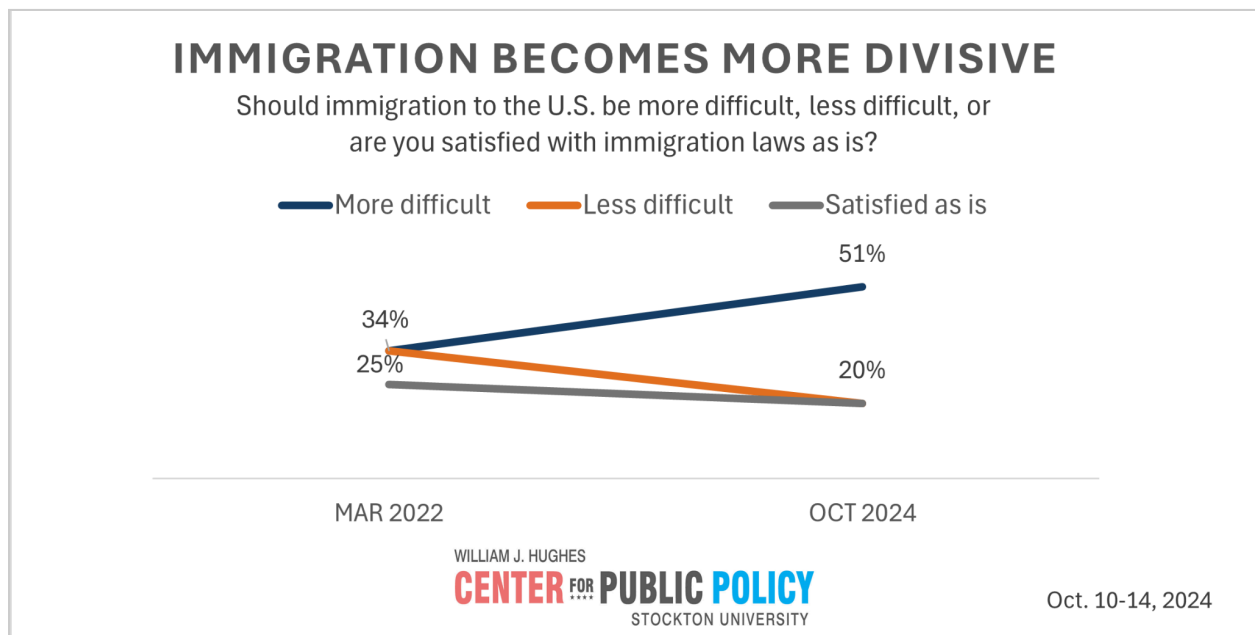
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High Resolution Images Available [Here](#)

Galloway, N.J. – More than half of New Jersey voters would support national deportation efforts and think immigration to the U.S. should be more difficult, but majorities also support expanding legal pathways to citizenship and easing work authorization for noncitizens, according to a Hughes Center poll.

A majority of voters view immigration positively with 55% saying it's a good thing overall. Nearly one-third think immigration is a bad thing and 10% are not sure.

Just over half (51%) said immigration to the United States should be more difficult, while one in five said it should be less difficult and the same rate were unsure. Voters have grown further apart on this matter since 2022 when respondents were evenly split.

