PERRY UNDEM

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# Americans' Views on Immigration Enforcement and Access to Benefits for Immigrant Families

Findings from a National Survey

The Protecting Immigrant Families coalition worked with PerryUndem, a non-partisan research firm, to conduct a national survey about current feelings toward immigration enforcement efforts and potential impacts on immigrant families.[1] The study, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, specifically looked at access to social services and public benefits, and how immigration enforcement and eligibility restrictions may be affecting U.S. citizens and lawfully present immigrants.

The survey results show more agreement and common ground on immigration issues than might be expected. They suggest the public wants a shift in approach to immigration enforcement and to limit negative impacts on immigrant families. There is also bipartisan agreement that U.S. citizens in immigrant families, and those who are in the country legally, should be free from harassment and intimidation, and should be able to access social services and benefits when they struggle. Importantly, by a 3-to-1 ratio, they support restoring Medicaid benefits to immigrants who are in the U.S. legally, which were taken away under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. A majority also believes ICE agents should not be allowed to use Medicaid data for deportation reasons. Here are the details:

- **Nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults (64%) say they disapprove of how Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is handling its job.** There are partisan differences, with majorities of Democrats (92%) and Independents (74%) disapproving, and just 27% of Republicans disapproving of how ICE is handling its job.

- **A majority of U.S. adults (66%) feel ICE enforcement efforts have "gone too far."** One-quarter say they are "about right" (26%), and only 7% feel they "don't go far enough." Once again, there are partisan differences – 92% of Democrats and 71% of Independents agree ICE efforts have gone too far, while 36% of Republicans say the same.

- **Most agree ICE agents should not be allowed to detain and arrest U.S. citizens and immigrants who are in the country legally.** There is bipartisan agreement on this, with majorities across political party agreeing that ICE agents should not be allowed to detain and arrest U.S. citizens (80%) or those who are in the country legally (69%). (TABLE 1)

[1] This was a 10-question survey fielded using NORC's nationally representative AmeriSpeak Omnibus from March 5 to 8, 2026. The survey included 1,133 nationally representative U.S. adults age 18 and older. The margin of sampling error for the total results is ± 4.01 percentage points.

- **The majority of U.S. adults do not support ICE agents detaining and arresting people at schools, hospitals, health clinics, or local non-profits providing social services.** Specifically, a majority of U.S. adults say ICE agents should not be allowed to detain and arrest someone at their child's school (68%), in the hospital in their neighborhood (60%), in a health clinic in their neighborhood (58%), or in an office of a local non-profit organization that helps people with things like food, housing, and childcare (54%). (TABLE 1)

**TABLE 1**

| Q: When conducting immigration enforcement, do you think ICE agents should be allowed to detain and arrest someone…<br><br>***% No, should not be allowed*** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | TOTAL | Dem | Ind | Rep |
| … who is a U.S. citizen? | 80% | 94% | 87% | 62% |
| …who is an immigrant in the U.S. legally? | 69% | 83% | 66% | 57% |
| …at their child's school? | 68% | 92% | 75% | 38% |
| …in the hospital in your neighborhood? | 60% | 87% | 63% | 29% |
| …in a health clinic in your neighborhood? | 58% | 86% | 61% | 27% |
| …in an office of a local non-profit organization that helps people with things like food, housing, and childcare? | 54% | 83% | 56% | 22% |

- **There is a shared perception that U.S. citizens in immigrant families are being negatively impacted by current ICE enforcement efforts.** Nearly three-quarters (74%) agree that it is likely that U.S. citizens in immigrant families are experiencing negative effects such as intimidation and being wrongfully detained because of current ICE enforcement efforts (D 91%, I 77%, R 54%).

- **Majorities would be concerned if current enforcement efforts caused U.S. citizens in immigrant families to avoid hospitals, experience hunger, avoid doctors, lose income, or not sign themselves up for public benefits.** Specifically, most say they would be concerned if enforcement efforts caused U.S. citizens to avoid hospitals even when injured (Total 70%, D 91%, I 73%, R 48%), experience hunger because they are afraid to go to food banks (Total 69%, D 90%, I 71%, R 48%), avoid doctors and health clinics when they need medical care (Total 68%, D 91%, I 70%, R 45%), lose income because they feel unsafe in their jobs (Total 67%, D 90%, I 69%, R 44%), or not sign themselves or their children up for programs like Medicaid or SNAP even though they are eligible (Total 64%, D 89%, I 65%, R 38%).

