



The **Opportunity** Agenda

*Building the National Will
to Expand Opportunity in America*

Media Content Analysis:

*California
Public Discourse
on Immigration*

▶ A Scan of Print Media Coverage and Public Opinion
in 2008–2009

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About The Opportunity Agenda

The Opportunity Agenda was founded in 2004 with the mission of building the national will to expand opportunity in America. Focused on moving hearts, minds, and policy over time, the organization works closely with social justice organizations, leaders, and movements to advocate for solutions that expand opportunity for everyone. Through active partnerships, The Opportunity Agenda uses communications and media to understand and influence public opinion; synthesizes and translates research on barriers to opportunity and promising solutions; and identifies and advocates for policies that improve people's lives. To learn more about The Opportunity Agenda, go to our website at www.opportunityagenda.org.

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Table of Contents

- Introduction 2**
- Executive Summary 3**
- Media Content Analysis Overview 5**
- Findings 7**
- Topic Analysis 9**
- Spokespeople analysis 15**
- Terminology Overview 18**
- Overview of California Public Opinion on Immigration 19**
- Recommendations 25**
- Conclusion 26**
- Appendix A: Media Research Methodology 27**
- Appendix B: Headlines 29**

Introduction

For much of this decade, immigration has been an important topic on the public agenda. Nowhere is that more true than in California. The state is home to 9.9 million immigrants, its governor is an immigrant, and it is a border state on the front lines of the debate over immigration reform. State and local policies concerning immigrants are hotly debated across the state, and the raucous debate over an anti-immigrant initiative in 1996, is widely perceived to have influenced the electoral landscape in lasting ways.

For those who hope to reframe the debate and influence policy on immigration, media coverage, public opinion, and the relationship between them must be key elements in any strategy. Understanding the values and perspectives that Californians bring to this debate, and the narratives and spokespeople elevated by the media are crucial to engaging persuadable public audiences as well as policymakers.

It is in this context that The Opportunity Agenda undertook this new research on media coverage and public opinion in California. We analyzed immigration coverage by eight major newspapers across the state, and reviewed responses to questions in all available statewide polls, including one of voters in the western region, overall that touched on immigration.

The media content analysis explored key elements of coverage in California:

- ▶ Dominant frames and narratives in the coverage of immigrants and immigration topics.
- ▶ Categories of spokespeople who are frequently quoted, and their message. We specifically examined the visibility of immigrant rights groups in the media, who and how often they are quoted.
- ▶ Terminology used to describe or define the issue.
- ▶ Topics that are frequently covered, and topics critical to the debate that are ignored.
- ▶ Volume and content of immigration coverage in the publications examined in the scan.
- ▶ Reporters who cover the issue.
- ▶ Openings for immigrant rights advocates to convey their message, and effectively frame the public debate to reflect public opinion and our nation's values.
- ▶ Openings for the immigration core narrative developed by The Opportunity Agenda and immigration reform advocates: *We need workable solutions that uphold our nation's values and move us forward together.*

The analysis of Californians' public opinion reviewed the following topics:

- ▶ Immigrants' impact on the state's economy, and immigrants' own economic attitudes toward public services, social benefits, and their own finances.
- ▶ Policy reform and how best to deal with the issue of undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S.
- ▶ The impact of immigration on the state's population growth.
- ▶ The politics of immigration, and expectations from government officials to confront the issue.
- ▶ Immigrants' commitment to America, and their sentiments for becoming or considering becoming U.S. citizens.

What emerged from the combined research is a nuanced snapshot of immigrants and immigration in California's public discourse that should inform the work of advocates, policymakers, and others concerned with the integration of immigrants into U.S. society. The analysis reveals both challenges and opportunities. While news coverage highlights the flaws in the current national immigration system, there is little discourse about systemic causes or positive solutions. And while Californians hold a generally favorable opinion of immigrants and see immigration as a net benefit to the state, many worry about the strains of population growth within the state, which they see as driven largely by immigration.

It is our hope that, with this knowledge in hand, leaders in the state can begin to tell a new story to Californians, a story about workable solutions that uphold our nation's values and move us forward together.

Executive Summary

Our media and public opinion analyses reveal key challenges, as well as significant opportunities for promoting positive solutions in the area of immigration.

The major findings of the analysis of media coverage of immigration include:

- ▶ The dominant frame in California's media coverage is that the immigration system is broken, and is failing Americans. While news coverage highlights the flaws in the current system, there is little discourse about systemic causes or positive solutions and the content of a possible reform of the immigration system. The responsibility for resolving the immigration issue is clearly attributed to elected officials and the government.
- ▶ Hardly any of the stories scanned discussed immigrants' non-economic contributions to the society, or fundamental values that immigrants share with native-born Americans, or their commitment or pride about becoming American.
- ▶ Reporters often use a human interest frame focusing on an individual's personal story to discuss relevant problems of immigration. Those stories usually portray immigrants as "hard workers" and wanting to live out of shadows.
- ▶ The vast majority of stories discussing the immigration issue evoke a conflict frame presenting both sides of the debate and emphasizing the ongoing dispute over the resolution of the problem.
- ▶ The role of the Latino bloc in the 2008 presidential election and the new administration's attitude toward pursuing immigration reform drew media attention.
- ▶ Most reporters quickly dismiss, directly or indirectly, the newly surfaced anti-immigrant narrative that an increasing number of illegal immigrants are leaving the country because of the economic downturn and loss of jobs, which would result in a resolution of the country's immigration issues.
- ▶ Immigrant voices are rare in California's news coverage and opinion pieces on immigration.
- ▶ Government officials and agencies accounted for the largest portion of references and quotations.

Our major findings about public opinion on immigration are as follows:

- ▶ Californians hold a generally favorable opinion of immigrants and see immigration as a benefit to the state.
- ▶ Most Californians continue to support a pathway to legalization for undocumented immigrants over deportation.
- ▶ Californians are concerned about the strains of population growth within the state, which they see as driven largely by immigration.
- ▶ Californians were split on which presidential candidate for the 2008 election—then Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain—would do a better job dealing with immigration, according to pre-election surveys.
- ▶ A vast majority of immigrants who have lived in the U.S. show a strong commitment and pride in America although, they don't think that recent immigrants demonstrate as strong a commitment.

Several recommendations emerge from the research for framing the public discourse and moving public opinion on immigrants. Those include:

- ▶ More pro-immigrant rights voices should appear talking about immigrants' success stories, and how they contribute to the progress of the community, the society, and eventually the country (systemic frame).
- ▶ It is important to educate or remind audiences of immigrants' positive contributions to local culture and diversity of our society, and the values they share with native-born Americans, such as hard work, the importance of family, and pursuit of opportunity. Appropriate spokespeople, such as clergy, teachers and community leaders, can effectively discuss these contributions.
- ▶ Tap into the dominant media narrative about the broken immigration system, by pitching stories that support the narrative. These stories should explain how the current system fails Americans and immigrants, who are committed to becoming American. Explain the legal obstacles that prevent undocumented immigrants from getting proper documentation.¹
- ▶ When pitching stories of individual immigrants, advocates need to make sure that these stories are framed to focus on the system and its failures, as opposed to the individual. The systemic frame can motivate target audiences to see policy changes, rather than individual behavior, as the solution to immigration related issues.
- ▶ Immigrants should aim at placing op-eds by experts who can argue persuasively how immigration reform will help the country progress in the short and the long term.
- ▶ Regarding specifically the issue of whether undocumented immigrants should have access to in-state college tuitions, advocates need to explain that these students have spent most of their lives here, have embraced American culture, and consider themselves Americans despite their immigration status. Advocates should also talk about the core American value of opportunity for all, and how allowing those students to pursue their full potential and become productive members of the society is an investment in our nation's future.
- ▶ Reach out to journalists who publish in progressive media and help them shape stories that carry the core narrative and lay out the movement's vision for reform.
- ▶ Pitch immigration as a progressive issue that progressive writers should spotlight so that they can provide a reliable platform for positive messages and lay out the solution. In addition, leverage existing pieces of progressive coverage of immigration.

1. These strategies are also discussed in The Opportunity Agenda's 2009 report "Public Discourse on Immigration". Available at www.opportunityagenda.org.

