

## **NEW SURVEY FINDS MAJORITY OF AMERICANS SAY DIVERSITY MAKES COUNTRY STRONGER AND THAT THE U.S. IS LOSING ITS NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Most Americans consider a fair judicial system and rule of law, Constitutional freedoms and liberties, and the ability to achieve the American dream important features of the country's identity.

**CHICAGO, Mar. 6, 2017** — Americans are supportive of their country's diversity and generally favorable toward immigration, but they are less favorable toward refugees and illegal immigration, according to a new national survey from [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#). Fifty-seven percent say the United States should be a country with an essential culture that immigrants adopt when they arrive, and 42 percent think the culture of the country should change when new people arrive.

"Based on the survey results, we can see quite clearly that a majority of Americans see diversity and legal immigration in a positive light, but they have serious reservations about illegal immigration and refugees," said Trevor Tompson, director of The AP-NORC Center. "Nearly half of Americans report that illegal immigration is extremely or very threatening to the country."

Key findings from the poll include:

- Sixty-five percent of Americans say diversity makes the United States stronger, up from 56 percent in an AP-NORC poll taken last June. Only 11 percent say it makes the country weaker, and 23 percent think it has no effect.
- Along with a positive view of diversity, Americans see immigration in a largely positive light, although they are less welcoming to refugees.
- Nearly 6 in 10 say the United States should be a country with an essential American culture and values that immigrants take on when they arrive, but just as many say that most recent immigrants retain their own customs, rather than assimilate.
- Americans say legal immigration provides more advantages than disadvantages, and two-thirds think the benefits outweigh any risks. The public is closely split on whether the possible harm from welcoming refugees outweighs potential advantages.
- Six in 10 Americans say legal immigration boosts the reputation of the United States as a land of opportunity and benefits companies with technical expertise.
- A third of the public agrees that the United States stands above all other countries in the world, while 56 percent of the public say the United States is one of the greatest countries in the world along with some others. Just 11 percent think there are other countries that are better.



- Nearly 8 in 10 Americans are proud of the country's armed forces, while less than 3 in 10 have pride in how groups in society are treated and in the Social Security system.
- More than three-quarters consider a fair judicial system and rule of law, Constitutional freedoms and liberties, and the ability to achieve the American dream as central tenets of the country's identity. Half say the mixing of cultures is important, and fewer think the country's identity is tied to Christian values and European traditions. However, 7 in 10 consider the use of the English language to be important.
- More than half of Americans say political polarization is extremely or very threatening to the United States. Nearly as many consider political leaders, economic inequality, and illegal immigration as important threats to the American way of life. Four in 10 say influence from foreign governments jeopardizes the country, but only 15 percent say that about legal immigration.

### **About the Survey**

The nationwide poll was conducted February 16-20, 2017, using the AmeriSpeak Panel, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 1,004 adults. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.9 percentage points.

### **About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research**

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use



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### **About AmeriSpeak Omnibus**

AmeriSpeak Omnibus is a once-a-month, multi-client survey using a probability sample of at least 1,000 nationally representative adults age 18 and older. Respondents are interviewed online and by phone from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel—the most scientifically rigorous multi-client household panel in the United States. AmeriSpeak households are selected randomly from NORC's National Sample Frame, the industry leader in sample coverage. The National Frame is representative of over 99 percent of U.S. households and includes additional coverage of hard-to-survey population segments, such as rural and low-income households, that are underrepresented in other sample frames. More information about AmeriSpeak is available at [AmeriSpeak.NORC.org](http://AmeriSpeak.NORC.org).

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Contact: For more information, contact Eric Young for NORC at [young-eric@norc.org](mailto:young-eric@norc.org) or (703) 217-6814 (cell); Ray Boyer for NORC at [boyer-ray@norc.org](mailto:boyer-ray@norc.org) or (312) 330-6433; or Lauren Easton for AP at [leaston@ap.org](mailto:leaston@ap.org).