



Majority Opposes Increased Numbers of Refugees, But...

For Immediate Release: **Tuesday, April 19, 2016**

A majority of Americans do not believe that the United States should allow more refugees into the country, according to an [Exclusive Point Taken-Marist Poll](#), commissioned by WGBH Boston for its new late-night, multi-platform PBS debate series *Point Taken*. However, about half of Americans think the United States has a moral obligation to aid refugees and do not think they pose a significant threat to the nation. The issue at hand is the number of refugees allowed into the country. Tolerance for allowing those seeking asylum has grown over the last 80 years, and today, millennials are among those who are most lenient.

The national survey was conducted by The Marist Poll in advance of this week's *Point Taken* episode, airing Tuesday April 19, 2016 at 11pmET (check local listings) and streaming on pbs.org/pointtaken. The series is hosted by Carlos Watson, Emmy Award winning journalist and OZY Media co-founder and CEO.

A majority of Americans, 53%, think the United States should take in *fewer* refugees than it currently does while 35% report the nation should allow *more* refugees into the country. 40% of U.S. residents consider refugees to be a significant threat to the United States compared with 51% who disagree. Among those who see refugees as a threat, more than two-thirds, 67%, perceive the nature of the threat to be terrorism as opposed to, economic, 19%, or cultural, 11%.

By about two to one, Millennials, 54%, are much more likely than members of any other generation to think more refugees should be allowed into the United States, and they are the least likely to consider refugees to be a threat. Differences based on education are also present. A majority of non-college graduates, 57%, think fewer refugees should be allowed into the country. Residents with a college degree divide. 46% think fewer refugees should be allowed into the country while 44% believe more should be permitted. And, by nearly two-to-one, those without a college education, 48%, are more likely than college graduates, 25%, to consider refugees to be a threat to the country. Men, 46%, are also more likely than women, 34%, to say refugees are a threat to the nation.

*All references to the survey must be sourced as "Exclusive *Point Taken*-Marist Poll"



“The issue of allowing refugees into this country is a complex one,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Americans are torn between what they feel should be done ethically and their concerns for security.”

"These results show the many and varied viewpoints Americans have. Tonight's *Point Taken* broadcast, which will include social media contributions, is a great opportunity to continue the dialogue," says Denise Dilanni, series creator and Executive-in-Charge.

While a majority of Americans oppose opening the borders to more refugees, half of residents, 50%, think the United States is not legally *but is morally* required to take in refugees. But, tolerance for permitting refugees into the United States has also increased since the late 1930's.

A majority of U.S. residents, 53%, believe Syrian refugees should be encouraged or allowed to come to the United States. Included here, are 25% who say we should welcome refugees even if the country needs to increase the level of immigrants allowed into the country and 28% who think the U.S. should allow refugees but do not support raising the quotas. 35% of residents think refugees should be kept out of the United States given the nation's current conditions. In a 1938 Roper/*Fortune* Survey, only 23% of Americans encouraged or wanted to allow political refugees from countries such as Germany and Austria to enter the United States, and of those, only 5% supported raising immigration quotas.

When asked the question of whether Syrian refugees should be temporarily banned from entering the United States or if the nation should continue its current policy toward these refugees, nearly half of residents today, 49%, favor the status quo. 43% support a temporary ban.

Millennials are more likely than their older cohorts to assert the United States has a moral obligation to take in refugees, 61%, to think we should encourage or allow refugees to come to the United States, 68%, and to believe the U.S. policy toward Syrian refugees should remain the same, 66%. College graduates, 62%, and women, 58%, are more likely than non-college graduates, 44%, and men, 43%, to say the U.S. is morally required to allow refugees into the country. Those with a college degree, 58%, and women, 56%, are also more likely than their counterparts to say Syrian refugees should not be temporarily banned from the country.

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On the question of whether Syrian refugees should be encouraged or allowed to enter the United States, college graduates, 69%, are more likely than non-college graduates, 43%, to have this view. Women, 57%, are more likely than men, 49%, to say refugees should enter the United States.

Six in ten Americans, 60%, say, if they were a member of the incoming Congress, they would vote against a bill to increase the number of Syrian refugees allowed to enter the United States. 33% would vote for such a bill. However, tolerance has grown. When the Roper/*Fortune* Survey asked a similar question about European refugees in 1939, 83% said they would not support such a bill for political refugees.

While millennials, 47%, college graduates, 43%, and women, 40%, are more likely than their counterparts to support such a bill, 48% of millennials, 50% of college graduates, 53% of women say they would vote against the legislation.

For more on *Point Taken*:

pbs.org/pointtaken

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For more on The Marist Poll:

Maristpoll.marist.edu

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About The Marist Poll

Founded in 1978, The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of social issues. Through the regular public release of surveys, MIPO has built a legacy of independence, reliability, and accuracy. Its results are featured in print and electronic media throughout the world.

About WGBH Boston

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcaster and the largest producer of PBS content for TV and the Web, including *Frontline*, *Nova*, *American Experience*, *Masterpiece*, *Antiques Roadshow*, *Arthur*, *Curious George* and more than a dozen other primetime, lifestyle, and children's series. WGBH also is a major supplier of programming for public radio, and oversees Public Radio International (PRI). As a

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leader in educational multimedia for the classroom, WGBH supplies content to PBS LearningMedia, a national broadband service for teachers and students. WGBH also is a pioneer in technologies and services that make media accessible to those with hearing or visual impairments. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors. More info at www.wgbh.org.

contacts:

for the Marist Poll

Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Griffith
Marist College
845.575.5050

for *Point Taken*/WGBH

Eileen Campion
Roslan & Campion PR
212-966-4600
eileen@rc-pr.com

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