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NEW JERSEY: SUPPORT FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT ACCESS TO LICENSES, STATE COLLEGES RISES OVER PAST DECADE

Significant shifts in concerns about illegal immigration as a problem

West Long Branch, NJ – There has been a sea change in New Jersey over the past decade about whether key state resources should be made available to immigrants in the country illegally. The *Monmouth (“Mon-muth”) University Poll* finds a majority of the public now supports allowing these immigrants to get driver’s licenses – a new policy that went into effect this month. Half also support allowing these undocumented residents to attend state colleges at in-state tuition rates. Few Garden State residents supported these policies just over ten years ago. Concerns about the impact of illegal immigration on the state have also declined sharply over this period.

A solid majority (57%) of New Jersey residents favor “allowing illegal immigrants to get some type of limited driver’s license.” Twelve years ago, just 33% supported this accommodation for these noncitizens. Just 41% currently oppose this, versus a much larger 62% who stood in opposition to making driver’s licenses available to “illegal immigrants” in 2009.

“The New Jersey driver’s license available to undocumented immigrants may have fewer limitations than were envisioned when Monmouth first polled on this topic over a decade ago, but the wholesale shift in public opinion since that time is undeniable,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

In 2009, there were few demographic differences in opinion on providing driver’s licenses for “illegal immigrants” in New Jersey. Support ranged from just 27% of Republicans to only 39% of Democrats. While Republican support for this idea has hardly changed since then – it is 31% among Republicans now – support has skyrocketed among Democrats to 77% in the current poll and it has also grown among independents (from 29% to 51%). Support for making driver’s licenses available to “illegal

immigrants” has practically doubled among New Jerseyans between the ages of 18 and 34 (from 36% to 70%), and has also climbed significantly among those aged 35 to 54 (from 34% to 51%) and those 55 years old and over (from 31% to 51%).

The poll also finds that half (50%) of New Jerseyans support allowing “illegal or undocumented immigrants” living in the state to attend a public state college at the in-state tuition rate. Another 24% say these students should pay the higher out-of-state rate and 22% say they should not be allowed to attend a public college at all. Twelve years ago, though, just 20% of state residents supported granting in-state status to “illegal or undocumented immigrants,” while 37% said these students should be charged out-of-state tuition rates and 39% said they should be barred from attending public colleges at all. Support for providing in-state tuition to resident immigrants who are undocumented has gone up by 46 points among Democrats (from 25% to 71%), by 27 points among independents (from 15% to 42%), and by 9 points among Republicans (from 18% to 27%).

The public is evenly divided on whether immigrant students without documentation should be eligible to receive financial aid grants from the state. Just under half (48%) say they should be eligible and a nearly identical number (47%) say they should not. Support for this policy ranges from 70% of Democrats to 42% of independents and just 21% of Republicans. New Jersey started extending tuition grant eligibility to college students living in the state illegally in 2018.

“Providing financial aid for undocumented state residents is one policy where the Murphy administration is running ahead of public opinion as a whole, although it is clearly in line with evolved views in the governor’s own political party,” said Murray.

Public opinion about the impact of all immigration in general on New Jersey has not shifted as much as it has on illegal immigration. Currently, 37% of state residents say that immigration into New Jersey has been good for the state, 20% say it has been bad, and 33% say it has had no impact. The number who say immigration in general is good for the state has not changed much in the past decade (34% in December 2010), but the number who say it is bad has declined (from 32%) while the number who say it has had no impact has increased (from 21%). Opinion that immigration in general has been bad for the state has dropped among Democrats (from 26% to 4%) and independents (from 32% to 23%), but it remains relatively high among Republicans (44% in both 2010 and 2021).

Concerns about illegal immigration have lessened considerably over the past fourteen years. The number of New Jerseyans who see this as at least a somewhat serious problem for the entire country has gone from about 9 in 10 to just over 7 in 10, with the biggest drop coming from those who see this problem as *very serious* (from 69% in 2007 to 49% now). The lessening of this concern has been even more substantial in terms of illegal immigration’s impact within New Jersey, going from more than 3 in 4 seeing this as at least a somewhat serious problem for the state to just half who feel that way today. The

number who said illegal immigration is a *very serious* problem for New Jersey ranged from 46% to 51% between 2007 and 2009, but it stands at just 24% today. This state-based level of concern has declined among all partisan groups since 2009 – from 44% very serious then to 9% now among Democrats, from 52% to 25% among independents, and from 64% to 49% among Republicans. There has also been a substantial double-digit decline among all age groups in concern about illegal immigration being a problem for New Jersey.

