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**To: Interested Parties**  
**From: Celinda Lake and Joshua Ulibarri**  
**Date: July 31, 2009**  
**Re: Among Latinos, Support to Confirm Sotomayor is High**

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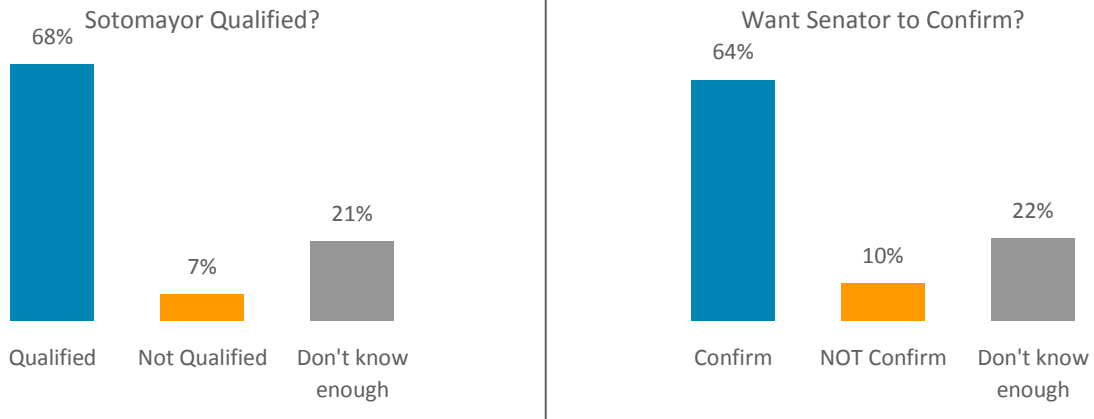
Lake Research Partners, on behalf of the Latino Policy Coalition (LPC), recently concluded another round of survey research among Latino/a registered voters. This was the fifth installment of survey research that began in April 2006. LPC has also funded four rounds of focus groups over the last three years that inform the continuing research. In this case, 1,000 Latino registered voters in 23 states with the highest Latino populations were interviewed from July 23 to 28. The survey focused on the Sotomayor nomination, health care reform, the economy, and attitudes toward the two parties. This memo about Judge Sonia Sotomayor is the first in the series regarding the recent research.

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**The news from this fifth iteration of LPC polling is clear: Latinos believe Sotomayor is qualified, and they want her confirmed, but they are less than happy with the tone of the debate around her nomination. As several Senators prepare to cast their first-ever no votes on a Supreme Court nominee when that nominee just happens to be the first Latina nominated to the Court, they may want to consider the long term consequences. Latinos are the fastest growing demographic group in the country, and they believe that the Supreme Court should look more like America. Their strong support for Sotomayor's confirmation suggests that there may be problems for no-voters among Latino voters in future elections.**

