

#### Summer 2017 Public Policy Poll

#### A survey of Virginians conducted by the Office of Public Policy Outreach

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### Va. poll: Majority say localities should use taxpayer resources to enforce federal immigration laws

RICHMOND, Va. (Aug. 15, 2017) — A slim majority of Virginians — 55 percent — say local governments should be required to use their resources to enforce federal immigration laws, [according to a poll released today](http://www.wilder.vcu.edu/office-of-public-policy-outreach/) by the

L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University.

However, 40 percent of respondents in the statewide poll thought localities should not be required to spend their own resources and 5 percent didn’t know or declined to answer. The results varied significantly along regional and partisan lines.

The finding, part of the Wilder School’s Summer 2017 Public Policy Poll, comes amid a growing debate about the role of local governments in immigration enforcement and indicates that most Virginians are likely to be supportive of local governments being required to use taxpayer resources to help enforce federal immigration laws.

"We welcome objective and nonpartisan polls of Virginians like this important one from VCU’s Wilder School,” said Brian Moran, Virginia secretary of public safety and homeland security. “The poll insights will help inform the debate around such a controversial issue that is relevant and important to all Virginians. Informing policy makers as much as possible around such an important issue is imperative, including a window into what the public thinks."

The poll, a representative random sample of 806 adults in Virginia contacted by landline and cell telephone from July 17-25, has an overall margin of error of 4.2 percentage points.

## 1

Some local governments have argued that using local resources to enforce immigration laws erodes public safety because immigrants may be less willing to contact local police if they are victims of or witness a crime. The city of Chicago filed suit in federal court last week, arguing that a Trump administration policy seeking to deny broad categories of federal funding to so-called “sanctuary cities” — cities that refuse to use local resources for immigration enforcement — is in violation of the Constitution.

Stark differences along partisan lines were found in support of such a requirement for localities, a factor that will likely see Virginia’s gubernatorial candidates come down on opposite sides of the issue. Seventy-three percent of Republicans and 57 percent of independents thought localities should be required to spend their own resources to enforce immigration laws. Only 40 percent of Democrats thought the same.

“This is a complex public safety issue at the forefront of the current national debate,” said Robyn McDougle, Ph.D., faculty director of the Wilder School’s Office of Public Policy Outreach, which conducted the poll. “But it’s also very relevant in Virginia. This past General Assembly session, we saw the governor veto legislation that would have banned localities from restricting the enforcement of federal immigration laws. This gives policy makers a sense of what the public thinks about this issue, as well as the differences along regional and partisan lines.”

In addition to differences along partisan lines, the poll also found significant regional differences on the question with respondents in the west — at 64 percent — most likely to think localities should be required to enforce federal laws. Northern Virginia respondents were the least likely at 48 percent. Fifty- seven percent of Tidewater residents and 56 percent of those in the northwest and south central regions said localities should be required to use local resources to help enforce federal immigration laws.

Virginians were split in their opinion of when deportation

should be used, with a plurality (39 percent) saying undocumented immigrants should only be deported if they have committed a serious crime. However, 31 percent said all undocumented immigrants should be deported and 22 percent thought those who had committed any crime should be deported. Only 6 percent felt that undocumented immigrants should never be deported.

These opinions were significantly different than a national poll by Quinnipiac University in February that indicated a majority of respondents (53 percent) thought undocumented immigrants should be deported only if they had committed a serious crime and only 19 percent thought that all undocumented immigrants should be deported.

On the question of deportation, the poll found party identification again played an important role with a slight majority of Republicans (51 percent) responding that all undocumented immigrants should be deported and 57 percent of Democrats saying only those who committed serious crimes should be deported. Independents were slightly more likely to say only those who committed serious crimes should be deported (41 percent) compared to deporting all undocumented immigrants (36 percent.)

