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National UMass Amherst Poll Finds Nearly One-Third of Republicans Believe Immigrants are ‘Poisoning the Blood of the Country’

The poll also found declining support for reparations – but a high degree of support for DEI initiatives – and partisan division over the role women should have in determining if a medical emergency should allow for an abortion

Topline results and crosstabs for the poll can be found at www.umass.edu/poll

AMHERST, Mass. – A new national [University of Massachusetts Amherst Poll](#) examining Americans’ views on issues including race, immigration and abortion has found that one-fifth of respondents – and nearly one-third of Republicans – agree with former President Donald Trump’s claim that immigrants are “poisoning the blood of the country.”

The extensive poll of 1,064 respondents, [further results of which](#) have been released over the past 10 days, was conducted Jan. 25-30.

“In recent months, Donald Trump echoed the rhetoric of the Nazis when he proclaimed that immigrants were ‘poisoning the blood of the country,’” says [Jesse Rhodes](#), professor of political science at UMass Amherst and co-director of the poll. “About 1 in 5 Americans agrees with this sentiment. Support is even stronger on the political right, where about 1 in 3 Republicans (31%) and Trump supporters (35%) agree.”

Rhodes says that poll shows that a growing number of Americans appear to be embracing xenophobic attitudes, such as the “Great Replacement Theory,” with their ire directed specifically at immigrants.

“Nearly 40% of Americans believe that increased immigration threatens American culture and identity,” he says, “and an even larger faction, 43%, believe that political elites are welcoming immigrants to replace the current population with obedient voters who will vote for them. Americans’ feelings are much more negative toward immigrants than toward African Americans or Jewish Americans, two other groups that have historically borne the brunt of hostility from other Americans. It appears that xenophobia is a form of discrimination that is still socially acceptable, at least in some circles.

“However,” Rhodes adds, “while the poll found that many Americans endorse many tenets of the Great Replacement Theory, a majority (53%) still embraces the belief that racial and ethnic diversity is a source of national strength.”

[Tatishe Nteta](#), provost professor of political science at UMass Amherst and director of the poll, points out that the poll found similar levels of support for a slate of immigration reforms, although each still faces significantly less favor from those on the right.

“Even though the number of asylum seekers at the U.S. southern border is reaching historic levels and Congress seemed poised to pass bipartisan legislation that sought to address the situation at the border and the nation’s immigration system, in the wake of objections voiced by former President Donald Trump, Republicans in both the House and Senate torpedoed the chances for comprehensive immigration reform this year,” Nteta says. “And while immigration reform is seemingly dead in the water, majorities of Americans support what would be sweeping immigration reforms, most notably allowing the children of undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally to gain citizenship (63%) and providing a pathway to citizenship for the nation’s tens of millions of undocumented citizens (52%). With the Congress once again incapacitated by partisan conflict, immigration reform – while popular – once again remains off the nation’s agenda.”

“This suggests that most Americans retain empathy for unauthorized immigrants and view them as potential citizens and full members of the American community,” Rhodes says. “Democrats and Republicans should take note that there is a strong – though often ‘silent’ – contingent of Americans who want the federal government to enact policies that will grant citizenship to people who, though they may have entered the U.S. illegally, make important contributions to our society.”

Slavery, Reparations and DEI

The poll also gauged respondents’ views on a number of race-related issues, including views on the impact of the nation’s legacy of slavery and efforts to implement DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) initiatives to attempt to educate about and effect change based on America’s racial history.

“As the nation continues on its steady march toward the ‘promised land’ of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.’s dreams and continues the struggle of upholding its egalitarian ideals in the face of racial prejudice, discrimination and violence, clear majorities of Americans recognize the continued privilege experienced by white Americans (53%), express anger at the continued existence and influence of racism (72%) and push back on the notion that racial problems are isolated and rare situations (52%),” Nteta says. “However, in more evidence of how the partisan divide may also reflect the nation’s divide on race, Democrats and Republicans express diametrically opposed views on the racial progress of the nation with larger swaths of Republicans expressing skepticism regarding the existence of white privilege, less likely to see racial problems as systemic,

and exhibiting less anger concerning the existence of racism when compared to Democrats.”

Nteta says the new poll did find a low level of knowledge among respondents regarding the nation’s ‘original sin’ of slavery and the effort to abolish the institution as the cause of the Civil War.