By and large, it is important that advocates exercise message discipline and utilize the core narrative embraced by the pro-immigrant movement: **workable solutions that uphold our nation’s values and move us forward together**. Reframing the media discourse takes coordination and discipline. Accurate facts and logical arguments are necessary but, unfortunately, not sufficient to prevail. It is critical that the core narrative is communicated again and again by large numbers of proponents. The more frequently and effectively spokespeople can deliver that narrative, the more successful they will be in collectively reframing the media debate.²

Media Content Analysis Overview

We analyzed 13 months of mainstream newspaper content about immigrants and immigration published from June 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009 by nine English-language large circulation newspapers in four regions in California: San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles, and San Diego. The newspapers in the scan include *San Diego Union-Tribune*, *Contra Costa Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Monterey County Herald*, *San Bernardino Sun*, *The Press-Enterprise*, and *The Daily News of Los Angeles*. The initial search for immigration coverage in California contained an additional region in California—Fresno—and another seven publications, which were excluded from the final pool of content for analysis because of their marginal coverage of immigration during the timeframe of this scan. The final random sample consists of 80 articles, including 50 opinion pieces, and 30 news stories. The methodology of the media research that was adopted for this report is described in the Appendix.

In the analysis that follows, we discuss the following topics:

- ▶ Dominant frames and narratives in the coverage of immigrants and immigration topics by mainstream newspapers in San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles, and San Diego.
- ▶ Categories of spokespeople who are frequently quoted, and their message. We specifically examined the viability of immigrant rights groups in the media, who and how often they are quoted.
- ▶ Terminology used to describe or define the issue.
- ▶ Topics that are frequently covered, and topics critical to the debate that are ignored.
- ▶ Volume and content of immigration coverage in the publications examined in the scan.
- ▶ Reporters who cover the issue.
- ▶ Openings for immigrant rights advocates to convey their message, and effectively frame the public debate to reflect public opinion and our nation’s values.
- ▶ Openings for the immigration core narrative developed by The Opportunity Agenda and immigration reform advocates: ***We need workable solutions that uphold our nation’s values and move us forward together.***

2. These strategies are also discussed in The Opportunity Agenda’s 2009 report “Public Discourse on Immigration”. Available at www.opportunityagenda.org.

In addition, we present below an index of the newspapers that we examined, their volume of immigration coverage and their audience outreach. This index should help inform advocates' media strategy in terms of targeting the right publications to reach their target audiences.

Newspapers in order of volume of immigration coverage	Region	Circulation³
San Diego Union Tribune	San Diego County	330,848
Contra Costa Times	San Francisco Bay Area	194, 445
The San Francisco Chronicle	San Francisco Bay Area	354, 752
Los Angeles Times	Los Angeles	1,019,388
San Jose Mercury News	San Francisco Bay Area (Southern; Silicon Valley, San Jose, Santa Cruz)	244, 641
Monterey County Herald	Monterey County/ Central Coast	28,778
The Press Enterprise	Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernardino Counties)	147, 399
The Daily News of Los Angeles	Los Angeles	124, 488

Finally, we present a media list of reporters covering the topic of immigration, which should be part of any successful media strategy. It is important that advocates and communications professionals target reporters, study their beat and pitch a story specifically for a reporter, when possible.

The index of writers below includes reporters and op-ed columnists who appeared at least twice in the sample of articles that we analyzed for this report. Some express consistent views pro or against immigrants and the kind of immigration policies that they support. There were also reporters who move between progressive and conservative positions on immigration dependent on the specific topic that is debated. We suggest contacting those reporters whose articles or op-eds are fair or pro-immigration. Although the list below will serve as a solid foundation to judge which journalists to target, advocates should look more carefully for writers who cover stories in the broader spectrum of social issues, or topics which relate to immigration, such as the economy, law enforcement, human rights or general stories of human interest.

3. These numbers are accurate as of May 31, 2009.

Index of Journalists in order of immigration coverage volume

Journalists covering immigration	Publication	Coverage Volume	Article Type
Ruben Navarrette Jr.	The San Diego Union-Tribune	6	Opinion
	San Jose Mercury News	2	
	Contra Costa Times	2	
	Contra Costa Times	2	
	San Gabriel Valley Tribune	1	
Matt O'Brien	Contra Costa Times	5	News
Ann Gorman	Los Angeles Times	3	News
Tyche Hendricks	The San Francisco Chronicle	2	News
Bob Egelko	The San Francisco Chronicle	2	News
Jaxon Van Derbeken	The San Francisco Chronicle	2	News
David Olson	The Press Enterprise	2	News
Leslie Berestein	The San Diego Union-Tribune	2	News
Stephen Wall	San Gabriel Valley Tribune	2	News

Findings

1. The dominant frame in California's media coverage, according to the random sample of articles that was analyzed for this scan, is that the immigration system is broken, and is failing Americans—from the state's correction system and local law enforcement to Americans' civil rights and the public education system. Immigrants are expected to obey the law once they find themselves in a situation such as being ordered for deportation or caught for drug dealing. They are also portrayed trapped in life conditions that have left them with no options. The responsibility for resolving the immigration problem is clearly attributed to elected officials and the government.
2. While news coverage highlights the flaws in the current system, there is little discourse about the systemic causes of the problems related to immigration in the U.S. With the exception of one article that provided historical context for immigration in the U.S., coverage is focused only on Congress's and other elected officials' recent failure, especially the unsuccessful attempt in 2007, to resolve the problem.
3. Similarly to the lack of discourse about systemic causes, just a marginal share of articles discusses positive solutions or the content of a possible reform of the immigration system.
4. Immigrants were portrayed as hard workers and wanting to live "out of the shadows."
5. Almost none of the stories scanned discussed immigrants' non-economic contributions to the society, such as enrichment of local culture and bringing diversity. Also marginal was the discussion around fundamental values that immigrants share with native-born Americans—family, pursuit of opportunity—or their commitment to or pride about becoming American.

6. Reporters often use a human interest frame focusing on an individual's personal story to discuss relevant problems of immigration.
7. The vast majority of stories discussing the immigration issue evoke a conflict frame presenting both sides of the debate and emphasizing the ongoing dispute over the resolution of the problem.
8. Immigrant voices are rare in California's news coverage and opinion writing on immigration. When immigrants are quoted, they usually pledge for compassion for their struggle, typically with the U.S. immigration system. As a result, the reader can associate immigrants with trouble and problems, even if they are not to be blamed. Exceptions include compelling immigrant voices quoted in a few articles about May Day rallies that express their desire and commitment to becoming American.
9. Almost every story discussing the immigration issue in relation to the 2008 presidential election focused on the lack of debate about the issue between the candidates—U.S. Senators Barack Obama and John McCain. The “politics over policy” argument was dominant in those articles where both candidates were accused of avoiding the controversial issue of immigration reform in fear of alienating the valuable Latino vote.
10. The role of the Latino voting bloc in the 2008 presidential election, and later in the new administration's attitude toward pursuing immigration reform, was a popular topic in stories about politics and immigration. Prior to the election reporters speculated about Latinos' preference of presidential candidate. Following the election, stories examined primarily the dynamics of the relationship between Latinos' vast support for Barack Obama in the election, and his administration's timing and stand on reforming the immigration system. Barack Obama is often portrayed as being “in debt” to the Latino community, and his administration's actions on immigration reform are often examined through that lens.
11. Despite the focus on the Latino community, there is little discourse about Latino voters' opinions about the content of positive solutions to the immigration problem, or their attitudes generally toward contemporary issues, and the new administration.
12. Most reporters quickly dismiss, directly or indirectly, the newly surfaced anti-immigrant narrative that an increasing number of illegal immigrants are leaving the country because of the economic downturn and loss of jobs, which would result in a resolution of the country's immigration problem. Most writers argue through their own words or quotes by experts that this is still not a solution to the massive number of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. today, who are rooted in the country, or even teenagers who moved to the U.S. at a very young age. Some also argue that when the economy recovers, the immigration flow to the U.S. will increase again.
13. Government officials and agencies accounted for the largest portion of references and quotations, including President Barack Obama, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE). After that group of immigration actors, immigrant rights advocates and then anti-immigrant groups were the most frequently quoted or referenced in the articles.
14. California's print news coverage of immigration from June 2008 to June 2009 focused heavily on (1) politics and policies at the national level and at a lesser degree on the state level, (2) immigration and the economy, and (3) enforcement policies and practices.
15. Ruben Navarrette Jr., writer for the *San Diego Tribune*, is a major voice of immigration in California and nationwide. Our review of his articles found that the following narratives dominate his content: (1) need for immigration reform, (2) contentious politics of immigration reform, and Congress's repeated failures to resolve the immigration problem, and (3) xenophobia and fear of a perceived alteration of the American culture by immigrants (e.g. “Latinophobes”), who are to be blamed for some anti-immigrant sentiments.

