



Annual Minnesota Statewide Survey Fall 2014

Findings Report- Immigration questions



Minnesotans welcome immigration, but mixed feelings on executive orders on immigration.

Since 2010, there has been a decrease in the percentage of people responding positive (or somewhat positive) to immigration in Minnesota. In 2010, 70% of Minnesotans agreed with the statement “Immigrants make a positive impact on the United States”, while only 61% agreed with the statements ‘very positive’ or ‘somewhat positive’ impact to the United States in 2014. Minnesotans think the top positive effect of immigration in the state is cultural diversity. Meanwhile, the top negative effect of immigration was the burden they represent to government welfare. This reason is more than 20 percentage points higher than the second negative effect: “They take jobs away from Americans”.

One issue that has become relevant in recent months has been the one about undocumented immigrants and pathways to legalization. This year we asked two questions on this matter. First, we asked “Do you think that immigrants currently living in the U.S. illegally who meet certain requirements should have a way to reside in the U.S. legally”. Then, we asked “Should the President provide a way for undocumented immigrants to stay legally in the country?”.¹

The 34 year-old SCSU Survey is led by an interdisciplinary team of SCSU faculty and student directors who design the survey and analyze results. Students enrolled in related social science classes call respondents. The survey sample came from a statewide random sample of Minnesota adults. Responses were gathered from 551 randomly-selected landline (60 percent of sample) and cellphone users (40 percent of sample) Oct. 13-22 at the St. Cloud State University Survey Lab. The questionnaire consisted of about 40 questions.

Minnesotans and Immigration

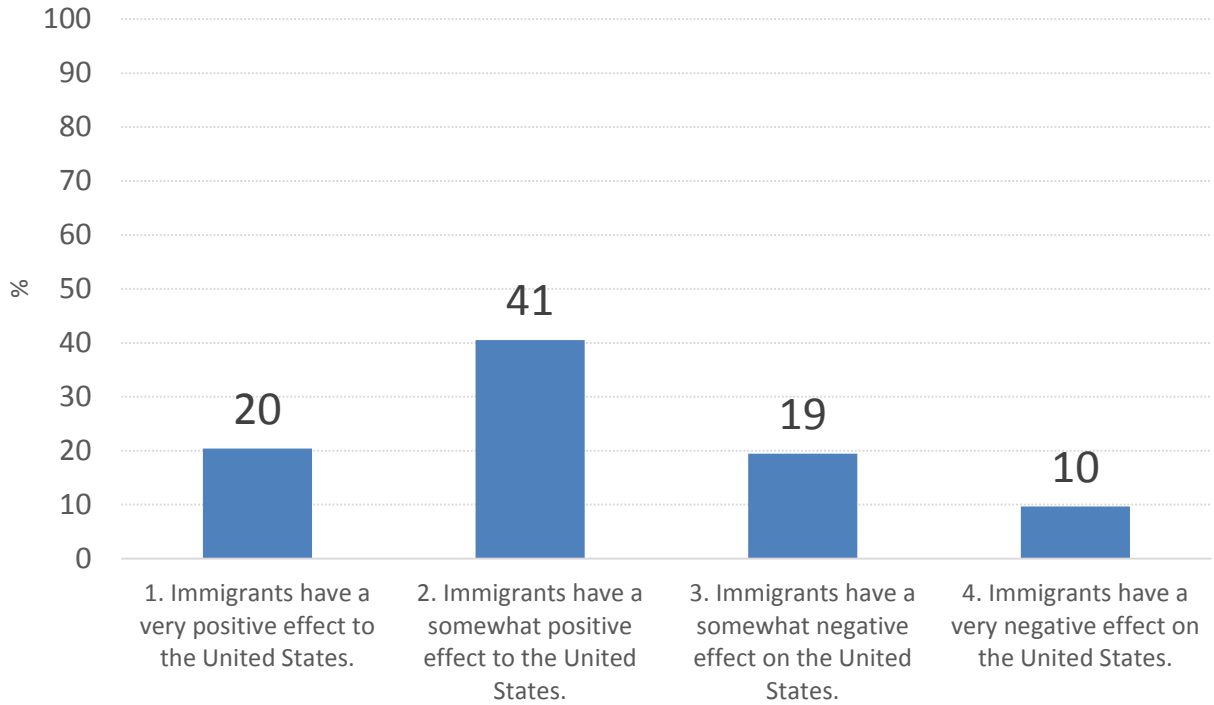
In 2011, SCSU Survey Center released a report on 2010 Fall Survey’s immigration questions. The Center has followed a basic set of questions on immigration Fall Survey, in addition to questions related to current immigration issues. In Fall 2014, it continued asking immigration questions to respondents. This year, the Center included two new questions in this section with the goal to measure local welcoming environment towards immigration and political support on immigration issues in Minnesota. If we compare results from 2010 Fall Survey to 2014 Fall Survey there is a decrease in the percentage of people responding positive (or somewhat positive) to immigration in Minnesota.

In 2010, 70% of Minnesotans agreed with the statement “Immigrants make a positive impact on the United States”, while only 61% agreed with the statements ‘very positive’ or ‘somewhat positive’ impact to the United States in 2014. We must notice however, that in this year’s survey we offered different options and asked for the ‘most agree’ result. This technique may have affected how people answer. For instance, 10% of the sample did not answer, were neutral, or refused to answer to the question, while 29% agreed with a negative or ‘somewhat’ negative impact. According to Pew Research Center, 57% of Americans say “immigrants strengthen our country”, while 35% of Americans say they are a burden to the country.

¹ The full questionnaire used in this year survey can be found in our webpage.

Minnesotans views on immigrants making a positive or negative effect on us

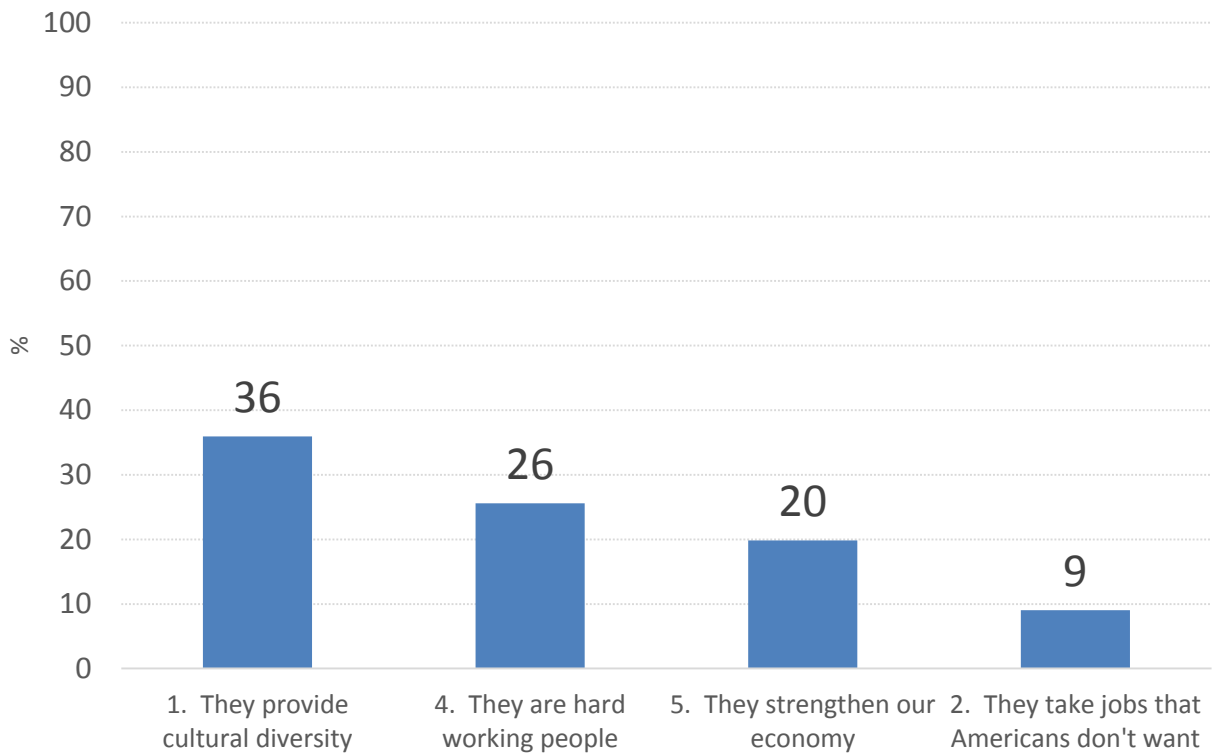
(Question: Which of the following do you most agree with?)



