

Briefing: Voter Attitudes Toward Undocumented Immigrants

July 23, 2015

Broad Sympathies & Borderline Myths

US Voter Attitudes About Undocumented Immigrants

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Research Question

- **What do Americans believe about the motivations, character, and impacts of undocumented or illegal immigrants?**

Survey Methodology

Bipartisan national poll conducted by The George Washington University.

- **Universe: National**
- **Sample: 1,000 Registered Voters**
- **Margin of Error: +/- 3.1%**
- **Field Dates: May 3-6, 2015**

The Questions: Attitude Probes

“Thinking for just a moment about immigrants living illegally in this country ...I would like to read you a list of statements that some people have said about undocumented or illegal immigrants. Please listen carefully as I read each statement and tell me if you would agree or disagree with that statement about undocumented or illegal immigrants....They:”

Answer options:

Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, unsure.

Question structure varies so that “agree” is sometimes favorable and sometimes unfavorable to the population of interest. Data has been arranged and color-coded to align favorable (green) and unfavorable (red).

- **Take jobs away from Americans.**
- **Are family and community oriented.**
- **Live off welfare and Social Security.**
- **Pay their taxes in America.**
- **Belong to gangs and commit many crimes.**
- **Start businesses that create jobs and growth.**
- **Are faithful Christians.**
- **Threaten our traditional American culture.**
- **Fill jobs that Americans don't want.**
- **Are “cheaters” just here to help themselves.**

Main Finding:
The electorate has a net favorable disposition toward undocumented or illegal immigrants.

9 out of 10 attitude probes indicate positive sentiment. The 10th is within the poll's margin of error.

Attitude Probe	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure	Net Sentiment
...are family and community oriented.	71%	19%	10%	+51
...fill jobs that Americans don't want.	67%	29%	4%	+38
...are "cheaters" just here to help themselves.	59%	33%	8%	+26
...belong to gangs and commit many crimes.	56%	34%	11%	+22
...threaten our traditional American culture.	56%	38%	6%	+18
...are faithful Christians.	41%	24%	34%	+17
...live off Welfare and Social Security.	55%	39%	6%	+16
...start businesses that create jobs and growth.	49%	42%	9%	+6
...take jobs away from Americans.	52%	45%	3%	+6
...pay their taxes in America.	43%	46%	11%	-3
Overall	55%	35%	10%	+20

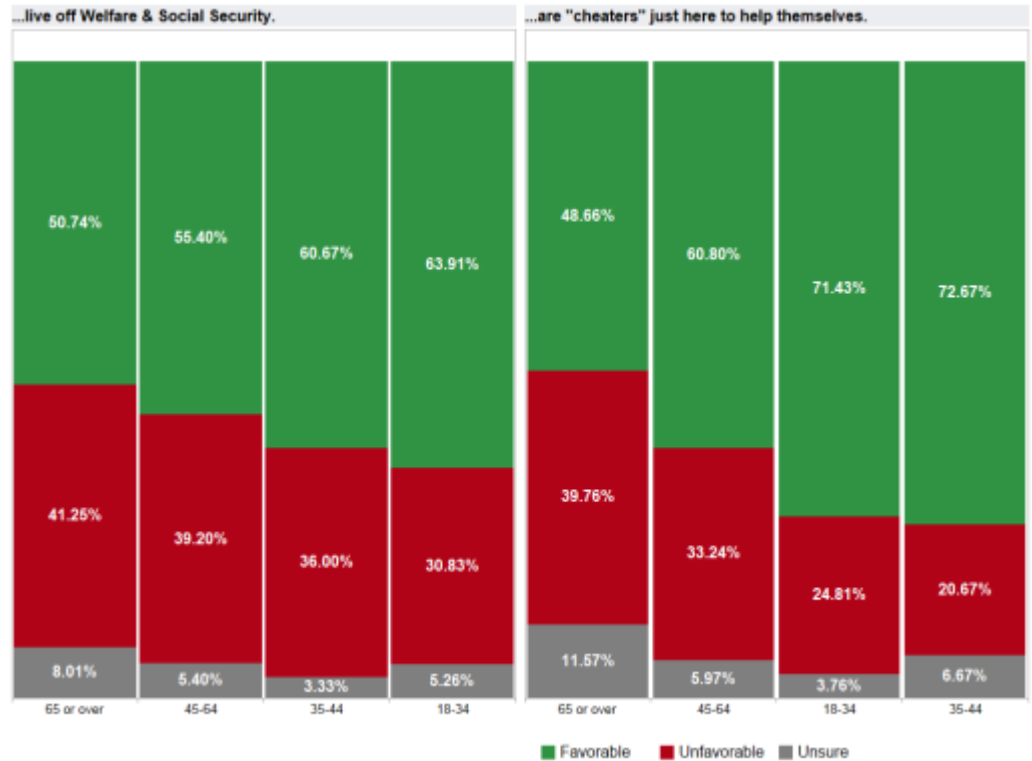
Strongest feelings were elicited about culture, taxes, jobs, cheaters, and public benefits.

Attitude Probe	Strong	Weak	Unsure	Net Intensity
...threaten our traditional American culture.	61%	33%	6%	+28
...pay their taxes in America.	57%	31%	11%	+26
...take jobs away from Americans.	60%	37%	3%	+23
...are "cheaters" just here to help themselves.	57%	35%	8%	+22
...live off Welfare and Social Security.	58%	36%	6%	+22
...fill jobs that Americans don't want.	55%	40%	4%	+15
... are family and community oriented.	51%	39%	10%	+11
...belong to gangs and commit many crimes.	46%	43%	11%	+3
...start businesses that create jobs and growth.	46%	45%	9%	+1
...are faithful Christians.	29%	37%	34%	-8
Overall	52%	38%	10%	14%

**Two questions probed
negative attitudes about
why they come.**

- **Live off welfare and Social Security**
- **Are “cheaters” just here to help themselves.**

Age: Positive Outweighed Negative Attitudes in Each Cohort Group.



