



RESURGENT REPUBLIC

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Ed Goetas and Leslie Sanchez
DATE: March 17, 2010
RE: Hispanic Voters Align with Conservative Fiscal and National Security Policies

Despite being more favorable to Democrats than Republicans, Hispanic voters are open to persuasion this November due to concern over current Democrat policies on spending, debt and national security, according to Resurgent Republic's latest national survey among 800 registered likely Hispanic voters conducted March 7-10, 2010.

Signifying a potential shift in the national electorate, Hispanic voters are troubled by the direction of the country and very concerned about the economy. Hispanic voters are responsive to conservative fiscal messages, centered on the reduction of spending and record deficits. On health care reform, they believe President Obama's top priority is increasing coverage while their own priority is lowering costs, a noteworthy disconnect after a year-long debate.

This demographic group is also skeptical about two of President Obama's key national security policies, closing the facility at Guantanamo Bay and putting 9-11 terrorists on trial in New York City instead of a military tribunal.

There are also some notable areas of concern for Republicans in this survey. Hispanic voters are more likely to identify as Democrats, and they have solid favorable views of President Obama and Democrats in Congress. In addition, Hispanic voters are more likely to give President Obama the benefit of the doubt as a majority believes he has met or exceeded their expectations since taking office. On immigration reform, a majority of Hispanic voters favor a comprehensive solution and do not believe Democrats plan to use immigration reform as a political issue.

- 1. Hispanic voters are very concerned about the direction of the country and are very worried about the national economy.** A majority (50 percent) of Latino voters believe that the country is on the wrong track, including 40 percent who "strongly" believe this. The intensity of this opposition is notable, with almost twice as many Latinos "strongly" thinking wrong track as those who think the country is "strongly" headed in the right direction.

They overwhelmingly believe the top problem facing the country is the economy/unemployment/better job. Fully 51 percent of Hispanic voters name this as their top issue of concern. Health care is the only other issue that reaches double digit voter concern, being mentioned by 15 percent of Hispanic voters.

2. **On economic issues, fiscally conservative messages centered on the reduction of spending and record debt resonate strongly with Hispanic voters.** Offered two viewpoints on what should be the higher priority for the federal government – spending more to help the economy recover or spending less to reduce the budget deficit, a majority (54 percent) of Hispanic voters select less spending. An overwhelming majority of Republicans (80 percent) and solid majority of Independents (57 percent) select less spending. Even among Democrats, more spending receives just 49 percent support.

Asked to rate their level of concern about government spending, a majority (56 percent) of Hispanic voters say they are “very concerned” about the current level of government spending and debt and another 31 percent rate themselves as “somewhat concerned.” This anxiety crosses all party lines as a majority of Republicans (83 percent), a majority of Independents (58 percent), and a plurality of Democrats (45 percent) say the current government spending and debt levels make them “very concerned.”

Hispanic voters were offered two choices about stimulus spending:

Congressman A says the stimulus spending is working, and should continue to be spent as originally authorized, OR

Congressman B says the stimulus spending is not working, and unspent funds should be returned to reduce the deficit

By a 51 to 43 percent, Hispanic voters agree with Congressman B that stimulus spending is not working, including 34 percent who “strongly” agree. Seventy-seven percent of Republicans and 60 percent of Independents agree that stimulus spending is not working, while 57 percent of Democrats believe it is working.

On the issue of the federal debt, the two choices were:

Congressman A says the nation’s high level of debt is a temporary response to an economic crisis, and can only be addressed after the economy turns around, OR

Congressman B says the nation’s high level of debt is a serious burden that will limit economic growth in this country for our children and grandchildren, and must be addressed now.

A strong majority (61 percent) of Hispanic voters select that the debt is a serious burden, including 45 percent who “strongly” believe this. The argument made by Congressman B wins majority support among all partisan groups, carrying 79 percent of Republicans, 64 percent of Independents, 53 percent of Democrats.

3. **A majority of Hispanic voters have health insurance and believe that Obama does not share their top priority for health care reform.** Overall, 65 percent of Hispanics report having health insurance coverage for all members of their family and another 20 percent report that some members of their family have health insurance coverage.

Asked their main priority when it comes to reforming health care, a plurality (46 percent) of Hispanic voters say it is to “lower the cost of health care for all Americans.” By party, a majority (59 percent) of Republicans and a plurality (49 percent) of Independents select lower cost.