“When asked recently by a New Hampshire resident what the central cause of the Civil War was,” Nteta says, “former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley focused primarily on states’ rights and the relationship with the federal government, failing to mention the issue of slavery. While Haley’s reluctance to pinpoint slavery as a central cause of the bloodiest war in American history elicited widespread ridicule and admonishment, our results suggest that Haley is not alone in identifying states’ rights as the main cause of the Civil War. Four in 10 Americans (41%) agree with this statement with strong majorities of Republicans, conservatives, and Trump voters also embracing the notion that states’ rights primarily led 13 states in the Confederacy to formally secede from the United States.”

As for the possibility of descendants of Black slaves receiving reparations, Nteta says their polling has found declining support for the idea since they first started asking about it [in April 2021](#).

“In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd and reignition of the Black Lives Matter Movement, the policy of reparations emerged as an increasingly popular solution to the problem of racial inequality in the United States with close to 4 in 10 Americans (38%) expressing support for the policy of reparations directed at the descendants of slaves,” Nteta says. “In response, a number of localities, states, colleges and universities have begun to explore and even pass reparations policies, but the momentum toward a national reparations policy may be waning. Support for a federal reparations program has declined by 4% among all Americans, and groups such as Democrats, liberals and African Americans all have exhibited steep declines in their level of support for the program since 2021. As states such as New York and California begin to debate statewide reparations programs, our results suggest that proponents of these programs may no longer have a rising tide of public support for reparations behind them.”

[Raymond La Raja](#), professor of political science at UMass Amherst and co-director of the poll, says that while support for reparations may be waning, support for DEI is – perhaps surprisingly – somewhat strong.

“For all the polarizing talk in the news about DEI, roughly half of Americans have told us they have not heard much – or anything at all – about DEI,” La Raja says. “When asked to describe DEI, most simply talk in terms of pursuing equality or including everyone. Moreover, the vast majority of Americans believe that many professions actually should receive DEI training, including medical professionals (71%), teachers (71%), members of the armed forces (70%) and especially police officers (73%).”

La Raja also points to the survey's responses regarding the implementation of diversity efforts in Hollywood and pro sports, saying, "relatively few Americans oppose greater efforts to increase racial and gender diversity in high profile fields, such as film and television, or in hiring NFL coaches. For example, just 24% of Americans oppose the NFL's 'Rooney Rule' which requires each team to interview at least two external racial minority candidates for an open head coaching position."

Abortion

Following the state-by-state laws regarding abortion access – or lack thereof – enacted following the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs*, the new UMass Amherst Poll also asked respondents to identify the circumstances under which "medical emergencies" should allow for abortions and who should make such determinations.

"Some states restrict abortions considerably, and only allow for medical emergencies to have abortions beyond these restrictions," La Raja says. "We find there is widespread agreement that a pregnancy that would result in the death of the mother is considered a medical emergency (77%), but partisan divisions emerge clearly under other kinds of conditions that affect the mother. For example, 69% of Democrats believe that it is a medical emergency if the pregnancy will result in complications that will prevent the mother from participating in normal day-to-day activities permanently; however, only 40% of Republicans would call this an emergency. Similarly, 56% of Democrats believe it is a medical emergency if the pregnancy will result in the mother becoming unable to have children in the future, but only 26% of Republicans feel this way. In so many ways, partisans simply disagree on abortion-related decisions.

"Partisans are in alignment, though, on whether a health provider should be among those making the final decision about whether an abortion is medically necessary," La Raja continues, "and they also strongly agree that the courts should not be a part of this decision. But where they disagree on this topic is what role a pregnant woman should have in this decision – 70% of Democrats believe she should make the final decision about medical necessity, while just 38% of Republicans feel this way."

Methodology

This [University of Massachusetts Amherst Poll](#) of 1,064 respondents nationwide was conducted by YouGov Jan. 25-30. YouGov interviewed 1,064 total respondents none of whom were matched out to produce the final dataset. The unmatched cases were weighted to a sampling frame using propensity scores. The sampling frame is a politically representative "modeled frame" of U.S. adults, based upon the American Community Survey (ACS) public use microdata file, public voter file records, the 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration supplements, the 2020 National Election Pool (NEP) exit poll and the 2020 CES surveys, including demographics and 2020 presidential vote.

The unmatched cases and the frame were combined, and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, region and home ownership status. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame, and then post-stratified according to these deciles. The weights were then post-stratified on 2020 presidential vote choice, as well as a four-way stratification of gender, age (4-categories), race (4-categories) and education (4-categories), to produce the final weight.

The margin of error of this poll is 3.7%.

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