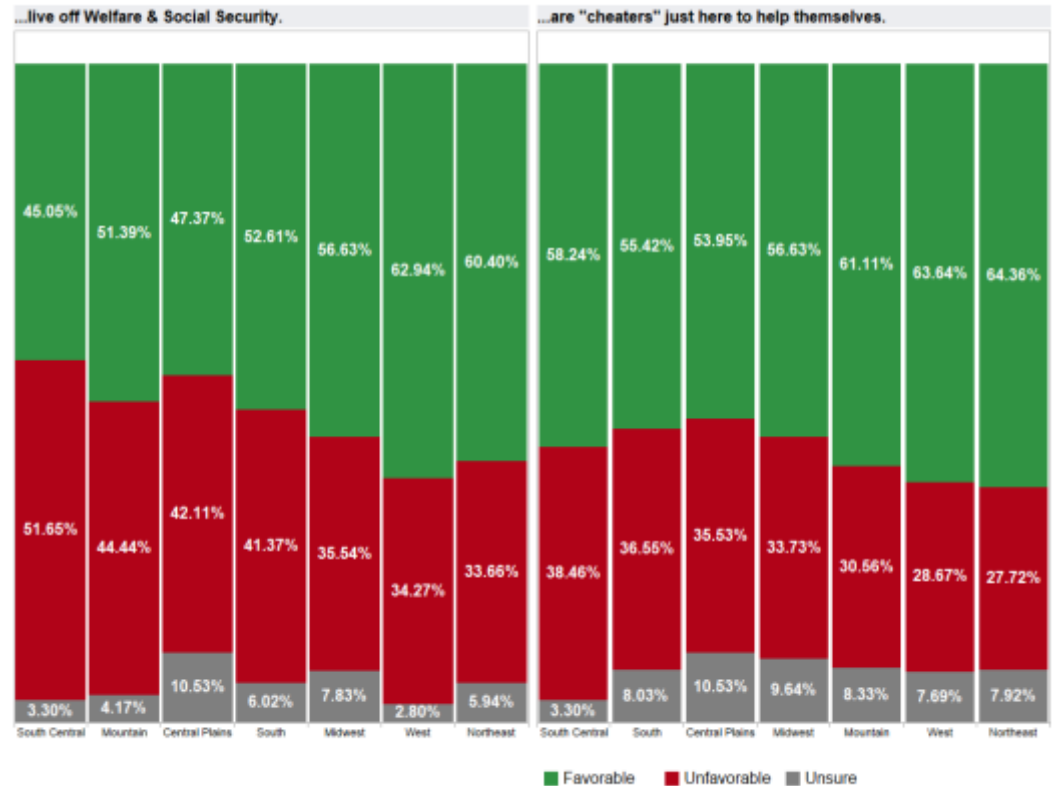
Region: Positive Outweighed Negative in 13 of 14 cases.

The voters most suspicious of undocumented and illegal immigrants live in the South Central region.

- 51.6% perceive them as a public burden
- 38.5% view them as “cheaters.”

Voters with the least suspicions live in the Northeast region.

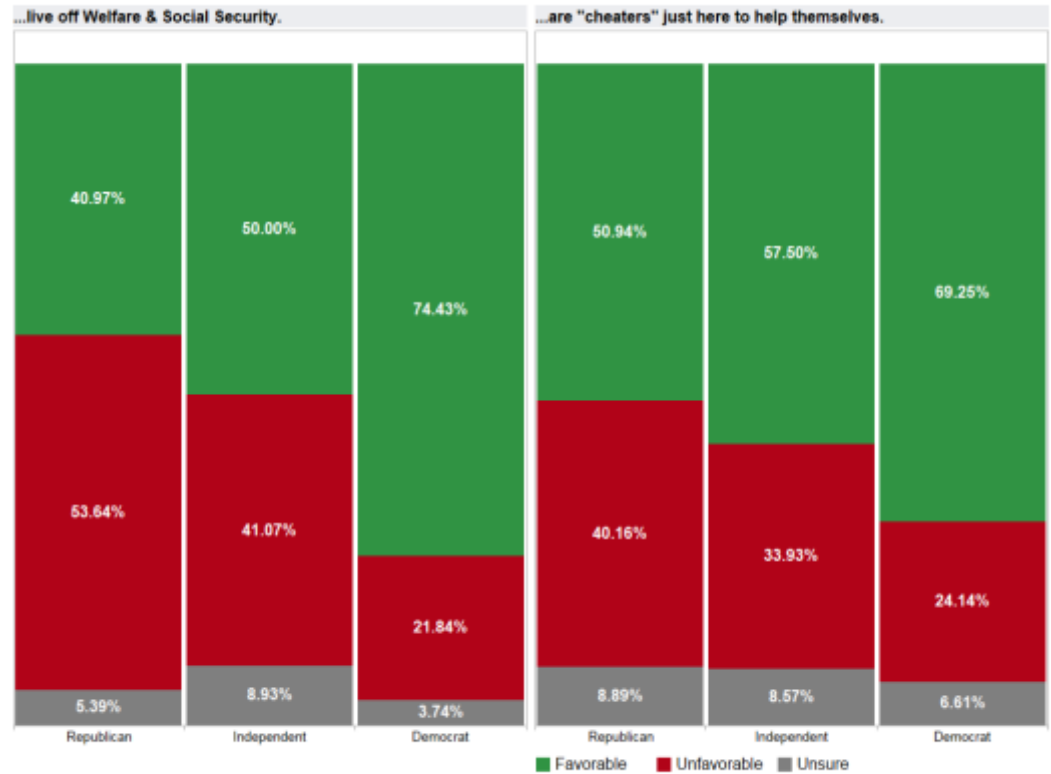
- Only 33.6% of northeasterners view them as living off Welfare and Social Security.
- Only 27.2% of them see undocumented and illegal immigrants as “cheaters.”



South Central: Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Northeast: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

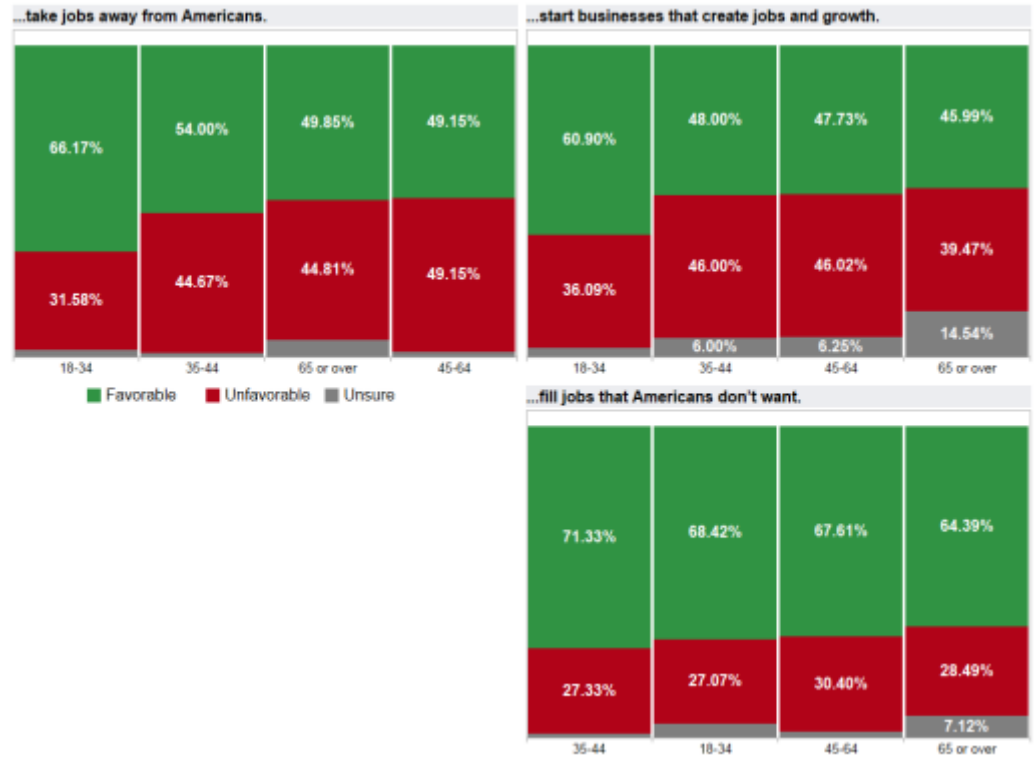
Party: Positive Outweighed Negative in 5 of 6 Cases.



