

**Poll: 79 Percent Allow Undocumented Immigrants to Stay for Citizenship**  
Majority also affirms Sacramento is a good place for ethnic minorities to live

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California is home to millions of immigrants and ethnic minorities, and many have settled in the Sacramento region helping to make it one of the fastest growing areas in the state. Although the Sacramento region is very diverse, some questions regarding immigration remain. How hospitable is the Sacramento region to undocumented immigrants and their children? Is Sacramento considered to be a good location for racial or ethnic minorities to live?

In a recent survey of the Sacramento region, an overwhelming majority (79%) of area residents reports that their city or area is a good place for ethnic or racial minorities to live. Nearly three out of four residents (71%) also endorse a plan to allow undocumented immigrants to remain in the United States and eventually become American citizens if they meet certain requirements (71%). Moreover, more than half of the public (55%) also support a proposal to guarantee medical coverage for low-income children of undocumented immigrants in California. Although a majority of residents (62%) still oppose giving driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants, this figure represents a 10 percent decrease from two years ago (72% oppose in 2005).

These are some of the results from *The 2007 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, conducted from February 17 to March 8, 2007, by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

**Overwhelming majority think Sacramento is a great place for minorities**

Almost 80 percent of residents in the Sacramento region (79%) say their city or area is a good place for ethnic or racial minorities to live, with only 11 percent stating it is not a good place to live, and 10 percent indicating they don't know. This view is shared by men and women, homeowners and renters, young and old, as well as new comers and long time residents. In fact, non-white residents (84%) are more likely to claim their area is a good place to live than white residents (77%). Among the non-white residents, non-Latinos (87%) are happier with their life in the region than Latinos (80%).

Residents in Sacramento (85%) and Yolo (84%) counties are also more likely to report that their area is a good place for minorities to live than people from El Dorado (63%) and Placer (68%) counties. However, those making \$100,000 or more (73%) are less likely to be content than people earning less than \$100,000 (83%).

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**“Is your city or area a good place for racial or ethnic minorities to live?”**

*Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region*

	Sacramento Region	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Yes	79%	63%	68%	85%	84%
No	11	24	20	6	9
Don't know	10	13	12	9	7

*Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups*

	White	Other Racial Groups
Yes	77%	84%
No	11	11
Don't know	12	5

*Comparison among Latinos, White, and Other Racial Groups*

	Latinos	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Yes	80%	77%	87%
No	11	11	10
Don't know	9	12	3

*Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes*

	Less Than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 and Above
Yes	82%	83%	73%
No	9	9	16
Don't know	9	8	11

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## Majority support the path to citizenship proposal for undocumented immigrants

Almost three quarters of Sacramentans (71%) favor a plan to allow undocumented immigrants to remain in the United States and become U. S. citizens if they meet certain requirements over a period of time. This is consistent with the findings from a recent Gallup poll that shows that 59 percent of Americans support undocumented immigrants staying in America and eventually becoming American citizens<sup>1</sup>.

This citizenship proposal for undocumented immigrants already in the United States is the most popular among Latino residents (88%) and Sacramento area residents who have not registered to vote or are not eligible to register to vote (81%).

Among the registered voters, Democrats (78%) and Independent or other voters (78%) are more likely than Republicans (56%) to support allowing undocumented immigrants to stay for eventual citizenship. Nonetheless, the majority of Republicans in this region (56%) favor this plan, though a large number (40%) still oppose this idea.

### **“Do you favor or oppose a proposal to allow undocumented immigrants to remain in the United States and become U.S. citizens if they meet certain requirements over a period of time?”**

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	Sacramento Region
Favor	71%
Oppose	24
Don't know	5

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#### *Comparison among Latinos, White, and Other Racial Groups*

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	Latinos	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Favor	88%	68%	68%
Oppose	8	27	27
Don't know	4	5	5

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<sup>1</sup> Source: The CNN/USA Today/ Gallup poll conducted on March 2-4, 2007. <http://www.galluppoll.com/content/?ci=26875&pg=1>. Retrieved April 25, 2007. The wording in our survey is slightly different from the Gallup Poll. The exact wording of the Gallup Poll is “Which comes closest to your view about what government policy should be toward illegal immigrants currently residing in the United States? Should the government -- [ROTATED: deport all illegal immigrants back to their home country, allow illegal immigrants to remain in the United States in order to work, but only for a limited amount of time, or allow illegal immigrants to remain in the United States and become U.S. citizens, but only if they meet certain requirements over a period of time]?”

*Comparison between Registered Voters and Others (Those Not Registered or Those Not Eligible to Register)*

	Registered Voters	Others
Favor	69%	81%
Oppose	26	15
Don't know	5	4

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Democrats	Republicans	Others
Favor	78%	56%	78%
Oppose	17	40	19
Don't know	5	4	3

**Majority think children of undocumented immigrants should receive medical coverage**

More than half of area residents (55%) support a proposal to guarantee medical coverage for children of low-income, undocumented immigrants in California. Thirty-nine percent oppose such a plan, and six percent don't know. These figures are similar to the results appearing in a recent statewide survey by Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), with 56 percent favoring the idea, 40 percent opposing, and 4 percent don't know<sup>2</sup>.

Latinos are the most likely to support this proposal (81%). This idea is also very popular in Yolo County (70%) and among younger residents (67%) and those who have not registered to vote or those who are ineligible to register (70%).

Although more than half (56%) of the residents in Sacramento County favor this plan, residents in Placer (49% favor vs. 46% oppose) and El Dorado (48% favor vs. 47% oppose) counties are equally divided.

