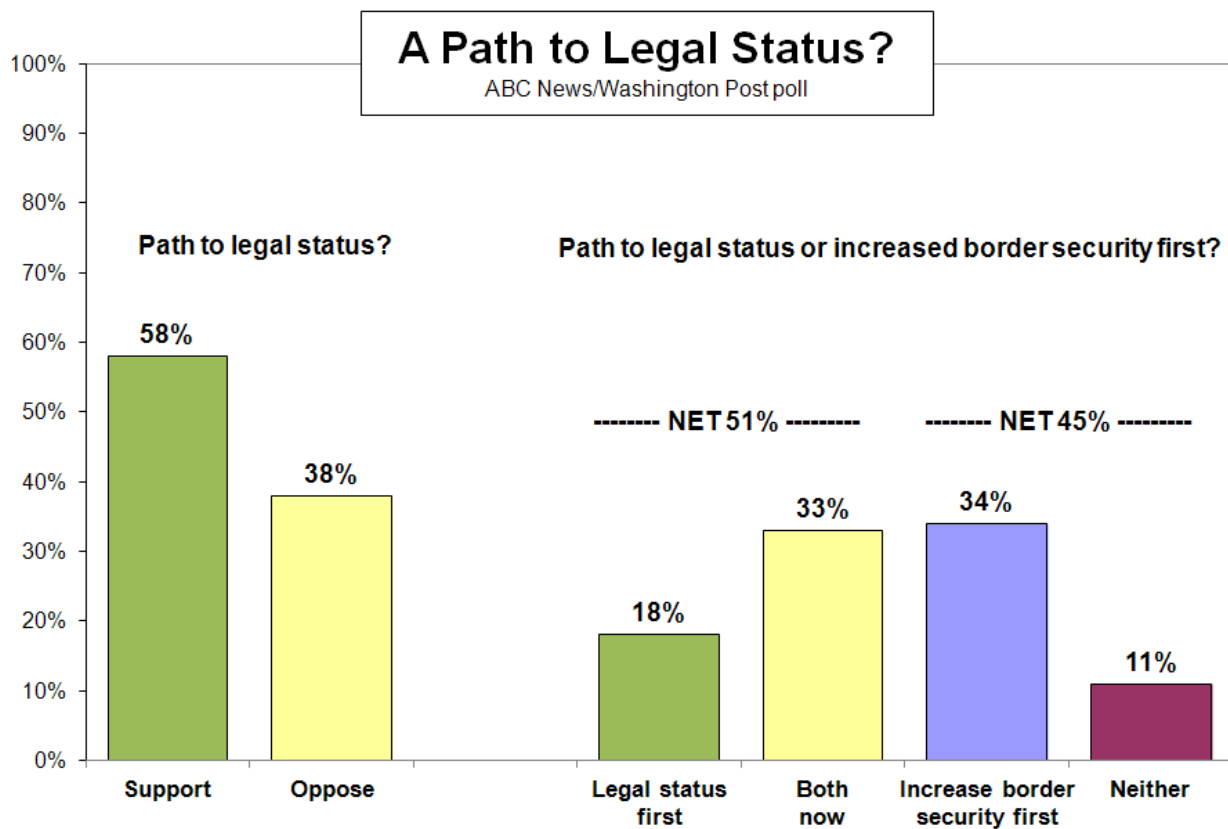


## Support for Legal Status Holds; So Do Sizable Partisan Divisions

Nearly six in 10 Americans back a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants, with narrow preference for prompt action on the issue. Partisan divisions are sharp, a factor likely to be reflected in the full Senate debate ahead.

Overall, 58 percent in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll support providing a way for undocumented immigrants to remain in the country legally “if they pay a fine and meet other requirements,” vs. 38 percent opposed. That’s similar to a 62-34 percent split [last month](#).

A bare majority, 51 percent, also says Congress should pass a legal status law now, either alone or along with stricter border control. Forty-five percent instead say border control should come first – as preferred by some Republicans in Congress – or oppose action on either step.

