

To: Interested Parties
 From: Celinda Lake, David Mermin, Matthew McDermott, and Brittany Stalsburg
 Re: Unaccompanied immigrant children focus group research
 Date: August 8, 2014

Recent focus group research among swing 2014 voters on the topic of unaccompanied immigrant children has revealed a clear direction for communication and messaging around this issue.¹ We have assembled some key takeaways, heard across the focus group segments:

- 1. Refer to these children simply as “children.”** Remind voters that 60%+ have families here. Most believe it’s more feasible to resolve this crisis if children can be united with family. **Avoid references to these children as teenagers.** “Children” evoke more of a sense of crisis and call to action to help the vulnerable.
- 2. Emphasize the level of violence ongoing in Central America. “Rape” and “gang violence” were strong words.** Voters are unaware of the severity of violence and control of drug cartels and gangs in the region. It also helps to visually show how dangerous and desperate the situation must be for a parent to put a child on this journey.
- 3. Messages that evoke the value of compassion work especially well with voters,** particularly when paired with the argument we have to keep these children protected and safe. **Do not use the word “responsibility.”** Even the most sympathetic of voters, who want to take in these children, deeply resent the assertion that it is our responsibility as Americans to do so.
- 4. Voters respond well to the idea of providing a fast, fair, and legal process and establishing order. Voters also think there should be a short-term and long-term solution.** It helps to call this a crisis for immediate action. Voters have increased dramatically their desire for comprehensive reform and believe this is indicative of a broken system that lurches from crisis to crisis. Voters also respond to our government pushing and using leverage to have the countries of origin deal with their problems, and for us to crack down on smugglers.
- 5. Voters do worry about the “flood” of illegal immigrants coming to the country.** It helps to remind people that these children are running to the border patrol not getting through them, and that this represents one tenth of one percent of all refugees worldwide.

Replace These ...	With these ...
Situation	Crisis
Send Them Home Now	Fast, Fair, and Legal Process
It’s our Responsibility as Americans	Compassion is a Human Value
Immigrant, Illegal Alien, or Refugee	Children
Teenager	Protect the Children
Sneaking Across the Border	Running to the Border
Assimilation, A Refugee Issue	Comprehensive immigration reform to fix a broken system

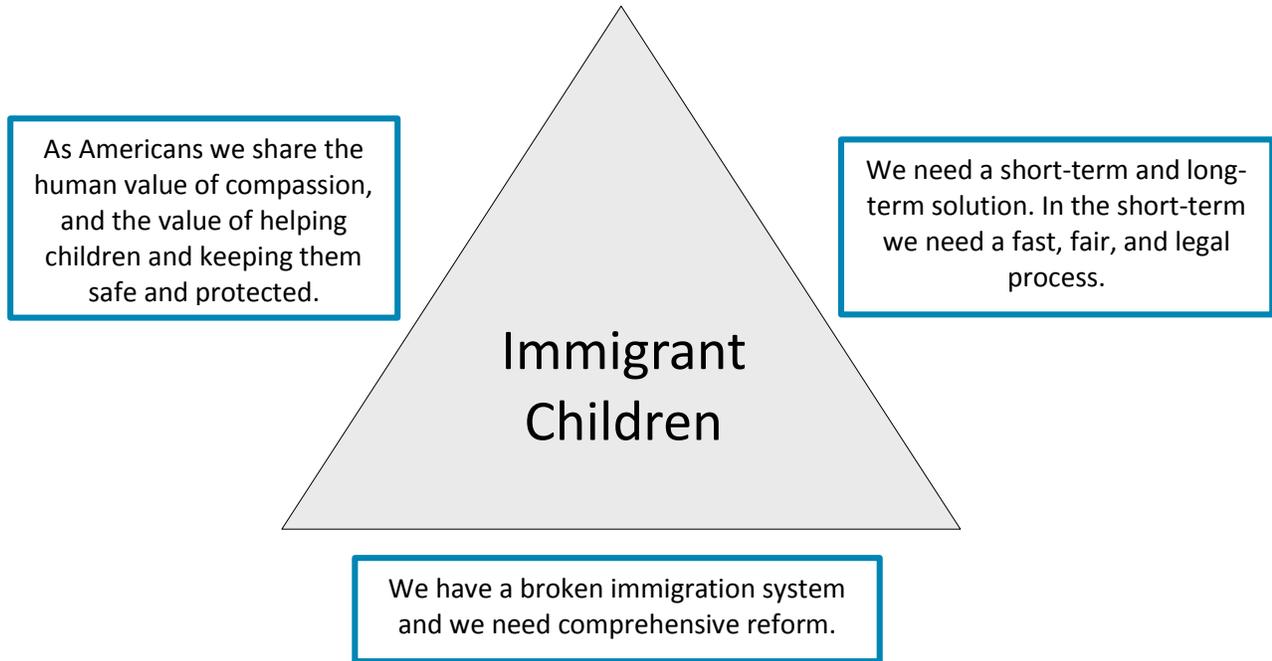
Lake Research Partners
 1726 M St., NW
 Suite 1100
 Washington, DC 20036

Tel: 202.776.9066
 Fax: 202.776.9074

Partners
 Celinda Lake
 Alysia Snell
 David Mermin
 Dr. Robert G. Meadow
 Daniel Gotoff
 Joshua Ulibarri

¹ Four focus groups were designed, conducted, and moderated by Lake Research Partners and Tarrance Group on July 28-29th. The groups consisted of 2014 likely voters, as follows: African Americans and white non-college swing women in Richmond, VA; and white college swing women and white swing men in Cleveland, OH.

Educate the Voter and Focus on Values



In focusing our broader message on compassion as a human value and the emphasis of keeping these children safe we can win over both our progressive base and critical swing voters.

For more information about this research, please contact Celinda Lake by e-mail (clake@lakeresearch.com) or by phone (202-776-9066).