



# The Construction Worker Shortage In America: Public Views On The Problem And Potential Solutions

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# Introduction

## Background & Objectives

JK Strategies commissioned the study to gain insights into Americans' views on visa programs that help businesses attract essential workers when American workers are unavailable.

## Survey Sample

- ✓ Online Survey Methodology
- ✓ Sample size – 1,424 completes
  - TechnoMetrica used its network of panel partners for the sample
  - National sample
  - Results weighted to mirror census and other known benchmarks
- ✓ Credibility interval - +/-2.6 percentage points

## Methodology

- ✓ Survey Conducted
  - Jan 8 – Jan 10, 2025



## Findings - Overview

As workforce shortages and immigration challenges continue, Americans broadly support targeted solutions. However, there are significant bipartisan differences in intensity and focus. These findings show that the public prioritizes practical visa programs and stricter border enforcement to address labor and policy concerns.

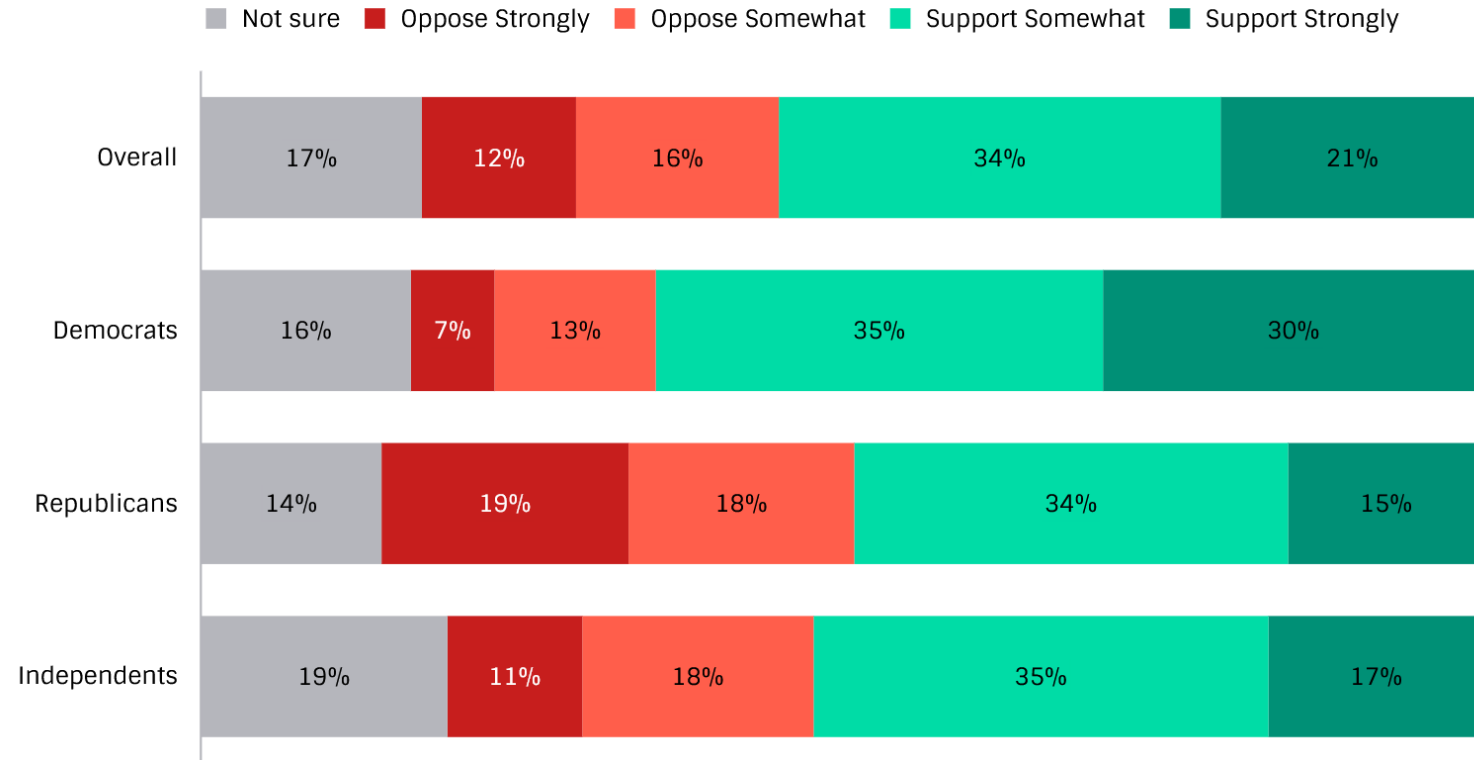
- **Worker Visa Programs:** 55% of Americans back worker visa programs for essential jobs, with Democrats showing the strongest support (65%) compared to Republicans (49%) and Independents (52%). Republicans lead in opposition at 37%.
- **Short-Term Agricultural Visas:** 60% support these programs, with 71% of Democrats lending support, followed by Independents (57%) and Republicans (54%). Opposition among Republicans is highest at 32%.
- **Prioritizing Critical Building and Infrastructure Programs:** Over three-quarters (78%) consider it important to address workforce shortages, which are delaying vital building and infrastructure projects.
- **Builder-Specific Visas:** Two-thirds (64% ) support short-term visas for builders, with Democrats strongly favoring these programs (76%), followed by Republicans (59%) and Independents (59%).

