



Latino Policy Coalition

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LATINO VOTERS OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT EARNED LEGALIZATION, NEW STUDY FINDS

Study Also Finds Nearly One-Quarter of Registered Latinos Participated or Knew Participants in Rallies, Marches

Sacramento, CA – Eighty-percent of registered Latino voters support an immigration proposal, similar to one recently proposed in the U.S. Senate that would allow immigrants currently in the United States to earn their way to citizenship, according to a recent poll conducted for the Latino Policy Coalition. The extensive survey, conducted by Lake Research Partners in 23 states across the U.S., also found that nearly one-quarter of all Latino registered voters, equal to roughly 2.5 million Latino voters, either participated in or knew someone who participated in the recent rallies and marches.

“This survey underscores incredible consensus within the Latino community for a workable immigration plan,” said Celinda Lake, president of Lake Research Partners, who conducted the survey for the Latino Policy Coalition. “Latino voters are clearly concerned about the immigration issue, and are focused on workable solutions - so much so that they, their families, and their friends have taken to the streets to make their voices heard.”

Support for a guest worker program as well as a path to citizenship is broad and intense. Of the eighty-percent who favor a guest worker program, two-thirds (67%) strongly support such a program. Only 15% oppose a guest worker program.

Specifically, the survey found support for immigrants passing a criminal background check (87%); having a job (86%); learning English (79%); passing a health screen and paying back taxes (77%); and living in the U.S. for at least five years (71%). Overall, 79% of Latino voters found illegal immigration to be a serious problem.

In addition to the immigration legislation findings, the Latino Policy Coalition survey found solid support (48% to 25%) among Latino voters for the marches and protests that recently have been taking place. Indeed nearly one-quarter of Latino voters have either participated in or knew someone who took part in the rallies and marches.

“While some see division on immigration, this survey and others indicate consensus,” said Dr. Fernando Guerra, Director of the Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University. “There is remarkable consensus across the nation, across ethnic groups, and across the ideological spectrum that the solutions to the immigration issue are: strengthening the border, creating a path to citizenship for those who are here, and establish a guest worker program.”

The survey, conducted by Lake Research Partners, surveyed 1,000 Latino adults (800 Latino registered voters) in 23 states with the highest Latino population density. It was conducted April 20-26, 2006 and has a margin of error of +/-3.2 percent.

About the Latino Policy Coalition

The Latino Policy Coalition is a national non-partisan non-profit consortium of the country's leading Latino research organizations and scholars. The LPC analyzes, through nationwide public opinion surveys, policy issues affecting the Latino community. Chaired by former San Francisco City and County Supervisor Jim Gonzalez, the LPC seeks to highlight Latino community views on key national issues; and thus stimulate public policy debate among local, state and national elected officials.

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What Members of the Latino Policy Coalition Are Saying About the Immigration Survey Findings...

"I hope the policy makers in Washington take note of the fact that the Latino respondents in this poll are all U.S. citizens, eligible and planning to vote in the 2006 elections. There is strong opposition among these citizens to the action taken by the US House to reform current immigration law. Latino citizens acknowledge the serious problem of illegal immigration but they are solidly against the punitive and inhumane remedies included in the House bill. An overwhelming majority supports the tough, but more humane and practical, proposals included in the bill proposed by the Senate Judiciary Committee or the Senators' Hegel/Martinez compromise bill."

--- **Dr. Valerie Martinez-Ebers, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX**

"Immigrants are the life blood of the American economy and yesterday's numbers reveal the strong discontent among the growing Latino population."

--- **Dr. Frances Marquez, Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C.**

"This survey blows up the myth that only undocumented persons are marching and protesting, in fact, more than 2.5 million Latino votes are engaged with the immigration reform issue"

--- **Antonio Gonzalez, President, William C. Velasquez Institute, Los Angeles, CA**