However, a strong majority (58 percent) of Hispanic voters believe that the top priority for Obama is universal coverage. This means that overall, fully 57% of Hispanic voters believe that Obama is pursuing a priority on health care reform that is different from their own.

Providing federal funding for abortion has become an integral part of the health care debate. A majority (55 percent) of Hispanics identify themselves as pro-life, including 48 percent of Hispanic voters who hold this position “strongly.” Government funding for abortions will be a significant concern to many of these voters.

4. **Hispanic voters are supportive of conservative viewpoints on national security.** Asked to assess the impact of Obama’s national security and foreign relations policies on the nation’s safety, 37 percent believe his policies have had no effect, 36 percent believe his policies have made the nation safer, and 22 percent believe the nation is less safe. Hispanic voters did express disagreement with two of President Obama’s central tenets on national security.

On the issue of holding prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Hispanic voters were given these two options:

Congressman A says holding prisoners at Guantanamo Bay weakens America’s moral authority and isn’t in keeping with our values, OR

Congressman B says holding prisoners at Guantanamo Bay helps protect America by keeping terrorists in custody who would kill Americans overseas.

Hispanic voters prefer Congressman B’s more conservative argument, 62 to 32 percent. Congressman B also garnered majority support among all three partisan groups, earning 83 percent of Republicans, 64 percent of Independents, and 54 percent of Democrats.

On the issue of holding terrorism trials in New York City, Hispanic voters were asked to choose between the following statements:

Congressman A says putting suspected 9-11 terrorists on trial in New York City instead of a military tribunal is a good idea, because it shows that America provides the same rights to everyone, including those suspected of the worst crimes, and a visible, open trial will prove to the world any convictions are deserved, OR

Congressman B says putting suspected 9-11 terrorists on trial in New York City instead of a military tribunal is a bad idea, because it elevates New York City as a terrorism target, will expose confidential intelligence-gathering methods, and gives terrorists captured on the battlefield the same rights as American citizens.

Again, Hispanic voters agree with Congressman B’s more conservative policy and think putting 9-11 terrorists on trial in New York City is a bad idea, 54 to 39 percent overall, with support of 74 percent of Republicans and 59 percent of Independents. Democrats favor the more liberal argument 48 to 44 percent.

5. **Hispanic voters are open to receiving communication from elected officials in a variety of ways.** A majority (55 percent) of Hispanics report that they use the Internet to get their news either almost every day (38 percent) or at least once a week (17 percent). Also these voters rate a variety of contact methods as “extremely” or “very” important.

Activity	% Extremely Important	% Very Important
Work with leaders in the Hispanic community on key legislation	28%	38%
Hold town hall discussions in your neighborhood	28%	33%
Receive the support of national Hispanic leaders	24%	37%
Deliver remarks in Spanish on Spanish language television, radio, and on his website	21%	27%

6. **A majority of Hispanic voters identify as Democrats and hold favorable images of both President Obama and Democrats in Congress.** Fifty-one percent of Hispanic voters identify as Democrats, with 35 percent considered strong Democrats. On an assessment of how President Obama has done as President, 55 percent say Obama’s performance has been “about the same” as their expectations. On a name identification series, Barack Obama (69 percent favorable) and the Democrats in Congress (55 percent favorable) both enjoy a majority favorable rating. Among the other figures tested, Nancy Pelosi has a plurality favorable rating (43 percent favorable) while Harry Reid has a plurality unfavorable rating (27 percent unfavorable). The Republicans in Congress have a

majority unfavorable rating (51 percent unfavorable) with three times as many Hispanic voters holding a “very” unfavorable view (30 percent) compared to “very” favorable view (10 percent). Among Independents, however, the favorability rating for Republicans in Congress is split, 41 to 42 percent.

7. **Hispanic voters favor a comprehensive, pragmatic approach to immigration and do not believe that the Democrats are using immigration reform as a political issue.** Hispanic voters are offered these two choices regarding priorities for immigration reform:

Congressman A says immigration reform should focus on several items including securing the border, and reforming immigration quotas to meet labor demand, OR

Congressman B says a physical barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border should be completed before any other immigration reforms are considered.

