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## Research in Greater Depth: Immigration

*Instructions:* Read the following news article excerpts and poll data and complete the “Source Analysis” handout.

### Excerpts of News Articles

#### Source 1

Wall Street Journal: “Where Trump and Biden Stand on Immigration, Border Wall and ICE” by Michelle Hackman, September 17, 2020. <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/where-trump-and-biden-stand-on-immigration-border-wall-and-ice-11600335000>>

Immigration formed a core theme of Donald Trump’s 2016 campaign and his subsequent administration, and he has sought to reduce nearly all forms of immigration to the U.S.

Former Vice President Joe Biden formulated his own immigration policy as a rebuttal of Mr. Trump’s terms, promising to undo nearly all of the changes the administration has made.

Among Mr. Trump’s changes: border-wall construction, bans on travel from a number of countries and a temporary closure of the southern border to asylum seekers for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic. He also attempted to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which offers legal protections for young immigrants who had been living in the country illegally, imposed a wealth test on green-card applicants and began sending asylum seekers at the southern border back to Mexico to await their immigration hearings....

Mr. Biden has said he would unwind Mr. Trump’s immigration agenda: He would repeal the travel bans, restore DACA, end the wealth test and stop sending asylum seekers back to Mexico....

Mr. Trump says his hard-line immigration policies are necessary because he says many immigrants in the U.S. illegally commit crimes, sap public resources and compete unfairly with citizens for jobs.

Mr. Biden argues that the policies are wrong because immigrants form a core part of America’s cultural fabric and because key sectors of the economy, from technology to agriculture, rely on them to keep the workforce growing.

#### The Border

Congress denied requests to fund Mr. Trump’s southern border wall, a core campaign promise, during the first two years of his presidency. In 2019, the president declared a national emergency at the border, allowing him to use Defense Department money for the project. Since then, his administration has erected about 300 miles of the wall—essentially a 30-foot steel fence—although all but five of the miles replace existing border barriers.

As a senator, Mr. Biden was one of numerous Democrats to vote in favor of a 2006 law funding 700 miles of fence construction along the border. On the campaign trail, Mr. Biden has called Mr. Trump’s wall an “obsession” and vowed to cease building it the day he takes office....

Beyond the wall, Mr. Trump’s border policies stress deterrence. The administration has restricted access to legal ports of entry and designed policies to punish migrants crossing the border illegally. Other policies make nearly all migrants at the border ineligible for asylum....

Mr. Biden, meanwhile, advocates a strategy of addressing the root causes that prompt migrants to leave their countries. During the Obama administration, he championed a plan passed in 2016 to provide \$750 million in aid to Central American countries to help curb poverty and violence, aiming to keep people from fleeing to the U.S. Mr. Trump cut that aid soon after taking office.

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### Legal Immigration

Mr. Biden commits in his platform to modernizing the immigration system, which would almost certainly require congressional action. He wants to provide a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million immigrants in the country who lack a permanent legal status. He also advocates providing a path to legalization for farm workers in the U.S. illegally, a rare immigration issue that garners some bipartisan support in Congress, although Mr. Trump opposes the idea.

Mr. Biden also wants to increase the number of employment-based visas awarded each year and to eliminate the country-based caps that have created a decadeslong backlog for Indian immigrants in particular.

Mr. Trump has at times advocated a similar approach—known as merit-based immigration because it is based on qualifications such as work skills and specialized vocations—although he has balanced it with a corresponding cut in family-based immigration, which he calls chain migration....

[Mr. Biden] has also committed to preserving the Diversity Visa lottery, a program targeted for elimination by Mr. Trump that awards 50,000 green cards each year to countries with low levels of immigration to the U.S.

Mr. Biden has also proposed a new visa type that would permit cities and states to sponsor immigrants to resettle and work in specific areas where workers are scarce.

### Refugees and Asylum

Mr. Biden has said that as president, he would commit to taking in 125,000 refugees a year. Mr. Trump has steadily reduced the number of refugees the U.S. accepts each year, setting the ceiling for 2020 at a record-low 18,000.

Mr. Biden also wants to change the asylum process—under which people already in the U.S.

ask for protection on humanitarian grounds—by hiring more immigration judges to process a backlog of more than 1.1 million cases and providing immigrants with lawyers in immigration court, a change that would likely need to go through Congress. He has said he would reverse the Trump administration's determinations that domestic violence and gang persecution aren't valid bases for seeking asylum in the U.S....

### Immigrant Detention and Deportation

Mr. Biden has promised a 100-day deportation moratorium and has said he would focus only on deporting immigrants with criminal convictions in their home country or in the U.S. That essentially returns him to the Obama administration's approach in its final few years, when that administration sharply cut annual deportations. Before that, the Obama administration in its first term allowed ICE to expand a Bush-era program known as Secure Communities, which used a little-known information-sharing requirement to collect fingerprints of people booked into local jails across the country and identify immigrants in the U.S. without permanent legal status for deportation.