## Findings - Overview

- **Border Enforcement:** 75% of Americans favor stricter immigration enforcement, with overwhelming Republican support (91%), strong backing from Independents (70%), and significant agreement among Democrats (68%).
- These findings highlight the public's demand for solutions that balance workforce needs with robust immigration enforcement, reflecting the varied partisan perspectives on the path forward.
- Support for a limited short-term visa program to address the construction labor shortage is strong across both sides of the border enforcement debate. **67% of enforcement supporters** and **69% of opponents** back the measure, with opposition low in both groups (22%). These findings highlight a broad recognition of the need for practical workforce solutions.

# Detailed Findings

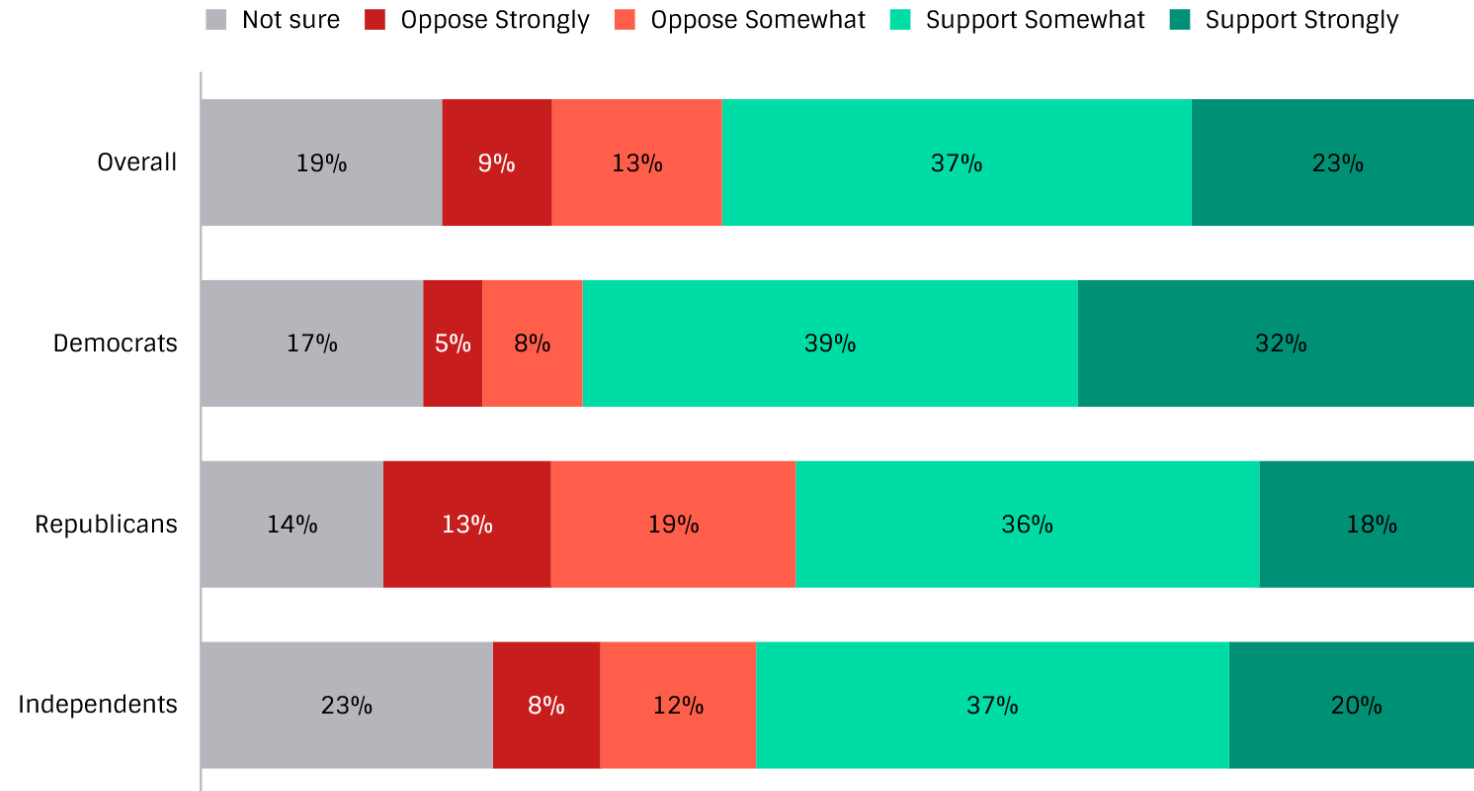
# Majority Support Worker Visa Programs When American Workers are Unavailable



