



October 2026

Working-Class Hispanic Voters:

The Upward Mobility Ladder is Broken

Affordability pressures remain widespread
as the 2026 midterm elections approach





Hispanics are a driving force of America's prosperity: They contribute [\\$4.4 trillion](#) to the U.S. economy, comprise nearly 20% of the U.S. workforce and are projected to account for [78% of net-new workers this decade](#). Currently, nearly [80% of Latino adults are part of the American working class](#) — a much larger share compared to all U.S. adults (66%) and white adults (61%).

Working-class Latinos are America's teachers, firefighters, retail and hospitality workers, agricultural and construction workers, and healthcare and support workers. They are also a sizeable majority of the Hispanic electorate.

Hispanics accounted for [more than half of the country's growth in eligible voters](#) between 2022 and 2026 and [comprise 16% of voting-age Americans](#). They have a significant presence in [12 of 37 competitive congressional districts](#) that will determine congressional balance of power in the 2026 midterm election.

Hispanic working-class voters not only make up a larger share of the [Latino electorate](#) compared to their white counterparts, they are also younger and their voting patterns have been different than those of white working-class voters.

This memo takes a closer look at the economic experiences and priorities of working-class Hispanic voters, drawing from the UnidosUS survey of the Latino working class, which includes 1,955 Hispanic registered voters. The poll examines voter views on policy solutions and the parties, their likelihood of voting in the midterm elections and experiences with election outreach. Survey topics were informed by the [UnidosUS Economic Prosperity Agenda](#), a framework for understanding and expressing the economic challenges facing working-class Latino families.

Defining economic concerns: high costs and low wages

Hispanic voters have been very consistent in sharing what matters most in the upcoming elections: lower costs and strengthen wages. In several UnidosUS polls of 3,000 Hispanic voters, four of the top five priorities voters want members of Congress to address relate to personal finances and economic well-being: the overall cost of living and inflation (84%), jobs and wages (56%), cost of healthcare (52%) and the cost of housing (48%). (Immigration rounds out the top five priorities.)

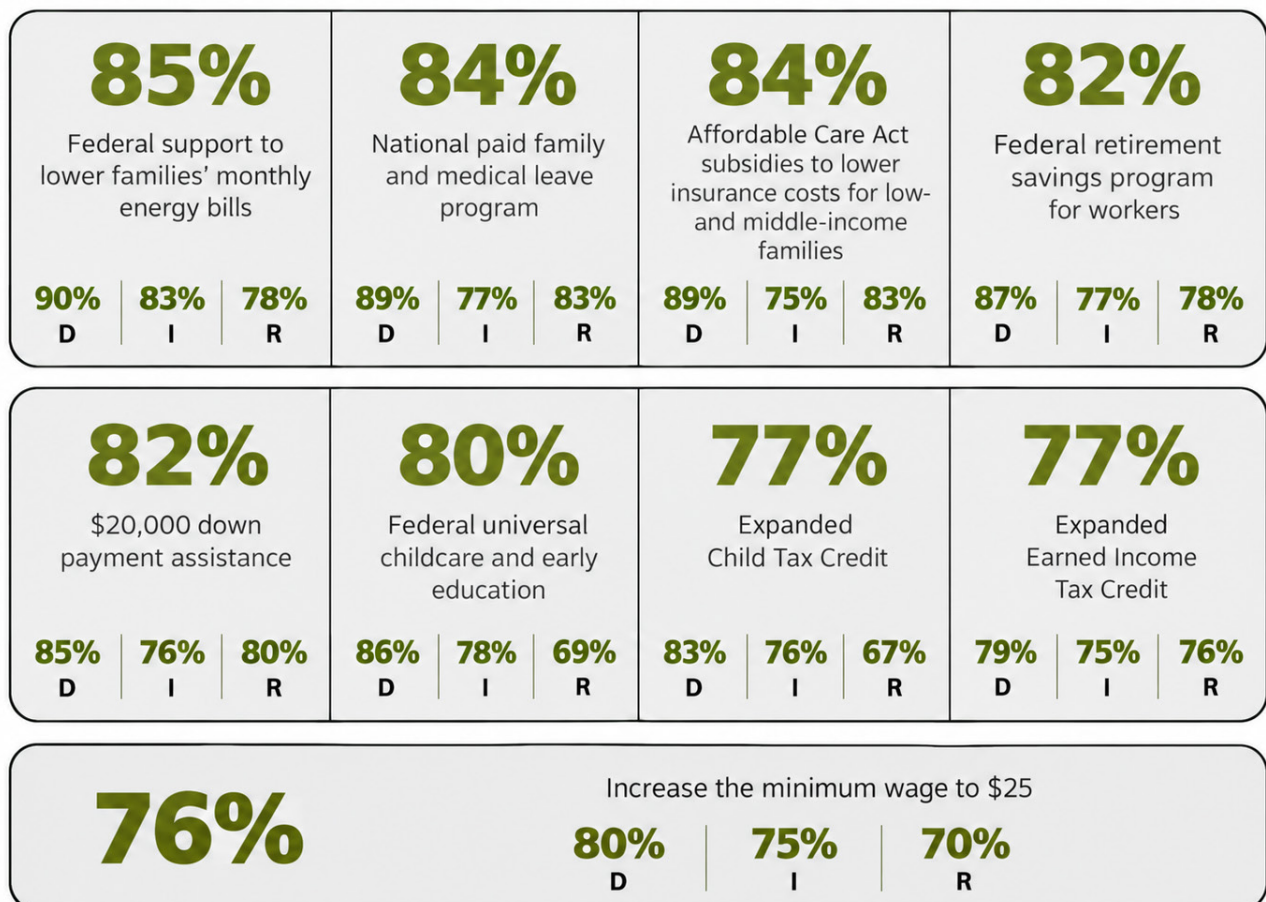
This survey went deeper to better understand how they are navigating these challenges. When asked to identify the top three economic issues they are most worried about at this moment, 84% of Hispanic working-class voters said the cost of living and inflation, followed by jobs and wages (56%), and health care (52%). Forty-eight percent also identified housing.

