



POLITICS

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In U.S., 6 in 10 Dissatisfied With Immigration Levels

by Andrew Dugan



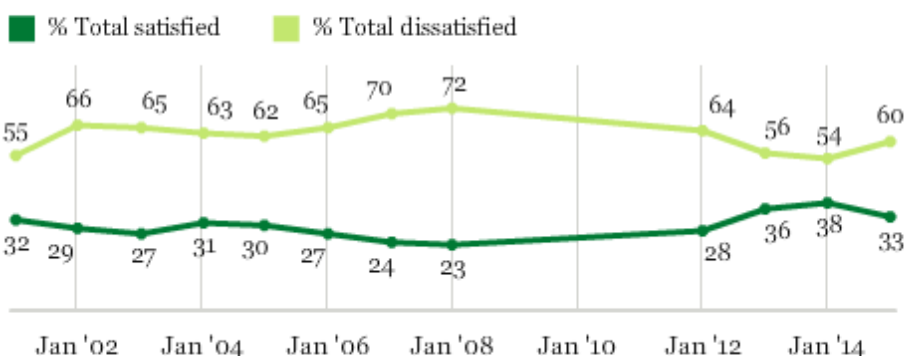
Story Highlights

- 60% dissatisfied with current level of immigration; 33% satisfied
- Republicans more likely this year to be dissatisfied

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- As congressional Republicans weigh whether to file a lawsuit against President Barack Obama for his executive actions on immigration, 60% of Americans say they are dissatisfied with the level of immigration into the country today. This is an increase of six percentage points from 2014, but is comfortably lower than the 2008 high of 72%. By contrast, one-third of Americans are satisfied with current levels of immigration.

U.S. Satisfaction With Current Levels of Immigration

For each one, please say whether you are -- very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied. How about -- the level of immigration into the country today?



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Few issues on Gallup's annual Mood of the Nation poll saw such a drop over the past year in the number of Americans expressing satisfaction -- or the corresponding climb in those voicing dissatisfaction -- as the desired level of immigration. The poll, conducted Jan. 5-8, saw larger drops in such high-profile issues as the nation's security from terrorism (10-point drop from 2014) and a 25-point decline in satisfaction with the state of race relations.

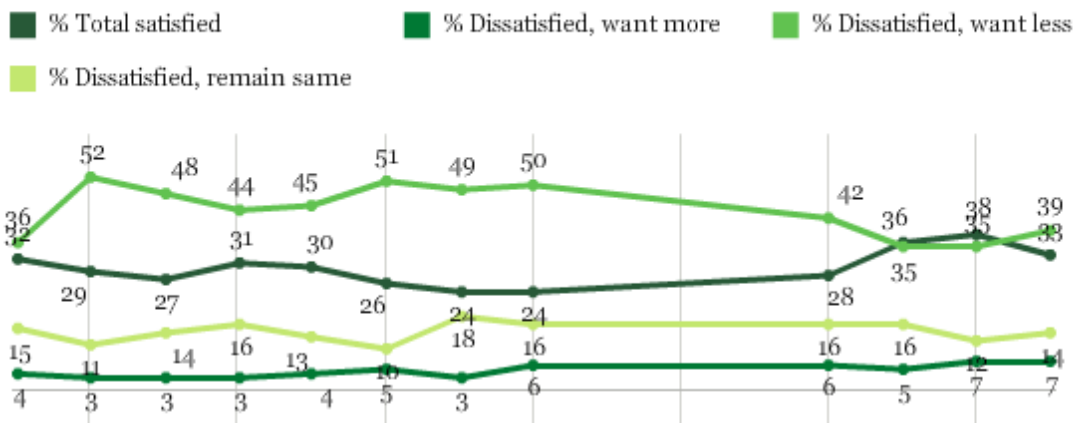
The increasing level of dissatisfaction with current immigration levels comes at a time when immigration is once again a major issue in the political debate. Late in 2014, President Obama issued an executive action protecting some immigrants who are living in the U.S. illegally from deportation. While the move has been politically popular for the president among Hispanic Americans, it is not without controversy. Republicans on Capitol Hill have vowed to undo the measures, and in fact the House has passed a spending bill that includes language to roll back the president's actions. That legislation is unlikely to receive approval in the Senate, but it speaks to the broader partisan conflict unfolding on immigration.