Topic Analysis

California's print news coverage of immigration in June 2008 – June 2009 focused (1) on politics and policies at the national level and at a lesser degree on the state level, (2) immigration and the economy—by and large the economic downturn and jobs, and (3) enforcement policies and practices, including raids, local enforcement of the immigration law, and sanctuary policies.

News stories and opinion pieces on politics and policies prior to the 2008 national election focused on calls for more public debate of the issue by the presidential candidates, and eventually criticism of the candidates' silence on the issue with speculation about the Latino voting bloc's choice of candidate. Post-election coverage looked at the effect of Latino voters' vast support for President Barack Obama, and his decision to take on immigration overhaul early on his presidency.

Other topics that received less but still substantive coverage include *human* interest stories of legal immigrants who are failed by the current immigration system, rallies and protests for immigrant rights, crimes, especially those committed by undocumented juveniles, and undocumented children of immigrants with no way to legalization, face deportation or are threatened to lose favorable tuition to state colleges.

The table below explains the percentage of coverage that various immigration topics received, according to the sample of articles analyzed for this media scan.

Topics	% Volume of coverage
Politics and policies, and immigration reform	25%
Immigration, the economy and jobs	17%
Enforcement policies and practices	14%
Immigration system and legal immigrants	6%
Events	6%
Crime	5%
Immigrant and civil rights	4%
Children of immigrants	4%
Integration	3%
Immigrant success story	3%
Miscellaneous	13%
Total	100%

Politics and Policies, and Immigration Reform (25%)

A quarter of the stories were political in nature, primarily about the election, the Latino voting bloc, the politics of immigration reform, the new administration, and the failure of Congress to resolve the issue in the past, and specifically during the 2007 attempt for comprehensive reform. Speculation about whether Latino voters would swing in the presidential election, and the level of importance that group ascribed the issue of immigration were echoed in many articles.

The majority of these articles told a narrative about the failure of the immigration system, attributed the responsibility for the cause and the resolution of the problem to our elected officials in our nation's capital and the "treatment responsibility" of the government. These articles did not clearly attribute responsibility to immigrants who stay in the country without proper documentation, although they demanded that immigrants follow the current law if ordered to do so. By and large, stories about the politics of immigration have adopted a conflict frame, and stress the contest between the immigrant rights and anti-immigrant movements.

Excerpt of articles about politics, policies, and immigration reform

Broken system/systemic failure: "But whenever there's a chance to put a little more pressure on the federal government to fix the nation's immigration laws—or least pay for its failure to fix or enforce them—California should take the opportunity. Those incarcerated immigrants should be a federal responsibility because only the federal government can enforce immigration law." (Opinion, "Our View: Don't scrap SCAAP funds," *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*, March 6, 2006).

Complexities of the immigration system: "It confirms our suspicion that adults were taking advantage of the sanctuary policy in order to evade detention, responsibility, and prosecution for criminal behavior.'... 'The case of Francisco G. shows that even when juvenile suspects are referred to ICE, it doesn't mean that they will never come back and reoffend' said mayoral spokesman Nathan Ballard." (Jaxon Van Derbeken, "Illegal teen rearrested, again faces deportation", *The San Francisco Chronicle*, May 5, 2009).

Latino voting bloc: "The conventional thinking is that the (immigration reform) issue has very little benefit for Democrats beyond scoring points with Latino voters, who will probably stay in their camp anyway...It's true that President-elect Obama owes Latinos an enormous debt for giving him two-thirds of their votes. But Obama and congressional Democrats also owe a lot to labor...Yet when it comes to immigration, Obama will have trouble keeping his promise of comprehensive reform from last summer." (Ruben Navarrette Jr., "Immigration unlikely to be Obama priority," *The San Diego Union Tribune*, November 12, 2008).

New administration: "No one expects Obama to put immigration reform on his 100-day list. But it would be a great waste if this president-elect, with his sensible and practical approach, does not apply his considerable skills to resolving this stalemate during his first term." (Jaxon Van Derbeken, "Adult Offenders Shielded by S.F.," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 17, 2008).

Immigration and the economy (17%)

Coverage of the relationship of immigrants and immigration to different aspects of the state's economy increased as the economic downturn intensified in the fall of 2008 and all 2009. More frequently, stories and opinion pieces discussed the effect of the recession on the President's campaign promise to overhaul the immigration system early on in his presidency, which intensified when the new administration officially put the issue on its agenda in March 2009. A lot of the discourse focused on the perceived challenges of promoting immigration reform, and most likely a path to legalization for undocumented immigrants, at a time of high unemployment rates and high job competition. Although there was a lot of discussion about the opposition's argument to prevent

comprehensive immigration reform, anti-immigrant spokespeople were quoted frequently. Their consistent narrative was that Americans need more jobs not more competition. Fewer stories discussed the positive impact of legal and undocumented immigrants to the economy, the cost of local enforcement measures, and the cost of housing immigrant inmates in the state prison system.

Excerpts from articles on immigration and the economy

“In the midst of a recession, however, the ideal of expanding temporary or permanent legal immigration—a central element of similar bill sin 2006 and 2007—already faces opposition. And offering legal status for an estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants is likely to be a tough sell as well. (Tyche Hendricks, “May Day marches, rallies set,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, May 1, 2009)

“The nation’s economic crisis could make it tough for President-elect Barack Obama to deliver on his pledge to overhaul the nation’s immigration laws, some analysts predict. With unemployment rising, foreign workers are less welcome, say immigration restrictionists, who have vowed to oppose to offering legal status to the nation’s estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants.” (Tyche Hendricks, “Economy many hobble Obama on immigration,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, December 10, 2008).

“It makes it hard to ignore the fact that illegal immigrants benefit the U.S. economy in many ways...The benefits aren’t limited to the taxes illegal immigrants pay while residing in the United States—sales, property, and, thanks to a U.S. government-issued Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, income taxes and Social Security taxes... If these companies do well financially because they can fill their labor needs, either because illegal immigrants are doing jobs that Americans won’t do or because they are working for less than Americas would demand, then those companies bolster the local, state and federal economy with the taxes they contribute and the salaries they pay to their workers.” (Op-ed, “A little honesty; It’s a fact, illegal immigrants aid U.S. economy,” *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, January 2, 2009).

“Immigrant entrepreneurs; Nearly one-third of California’s business owners are foreign-born.” By Leslie Berestein for *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, November 15, 2008.

Enforcement policies and practices (14%)

Articles about enforcement practices are focused heavily on state policies, and workplace raids in California. San Francisco’s sanctuary policy and Mayor Gavin Newsom’s recent policy change to surrender juvenile immigrant offenders to federal agencies, and the broader dispute over enforcement of immigration law by local police officers dominated this category of news.

Excerpts from articles on enforcement policies and practices

Raids: “While immigration officials say that these raids are proving effective, some results do not justify the means. The ICE is essentially working on the premise that people are guilty until proven innocent, and many are rotting in jails without due process. True, many illegals can be caught in raids but many legal residents are caught in the crossfire and that’s gross violation of an American’s civil rights.” (Editorial, “Change the means,” *Contra Costa Times*, August 21, 2008).

Deportation: “Let me say a few words in defense of deporting illegal immigrants. I wouldn’t have thought such a defense would be necessary, since being in the United States without proper documents is a crime and the penalty is deportation.” (Ruben Navarette Jr., “Double Standard rears its ugly head in two immigration cases,” *Contra Costa Times*, June 12, 2008)

“We should be tough on illegal immigration. We should speed up deportations, continue workplace raids, stiffen penalties for smugglers, crack down on employers, create a tamper-proof ID card for employees, and give the Border Patrol agents on the front lines the tools they need to do their jobs.” (Ruben Navarrette Jr., “Feds hold the key to crack down on illegal immigration,” *Contra Costa Times*, February 19, 2009).

