



New China

Polls show U.S. divided over national anthem protests by NFL players

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LOS ANGELES, Sept. 25 (Xinhua) -- Recent online national surveys find Americans are divided over the national anthem protests by National Football League (NFL) players.

A survey conducted by the Cato Institute finds 61 percent of Americans opposed to President Donald Trump's idea of firing NFL players for not standing during playing of the national anthem.

However, another survey by the YouGov showed only 38 percent of Americans supported the kneeling protest.

A verbal war between Trump and NFL players escalated over the latest weekend. Trump challenged NFL owner Roger Goodell to kneel during the playing of the national anthem last Friday, then received fire back from more than 200 players who remained in the locker room during the anthem time before match.

Cato Institute published the result of the national survey Monday, which is part of the forthcoming national Cato Institute Tolerance Survey participated by 2,300 Americans 18 years of age and older.

It showed 61 percent of Americans opposed firing NFL players who refused to stand for the national anthem playing in order to make a political statement, and 38 percent of Americans aligned with Trump and supported firing these players.

The opinions were divided clearly by parties, age and race. In general, the report of Cato Institute pointed out that Americans with less education, and living in smaller towns and rural communities are most likely to support punishing NFL players.

Nearly two-thirds, 65 percent of Republicans said NFL players should be fired for this reason, but only 19 percent of independents agreed.

In group aged over 65, 57 percent of Americans thought such players should be fired while 71 percent of Americans aged 18-29 should not.

Even majorities across racial groups opposed firing NFL players joining protest, but African Americans (88 percent), Hispanics (60 percent) and whites (55 percent) to oppose.

The Cato survey was conducted on Aug. 15-23, with the cooperation of the YouGov website.

YouGov also launched an online survey on this matter. It posted a question "Following comments from President Trump that NFL players who kneel during the national anthem should be fired, hundreds of football players knelt or otherwise made a silent protest during weekend's NFL games. What comes closest to your view about NFL players kneeling during the national anthem?"

Until Monday night, the ongoing survey found 38 percent of Americans selected "I support the act", while 20 percent selected "I don't support this act but they believed it should be allowed", and 31 percent said they neither supported this act nor opposed it.

The Cato report said "Not wanting to fire NFL players because of their political speech doesn't mean that most Americans support the content of this speech."

"In sum, Americans don't want to strip people of their livelihoods and ruin their careers over refusing to stand for the flag if they don't agree with the content of the speech, that doesn't mean they support punishing people who do," it said.

The kneeling protest was started by former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick from August of 2016, protesting not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color."

Last September, a poll conducted by Reuters/Ipsos showed that 61 percent of Americans disagreed with Kaepernick's protest, and 39 percent thought it was "unpatriotic".