

Attitudes toward Guest Immigrant Workers: What Alabama Thinks

- A majority of Alabamians believe that guest immigrant workers in the State are taking jobs away from Alabamians, and that the skills these immigrant workers bring are not critically needed.
- Few Alabamians (10%) perceive that recent immigrants have had generally positive impacts on their community, while 41% perceive that recent immigrants are responsible for small or major problems.
- More than half of Alabamians (56%) believe that Alabama should not provide assistance to new guest immigrants.
- State residents are strongly supportive of providing some targeted services for recent immigrants. Services that engender support include: English language instruction (73%); information on citizenship (70%); and educational assistance for the children of immigrants (65%).

(Auburn, January 12) The recent *Ask-Alabama* statewide public opinion survey explored the attitudes of Alabamians toward the State's guest immigrant workers and their perceived impact upon local communities¹. A majority perceive that immigrant workers are taking jobs away from Alabamians, and few perceive that the presence of guest immigrant workers has led to improvements within their communities.

State residents are supportive of some targeted services for immigrants; including English language instruction, information about citizenship, educational assistance for children in K-12, and information about social services. Support for such services as job training and affordable health care, however, is somewhat lower.

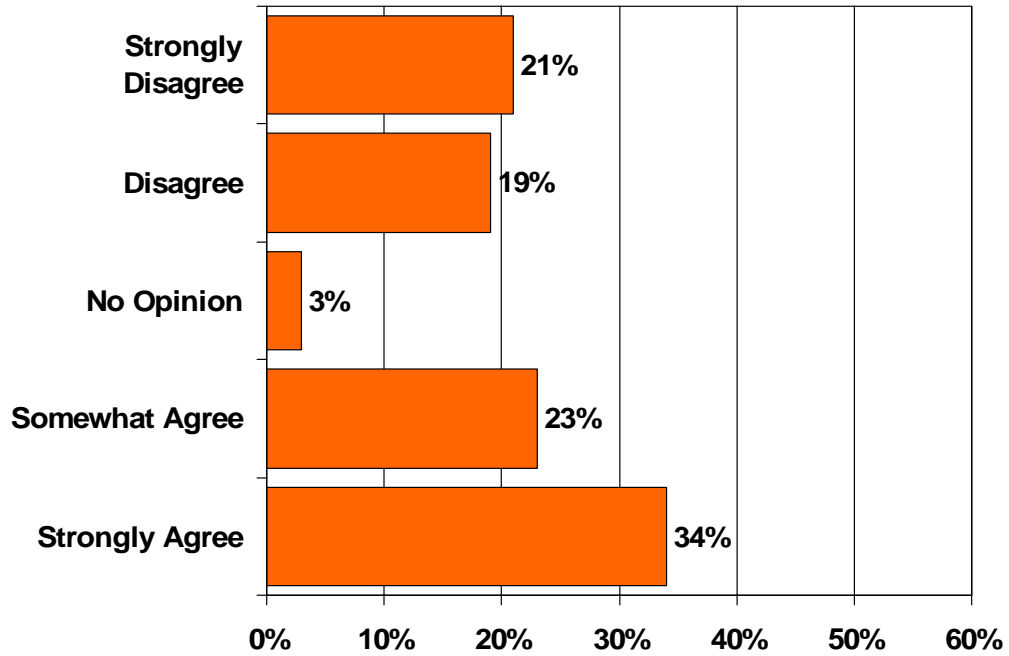
Alabamians Worry that Guest Immigrant Workers Take Jobs Away from Americans²

A majority of Alabama respondents (58%) agree that new guest immigrants take jobs away from American workers (34% *strongly agree* and 24% *somewhat agree*). A majority of respondents (55%) also disagree with the idea that guest immigrants bring needed skills to Alabama (34% *strongly disagree* and 21% *somewhat disagree*).

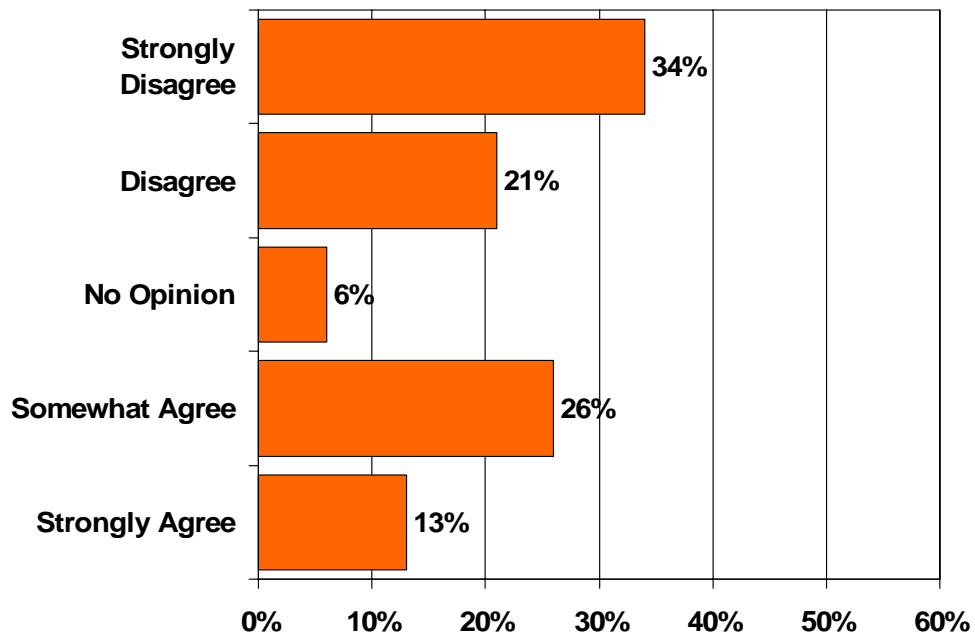
¹ The survey of a random telephone sample of 1,018 Alabamians was conducted October 12-27, 2004. The average estimated margin of error is less than +/-3%.

² Totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

Guest Immigrant Workers Take Jobs Away from American Workers



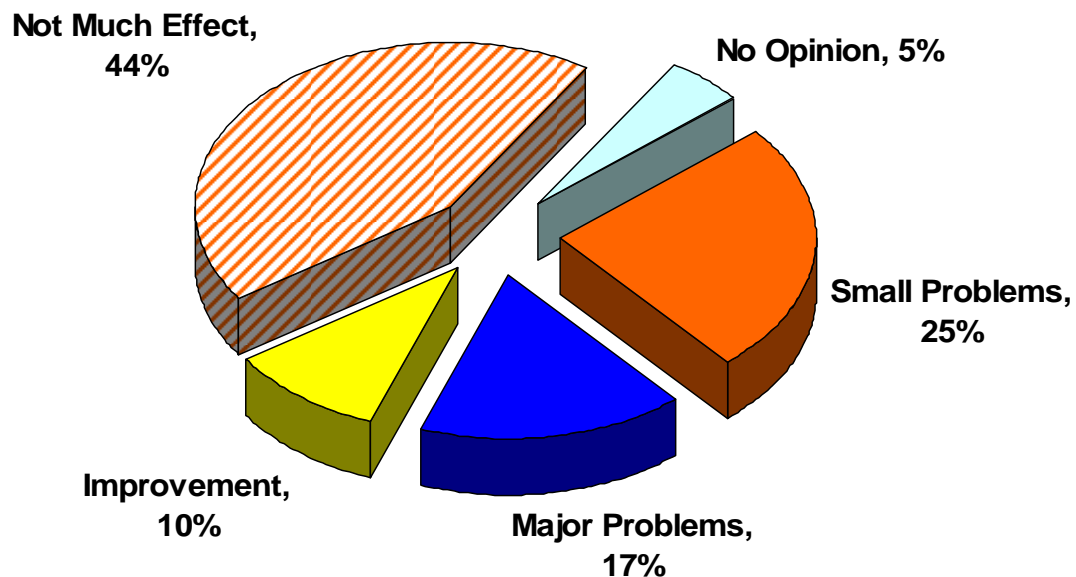
Guest Immigrant Workers Bring Needed Skills to Alabama



Perceived Impact of Immigrant Workers on the Local Community

Alabamians are divided on the effect immigrant workers have had on their community. Forty-four percent do not see much impact of immigrant workers on the community. Twenty-five perceive that immigrants are responsible for small problems in their community; and 17% attribute major problems to the local community from immigrant guest workers. Only 10% attribute overall community improvement to the impact of immigrant guest workers.

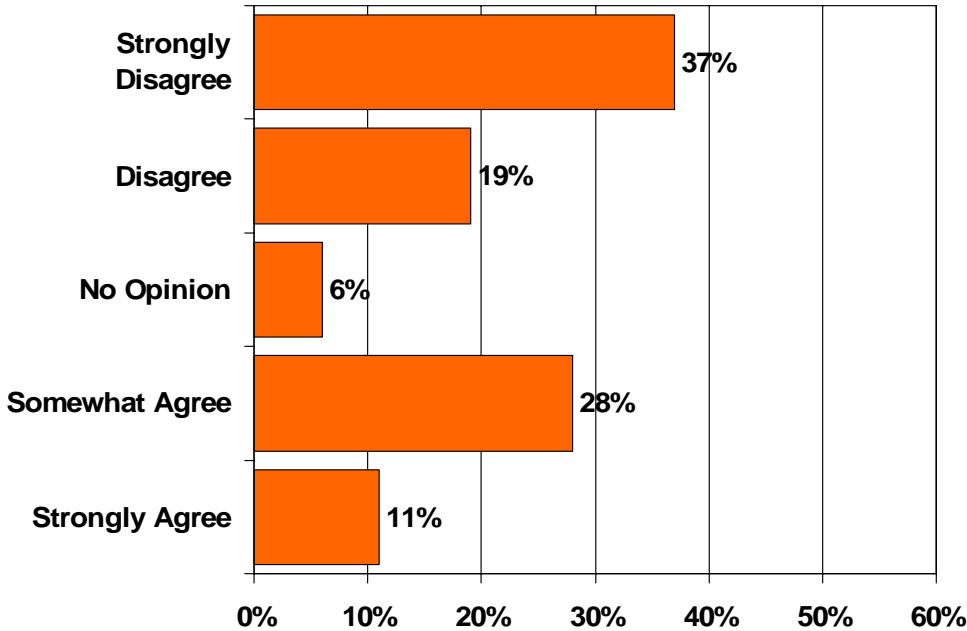
Effect of Immigrant Guest Workers on Alabama's Local Communities



Support for Assistance to Alabama Immigrant Workers

A majority of Alabamians do not agree that state resources should be used to facilitate the transition of new immigrants into their community. Only one in nine Alabamians (11%) would strongly support assistance for recent immigrant workers, but more than three times that number (37%) strongly oppose such assistance. Despite opposition to the general proposal that Alabama offer assistance to new immigrant workers, there was considerable support for providing specific services such as English language classes (73% support) and information on citizenship (70% support) as well as educational assistance for the children of immigrant workers (65%) and information on available social services (64%). Smaller sized majorities supported job training programs for immigrants (55%) and access to affordable health care (54%).

Agreement with the Proposal that Alabama Should Provide Assistance to Recent Guest Immigrant Workers



Support for Specific Services for Guest Immigrant Workers and Their Families

