
Quick Tips for Talking Immigration Issues

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The immigration experience, one of moving from a familiar home to an uncertain future, is based on hope and opportunity. While recent attacks on immigrants and the concept are dispiriting, to say the least, they can't defeat that hope and opportunity. Those values have pushed us forward as a nation built, in part, on the experience of newcomers who have made their way here to share their unique perspectives, skills, and cultures. As a result, we are a country that values the contributions and participation of people from diverse backgrounds. We have to continue to connect to those core values, and protect them against those seeking to exclude and divide. Here are five quick tips for talking about immigration in the face of these attacks so that we can tell a story that is forward-looking, full of hope, and that celebrates opportunity for all.

1. **Lead with values.** “This is about the kind of country we want to be, how we treat people, what it really means to be American.” We need to push these conversations beyond specific executive orders or legislation and ensure that they're centered on our core beliefs and our value system. Persuadable audiences can hear arguments for policy reform much more clearly when we link it to these all-important values.
2. **Talk common sense.** Recent executive orders and proposed legislation reflect backward thinking and won't serve us into the future. Instead, we need a commonsense approach that takes into account our values, our economic needs, and our future. Point out that vitriol, political division, and a desire to exclude people shouldn't have any place in our approach to immigration policy.
3. **It's about all of us.** Standing up for what's right is about more than immigrants' rights, or workers, or Latinos. Rejecting bad policies is the right thing to do for everyone.
4. **Tell an affirmative story.** There are a lot of misguided communications, skewed arguments and outright lies in current discourse. But too much focus on correcting wrong information can just reinforce it in audiences' minds. So resist the temptation to bust all the myths out there, and just tell people what is true.
5. **Emphasize contribution and participation.** We have to reject policies that would make contribution and participation very difficult for some people. We all thrive when we all participate, gearing up our economic engine and moving us all forward together.