**Three questions probed
their impact on the job
market.**

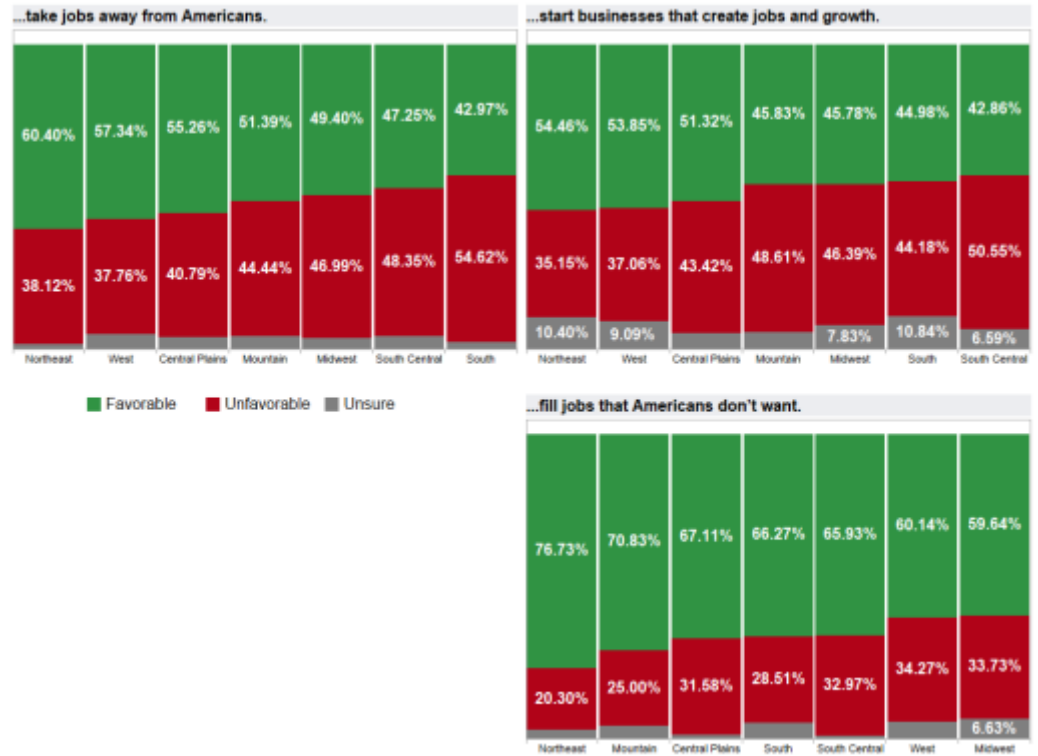
- **Take jobs away from Americans.**
- **Start businesses that create jobs and growth.**
- ***Fill jobs that Americans don't want.**

Age: Younger cohorts most favorable; anxiety evident over job losses.

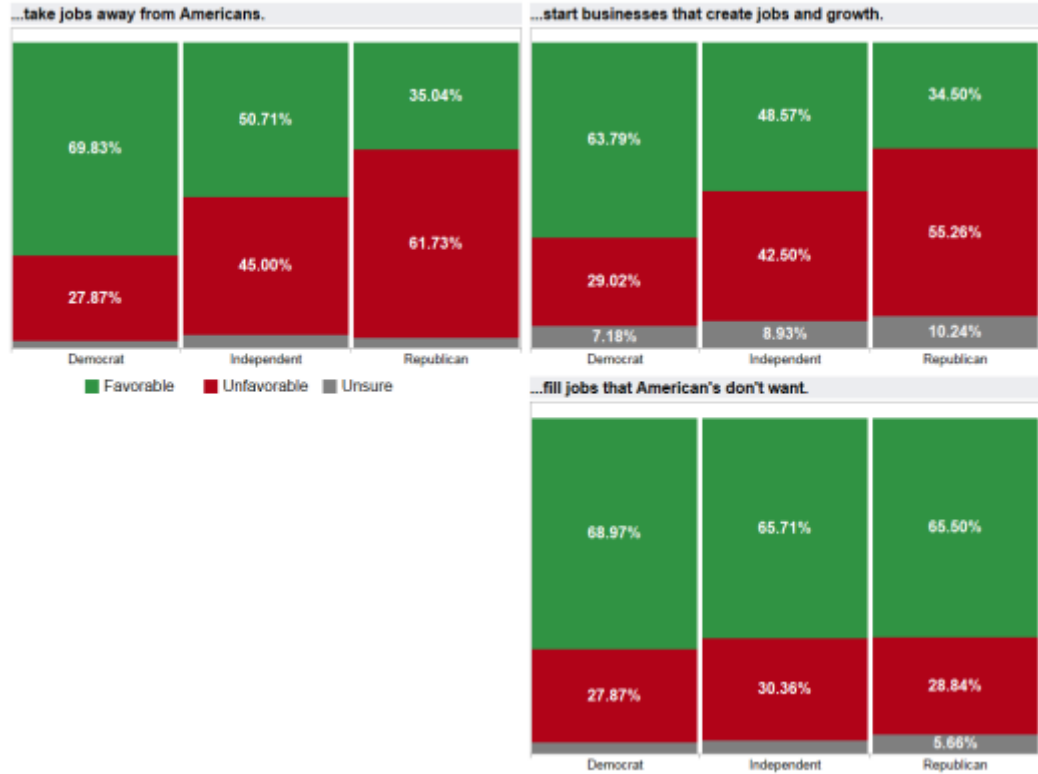


Region: Favorable across the nation except the South.

South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia



Party: splits evident except on taking jobs that Americans don't want.