“Such findings provide potential insight into the near success of Corey Stewart’s Republican primary campaign for governor in which he staked out more expansive positions on deportation than did the eventual Republican nominee, Ed Gillespie,” McDougle said. “Given the narrow plurality among independents for deporting only those undocumented immigrants who have committed serious crimes, the candidates in the general election may feel pulled in one direction by independents and the opposite direction by their partisan base.”

Minority respondents were more likely to say that deportation should be reserved only for those who committed serious crimes (51 percent) while white respondents were more evenly split. Thirty-seven percent of white respondents said all undocumented immigrants should be deported while 33 percent said only serious criminals should be deported. Regionally, those in Northern Virginia and the northwest were more likely to say only undocumented immigrants who are serious criminals should be deported (47 percent and 46 percent, respectively) while those in the west were more likely to say all undocumented immigrants should be deported (44 percent).

The Wilder School poll also found a solid majority (60 percent) of Virginians said they support taking in refugees from majority-Muslim countries after screening for security risks, while 35 percent were opposed. But a smaller percentage (50 percent) thought that such refugees would be welcomed by most residents in their community. Thirty-nine percent of respondents said they thought refugees wouldn’t be welcomed by most residents in their own community.

“These findings indicate two different layers of public opinion regarding refugees settling in the commonwealth,” said McDougle. “Even in the midst of the controversy this spring about the Trump administration’s proposed restrictions on travel for refugees from Muslim-majority countries, most Virginians support taking in refugees from those countries. But a smaller percentage think such refugees would be welcomed by most people in their own local community.”

The support for taking in refugees varied by region and by educational experience. Northern Virginia respondents were most likely to be supportive (71 percent), followed by the south central region (66 percent), the northwest (60 percent) and Tidewater (58 percent). The west was the least likely (49 percent).

Those with more educational experience were also more likely to be supportive. Seventy-six percent of those with a college degree or more said they supporting taking in refugees, while only 59 percent of those with some college experience and 51 percent of those with a high school diploma or less were supportive.

In the weeks ahead, the Wilder School’s Office of Public Policy will be releasing further poll results measuring Virginians’ views on economic development (Aug. 22) and K-12 and higher education (Aug. 29).

For a PDF of the 13-page report including complete question wording and detailed tables of results see <http://www.wilder.vcu.edu/office-of-public-policy-outreach/>

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# Local Role in Federal Immigration Enforcement

In the same time period that the city of Chicago filed suit against the federal government for efforts to withhold funding from so-called sanctuary cities, a majority of Virginians (55 percent) said that local government should be required to use their resources

to enforce federal immigration laws. Forty percent of respondents thought localities should not be required to spend their own resources and 5 percent didn’t know or declined to answer.

There were significant regional differences, with the West being most likely to think localities should be required to enforce federal laws at 64 percent and Northern Virginia being the least likely at 48 percent. Fifty-seven percent of Tidewater residents and 56 percent of those in the Northwest and South Central regions thought localities should be required.

Education also played a significant role, with 63 percent of those with a high school diploma or less and 60 percent of those with some college experience responding that localities should be required to enforce federal immigration laws. However, only 43

percent of those with a college degree or more thought the same. The starkest differences were along partisan lines. More than seven-in-ten Republicans (73 percent) and 57 percent of Independents thought localities should be required to spend local resources to enforce immigration laws. Only 40 percent of Democrats thought the same.

# Targeting Deportation of Undocumented Immigrants

We asked respondents about when it is appropriate for the government to deport undocumented immigrants. Virginians were split in their opinion of when deportation should be used, with a plurality (39 percent) saying that undocumented immigrants should only be deported if they have committed a serious crime. However, 31 percent said that

all undocumented immigrants should be deported and 22 percent thought those who had committed any crime should. Only 6 percent felt that undocumented immigrants should never be deported. These opinions were significantly different than a recent national poll that indicated a majority of respondents (53 percent) thought that undocumented immigrants should be deported only if they had committed a serious crime and only 19 percent thought that all undocumented immigrants should be deported1.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 18-34 | 8 |  |  | 44 |  |  |  | 24 |  |
| Tidewater | 7 |  | 37 |  |  |  | 27 |  |  |  |
| South Central | 7 |  | 36 |  |  |  | 22 |  |  | 30 |
| West | 5 | 22 |  |  | 26 |  |  |  | 44 |  |

Party identification played an important role with a slight majority of Republicans (51 percent) responding that all undocumented immigrants should be deported and 57 percent of Democrats saying only

those who committed serious crimes should. Independents were slightly more likely to say only those who committed serious crimes should be deported (41 percent) compared to deporting all undocumented immigrants (36 percent).