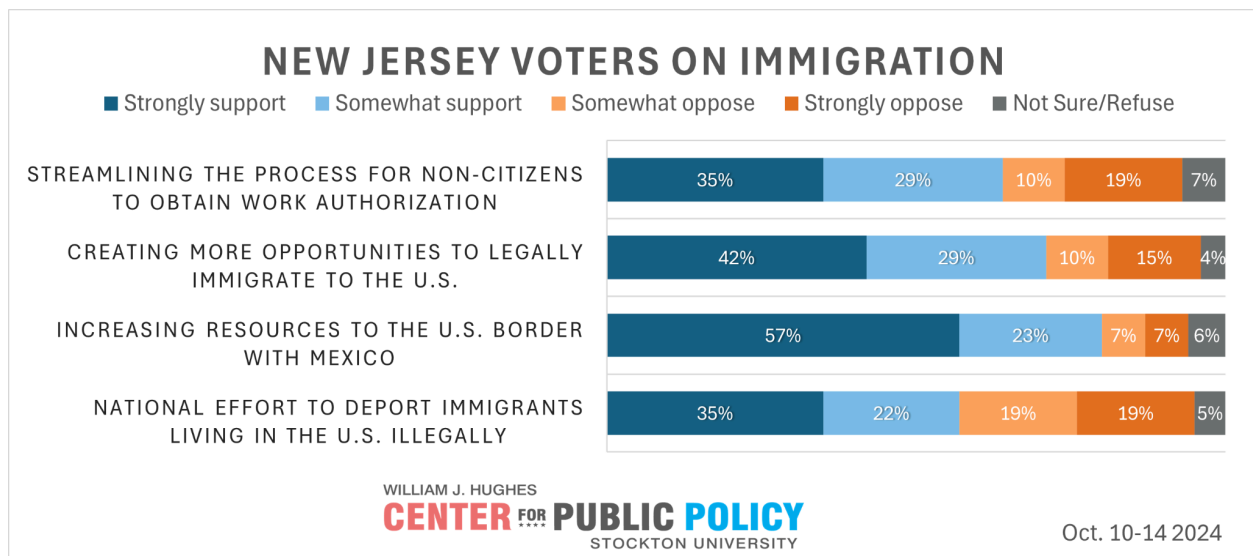


When it comes to undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States, most voters (59%) said they should be allowed to stay legally as long as they meet certain requirements, while 8% said they should be allowed to stay in the country legally without conditions, and 30% said they should not be allowed to stay legally.

Respondents were also asked about Temporary Protected Status (TPS), an authorization provided to certain eligible migrants that allows them to legally live and work in the U.S. temporarily, which has been under heightened scrutiny since false claims were made about Springfield, Ohio residents with this legal status. New Jerseyans were almost evenly split on this program, with 27% saying TPS requirements should remain as is, 22% saying eligibility should be expanded, 26% saying eligibility should be restricted, and 14% saying this legal status should be revoked completely.

A majority of voters want to curb illegal immigration but are largely supportive of legal pathways to citizenship and easing work authorization for non-citizens. More than half (57%) of all voters, including one third of Democrats, would support a national effort to deport immigrants living in the U.S. illegally. As many as 80% of all voters want to increase resources to the U.S. border with Mexico. Only 14% of voters oppose such a measure.

Despite this desire to curtail illegal border crossings, majorities of voters support creating more opportunities to legally immigrate to the U.S. (71%) and making it easier for noncitizens to obtain work authorization (64%). The Hughes Center recently released a [podcast episode](#) with Stockton Professor of Economics Ramya Vijaya that addresses immigrants' role in the state economy.



“Findings like this in a blue state like New Jersey help explain why the Democratic party has shifted to take a harder line on this issue,” said Alyssa Maurice, director of research at the Hughes Center. “On its face, the results can seem conflicting, but voters seem to be rejecting the notion of unchecked migration, which has been a big focus of this election cycle, while still embracing legal pathways to citizenship.”

Broken down by political affiliation, some voters defect from their party’s position. One third of Democrats support mass deportations for immigrants living in the U.S. illegally, a component of the Republican platform this cycle. On the other hand, about the same rate of Republicans

embrace immigrants in the workforce, a position criticized by many in the Republican party. More than one-third (36%) of Republicans support streamlining the process for non-citizens to obtain work authorization.

“Voters’ views on this are very nuanced. Their positions are not nearly as clear cut as some of the rhetoric around this issue might imply,” said Maurice.