Moreover, registered voters in the region are also deeply divided on this issue: 69 percent of Democrats support this plan, 61 percent of Republicans oppose it, while 59 percent of Independents and voters categorized as "Others" favor it.

<sup>2</sup> This information comes from the PPIC statewide survey in January 2007. The wording in our survey is slightly different from the PPIC survey. The exact wording of the PPIC survey includes "What if this plan covered children of low-income families regardless of their immigration status?" after asking "How about a plan to guarantee medical coverage for children of low-income families, that is, a family of four earning under \$60,000 a year?"

**“Do you favor or oppose a proposal to guarantee medical coverage for low-income children of undocumented immigrants in California?”**

*Comparison between the Sacramento Region and California*

	Sacramento Region	California
Favor	55%	56%
Oppose	39	40
Don't know	6	4

*Comparison among Latinos, White, and Other Racial Groups*

	Latinos	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Favor	81%	51%	56%
Oppose	14	44	37
Don't know	5	5	7

*Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region*

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Favor	48%	49%	56%	70%
Oppose	47	46	39	21
Don't know	5	5	5	9

*Comparison among People from Different Age Groups*

	30 or Younger	More than 30
Favor	67%	54%
Oppose	29	41
Don't know	4	5

*Comparison between Registered Voters and Others (Those Not Registered or Those Not Eligible to Register)*

	Registered Voters	Others
Favor	53%	70%
Oppose	41	26
Don't know	6	4

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Democrats	Republicans	Others
Favor	69%	33%	59%
Oppose	26	61	37
Don't know	5	6	4

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## More than 60 percent oppose granting driver's license to undocumented immigrants

A majority of area residents (62%) do not believe undocumented immigrants in California should have the right to obtain a driver's license. However, thirty-three percent support the idea. Opposition to this proposal has decreased by 10 percent from two years ago (72% in 2005 vs. 62% in 2007).

Registered voters in the region (64%) are more inclined to oppose giving a driver's license to undocumented immigrants than those who have not registered to vote or those who are not eligible to vote (46%). Almost two-thirds (64%) of registered voters oppose giving a driver's license to undocumented immigrants, whereas non-registered voters or those who are not eligible to vote are divided: 47 percent support the idea while 46 percent oppose it.

Among registered voters, Republicans (83%) are the most likely to oppose the idea, Democrats (50%) are the least likely to oppose the option, while other voters or Independents support the idea by a ratio of nearly two to one (62%). Older residents (63%) are also more likely to oppose it than those 30 or younger (50%).

However, there are some exceptions. More than 70 percent (71%) of Latinos and just over half of residents (51%) in Yolo County think undocumented immigrants in California should have the right to obtain a driver's license.

### **“Do you think undocumented immigrants in California should have the right to obtain a driver's license?”**

#### *Comparison between 2007 and 2005*

	2007	2005 <sup>1</sup>
Yes	33%	25%
No	62	72
Don't know	5	3

<sup>1</sup> The wording in 2005 survey is slightly different from this year. The exact wording is “please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: undocumented immigrants in California should have the right to obtain a driver's license.”

#### *Comparison between Registered Voters and Others (Those Not Registered or Those Not Eligible to Register)*

	Registered Voters	Others
Yes	31%	47%
No	64	46
Don't know	5	7

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Democrats	Republicans	Others
Yes	44%	13%	31%
No	50	83	62
Don't know	6	4	7

*Comparison among People from Different Age Groups*

	30 or Younger	More than 30
Yes	44%	32%
No	50	63
Don't know	6	5

*Comparison among Latinos, White, and Other Racial Groups*

	Latinos	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Yes	71%	28%	26%
No	25	67	68
Don't know	4	5	6

*Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region*

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Yes	24%	24%	34%	51%
No	74	72	61	39
Don't know	2	4	5	10

**Survey methods**

The above results are based on our sixth annual survey, *The 2007 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*<sup>3</sup>. This study is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1106 adult residents age 18 and older from randomly selected households in the Sacramento region which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties. The objective of this project is to assess quality of life and public opinion in the Sacramento region regarding a wide range of important local and national issues.

More than 30 students conducted over 1,000 phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 17 to March 8, 2007, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. Our sample is still quite representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region when compared with the 2000 U.S. Census (9% in the Census vs. 9.4% in the sample in Yolo County; 9% in the Census vs. 10.5% in the sample in El

<sup>3</sup> This study was called Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region before 2006.

Dorado County, 14% in the Census vs. 19.2% in the sample in Placer County, and 68% residents in the Census vs. 60.9% in the sample in Sacramento County). The differences may reflect the changes in the population of the region. The margin of error for the survey is approximately  $\pm 3$  percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The error for group comparisons in the Sacramento region would be higher than  $\pm 3$  percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento region findings with those from other California regions, the state, and the nation. Data cited regarding the state and other California regions often comes from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Surveys. Nationwide data often comes from Gallup polls.

The College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS), the Department of Sociology, the Office of Public Affairs, and the Office of Community Collaboration at California State University, Sacramento sponsored this project. Dr. Joseph Sheley has been actively involved in this project and offered significant contributions to the effort.

This research is directed by Amy Liu, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Liu is an expert in public opinion polls, and has conducted over 20 surveys in the past nine years, including:

- 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region
- Survey of Iowa Business about Eldercare and Eldercare Needs
- Story County Conservation Board Survey
- Grundy County Youth Needs Assessment

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## **References**

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