Minorities were more likely to say that deportation should be reserved only for those who committed serious crimes (51 percent) while white respondents were more evenly split, with 37 percent saying all should be deported and 33 percent saying only serious criminals should be. Regionally, those in Northern Virginia and

1 Quinnipiac University Poll, conducted February 2017 with 1323 US voters, margin of error= +/- 2.7%

the Northwest were more likely to say only undocumented immigrants who are serious criminals should be deported (47 percent and 46

percent, respectively) while those in the West were more likely to say all undocumented immigrants should (44 percent).

# Acceptance of Refugees

Respondents were also asked whether Virginia should be taking in refugees and how respondents expected refugees would be received in their own community. A solid majority (60 percent) said they support taking in refugees from majority-Muslim countries after screening for security risks. Thirty-five percent were opposed. Respondents were also asked whether they thought those refugees would be welcomed by most residents in their own community. Half of respondents (50 percent) said they thought refugees would be welcomed by most residents, while 39 percent said they wouldn’t.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 50 |  |  | 39 |  |  | 7 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 43 |  |  | 49 |  |  | 5 |
|  | 55 |  |  | 38 |  | 5 |
|  | 63 |  |  | 27 |  |  | 4 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | 0 |  | 50 |  |  | 7 |
|  | 47 |  |  | 45 |  |  | 5 |
| 4 | 1 |  | 45 |  |  | 8 |
|  | 66 |  |  | 25 |  |  | 5 |
|  | 47 |  |  | 43 |  | 9 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 60 |  | 29 |  |  | 7 |
|  | 50 |  |  | 40 |  |  | 5 |
| 4 | 1 |  | 49 |  |  | 7 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | 9 |  | 50 |  |  | 7 |
|  | 44 |  |  | 45 |  |  | 7 |
|  | 59 |  | 32 |  |  | 6 |

Support for taking in refugees varied by region. Northern Virginia was most likely with 71 percent, followed by the South Central region (66 percent), the Northwest (60 percent) and Tidewater (58 percent). The West

was the least likely with 49 percent. Those with more educational experience were also more likely to be supportive. Seventy-six percent of those with a college degree or more said they support taking in refugees, while only 59 percent of those with some college experience and 51 percent of those with a high school diploma or less were supportive. Partisan differences existed with almost eight-in-ten Democrats (79 percent) being supportive, while only 59 percent of independents and 43 percent of Republicans were.

With regard to acceptance by their community, only 43 percent of those who made less than $50,000 last year thought refugees would be welcomed by most of their community’s residents while 63 percent of those who made more than $100,000 thought most in their community would welcome refugees. Fifty-five percent of those who make between $50,000 and $100,000 thought the same.

Again, respondents from Northern Virginia (66 percent) were more likely to think that refugees would be welcomed by their community, while less than half of respondents in the other regions thought the same (Northwest, 47 percent; South Central, 47 percent; West, 41 percent; Tidewater, 40 percent). Education also played a role with respondents with more educational experience being more likely to think their communities would welcome refugees. Sixty percent of those with a college degree or more thought most of their community would welcome them, while 50 percent of those with some college experience and 41 percent of those with a high school diploma or less thought the same.

# Methodology of the VCU Wilder School Public Policy Poll

The 2017 Summer Public Policy Poll, sponsored by the Office of Public Policy at VCU’s L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, obtained telephone interviews with a representative sample of 806 adults, age 18 or older, living in Virginia. Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (396) and cell phone (410, including 235 without a landline phone). The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). Interviews were done in English by Princeton Data Source from July 17-25, 2017. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 4.2 percentage points.

