



To: Interested Parties
From: Lake Research Partners and Public Opinion Strategies
Date: November 7, 2006
Re: Recent Poll Findings Among Likely Latino Voters¹

- ü **Latinos are engaged in this election and report being more enthusiastic about voting this year than in past years.**
 - ü **Education, jobs and the economy, and the war in Iraq top the issue agenda for Latino voters. However, when asked specifically about the importance of immigration, a majority say it was one of the most important issues in deciding their vote. Still, they feel the discourse surrounding immigration has had a negative impact on their community.**
 - ü **Spanish language programs were an important source of information and Latino GOTV efforts this year. However, only a third say they received targeted communication from Democrats or Republicans.**
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KEY FINDINGS:

Latinos are very interested in this election and report being more motivated to vote this year compared to past cycles. In addition, compared to publicly available information, interest in and enthusiasm about this election has grown since late in the summer.

- § Forty-three percent of Latinos rate their personal interest in the election a "10" on a ten point scale. A total of 75% rate their interest a 9 or 10. The mean is an astonishing 9.4. In a study Lake Research conducted among the same population for the Latino Policy Coalition (LPC) in late September, interest stood at a mean of 7.5, and only 30% rated their personal interest a "10." Clearly, interest has risen since late summer.
- § Fifty percent of Latinos say they are more enthusiastic about voting this year than in previous elections. Only 19% say they are less enthusiastic, while a third (30%) feel the same level of enthusiasm as in other years
- § Among Latinos under age 25, interest in the election receives a mean of 9.4, and 45% are more enthusiastic about voting this year compared to past elections.

¹ *The National Council of La Raza* released results from its election-eve survey among likely Latino/a voters in the 23 states with the highest density of Latino/as. The survey covered Latinos' interest in the election, voting intention, and attitudes toward important issues. The survey was conducted between November 2nd and 6th, 2006. The survey has a base of 800 likely voters with a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage point. *Lake Research Partners* and *Public Opinion Strategies* designed the survey which was called with professional and trained interviewers.

Education, the economy and jobs, the war in Iraq, and immigration dominate the issue agenda for Latinos.

- § A fifth of Latinos (20%) choose education as the issue most important to them in deciding how to vote. Eighteen percent choose the economy and jobs, and 17% choose the war in Iraq, placing these issues in the top tier. Second tier issues include immigration (9%), health care (9%), and social security or retirement (8%). Taxes (5%), moral values (5%), terrorism and national security (4%), and crime and drugs (3%) are lower on the list of priorities.
- § Among younger Latinos, the rank order is similar, but immigration and education are bigger priorities. A quarter of Latinos (25%) under age 25 choose education as the issue most important to them in deciding how to vote. A fifth (19%) choose the economy and jobs, with another fifth (18%) saying the war in Iraq, and 14% choose immigration. Taxes (5%), health care (7%), crime and drugs (3%), moral values (2%), social security and retirement (1%), the budget deficit (1%), and terrorism and national security (2%) are lower on the list of priorities for younger Latinos.
- § Seventy-five percent of all Latinos and 75% of younger Latinos feel that, for them, the definition of moral values is more encompassed by “favoring social policies to help the poor” than by “opposing social policies like legalizing gay marriage (9% overall, 10% among younger Latinos).
- § Latinos tend to trust the Democratic Party more than the Republican Party when it comes to making decisions in the interest of Latinos. While 20% of Latinos trust Republicans more, 60% trust Democrats more (13% trust both or neither).

Immigration is a key issue for Latinos. It has a special place in their vote criterion and leads them to be more likely to vote for Democrats than Republicans. It is a complex issue, and while Latinos believe immigration has been good for our country they worry the tone of the immigration debate this summer hurt the community more than it helped.

- § Over half (51%) of Latino voters say the issue of immigration is important to their vote this year. While only 9% of Latinos cited immigration as their top concern at the beginning of the survey, when asked specifically about the importance of immigration a third of Latinos (32%) say the issue was the most important in deciding their vote and another 19% say it was one of the most important issues (total important = 51%). Among younger Latinos, 30% said it was the most important issue and 21% said it was one of the most important issues (total important = 51%). Almost half of Latinos (47%) say the events of the last year surrounding immigration made them more likely to support Democrats, while 11% say it made them more likely to vote Republican. By a margin of more than three-to-one, younger Latino voters say the events related to immigration in the last year made them more likely to vote Democrat (41%) than Republican (12%)
- § Almost two in three Latinos believe immigration has been a good thing for the country (63%), while only 16% feel it has been a bad thing. By four-to-one, the intensity is on the side of those who strongly feel immigration has been good for the country (43%) as opposed to those who feel strongly that it has been bad (9%). Only 13% of Latinos say they have not thought about it much.
- § While immigration has been good for the country, Latinos feel the tone of the discussion this year has hurt the community (40%) more than it has helped (30%). Younger Latinos are split on the issue, with 39% feeling the discussion has helped and 40% feeling it has hurt their community.