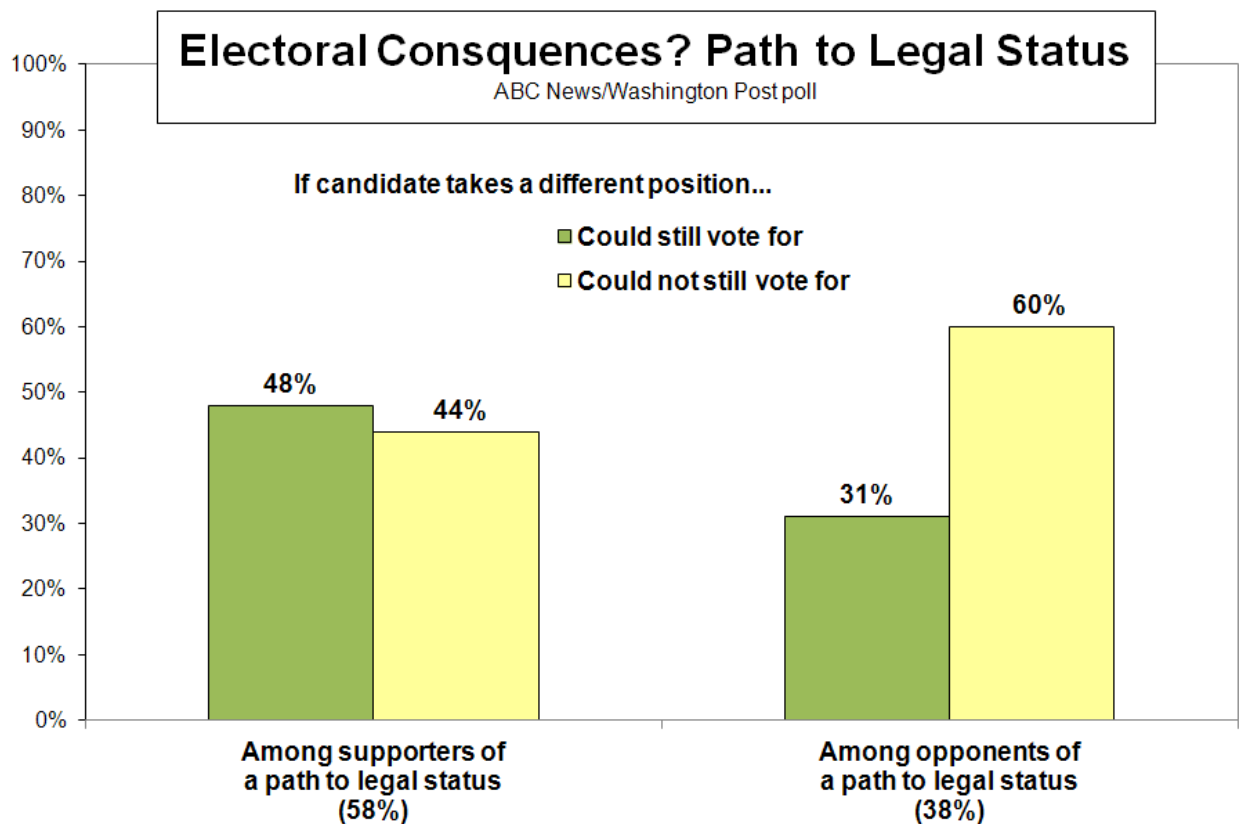


Legal status and tighter border control both are included in a package approved Tuesday night by the Senate Judiciary Committee, with support from three of its eight Republican members and all

10 Democrats. Reflecting that outcome, this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that 70 percent of Democrats support a path to legal status, as do 57 percent of independents – dropping to 42 percent of Republicans.

Further, 52 percent of Republicans say Congress should pass border control first, or not act on either element of immigration reform. Forty-seven percent of independents share that view; it declines to 35 percent among Democrats.

All else equal, potential effects of the issue in 2014 congressional races look like a wash. People who oppose a path to legal status are more likely than its supporters to call the issue a red line in their vote preference – but there are fewer of them, equalizing the overall effect. (Of course, all else in fact is not equal, given factors including the demographic and political makeup of congressional districts; turnout, including in primaries; the quality of opposing candidates; and the potential pull of other issues.)