Q1: Do you support or oppose worker visa programs that help businesses attract essential workers when American workers are not available?

- Overall, 55% of Americans support worker visa programs for essential workers, with 21% supporting them strongly and 34% supporting them somewhat. 28% oppose the programs (12% strongly, 16% somewhat).
- Democrats demonstrate the strongest support, with 65% in favor (30% strongly, 35% somewhat), while 20% oppose (7% strongly, 13% somewhat).
- Republican support is lower at 49% (15% strongly, 34% somewhat), and their opposition is the highest among the three groups, with 37% opposing (19% strongly, 18% somewhat).
- About half of Independents (52%) support these programs (17% strongly, 35% somewhat), while 29% oppose them (11% strongly, 18% somewhat). Independents also have the highest percentage of "Not Sure" responses at 19%.

# Most Support Short-Term Agricultural Visa Programs To Address Industry Needs

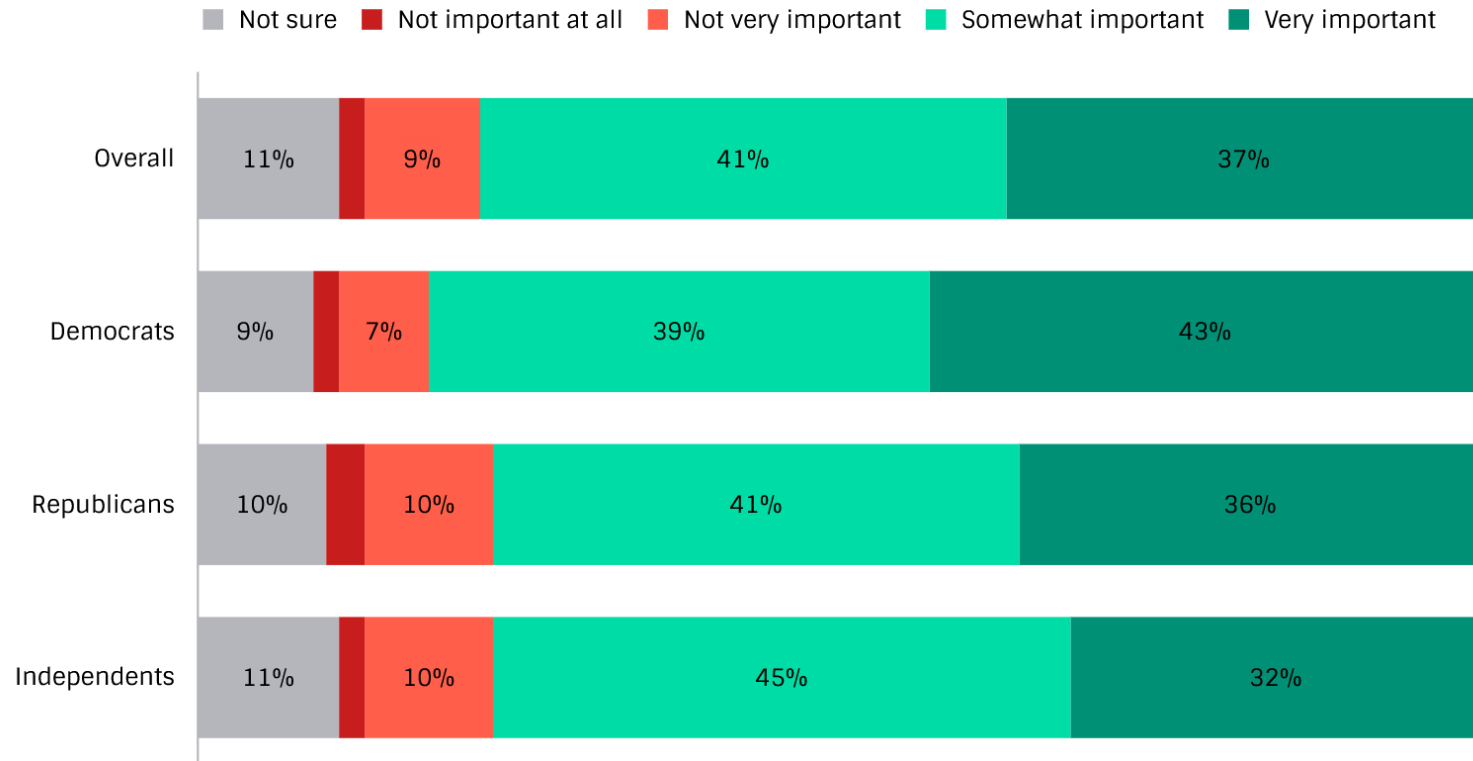


Q2: Do you support or oppose continuing short-term agricultural visa programs to address industry needs?

- Overall, 60% of Americans support short-term agricultural visa programs, with 23% supporting them strongly and 37% supporting them somewhat. 22% oppose (9% strongly, 13% somewhat).
- Democrats show the strongest support, with 71% in favor (32% strongly, 39% somewhat), while only 13% oppose (5% strongly, 8% somewhat).
- A majority of Republicans, 54%, support (18% strongly, 36% somewhat), and their opposition is the highest among the three groups, with 32% opposing (13% strongly, 19% somewhat).
- Over half of Independents (57%) support these programs (20% strongly, 37% somewhat), while 20% oppose them (8% strongly, 12% somewhat). Independents also have the highest share of "Not Sure" responses at 23%.



