To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group on behalf of the Immigration Hub and Voto Latino
Date: April 18th, 2023
Re: NEW SURVEY – Battleground state voters want balance in their approach to immigration that includes both security and solutions for Dreamers and the undocumented

On behalf of the Immigration Hub and Voto Latino, Global Strategy Group recently conducted public opinion research on the issue of immigration. This memo reflects the findings from a survey fielded April 4th-11th, 2023 among 1,201 likely voters in 2024 presidential battleground states (AZ, GA, MI, NC, NV, PA, WI). Key findings are as follows:

Voters disapprove of the way both parties are handling immigration. But, Democrats face a tougher public opinion environment on the issue because voters don't know where they stand on immigration. Voters give both President Biden (-26 approval) and the Republicans in Congress (-18) negative ratings on the issue of immigration. However, voters report they hear more from Republicans than Democrats on immigration by a 52%-27% margin, which contributes to Republicans' 8-point advantage on who voters trust more to handle the issue. A majority of voters think President Biden is ignoring problems at the border (52%) and the situation involving Dreamers and the undocumented (50%).

Voters see the immigration system as deeply broken – and want Washington to act. They also want a balanced solution that is secure AND humane; they want both border security *and* a pathway to citizenship. Nearly all voters (82%) think the immigration system is broken. The top two words voters use to describe their ideal immigration system are *"secure"* and *"humane."* Both *"increasing border security"* (76% view it positively) AND *"providing pathways to citizenship"* (75%) are very popular concepts. Further, voters far prefer a balanced versus an enforcement-only approach:
- 68% of all voters, including 74% of swing voters, want "*a balanced approach that includes both border security and protects Dreamers, providing them and other eligible immigrants with a pathway to citizenship.*"
- Only 32% of all voters, and only 26% of swing voters, want "*an enforcement-only approach that exclusively focuses on border security and limiting the use of asylum.*"

A popular approach to immigration with voters from both parties includes increasing border security and policies like providing pathways to citizenship, issuing work permits for Dreamers, expanding TPS, and expanding legal pathways to immigration.
- On the security side, 65% have a positive view of "*modernizing and improving the physical infrastructure at high-volume ports of entry to enhance screening and processing.*" An earlier poll we conducted also found cracking down on drug cartels to be very popular (81% positive).
- On the side of Dreamers and the undocumented, 76% want a way for them to "*gain legal status and a pathway to citizenship if certain requirements are met, including background checks,*" and 64% support the Biden administration using its TPS authority.

Voters strongly support policies to protect DACA recipients and other immigrants from deportation. There is strong, majority support (69% support/21% oppose) for President Biden to take action that makes it easier for undocumented immigrants, including DACA recipients, who meet certain criteria to apply for work permits and protection from deportation. Key criteria include passing criminal background checks and living in the U.S. for 10 years or more.

Those advocating for these proposals can use widely appealing and effective messaging that appeals to both base Democrats and swing voters. Key aspects of this messaging emphasize values ("we are a nation of immigrants"), immigrant contributions (emphasizing the direct economic ones), and highlights Dreamers, who are a very sympathetic group. Examples of effective messages that appeal to both the Democratic base and the persuadable middle include:

- *We are a nation of immigrants: nearly everyone in America has ancestors who came here as immigrants. Immigration is part of our past, present, and future, and it is crucial to who we are as a country.*
- *Immigrants belong to our communities as much as any other American – they build and own small businesses, pay state and local taxes, work hard, and send their children to the same schools as ours.*
- *We have millions of Dreamers, undocumented immigrant children who know no other home than the U.S. They want to go to college here, contribute to the U.S., invent new technologies, invest in our companies, and build and own small businesses here. We only are hurting ourselves by preventing them from doing so.*

Republicans are vulnerable on their extremism, and new proposals from Ron DeSantis and Greg Abbott put them far outside the mainstream. The most concerning aspect of Republican positioning on immigration is that they support "*MAGA positions far out of line with the mainstream, including separating children from their parents at the border and the mass deportation of Dreamers and other undocumented immigrants.*" Further, a strong majority of voters think recent anti-immigrant proposals from these states go too far:

- 64% say the following proposal from Ron DeSantis "goes too far" (vs. just 25% who say it is an appropriate policy): *"Making it a felony for U.S. citizens to have an undocumented immigrant in their home or to give them a ride in their car."*
- 63% say the following proposal from Greg Abbott "goes too far" (vs. just 24% who say it is appropriate): *"Giving ordinary citizens the authority to arrest migrants who cross the border, and providing them immunity from any criminal prosecution related to their actions."*

To conclude, battleground state voters strongly prefer balance – that includes both border security and humane solutions to address the situation with Dreamers and the undocumented – when compared to just enforcement-only or security only approaches. If Democrats lean in on popular solutions, including many already advanced by the Biden administration, they can win the debate.