Among groups, apart from partisanship, support for a path to legal status peaks among college post-graduates (72 percent), liberals (70 percent), Westerners (69 percent), nonwhites (68 percent) and 18- to 39-year olds (65 percent).

**GUN CONTROL** – On another contentious issue, this poll finds extensive unhappiness with the Senate’s recent rejection of expanded background checks for gun purchasers; 67 percent say it

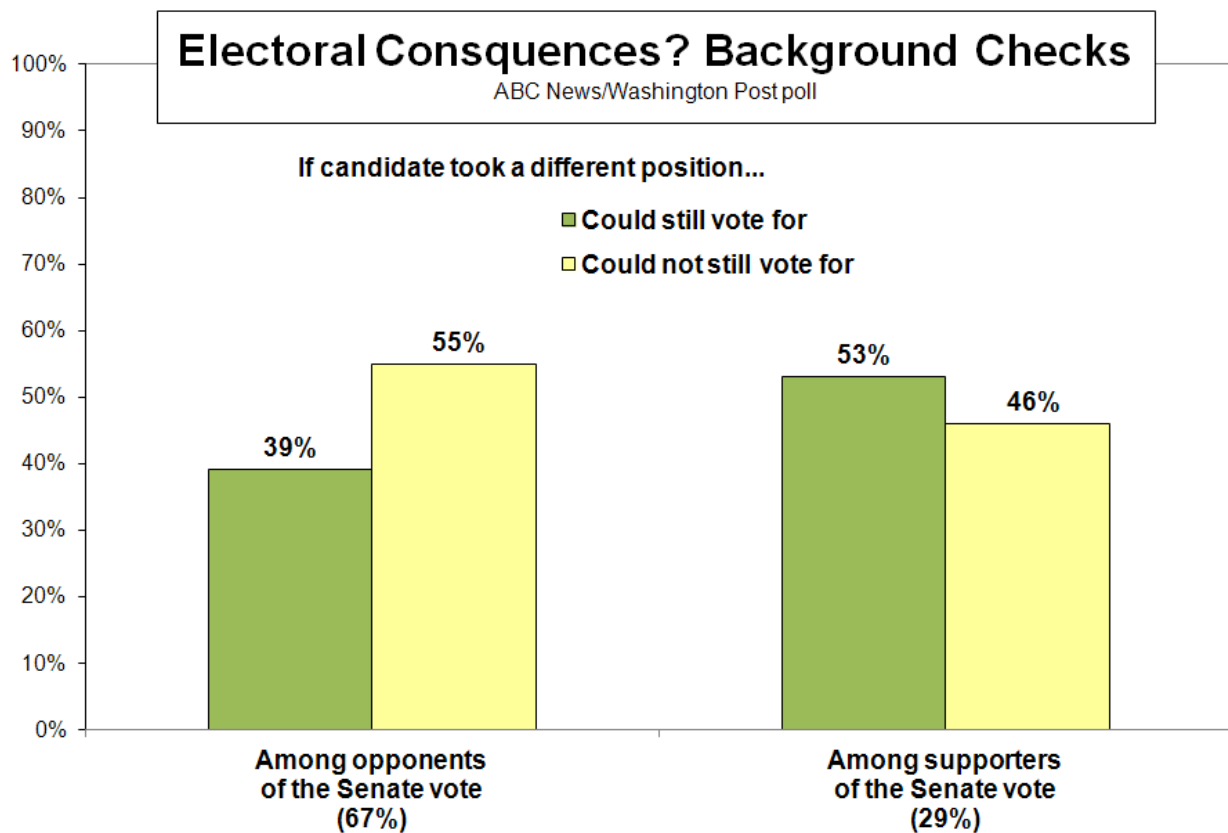
was the wrong thing to do, with 58 percent feeling that way “strongly.” That’s not unexpected, since 86 percent favored expanded background checks in an [ABC/Post poll](#) in March.

Notably, even among people in gun-owning households, 62 percent say it was wrong for the Senate to reject extending background checks to cover online and gun-show purchases.

Forty-one Republican senators and five Democrats voted against the measure. Criticism in this survey is focused on the GOP: Among Americans who favored the measure, 64 percent chiefly blame its rejection on opposition led by congressional Republicans, vs. 17 percent who mainly blame President Obama for failing to secure the needed votes.