#### **Support to Confirm Sotomayor is High**

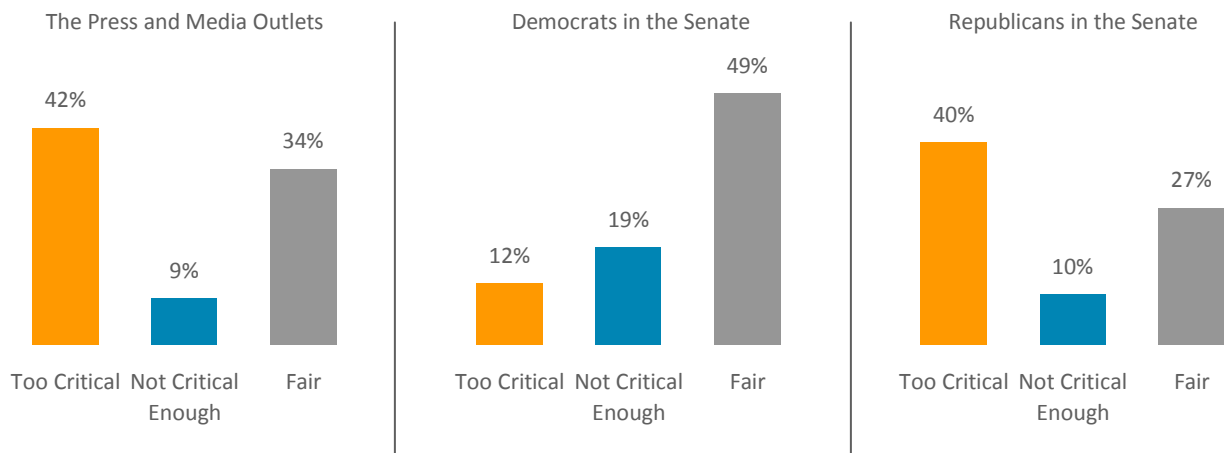
Registered Latino voters believe Federal Appeals Court Judge Sonia Sotomayor is qualified for the Supreme Court, and they want her confirmed. Sixty-eight percent of Latinos think Sotomayor is qualified (only 7% say not qualified) and 64% want their U.S. Senator to vote for her confirmation (only 10% don't want her confirmed). Belief in Sotomayor's qualification extends across partisanship with 74% of Democrats, 64% of independents, and 52% of Republicans believing she is qualified for the court. Support for her confirmation, however, varies across partisanship but even Republican Latinos are still solidly in favor. Seventy-four percent of Democrats and 55% of independents urge their Senator to vote for confirmation, the same is true for only 43% of Latino Republicans (27% don't want her confirmed). Both men (68% qualified, 66% want her confirmed) and women (67% qualified, 62% confirmed) believe Sotomayor is qualified and should be confirmed.



**Treatment of Sotomayor on the Verge of Too Critical, Too Much Focus on Ethnicity**

Though Latino voters express mixed views of whether Sotomayor has been treated too critically, a plurality believes both the press and Republicans in the Senate were too critical. Forty-two percent of Latinos believe the press and media outlets were too critical, while 34% say they were fair (9% say not critical enough). Almost as many (40%) believe Republicans in the Senate were too critical, compared to 27% who think they were fair. Half (49%) think Democrats in the Senate treated Sotomayor fairly (12% too critical). Self-identified independent Latinos (18% of the sample) divide on how Republicans treated Sotomayor (32% too critical, 35% fair); they also divide on how the press treated her (36% too critical, 40% fair). A near majority of Latino Democrats (61% of the sample) feel Republicans and the press were too critical of Sotomayor (48% too critical).

Too Critical, Not Critical Enough, or Fair?



Notably, a majority of Latinos agree with both Democratic Senator Pat Leahy and Republican Senator John Cornyn when they accuse each other of putting too much emphasis on Sotomayor’s race and ethnicity. Half of Latinos (51%) believe there was too much focus on the fact that Sotomayor is a Latina. This is one area, notably, where both Democrats and Republicans agree, with 53% in each case agreeing that too much was made of Sotomayor’s being Latina. This likely means that each side thought the other had too much of race in this debate. Women also tend to think there was too much focus on ethnicity (57% too much focus), while men were less likely to feel that way (45%, still a plurality). This difference may be a combination of considerations of both race and gender, since Latina, as a term, speaks to gender as well.

Gender was also a defining area of the debate, but Latinos feel less polarized on this dynamic. Overall, 35% feel there was too much focus on gender while 37% believe the focus was about right. Women are only slightly more likely to think there was too much focus on the fact that Sotomayor is a women (37% and 33% too much focus, respectively). Sotomayor's "up from the boot straps" personal story that inspired so many was given about the right amount of focus according to the plurality of Latinos (40% right amount, 15% too much focus on her working-class background).

A plurality felt her qualifications to serve on the court and her 17 years of judicial experience were given the right amount of focus (39% and 37% about right, respectively).

Latinos are split on the amount of focus given to Sotomayor's controversial court decisions. Just under a third believe the amount of focus on her decisions was about right (26% too much, 20% not enough), and 34% believe the focus on her affirmative action decisions was also about right (16% too much, 20% not enough).

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#### METHODOLOGY

Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey, which was conducted by phone using professional interviewers. The survey reached 1,000 Latino/a registered voters in the 23 states with the highest Latino population density. A quarter of the interviews were conducted in Spanish. 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. The survey was conducted July 23 through July 28, 2009. Telephone numbers for the survey were drawn from files of registered voters. The data were weighted slightly by age and education. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 3.1 percentage points.

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