Note: 2014 Fall Survey. Sample 552. Neutral/No Opinion/Don't know/Refused/other represents 10% of total

Minnesotans think the top positive effect of immigration in the state is cultural diversity.

REASONS WHY SOME MN THINK IMMIGRANTS MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

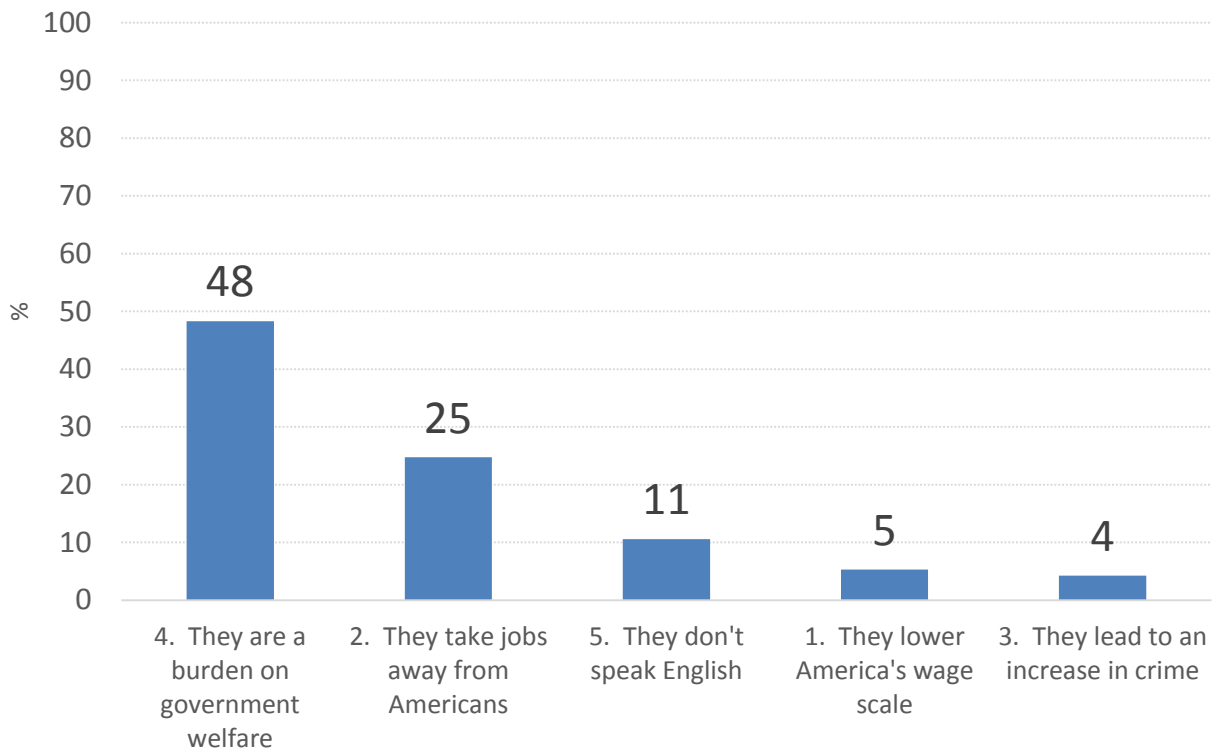


Note: 2014 Fall Survey. Sample 552. Others/Neutral/No Opinion/Don't know/Refused/other represents 9% of total sample.

FOR THOSE MN WHO THINK IMMIGRATION HAS A NEGATIVE EFFECT – Minnesotans and negative effects of immigration

For Minnesotans the top negative effect of immigration was the burden they represent to government welfare. This reason is more than 20 percentage points higher than the second negative effect: "They take jobs away from Americans".

What is the main negative effect of allowing immigrants into the United States?

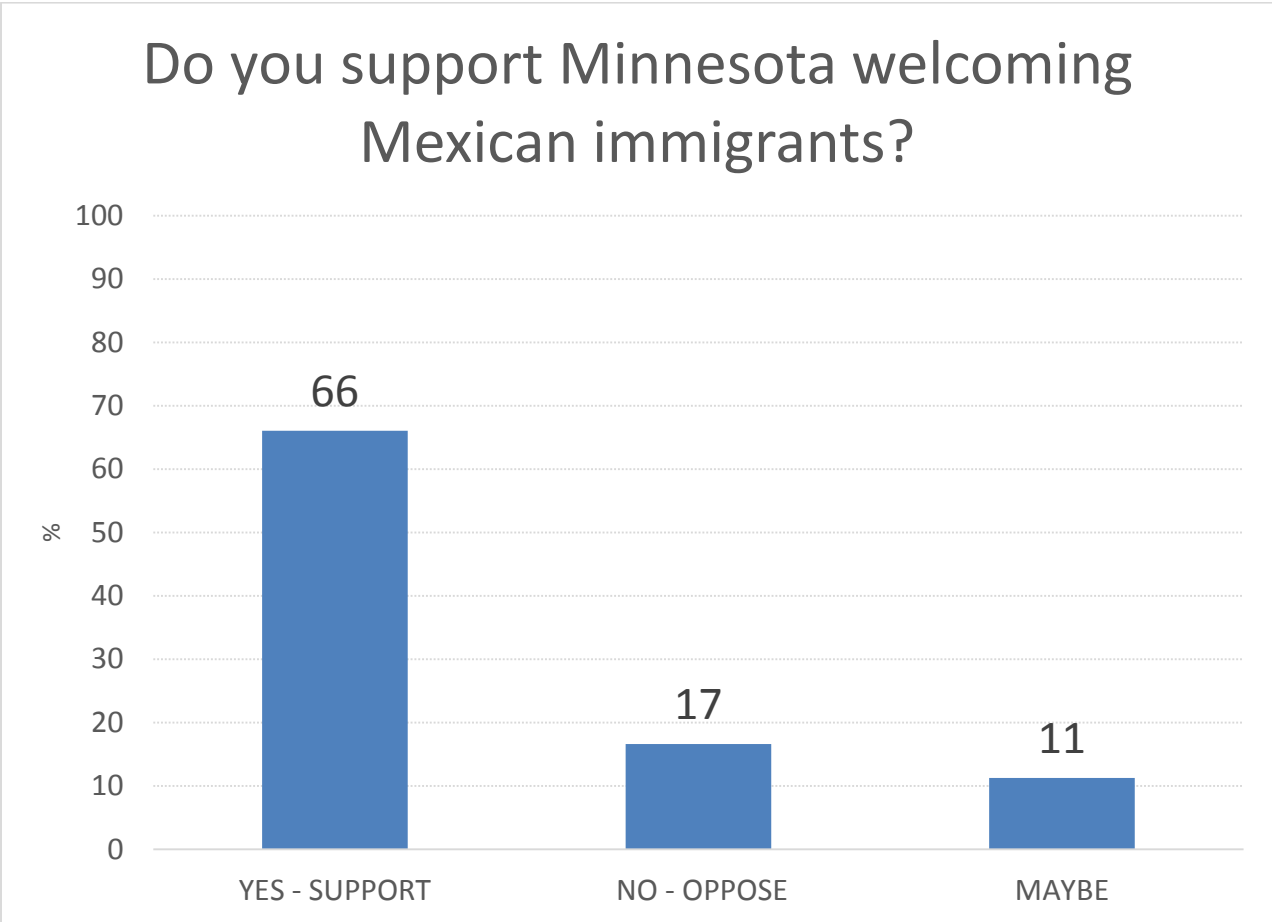


Note: 2014 Fall Survey. Sample 552. Others/Neutral/No Opinion/Don't know/Refused/other represents 7% of total sample.

