

MEMO *Published April 16, 2026 · 9 minute read*

President Trump's Immigration Problem

Third Way & UnidosUS



This March, Third Way and UnidosUS worked with Impact Research and BSP Research to conduct a phone and text-to-web survey of 1,000 likely voters and an oversample of 850 Hispanic voters. The goal was to understand how Americans felt about the Trump Administration's actions on immigration—and what they want to see moving forward.

Here's what we learned:

- Voters have soured on Trump's reckless immigration enforcement campaign.
- Erosion on this issue among Hispanic voters is more acute, helping to erase their 2024 bump in support for both Trump and his party overall.
- There is widespread support for the entire range of reforms to ICE that are being considered by policymakers, and voters want to see those reforms enacted before the agency gets any more funding.

How Voters View Trump's Immigration Actions

The past year has not been kind to how Americans view President Trump or his mass deportation campaign. His favorability numbers have plummeted, as have those of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

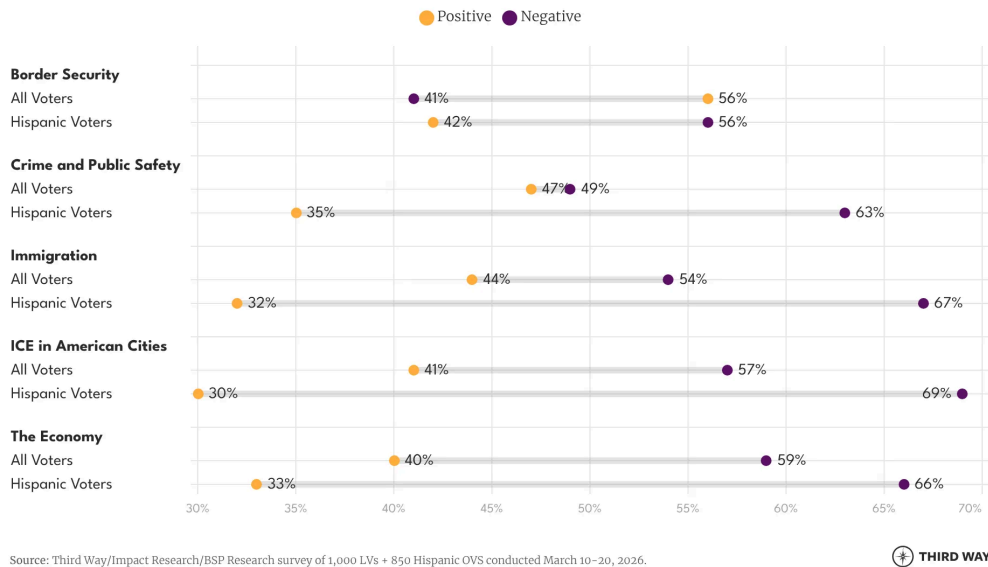
Right now, Trump's overall favorability rating stands at 44% favorable to 55% unfavorable, and he is underwater by 32 points (34% to 66%) with Latino voters. ICE has nearly identical marks, at 43% to 55% overall and 32% to 66% with Latinos. Customs and Border Protection is seen more favorably than ICE overall at 51% favorable to 44% unfavorable, but that agency too is currently underwater with Latinos by five points (45% to 50%).

Trump's job approval on immigration (44%) now mirrors his job approval overall (43%), a massive erosion from where he started on this issue. Support dips even lower to 41% when voters are asked about his use of federal agents such as ICE in American cities. This is a dramatic collapse for Trump on his signature issue, with approval especially low among Independents at just 38%.

Despite this turnabout on his immigration enforcement efforts, border security remains the only issue on which Trump's approval rating is *not* underwater. There, he sits at a 56% approval rating, nearly 10 points higher than his next best issue of crime and public safety at 47%. With Hispanics, Trump's approval on border security stands at 42%.

