

Deportation IS Popular: Voters Back ICE Action – and It Moves Votes in 2026



CYGNAL

DATE: Monday, February 2, 2026
TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Brent Buchanan, CEO and Founder, Cygnal
RE: Media Narrative around Deportation Efforts and ICE is *NOT* Backed by Voters

Executive Summary

Democrats are living on a different planet when it comes to the issue of deportation and ICE's enforcement of federal laws to remove those here illegally. Most voters are on one side of the issue, and Democrats are taking a drastically opposition position on every aspect of the issue.

A **huge majority of voters** strongly believe people who came into the country without permission broke the law doing so, proving the term "illegal" is how Americans term the topic. They **support deporting** them back to their countries of origin. And...a majority **supports ICE** enforcing federal immigration laws and **removing those here illegally**. The mainstream Democrat position to **defund ICE is strongly opposed** by most.

The **media narrative** around the topic of deportation and ICE reflect the Democratic view of the issue in opposition to a large majority of Americans. Maybe that's why a [Center for Public Integrity analysis](#) of campaign finance data in 2016 found 97% of journalist donations go to Democrats.

This **push against deportation** from the Left is proven in the polling to **cost Democrats electorally** in the midterms **if Republican say strong** on this "rule of law" issue.

Key Numbers

- **73%** say entering the U.S. without legal permission is **breaking the law**.
- Voters **support deporting** those here illegally **by 2:1** (61 - 34).
- **54%** **support ICE enforcing** federal immigration laws to remove illegal immigrants.
- **58%** **oppose defunding** ICE.

Do you believe that individuals who have entered the United States without legal permission have broken the law?

Midterm Voters	DEM	Swing Voters	INDEP	GOP
73% yes	48% yes	82% yes	70% yes	99% yes
+51	+3	+69	+46	+98
+/- overall	-48	+18	-5	+47

How much of a problem is illegal immigration in the United States?

Midterm Voters	DEM	Swing Voters	INDEP	GOP
64% a problem	61% <i>NOT</i> problem	71% a problem	60% a problem	97% a problem
+32	-28	+46	+23	+94
+/- overall	-60	+14	-9	+62



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Do you support or oppose deporting those illegally in the United States back to their country of origin?

Midterm Voters	DEM	Swing Voters	INDEP	GOP
61% support	67% oppose	64% support	59% support	97% support
+27	-42	+37	+23	+96
+/- overall	-69	+10	-4	+69

Do you support or oppose Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) enforcing federal immigration laws to remove illegal immigrants from the U.S.?

Midterm Voters	DEM	Swing Voters	INDEP	GOP
54% support	81% oppose	59% support	52% support	94% support
+11	-65	+37	+7	+88
+/- overall	-76	+26	-4	+77

Do you support or oppose shutting down the federal government to defund ICE?

Midterm Voters	DEM	Swing Voters	INDEP	GOP
58% oppose	68% support	66% oppose	58% oppose	92% oppose
+22	-44	+44	+23	+87
+/- overall	-66	+22	+1	+65

Democrats’ position on defunding ICE and a potential shutdown over the issue is electorally devastating.

Republicans have a slight deficit on the generic ballot though a positive position with swing voters. Voters responded negatively to Democrats’ efforts around ICE in Congress by saying they’ll punish them at the ballot box. This proves the **strong contrast opportunity for Republicans** on the issue of deportation, showing it’s **electorally beneficial to lean into the issue**.

All midterm voters move 6 points away from Democrats on the issue, handing the GOP a lead. **Swing voters shift 16-point further in the direction of Republicans.**

Midterm Generic Ballot	If the DEM Pushes to Defund ICE	If the DEM Shuts Down Government to Defund ICE
D+4	R+0	R+2
<i>DEM Margin +/- baseline</i>	-4	-6

SWING VOTERS Generic Ballot	If the DEM Pushes to Defund ICE	If the DEM Shuts Down Government to Defund ICE
R+8	R+14	R+24
<i>DEM Margin +/- baseline</i>	-6	-16

Methodology: This probabilistic survey was conducted January 27 – 28, 2026, with n1004 likely 2026 general election voters. It has a margin of error of ±3.09%. Known registered voters were interviewed via live phone call and text-to-web survey. This survey was weighted to a likely general election audience.

