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Special “Attitudes Towards Migrants Survey”

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**Majorities Support: Using Federal Properties to Shelter Migrants, Easier Work Authorizations & Comprehensive Immigration Reform; Oppose Border Wall 50-41%
42% Say Immigrants Take More Resources than They Give in Economic Activity; About 1/3 Say Many Want Free Hand-outs, Are Dangerous/Criminal & Source of Illegal Drugs
84% Agree Most Current Migrants Want to Build Better Life; 69% Say America Should Continue to Live By – “Give me your tired, your poor...”**

Loudonville, NY – A majority of New Yorkers, 56-36%, support using federally owned land and buildings as temporary shelters for the current migrants now in New York. Similarly, by 59-33%, New Yorkers support making it easier for migrants currently in New York to be granted work authorizations regardless of their current immigration status according to a new survey of New York residents released today from the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI). By more than two-to-one, 60-28%, residents support a comprehensive immigration reform bill that provides a pathway to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants in the United States, and by 50-41%, New Yorkers oppose the construction of a wall the entire length of our southern border with Mexico.

By 48-42%, New Yorkers disagree that immigrants take more in resources than they return in economic activity. A majority, 61% disagree that many of the people trying to immigrate to the U.S. just want free hand-outs from our government and people, and 53% say that current immigrants are not the source of much of the illegal drugs entering our county. Still, 31% of New Yorkers say that many of the people trying to immigrate to the U.S. are dangerous, potentially criminal people, and 38% say that migrants are the source of illegal drugs.

“Over 40% of all New Yorkers believe that immigrants take more than they offer society. About a third believe current migrants are dangerous, perhaps even criminal, only want hand-outs and are a source of illegal drugs. But in each of these cases more New Yorkers disagree with, rather than hold, these judgments,” said Don Levy, SCRI’s Director. “Large majorities of Republicans see immigrants and current migrants as dangerous but Democrats and independents disagree. While a small majority of Republicans say that America no longer needs new immigrants, overwhelming majorities of Democrats and independents say that we do.”

“Despite concerns that some New Yorkers have about the recent influx of migrants, 84% of all New Yorkers agree that most of the current migrants want only to build a better life for themselves and their family and 69% agree that America should continue to live by the words written on the Statue of Liberty, ‘Give me your tired, your poor...send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me’,” Levy said.

Percent of New Yorkers Agreeing/Disagreeing with Statements about Immigrants and Migrants						
Statement	Total	NYC	Suburbs	Upstate	Dem's	Rep's
U.S. was built by immigrants from every country...	85/10%	81/14%	92/5%	85/8%	85/11%	87/8%
Most current migrants...want only to build better life...	84/11%	88/8%	83/13%	80/15%	92/7%	73/20%
Assimilating immigrants, being a melting pot, has made America great	78/14%	78/14%	85/10%	75/14%	83/10%	77/15%
Immigrants bring new vitality to our country	72/21%	77/15%	75/23%	64/28%	83/13%	54/39%
America should continue to live by..."Give me your tired, your poor..."	69/21%	64/23%	70/22%	74/18%	80/13%	59/31%
Businesses need new immigrants... in order to be successful	60/31%	67/25%	59/33%	54/38%	70/25%	52/39%
Immigrants take more in resources than they return in economic activity...	42/48%	40/48%	39/54%	45/44%	29/62%	69/24%
Current migrants...are the source of ...illegal drugs entering our country	38/53%	35/56%	39/54%	41/48%	25/70%	66/26%
Immigrants take jobs away from Americans that lived here for many years	36/60%	36/58%	30/68%	39/55%	24/74%	60/35%
Many ...immigrant(s) want free hand-outs...and do not want to work	35/61%	33/61%	28/72%	39/56%	22/77%	64/34%
It is easy to get 'in line' to immigrate to the United States	33/53%	34/51%	30/56%	34/54%	25/66%	47/38%
Many...trying to immigrate to the U.S. are dangerous potentially criminal	31/62%	28/64%	31/67%	34/56%	20/75%	55/36%
America no longer needs new immigrants	30/63%	29/62%	24/72%	34/59%	22/73%	51/46%
Siena College Research Institute, September 12, 2023						

“There’s no doubt, the vast majority of New Yorkers recognize that our country was built by immigrants from virtually every nation around the globe and assimilating immigrants has made America great,” Levy noted.

“Despite nearly a third saying that America no longer needs new immigrants, well over half and a majority of both Democrats and Republicans say that businesses need new immigrants in order to be successful. And, by 60-36%, New Yorkers do not believe that immigrants take jobs away from Americans that have lived here for years.”

Eleven percent of the New Yorkers in this survey say that they were born in another country. While 16% say that the first member of their family that came to this country did so prior to 1840, 31% trace their family’s arrival to the period of American growth from 1840 through World War I and another 35% say their family arrived during the Depression, World War II or through the Reagan years. Only 10% say that they started their American journey from 1990 through the present.

“When it comes to migrants and issues associated with immigration, there is a huge partisan divide. A majority of Republicans oppose a comprehensive immigration bill and a huge majority, 77-19%, call for building ‘The Wall.’ Democrats strongly support, and over half of independents want the legislation, and while two-thirds of Democrats oppose building a wall, independents are evenly divided,” Levy said. “Democrats overwhelmingly support easier work authorizations and the use of federal properties to house recent migrants. Majorities of Republicans oppose both proposals and while independents oppose using federal properties, 51-41%, they are evenly divided on easier work authorizations.”

This Siena College Poll was conducted September 5 – 8, 2023 by random telephone calls to 414 New York adults via landline and cell phones and 386 responses drawn from a proprietary online panel of New Yorkers. Respondent sampling via phone was initiated by asking for the youngest person in the household. The overall results has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.8 percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. Telephone sampling was conducted via a stratified dual frame probability sample of landline (from ASDE Survey Sampler) and cell phone (from Dynata) telephone numbers from within New York State weighted to reflect known population patterns. Data from the telephone and web samples were blended and statistically adjusted by age, race/ethnicity, gender and party to ensure representativeness. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information or comments, please call Dr. Don Levy at 518-783-2901. Survey cross-tabulations can be found at www.siena.edu/scri/ci.