

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Global Strategy Group
DATE: February 2019
RE: **NEW SURVEY RESULTS: NYS voters support driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants after learning about requirements**

Conventional wisdom in New York political circles is that drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants is an unpopular proposal with little public support. However, this conclusion is based on a lack of understanding and exploration into the issue. To address existing misconceptions, Global Strategy Group recently conducted a survey of 815 registered voters in New York State dedicated to this topic.

What we found is that opposition to this issue is thin and that voters can easily be pushed to the support this proposal with just some basic education about the proposal. Key findings are as follows:

- **Support is split on this issue, but opposition is not deep.** Voters are mixed when initially asked if they support "allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain New York State driver's licenses" (47% support/53% oppose), but only 29% of voters strongly oppose it. Further, opposition drops dramatically to under 40% with basic education about the proposal (more on that below).
- **Support for the issue rises dramatically with just a bit of basic education – specifically that undocumented immigrants must meet the same requirements for a driver's license as anyone else in New York.** Over three in five voters come to support the proposal (63% support/37% oppose) after they read neutral language about the requirements individuals would need to meet to obtain a license – for example, that they would have to pass road test and provide proof of state residence.
- **That undocumented immigrants must take driver education and pass a road test is the most compelling requirement that helps alleviate concerns and increase support.** When asked to choose which of the requirements and conditions is most important, a plurality of voters (39%) choose that "recipients would need to take a pre-licensing or driver education course and pass a road test."
- **Support for the proposal extends across key partisan and geographic lines after voters learn about the criteria.** After reading about the requirements and conditions of the proposal, majorities of Democrats (78%, including 84% of liberal Democrats), registered independents (55%), upstate voters (53%), and Long Island voters (52%) all support it.
- **Voters broadly support the drivers' license proposal when packaged as part of a group of new laws in response to President Trump's unpopular immigration agenda.** A strong majority of voters (59% support/41% oppose) support passing a package of laws, including the state DREAM Act and the driver's license bill, in order to protect undocumented immigrants from the Trump administration. The President is deeply unpopular in the state (68% unfavorable), as is his border wall policy (61% oppose), and voters want state government to act as a check and balance on the administration (78% say it is important for New York State to do so)

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 815 registered voters in New York State from January 19th to January 23rd, 2019. Care has been taken to ensure that the geographic and demographic characteristics of the statewide electorate are properly represented.