

Polls Reaffirm Americans Support Immigration Enforcement

March 24, 2009

Three polls released last week by Rasmussen Reports reaffirm what true immigration reformers have known for years: the American public overwhelmingly supports enhanced border security and strengthened interior enforcement of our immigration laws. The results of these polls further undermine the arguments of amnesty advocates who claim that the American people want "comprehensive" immigration reform.

The first Rasmussen poll, released March 16th, focused on border security. According to the poll, 79% of voters support using troops on the U.S.-Mexico border to protect Americans from drug-related violence. The 79% figure marked a 21% jump in support for the use of the U.S. military along the border in just two months. Only 10% of U.S. voters oppose putting U.S. troops on the border to fight drug violence, while 11% say they are unsure. Strong support for placing U.S. troops on the border may stem from the fact that 82% of U.S. voters are concerned that Mexican drug violence will spill over into the United States, including 50% who say that they are very concerned. The poll also found that more than six in ten Americans say that the Department of Homeland Security should continue to build a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border. ([Rasmussen Reports](#), March 16, 2009). The release of the poll came just days after President Obama and other members of his administration expressed reluctance to deploy members of the National Guard to the border. (See [FAIR's Legislative Update](#), March 16, 2009).

The second Rasmussen poll, released March 17, highlighted strong support for local law enforcement of immigration laws. According to the poll, 73% of voters say that police officers should automatically check to see if someone is in the country legally when the officer pulls that person over for a traffic violation, while only 21% disagree. Furthermore, 67% of voters say that if law enforcement officers know of places where immigrants gather to find work, they should conduct surprise raids to identify and deport illegal aliens. ([Rasmussen Reports](#), March 17, 2009). The poll's findings came less than two weeks after House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson (D-MS) questioned the success of the 287(g) program - which allows Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to enter into agreements to train state and local law enforcement agencies in the enforcement of federal immigration laws. (See [FAIR's Legislative Update](#), March 9, 2009).

A third Rasmussen poll, released March 18, shows that nearly seven in ten voters support strict government sanctions on employers who hire illegal aliens. Only 22% say that employers should not be punished, while another 10% are not sure. Nearly half of U.S. voters support sanctions for landlords who rent or sell property to illegal aliens, while 36% are opposed to such penalties. ([Rasmussen Reports](#), March 18, 2009). These findings came just eight days after the Senate voted to kill an amendment offered by Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) to the \$410 billion Omnibus Appropriations bill (H.R. 1105) that would have reauthorized the E-Verify program - which prevents employers from hiring illegal aliens in the first place - through September 2014. (See [FAIR's Action Alert](#), March 10, 2009).