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in Virginia who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to PSRAI specifications. Numbers for the landline sample were drawn with probabilities in proportion to their share of listed telephone households from active blocks (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

The data are weighted to adjust for unequal probabilities of selection due to multiple adults living in landline households a nd for frame size of the landline and cell phone sampling frames. In addition, the data are weighted on sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region of residence and population density to reflect the demographic composition of the adult population in Virginia. Percentages reported in the text and tables are weighted, while the number of cases shown in the tables for various subgroups is the actual number of respondents.

Questions answered by the full sample of adults are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 4.2 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples like the one used here, the results obtained should be no more than 4.2 percentage points above or below the figure that would be obtained by interviewing all Virginian residents with telephones.

Where the answers of subgroups are reported, the sampling error would be higher. Because of non-response (refusals to participate, etc.), standard calculations of sampling error are apt to understate the actual extent to which survey results are at variance with the true population values. Surveys are also subject to errors from sources other than sampling. While every effort is made to identify such errors, they are often difficult or impossible to measure. Readers making use of the results are urged to be mindful of the limitations inherent in survey research.

# Topline

**2017 Summer Public Policy Poll, Office of Public Policy Outreach,**

**L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, VCU**

Statewide survey of Virginians2 July 17-25, 2017

Number of Respondents: 806

**QUESTIONS 1-12 HELD FOR SEPARATE RELEASE**

Next…

**[RANDOMIZE Q13 AND Q14]**

Q13. Thinking about people who come to the U.S. illegally, which one of the following best describes your view? **[READ; HALF IN ORDER, HALF IN REVERSE ORDER]**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Aug 17** | **Quinnipiac****173** |
|  | % | % |
| 1, No undocumented immigrants should be deported | 6 | 3 |
| 2, Only undocumented immigrants who have been convicted of aSERIOUS crime while in this country should be deported | 39 | 53 |
| 3, Only undocumented immigrants who have been convicted of ANYcrime while in this country should be deported | 22 | 22 |
| 4, All undocumented immigrants should be deported | 31 | 19 |
| Don’t know/Refused | 3 | 3 |

Q14. As you may know, the federal government has primary responsibility for enforcing federal immigration laws but relies on cooperation from local governments. Do you think local governments should or should not be required to use local resources to enforce federal immigration laws?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Aug 17** |
|  | % |
| Should be required | 55 |
| Should not be required | 40 |
| Don’t Know/Refused | 5 |

Q15. In general, do you support or oppose Virginia taking in refugees from Syria and other majority-Muslim countries after screening them for security risks?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Aug 17** |
|  | % |
| Support | 62 |
| Oppose | 35 |
| Don’t Know/Refused | 3 |

Q16. If some of these refugees came to live in your community, do you think they would be welcomed by most residents, or not?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Aug 17** |
|  | % |
| Yes | 50 |
| No | 39 |
| Maybe (Volunteered) | 4 |
| Don’t Know/Refused | 7 |

**QUESTIONS 17-20 HELD FOR SEPARATE RELEASE**

2 Percentages may add to 99 or 101 due to rounding. Cells that are blank contain no cases. Cells with a zero percent entry contain cases, but the percentage is less than 0.5%.

