

**To: Women’s Refugee Commission**  
**Fr: Celinda Lake, Alysia Snell, and Cate Gormley, Lake Research Partners**  
**Re: Findings on Voters’ Attitudes toward Refugees and Asylum Policies**  
**Date: October 24, 2018**

Recent polling on refugees, including families with children, and voters’ attitudes toward United States asylum policies illustrates that voters favor allowing refugees to seek asylum and oppose the current policy of detaining families in jail.

A solid majority (60%) of voters favor, and 46% strongly favor, allowing refugees to seek asylum in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Only a quarter (24%) of voters are opposed. After hearing messages both for and against allowing refugees to seek asylum, at the end of the survey 70% of voters favor, and 50% strongly favor, allowing refugees to seek asylum in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Refugees apply for asylum for a variety of reasons, and voters feel empathy toward parents who are providing safety for their children, as well as toward victims of sexual violence, or war and conflict.

- It is very important for over two-thirds (70%) of voters that the United States allow refugees to apply for asylum because they are escaping rape or sexual violence<sup>3</sup> (84% important overall). Voters across party identification believe this is important: 98% of Democrats, 79% of Independents, and 71% of Republicans.
- Two-thirds (66%) of voters say it is very important to allow refugees to apply for asylum because they are providing safety for their children<sup>4</sup> (83% important overall). Voters across party identification believe this is important: 97% of Democrats, 81% of Independents, and 68% of Republicans.
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of voters say it is very important to allow refugees to apply for asylum when they are escaping war and conflict zones<sup>5</sup> (83% important overall). Again, voters across party identification believe this is important: 94% of Democrats, 81% of Independents, and 72% of Republicans.

When thinking about refugees and asylum seekers, some core values inform voters’ views: safety; American exceptionalism; compassion; human rights; fairness; and dignity. A solid majority of voters agree with the following statements:

- Protecting children and families is an American value<sup>6</sup>—87% agree, 73% strongly

1 Split sampled question  
2 Ibid.  
3 Ibid.  
4 Ibid.  
5 Ibid.  
6 Ibid.

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- We have to protect children and families who are facing danger of violence at home<sup>7</sup>—77% agree, 62% strongly
- All human beings have basic human rights—no matter who you are, or where you are in the world—and that is why the U.S. offers asylum to refugees—75% agree, 60% strongly
- The U.S. should not turn away people who are fleeing violent and desperate conditions and need our help<sup>8</sup>—66% agree, 53% strongly

Given their views toward refugees, and the values they hold, it is no surprise that voters oppose the current policy of detaining families with children who come to the border seeking asylum in a family jail.<sup>9</sup>

Rather, voters would prefer providing case management for families after they are released from custody to help them get to court hearings and to find lawyers, which has a compliance rate of over 90 percent, according to the Department of Homeland Security.<sup>10</sup>

- Two-thirds (66%) of voters oppose detaining families with children who come to the border seeking asylum; 53% strongly oppose family jails.
- A solid majority (61%) of voters oppose requiring ankle monitors in which individuals are tracked by wearing GPS monitors; 49% strongly oppose ankle monitors.
- Three-quarters (74%) of voters favor providing case management for families seeking asylum; 56% strongly favor case management.
- Majorities of voters across party identification favor case management for families seeking asylum: 92% of Democrats, 76% of Independents, and 53% of Republicans.

### Methodology

Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey, which was conducted by telephone from September 29–October 4, 2018. The survey reached a total of 1,000 likely 2018 voters nationwide. The sample was drawn from a listed voter file and respondents were screened to be likely 2018 voters. The sample was weighted slightly by gender, age, race, gender by race, and party identification to reflect the composition of likely voters nationwide. The margin of error for the total sample is +/-3.1%.

7 Ibid.  
8 Split sample question  
9 Ibid.  
10 Ibid.