The attitude that Donald Trump has brought to the fore.

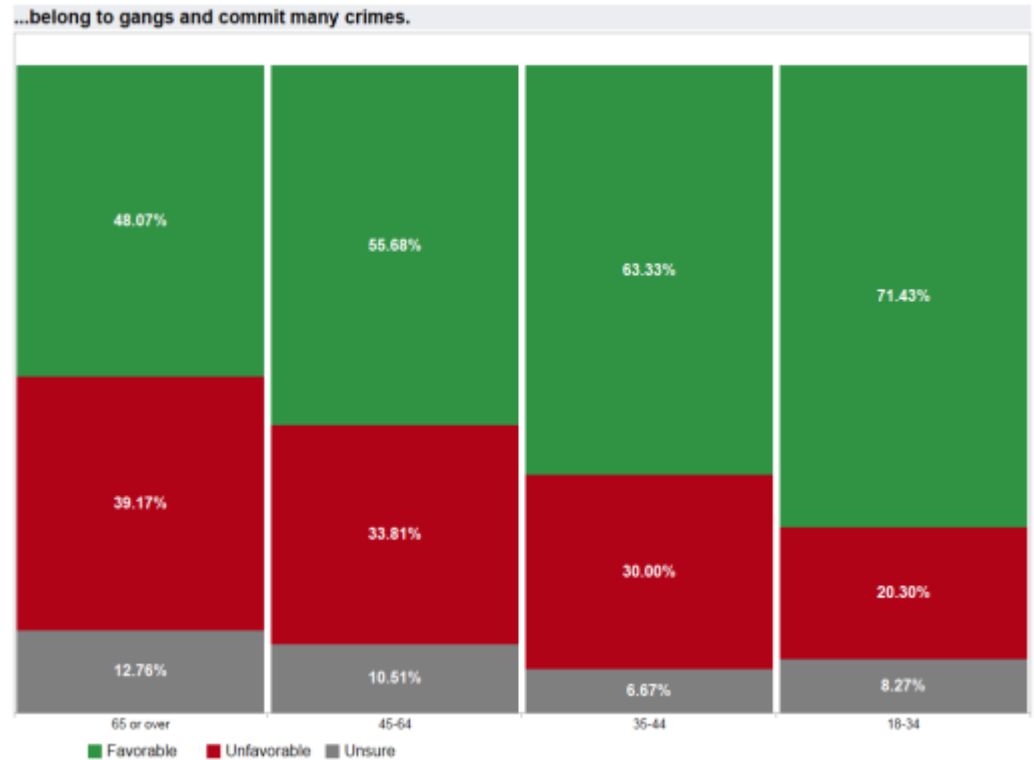
From Trump's presidential candidacy announcement speech, June 16, 2015:

“When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems to us.

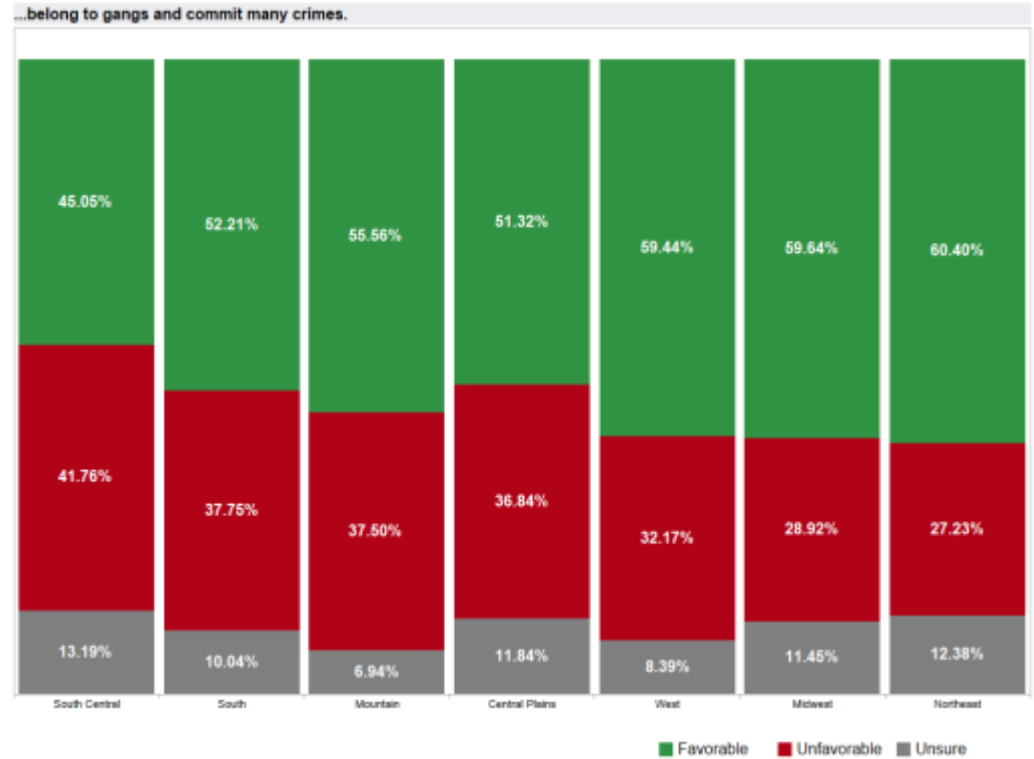
They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people. But I speak to border guards and they tell us what we're getting. And it only makes common sense. They're sending us not the right people.”