Donald Trump Approval on Issues

Q: Rate the job Donald Trump is doing on the following issue

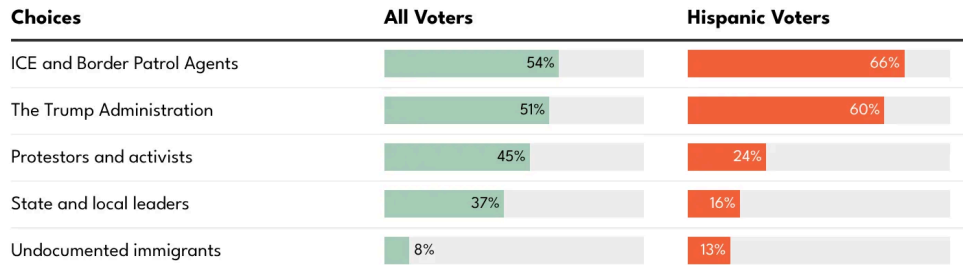


It is clear that the recent immigration enforcement actions involving the ICE officers and Border Patrol agents in Minneapolis and other cities across the US have broken through to the public. In all, 97% of voters say they have heard at least something about these events, with a majority of each group having heard a lot about them.

When asked which two groups deserved the most blame for clashes and unrest we've seen across major American cities, the Trump Administration and ICE and Border Patrol agents were the only two options that a majority of respondents named, with 51% blaming the Trump Administration and 54% blaming ICE and Border Patrol. Among Hispanics, those responses rose to 60% and 66%, respectively. Undocumented immigrants were the *least* likely to be blamed (8%), while protestors and activists received much more scrutiny. Even among Republicans, only 16% put the blame on undocumented immigrants, suggesting Trump and his DHS are not even aligned with their own partisans on this issue.

Who is to Blame for Clashes and Unrest?

Q: In your opinion, which TWO of the following deserve most of the blame for clashes and unrest between protestors and federal immigration officers and agents in Minneapolis and other cities across the US?



Source: Third Way/Impact Research/BSP Research survey of 1,000 LVs + 850 Hispanic OVS conducted March 10-20, 2026.



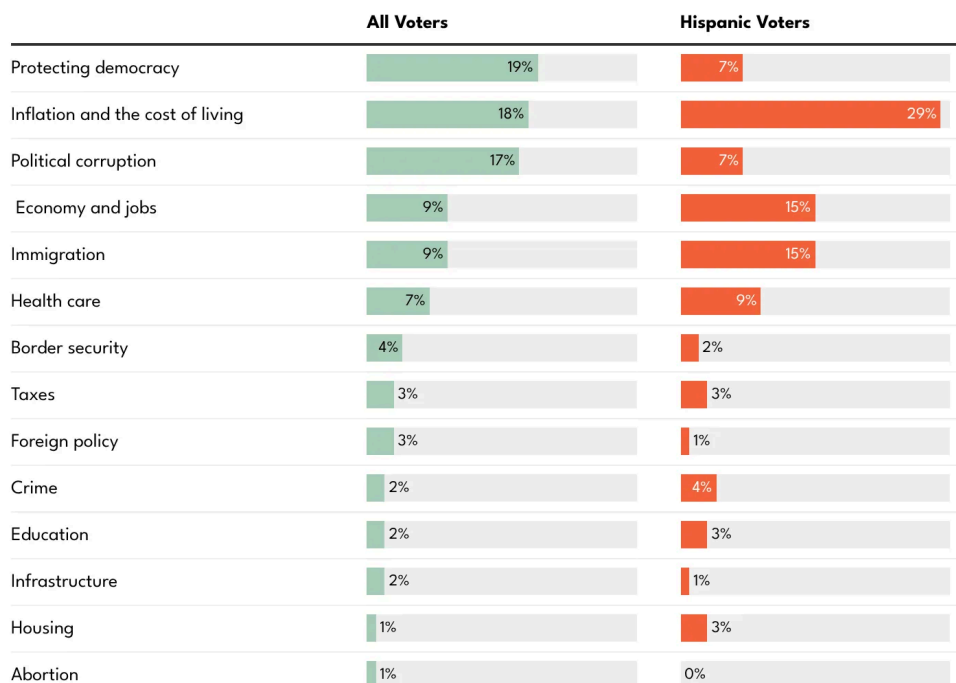
Trump's Erosion with Latino Voters

The Trump Administration's actions have damaged Latino voters' perceptions of President Trump and made their concerns much more salient.

