



# ***Public Attitudes on Immigration***

***August Battleground  
Survey Results***

***Presented by Global  
Strategy Group***



# Key Findings

- **The presidential battleground is toss-up** with Harris running similar to Biden in 2020, but ahead of where Biden was earlier this year.
- **Voters want a new approach to immigration, but Harris has substantial work to convince voters that she will do that.** While voters have more hope for Harris on immigration, few believe her approach will be different than Biden – meaning Harris starts at a deficit on this issue.
- **Securing the border is the top immigration priority for voters, including those who want to see Harris take a different approach than Biden.** Despite recent news, most voters believe illegal crossings at the border are going up.
- **Voters want to make sure security is included and a focus in all their solutions, but they continue to find appealing immigrant-focused proposals like fixing the legal immigration system and creating a pathway to citizenship – and the combination of these with security is more popular than border security on its own.**
- **Trump continues to have his own vulnerabilities on immigration, especially around family separation. When this is combined with a Harris positive message that hits the right notes, Trump's advantage on the issue can be eroded.** Trump's cruel family separation policies from the past remain much more unpopular than some of his future promises on immigration, and it's important to link family separation to his future plans.

# Battleground voters prioritize the economy, especially swing voters, while the importance of immigration and the border is largely driven by right-leaning opposition voters

Top Four Issues for the President and Congress to Focus On

	% top four most important	Hisp.	Base	Swing	Oppo
Inflation and the cost of living	68	70	53	74	80
Immigration and the border	41	42	15	35	72
Jobs and the economy	40	40	28	51	48
Social Security and Medicare	36	21	45	31	28
Abortion	33	38	56	25	13
Health care	27	32	39	29	13
Corruption in government	22	21	13	26	30
National security and foreign policy	21	17	10	15	37
Democracy	19	25	37	7	5
Crime	19	14	11	22	25
Climate change and the environment	19	20	32	17	5
Guns	14	11	21	10	8
Education	11	10	13	13	7
Student loans	5	10	7	5	2

7% of the electorate are “Immigration-sensitive swing voters” – they are swing voters who cite immigration as a top issue. A majority (57%) of these voters self-identify as Republican but only 36% are currently voting for Trump. They are younger and more moderate than the overall electorate. They are also less likely to live in the southwest (AZ, NV) where there is more polarization on the issue

# Voters have more hope for Harris on immigration than they did for Biden, but she has a lot of work to do convincing voters that she will take the right approach

Biden Presidency Immigration Approval



Harris Future Immigration Approach



Trump Presidency Immigration Approval

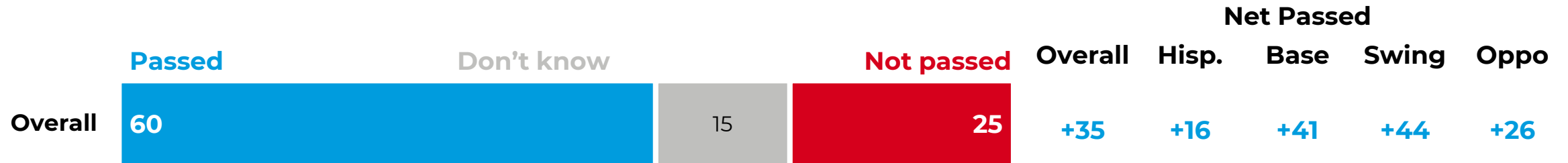


Trump Future Immigration Approach



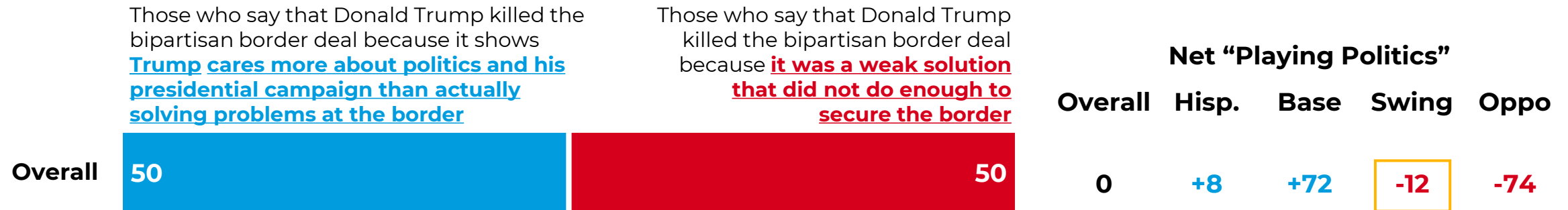
# The bipartisan immigration deal is broadly popular, but blame for its failure is mixed and voters move to partisan corners when debating its merits

As you may know, earlier this year, a bipartisan immigration deal was negotiated between Republicans and Democrats to increase funding for border security and make it more difficult for migrants to claim asylum. However, Congress did not pass it into law. What do you think should have happened with this bill?