Sanctuary: “Many advocates and supervisors in San Francisco, though, have slammed Newsome for his new policy of turning undocumented youth arrested for felonies to federal authorities, regardless of whether they’re found guilty. [Police Chief George] Gascun said he doesn’t believe in a blanket policy for undocumented youth and that turning them over upon arrest would depend on their age and the severity of their alleged crime. His refusal to arrest people just for being here illegal fits in well with San Francisco’s sanctuary policy.” (Heather Knight, “New top cop looks to be tailor-made,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 21, 2009).

Events (6%)

Protests for immigrant rights, including May Day rallies monopolized the attention of reporters covering immigration-related events. In this year’s coverage of May Day rallies, there was a lot of discussion about the outbreak of the swine flu and the anti-immigrant movement’s effort to associate it to Mexican immigrants or to demand the closing of the border. Another narrative that dominated the coverage of protests during 2009 was the new President’s campaign and post-election process to overhaul the immigration system. These stories presented a great opportunity for immigrant rights advocates to convey their message, and gave immigrants a platform to speak for themselves. Many advocates and immigrants were quoted, but also a few voices of the opposition were heard in the same article, claiming that undocumented immigrants are leaving the country due to the economic downturn and the shortage of jobs.

Excerpt from stories about events

“Immigrant right advocates planning marches around the Bay Area and across the country today are optimistic that they have support in Washington, D.C., for immigration reform, but the fact that the rallies take place during a week of panic over Mexico’s swine flu outbreak is further complicating a complex issue.” (Tyche Hendricks, “May Day marches, rallies set,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, May 1, 2009).

Crime (5%)

Stories about immigrant-related crime were heavily focused on immigrant juvenile offenders and San Francisco’s policy to surrender them to the federal authorities, and on the complexities of dealing with immigrants, legal or undocumented, offenders on the state level.

When the issue of immigrant juvenile drug offenders is discussed, the focus is on the broken immigration system and the debate on whether immigrant drug offenders who appear to be juveniles should be surrendered to the federal authorities. None of the relevant stories explored the causes of the phenomenon, whether they are related to the juvenile’s personal circumstances or society’s responsibility to protect them.

Excerpts from articles on crime

“Sanctuary city: San Francisco juvenile justice officials reported 58 illegal immigrants to federal authorities since the city stopped protecting youths from deportation. It turns out 17 of them weren’t minors.” (Jaxon Van Derbeken, “Adult offenders shielded by S.F.,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 17, 2008).

Immigrant and Civil Rights (4%)

Immigrant rights were seldom discussed in the stories that we analyzed. The few stories on the topic suggested that violation of immigrant rights undermines the civil rights of all Americans, or discussed the violation of rights of Americans or people who have the legal right to be in the country during massive efforts to arrest undocumented immigrants, such as raids.

Excerpt from article on immigrants and civil rights

“The new Department of Justice rule is another step toward marginalizing noncitizens in the name of security...Lowering the legal threshold to collect personal data from those detained on suspicion of, rather than conviction of, immigration violations is a dangerous precedent that denies noncitizens one of our most treasured American rights – the right to privacy.” (Op-ed, “Another privacy breach,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, December 30, 2008)

Children of immigrants (4%)

Coverage about children of immigrants focused almost exclusively on a California state appellate court rule that a state law that grants undocumented immigrant student the same heavily subsidized tuition rate that is given to resident students is in conflict with federal law. A few stories also appeared that discussed cases of children of undocumented immigrants who just turned 18 and face deportation to their parents’ native country. These are youths who moved to the United States at a very young age and have no relationship with their native country or knowledge of its culture and language. The frame of the majority of the stories assigns the responsibility of finding a solution to the problem of undocumented children of immigrants to the government and elected officials. These stories also adopt a human interest frame that focuses on immigrants’ personal stories in order to discuss the legal challenges.

Excerpts from articles on children of immigrants

“College aid for illegals in jeopardy; Court ruling says charging undocumented students in-state tuition conflicts with federal law. He [Kris Kobach, an attorney for the plaintiffs and a law professor at the UNI Missouri at Kansas City] said it is a big win for California taxpayers who have been subsidizing education for undocumented immigrants.

If the law is struck down, it has the potential to financially devastate undocumented students, who are not eligible for state or federal aid. For many, it may mean the difference between attending school and dropping out, [UC attorney Chris] Patti said. ‘It’s very shocking it worries me,’ said Gesel, 25, a community college student who already works to afford to go to school part-time at West Valley College in Saratoga.” (Tanya Schevitz, “College aid for illegals in jeopardy; Court ruling says charging undocumented students in-state tuition conflicts with federal law,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, September 16, 2008).

“U.S. citizens should have at least the same rights as undocumented immigrants,’ said one of the plaintiffs, Aaron Dallek, an Illinois-native who graduated from UC Berkeley in 2006.” (Anna Gorman, “High court to consider tuition law; California justices will determine the legality of 2001 legislation that lets illegal immigrants pay in-state fees”, *Los Angeles Times*, January 5, 2009)

Immigrant Integration (3%)

The few stories that discussed immigrants in our sample of articles focused on English language acquisition, immigrants’ desire to become American, and on volunteer Mexican associations, which help communities around the country but also maintain strong ties to communities in Mexico.

One of these stories, published by *The Press-Enterprise*, discusses the data offered by a new U.S. Census data that indicate greater integration of Latinos in the society as more speak English fluently and take language classes, and more attend citizenship classes. However, the article solely attributes the immigrants’ behavior to the economic benefit that they might get in return. It fails to recognize the possibility that immigrants might be equally motivated by their desire to integrate to the society, and their commitment to becoming American, which is true for many immigrants, as a recent survey of immigrants by Public Agenda indicates. (See chapter on public opinion).

Excerpts from articles on immigrant integration

“Spanish-speaking Latinos in the Inland area are increasingly likely to speak English fluently, according to a new Census data...More Spanish speakers are learning English because of great awareness among immigrants that English is necessary for better jobs, help their children with homework and participate in the political process...enrollment in English-as-a-Second Language classes has steadily risen over the past several years and spiked this year.” (David Olson, “English Speakers on the Increase,” *The Press-Enterprise*, September 24, 2008).

“‘I am not an American. I have a green card. But I want to be an American, and I never thought I’d say that in my life’, she said. ‘America should be so proud of that.’” Sarah Ladipo Manyika, a Nigerian-native who spent two years living in Kenya and is married to a Zimbabwean. (Sean Maher of Oakland Tribune, “Bay Area immigrants welcome Obama win”, *Contra Costa Times*, November 5, 2008).

Immigrant Success Story (3%)

Immigrant business owners, high scoring students, and Olympic athletes topped the coverage of immigrant success stories. The majority of the stories adopted a human interest frame and an episodic frame, and they emphasized the individual’s determination, hard work, and success. At times, a thematic frame was adopted in the story, and the individual success was put in a larger context either by connecting its impact on the society, or by connecting it to the need to reform the broken immigration system to promote committed and hardworking immigrants.

Excerpts of articles on immigrant success stories

“Still, immigrants don’t come empty-handed. They bring their hope for a better future for their children and a work ethic that often puts natives to shame. And they apply these things to a million different pursuits, including Olympic gold. Thirty-three of U.S. Olympic athletes for these games were immigrants, a number of others were the sons and daughters of immigrants.” (Ruben Navarrette Jr., “Immigrants and the best of us,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, August 27, 2008).

Spokespeople Analysis

We analyzed the media content to identify frequent references to or quotations by key actors in the immigration public debate. Elected and government officials and agencies accounted for the largest portion of references and quotations, including President Barack Obama, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE). After that group of immigration actors, immigrant rights advocates, and then anti-immigrant groups were the most frequently quoted or referenced in the articles. It is notable that two groups—the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)—were the most prevalent voices for the anti-immigrant movement. On the contrary, the immigrant rights movement was represented by multiple voices, such as the National Council of La Raza, America’s Voice, the National Immigration Forum, and others.