When voters overall were asked what issue was most important for Congress to prioritize, protecting democracy, inflation and the cost of living, and political corruption all topped the list with 19%, 18%, and 17%, respectively. Only 9% said immigration was the most important priority. Among Latino voters, pocketbook issues continue to dominate, with inflation and cost of living at 29% and jobs and the economy at 15%. Notably, immigration was tied with jobs, with 15% saying it should be Congress's most important priority.

Most Important Issue for Congress

Q: Which of the following do you feel is the most important issue that Congress should make a top priority?



Source: Third Way/Impact Research/BSP Research survey of 1,000 LVs + 850 Hispanic OVS conducted March 10-20, 2026.



Disapproval of Trump’s immigration actions has impacted voters as a whole, but it appears to be a more significant factor shaping Latino voter views of the President and his party. Among all voters, the political parties are essentially tied in terms of favorability, with Democrats at 39% and Republicans at 38%. Among Latino voters, there is a wider gap: Republicans now have a 34% favorability rating.

This gap shows up on the general congressional ballot as well. Among all voters, Democrats have a four-point advantage, leading 45% to 41% when it comes to who folks plan to support in the coming midterms. Among Latino voters, Democrats have a 61% to 31% lead on the generic ballot, including a 22-point advantage among Latino men, more in line with historical voting patterns for Hispanics and far better than Kamala Harris did in 2024 with Hispanics.

Digging underneath those numbers, Latino voters say they trust Democrats in Congress more than Republicans in Congress on every issue we tested, though neither party gets

above 50% on any issue. Democrats enjoy their strongest trust advantage on immigration, where they were trusted nearly twice as much as Republicans (50% to 26%). Their weakest advantage was on border security (41% to 32%). This shows that Latino voters see these as two distinct issues, as does the whole electorate, who still trust Republicans by 20 points on the border.

Voters Want to See Change

Voters don't find the status quo on immigration enforcement to be acceptable. They want to see reforms, and they support the broad swath of transparency and accountability changes under discussion in Washington.

The following reforms all garner at least two-thirds support overall, including with Latino voters:

- Requiring immigration officers to use body cameras when interacting with the public (94% overall, 88% Latino);
- Expanding training requirements for ICE and immigration enforcement agents and requiring officer certification before they can start work (86% overall, 85% Latino);
- Requiring that ICE verifies that someone is not a US citizen prior to detaining them (84% overall, 86% Latino);
- Requiring that ICE have probable cause to believe someone is here illegally before detaining them (80% overall, 80% Latino);
- Allowing state and local police to investigate federal immigration officers if they are accused of using excessive force (72% overall, 81% Latino)
- Requiring federal agents to notify local authorities before conducting large-scale immigration enforcement operations in their cities or towns (71% overall, 82% Latino);
- Banning ICE and immigration enforcement agents from entering private property without a warrant (70% overall, 78% Latino);
- Requiring officers conducting immigration enforcement to wear uniforms and IDs displaying their agency, ID number, and last name (70% overall, 86% Latino);
- Ending immigration arrests in sensitive locations like places of worship, schools, and hospitals (66% overall, 78% Latino); and,
- Prohibiting immigration officers from stopping people based on their job, spoken language and accent, or their race and ethnicity (66% overall, 78% Latino).

We also asked respondents to identify the two changes they *most* wanted to see in terms of how ICE operates. Voters overall prioritized reforms that would ensure accountability and fairness. They gave high marks to body cameras (26%), requiring probable cause (23%), more training and certificates for agents (19%), and guaranteeing a court hearing (16%).