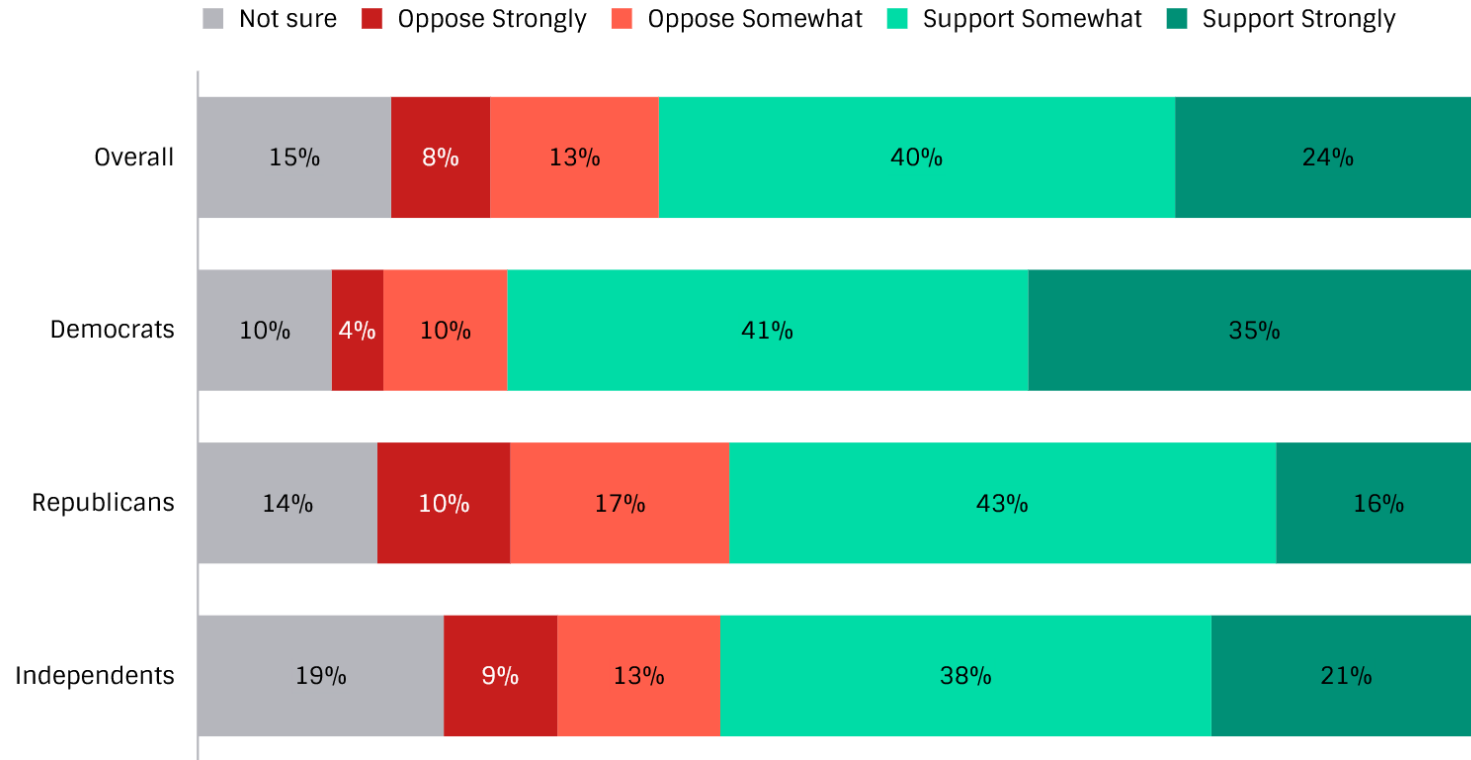
# Over Three-Quarter Consider It Important To Address Workforce Shortages Delaying Building And Infrastructure Projects



JK3: Workforce shortages are delaying vital building and infrastructure projects. How important is it for America to prioritize addressing this issue?

- Overall, 78% of respondents consider addressing workforce shortages very important (37%) or somewhat important (41%), while 11% believe it is not important, and another 11% are unsure.
- Eight in ten (82%) Democratic respondents view this issue as very important (43%) or somewhat important (39%), with only 9% considering it not important and another 9% unsure.
- A similar share (77%) of Republican respondents rate this issue as very important (36%) or somewhat important (41%), with 13% not considering it important and 10% unsure.
- Likewise, 77% of Independents see this issue as very important (32%) or somewhat important (45%), with 12% considering it not important and 11% unsure.

