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More Than 70% of Americans Support Normalizing Status of Undocumented

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The survey also found that 51 percent of Americans believe that border security can be improved "a lot," 37 percent support the immigration actions of President Barack Obama and 59 percent of Republicans believe that their party does not represent their ideas on this issue well.

Among those who believe that undocumented migrants should be allowed to remain in this country legally, 42 percent think that they should be able to apply for U.S. citizenship while 26 percent say that they should only be able to apply for permanent residence.

Hispanics, young people and Democrats are the groups giving the greatest support to the idea that undocumented migrants should be authorized to remain in the country legally.

Eighty-six percent of Hispanics feel that undocumented migrants should be allowed to get permanent residence if they fulfill certain requirements and, among that group, 54 percent believe that they should be able to aspire to citizenship and 30 percent would limit them to permanent residence.

Some 93 percent of people born outside the United States and 81 percent of people under 30 think that undocumented immigrants should be allowed to regularize their status, something that is supported by 80 percent of Democrats and 56 percent of Republicans.

Meanwhile, 59 percent of the Republicans surveyed said that their party is not doing a good job

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of representing their ideas on illegal immigration, while 51 percent of Democrats believe that their political representatives are doing a good job.

Despite that, 56 percent of those surveyed do not approve of Obama's actions on immigration.

Hispanics are divided on that point with 48 percent being critical of Obama in that area while 44 percent support him, something that could be due in part to the lack of practical impact of the measures announced last November to temporarily regularize the status of some five million undocumented immigrants, measures that were suspended by a federal court pending resolution of a lawsuit filed by 26 states.

Regarding border security, 51 percent of those surveyed said that "a lot" more could be done to improve it, while 29 percent that "somewhat more" could be done.

The study is based on telephone surveys conducted between May 12-18 among a national sample of 2,002 adults and it has an error margin of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

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