*On a separate question, 36% of voters believe Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress are responsible for stopping this bill, while 35% believe Joe Biden and Democrats in Congress are responsible, and 16% believe they are equally responsible.*

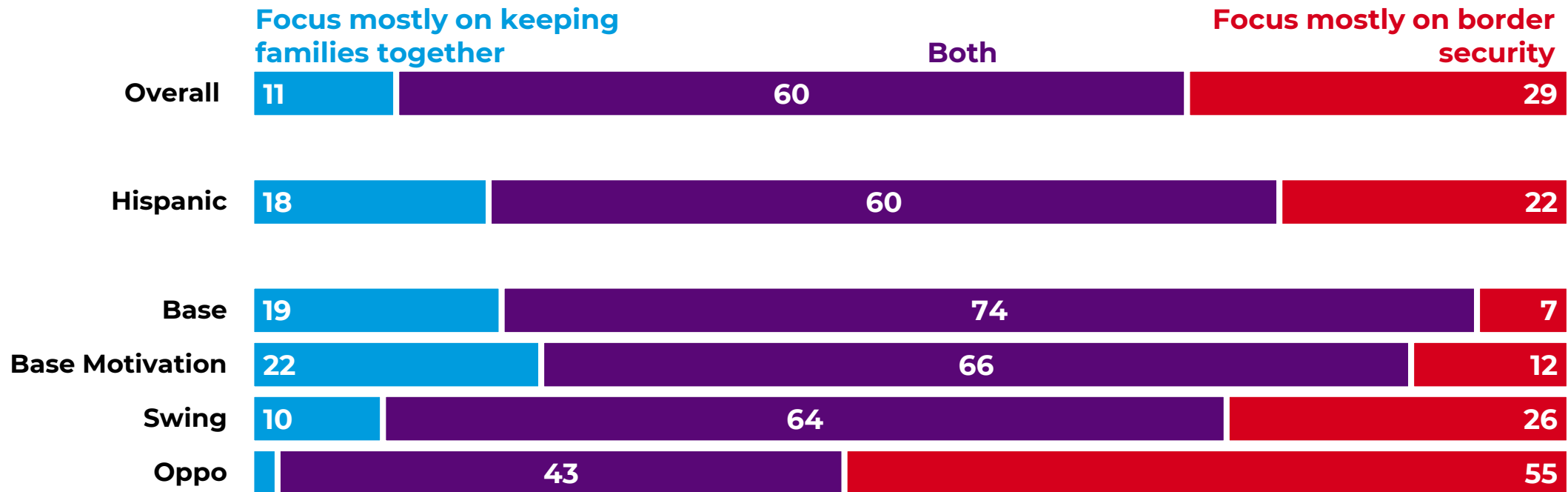
## Bipartisan Immigration Bill – Who Do You Agree with More



# While swing voters want strong border security, you don't lose them by adding in a focus on keeping families together – and in fact, a wide majority want an approach that includes both

## Preferred Focus of Next President

- Some people say it is important to **focus on securing the southern border**, ensuring that we reduce illegal immigration and keep our country safe and secure
- Some people say it is important to **focus on keeping families together**, ensuring children and immigrants who have lived here for many years have a path to staying in the country legally



Base motivation voters are either base voters with a 0 – 8 motivation to vote, or swing voters who cast at least one vote for Harris throughout the survey, but never vote for Trump.