Among non-Hispanic white New Jerseyans specifically, opinion that illegal immigration is a very serious problem for New Jersey has dropped from 59% in 2009 to 29% now. At the same time, support for offering “undocumented college students” in-state tuition at public colleges has risen from 17% to 46% and support for offering “illegal immigrants” access to driver’s licenses has risen from 29% to 51% among non-Hispanic whites in the state.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from April 29 to May 4, 2021 with 706 New Jersey adults. The question results in this release have a margin of error of +/- 3.7 percentage points. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

[Q1, Q11-15 & Q30-37 held for future release.]

[Q2-10 & Q16-29 previously released.]

38. Overall, do you feel that immigration into New Jersey has been good or bad for the state, or does it have no impact?

TREND:	May 2021	Dec. 2010
Good	37%	34%
Bad	20%	32%
No impact	33%	21%
(VOL) Both good and bad	3%	6%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	7%
(n)	(706)	(2,864)

39. How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for the United States right now – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all serious?

TREND:	May 2021	July 2007
Very serious	49%	69%
Somewhat serious	24%	20%
Not too serious	15%	7%
Not at all serious	10%	4%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%
(n)	(706)	(392)

40. How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for New Jersey right now – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all serious?

TREND:	May 2021	Feb. 2009	Sept. 2007	July 2007
Very serious	24%	51%	47%	46%
Somewhat serious	27%	28%	33%	30%
Not too serious	28%	10%	11%	16%
Not at all serious	18%	8%	6%	6%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	4%	3%	2%
(n)	(706)	(803)	(801)	(408)

41. Do you think that illegal or undocumented immigrants living in New Jersey should be allowed to attend a state college at the same reduced tuition rate as other New Jersey residents, should they pay the higher out-of-state tuition rate, or should they not be allowed to attend state colleges at all?

TREND:	May 2021	Feb. 2009
Reduced in-state tuition	50%	20%
Higher out-of-state tuition	24%	37%
Not allowed to attend state colleges at all	22%	39%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	4%
(n)	(706)	(401)

42. Do you think that undocumented college students who are residents of New Jersey should or should not be eligible to receive financial aid grants from the state?

	May 2021
Should be	48%
Should not be	47%
(VOL) Don't know	5%
(n)	(706)

43. Do you favor or oppose allowing illegal immigrants to get some type of limited driver's license?

TREND:	May 2021	Feb. 2009
Favor	57%	33%
Oppose	41%	62%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	5%
(n)	(706)	(803)

[Question 43A was asked only of those who said "OPPOSE" to Q43, n=275, moe= +/- 5.9%]

43A. Some people say that issuing limited licenses to illegal immigrants would allow them to keep jobs that legal citizens don't want to do and would make the state safer by bringing them into the system. Does hearing this argument make you more likely to favor allowing illegal immigrants to get a limited driver's license, or doesn't it really change your mind?

TREND:	May 2021	Feb. 2009
More likely to favor	11%	11%
Doesn't change mind	84%	81%
(VOL) Makes even less likely to favor	2%	7%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	2%
(n)	(275)	(507)

METHODOLOGY

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from April 29 to May 4, 2021 with a random sample of 706 New Jersey adults age 18 and older, in English. This includes 283 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 423 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone. Telephone numbers were selected through random digit dialing and landline respondents were selected with a modified Troidahl-Carter youngest adult household screen. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. The full sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information (ACS 2018 one-year survey). Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and Dynata (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.7 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

<i>DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>	
<i>Self-Reported</i>	
22% Republican	
40% Independent	
38% Democrat	
49% Male	
51% Female	
29% 18-34	
35% 35-54	
36% 55+	
57% White	
13% Black	
19% Hispanic	
11% Asian/Other	
63% No degree	
37% 4 year degree	

<i>MARGIN OF ERROR</i>		<i>unweighted</i>	<i>moe</i>
		<i>sample</i>	<i>(+/-)</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>		706	3.7%
<i>REGISTERED VOTER</i>	Yes	661	3.8%
	No	45	14.6%
<i>SELF-REPORTED</i>	Republican	124	8.8%
<i>PARTY ID</i>	Independent	299	5.7%
	Democrat	267	6.0%
<i>REGION</i>	North	365	5.1%
	Central	176	7.4%
	South	165	7.6%
<i>GENDER</i>	Male	366	5.1%
	Female	340	5.3%
<i>AGE</i>	18-34	135	8.4%
	35-54	271	6.0%
	55+	294	5.7%
<i>RACE</i>	White non-Hispanic	444	4.7%
	Other	236	6.4%
<i>COLLEGE GRADUATE</i>	No degree	276	5.9%
	4 year degree	428	4.7%
<i>INCOME</i>	<\$50K	127	8.7%
	\$50 to <\$100K	232	6.4%
	\$100K+	298	5.7%
<i>CHILDREN IN HOME</i>	Yes	215	6.7%
	No	487	4.5%

