FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nationwide Survey Shows Impacts of Immigration Policies on General Population
Majority of Americans report higher stress, dramatic drop in confidence in the country.

WASHINGTON — The Im/migrant Well-Being Scholar Collaborative in partnership with the Cisneros Institute at The George Washington University and the Im/migrant Well-Being Research Center (IWRC) at the University of South Florida (USF), led a nationally representative survey of 1,410 U.S. adults examining public opinion regarding perceptions of immigration policy, enforcement climate, and recent immigration-related developments nationwide. Initial findings from the survey are released today, revealing the negative impacts of immigration enforcement practices on the majority of Americans.

Key Findings

- Nearly **one in five Americans** (19.3%) report that they **have considered leaving the US** due to current immigration enforcement actions. This number rises to more than one in four (26.7%) among Hispanic respondents.
- **One in five Americans** (20.7%) **report that their mental health has gotten worse** since January 2026 due to immigration enforcement. This number jumps to one in four when looking at Hispanic respondents (25.6%).
- **The majority of Americans report that they experience increased stress** (62.3%) **and anxiety** (60.5%) because of what they had seen, heard or read about immigration enforcement activities since January 2026. More than 1 in 3 Americans (36.8%) report experiencing this stress and anxiety frequently or more often.
- In the past decade, **confidence in the country's future has fallen by half**. Compared to 45% in a 2015 general population survey by Pew, **only 22.6% of survey respondents felt very confident about the country's future**. Less than 50% of registered voters in our sample agreed with the statement "I trust the country will be ok" in connection with perceptions related to immigration enforcement.
- **The majority of Americans** (58.6%) **approve of using alternatives to detention**, such as regular check-ins with immigration authorities.
- **The majority of Americans** (60.4%) **agree that the US government should do more to protect the well-being of immigrants**.

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Statements from Leadership

"The use of aggressive immigration enforcement practices is not only impacting immigrants; it's negatively impacting the daily lives of the majority of Americans. This impact is already taking a serious mental toll on Americans, and there is a real risk that these impacts spill over to all aspects of life from personal relationships to work productivity to civic engagement."

- Dr. Elizabeth Aranda, The USF Im/migrant Well-Being Research Center

"Our findings make it clear that the majority of Americans want the government to do more to protect the well-being of immigrants in this country and that the enforcement practices that run counter to this principle are taking a serious toll on them."

- Dr. Elizabeth Vaquera, The GW Cisneros Institute

"Our findings show that harsh immigration enforcement practices have contributed to a troubling erosion in Americans' confidence in the future of the country and overall well-being. The majority of the people in our sample are registered and intend to vote in the upcoming midterm elections, and we anticipate they will bring this lack of confidence in the country's future, stress, and anxiety connected to the use of extreme immigration enforcement practices with them into the ballot box."

- Trey Johnston, Im/migrant Well-Being Scholar Collaborative

Methodology

This study is co-led by Dr. Elizabeth Aranda, Professor of Sociology at the University of South Florida, Dr. Elizabeth Vaquera, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Public Administration and Sociology at the George Washington University, and Im/migrant Well-Being Scholar Collaborative Director, Trey Johnston. Participants recruited through Qualtrics' proprietary panel recruitment services, with a sample that approximates 2020 US Census and ACS 2024 distributions. The final sample includes 1,410 respondents.

For this survey, immigration enforcement refers to actions taken by federal, state, or local authorities to enforce US immigration laws. This includes activities carried out by agencies such as US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the National Guard, and local law enforcement acting in partnership with federal authorities.

Read the most recently released results: **https://iwbcollab.org/2026-iwb-survey/**

About the Im/migrant Well-Being Scholar Collaborative

The Im/migrant Well-Being Scholar Collaborative bridges the gap between research and policy by promoting work and translating findings on im/migrant well-being for use by policymakers and community organizations. We do so by organizing events, leading trainings, and assisting with research translation efforts alongside scholars who conduct multidisciplinary, empirical research in and out of the academy.

About the Im/migrant Well-Being Research Center

The Im/migrant Well-Being Research Center at the University of South Florida fosters interdisciplinary collaboration in research among migration and immigrant incorporation scholars. The Center's mission is to translate high impact research into innovative policy solutions that advance the well-being of im/migrants to the U.S.

About the Cisneros Institute

The Cisneros Institute draws on the intellectual strength of the George Washington University and the resources of the nation's capital to bring together innovative research and academically-driven leadership. For partners, media and policymakers, the Cisneros Institute is a nexus for scholarship and community engagement, offering data-driven research and analysis that facilitates creative approaches to the most pressing contemporary policy issues.