

Defeat Xenophobia Project

Combatting Donald Trump's Anti-Immigrant Demagoguery

The latest polling shows the best way to counter Trump's anti-immigrant agenda in 2024 is to proactively talk about immigration in a way that is salient to voters, grounded in our values, and recognizes the political realities created by the forced global migration crisis. Below is our tested messaging guidance based on how Democrats can best drive a strategic contrast against the most offensive aspects of the far-right, xenophobic authoritarianism being used by the MAGA movement.

Donald Trump has said he will once again try to deport Dreamers, we know he will resume family separation and once again take children from their parents, and he's promising to do that in every corner of the country by using hundreds of thousands of law enforcement officers, and even the military, to round up millions of immigrants and force them into mass deportation camps.

DEMOCRATS AND THOSE OPPOSED TO TRUMP AND HIS AWFUL POLICIES MUST GO ON THE OFFENSE AND OWN THE SPACE:

Embrace a policy and political platform based on a system that ensures a secure and orderly border, provides legal channels that reduce irregular migration, and creates a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who have been integral members of our country for decades.

- Democrats have a trust problem when it comes to immigration. After championing specific reforms for decades, Americans are simply not hearing enough about the party's current policy agenda and priorities, which has helped create the vacuum being filled by Trump's openly xenophobic plans.
- It's true; we do have a crisis at the border, and it has been 30 years in the making. Most Americans in battleground states say they want a secure and orderly border. However, they know little about border operations and do not distinguish much on policies they don't understand. Democrats must fill voters' understanding by presenting them with viable solutions that bring order and contrast to Trump's harmful and fear-mongering-driven plans.
- Democrats are working to build a safe, orderly, and secure immigration system, and provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and others who have built their lives here.
- **We need to secure the border, fix the failed immigration system, protect long-time undocumented residents, and not revert to Trump's cruelty of family separation and chaos.**

ACCOUNTABILITY: TRUMP'S RECORD AND RHETORIC ON IMMIGRATION ARE TOXIC TO VOTERS

- **Trump and his far-right allies blew up a bipartisan deal:** It's simply wrong that President Trump and his allies worked to sabotage bipartisan legislation for their own selfish political gain. It's wrong for border security and it's wrong for all Americans.
- Americans across the country remain **vehemently opposed and horrified** by Trumpist anti-immigrant policies, particularly his family separation policies, efforts to target Dreamers, and more recent promises to round up millions in mass deportation camps.
- One of the top testing messages for swing voters is that Donald Trump has consistently used fear, hate, and racism in the way he speaks about immigrants -which has emboldened white supremacists and MAGA extremists and made immigrants targets for hate and violence.

- Trump's reelection plans rest on reinstating family separation policies, going after Dreamers, and rounding up millions in mass deportation camps. Polling shows a **majority of swing voters are incredibly concerned by:**
 - ▶ Mass detention camps – even for those who have been living and working here for many years.
 - ▶ A return to the horrors of family separation at the border.
 - ▶ Threats to deport Dreamers and millions of hard-working people who have temporary legal status.
- **The fight on immigration and against the weaponization of immigrants is the Fight for Our Democracy:** We must engage in this in order to protect our democracy and stop hard-right extremism.
 - ▶ When Donald Trump says, "I want to be a dictator for one day," we know exactly what he means because his very next words are: "On day one, I want to close the border."
 - ▶ The attacks against our democracy come today under the guise of threats against immigration and immigrants — but of course, they would not stop there.
 - ▶ Trump, like many wannabe dictators before him, is looking for a gateway to authoritarianism. If we let him get away with being a dictator on immigration he will end up becoming a dictator on all things. We cannot give him that foot in the door. Taking his anti-immigrant proposals head-on, and doing so strategically, is critical.

IMMIGRATION: WHAT AMERICANS ACTUALLY SUPPORT

- **The Top-Tested Frame:** We need to ensure there are safe, legal ways for people to immigrate to the U.S. while also making it harder to come here illegally and provide a pathway to citizenship for those who meet certain qualifications.
- **Border Security:** Americans are rightfully concerned about the border. A vast majority of Americans say they want a secure and orderly border, but know little about border operations and do not distinguish much on policies they don't understand.
 - ▶ We need to increase our capacity to process migrant families and ensure we continue to vet individuals coming into our ports of entry thoroughly. Inhumane policies like family separation will never be the answer.
 - ▶ We have failed policies when we wait for people to arrive at the border to address their immigration needs. We need policies that establish a secure and orderly border, create legal pathways away from the border to reduce pressure on the asylum system, and deter unauthorized crossings.
- **Inaction is not acceptable:** Our elected leaders must do more to relieve pressure at the border by building legal pathways that we know have drastically lowered unauthorized migration. This will allow people to work and reunite with their families safely and orderly. We can do that and give people who have built their lives here a pathway to citizenship without ripping apart families in every state in the country.
- Democrats know we need to secure the border and stop illegal migration by fighting for legal and safe immigration. Instead of fueling chaos, fear, and division like Trump, we have real solutions for a real challenge.
 - ▶ Secure borders, legal migration, and earned pathways to citizenship for longtime residents. That's how Democrats can help defeat Trump's xenophobic agenda of mass deportation camps and family separations.

Please do not hesitate to contact us. We are happy to share additional polling & resources on the best way to combat Donald Trump's anti-immigrant xenophobia in 2024.

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