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Monmouth University Poll -- NEW JERSEY -- 5/10/21

		TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	North	Central	South
38. Overall, do you feel that immigration into New Jersey has been good or bad for the state, or does it have no impact?	Good	37%	38%	27%	17%	33%	54%	39%	41%	31%
	Bad	20%	22%	8%	44%	23%	4%	18%	19%	25%
	No impact	33%	30%	58%	21%	36%	37%	35%	29%	34%
	(VOL) Both good and bad	3%	3%	2%	6%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%
	[VOL] Dont know	6%	6%	5%	12%	4%	4%	5%	7%	7%

		GENDER		AGE			RACE		COLLEGE GRAD	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	No degree	4 yr degree
38. Overall, do you feel that immigration into New Jersey has been good or bad for the state, or does it have no impact?	Good	36%	39%	42%	34%	37%	32%	45%	31%	48%
	Bad	27%	15%	9%	23%	27%	27%	11%	22%	18%
	No impact	31%	35%	43%	33%	26%	28%	40%	36%	29%
	(VOL) Both good and bad	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	5%	2%	4%	1%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%	8%	4%	6%	7%	8%	3%	7%	4%

		INCOME			CHILDREN IN HOME	
		<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+	Yes	No
38. Overall, do you feel that immigration into New Jersey has been good or bad for the state, or does it have no impact?	Good	33%	38%	41%	35%	38%
	Bad	18%	22%	18%	21%	20%
	No impact	38%	31%	33%	34%	33%
	(VOL) Both good and bad	6%	4%	1%	2%	4%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	5%	6%	7%	5%

		TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	North	Central	South
39. How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for the United States right now - very, somewhat, not too, or not at all serious?	Very serious	49%	50%	38%	79%	53%	28%	46%	47%	56%
	Somewhat serious	24%	24%	23%	16%	23%	30%	28%	25%	18%
	Not too serious	15%	14%	19%	4%	13%	23%	14%	18%	15%
	Not at all serious	10%	10%	16%	0%	9%	17%	11%	9%	11%
	[VOL] Dont know	1%	1%	3%	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%

		GENDER		AGE			RACE		COLLEGE GRAD	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	No degree	4 yr degree
39. How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for the United States right now - very, somewhat, not too, or not at all serious?	Very serious	56%	43%	34%	52%	59%	56%	39%	55%	40%
	Somewhat serious	20%	28%	28%	23%	22%	24%	27%	23%	27%
	Not too serious	14%	16%	21%	13%	12%	12%	19%	12%	20%
	Not at all serious	10%	11%	16%	10%	6%	8%	14%	9%	12%
	[VOL] Dont know	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%

Monmouth University Poll -- NEW JERSEY -- 5/10/21

		INCOME			CHILDREN IN HOME	
		<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+	Yes	No
39. How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for the United States right now - very, somewhat, not too, or not at all serious?	Very serious	46%	52%	50%	50%	49%
	Somewhat serious	23%	25%	23%	23%	25%
	Not too serious	17%	13%	17%	13%	16%
	Not at all serious	13%	9%	10%	12%	10%
	[VOL] Dont know	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%

		TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	North	Central	South
40. How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for New Jersey right now - very, somewhat, not too, or not at all serious?	Very serious	24%	26%	10%	49%	25%	9%	22%	23%	29%
	Somewhat serious	27%	26%	33%	29%	30%	22%	29%	30%	21%
	Not too serious	28%	28%	25%	15%	29%	36%	28%	32%	25%
	Not at all serious	18%	17%	28%	6%	15%	29%	18%	15%	21%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%	1%	4%

		GENDER		AGE			RACE		COLLEGE GRAD	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	No degree	4 yr degree
40. How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for New Jersey right now - very, somewhat, not too, or not at all serious?	Very serious	31%	18%	10%	28%	33%	29%	18%	26%	21%
	Somewhat serious	26%	28%	23%	26%	30%	28%	25%	27%	26%
	Not too serious	25%	31%	37%	24%	25%	27%	31%	26%	32%
	Not at all serious	17%	19%	30%	17%	10%	14%	24%	18%	19%
	[VOL] Dont know	1%	4%	0%	5%	2%	3%	1%	3%	2%

		INCOME			CHILDREN IN HOME	
		<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+	Yes	No
40. How serious a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for New Jersey right now - very, somewhat, not too, or not at all serious?	Very serious	28%	20%	24%	25%	24%
	Somewhat serious	21%	32%	26%	30%	25%
	Not too serious	28%	25%	32%	21%	31%
	Not at all serious	21%	18%	17%	20%	17%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	5%	1%	3%	3%