Two-thirds (66 percent) of Hispanic voters select focusing on several items, including 40 percent who “strongly” select this option. A majority of all three partisan groups support Congressman A, 56 percent of Republicans, 62 percent of Independents and 73 percent of Democrats.

The two choices offered on the issue of temporary worker programs are:

Congressman A says we should consider reforms to temporary worker programs, based on the needs of those businesses that use these programs, OR

Congressman B says all temporary worker programs should be suspended. There are already too many Americans looking for work.

Sixty-one percent (61 percent) of Hispanic voters select reforming temporary worker programs, including 36 percent who “strongly” hold this view.

On the issue of immigration quotas, the two options offered are:

Congressman A says our immigration system needs to have the flexibility to adjust immigration quotas to best serve the needs of the country, OR

Congressman B says no change in the current immigration quotas is needed.

Fully 69 percent of Hispanic voters agree that the immigration system needs flexibility to adjust quotas, including 63 percent of Republicans, 66 percent of Independents, and 75 percent of Democrats.

Regarding a path to citizenship for illegal immigrations, the choices offered are:

Congressman A says illegal immigrants who have no criminal background and meet strict guidelines like registration, paying a fine, and learning English should be allowed to earn citizenship over the course of several years, OR

Congressman B says immigration reform should not include a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants. There should be no reward for illegal behavior.

Seventy percent (70 percent) of the Hispanic electorate supports illegal immigrants being allowed to earn a path to citizenship, including 53 percent who “strongly” support this argument. A majority of all three partisan groups support Congressman A, 62 percent of Republicans, 62 percent of Independents, and 77 percent of Democrats.

The options offered regarding timing for immigration reform are:

Congressman A says now is a good time to pass immigration reform because the weak economy is not driving so many illegal immigrants to our country and many have actually left, OR

Congressman B says now is not the time to pass immigration reform legislation, when our economy is doing poorly and so many Americans are out of work.

By 56 to 37 percent, Hispanic voters agree with Congressman A that now is a good time for immigration reform, including 50 percent of Republicans, 52 percent of Independents, and 61 percent of Democrats.

On the issue of dealing with illegal immigrants currently here, the options given are:

Congressman A says immigration reform should focus on finding a humane approach to dealing with the 12 million immigrants living in the United States so that they can be brought out of the shadows and live without fear of mistreatment, OR

Congressman B says immigration reform will cause the United States to be overrun by illegal immigrants, overwhelming schools, hospitals, roads, and jails.

Seven-in-ten (69 percent) Hispanic voters believe that reform should focus on a humane approach for dealing with the 12 million illegal immigrants, including 52 percent who

“strongly” support this option. Among the partisan groups, 53 percent of Republicans, 63 percent of Independents, and 79 percent of Democrats support Congressman A.

Despite these pragmatic sentiments about immigration reform, 55 percent of Hispanic voters say illegal immigrants should not receive medical and health benefits from the government. Fully 76 percent of Republicans and 58 percent of Independents agree, while a plurality of Democrats (49 percent) believe illegal immigrants should receive these benefits.

Despite this enthusiasm, Hispanic voters are closely divided (47 to 47 percent) when asked if President Obama has broken his promise to pass immigration reform and when asked if Obama is delaying immigration reform to keep other Democratic interest groups happy (46 percent agree to 48 percent disagree). In addition, a majority of Hispanic voters (57 percent) disagree with the assertion that Democrats in Congress and President Obama plan to use immigration reform only as a political issue and never intend to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

The following messages will be well received by Hispanic voters:

1. Congress’ top priority should be to focus on turning the economy around and creating new and better jobs. More federal spending increases the deficit and is not a jobs plan.
2. The reckless spending and debt of the Democrat-controlled Congress is an immediate threat to our children and grandchildren and must be addressed now.
3. President Obama’s top priority for health care reform should be to lower the cost of health care, not increase coverage.
4. Our national security policies should keep terrorists who want to kill Americans in custody at Guantanamo Bay.
5. 9-11 terrorists should be denied the same rights as American citizens and brought to justice in a military tribunal.

Methodology

All respondents interviewed in this study were part of a fully representative sample of N=800 registered “likely” Hispanic voters nationwide. Responses to this survey were gathered March 7-10, 2010. The confidence interval associated with a sample of this type is $\pm 3.5\%$ in 19 of 20 cases.