# One challenge with focusing exclusively on the border is that even when the numbers drop, voters don't believe it – making it hard to win an argument about progress on this issue

As far as you know, compared to a few years ago, have the number of illegal crossings at the southern border gone up, down, or are they about the same?\*



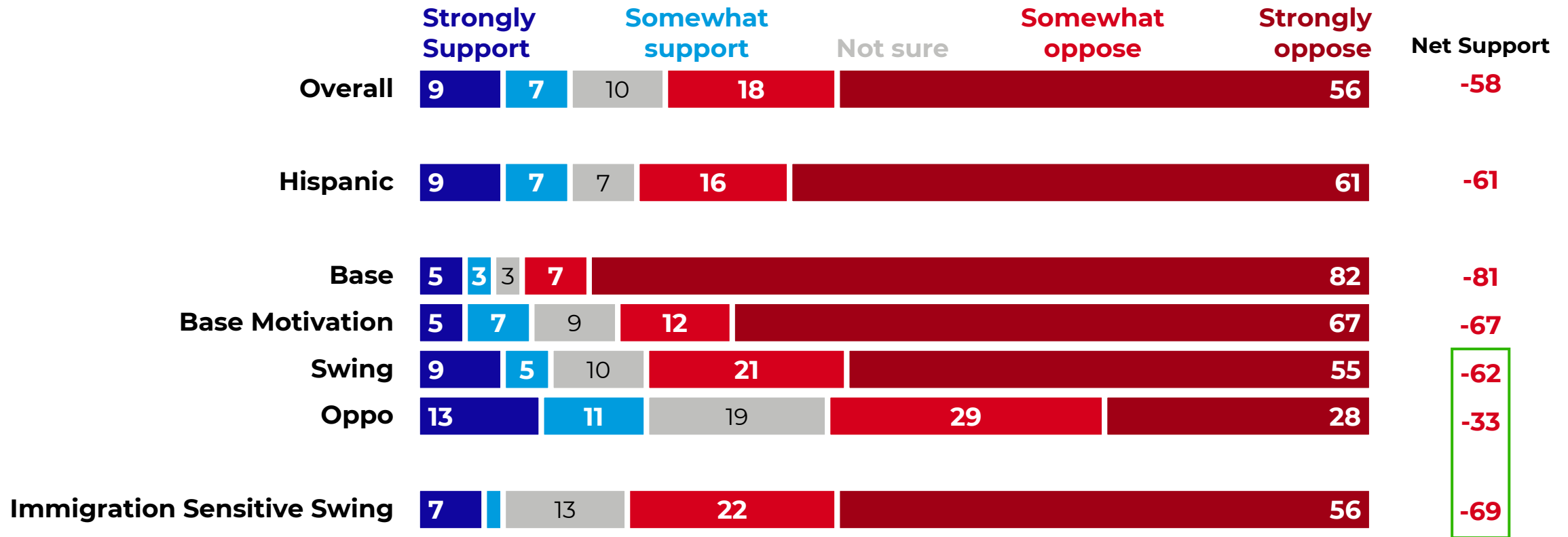
As far as you know, compared to the end of last year (2023), have the number of illegal crossings at the southern border gone up, down, or are they about the same?\*



\*/\*\* Denotes split sample.

# Trump's family separation policy remains incredibly unpopular and is even net negative with Trump's base of support

**Family Separation at the Border:** Bringing back the policy of separating immigrant children from their parents at the border.





# A variety of anti-Trump messages test at effective levels, with killing the border deal on par with family separation and Trump being anti-immigrant with swing voters

## Anti-Trump Messaging

Overall	Hispanic	Swing	Imm. Sensitive Swing^	
52	60	46	45	<b>[CRUEL/FAMILY SEPARATION]</b> When he was President, Donald Trump put in place cruel and inhumane immigration policies, including separating children from their parents at the border, that are out of step with American values. If he is re-elected, he will pursue those same cruel, inhumane immigration policies.*
51	59	45	44	<b>[MASS DEPORTATIONS]</b> If he wins back the Presidency, Donald Trump has vowed to pursue mass deportation. He has said it would be the largest deportation in our nation's history. His plan involves huge military and national guard operations in U.S. cities to round up, detain, and deport millions of people who are long-settled and living peacefully in our communities, including Dreamers who came here as children, and others who have lived and worked here for decades.
51	60	46	43	<b>[MAGA/HATE &amp; VIOLENCE]</b> Donald Trump stokes fear, hate, and racism towards Latino families in the way he speaks about immigrants, calling them “animals” who are “poisoning the blood of our country,” – which has emboldened white supremacists and MAGA extremists and made immigrants targets for hate and violence.
49	60	43	41	<b>[PROJECT 2025]</b> Donald Trump and his MAGA allies has an extreme plan for America called Project 2025 that includes cruel and unlawful immigration policies, including mass family separation at the border, building sprawling detention camps to detain millions of families and children, and using the military to deport immigrants in schools, hospitals, and churches across the country.
49	55	46	47	<b>[KILLED THE BORDER DEAL]</b> Donald Trump stopped a bipartisan border security deal from becoming law – showing he cares more about winning and scoring political points than solving our immigration problem. Even though conservative Republicans in Congress negotiated the strongest border security deal in decades, Trump told them not to vote for it because he doesn’t want to help Democrats to solve the problem at the border during an election year.
47	55	39	34	<b>[FURTHER SEPARATION]</b> When he was President, Donald Trump put in place cruel and inhumane immigration policies, including separating children from their parents at the border. If he is re-elected, he will pursue those same cruel immigration policies, but promises to go even further – separating families of undocumented immigrants not just at the border, but across the country.**