Minnesotans welcoming diverse immigration- Mexican Immigrants vs. Somali immigrants

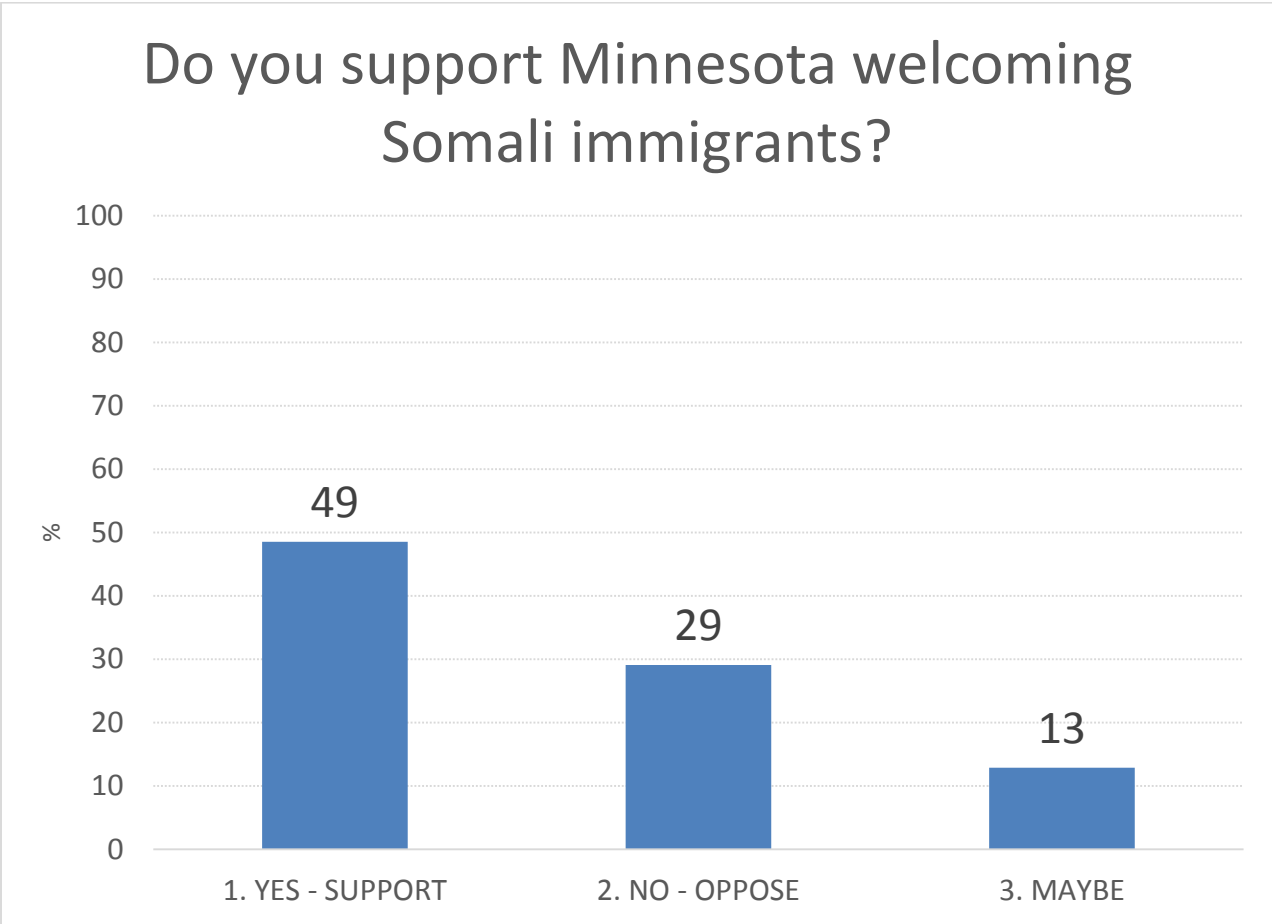
Minnesota is the largest receiver of refugees from Somalia in the United States. The number of Somalis in Minnesota rapidly grew from 2000 to 2009 in many of the largest metropolitan areas in the state. Simultaneously, Minnesota has received a larger Hispanic/Latino population every year. From 2000 to 2010, the Latino population grew more than 5 percentage points (to more than double in some communities).

This year we randomly separated the sample and asked two different questions regarding welcoming a particular group. The two immigrant groups we used were immigrants from Somalia and immigrants from Mexico. The sample was almost equally divided between the two questions. Our intention was to see if we can capture a different perception towards different types/groups of immigrant groups.



Note: 2014 Fall Survey. Sample 292. Don't know/Refused/other represents 6% of total sample.

Most Minnesotans welcome diverse immigration. The two random groups have a high percentage of supporters of immigration from Mexico and Somalia. However, the support varies between the two groups. The support for Mexicans is larger as a proportion of the sub-sample than the support for Somali immigrants. The two groups are not only different in terms of culture, language, and religion, but also in terms of their immigration status. Mexicans would tend to be in temporary visas, residency, or undocumented; meanwhile Somali immigrants are generally refugees with an immigration status that provides different access to institutions and services compared to Mexican immigrants. This comparison is very particular to Minnesota and more research would need to be done to actually capture the differences in attitudes and perception towards immigration from different groups and cultures. This is beyond the scope of our survey.



Note: 2014 Fall Survey. Sample 259. Don't know/Refused/other represents 10% of total sample.

Minnesotans and pathway to legalization for undocumented immigrants

One issue that has become relevant in recent months has been the one about undocumented immigrants and pathways to legalization. This year we asked two questions on this matter. First, we asked “Do you think that immigrants currently living in the U.S. illegally who meet certain requirements should have a way to reside in the U.S. legally”. Then, we asked “Should the President provide a way for undocumented immigrants to stay legally in the country?”.² We see these questions as follow-up from last year question on the DREAM Act: “Please tell me whether you would support a law that would allow illegal immigrants brought to the United States as children to gain legal resident status if they go to college?”. For the sake of comparison, we would include the overall results from last year’s survey regarding this question. However, it is important to remember that samples from both years are different representative sample populations of Minnesota.

Main findings

According to the Center, almost 60% of Minnesotans support finding a way to legalization for immigrants living in the U.S. illegally. Although the notion of the questions were different, we could compare this proportion to other major research centers. For instance, the Pew Research Center estimated that 70% of Americans think that undocumented immigrants should have a way to stay legally in the U.S.

² The full questionnaire used in this year survey can be found in our webpage.

Meanwhile, 40% support a presidential measure that unilaterally offers a way for undocumented immigrants to legalize their status. Similarly, the Pew Research Center estimated that 46% of Americans approve of last year's presidential executive order towards undocumented immigrants.

Overall, our findings show a very different pattern between the two questions. Although the majority of individuals support finding a way to legalize the status of immigrants living in the U.S. illegally, this support doesn't translate into support for the President offering (unilaterally) a pathway to legalization to undocumented immigrants. With the exception of gender groups, this finding is consistent across the different subgroups we considered in this report (age, education, geographic, and party affiliation).

Female participants were almost equally supportive of immigrant legalization and presidential action on immigrant legalization.

Within the seven counties in the metro area, the majority supports some way to legalization (67%), however that support declines to 41% when we ask for presidential unilateral measure to this issue.

Majority of Minnesotans identified as Democrats support a pathway to legalization for undocumented immigrants (67%) and an executive action on this matter (57%). However, the support is larger for the overall issue. Meanwhile, those identified as Republicans were mostly supportive of legalization (68%), but largely opposed to an executive action on this issue (less than 37% support).

We should consider, however, that when the survey was held there was not clear evidence of what the president would do on immigration matters. Therefore, our question was on a broader idea of 'any' measure taking place. The issue here is how our question may have changed respondents' perspectives. What we cannot identify here is whether people are against a particular measure or against any executive action. This becomes clear when we compare our results with 2013 survey. The majority of Minnesotans supported the Dream Act (55%). Even though this was a executive action, people were supportive of this measure at the time. It could be the case that by knowing the exact measure, individuals can assess the issue better rather than discussing the possible political, or even insitutional, impacts. Therefore, we can actually measure the support on the actual measure with fewer distortions.

Other small caveats that should be considered is that we included the word 'undocumented' in the questions regarding presidential actions, but not in the first, which could have an impact on respondents' perspectives. Our Fall Survey was not intended to offer a deep analysis on the topic of immigration. Our focus was to offer a snapshot of the overall perspective on relevant issues. We consider a extended survey on the issue of immigration would be needed to be able to capture the different perceptions, ideas, and attitudes towards immigration in Minnesota.