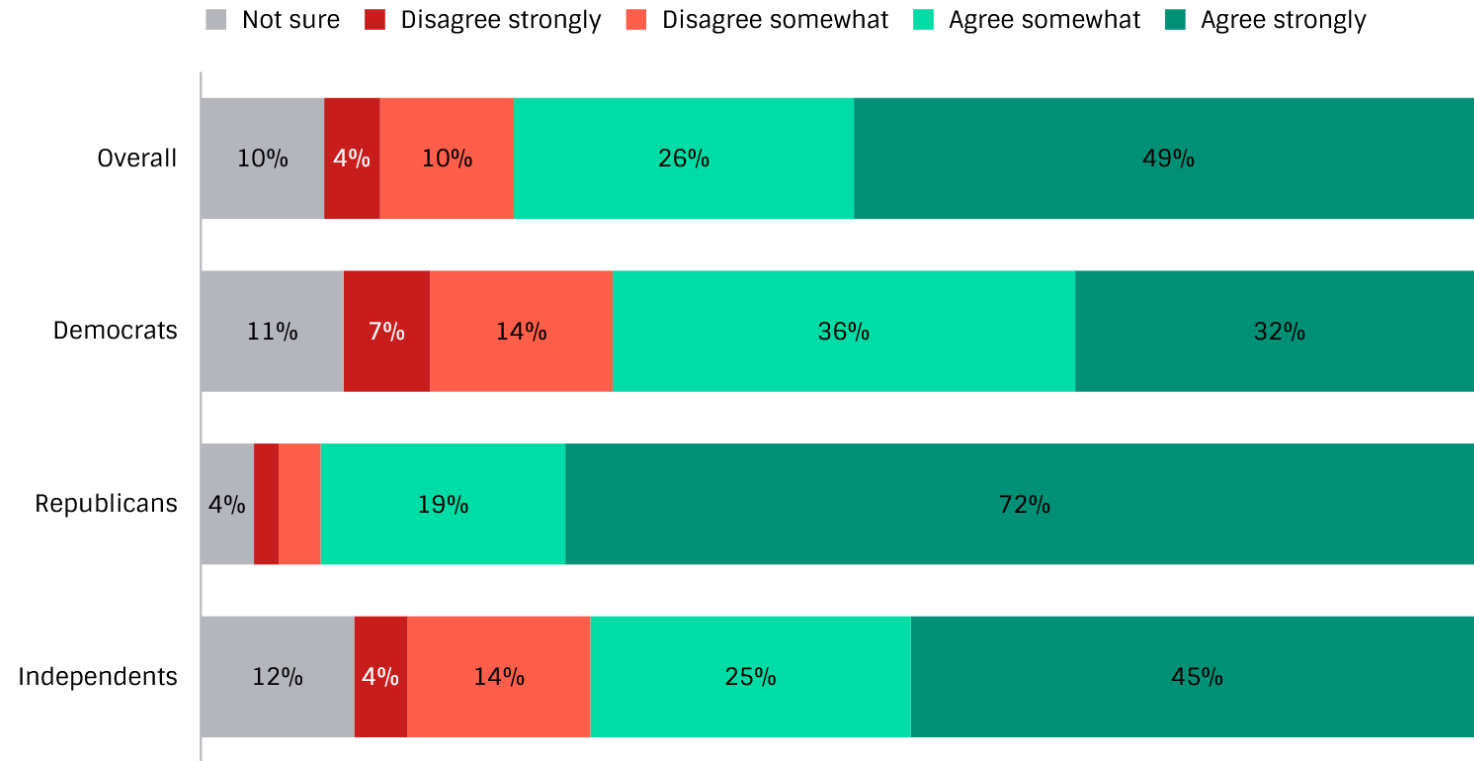
# 64% Support Short-Term Visas to Aid Builders Amid Worker Shortage



Q4: Would you support or oppose a limited short-term visa program to help builders complete projects as part of the solution to the worker shortage?

- Overall, 64% of Americans support short-term visas to help builders complete projects, with 24% strongly supporting and 40% somewhat supporting these programs. 21% oppose (8% strongly, 13% somewhat).
- Democrats show the strongest support, with 76% in favor (35% strongly, 41% somewhat) and only 14% opposed (4% strongly, 10% somewhat)..
- Over half of Republicans (59%) support these visas (16% strongly, 43% somewhat), but their opposition is the highest with 27% opposed (10% strongly, 17% somewhat).
- Similarly, 59% of Independents support these programs (21% strongly, 38% somewhat), while 22% oppose (9% strongly, 13% somewhat) them.
- Independents also report the highest level of uncertainty, with 19% selecting "Not Sure."