Advocates

In the original pool of 1,000 articles on immigration, which were generated by our electronic search, the immigrant rights organization National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the conservative Center for Immigration Studies were mentioned or quoted more frequently than other advocates. Another anti-immigrant organization with significant coverage is the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). Immigrant rights groups, including America’s Voice, the National Immigration Forum (NIF), and the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), were less frequently quoted. Yet, the total references of rights groups altogether exceed the coverage of conservative groups.

Advocacy organizations	Appearances in 1000 articles
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)	89
Center for Immigration Studies	76
Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)	46
America’s Voice (AV)	22
National Immigration Forum (NIF)	17
National Immigration Law Center (NILC)	14
Immigration Policy Institute (IPC)	13
Total	277
Total immigrant rights groups	155
Total anti-immigrant groups	122

We also found that immigrant rights advocates were most commonly referred to as “immigrant rights groups” or simply “rights groups”, while anti-immigrant advocates were mostly referred to as “conservative”, sometimes as “anti-immigrant” and less frequently as “restrictionists”. The table below shows the volume of use of these terms within the overall pool of 1,000 articles about immigrants and immigration, which were generated by our electronic search (see appendix on methodology).

Commonly used description of advocates on both sides	
Rights group	140
Anti-immigrant	42
Restrictionist	16
Conservative	84
Total references	282

Quote examples by immigrant rights advocates

“We have hope that this son of an immigrant will work with us to embrace the millions of immigrants currently in the shadows who are helping to build this country through their tireless work,” said Foster, executive director of the Pomona Economic Opportunity Center.” (Stephen Wall, “Day laborers march for rights,” *San Bernardino County Sun*, January 21, 2009).

“And, as always when times are hard, there’s a danger that populist resentments will curdle into xenophobia, creating pressure to seal the border rather than craft a way for newcomers to come and hear to work legally.” (Tamar Jacoby, President of Immigration Works USA, editorial page, “New Territory,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 2009).

“It’s really very cruel and immoral,” said Randall Emery of America Families United, a 2-year-old group fighting to make immigration law more friendly to nuclear families. ‘People die waiting overseas for visas. Some divorce.’” (Jen McLaughlin, “A green card, and a wife overseas,” *San Jose Mercury News*, July 7, 2008).

Quote examples by anti-immigrant advocates

“The marches they’re having are just going to embolden the American people even more to continue our fight for America,” said Victorville resident Raymond Herrera, national rally spokesman for the Minuteman Project. ‘Illegal aliens are to be deported. They are criminals in America. They are breaking the law. The law must be enforced on them just lie everybody else.’” (Stephen Wall, “Day Laborers march for rights,” *San Bernardino County Sun*, January 21, 2009).

“Robin Hvidston, an upland estate manager said it is unfair that U.S. citizens should have to compete with illegal immigrants for scarce jobs during the recession. ‘Teens who want to get jobs in fast food can’t because Spanish-speaking adults who are in this country unlawfully take them,’ she said. ‘In this economic crisis it’s particularly devastating to the American worker.’” (Anna Gorman, “In the streets, hope and urgency; Marchers voice optimism for immigration reform under President Obama”, *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 2009).

“They knowingly broke immigration laws, she [Barbara Coe of the California Coalition for Immigration Reform] said. The consequence is deportation.” Regarding a claim of an immigrant family who were ordered deportation to reopen their case based in part on the incompetence of the previous lawyer. (Anna Gorman, “Legal error may split parents, disabled girl,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 2008).

“The decision strikes at the heart of the sanctuary movements’, said Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch, a conservative group that joined the lawsuit after it was dismissed...Futton said that he has ‘little doubt that San Francisco is in noncompliance with the law’.” (Bob Egelko, “Critics of city's immigration policy win round; Taxpayer suit over notification in drug arrests reinstated,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, October 23, 2009).

Government and elected officials, and government agencies

President Barack Obama was mostly referenced in articles that focused on immigration reform, his promise to overhaul the immigration system during the presidential election, the administration’s promise to pursue reform in March 2009, and on speculating potential challenges to that pursuit in the midst of a recession.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom or his spokespeople were quoted at most in stories about local enforcement of immigration law, the sanctuary policy of San Francisco, and Mayor Newsom’s controversial new policy to surrender juvenile crime offenders to federal immigration authorities.

References to or quotes by spokespeople of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency dominated articles about raids, deportation, local law enforcements, border security, and the appointment of Janet Napolitano to head the Department of Homeland Security.

Government and elected officials, and government agencies	Appearances in 1000 articles
President Barack Obama (95)	95
San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom (69)	69
Senator John McCain (24)	24
Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano (12)	12
California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (9)	9
White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel (8)	8
Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (144)	144
Total	361

Quote examples by elected officials

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger: “I think it’s an easy scapegoat for people to point the finger and say, ‘Our budget is out of whack because of illegal immigrants. It’s not.’... He went further and praised the contribution they make to the California economy and noted that ‘everything we eat today is picked and created by undocumented immigrants, to a large extent...and every time we go to a restaurant and every time we go and move into a building, a lot of those buildings are built by undocumented immigrants’ hands.” (Ruben Navarrette Jr., “Schwarzenegger challenges the anti-immigrant crowd,” *San Jose Mercury News*, June 10, 2009).

Nathan Ballard, spokesman for San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom: “ ‘This shows that we need serious immigration reform on the federal level—local governments bear the brunt of a failed immigration policy. We are doing everything we can to keep criminals away and off our streets, but we can’t do it alone.” (Jaxon Van Derbeken, “Illegal teen rearrested, again faced deportation,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, May 5, 2009).

Immigrants

In the sample articles that we analyzed, immigrants were not frequently quoted, despite being the subject of discussion. Quotations by immigrants appeared in (1) human interest stories, which focused on immigrant successes or the impact of the current immigration system on the individual lives of immigrants, (2) stories about May Day rallies or other protests for immigrant rights, and (3) stories about the case of in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants who study in California’s state universities.

Quote example by immigrants:

“I need papers to go back. My mother is sick. My family is still there. My dream is to support them and return,” said Gutierrez that came to the U.S. from Puebla, Mexico, so she could support her two children after her divorce. (Editorial, “ Protesters march in support of immigrants’ rights; Peaceful: Violence is avoided as thousands participate downtown,” *The Daily News of Los Angeles*, May 2, 2009).

Terminology overview

The use of a word with positive or negative connotations rather than a more neutral synonym can form a biased picture in the audience’s mind. In the case of immigrants and the immigration debate, the term “illegal” is probably the most contentious term. It is so widely used, and in the minds of many public audiences the term has been associated with immigrants in general.

Although the decreased use of the term “illegal immigrant” in the public discourse would help advance the immigrant rights movement agenda, it is a difficult goal to achieve. A word analysis of 1,000 articles that were collected for this scan shows that the term dominates the media discourse in California’s largest newspapers, and continues to dominate the discourse across the country. Nonetheless, other negative and dehumanizing terms, such as “illegals,” rarely appeared in our pool of articles. In addition, reporters also referred to immigrants without proper documentation as “undocumented”, and especially some newspapers, including *The San Francisco Chronicle*. Overall, the term “undocumented” was most utilized by immigrant rights advocates, who consistently avoided using the word “illegal.”

The word cloud⁴ below visually demonstrates the frequency of appearance of some terms, which are closely associated with debate about the immigration issue— “illegal,” “undocumented,” “practical,” “workable,” “solution,” “problem,” “values.”



4. Word cloud created by www.wordle.net.

Overview of California Public Opinion on Immigration

In general, Californians hold a favorable opinion of immigrants, believing that immigration is a benefit to the state. Most California adults believe undocumented immigrants should stay and work in the United States rather than be deported to their native countries. At the same time, Californians are concerned about the impact of some aspects of immigration on their state. Most Californians attribute the majority of their population growth to immigration, while most voters also see the population growth projected for California as unsustainable, and ultimately having a negative impact on the state. When it comes to resolving immigration-related problems, Californians were split on which presidential candidate would do a better job dealing with it in October 2008, although they voted for then Senator Barack Obama over Senator John McCain by a large margin on Election Day (Obama's 61% to McCain's 37%).