- **Belong to gangs and commit many crimes.**

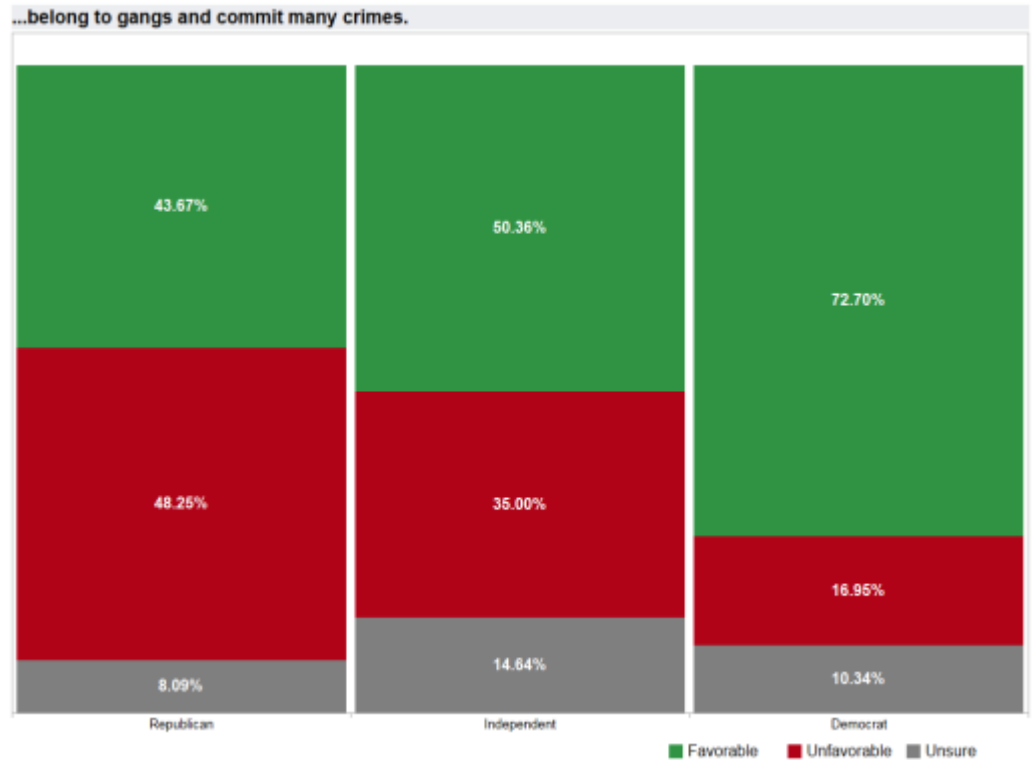
Age: Majorities/pluralities disagree with Trump.



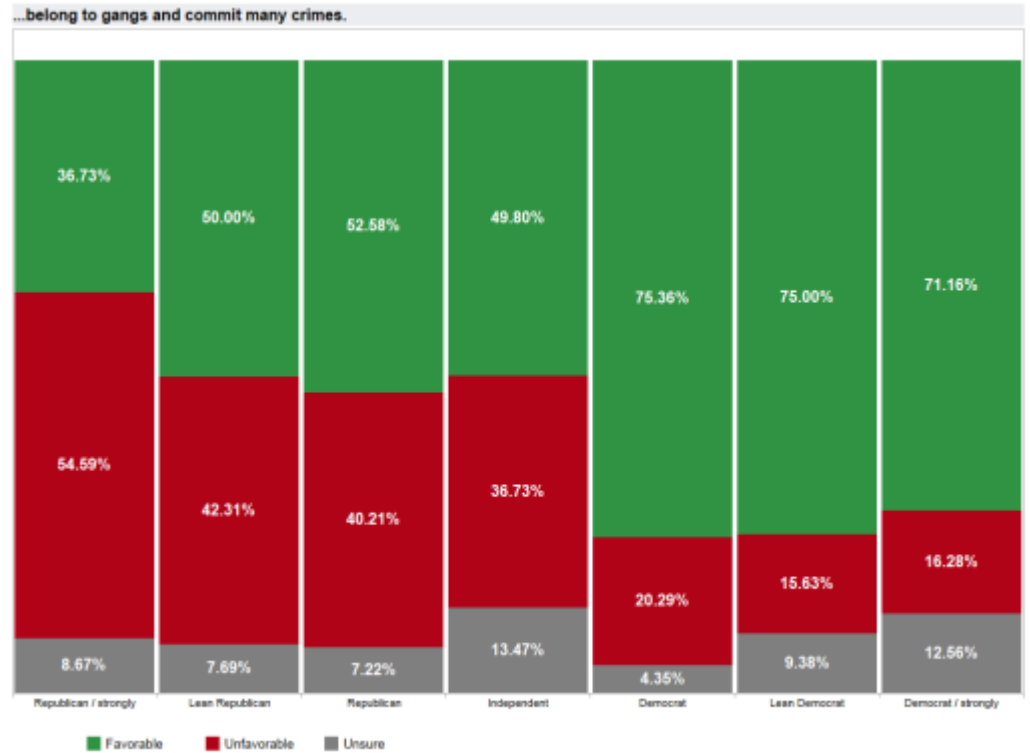
Region: Majorities/ pluralities disagree with Trump.



Party: Republicans agree with Trump by a small plurality; others disagree.



Strength of Partisanship: Only a majority of Strong Republicans agree with Trump.



Conclusion

There is a substantial, multidimensional, and widespread favorable attitude toward undocumented or illegal immigrants among American voters today.

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**The Wilson
Center**

LATINO VOTERS: THE ROAD TO 2016

The Parties

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□ **Latinos will play pivotal role in 2016**

Natl: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia.

□ **Republicans are facing a shrinking base.***

There will never again be an electoral map, and more importantly, an electorate as favorable to the *current* incarnation of the Republican Party as 2014.

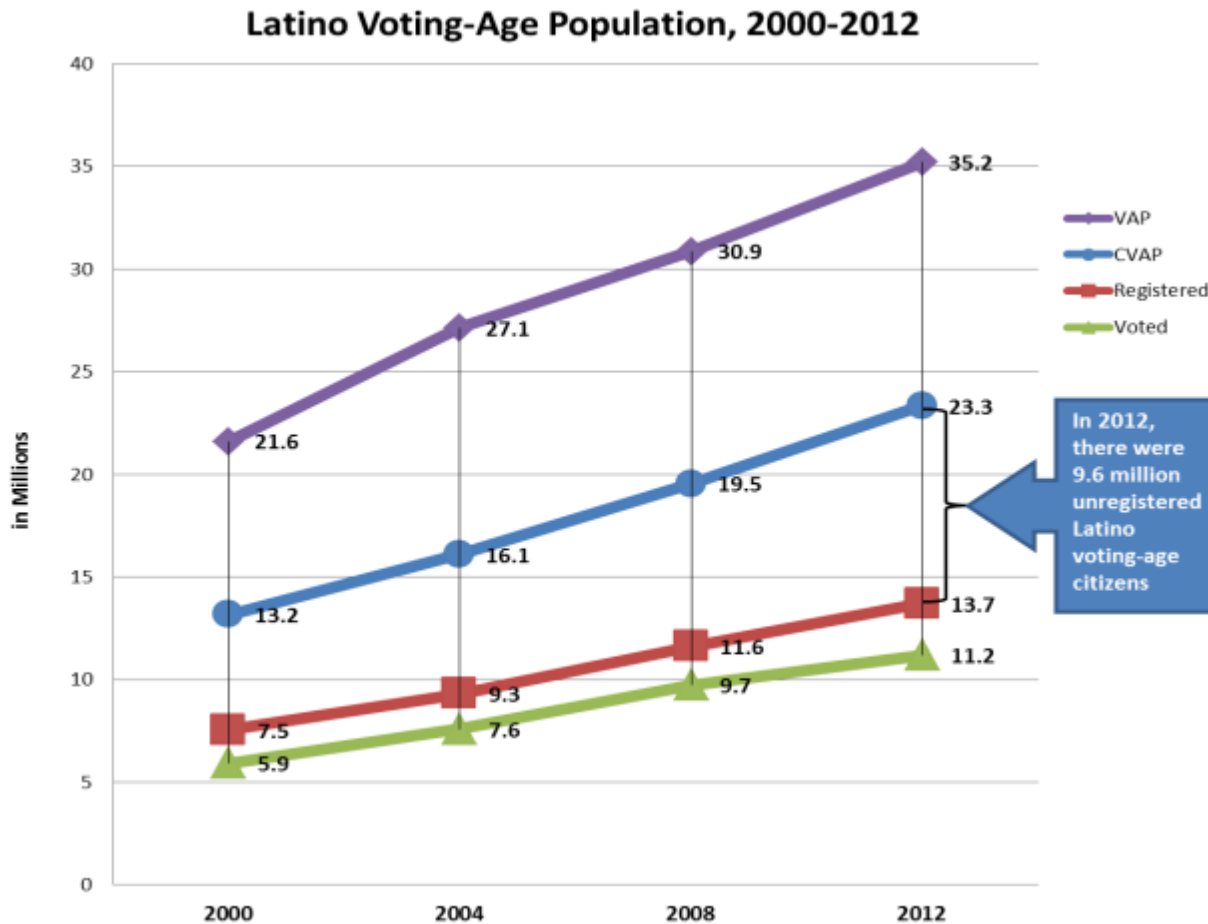
□ **Democrats are facing an expanding base.***