But backlash against the National Rifle Association, a prime opponent of the law, is muted. Forty-four percent of Americans say the NRA has too much influence over gun laws; that’s up by 6 points from January, but to a level it’s seen before.

Compared with immigration reform, the background-check issue appears to pose clearer electoral risk. Among the many critics of the Senate action, 55 percent say they could not support a candidate who voted against expanded background checks. It’s a red line for fewer on the other side of the issue, 46 percent, and, as noted, there are many fewer of them.



MIDTERMS – While it’s far too early to handicap the 2014 election in any serious way, registered voters currently favor the Democratic candidate over the Republican in their congressional district by 48-40 percent, the largest Democratic midterm advantage since 2006. The party saw steep losses in the 2010 midterms.

The result almost entirely reflects a current Democratic advantage in partisan affiliation. Among registered voters in this survey, 33 percent identify themselves as Democrats, 22 percent as Republicans; most of the rest are independents, and they split evenly in their 2014 preference. Democrats outnumbered Republicans by 6 points in the 2012 presidential election and by 7 points in 2008, but they were even in the last two midterms – meaning the Democratic advantage holds only if their midterm turnout improves dramatically.

Finally, similar to the Democratic advantage in 2014 preferences, Obama leads the Republicans in Congress by 8 points in trust to handle immigration issues, 45-37 percent. The two, though, are essentially even in trust to handle gun control, 42-41 percent, and on both, the president’s own approval ratings are tepid – 46 percent on immigration, 44 percent on gun control.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone May 16-19, 2013, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including design effect. Partisan divisions are 33-22-38 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

Analysis by Gregory Holyk and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contacts: [David Ford](#), (212) 456-7243, and [Julie Townsend](#), (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

\*= less than 0.5 percent

1, 2a, 3, 4a, 5-12, 25-32, 34 previously released.

4d, 13-14 held for release.

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling [ITEM]? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

5/19/13 - Summary Table

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No op.
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
b. Immigration issues	46	25	21	41	11	30	13
c. Gun control	44	29	15	49	12	38	7

Trend:

b. Immigration issues

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
5/19/13	46	25	21	41	11	30	13
4/14/13	44	24	21	43	12	30	13
2/3/13	49	27	22	43	15	28	8
7/8/12	38	20	18	52	18	34	10
6/6/10	39	17	23	51	14	37	10
3/26/10	33	14	19	43	15	28	23
4/24/09	48	NA	NA	35	NA	NA	18

c. Gun control

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
5/19/13	44	29	15	49	12	38	7
4/14/13	45	29	15	49	11	38	7

4. Who do you trust to do a better job handling [ITEM] - (Obama) or (the Republicans in Congress)?

5/19/13 - Summary Table

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
b. Immigration issues	45	37	2	10	6
c. The issue of gun control	42	41	2	11	4

Trend:

b. Immigration issues

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
5/19/13	45	37	2	10	6
3/10/13	45	39	1	9	6

Compare to: Who do you trust to do a better job handling immigration issues - (Bush) or (the Democrats in Congress)?

	Bush	Dems	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
6/1/07	31	48	2	13	5
12/11/06	34	49	1	10	6
1/18/04	38	44	2	8	8

c. The issue of gun control

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
5/19/13	42	41	2	11	4
3/10/13	42	41	1	10	6

15. Would you support or oppose a program giving undocumented immigrants now living in the United States the right to live here legally if they pay a fine and meet other requirements? Do you support/oppose strongly or somewhat?

----- Support -----      ----- Oppose -----      No

	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
5/19/13	58	34	23	38	10	29	4
4/14/13	62	NA	NA	34	NA	NA	4

16. (IF SUPPORT PATH TO LEGAL STATUS) If you agreed with a political candidate on other issues, could you support a candidate for Congress who voted against a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants, or not?

	Could still support	Could not still support	No opinion
5/19/13	48	44	9

17. (IF OPPOSE PATH TO LEGAL STATUS) If you agreed with a political candidate on other issues, could you support a candidate for Congress who voted in favor of a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants, or not?