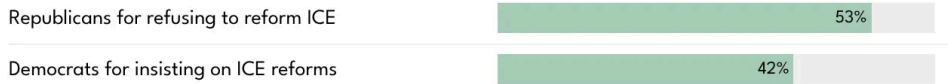
Latino voters had slightly different priorities, including requiring probable cause (26%) and body cameras (24%), but also banning ICE from stopping folks based on race, language, or job (23%), and banning arrests in certain sensitive locations (20%).

The Broader Picture

Given their strong support for these reforms, it is no surprise that voters are more likely to blame Republicans than Democrats for the current shutdown over Department of Homeland Security funding. Overall, respondents place more blame on Republicans for refusing to reform ICE than Democrats for insisting on ICE reforms, by an 11-point margin (53% to 42%). Among Independents, that gap grows to 15 points (54% to 39%), and among Latino voters, it rises to 29 points (62% to 33%).

Who Do You Blame for DHS Government Shutdown?

All Voters



Hispanic Votes



Source: Third Way/Impact Research/BSP Research survey of 1,000 LVs + 850 Hispanic OVS conducted March 10-20, 2026.



As a broader matter, a majority of voters feel like the actions of President Trump and Republicans have crossed a line.

- 55% of voters overall and 70% of Latino voters agree that “President Trump and Republicans have gone too far. We need an effective border and immigration system,

with enforcement that respects the rights and safety of American citizens and non-citizens alike.”

- That compares to 43% of all voters and 29% of Latinos who prefer the statement “President Trump and Republicans are on the right track. We need to do what’s necessary to secure our border, crack down on people coming in illegally, and deport anyone who broke the law coming here in the first place.”

And while there is a broad rejection of this Administration’s extreme and chaotic approach, most voters still believe there is a way to conduct immigration enforcement in this country that aligns with their values. A majority of voters (54%) and two-thirds of Latino voters oppose deporting all undocumented immigrants. Instead, there is supermajority support for targeted enforcement to remove undocumented immigrants with a criminal record or those who are recent arrivals without legal basis to stay (77%). In fact, the proportion of Latino voters who support that kind of targeted enforcement (68%) is nearly identical to the number who oppose deporting all undocumented immigrants (66%).

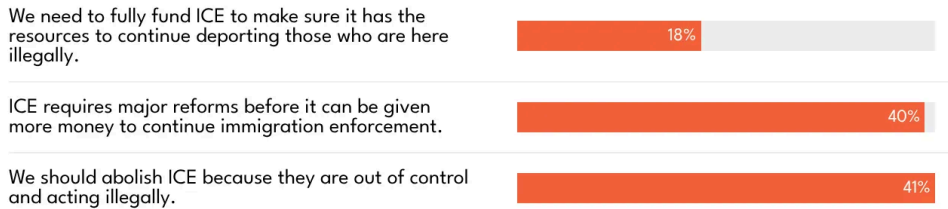
There is significant support for major reforms to ICE, with 59% of voters wanting to see significant action before ICE gets any additional funding, and only 40% saying ICE needs to be fully funded now. Among Latinos, a staggering 81% want policymakers to make major changes before passing funding for this agency, with a mere 18% saying ICE needs to be fully funded to continue its current operations. Of the 59% who want to see major changes at ICE, 27% of voters overall and 41% of Latino voters want to “Abolish ICE.” Another 32% of voters overall, including 40% of Latino voters, say “ICE requires major reforms before it can be given more money to continue immigration enforcement.”

Do You Want ICE Reforms Before Funding Continuation?

All Voters



Hispanic Votes



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Conclusion

Across the country, voters are rejecting what they're seeing from President Trump and his administration and demanding reforms to bring transparency and accountability to immigration enforcement operations. They believe the status quo is unacceptable, and that the changes under discussion are eminently reasonable. But they are not asking Washington to choose between immigration enforcement and guardrails—they are demanding both. And with Latino voters especially clear that the current approach has gone too far, policymakers who refuse these reforms are not defending public safety, they are ignoring a broad and growing public consensus.