But they have not fully implemented strategies to capitalize on that opportunity. They need an approach that reflects America's growing electorate.

Latino Vote Trend Lines

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Numbers from U.S. Census data

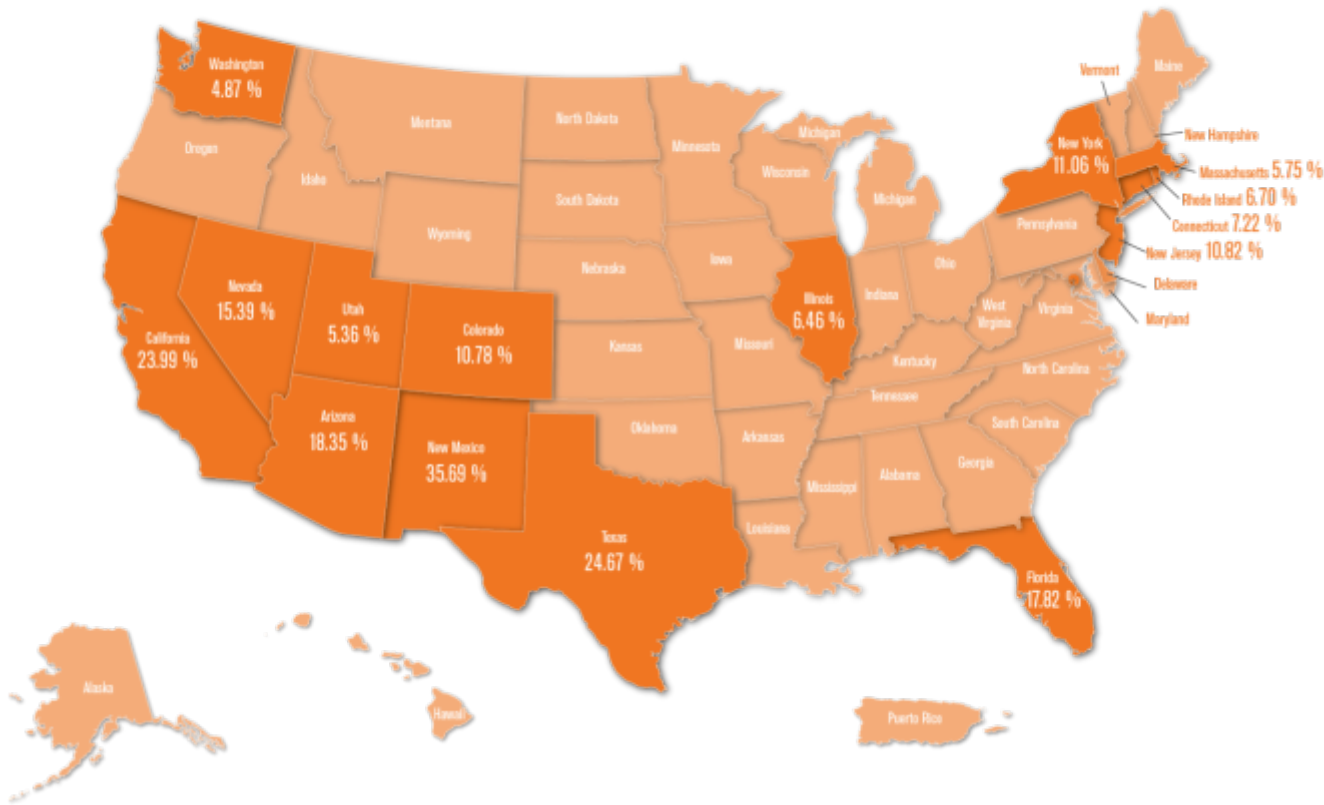


- In 2012, Latino support proved essential to winning the presidency and many state and local races.
- There is ample room to grow this electorate, by helping eligible immigrants become citizens, citizens become voters, and the community engage in policy debates.
- Between now and 2028, nearly 1 million Latino citizens will turn 18 every year.

Top States in Latino Share of Registered Voters

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Exit poll margin and U.S. Census data



- Exit polls placed the Latino share of the 2012 electorate at 10%.
- In 2012, the top 10 states in terms of Latino share of the state's registered voters were: NM, TX, CA, AZ, FL, NV, NY, NJ, CO, and CT.
- Notably, the 10 states with the fastest growth rate in Latino registration between 2008 and 2012 were: TN, UT, MI, MA, RI, OR, IN, VA, KY and IA.

Courting the Latino Electorate

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- **Candidates matter**, and demonizing immigrants and Hispanics is a losing strategy.
- **Issues matter**, and candidates need to define their positions on the issues that matter to the Hispanic community.
- **Meaningful outreach is essential**, and significant investments pay off.

It's time to change the conversation between voters and those who represent them. Focus on solutions and deeds, rather than posturing and attacks



RESEARCH FINDINGS ON IMMIGRATION

June 10, 2015

www.burningglassconsulting.com

Key Findings

- The immigration issue is important, but national security, the economy, taxes/spending and health care even more so.
- Two-thirds of likely Republican caucus-goers in Iowa, as well as Republican voters in 2016 battleground states favor reform (path to legal status or citizenship), as do 59% of New Hampshire and 57% of South Carolina likely primary voters.
- Among ALL voters in key 2016 states, 72% favor immigration reform: a path to citizenship (49%) or legal status (23%).

