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Contact: Audrey Garden
audrey.garden@pinkston.co
571-405-1606

New Lifeway Research Study Reveals Widespread Evangelical Support for Immigration Reform

BALTIMORE, September 27, 2022 – Today, Lifeway Research released a new study revealing that in almost every area, American evangelicals' views have come closer to the positions of World Relief and its Evangelical Immigration Table partners on immigration policy. When compared to a similar study conducted in 2015, the results show significant improvements in terms of the number of evangelicals who cite their faith as a significant factor in their views. The study, which is sponsored by World Relief and the Evangelical Immigration Table, pulls from an online survey of 1,007 Americans.

“This study underscores what World Relief offices around the country have found in their interactions with the thousands of local churches and tens of thousands of volunteers: Large majorities of evangelical Christians recognize that their faith compels them to care sacrificially for refugees and other immigrants, and they want to see governmental policies that reflect those concerns as well,” said **World Relief president and CEO Myal Greene**.

When asked to characterize their perspectives, the top three responses selected by evangelicals were to view the arrival of immigrants to their communities as “an opportunity to show them love,” “an opportunity to introduce them to Jesus Christ,” and “an improvement to America’s cultural diversity.” By comparison, in 2015, the top response was to describe the arrival of immigrants as “a drain on economic resources.” The share of evangelicals who selected that response has dropped by double digits since 2015, the study finds.

The study also found that at least 78% of evangelicals support legislation guided by each of [six principles](#) that have guided the Evangelical Immigration Table’s advocacy for more than a decade, including protecting the unity of the immediate family, ensuring secure national borders and establishing a path to citizenship for immigrants in the country illegally who meet certain requirements. Moreover, 70 percent now affirm that the U.S. has a moral responsibility to refugees and 69 percent also believe that Christians have a moral responsibility to care sacrificially for refugees and other foreigners. 64 percent of self-identified evangelicals now say they are very familiar with what the Bible has to say about how immigrants should be treated, compared to 53 percent in 2015.

“This encouraging research confirms overwhelmingly that evangelicals have a significant interest in protecting the dignity and well-being of refugees and other immigrants, with particularly high levels of support from those between the ages of 18 and 24,” said **Shirley Hoogstra, president of Council for Christian Colleges & Universities**. “As Christians who believe a biblical worldview should undergird how we approach any complex policy issue, we were pleased to see a significant increase in the share of self-identified evangelicals who cite the Bible as the primary influence on their views on immigration. We hope our work with others at the Evangelical Immigration Table will continue to help Christians think

biblically about these immigration issues and, more importantly, about immigrants themselves as people made in God’s image.”

The results of the study make it clear that evangelicals are eager to see reforms to immigration laws. Four out of five evangelicals said they would support Republicans and Democrats working together on a combination of reforms to strengthen border security, create a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and provide a reliable number of screened, legal farmworkers. 65 percent said they would be *more* likely to vote for a candidate who supported these positions, while only 7 percent of evangelicals said that support for these positions would make them less likely to vote for a candidate. Furthermore, 71 percent of evangelicals said it is important or very important that Congress passes new immigration legislation in 2022.

“I’m encouraged by this evidence that more evangelical Christians are hearing biblical messages on immigration, and that support for the biblically-rooted policies that we have long advocated continues to grow,” said **Reverend Gabriel Salguero, president of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition**. “Fully 85 percent of Latino evangelicals and 78 percent of evangelicals overall support reforms that would combine an earned path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants with improvements to border security. Congress should listen – and act now.”

To view the full Lifeway dataset visit:

<https://research.lifeway.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Evangelical-Views-on-Immigration-2022.pdf>.

About World Relief

[World Relief](#) is a global Christian humanitarian organization that brings sustainable solutions to the world’s greatest problems – disasters, extreme poverty, violence, oppression, and mass displacement. For over 75 years, we’ve partnered with churches and community leaders in the U.S. and abroad to bring hope, healing and transformation to the most vulnerable.

About the Evangelical Immigration Table

The [Evangelical Immigration Table](#) is a broad coalition of evangelical organizations and leaders advocating for immigration reform consistent with biblical values.

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