Monmouth University Poll -- NEW JERSEY -- 5/10/21

		TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	North	Central	South
41. Do you think that illegal or undocumented immigrants living in NJ should be allowed to attend a state college at the same reduced tuition rate as other NJ residents, should they pay the higher out-of-state tuition, or should they not be allowed to atte	Reduced in-state tuition	50%	49%	59%	27%	42%	71%	51%	55%	46%
	Higher out-of-state tuition	24%	25%	13%	28%	29%	16%	21%	29%	23%
	Not allowed to attend state colleges at all	22%	22%	24%	42%	24%	8%	21%	14%	29%
	[VOL] Dont know	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%	7%	2%	1%

		GENDER		AGE			RACE		COLLEGE GRAD	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	No degree	4 yr degree
41. Do you think that illegal or undocumented immigrants living in NJ should be allowed to attend a state college at the same reduced tuition rate as other NJ residents, should they pay the higher out-of-state tuition, or should they not be allowed to atte	Reduced in-state tuition	37%	63%	66%	45%	44%	46%	57%	50%	52%
	Higher out-of-state tuition	29%	19%	17%	31%	22%	25%	22%	19%	31%
	Not allowed to attend state colleges at all	32%	12%	15%	21%	29%	26%	17%	26%	15%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	6%	3%	3%	5%	3%	4%	5%	3%

		INCOME			CHILDREN IN HOME	
		<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+	Yes	No
41. Do you think that illegal or undocumented immigrants living in NJ should be allowed to attend a state college at the same reduced tuition rate as other NJ residents, should they pay the higher out-of-state tuition, or should they not be allowed to atte	Reduced in-state tuition	53%	55%	43%	48%	51%
	Higher out-of-state tuition	18%	22%	30%	29%	21%
	Not allowed to attend state colleges at all	24%	19%	24%	21%	22%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	4%	3%	2%	5%

		TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	North	Central	South
42. Do you think that undocumented college students who are residents of New Jersey should or should not be eligible to receive financial aid grants from the state?	Should be	48%	46%	65%	21%	42%	70%	53%	49%	40%
	Should not be	47%	49%	28%	76%	53%	25%	43%	46%	56%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	4%	7%	3%	5%	6%	4%	6%	4%

		GENDER		AGE			RACE		COLLEGE GRAD	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	No degree	4 yr degree
42. Do you think that undocumented college students who are residents of New Jersey should or should not be eligible to receive financial aid grants from the state?	Should be	40%	56%	72%	40%	38%	39%	61%	48%	48%
	Should not be	57%	38%	26%	56%	55%	56%	35%	47%	47%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%	6%	2%	4%	7%	5%	4%	5%	5%

Monmouth University Poll -- NEW JERSEY -- 5/10/21

		INCOME			CHILDREN IN HOME	
		<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+	Yes	No
42. Do you think that undocumented college students who are residents of New Jersey should or should not be eligible to receive financial aid grants from the state?	Should be	55%	47%	44%	40%	52%
	Should not be	39%	49%	53%	55%	44%
	[VOL] Dont know	6%	5%	3%	5%	5%

		TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			REGION OF STATE		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	North	Central	South
43. Do you favor or oppose allowing illegal immigrants to get some type of limited drivers license?	Favor	57%	57%	51%	31%	51%	77%	57%	57%	56%
	Oppose	41%	40%	47%	69%	46%	19%	39%	40%	44%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%	3%	2%	0%	3%	3%	4%	3%	0%

		GENDER		AGE			RACE		COLLEGE GRAD	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	No degree	4 yr degree
43. Do you favor or oppose allowing illegal immigrants to get some type of limited drivers license?	Favor	48%	65%	70%	51%	51%	51%	65%	50%	68%
	Oppose	50%	32%	30%	45%	46%	46%	33%	47%	30%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	4%	1%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%

		INCOME			CHILDREN IN HOME	
		<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+	Yes	No
43. Do you favor or oppose allowing illegal immigrants to get some type of limited drivers license?	Favor	58%	59%	55%	49%	60%
	Oppose	39%	38%	43%	48%	38%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%

		TOTAL
AMONG THOSE OPPOSED: 43A. Some people say that issuing limited licenses to illegal immigrants would allow them to keep jobs that legal citizens dont want to do and would make the state safer by bringing them into the system. Does hearing this argument make you more likely to ...	More likely to favor	11%
	Doesnt change mind	84%
	(VOL) Makes even less likely	2%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%