- § More than one in four Latinos (29%) say they (7%), or a family member (10%), or a close friend (11%) participated in this year's rallies or marches. Dramatically, among younger Latino voters just under half (45%) say they or someone close to them participated.

As other public research has demonstrated, Spanish language media is an important source of political information for Latino voters. Half have heard get out the vote messages via Spanish language media, and a quarter say Spanish language media is their main source of information.

- § More than half of Latinos heard ads or programs on Spanish language radio (52%) or television (52%) encouraging them to get involved politically, register to vote, or get out and vote. For younger Latinos Spanish language radio (49%) or television (50%) was also a source of election related information.
- § While English language television (45%) and newspapers or magazines (13%) are major sources of information for most Latinos, Spanish language media plays a strong role. Twenty percent of Latinos utilize Spanish language television, and 5% each utilize Spanish language radio or newspapers and magazines as their main source of political information. Not surprisingly, the reach is slightly lower among younger Latinos – only 14% use any kind of Spanish media as their main source of information.

A significant number of Latinos report being contacted about the election but not by political parties.

- § Most Latinos also say they were contacted this year about elections and voting. Fifty-nine percent received mail, 50% received a phone call, 22% talked to someone in person at their door or at a meeting, and 14% received an email regarding voting and elections. Among younger Latinos, 45% received mail, 41% received a phone call, 21% talked to someone in person, and 12% received email.
- § Still, while most Latinos had been contacted, few recall hearing from a political party. Thirty-eight percent of Latinos say they heard from the Democratic Party and 29% heard from the Republican Party. Among young Latino voters, about the same share heard from Democrats (36%), but far fewer heard from Republicans (19%).

Latino voters indicate they will support Democratic candidates by three to one this year. While most say their vote is in favor of the Democrat rather than in opposition to the Republican, almost twice as many say their vote is an expression of opposition when the President is mentioned, and it is clear that Bush was a factor for voting Democratic in this year's elections.

- § Sixty percent of Latinos indicate they will support the Democratic candidate this election, while 22% will vote Republican, which tracks closely with respondents' party identification (63% Democrat/20% Republican). The vote is roughly the same among younger Latinos (57% Democrat to 20% Republican), also closely matching their party identification (55% Democrat/23% Republican).
- § Among those Latinos who indicate support for the Republican candidate, 66% say their vote is *in favor* of the Republican, and only 18% say their vote is *against* the Democrat.

§ Among Latinos who supported the Democratic candidate, 67% say their vote was in favor of the Democrat, and 21% say it was against the Republican – similar to the pattern among Republican voters. However, in a modified version of the question, Democratic voters were asked if their vote was in favor of the Democrat or against President Bush. Forty-eight percent of Democratic voters said their vote was in favor of the Democrat, but 39% said their vote was against President Bush.

METHODOLOGY

Lake Research Partners and Public Opinion Strategies designed and administered this survey which was conducted by phone using professional interviewers. The survey reached 800 Latino registered and likely voters in the 23 states with the highest Latino population density. These states include: CA, TX, FL, NY, IL, AZ, NJ, NM, CO, GA, NV, NC, WA, MA, VA, PA, CT, MI, OR, MD, IN, OH, and WI (ordered by Latino population density). The survey was conducted November 2nd through the 6th, 2006. In addition, oversamples were conducted among likely Latino voters under age 25 (200 interviews) and Spanish-speaking likely Latino voters (50 interviews), which were then down-weighted to represent their actual proportion among all Latino likely voters. In total, 1,050 Latino voters took part in this survey. Telephone numbers for the survey were drawn from files of registered voters and supplemented by listed samples for the under age 25 population. The data were weighted slightly by age and education in order to ensure that it accurately reflects the demographic configuration of these populations. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 3.2 percentage points.