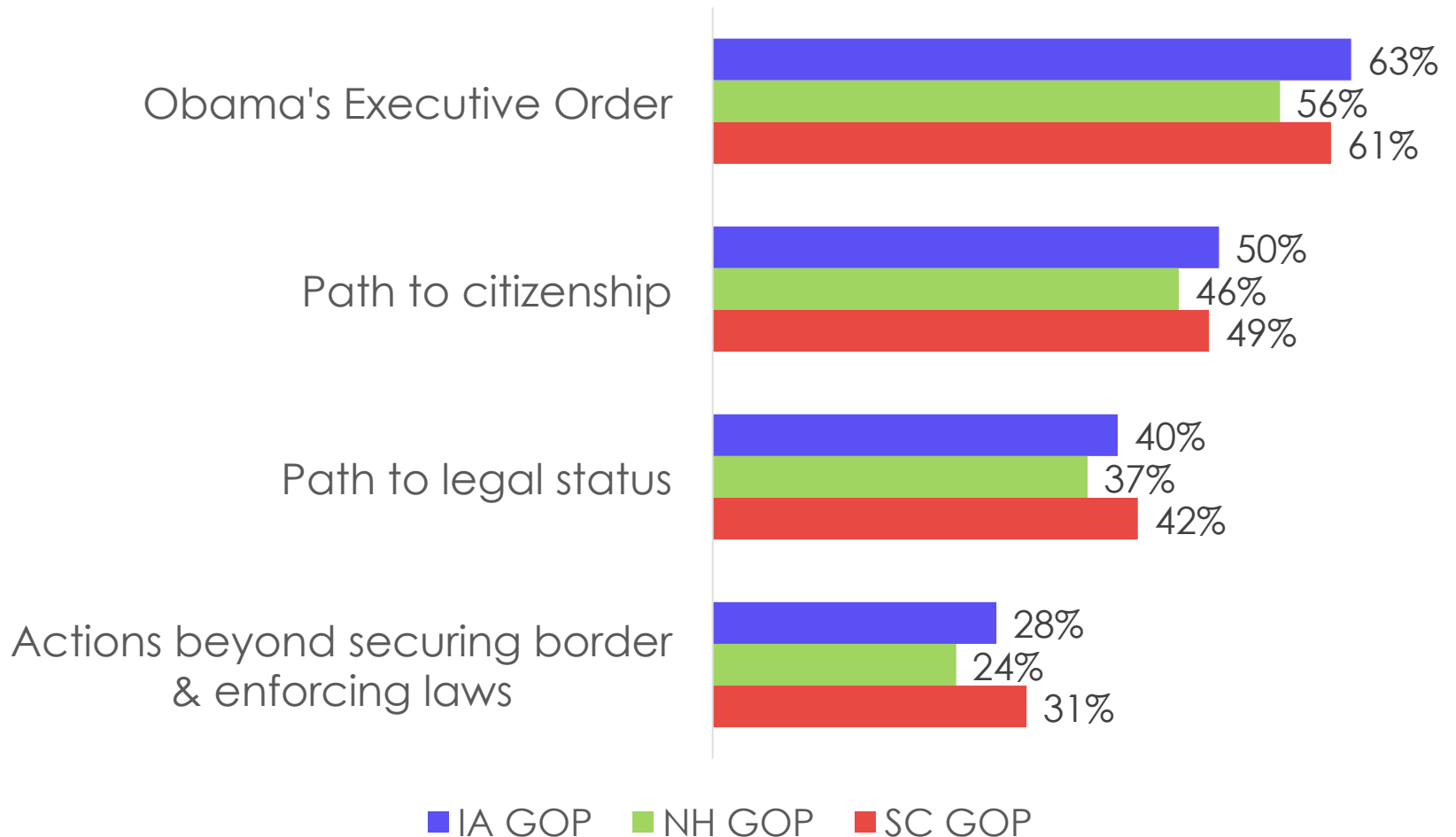
Key Findings

- There is a perception that candidates have to go hard right on immigration in the primary. **The reality is that no more than one in five Republican caucus or early state primary voters are hard line single issue voters.**
- For the vast majority, once a candidate says he/she wants to make the border more secure as the underpinning of any plan, support for reform and having a plan to deal with the 11 million undocumented immigrants **is desirable** -- far from a deal-breaker.

Key Findings

- How the issue plays with subgroups is key. The same segmentation by education level, gender, age and ethnicity on immigration is evident within both the Republican base and general election voters.
- The most hard line group – non college-educated white men – are essentially in the pocket of Republicans anyway. The most reform minded – college educated white women and voters under 35 – are determinant. And, of course, Hispanics, a rising part of the electorate, strongly favor reform.
- Some pollsters estimate a successful 2016 GOP candidate needs 40% of the Hispanic vote. Mitt Romney won 27%.

What is Amnesty?



Question Wording

I'd like to read you a comprehensive, multi-step approach to illegal immigration.