Do you think that immigrants currently living in the U.S. illegally who meet certain requirements should have a way to legalization

Count	Percent	Count
Yes	59.80	329
No	28.31	156
Neutral	4.88	27

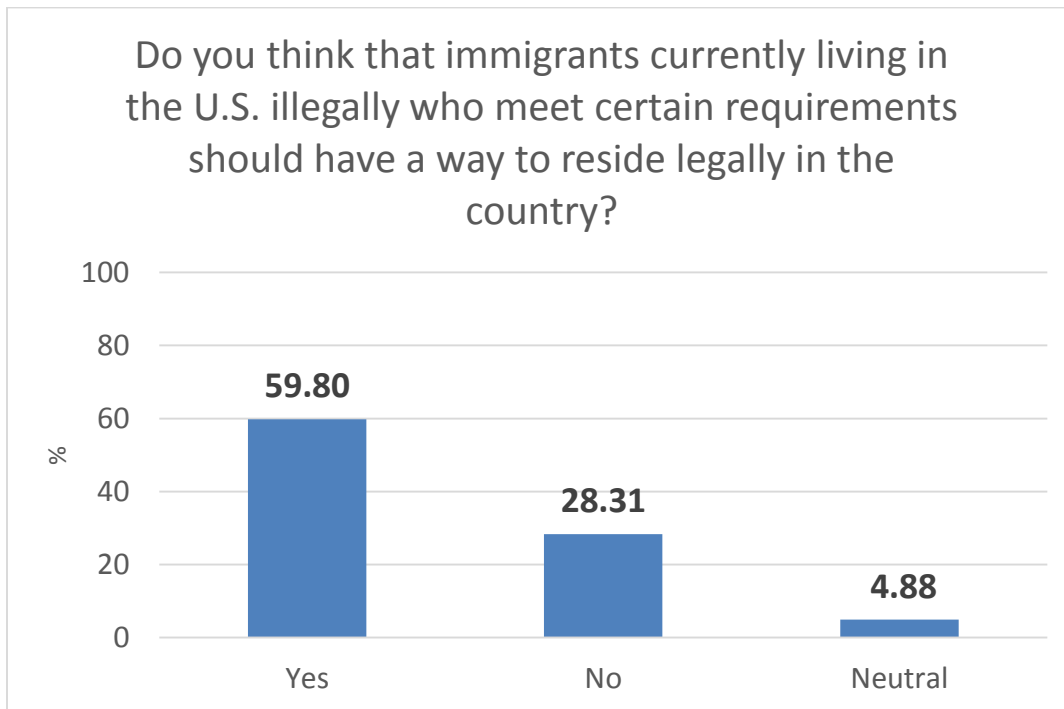
Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 551. 7% of this sample answered Don't know or Refused.

Should the President provide a way for undocumented immigrants to stay legally in the country?

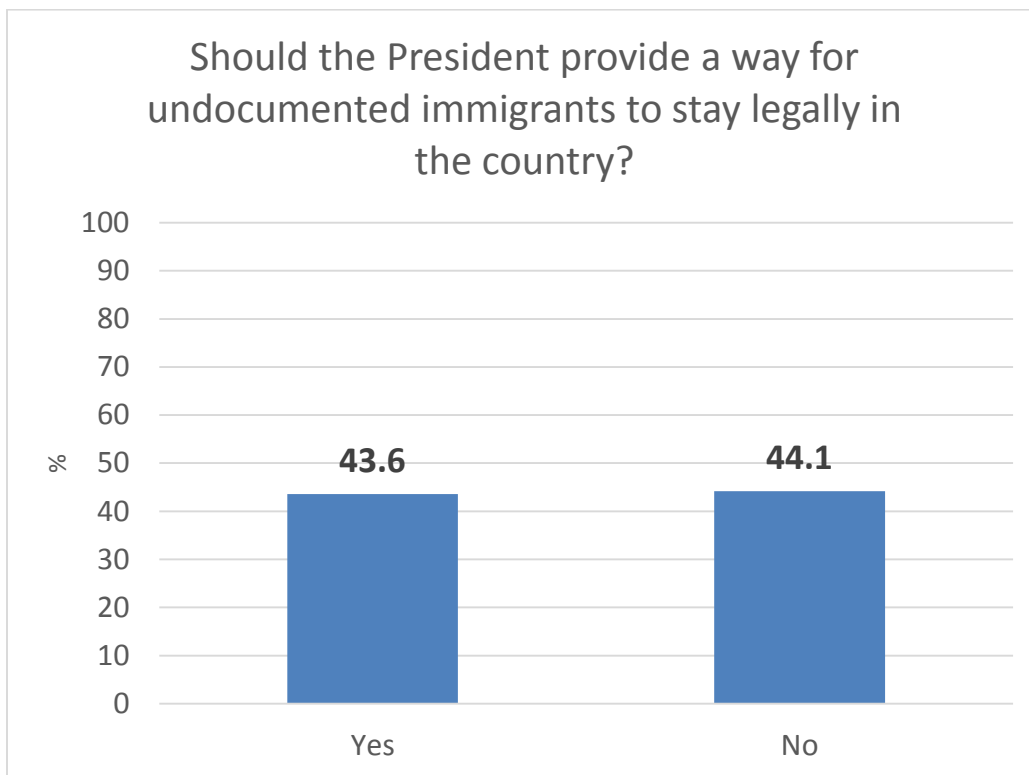
	Percent	Count
Yes	43.6	240

No	44.1	243
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Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 551. 12.2% of this sample answered Don't know or Refused.



Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 551. 7% of this sample answered Don't know or Refused.



Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 551. 12.2% of this sample answered 'Don't know' or 'Refused'.

The sample is almost equally divided into supporting, or not supporting, a unilateral presidential measure on immigration. It is also worth to mention that a larger proportion of respondents answered "Don't know" or Refused to answer this question. A larger proportion of these groups self-identified as supporters of the Republican or the MN Independence parties. Another interesting finding is that among those who responded "No", almost 35% self-identified as Democrats. The group of "Yes" is also mixed; it is formed by only 57% of Democrats. This seems to suggest that there are supporters of unilateral measures outside own political party. Nevertheless, the final support doesn't represent a majority.

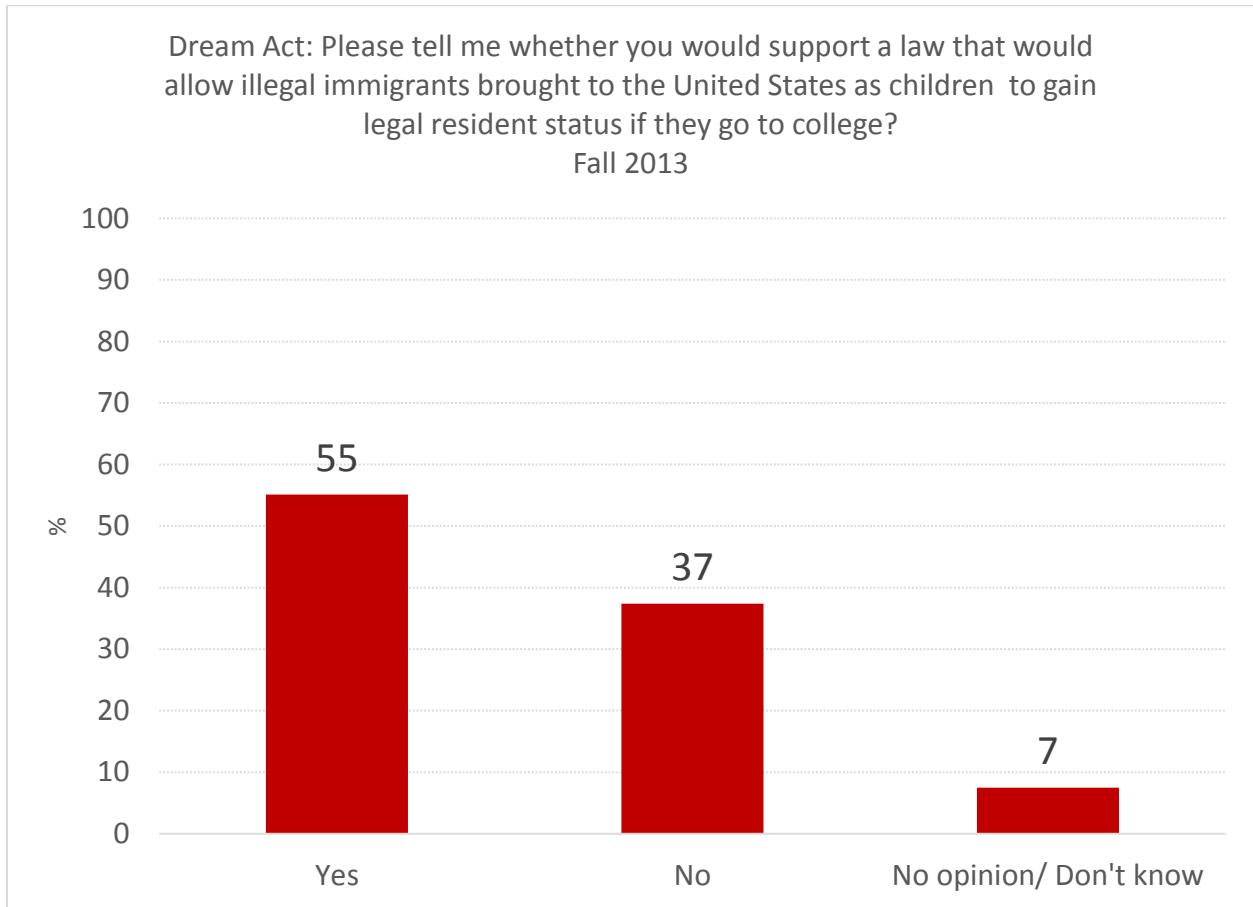
If we now look deeper into our questions and other demographic and geographic indicators, we would see that overall highly educated and high income individuals, tend to support a pathway to legalization to immigrants residing illegally in the U.S. The support towards the presidential measure on undocumented immigration is unclear.