3 Quinnipiac University Poll, conducted February 2017 with 1323 US voters, margin of error= +/- 2.7%.

# Tables for Subgroup Analysis

|  |
| --- |
| Q13.Thinking about people who come to the US illegally, which one of the following best describes your view…  |
| None deported | Onlyserious crime | All crimes | All deported | Don’t know | Number of cases |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All adults | 6 |  | 39 | 22 | 31 | 3 | 806 |
| VA Region | Northwest | 3 | 46 | 13 | 37 | 1 | 102 |
|  | Northern VA | 5 | 47 | 21 | 25 | 1 | 199 |
|  | West | 5 | 22 | 26 | 44 | 4 | 114 |
|  | South Central | 7 | 36 | 22 | 30 | 5 | 134 |
|  | Tidewater | 7 | 37 | 27 | 27 | 2 | 158 |
| Gender | Men | 5 | 39 | 20 | 33 | 3 | 331 |
|  | Women | 6 | 38 | 25 | 29 | 2 | 376 |
| Age | 18-34 | 8 | 44 | 24 | 23 | 2 | 96 |
|  | 35-44 | 5 | 36 | 26 | 33 | 1 | 78 |
|  | 45-64 | 5 | 37 | 22 | 33 | 2 | 277 |
|  | 65 and older | 3 | 38 | 17 | 36 | 5 | 237 |
| Education | H.S. or less | 8 | 29 | 20 | 39 | 4 | 181 |
|  | Some college | 6 | 37 | 22 | 34 | 2 | 165 |
|  | College grad or more | 3 | 49 | 26 | 20 | 2 | 358 |
| Family Income | Under $50,000 | 7 | 34 | 23 | 32 | 3 | 196 |
|  | 50K to under $100,000 | 6 | 42 | 23 | 27 | 2 | 193 |
|  | $100,000 or more | 4 | 44 | 21 | 30 | 1 | 208 |
| Race | White | 4 | 33 | 24 | 37 | 2 | 507 |
|  | Minority | 9 | 51 | 21 | 16 | 3 | 175 |
| Employment status | Employed full-time | 5 | 42 | 20 | 31 | 2 | 329 |
| Employed part-time | 9 | 36 | 37 | 16 | 2 | 72 |
|  | Not employed | 5 | 35 | 21 | 36 | 4 | 305 |
| Party identification | Democrat | 8 | 57 | 22 | 12 | 2 | 338 |
| Republican | 2 | 16 | 27 | 51 | 4 | 301 |
|  | Independent | 8 | 41 | 14 | 36 | 1 | 47 |

|  |
| --- |
| Q14. Do you think local governments should or should not be required to use local resources to enforce federal immigration laws?  |
| Should berequired | Should not berequired | Don’tKnow | Number ofcases |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All adults |  | 55 | 40 | 5 | 806 |
| VA Region | Northwest | 56 | 41 | 3 | 102 |
|  | Northern VA | 48 | 49 | 3 | 199 |
|  | West | 64 | 30 | 7 | 114 |
|  | South Central | 56 | 38 | 6 | 134 |
|  | Tidewater | 57 | 37 | 6 | 158 |
| Gender | Men | 59 | 39 | 2 | 331 |
|  | Women | 52 | 41 | 7 | 376 |
| Age | 18-34 | 51 | 43 | 7 | 96 |
|  | 35-44 | 64 | 34 | 2 | 78 |
|  | 45-64 | 55 | 42 | 3 | 277 |
|  | 65 and older | 55 | 39 | 5 | 237 |
| Education | H.S. or less | 63 | 30 | 7 | 181 |
|  | Some college | 60 | 37 | 3 | 165 |
|  | College grad or more | 43 | 53 | 4 | 358 |
| Family Income | Under $50,000 | 58 | 35 | 7 | 196 |
|  | 50K to under $100,000 | 56 | 41 | 3 | 193 |
|  | $100,000 or more | 50 | 49 | 1 | 208 |
| Race | White | 56 | 40 | 4 | 507 |
|  | Minority | 53 | 41 | 6 | 175 |
| Employment status | Employed full-time | 55 | 42 | 4 | 329 |
| Employed part-time | 47 | 43 | 10 | 72 |
|  | Not employed | 59 | 37 | 4 | 305 |
| Party identification | Democrat | 40 | 55 | 5 | 338 |
| Republican | 73 | 23 | 3 | 301 |
|  | Independent | 57 | 34 | 9 | 47 |