California general attitudes toward immigration are similar to nationwide trends. A majority of voters around the country remain consistent in their preference for a pathway to legalization for undocumented immigrants who currently live in the country over deportation. Pre-election, voters across the country were divided on whether then Senator Barack Obama or Senator John McCain would do a better job on the immigration issue, with Obama having a slight over McCain.

Immigrants and the economy

California statewide surveys conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California in 2008 and 2009 show that the majority of Californians continue to feel that immigrants are a benefit to the state because of their hard work and job skills, not a burden on public resources.

"Please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view—even if neither is exactly right. Immigrants today are a benefit to California because of their hard work and job skills or immigrants today are a burden to California because they use public services."

	March 2008	September 2009
Benefit	59%	58%
Burden	34	35
Don't know	7	7

*Public Policy Institute of California
Statewide Survey: Californians and their Government
March 2008 and September 2009
N = 2,002 adults and N = 2,006 adults*

A recent survey of immigrants released by Public Agenda in September 2009⁵ reveals immigrants’ economic attitudes toward public services, social benefits, and their own finances, and their perception of undocumented immigrants’ impact on the economy. The findings presented below reflect the opinions of immigrants in the West, including California and other states determined by the U.S. Census⁶ (California specific findings are not available).

Approximately two out of three immigrants say that “illegal immigrants in the long run become productive citizens and pay their fair share of taxes,” but one out of three thinks that “illegal immigrants cost the taxpayers too much by using government services.” The vast majority of immigrants (86 percent) say that it is extremely or somewhat important to work and stay off welfare. Fifty percent of immigrants say that they sent money to family in their native country once. Only 16 percent do so on a regular basis, while 32 percent have never sent money “home.” Three out of four immigrants also attest that they have never received food stamps or any money from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

“Which comes closer to your point of view-illegal immigrants in the long run become productive citizens and pay their fair share of taxes, or illegal immigrants cost the taxpayers too much by using government services like public education and medical services?”

Illegal immigrants in the long run become productive citizens and pay their fair share of taxes	59%
Illegal immigrants cost the taxpayers too much by using government services like public education and medical services	31
Don't know	10

*Public Agenda
April 23 - June 7, 2009
N = 1,138 (foreign-born adults, 18 years and older who currently live in the West and came to the United States at the age of five or older)*

“Please tell me how important each thing is for immigrants to do: To work and stay off welfare?”

Extremely important	60%
Somewhat important	26
Not important	10
Don't know	4

*Public Agenda
April 23 - June 7, 2009
N = 1,138 (foreign-born adults, 18 years and older who currently live in the West⁷ and came to the United States at the age of five or older)*

5. A Place to Call Home is a cellular and landline phone survey (n= 1,138) of foreign-born adults who currently live in the United States and came to the United States at the age of 5 or older. Most of them were either citizens or in the process of being naturalized. Interviews were conducted between April 23 and June 7, 2009. The survey was sponsored the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

6, 7. West region as defined by the U.S. Census includes AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, HI, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WY, WA.

“How often do you send money to family living in your home country?”

Regularly	16%
Once in a while	52
Not at all	32
Don't know	0

Public Agenda

April 23 - June 7, 2009

N = 1,138 (foreign-born adults, 18 years and older who currently live in the West and came to the United States at the age of five or older)

“Since you've been in the United States, have you or has any member of your family living with you ever received money from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP or food stamps, or not?”

Yes, have received food stamps	22%
No, have not received food stamps	76
Don't know	1

Public Agenda

April 23 - June 7, 2009

N = 1,138 (foreign-born adults, 18 years and older who currently live in the West and came to the United States at the age of five or older)

Pathway to legalization

A vast majority of Californians prefer that undocumented immigrants who have been working in the United States for two or more years should be allowed to stay in the country, as shown by two surveys by the Public Policy Institute of California. These opinions have not changed significantly in the past 18 months, as shown in the chart below.

“If you had to choose, what do you think should happen to most illegal immigrants who have lived and worked in the United States for at least two years? They should be given a chance to keep their jobs and eventually apply for legal status; or they should be deported back to their native country.”

	March 2008	September 2009
Keep jobs n' apply to legal status	72%	69%
Deported	25	28
Don't know	3	3

Public Policy Institute of California

Statewide Survey: Californians and their Government

March 2008 and September 2009

N = 2,002 adults and N = 2,006 adults

Population growth concerns

A statewide survey on population related topics conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California indicates that California adults perceive immigration as being the greatest of four contributors to population growth in California. Whites are the most likely demographic group to express this belief, and Latinos are the least likely to do so.

“Which of the following do you think is the single biggest factor that is causing the state’s population to grow?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Immigration from other countries	51%	53%	45%	35%	61%
Children born to current residents	15	13	12	19	12
Migration from other states	14	15	19	17	12
State and local policies	9	14	11	13	5
Other	4	1	3	6	3
Don't know	7	4	10	10	7

*Public Policy Institute of California
Statewide Survey: Californians and Population Issues
February 2009
N = 2,502 adults*

Another question from the same study shows that a vast margin (81 percent) of Californians surveyed believe “illegal” immigration contributes a lot (50 percent) or somewhat (31 percent) to population growth. Fewer respondents, though still a majority (65 percent), reported that legal immigration contributes to population growth a lot (25 percent) or somewhat (40 percent).

“I am going to read a list of factors that may contribute to population growth in your region. For each one, please tell me if you think it contributes a lot, some, or not much to population growth. How about...”

	Illegal immigration from other countries	Births to residents	Legal immigration from other countries	Migration from other states
A lot/some	81%	73%	65%	58%
Not much/at all	18	24	32	39
Don't know	1	3	3	3

*Public Policy Institute of California
Statewide Survey: Californians and Population Issues
February 2009
N = 2,502 adults*

There is a discrepancy between what Californians perceive as the main cause of population growth and what actually is the main cause of the phenomenon. Statistical data on California demographics shows that births, not immigration, account for most of the population growth (under half of these births are attributable to immigrant women).⁸ Further, more than half of Californians believe the growth of the population in the coming decades will have a negative impact on their lives.⁹

8, 9. Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey: Californians and Population Issues; February 2009.

Politics and Immigration

Californians were split on which presidential candidate for the 2008 election would do a better job on immigration with then Senator Barack Obama leading Senator John McCain by a slight margin, according to two pre-election surveys by the Public Policy Institute of California. Those opinions were consistent with voters' divide over which party, the Democratic or Republican, would perform better on the immigration issue, according to a March 2008 survey by the same organization.

"Regardless of your choice for president, which of these candidates would do the better job on each of these issues—John McCain or Barack Obama? Which candidate would do a better job on immigration?"

	September 2008	October 2008
John McCain	40%	37%
Barack Obama	42	40
Someone else	2	3
Don't know	16	20

*Public Policy Institute of California
Statewide Survey: Californians and their Government
October 2008
N = 1,186 likely voters*

"Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job of handling each of these national issues. First, Which party could do a better job of handling immigration?"

Democratic Party	42%
Republican Party	37
Both equally	3
Neither	11
Don't know	7

*Public Policy Institute of California
Statewide Survey: Californians and their Government
March 2008
N = 1,077 likely voters*

Post-election, more than one out of two immigrants in the country's west region surveyed by Public Agenda in April-June 2009 feel that America's elected officials care just a little about issues facing immigrants, while one out of four feel that elected officials care a lot.

"How much do you think America's elected officials care about the issues facing immigrants?"

Care a lot	25%
A little	57
Not at all	11
Don't know	7

*Public Agenda
April 23 - June 7, 2009
N = 1,138 (foreign-born adults, 18 years and older who currently live in the United States and came to the United States at the age of five or older)*

Immigrant Commitment to America

Obtaining the right to vote, and “showing commitment and pride in America” topped the reasons that immigrants in the western U.S.¹⁰ considered for becoming citizens for 73 percent and 72 percent of immigrant respondents to Public Agenda’s survey respectively. These findings, although not surprising, provide for a strong argument to some concerns expressed by the general public about immigrants’ commitment to America.

Despite their own expressed personal commitment to America, some immigrants do not think that recent immigrants demonstrate as strong a commitment. The study found that only 60 percent think that recent immigrants have the same (57 percent) or more (3 percent) respect for American laws and customs, as themselves.

