CSRPA
Center for Survey Research & Policy Analysis
UTRGV

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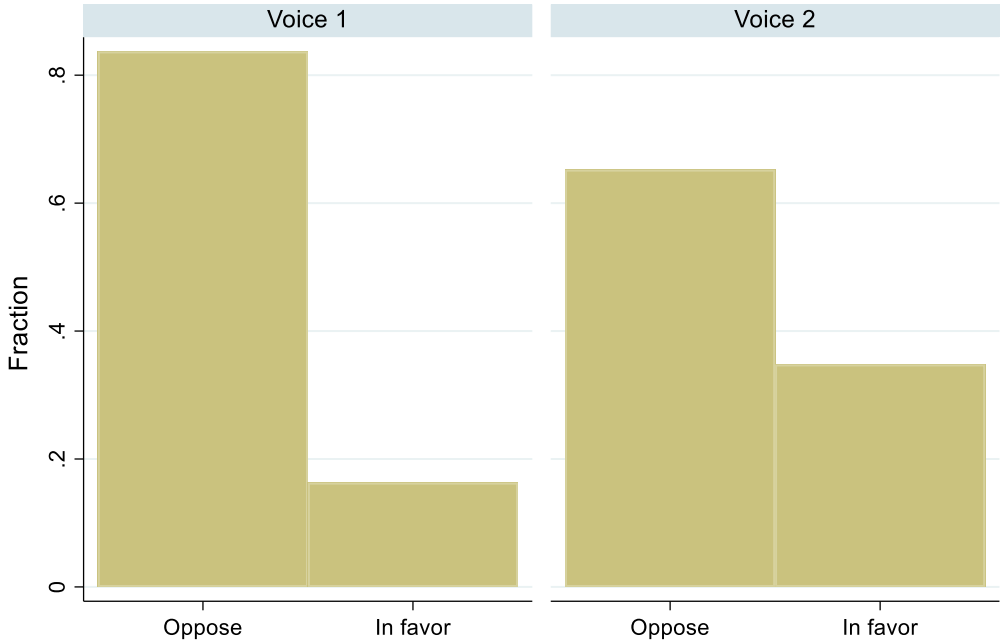
New RGV Survey: Attitudes on the Border Wall

ABOUT 65 % OF RGV RESIDENTS OPPOSE THE CONSTRUCTION OF BORDER WALL

The UTRGV Center for Survey Research & Policy Analysis (CSRPA) fielded the 2022 Rio Grande Valley (RGV) Our Voice/Nuestra Voz Survey (OVNV). The survey found that:

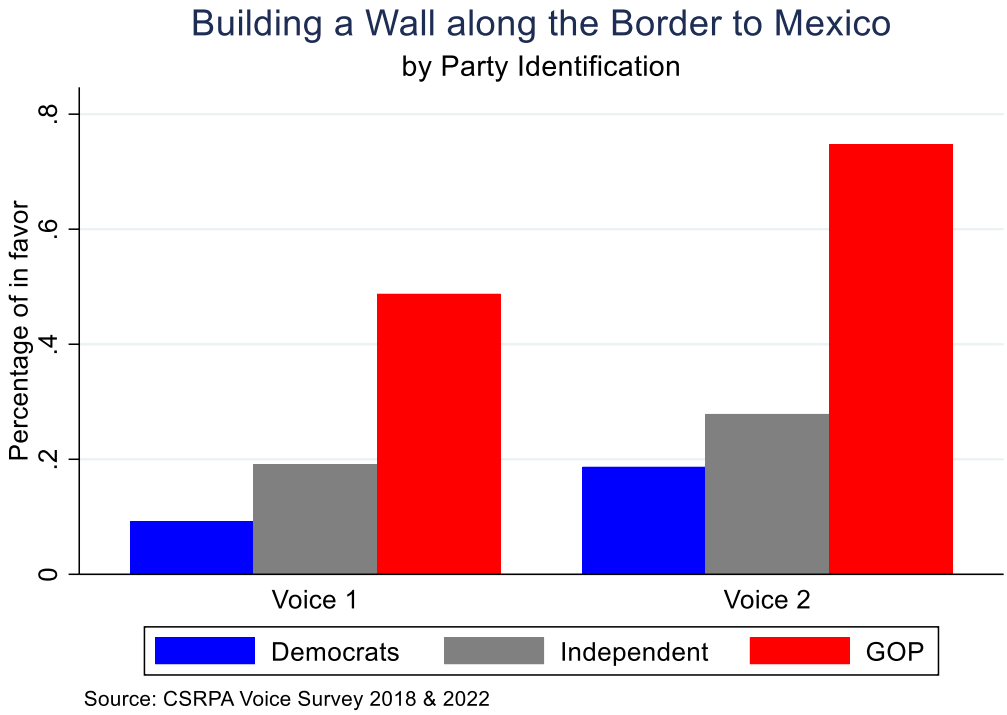
- More than a majority of RGV residents opposed the construction of the proposed border wall.
- The percentage of RGV residents who support building a border wall has nearly doubled since 2018.
- RGV Republican support for building a border wall has increased by 30 percent since 2018. The increase is found across party lines and gender.
- About 1 in 2 RGV residents disagree that the border wall would reduce the number of immigrants.