|  |
| --- |
| Q15. In general, do you support or oppose Virginia taking in refugees from Syria and other majority-Muslim countries after screening them for security risks?  |
| Support | Oppose | Don’tKnow | Number ofcases |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All adults |  | 62 | 35 | 3 | 806 |
| VA Region | Northwest | 60 | 37 | 3 | 102 |
|  | Northern VA | 71 | 25 | 3 | 199 |
|  | West | 49 | 47 | 4 | 114 |
|  | South Central | 66 | 30 | 4 | 134 |
|  | Tidewater | 58 | 41 | 2 | 158 |
| Gender | Men | 62 | 36 | 2 | 331 |
|  | Women | 62 | 34 | 4 | 376 |
| Age | 18-34 | 71 | 26 | 2 | 96 |
|  | 35-44 | 64 | 33 | 4 | 78 |
|  | 45-64 | 57 | 41 | 2 | 277 |
|  | 65 and older | 56 | 39 | 5 | 237 |
| Education | H.S. or less | 51 | 45 | 4 | 181 |
|  | Some college | 59 | 39 | 2 | 165 |
|  | College grad or more | 76 | 21 | 3 | 358 |
| Family Income | Under $50,000 | 58 | 40 | 2 | 196 |
|  | 50K to under $100,000 | 63 | 34 | 3 | 193 |
|  | $100,000 or more | 67 | 31 | 2 | 208 |
| Race | White | 62 | 35 | 3 | 507 |
|  | Minority | 63 | 34 | 4 | 175 |
| Employment status | Employed full-time | 65 | 33 | 2 | 329 |
| Employed part-time | 70 | 28 | 3 | 72 |
|  | Not employed | 54 | 40 | 5 | 305 |
| Party identification | Democrat | 79 | 19 | 2 | 338 |
| Republican | 43 | 54 | 3 | 301 |
|  | Independent | 59 | 33 | 8 | 47 |

|  |
| --- |
| Q16. If some of these refugees came to live in your community, do you think they would be welcomed by most residents, or not?  |
| Yes | No | Maybe (Volunteered) | Don’t Know | Number of cases |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All adults |  | 50 | 39 | 4 | 7 | 806 |
| VA Region | Northwest | 47 | 43 | 0 | 9 | 102 |
|  | Northern VA | 66 | 25 | 4 | 5 | 199 |
|  | West | 41 | 45 | 6 | 8 | 114 |
|  | South Central | 47 | 45 | 4 | 5 | 134 |
|  | Tidewater | 40 | 50 | 3 | 7 | 158 |
| Gender | Men | 51 | 41 | 3 | 5 | 331 |
|  | Women | 50 | 38 | 4 | 8 | 376 |
| Age | 18-34 | 53 | 42 | 3 | 1 | 96 |
|  | 35-44 | 52 | 38 | 3 | 6 | 78 |
|  | 45-64 | 48 | 40 | 4 | 8 | 277 |
|  | 65 and older | 51 | 34 | 4 | 11 | 237 |
| Education | H.S. or less | 41 | 49 | 2 | 7 | 181 |
|  | Some college | 50 | 40 | 5 | 5 | 165 |
|  | College grad or more | 60 | 29 | 4 | 7 | 358 |
| Family Income | Under $50,000 | 43 | 49 | 3 | 5 | 196 |
|  | 50K to under $100,000 | 55 | 38 | 2 | 5 | 193 |
|  | $100,000 or more | 63 | 27 | 6 | 4 | 208 |
| Race | White | 50 | 40 | 4 | 6 | 507 |
|  | Minority | 52 | 39 | 3 | 7 | 175 |
| Employment status | Employed full-time | 51 | 40 | 4 | 5 | 329 |
| Employed part-time | 51 | 36 | 7 | 5 | 72 |
|  | Not employed | 49 | 39 | 3 | 9 | 305 |
| Party identification | Democrat | 59 | 32 | 3 | 6 | 338 |
| Republican | 44 | 45 | 5 | 7 | 301 |
|  | Independent | 39 | 50 | 5 | 7 | 47 |