During the Obama administration immigrant removals hit a record of 409,842 in 2012, according to ICE. That figure was about 267,000 for 2019, its highest during the Trump administration.

Mr. Biden also has pledged to stop contracting with for-profit detention centers and to shut down the nation's three family jails, opened under the Obama administration. Families would instead be released into the country with ankle bracelets or other tracking methods while waiting for their court dates.

Mr. Biden has also said he would stop striking agreements with local police departments, popular during the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, that allow local police officers to arrest immigrants in the U.S. illegally. Mr. Biden has also said he would end workplace raids.

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**Source 2**

National Public Radio (NPR): “Trump’s And Biden’s Plans On Immigration” by Elena Moore, October 16, 2020. <<https://www.npr.org/2020/10/16/919258401/trumps-and-biden-s-plans-on-immigration>>

**Biden’s plans for immigration**

Much of Biden’s immigration plan centers around reversing a significant number of President Trump’s current policies. This includes stopping construction on the border wall, fully eliminating the practice of separating immigrant families at the U.S. border and ending current bans on people from certain Muslim-majority countries traveling to the United States.

Biden also calls for a reversal of Trump’s restrictions toward granting asylum and temporary protected status and instead wants to raise the cap on the number of refugees brought into the country to 125,000 per year.

Biden additionally has pledged to work to make the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, permanent on his first day as president.

His immigration plan notably pushes for further oversight, regulation and instruction of Immigration and Customs Enforcement as well as Customs and Border Protection, saying the agencies must “abide by professional standards” as well as be “held accountable for inhumane treatment,” given a series of reported abuses.

As for new policy implementation, Biden says he will “modernize” the nation’s immigration infrastructure, vowing, on Day 1, to send legislation to Congress that would offer a pathway to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented people in the country. He’s also called for a moratorium on deportations during the first 100 days of his administration.

On obtaining visas, Biden says he wants to make both permanent and temporary work visas more accessible.

Biden is additionally proposing several initiatives through the federal government’s Task Force on New Americans, aimed at supporting immigrants living in the United States. This task force would create local offices of immigrant affairs and informational hubs throughout the country that would provide resources on accessible health care and education systems as well as employment opportunities.

**Trump’s plans for immigration**

Trump’s second-term agenda on immigration builds on the foundation he set in his first term, notably continuing construction of the border wall, restricting immigration and opposing so-called sanctuary cities, where local law enforcement has limited coordination with federal immigration officials.

His campaign singles out the need to end human trafficking and remove “non-citizen gang members” from the country but gives no plan or further explanation on those processes. His campaign has not released further details on any of these goals.

Recently in response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Trump has tightened regulations on legal immigration and international work travel to the U.S. by limiting the distribution of visas, arguing it will help boost American employment. The U.S. has also taken steps to limit people successfully obtaining asylum.

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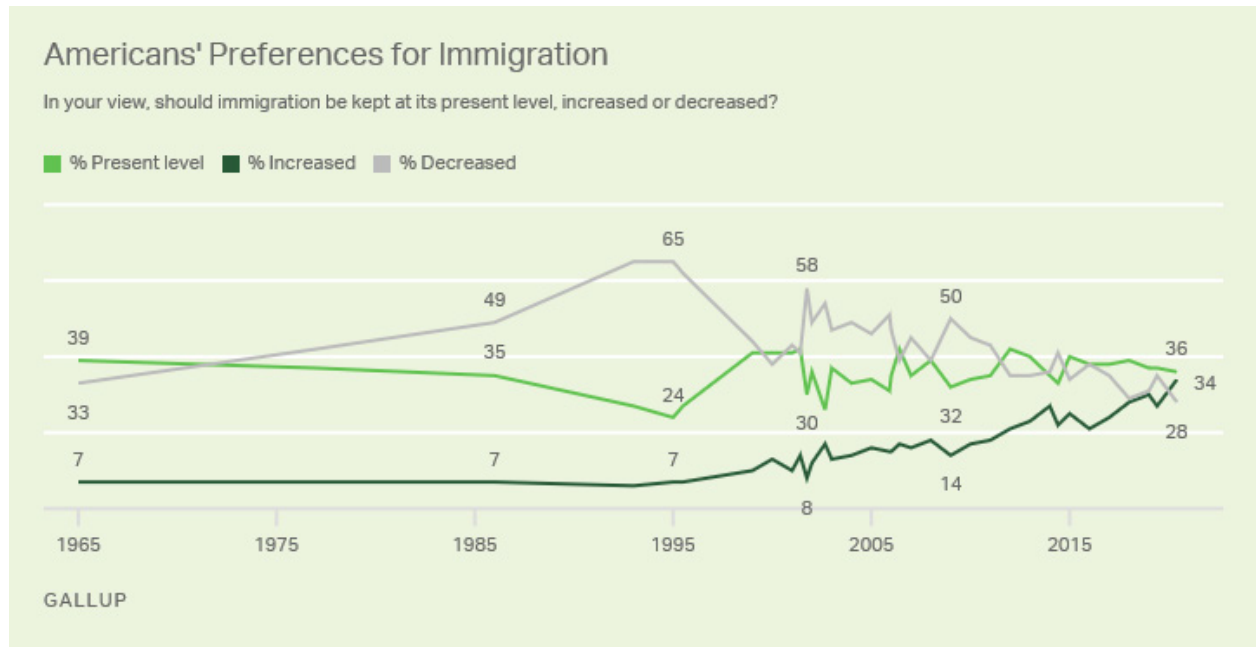
## Polling Data

