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POLL: IMMIGRATION A SOURCE OF WIDESPREAD FRUSTRATION

By Laura Meckler
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A new survey bears out what seems obvious about how politicians are handling the issue of illegal immigration: no one is particularly happy. The results underscore the potency of the issue, particularly for Republicans, in next month's midterms elections.

The poll by the Pew Research Center asked Democrats and Republicans how they felt about their own party's handling of this and other issues. It found people in both parties disappointed.

Only 37 percent of Republicans and those who lean to the GOP think their own party is doing a good job representing their views on illegal immigration. More than half – 56 percent – said it was not doing a good job.

A third of the disappointed Republicans said the party was too willing to allow immigrants living in the U.S. illegally to gain legal status, Pew said. Just 18 percent said it had not done a good job because it will not willing enough to allow for a legal status. Older Republicans were most critical of the party's handling of the issue.

Democrats and those who lean Democratic are more evenly split. Still, fewer than half – 47 percent – said the Democratic party was doing a good job, with nearly as many – 44 percent – saying the party was not doing a good job. Disappointment was higher among Hispanic Democrats – more than half said the party was not doing a good job representing their views.

The poll was conducted Sept. 2-9, well after it was clear Congress would not act on immigration legislation and after news this summer about a surge in illegal child migration from Central America.

The survey of 2002 adults included 863 Republicans and Republican leaners and 913 Democrat and Democratic leaners.