Are you in favor of or do you oppose building a wall along the border to Mexico?
Source: CSRPA Voice Survey 2018 & 2022

When the new survey asked, "*Are you in favor or do you oppose building a wall along the border to Mexico*?", about 2 in 3 RGV residents –65.2 percent–expressed opposition to the border wall construction. When the same question was asked in the 2018 survey, about 76 percent expressed opposition. When we look only at participants who answered the question, the opposition was about 84 percent. Thus, we can say the opposition to border wall construction has decreased by about 30 percent since 2018. Nationally, the opposition to building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border remains high. In a 2017 survey conducted by the Pew Research Institute, 63 percent of respondents opposed the construction of a border wall. The 2019 Pew survey also found that more than half of Americans (58 percent) still opposed; expanding the border wall. Over the last four years, the RGV opinion has seemed to follow the national trend. Dr. Mi-son Kim, an Associate Professor of Political Science, mentioned that "The border issue has been nationalized, leading residents in the RGV to respond to the issue similarly as people outside the RGV. And this trend primarily means more conservative sentiment has grown among our residents in the recent years". Meanwhile, the percentage of respondents who are in favor of building the border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border has doubled. In 2018, the percentage was only about 16.3 percent, while it increased to 34.7 percent in 2022.

The percentage of RGV residents who support building a border wall has nearly doubled.

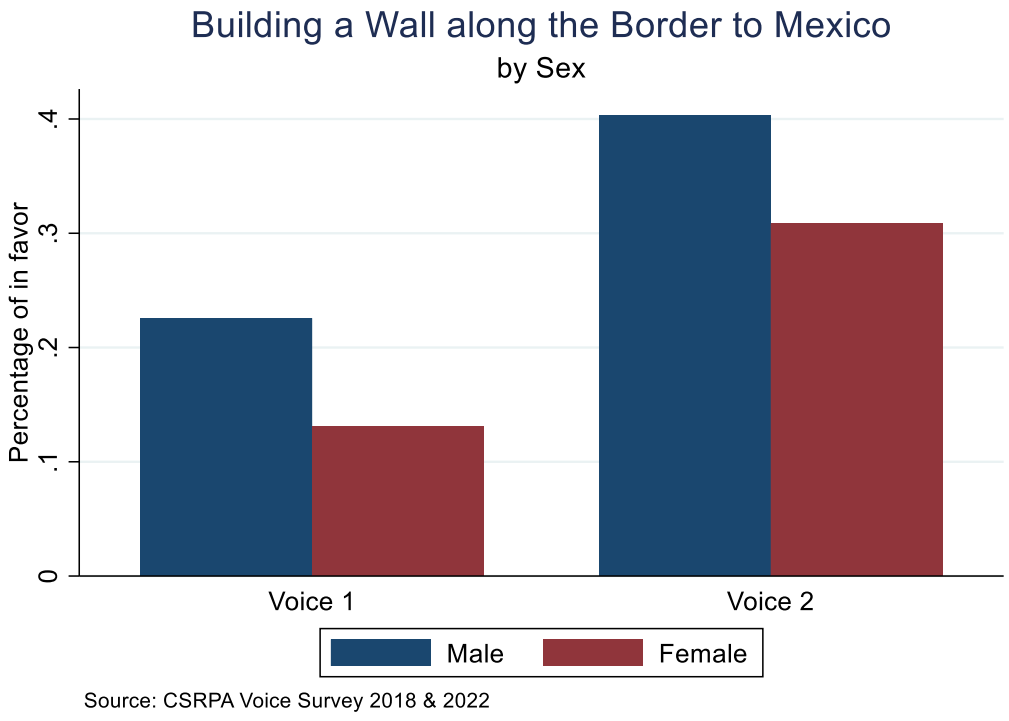


As the RGV public opinion on building a border wall follows the national pattern. Surprisingly, support for the border has increased among Republican and Democratic respondents. In

2018, about half of Republicans (49%) were in favor of building the wall, while that percentage increased to 75 percent in 2022. The percentage of Democrats who are in favor of building the wall also increased. In 2018, only 9.2 percent of Democrats were in favor of building the wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. By 2022, that number had doubled to 18.7%. Dr. Natasha Altema McNeely, an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, said, "The increase in support for the border wall among Republican and Democratic residents in the RGV may be a result of national and local news coverage about migrants crossing the border and Governor Abbott's efforts to increase border security in response."