### Poll 1

*Gallup: "Americans Want More, Not Less, Immigration for First Time" by Mohamed Younis, July 1, 2020.*  
 <<https://news.gallup.com/poll/313106/americans-not-less-immigration-first-time.aspx>>

Thirty-four percent of Americans, up from 27% a year ago, would prefer to see immigration to the U.S. increased. This is the highest support for expanding immigration Gallup has found in its trend since 1965. Meanwhile, the percentage favoring decreased immigration has fallen to a new low of 28%, while 36% think it should stay at the present level.

This marks the first time in Gallup's trend that the percentage wanting increased immigration has exceeded the percentage who want decreased immigration....



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**Poll 2**

*Pew Research Center: “Voters’ Attitudes About Race and Gender Are Even More Divided Than in 2016,” September 10, 2020. <<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/09/10/voters-attitudes-about-race-and-gender-are-even-more-divided-than-in-2016/>>*

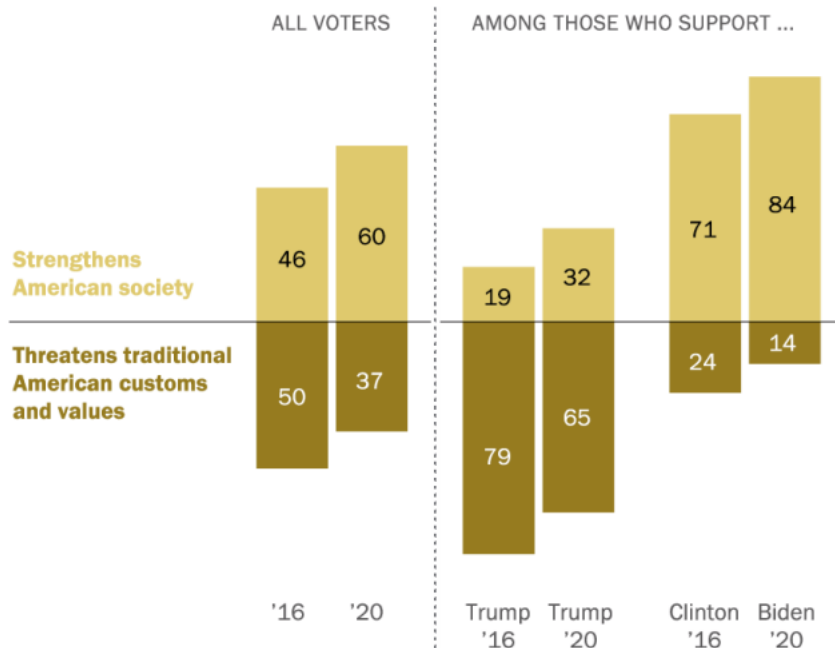
An increasing share of registered voters —Trump and Biden supporters alike—say the growing number of newcomers to the country strengthens American society. In the new survey, 60% say this, while 37% say this threatens the nation’s customs and values. In 2016, opinion was divided: 50% said increasing numbers of newcomers to the U.S. were more of a threat to American customs and values, while 46% said they strengthened society....

Supporters of both major party candidates this year are more likely than 2016 supporters to have

positive views of immigrants to the United States, but the gap between supporters of the Republican and Democratic candidates is little different than it was four years ago. Today, more than eight-in-ten Biden supporters (84%) say the growing share of newcomers in the U.S. strengthens American society, up from 71% among Clinton supporters in 2016. By comparison, a much smaller share of Trump supporters (32%) view immigration as strengthening society. Still, that is up from just 19% among Trump supporters in 2016....

**Majority of voters say growing number of newcomers to the U.S. strengthens American society**

*% of registered voters who say the growing number of newcomers from other countries ...*



Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

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