DREAM ACT

We decided to incorporate the analysis of one of last year's questions related to the Dream Act. By definition, the Dream Act is an executive order and it deterred deportation of young undocumented immigrants. One of the measures recently announced by President Obama was a modification of the Dream Act that allows many more undocumented immigrants to maintain a temporal legal status in the U.S. The major changes were the elimination of the age limit and time of arrival.

Please tell me whether you would support a law that would allow illegal immigrants brought to the United States as children to gain legal resident status if they go to college?

	Percent	Count
Yes	55	342
No	37	232
No opinion/ Don't know	7	47

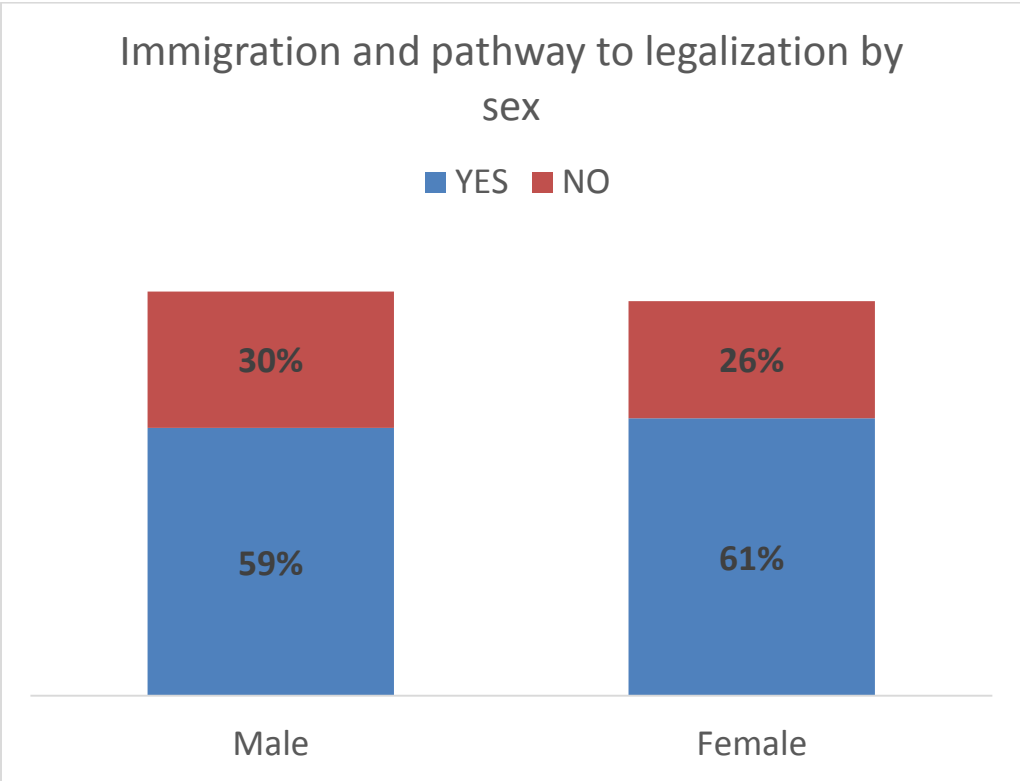


Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2013. Total number of valid observations equal to 626. 1% of this sample 'Refused' to answer the question.

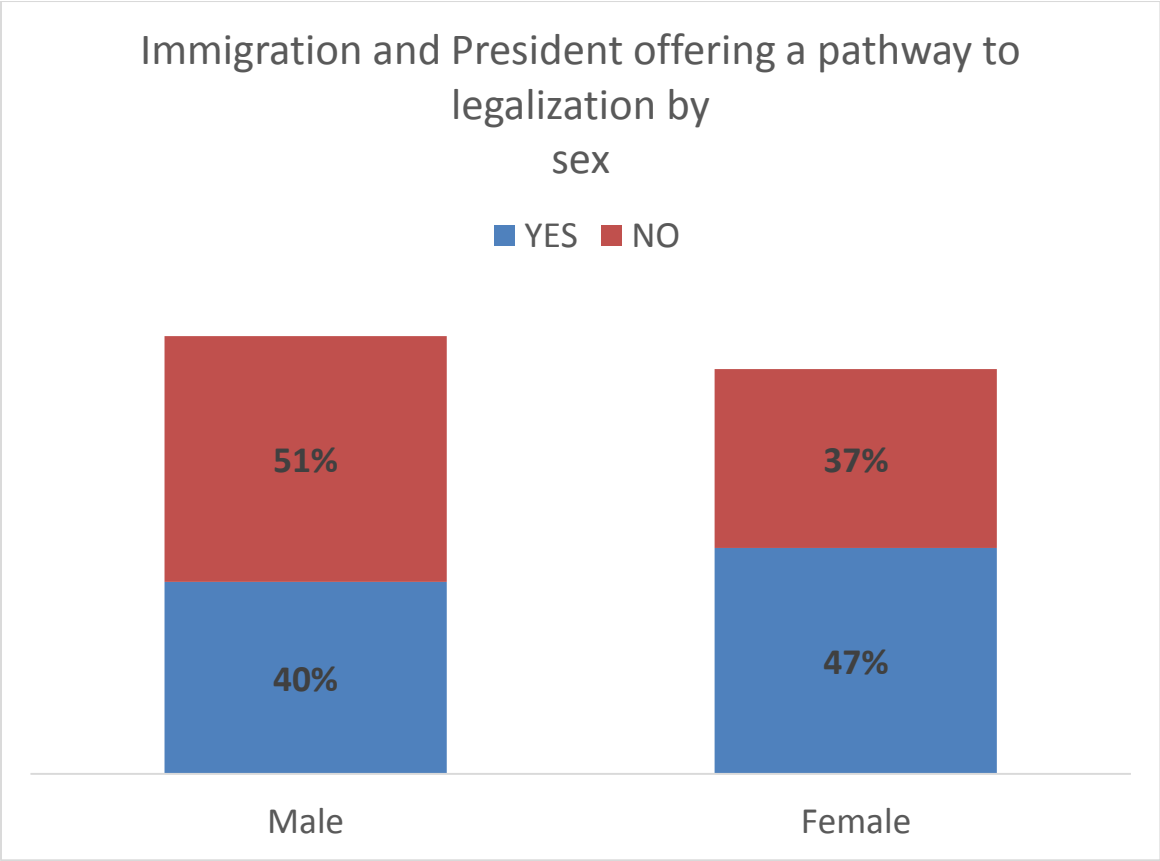
More Analysis: Looking at other sub groups

In this section, we would look into each question and separate the analysis by different demographic, political affiliation, and geography. In order, we would discuss the distribution of the sample by sex, age, education, Metro versus Non-Metro areas, and party affiliation.

We look at the detailed analysis by sex. The difference between males and females is small. Within both groups, the majority supports finding a way to legalize undocumented immigrants (who meet certain criteria), 59% males and 61% females. When we ask whether the president should offer a way to reside legally in the U.S. to undocumented immigrants, the support in both groups goes down; however it declines more for males than females.