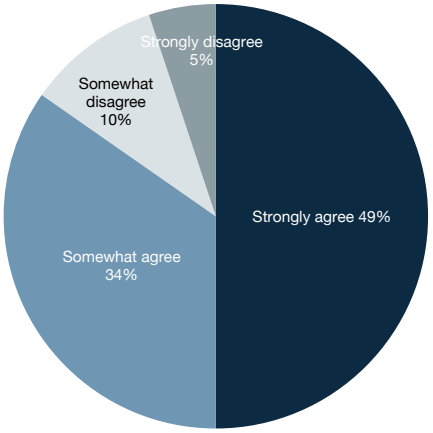
- **There is bipartisan agreement that those who are in the U.S. legally should be able to get help with things like food and healthcare when they struggle.** More than 8 in 10 (83%) believe that noncitizens who are in the U.S. legally (such as people with green cards)

and who pay U.S. taxes should be able to get help with things like food and healthcare when they go through hard times. Majorities across party ID agree (D 92%, I 84%, R 74%). (FIGURE 1)

**FIGURE 1**

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"Noncitizens who are in the U.S. legally (such as people with green cards) and who pay U.S. taxes should be able to get help with things like food and healthcare when they go through hard times."

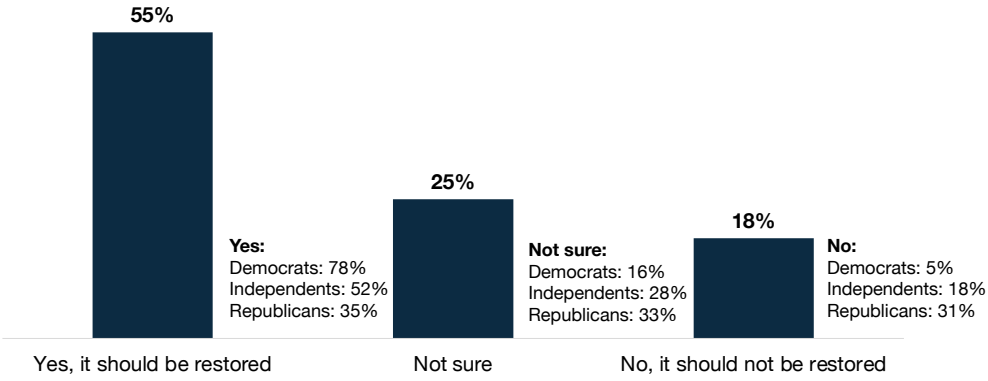



**NET Agree: 83%**
Democrats: 92%
Independents: 84%
Republicans: 74%

- **A majority believes Medicaid should be restored to immigrants who are in the U.S. legally.** When they learn that a recent law restricted access to federally-funded Medicaid for many immigrants who are in the U.S. legally, by a ratio of 3-to-1 (55% vs 18%) U.S. adults say Medicaid should be restored for these immigrants who are in the U.S. legally. (FIGURE 2)

**FIGURE 2**

Q. Last year, policymakers took away Medicaid for many immigrants who are in the U.S. legally, including refugees, people seeking asylum, and sex trafficking survivors. Do you think Medicaid should be restored for immigrants who are in the U.S. legally?




**Yes:**
Democrats: 78%
Independents: 52%
Republicans: 35%

**Not sure:**
Democrats: 16%
Independents: 28%
Republicans: 33%

**No:**
Democrats: 5%
Independents: 18%
Republicans: 31%

- **A bipartisan majority believes it is likely that some people intentionally mislead the public about immigrants using public benefits in order to build support for policies that exclude immigrants.** Seven-in-ten U.S. adults (72%) believe it is likely that "some people mislead the public about immigrants using government programs in order to build political support for policies that exclude immigrants from those programs" (D 87%, I 64%, R 63%).

- **Most oppose ICE agents using Medicaid data for deportation efforts.** The majority of U.S. adults (58%) oppose ICE agents using Medicaid data to identify and locate immigrants for deportation, although there are differences based on party ID (D 86%, I 61%, R 27%).

For more information or to ask questions about this survey, contact Michael Perry at mike@perryundem.com.