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## **Poll: Employers should verify immigration status**

*Giving amnesty is least favored by respondents*

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The Arizona Republic  
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Requiring employers to verify the immigration status of job candidates is the approach to curbing illegal immigration most favored by Arizonans who voted on Proposition 200, according to a poll released earlier this week by ThinkAZ, a nonpartisan research institute.

Proposition 200, which voters approved last November, requires people to provide proof of citizenship to vote and to receive certain public benefits.

Echoing the results of an Arizona Republic Poll published today, the poll by Phoenix-based ThinkAZ said that 64 percent of these voters believe that putting the onus on employers would be "effective." Existing U.S. law requires employers to verify employees' legal status and allows authorities to fine organizations that do not comply. However, the law is not rigorously enforced.

The approach that respondents to the ThinkAZ poll support the least is granting "immediate U.S. citizenship or amnesty" to undocumented immigrants who have lived in the United States for at least three years. Only about 30 percent favor it.

The 1986 amnesty offered by the federal government granted legal permanent resident status, but not automatic citizenship, to nearly 3 million undocumented immigrants who met certain conditions, such as a history of steady employment.

*The Republic's* poll did not specifically ask voters whether they favored granting amnesty. However, it did ask voters if all undocumented immigrants should be required to return to their native countries or whether some should be allowed to remain in the United States if they hold jobs, have roots here and have no criminal record. Sixty-eight percent favor the latter.

In the ThinkAZ poll, the five approaches for controlling illegal immigration that have the most support (45 to 65 percent of respondents) in descending order are:

- Requiring employers to verify citizenship.
- Imposing severe fines on employers.
- Requiring public employees to report undocumented immigrants.

- Establishing a militarized "no-crossing" zone.
- Refusing publicly funded medical or social services to undocumented immigrants.

A 44 percent plurality of respondents said eliminating automatic U.S. citizenship for babies born to undocumented immigrants in the United States would be "effective" in controlling illegal immigration. A proposal to limit access to a public school education to U.S. citizens was seen as "effective" by a leading 42 percent.

The poll indicated little consensus among Arizona voters on proposals to require local police to act as immigration agents, with 40 percent saying it would be "effective," 36 percent saying it would be "not effective" and 25 percent neutral.

A plurality (46 percent) said allowing "organized and armed citizen-initiated groups trained by the military" to patrol the border would be ineffective; 37 percent said it would be effective.

The ThinkAZ poll was based on interviews conducted from March 28 to April 23 with 603 Arizonans who voted on Proposition 200. The poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

The poll commissioned by *The Republic* of 600 registered voters was conducted from Oct. 6 to 9 and had the same margin of error.

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