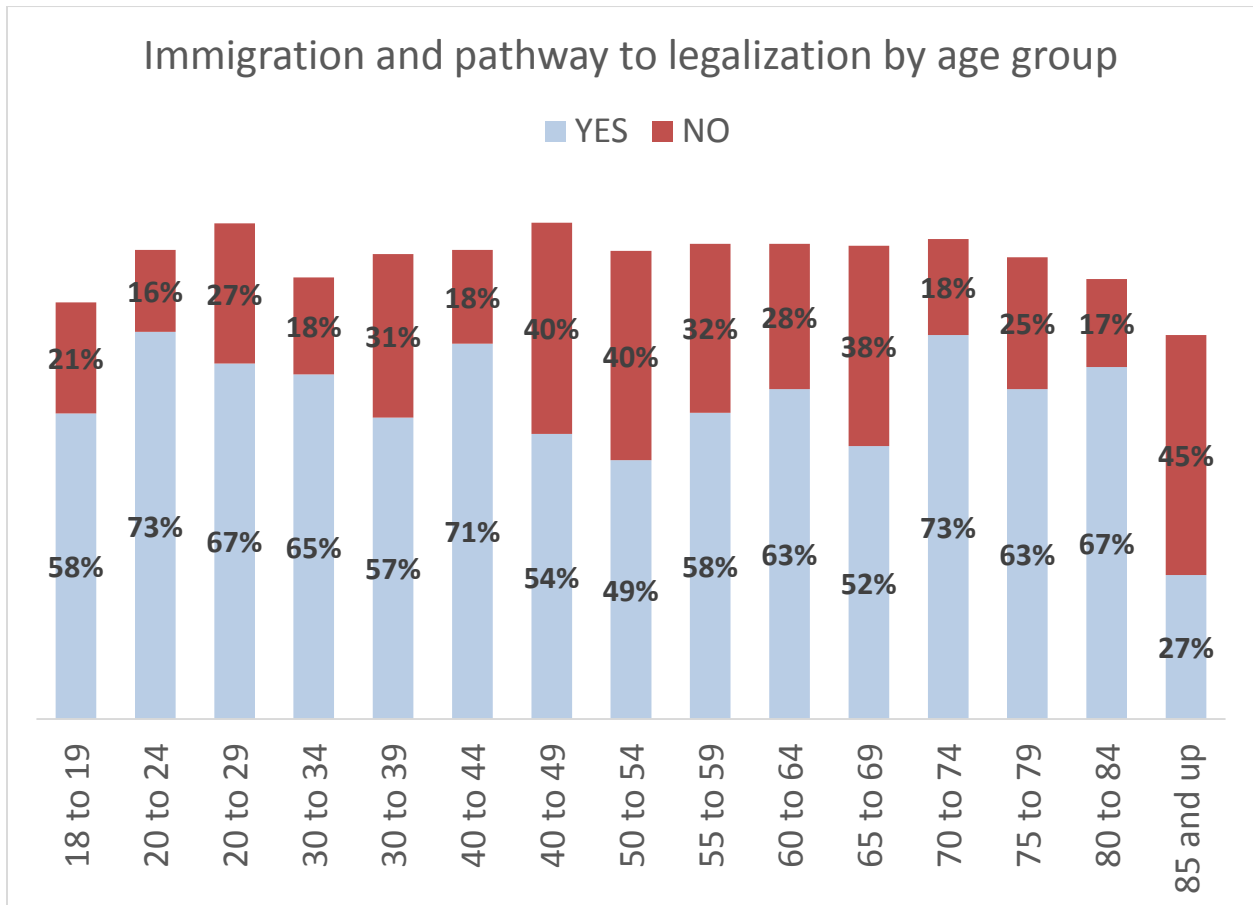


Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 532 (19 missing age). Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Neutra', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused' are not included in the graph.



Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 532 (19 missing age). Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Don't Know' and 'Refused' are not included in the graph.

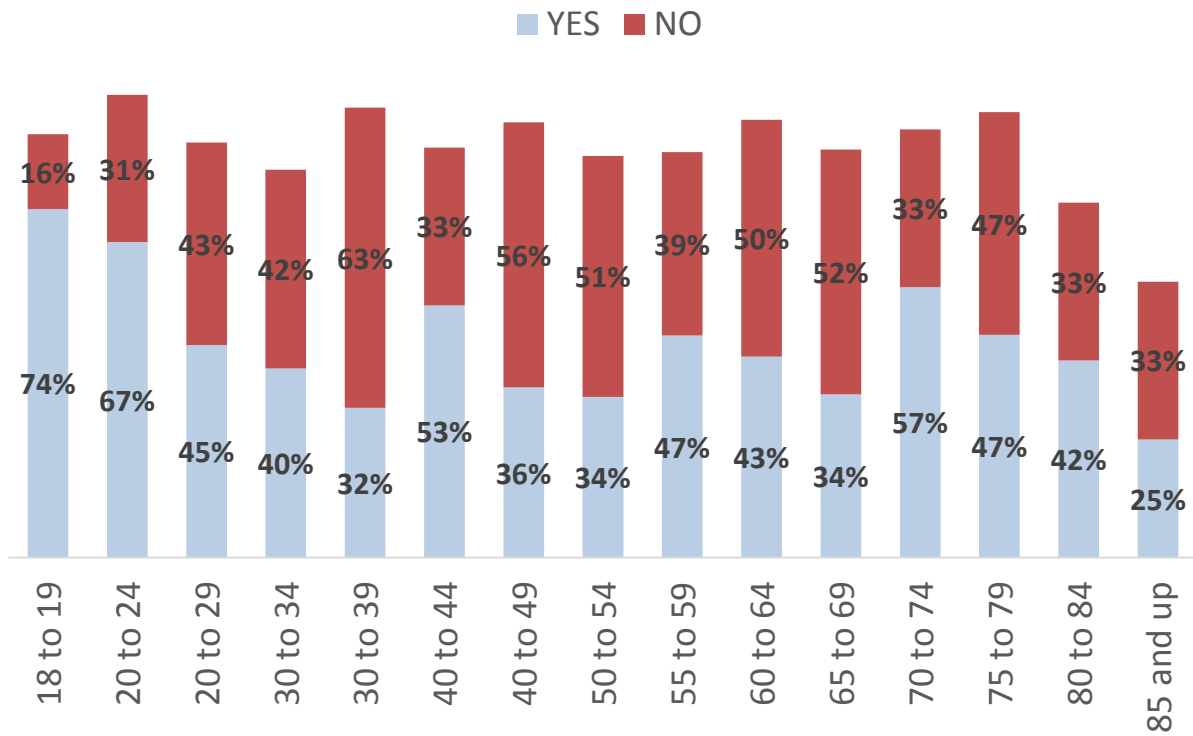
By age category, there is a strong support among the young population of finding a way to legalize residency to undocumented immigrants (around 73% say Yes to this question). The fraction of affirmative answers decreases after age 44; while it regains support with the elderly population (70 and plus).



Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 532 (19 missing age). Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Neutra', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused' are not included in the graph.

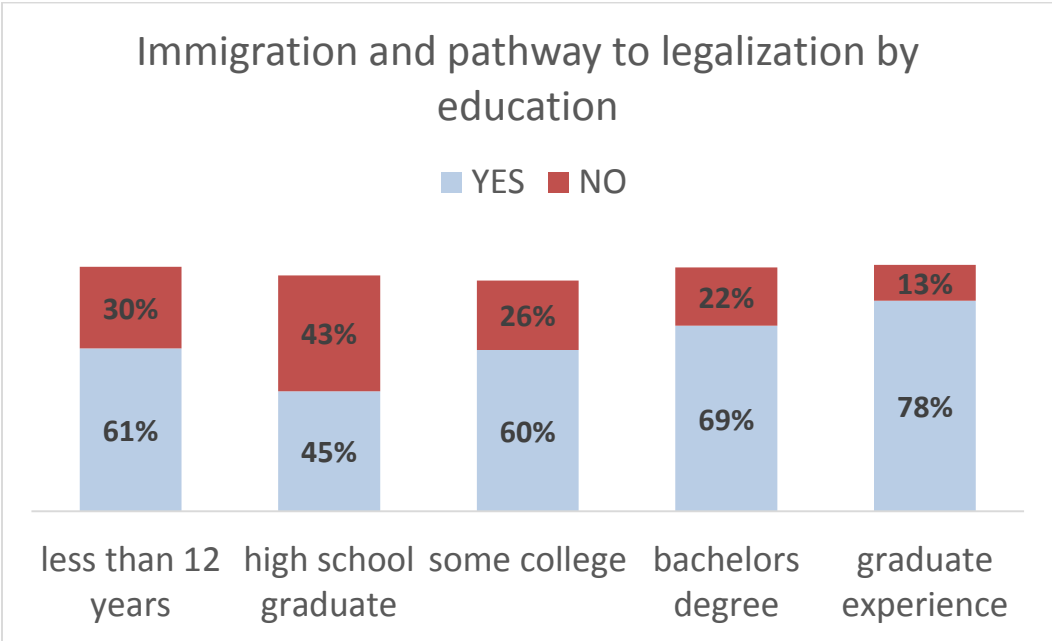
Although we are finding this overall support across all age groups for finding a pathway to legalization for immigrants living illegally in the country, this pattern is different when we look at the answers from whether the president should act unilaterally in this issue. Except for the young population, in many cases the support is less than 40% within each age category.