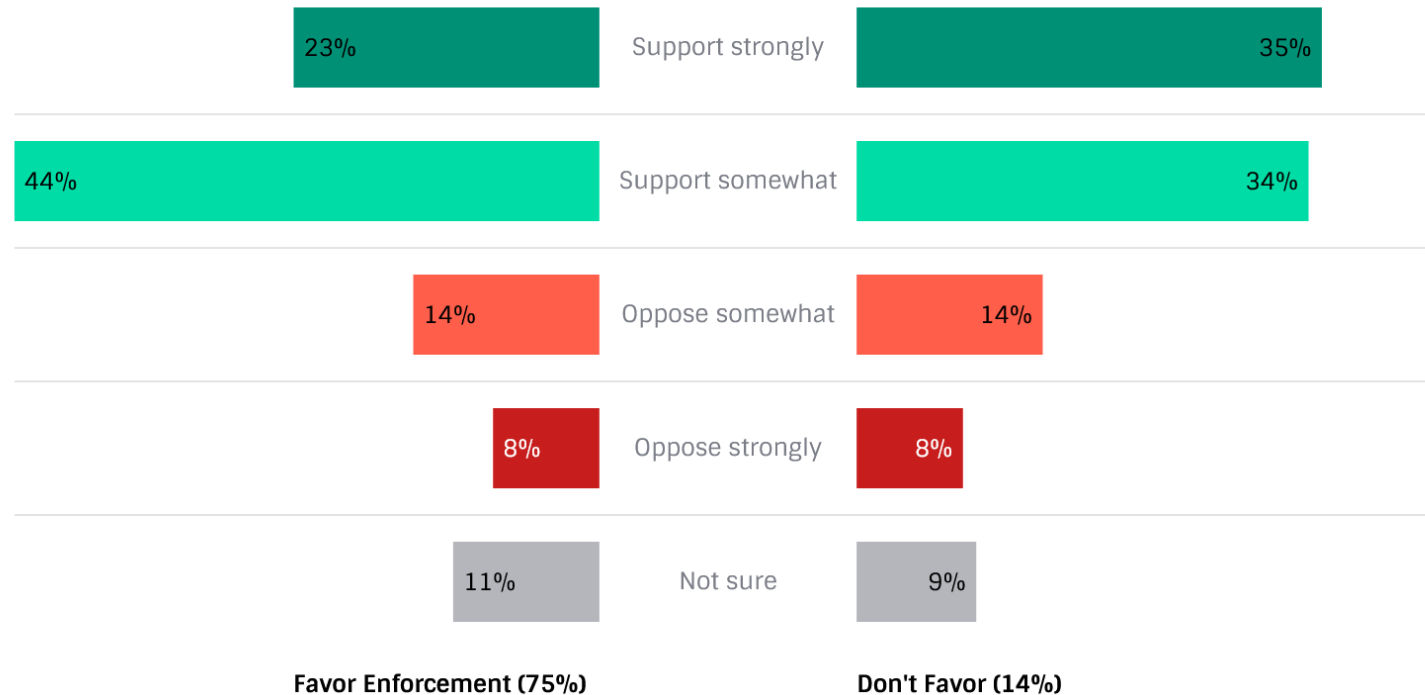
# 75% of Americans Support Tougher Border Enforcement



Q5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The U.S. should strengthen enforcement of existing border and immigration policies targeting undocumented immigrants?

- Overall, most Americans (75%) agree that the U.S. should strengthen enforcement of existing border and immigration policies, with 49% agreeing strongly and 26% agreeing somewhat. Only 14% disagree (10% somewhat, 4% strongly), while 10% are unsure.
- Among Democrats, 68% agree (36% somewhat, 32% strongly), while 21% disagree (14% somewhat, 7% strongly). One in ten, 11%, are unsure.
- Republican agreement is overwhelming at 91%, with 72% agreeing strongly and 19% agreeing somewhat. Only 4% disagree, and there are virtually no "Not Sure" responses.
- Support among Independents is high, with 70% in agreement (45% strongly, 25% somewhat). Disagreement stands at 18% (14% somewhat, 4% strongly), while 12% are unsure.

# Support for Short-Term Visas: 67% Of Border Hawks, 69% Of Opponents



Q5: Would you support or oppose a limited short-term visa program to help builders complete projects as part of the solution to the worker shortage?