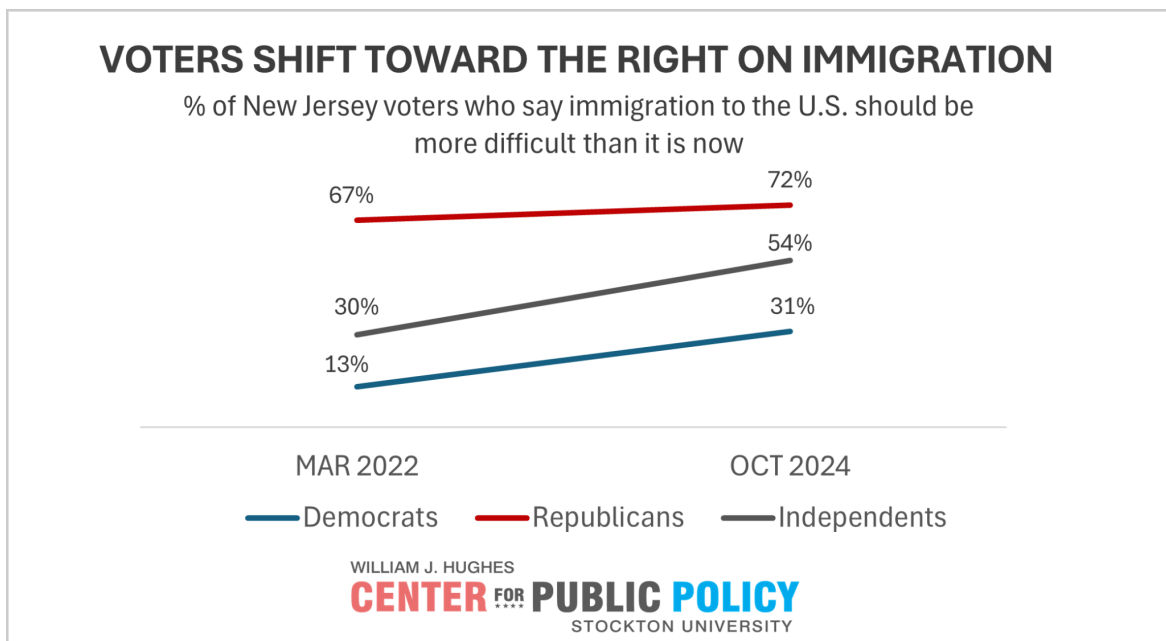
SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRATION POLICIES BY PARTY AFFILIATION

	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
National effort to deport immigrants living in the U.S. illegally	33%	89%	56%
Increasing resources to the U.S. border with Mexico	75%	90%	84%
Creating more opportunities to legally immigration to the U.S.	85%	55%	72%
Streamlining the process for non-citizens to obtain work authorization	86%	36%	69%

WILLIAM J. HUGHES
CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY
STOCKTON UNIVERSITY

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Both Democrats and Independents have shifted rightward since a March 2022 Hughes Center poll, the last time a baseline question about immigration policy was asked.



The poll of 616 registered voters has a margin of error of +/- 3.9 percentage points.

You can find the full poll results [here](#).

Methodology

The poll of New Jersey registered voters was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy from Oct. 10-14, 2024. Stockton University students texted cell phones with invitations to take the survey online and Opinion Services supplemented the dialing portion of the fieldwork, which consisted of cell and landline telephone calls. Overall, 91% of interviews were conducted on cell phones and 9% on landline phones. In terms of mode, 65% were reached via dialing and 35% were reached via text-to-web. A random sample of 616 New Jersey registered voters were interviewed. Both cell and landline samples consisted of random digit dialing (RDD) and voter list sample from MSG. Data are weighted based on U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2023 data for the citizen voting age population in New Jersey on variables of age, race, education level, and sex. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.9 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. Sampling error does not account for other potential sources of bias in polls such as measurement error or non-response.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes the civic life of New Jersey through engagement, education and research. The center is named for the late William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton. The Hughes Center can be found on YouTube [@StocktonHughesCenter](#), and can be followed on Facebook [@StocktonHughesCenter](#) and X [@hughescenter](#).