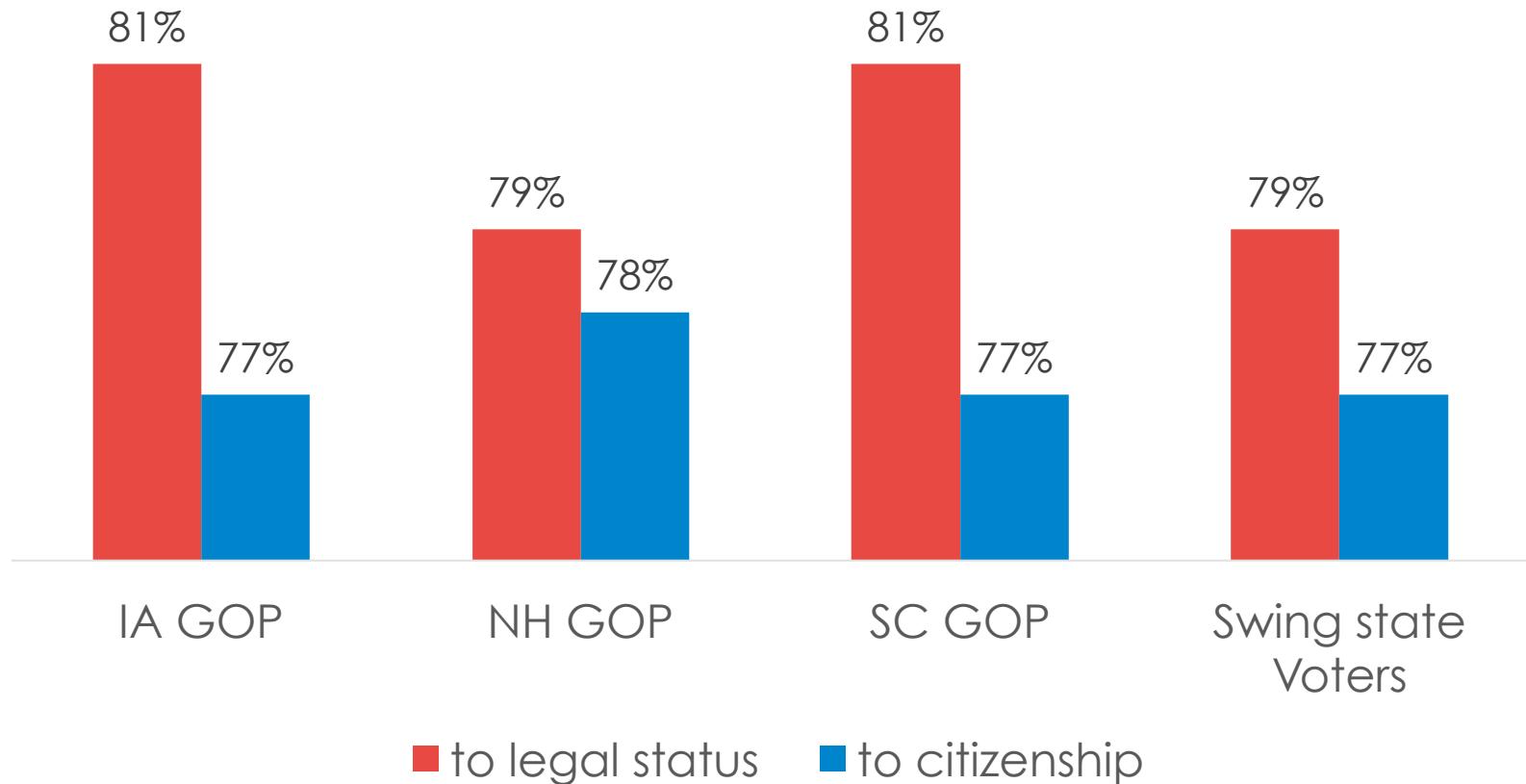
Current U.S. border security would be strengthened.

Workplace employment verification would be brought online and made more accurate.

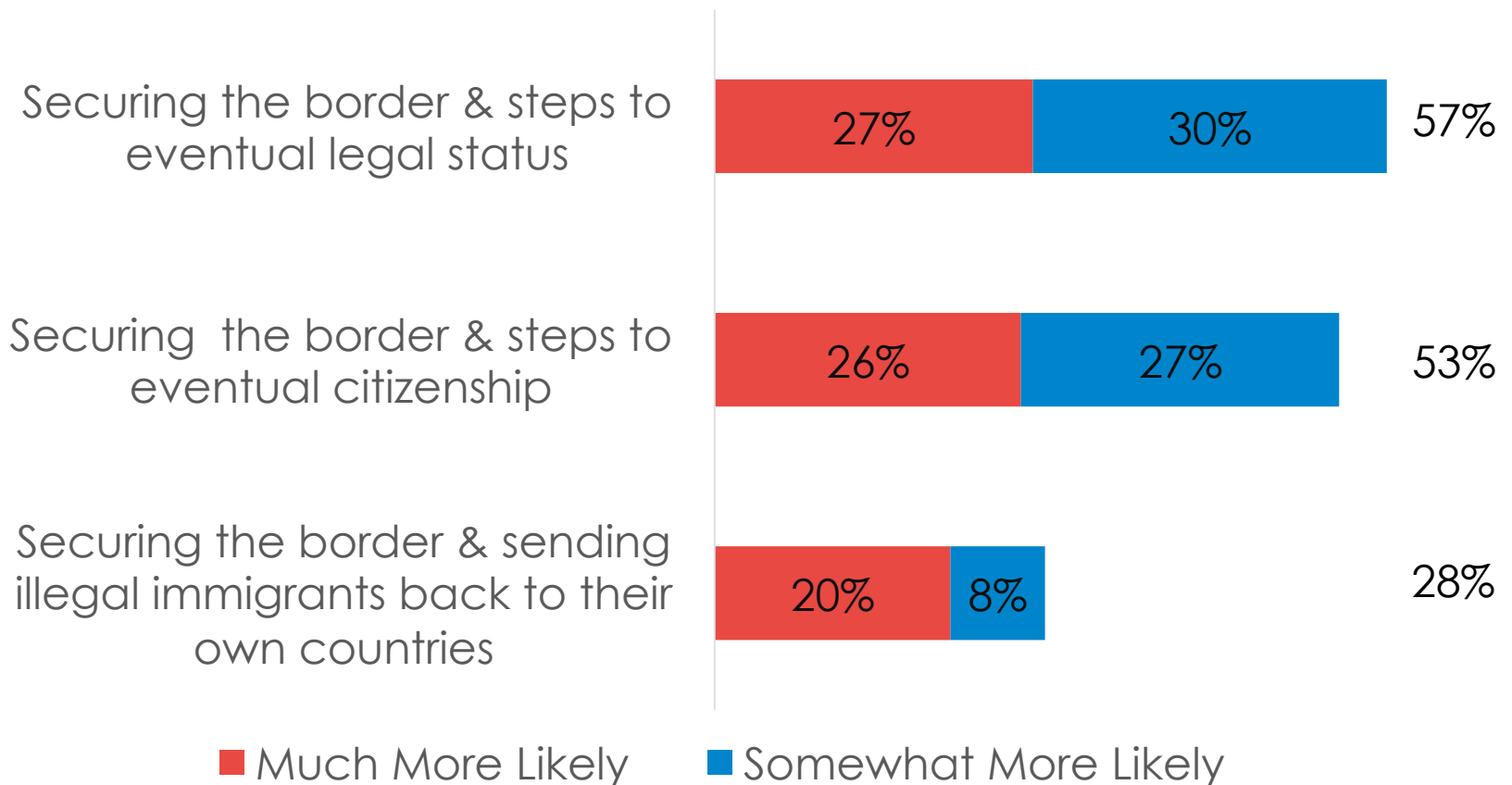
Illegal immigrants would be required to pay fines, back taxes, learn English and American civics, be financially self-supporting, and pass criminal background checks, and if they do that, they would be permitted to obtain legal status.

Would you be willing to support a candidate for President who supports this multi-step approach to legal status?
to citizenship?

Vote for candidate who supports multi-step approach



Swing State voters: Support for a candidate who favors...



Q&A