

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES  
FROM: IMMIGRATION HUB  
DATE: 26 JULY 2020  
RE: **NEW SWING VOTERS PERSUADED ON IMMIGRATION IN BATTLEGROUND STATES**

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On behalf of the Immigration Hub, Civis Analytics developed an immigration voter model of swing voters in Colorado, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The goal of the project was to determine if there is a group of voters in these states that can be moved against Republicans and towards Democrats when exposed to the right immigration messaging. The two-phase project began with message testing and ended with custom modeling to find the audience.

Based on a survey of over 9,000 voters, Civis built a group of predictive models to identify nearly 6 million voters across these four states who are most likely to be persuaded by the Immigration Hub's immigration content and moved towards Democrats. The most successful ads centered on values-based narratives to counter Trump's position on immigration: (1) a direct-to-camera military veteran testimonial on Trump's border policies and (2) the story of an American senior citizen who relies on an immigrant home health worker.

Civis tested ads exclusively on immigration that targeted moderate voters, the very voters the Trump campaign is targeting and hoping to sway for his re-election. The predictive model demonstrates that there are voters in this critical bloc who can be moved on pro-immigration messaging to counter Trump and persuade voters to elect Democrats.

## **FAMILY PATRIOTS: SWING VOTERS PERSUADED BY AMERICAN VALUES AND COMMON RELIANCE**

These predictive models were developed by analyzing the movement of voters towards a Democrat over Trump after voters were exposed to the Hub's ads discussing immigration. Ultimately, we identified a bloc of voters - that we call "family patriots" - who were persuaded by narratives in the creative that elevate core American values - patriotism, unity and fairness - and the familiar connection and interdependency between immigrants and non-immigrants.

### **What We Found**

- There are moderate voters that exist and can be moved towards Democrats when exposed to the right immigration messaging. The model identified 5.91 million voters (adults 18+) across CO, MI, PA, and WI that meet this criteria.
- Based on voter file characteristics, the most persuadable voters skewed suburban, white, not college-educated, and male. Across all four states, this bloc of voters was more susceptible to being moved by the Immigration Hub's ads. The *inclusion of some white non-college men may be counterintuitive*, but we found that many audiences that are more sympathetic to immigrants (i.e. white college women and people of color) are already supportive of Democrats and their position on immigration.
- Notably, these persuadable voters do not only skew more male, white and suburban, but they are also mostly Moderate voters. In fact, across all four states, "41% of the persuadable voters are Moderates, while 40% are "Lean Democratic" and 19% are "Lean Republican".
  - Among the states, 29% of the total Wisconsin population are in the persuadable audience who can be moved towards Democrats, 24% of Michiganders, 25% of Coloradans, and 9% of Pennsylvanians.
  - Of the persuadable population who "Lean Republican", they are younger, more white, more college educated, and significantly more male.

- Of note, when we tested voter's persuadability based on their immigration attitude, we found that the most persuadable audience was a bloc of voters who skew more male, white, rural, and Democrat-leaning.
- The survey also found that support is the highest for a *pathway to citizenship*, with 77% of all voters surveyed. Additionally, 66% of voters surveyed support *ending the policy of separating parents* from their children at the border, while 75% of voters surveyed support *focusing deportation on public safety threats*, such as drug smugglers and human traffickers, instead of the deportation of all undocumented immigrants.

## DEMOCRATS MUST SOCIALIZE THEIR VISION FOR IMMIGRATION, NOT CEDE THE ISSUE TO TRUMP

Immigration will be one of the top issues weaponized by President Trump's re-election campaign. According to [POLITICO](#), "President Donald Trump and his top aides are planning to rev up their campaign machine in the coming days with an aggressive focus on voters' perceived fears about crime, China and **immigration** — invoking parts of their successful 2016 strategy as they try to regain ground lost in recent months."

The Trump campaign's digital investment in 2020 is already demonstrating a repeat of the campaign's xenophobic 2016 tactics. In the last ten months, [Bully Pulpit Interactive](#) found that the Trump campaign has spent over \$3.3 million dollars on immigration ads on Facebook alone. Between March 8 and May 16, the campaign [spent](#) over \$623,000 on Facebook ads centered on immigration, on par with "Fake News" and topping all other issues.

Despite recent Democratic successes in [2018](#) and [2019](#) in defeating Republican immigration attacks, Trump can still be effective in using the issue as a wedge if Democrats fail to respond effectively. In [polling with Global Strategy Group](#), the Immigration Hub found that swing voters are susceptible to Trump's messaging if heard in a vacuum. But when those same voters hear a contrasting vision — one that focuses on humane solutions to fix the nation's immigration system — they side with the progressive viewpoint and reject Trump's cruel approach.

While Democrats don't need to make immigration the centerpiece of their campaign, it is critical that Trump is not the only voice on immigration in 2020. His campaign is counting on supplementing their base vote with a set of swing voters who they intend to move with anti-immigrant messaging to help reelect Trump and Republican candidates in battleground states. **Democrats have an opportunity to counter Trump's strategy: There is a segment of swing voters who can be persuaded with values-based messaging on immigration to vote for Democratic candidates.**

## METHODOLOGY

Commissioned by the Immigration Hub, Civis Analytics conducted a web-based survey and video tests from February 27 through March 24, 2020 among 9,639 adults 18+ in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Colorado. The survey and video tests were designed to both conduct a message test and to collect opinions on immigration and immigration policy. Three video messages were created by the Immigration Hub, and a public Trump campaign ad was used as the fourth video message. Civis's RCT (Randomized Control Trial) method was used to conduct the message test - with one control group, one group that sees a Trump ad, and three groups that each see a separate Immigration Hub ad. Persuasion models were built using voter file characteristics to identify the persuadable audiences. As follows, individual and demographic model results are based on voter file characteristics, as well as modeled characteristics, such as partisanship.