Immigration and President offering a pathway to legalization by age group

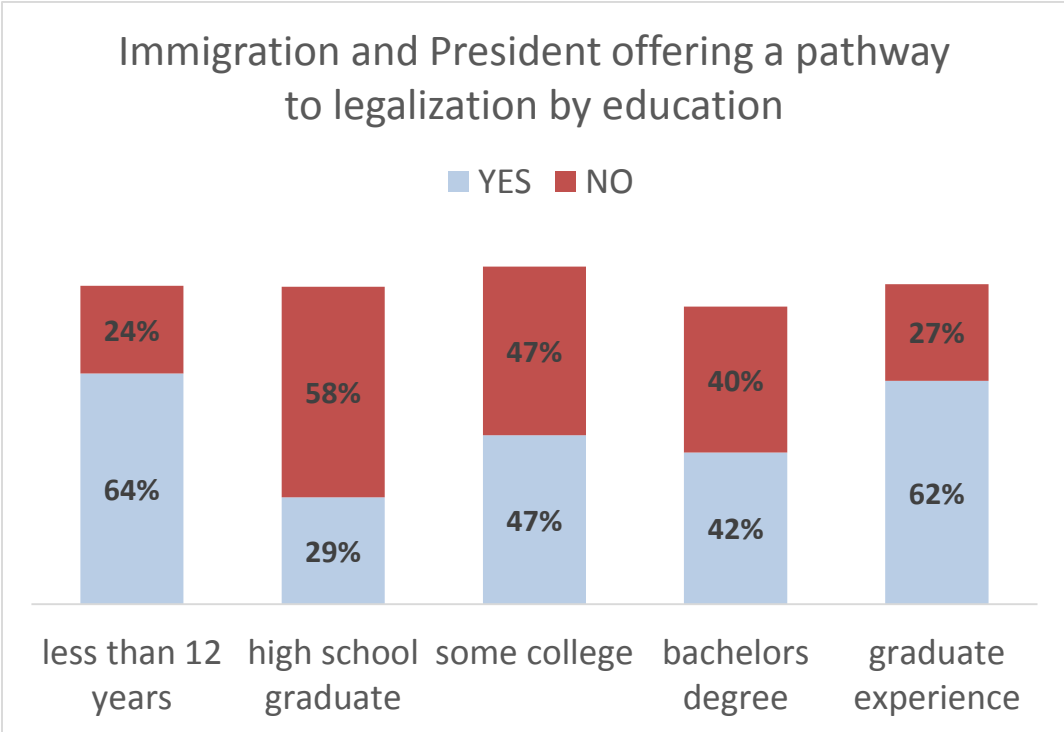


Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 532 (19 missing age). Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Don't Know' and 'Refused' are not included in the graph.

By **educational** level, the lowest support for finding a pathway to legalization for undocumented immigrants comes from the group with a High School Degree. Meanwhile, individuals with a Bachelor Degree and Some Graduate experience correspond to the group with the highest support for legalization. When the question is whether the President should act unilaterally on this issue, the majority support stays only in the groups less than High School Degree and Graduate Experience.



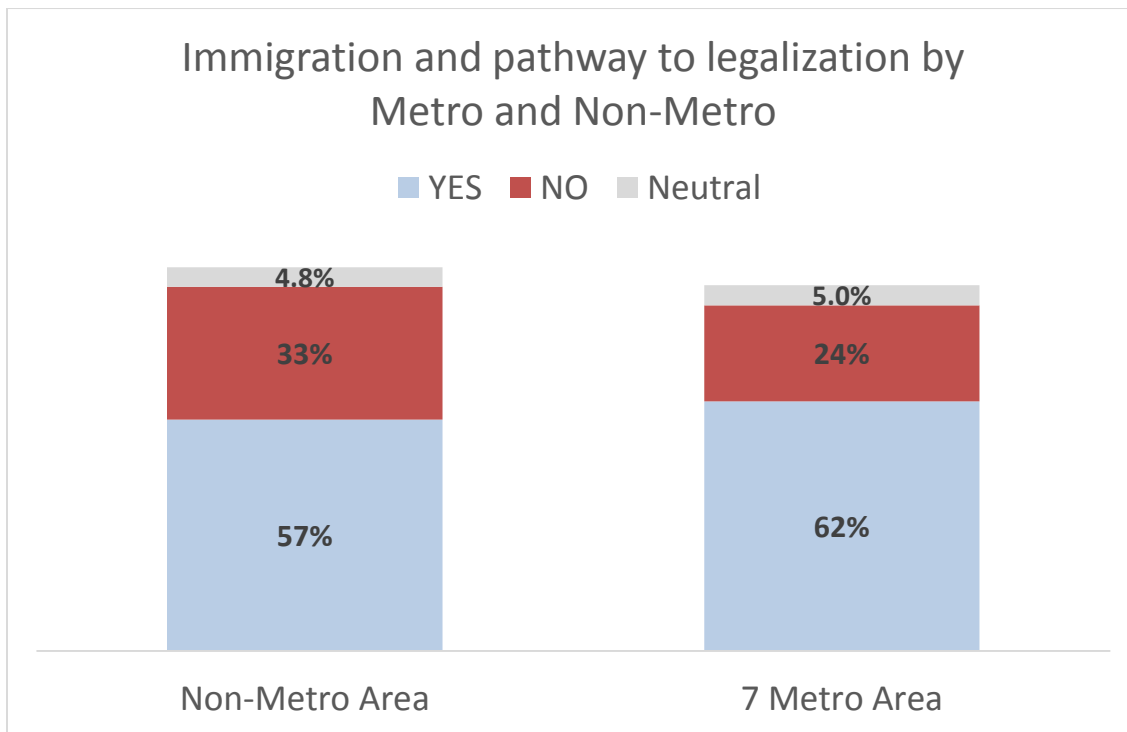
Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 542 (9 missing). Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Neutral', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused' are not included in the graph.



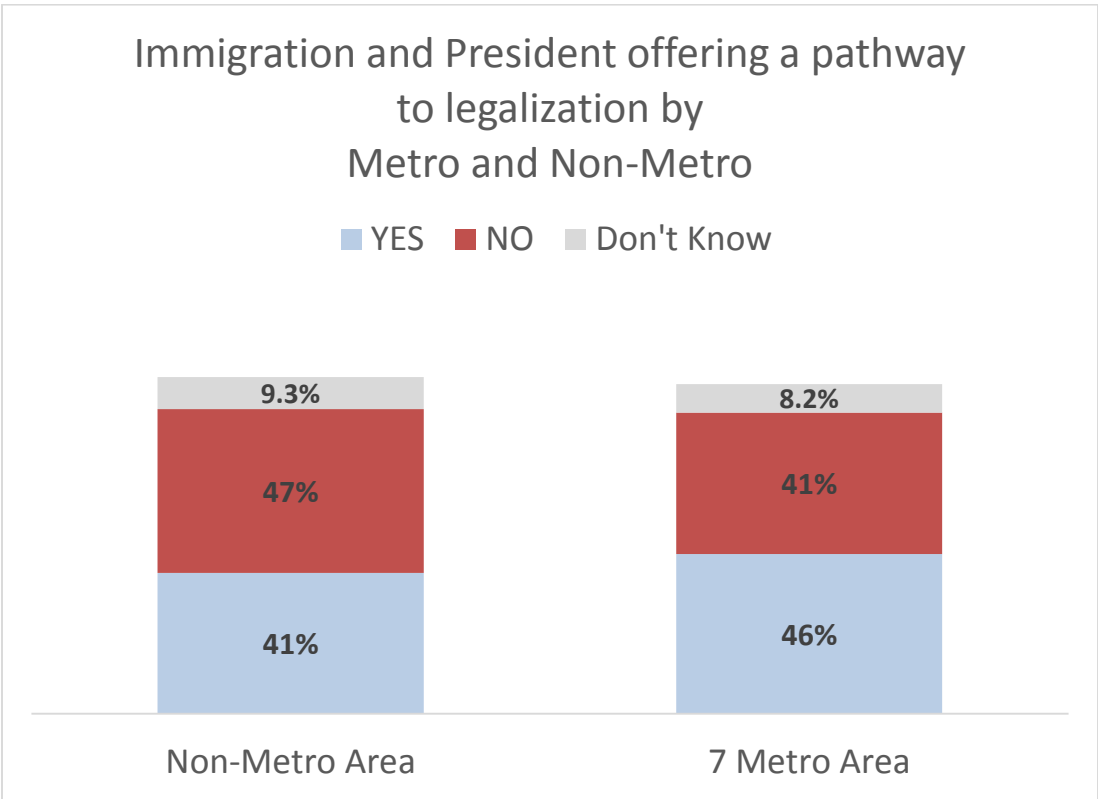
Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 542 (9 missing). Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Neutral', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused' are not included in the graph.