- This chart illustrates support for a limited short-term visa program to help builders address worker shortages, segmented by respondents' stance on border enforcement. Interestingly, 67% of those who **favor** tougher border enforcement support the program, with 23% strongly supporting it and 44% somewhat supporting it. Among those who **do not favor** stricter enforcement, support is slightly higher at 69% (35% strongly, 34% somewhat).
- Opposition to the program remains low across both groups, with a combined 22% opposing it among enforcement supporters and 22% among opponents. A small percentage of respondents remain unsure, at 11% and 9%, respectively.
- These findings suggest that while views on border security differ, there is a recognition of the need for a pragmatic workforce solution in the construction sector.

# Demographics

Region	
Northeast	17%
Midwest	22%
South	38%
West	23%

Gender	
Male	48%
Female	52%

Party	
Democrats	35%
Republicans	35%
Independents/Other	30%

Age	
18-24	11%
25-34	14%
35-44	19%
45-54	15%
55-64	17%
65 or over	24%

Race	
White Non-Hispanic	67%
Black Non-Hispanic	17%
Hispanic	11%
Asian	3%
Native American	1%
Other	1%

Education	
Some High School	5%
High School Graduate	31%
Some College	28%
College Graduate	24%
Some Graduate Courses	3%
Graduate/Professional Degree	9%