Recent focus group research by The Opportunity Agenda and Lake Research Partners¹¹ also found that white progressive and Latino voters across the country often assume that undocumented immigrants do not want to become Americans but “are interested mostly in coming here to work, and send much of their money to homes and families in other countries.”

“There are many reasons that people choose to become citizens. [...] To show a commitment and pride in being an American, would you say this is a major reason, a minor reason, or not something you (thought about when you were becoming a citizen/would think about if you thought about becoming citizen)?”

Major reason	72%
Minor reason	10
Not a reason at all	15
Do not want to be a citizen	0
Don't know	3

Public Agenda

April 23 - June 7, 2009

N = 1,138 (foreign-born adults, 18 years and older who currently live in the United States and came to the United States at the age of five or older)

“There are many reasons that people choose to become citizens. [...] To get the right to vote, would you say this is a major reason, a minor reason, or not something you (thought about when you were becoming a citizen/would think about if you thought about becoming citizen)?”

Major reason	73%
Minor reason	15%
Not a reason at all	10%
Do not want to be a citizen	0%
Don't know	1%

10. West region as defined by the U.S. Census includes AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, HI, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WY, WA.

11. *An effective Immigration Narrative* is a focus groups study conducted by The Opportunity Agenda and Lake Research Partners in May 2009. Available at http://opportunityagenda.org/immigration_focus_group_research_2009.

“ Do you think that recent immigrants have the same respect for American laws and customs as immigrants like you, or do they have less respect for American laws and customs?”

Same respect	57%
Less respect	34
More respect	3
Don't know	7

Public Agenda

April 23 - June 7, 2009

N = 1,138 (foreign-born adults, 18 years and older who currently live in the United States and came to the United States at the age of five or older)

Recommendations

As discussed earlier in this report, California’s newspapers have not defined what immigration reform might entail, although they have demanded for it. Advocates should build upon this constantly reinforced demand for reform, to promote *workable solutions that uphold our nation’s values and move us forward together*. Above and beyond, advocates need to exercise message discipline by consistently framing conversations and responses to reporters about immigration with this narrative.¹² If they act now, advocates will have an opportunity to shape the frame of immigration coverage to promote concern and understanding of the issue, and build support for comprehensive reform in advance of the upcoming immigration debate.

To assist advocates in achieving these goals, we developed a set of strategic recommendations, below, based on the findings of the media and public opinion research presented in the report.

- ▶ More pro-immigrant rights voices should appear talking about immigrants’ success stories, and how they contribute to the progress of the community, the society, and eventually the country (systemic frame).
- ▶ Hardly any of the stories scanned discussed immigrants’ non-economic contributions to the society, or values that immigrants share with native-born Americans. It is important to educate or remind audiences of immigrants’ positive contributions to California culture and diversity of our society, and the values they share with native-born Americans, such as hard work, the importance of family, and pursuit of opportunity. Appropriate spokespeople, such as clergy, teachers and community leaders, can effectively discuss these contributions.
- ▶ Tap into the dominant media narrative about the broken immigration system, by pitching stories that support narrative. Very importantly, these stories should explain how the current system fails Americans and immigrants, who are committed to becoming American. Explain the legal obstacles that prevent undocumented immigrants from getting proper documentation.¹³

12. This recommendation also appeared in The Opportunity Agenda’s Media Scan of National Immigration Coverage.

13. This strategy is also discussed in The Opportunity Agenda’s 2009 report “Public Discourse on Immigration”. Available at www.opportunityagenda.org.

- ▶ When pitching stories of individual immigrants, advocates need to make sure that these stories are framed to focus on the system and its failures, as opposed to the individual. The systemic frame can motivate target audiences to see policy changes, rather than individual behavior, as the solution to the immigration problem.
- ▶ Immigrants should aim at placing op-eds by experts who can argue persuasively how immigration reform will help the country progress in the short and the long term.
- ▶ Specifically regarding the issue of whether undocumented immigrants should have access to in-state college tuitions, advocates need to explain that these students have spent most of their lives here, have embraced American culture and consider themselves Americans despite their immigration status. Advocates should also talk about the core American value of opportunity for all, and how allowing those students to pursue their full potential and become productive members of the society is an investment in the nation's future.
- ▶ Reach out to journalists who publish in progressive print media and help them shape stories that carry the core narrative and lay out the movement's vision for reform.
- ▶ Pitch immigration as a progressive issue that progressive writers should spotlight so that they can provide a reliable platform for positive messages and lay out solutions. In addition, leverage existing pieces of progressive coverage of immigration.

By and large, it is important that advocates exercise message discipline and utilize the core narrative embraced by the pro-immigrant movement: **workable solutions that uphold our nation's values and move us forward together**. Reframing the media discourse takes coordination and discipline. Accurate facts and logical arguments are necessary but, unfortunately, not sufficient to prevail. It is critical that the core narrative is communicated again and again by large numbers of proponents. The more frequently and effectively spokespeople can deliver that narrative, the more successful they will be in collectively reframing the media debate.

Conclusion

Advocates are presented with a great opportunity to advance the media frame to promote understanding of the immigration issue and build support for positive reform of the immigration system. The predominant media frame reinforces that the immigration system is broken, and that comprehensive reform is critical to the progress of the country. At the same time, California's newspapers have not defined what this reform should entail, which presents a great opportunity for advocates to fill out the details of reform. This effort needs to be well coordinated and consistent with the movement's core narrative: *workable solutions that uphold our nation's values and move us forward together*.

Advocates need to exercise message discipline by consistently framing conversations and responses to reporters about immigration with this positive narrative based on solutions. If they act now, before the immigration issue rises again at the top of the public debate, advocates will have a better opportunity to be heard, frame the debate to their benefit, and prepare the groundwork for the President and immigration proponents in Congress to promote reform in the upcoming months.

Appendix A: Media Research Methodology

The media scan included 13 months of coverage, June 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009, by English-language newspapers in five regions in California, including:

- ▶ San Francisco
- ▶ San Jose
- ▶ Fresno
- ▶ Los Angeles
- ▶ San Diego

To obtain the articles, a scan was performed electronically on Lexis Nexis, and included 16 newspapers, which cover the above regions. The volume of immigration coverage by each publication was as follows:

Publication	Number of Articles
San Diego Union-Tribune	180
Contra Costa Times	157
The San Francisco Chronicle	113
Los Angeles Times (most recent 6 months)	107
San Jose Mercury News	107
Monterey County Herald	88
San Bernardino Sun	79
The Press Enterprise	77
The Daily News of Los Angeles	56
Orange County Weekly	11
Eureka Times-Standard	5
LA Opinion	3
East Bay Express	2
Los Angeles Business Journal	2

From the sources listed in the previous table, we focused our analysis on content generated by publications with significant coverage of the immigration issue in the past 13 months—*San Diego Union-Tribune*, *Contra Costa Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Monterey County Herald*, *San Bernardino Sun*, *The Press-Enterprise*, *The Daily News of Los Angeles*.

To generate a pool of articles relevant to immigrants and immigration, we first searched for content that included any word starting with *immigra-*. That search generated at least 1,000 articles, 65% of which were news stories, 29% opinion pieces, and 5% letter to the editor.

To identify the context of the discourse on immigration and the volume of coverage of specific immigration topics, we performed additional Boolean searches with the following terms: (a) the economy, (b) sanctuary, (c) Dream Act, (d) raids, (e) (comprehensive) Immigration reform, and (f) rights.

Additional searches were conducted within the pool of 1,000 articles to determine how frequently specific words and terms related to immigration appeared in the content, and how often some key actors of immigration were quoted or referenced, such as Barack Obama, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and various advocacy groups.

Finally, we applied a random sequence generator to select a sample of articles to analyze, where we oversampled for opinion pieces (op-eds, editorials, columns and letters to the editor), which provide more useful findings. The final random sample consists of 80 articles, including 50 opinion pieces, and 30 news stories.