Importantly, this survey question does not distinguish between legal and illegal immigration. While many Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, are careful to say they support *legal* immigration, the party is nonetheless known for housing many outspoken politicians on this issue, such as influential Rep. Steve King of Iowa, whose anti-immigration rhetoric often does not distinguish between legal or non-legal status.

Nearly Two in Five Want Less Immigration

In a follow-up question that queried Americans who are dissatisfied with the current levels of immigration, the majority -- 39% of U.S. adults in total -- said they would like to see the level of immigration *decrease*. This ranks among the lowest level of Americans who are dissatisfied and express a desire for less immigration since Gallup began asking the question in 2001, even if it is nominally higher than last year's 35%. The share of Americans who are dissatisfied and want more immigration (7%) was unchanged from 2014.

Americans' Core Positions on Current Levels of Immigrations



Jan 2002 Jan 2004 Jan 2006 Jan 2008 Jan 2010 Jan 2012 Jan 2014

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Fourteen percent of Americans said they were dissatisfied with the current level of immigration in the country, but did not express a specific preference for either increasing or decreasing it.

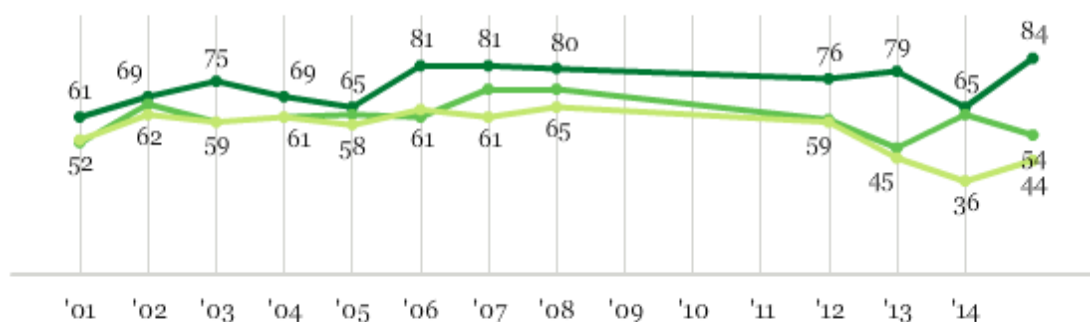
Republicans Most Dissatisfied With Level of Immigration

More than four out of every five self-identified Republicans say they are dissatisfied with the current level of immigration (84%), a figure that towers above the number of independents (54%) or Democrats (44%) who feel similarly. Moreover, the number of GOP affiliates saying they are dissatisfied on this issue swelled by 19 percentage points compared with 2014 -- suggesting that the overall increase in public dissatisfaction with immigration levels is driven primarily by Republicans, perhaps in reaction to the president's actions. However, even among Democrats, dissatisfaction increased by eight points this year.

U.S. Satisfaction With Current Levels of Immigration, by Self-Identified Party Affiliation

% Total dissatisfied

■ Republicans ■ Independents ■ Democrats



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Bottom Line

Republican lawmakers who oppose the president's recent executive action on immigration are finding different venues to challenge the decision. This is happening via legislative measures, and will perhaps make it through the court system. The matter will likely weigh heavily on the upcoming Senate confirmation hearings of Attorney General-nominee Loretta Lynch.

The president's disputed actions may have had some effect on how Americans perceive

immigration levels, providing Republicans additional fodder with which to challenge the president. The number of Americans saying they are dissatisfied with current immigration levels increased by six points and seems mostly driven by self-identified Republicans, although dissatisfaction among Democrats is also up slightly. Still, compared with earlier times this century, a smaller than usual proportion of Americans say they are dissatisfied with immigration levels.

Survey Methods

Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted Jan. 5-8, 2015, with a random sample of 804 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error is ± 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting.

Each sample of national adults includes a minimum quota of 50% cellphone respondents and 50% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within region. Landline and cellular telephone numbers are selected using random-digit-dial methods.

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