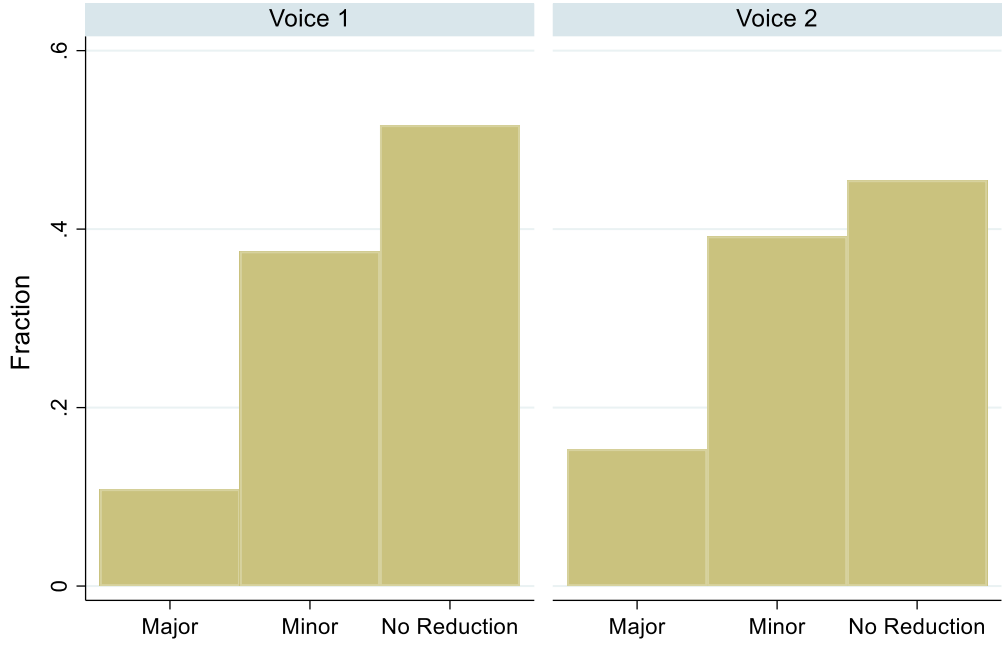
RGV Republican support for building border wall has increased by 30 percent since 2018

The survey does not find a noticeable shift in border wall opinion between men and women. Men are more likely to support the construction of a border wall than women. In 2018, about 22 percent of the male respondents were in favor of the wall, and about 13 percent of the female respondents shared that sentiment. The difference was 9 percent. In 2022, about 40 percent of male respondents and about 30 percent of female respondents were in favor of building a border wall. The difference was about 10 percent. Thus, across the gender line, the overall favorability increased while the difference between them remained the same.



About 1 in 2 RGV residents disagree that the border wall would reduce the number of immigrants.

In both polls, the respondents were asked, "Do you think that a wall along the entire U.S.-Mexico border would lead to (A) a major reduction in immigration, (B) a minor reduction in immigration or (C) no reduction in immigration?" Despite the dramatic increase in support of building a border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border in the RGV, people continue to believe that the border wall will not reduce immigration. In 2018, about 51.6 percent of RGV residents believed that the wall would have no impact on reducing the number of immigrants to the U.S. The new poll showed the same pattern. About 45.5 percent of the RGV residents believed that the wall would have no impact on reducing immigration. Dr. Dongkyu Kim, the Executive Chair of the Center for Survey Research & Policy Analysis, said the pattern shows the importance of the border to the people of RGV despite the recent politicization of the border wall along the partisan battle lines.



Source: CSRPA Voice Survey 2018 & 2022

Methodology: In spring 2022, the UTRGV Center for Survey Research & Policy Analysis (CSRPA) fielded the 2022 **RGV Our Voice/Nuestra Voz Survey.** Randomly selected RGV residents aged 18 years or older residing in Cameron, Hidalgo and Starr counties were asked about their perceptions of border security, immigration policy, NAFTA, gun control, disaster preparedness and satisfaction with community services. A team of student interviewers administered random-digit dialed telephone surveys in both Spanish and English. The sample of respondents totaled 640. The 2022 RGV Our Voice/Nuestra Voz survey was approved by IRB (IRB-21-0523) and funded by CSRPA. For more information regarding survey methodology, please contact csr@utrgv.edu.

About the Center for Survey Research & Policy Analysis: The Center for Survey Research & policy Analysis (www.utrgv.edu/center-for-survey-research) at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley was established in 1998 to study and report on issues of local concern in the Rio Grande Valley and to provide training opportunities and research experience to students in survey research methods. Today, the Center continues its mission to provide timely applied research, and technical assistance and consulting services to local and state agencies, non-profit organizations and private business associations throughout the Rio Grande Valley, as well as to the UTRGV community. The Center's capabilities include survey design and administration, public opinion polling, data collection and analysis, program evaluation, needs assessment, technical assistance and policy analysis. For more information or to discuss a potential project contact csr@utrgv.edu.

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