# Top concerns about mass deportation center around family separation, foster care crisis, and authoritarian style raids

## Top Two Most Concerning Statements – Mass Deportation

	<i>% top two most concerning</i>	Hisp.	Base	Swing	Oppo	Imm. Sensitive Swing
It would separate millions of children under 18 from their parents, tearing apart millions of families and creating a foster care crisis on a level the country has never seen before	31	41	42	37	15	40
It would turn the United States into an Authoritarian police state, with the military and hundreds of thousands of immigration police conducting raids at schools, hospitals, and churches across the country	31	33	48	32	11	30
It would mean finding, arresting and deporting people who have lived here for decades, and children who have known no other home than America	26	26	38	28	13	15
It would mean deporting millions and millions farmworkers, restaurant workers, and other service workers across the country, leading to more inflation and higher food costs	24	29	30	27	15	28
It would allow the military to arrest and deport millions of people without due process or seeing a judge, including those who are legally living here temporarily	22	25	33	20	11	23
It would require massive new prison camps, like the Japanese internment camps the United States built during World War II	16	17	21	16	9	13
It would bring deportation police into our schools – targeting for deportation children who lived here their whole lives and even teachers who are Dreamers and grew up here	14	18	19	16	8	21
It would allow the military and immigration police to use hospital records, and services like public transportation and DMVs, to identify and arrest people	10	11	12	10	7	8
None of these are concerning to me/I don't believe these statements	27	19	4	22	55	25

# Cruelty without solutions and harm to children, along with the disconnect from American values, are the most alarming aspects of family separation

Top Two Most Concerning – Family Separation

	<i>% top two concerning</i>	Hisp.	Base	Swing	Oppo	Imm. Sensitive Swing
This policy was cruelty for the sake of being cruel, and did nothing to solve the situation at the border	36	40	61	32	10	32
This policy is not in line with American values or who we should be as a country	32	29	43	33	20	33
This policy led to long-term psychological harm and trauma for millions of immigrant children	30	42	41	36	15	32
This policy was a complete embarrassment for the country as we completely lost track of children for years	19	26	25	20	11	18
This policy was against the law and federal judges ruled against it	11	9	12	17	6	17
None of these are concerning to me/I don't believe these statements	29	20	4	22	59	24

# Key Takeaways

- **Harris needs to convince voters that she will take a new and different approach on immigration that is active and addresses border security, but still differentiates from Trump by offering common sense solutions for the future.** While securing the border is critical to convey, voters also respond to ideas around fixing the legal immigration system and keeping families together, which differentiate Harris from Trump's less popular enforcement-only approach.
- **Talking about providing safe, legal ways for immigrants who follow the rules to contribute to the country is an effective way of doing that.** In multiple places in the poll, this language does well, whether it's in the context of fixing the system, keeping families together, or legalizing specified populations of undocumented immigrants.
- **Trump has his share of vulnerabilities on the issue, especially around family separation. Killing the border deal is one piece of that but it's not the only vulnerability.** Swing voters, in particular, detest Trump's cruel family separation policies and his anti-immigrant posture.
- **Voters are more negative to some of the mechanisms of mass deportation, such as family separation and rounding up people in communities, than to mass deportation in the abstract.**

*“When I’m elected, I’ll bring a new approach and solutions on day one. No more playing politics; no more inaction and delay. Donald Trump blew up a bipartisan border security deal I helped negotiate with conservative Republicans because he’s selfish, only cares about himself, and thought doing so would help him politically. He only promises chaos and to resume his horrible family separation policy, to take kids from their parents and expand it to rip apart millions of families across the country. I’ll secure the border. I’ll finally get an earned pathway to citizenship done. We can keep families together and secure the border. No more politics. I’m taking a new, serious approach and getting this done.”*