	Could still support	Could not still support	No opinion
5/19/13	31	60	9

18. Which of these would you prefer - (to have Congress enact stricter border control now and put off consideration of a path to legal status for later), (to have Congress enact a path to legal status now and put off consideration of stricter border control for later), to do both now, or not to do either?

	Enact stricter border control	Enact path to legal status	Both	Neither	No opinion
5/19/13	34	18	33	11	4

19. As you may know, the Senate recently rejected a proposal to require background checks on people buying guns at gun shows and online. Do you think the Senate did the right thing or the wrong thing in rejecting expanded background checks? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Right thing -----			----- Wrong thing -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
5/19/13	29	20	9	67	9	58	4

20. (IF SENATE DID THE WRONG THING) Who do you blame more for the Senate's rejection of the background-check law - (Obama, for not winning the needed votes) or (the Republicans in Congress, for leading the opposition)?

	Obama	Reps	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
5/19/13	17	64	7	3	9

19/20 NET:

	----- Right thing -----			----- Wrong thing -----			
	Right thing	Blame Obama	Blame Reps	Blame both (vol.)	Blame neither (vol.)	No op.	No op.
5/19/13	29	67	11	42	5	2	6

21. (IF SENATE DID THE RIGHT THING) If you agreed with a political candidate on other issues, could you support a candidate for Congress who voted in favor of expanded background checks for gun buyers, or not?

	Could still support	Could not still support	No opinion
5/19/13	53	46	1

22. (IF SENATE DID THE WRONG THING) If you agreed with a political candidate on other issues, could you support a candidate for Congress who voted against expanded background checks for gun buyers, or not?

	Could still support	Could not still support	No opinion
5/19/13	39	55	5

23. Do you think the National Rifle Association has (too much) influence, (too little) influence, or the right amount of influence over gun control laws in this country?

	Too much	Too little	Right amount	No opinion
5/19/13	44	18	32	6
1/13/13	38	24	30	8
4/2/00	44	18	32	6
9/2/99	47	17	31	5
12/5/93*	45	15	27	13

\*PSRA

24. Do you or does anyone in your house own a gun, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
5/19/13	44	55	1
4/14/13	43	55	2
3/10/13	42	57	1
1/13/13	44	56	1
1/16/11	44	55	*
4/24/09	41	58	*
6/15/08	42	58	*
4/22/07	45	55	0
10/8/06	42	58	*
10/20/02	41	59	*
5/10/00	45	55	*
4/2/00	43	56	*
9/2/99	44	56	*
5/16/99	46	53	*

33. (ASKED OF REGISTERED VOTERS) If the election for the U.S. House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for (the Democratic candidate) or (the Republican candidate) in your congressional district? (IF OTHER, NEITHER, DK, REF) Would you lean toward the (Democratic candidate) or toward the (Republican candidate)?

NET LEANED VOTE PREFERENCE - REGISTERED VOTERS

	Dem cand.	Rep cand.	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
5/19/13	48	40	2	4	1	6
10/28/10	49	44	1	2	*	3
10/3/10	47	43	1	3	1	5
9/2/10*	45	47	1	2	1	5
7/11/10	46	47	*	2	*	5
6/6/10	47	44	2	2	1	4
4/25/10	48	43	1	2	1	6

3/26/10	48	44	1	2	*	4
2/8/10	45	48	*	3	*	4
10/22/06	54	41	*	1	*	3
10/8/06	54	41	*	1	1	3
9/7/06	50	42	*	3	2	4
8/6/06	52	39	*	2	1	5
6/25/06	52	39	1	3	1	4
5/15/06	52	40	1	3	1	4
4/9/06	55	40	*	2	*	3
1/26/06	54	38	1	3	1	5
12/18/05	51	41	1	3	1	4
11/2/05	52	37	1	4	2	6
7/15/02	47	46	1	1	1	4
1/27/02**	43	50	NA	2	1	5
9/6/00	49	42		2	1	6
7/23/00	46	45		3	1	5
2/27/00	45	46	"	2	1	5

Call for full trend.

\*9/2/10 and previous: "Will not vote (vol.)"

\*\*1/27/02 and previous: No "other candidate" option recorded

\*\*\* END \*\*\*