The financial pressures Hispanic working-class voters are facing are acute:

- 68% report difficulty affording gas and transportation.
- Nearly two-thirds report difficulty affording groceries (63%), utilities (65%), health care (63%).
- More than half (54%) could not cover an unexpected \$1,000 expense without borrowing.
- 42% say they are worse off economically than a year ago, compared with 14% who say they are better off. Among those who are worse off, 76% point to higher prices for everyday goods and services and 49% to higher housing costs.
- 44% bought less food or switched to cheaper groceries.

What policy proposals do they support?

Hispanic working-class voters overwhelmingly support proposals aimed at addressing economic pressures:



D = Democrats · I = Independents · R = Republicans

Voting and political parties

A couple of notable differences between Latino working-class voters and white working-class voters are the share they represent within their respective electorates and their voting patterns.

Hispanic working-class voters account for [79% of the Latino electorate](#), compared to 65% of all U.S. voters and 61% of white voters, making this group a defining force behind overall Latino voter sentiment.

Hispanic working-class voters also differ from white working-class voters politically. Overall, while Democrats have not won a majority of white working-class voters in well over a decade, a majority of Hispanic working-class electoral support has remained on the Democratic side. That said, there is potential for fluidity within this group, as there is among the Latino electorate as a whole, of which [nearly 40% fall in a middle group of potentially swayable voters](#). In terms of party identification, 49% are or lean Democrat, 25% are or lean Republican and 23% are Independent.

With the midterm election a month away, both parties are still underperforming peak support levels achieved in previous elections, when comparing those figures to the 2026 generic ballot. September polls with samples of 1,000 or more Hispanic voters had the generic ballot at 56% supporting Democrats, 29% Republicans and 15% unsure, [nationally](#). In [California and Texas](#), those figures were 61%/21%/15% and 54%/27%/16%, respectively.

And while 67% of Hispanic working-class voters say they are 100% or almost certain they will vote in November, outreach to these voters remains anemic:

- 55% say no political party, campaign or other organization has contacted them about registering or voting in the 2026 election
- Only 23% report receiving contact from Democrats
- Only 15% report receiving contact from Republicans

Even in states with competitive statewide races, the majority of working-class Latino voters have not been contacted by campaigns:

Has anyone from a political party, campaign or any other organization contacted you and asked you to register and/or vote in this election?

Voter outreach

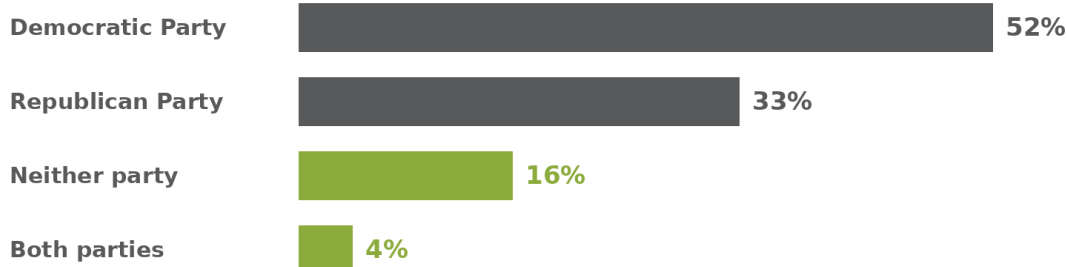
■ No, I have not been contacted ■ Yes (text, phone call, email, in person, other)



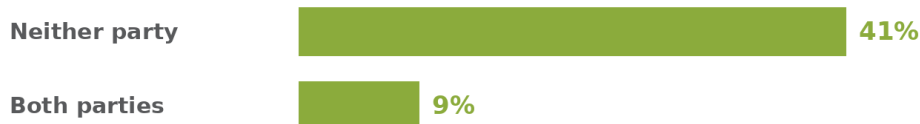
Given the acute economic challenges these voters are navigating, they were asked which political party does more to advance the interests and needs of working people like them. A slight majority (52%) overall said Democrats. But the plurality of independent voters, the most potent factor among Hispanic swayable voters, said neither.