Appendix B: Headlines

The San Diego Union-Tribune

Headline	Writer	Section/Page	Publication
Immigrants and the best of us	Ruben Navarrette Jr.	Opinion; Pg. B-5	The San Diego Union-Tribune
A little honesty; It's a fact, illegal immigrants aid U.S. economy	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. B-6	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Letters to the Editor	Michael R. Natale	Opinion; Pg. B-7	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Immigrant entrepreneurs; Nearly one-third of California's business owners are foreign-born	Leslie Berestein	Business; Pg. C-1	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Immigration unlikely to be Obama Priority	Ruben Navarrette Jr.	Opinion; Pg. B-7	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Immigration policy that is confusing	Ruben Navarrette Jr.	Opinion; Pg. B-7	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Immigration Raids are Pointless	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. A16	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Lessons learned; Both sides on immigration get another chance	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. B-6	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Troubling Changes; Raids must stay a part of immigration reform	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. B-6	The San Diego Union-Tribune
They'll be back; Immigration reform remains the only solution	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. B-6	The San Diego Union-Tribune
The problem remains; Need for immigration reform unchanged despite fewer crossings	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. B-5	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Let's not blur the lines; State, local police should work with, not impersonate, Border Patrol	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. B-5	The San Diego Union-Tribune

Failed leadership; Allegations of Border Patrol arrest quotas part of systemic collapse	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. F-2	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Republicans must change on immigration	Ruben Navarrette Jr.	Opinion; Pg. F-3	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Letters to the Editor	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. B-7	The San Diego Union-Tribune
No double standard; Heartbreaking tale shows flaws in system	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. B-6	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Help for adoptees, families; Legal immigrant status for the children must be ensured	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. F-2	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Little daylight; McCain, Obama need to address immigration	Editorial	Editorial; Pg. B-6	The San Diego Union-Tribune
Expanding the Border Fence in the San Diego Sector; No; It will destroy a relationship symbolized by Friendship Park local perspective	John Fanestil	Opinion; Pg. NC-6	The San Diego Union-Tribune
In a fog after tragedy	Ruben Navarrette Jr.	Opinion; Pg. B-7	The San Diego Union-Tribune

San Jose Mercury News

Headline	Writer	Section/Page	Publication
Trade deals' effect on U.S. immigration a problem for McCain	Ted Lewis	Opinion	San Jose Mercury News
Obama, Congress consider tackling immigration reform	Frank Davies	Politics	San Jose Mercury News
Schwarzenegger challenges the anti-immigrant crowd	Ruben Navarrette Jr.	Opinion	San Jose Mercury News
Swine Flu renews anti-immigrant hysteria	Ruben Navarrette Jr.	Opinion	San Jose Mercury News
Time for historical lesson on Mexican migration into U.S.	Arturo Villarreal and Charley Trujillo	Opinion	San Jose Mercury News

Editorial: Court ruling puts college out of reach for immigrant students	Editorial	Opinion/Editorials	San Jose Mercury News
A green card, and a wife overseas	Ken McLaughlin	Politics	San Jose Mercury News

Los Angeles Times

Headline	Writer	Section/Page	Publication
Good idea	Editorial	Editorial	Los Angeles Times
Legal error may split parents, disabled girl	Anna Gorman	California	Los Angeles Times
Letters to the Editor	Manuel Pastor Dowell Myers	Editorial Pages	Los Angeles Times
May day rallies planned today; Tens of thousands of immigration activists will hit the streets in LA and beyond, marching for reform	Teresa Watanabe	Metro Desk	Los Angeles Times
In the streets, hope and urgency; Marchers voice optimism for immigration reform under President Obama	Anna Gorman	Metro Desk	Los Angeles Times
Meeting the neighbors; At the Summit of the Americas, Obama has the change to offer leadership without unilateralism	Editorial	Editorial Pages	Los Angeles Times
Into the fray in Mexico	Editorial	Editorial Pages	Los Angeles Times
Get real on immigration	Editorial	Editorial Pages	Los Angeles Times
High court to consider tuition law; California justices will determine the legality of 2001 legislation that lets illegal immigrants pay in-state fees	Anna Gorman	California	Los Angeles Times

The San Francisco Chronicle

Headline	Writer	Section/Page	Publication
Special Order 8,792; LAPD Immigration policy should be revised for the sake of clarity	Editorial	Editorial	The San Francisco Chronicle
Protesters march in support of immigrants' rights; Peaceful: Violence is avoided as thousands participate downtown	Not indicated	News	The San Francisco Chronicle
Political Shelter: Big-Box stores shouldn't get stuck with day-laborer problem	Editorial	Editorial	The San Francisco Chronicle
New top cop looks to be tailor-made	Heather Knight	Main News	The San Francisco Chronicle
Illegal teen rearrested, again faces deportation	Jaxon Van Derbeken	Metro	The San Francisco Chronicle
College aid for illegals in jeopardy: Court ruling says charging undocumented students in-state tuition conflicts with federal law	Tanya Schevitz	Metro	The San Francisco Chronicle
Economy may hobble Obama on immigration	Tyche Hendricks	Main News	The San Francisco Chronicle
Adult offenders shielded by S.F.	Jaxon Van Derbeken	Main News	The San Francisco Chronicle
Don't forget immigration reform	Editorial	Editorial	The San Francisco Chronicle
Critics of city's immigration policy win round; Taxpayer suit over notification in drug arrests reinstated	Bob Egelko	Metro	The San Francisco Chronicle
Another privacy breach	Editorial	Editorial	The San Francisco Chronicle
May Day marches, rallies set; Immigrant rights	Tyche Hendricks	Metro	The San Francisco Chronicle
Ruling backs LAPD immigration policy; State Court of Appeal	Bob Egelko	Metro	The San Francisco Chronicle

Contra Costa Times

Headline	Writer	Section/Page	Publication
Feds hold the key to crack down on illegal immigration	Ruben Navarrette Jr.	Opinion	Contra Costa Times
Viewpoint: The promise of Rapid Repat for California prisons	Julie Myers Wood	Opinion	Contra Costa Times
Cities have second thoughts about ID cards for undocumented	Matt O'Brien	News	Contra Costa Times
Double standard rears its ugly head in two immigration cases	Ruben Navarrette, Jr.	Opinion	Contra Costa Times
Change the means		Opinion	Contra Costa Times
Letters from our readers	Tom Mader	Opinion	Contra Costa Times
Pittsburg nurtures link to Mexican city	Matt O'Brien Paul Bugarino	My Town	Contra Costa Times
Mixed-status families increasing in U.S., study finds	Mike Swift	News	Contra Costa Times
Minority homeownership suffers in latest trend	Matt O'Brien	Local	Contra Costa Times
Letters from our readers	Letter to the Editor	Opinion	Contra Costa Times
Bay Area Immigrants welcome Obama win	Sean Maher	News	Contra Costa Times
Feds probe those from Muslim nations	Matt O'Brien	Crime	Contra Costa Times
Council hopefuls split on idea of municipal ID cards for undocumented citizens	Katherine Tam	My Town	Contra Costa Times
Immigrant workers win back pay	Not Indicated	Main news, national desk	Contra Costa Times
Immigration policy takes low profile in political campaigns	Matt O'Brien	Politics	Contra Costa Times

The Press Enterprise

Headline	Writer	Section/Page	Publication
Not all Republicans Deserve Extremist Distinction - Letter to the Editor	Leonard Gaudreau	Perspective	The Press Enterprise
Concern over Boycott Call	David Olson	Local Plus	The Press Enterprise
Your Views / Letter to the editor	Editorial	Editorial	The Press Enterprise
English Speakers Increase	David Olson	Local Plus	The Press Enterprise

San Gabriel Valley Tribune

Headline	Writer	Section/Page	Publication
Liberals' opposition to ICE raids political mistake	Ruben Navarrette Jr.	Opinion	San Gabriel Valley Tribune
Our View: Don't scrap SCAAP funds	Julie Meyers Wood	Opinion	San Gabriel Valley Tribune
Little people	Theodore K. Martin	Opinion	San Gabriel Valley Tribune
Day Laborers march for rights	Stephen Wall	News	San Gabriel Valley Tribune
Immigration debate surfaces in stimulus bill	Stephen Wall	News	San Gabriel Valley Tribune
Who needs border wall?	Victor Landa	Opinion	San Gabriel Valley Tribune
R.I. Bishop leaps into public arena	Ray Henry	News	San Gabriel Valley Tribune



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