Income and education are highly related: low educational level equals low income while high educational level equals higher income. In our sample, we find individuals' answers evaluated by income levels follow the same patterns to education. Lower and higher income levels support a pathway to legalization, however, it decreases when a presidential unilateral measure is considered, and only individuals in the lowest and highest income levels continues their support within the group. For the sake of space, we do not show the results in this report. We will provide it upon request.

Although, overall a majority of the population supports finding a way to legalize the status of undocumented immigrants, there still exists a different in support between Metro Area and Non-Metro Areas. When looking at the 7-counties Metro Area, we found a stronger support within the group for a pathway to legalization in these urban areas compared to the rest of the counties (62% versus 57%). The support is reduced to below 50% in all areas when we ask whether President Obama should offer a way to legalize undocumented immigrants' status.

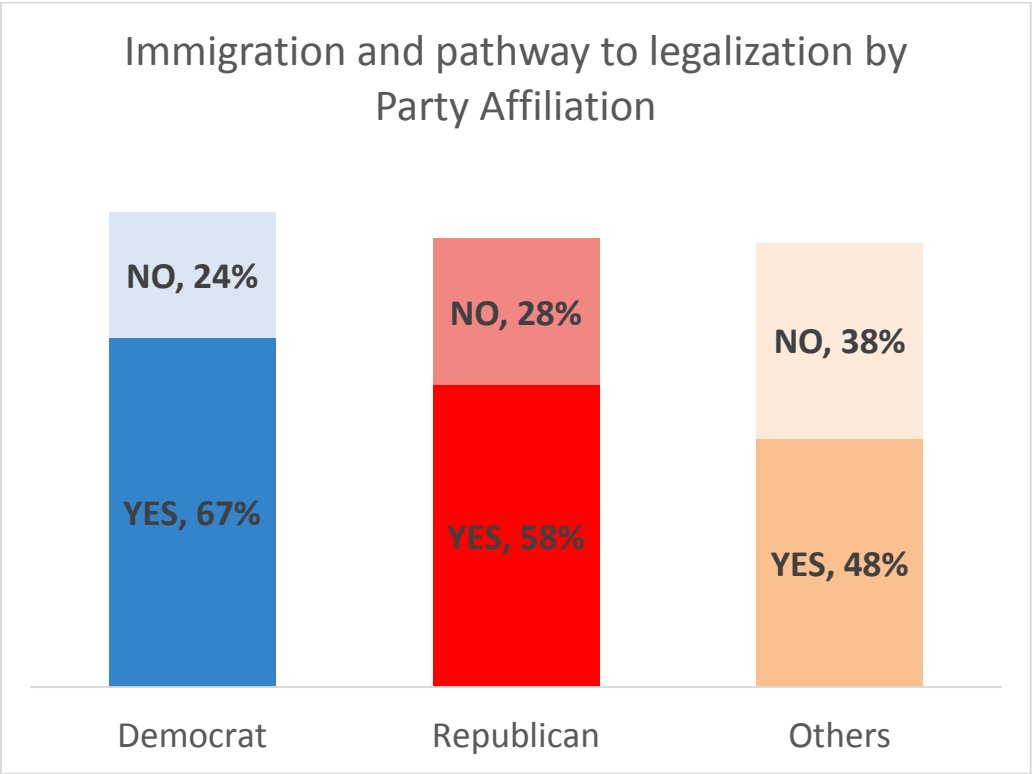


Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 551. Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Don't Know' and 'Refused' are not included in the graph.

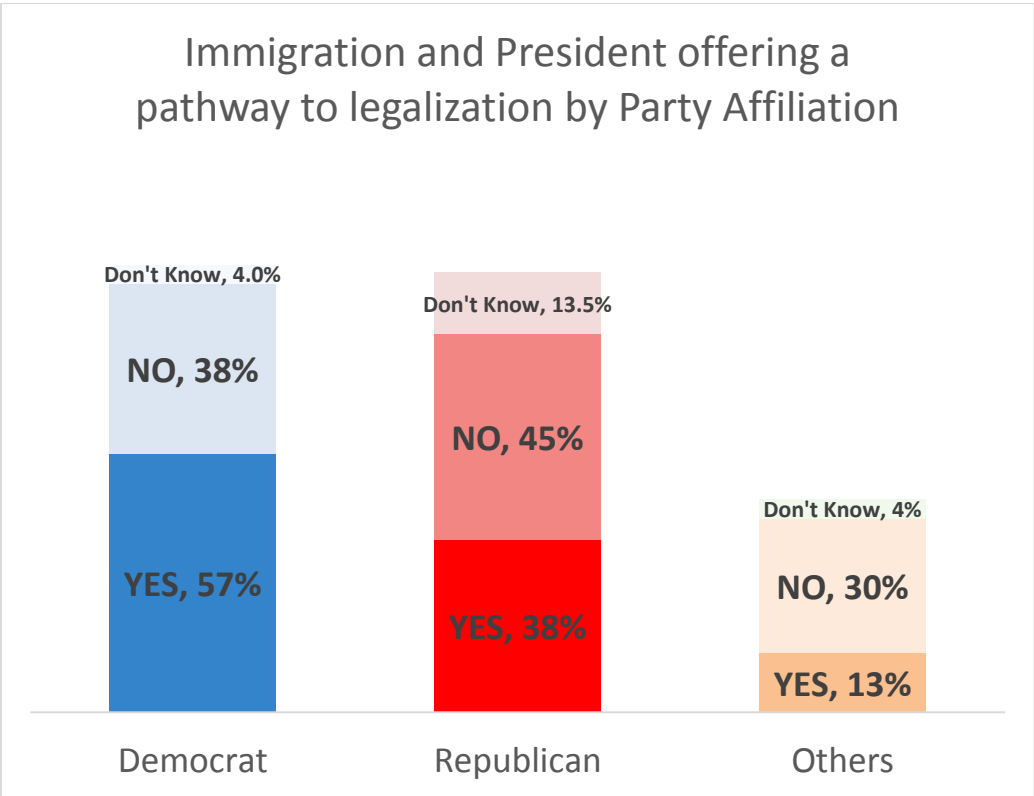


Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 551. Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Refused' are not included in the graph.

One of the interesting findings from this year survey was the mixed support that immigration has across different parties, and how that support decreases when the question regarding a unilateral presidential measure was asked. Similarly to the Pew Research Center, self-identified Democrats, within the group, represents the largest support to offering a pathway to legalization for immigrants residing illegally in the country (around 67% of people who identified as Democrats say yes to this question). However, even some people self-identified as Democrats, and who support offering some pathway to legalization to undocumented immigrants, answered 'No' to a unilateral presidential measure. The support within the Democratic group is still larger (57%) than in the other party affiliation groups (Republican 38% and Others 13%).



Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 550. Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Neutral', 'Don't Know' and 'Refused' are not included in the graph.



Note: SCSU Survey Center Fall 2014. Total number of valid observations equal to 550. Percentages do not sum up to 100% because answers 'Refused' are not included in the graph. Also, we exclude those who answered 'Don't know' or 'Refused' to party affiliation.