Which party does more for working people?

Hispanic working-class voters



Among Independent Hispanic working-class voters



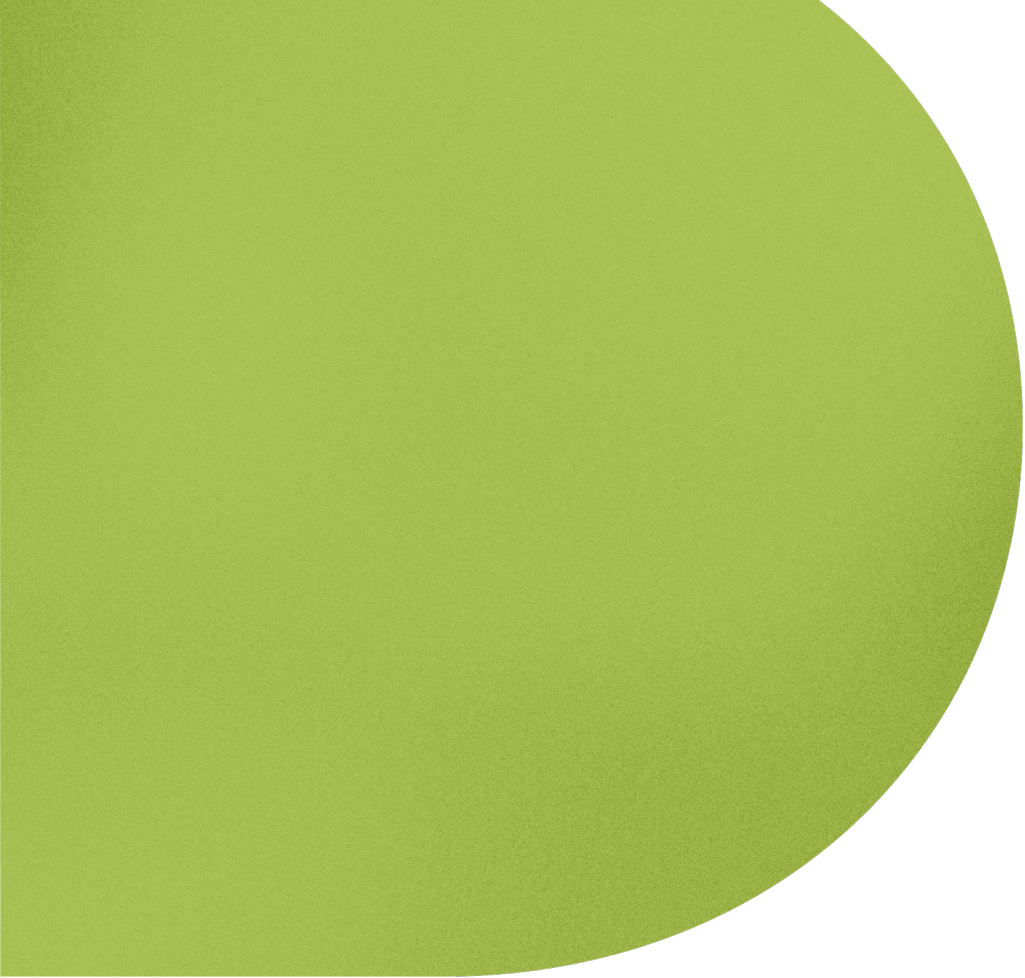
Note: The four percentages in the first panel total 105%; confirm the source figures. The second panel shows only "Neither" and "Both" responses.

Summary

Working-class Hispanic voters feel like they are working harder than ever yet falling further behind because the rise in the cost of living is far outpacing their wages. They overwhelmingly support policy proposals that will help working families get ahead. These are policies where Congress has agency, and candidates who present a vision and plan to move the needle in these areas could find strong reception with these voters.

Issues matter and meaningful outreach is essential. While working-class Hispanics make up nearly 80% of the Latino electorate, outreach levels to this group remain disappointingly low. In addition to the consistent and loud message from these voters to rein in costs and strengthen wages, another clear message the need for outreach. Candidates who want to win their support need to reach out and meaningfully engage these voters, particularly on their vision to address economic stability, to motivate them to go to the polls.

These findings build on the [UnidosUS Economic Prosperity Agenda](#), a framework built on research, polling and engagement with Latino communities across the country. The economic agenda responds to many of the challenges and aspirations identified in this poll by advancing solutions intended to strengthen economic security, mobility and shared prosperity.



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