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National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey
Latino Opinion Leaders on Public Policy Issues

The NiLP Latino Policy & Politics Report (April 16, 2015)
This is part 2 of a 5-part series on the results of this survey

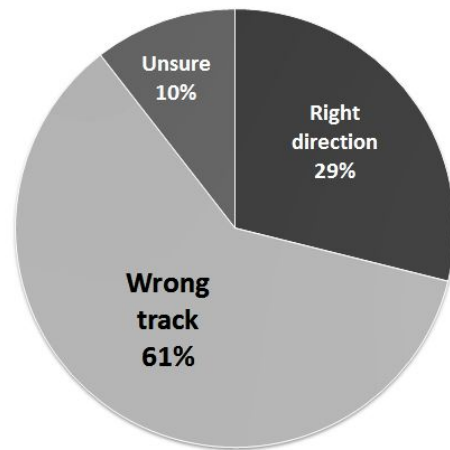
Latino opinion leaders were asked a series of questions relating to key public policy issues facing the United States. Overall, they feel that things for Latinos in the United States have pretty seriously gone on the wrong track. The majority (61 percent) feel this way, compared to only 29 percent who feel Latinos are on the right track, with 10 percent being unsure.

These findings are from the results of the National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey conducted by the National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP) over the Internet during the period April 6-13, 2015. It is a survey of 345 of the subscribers to *The NiLP Latino Policy & Politics Report*. The responses to this poll were all anonymous.

Top Problems. Asked to identify the top problems facing the United States in general versus the Latino community, in particular, the Latino opinion leaders find similarities with some differences. Although the majority see economic issues in general as most important (jobs and income inequality), for the Latino community they thought the most important problem was income inequality while for the country in general it was the economy and jobs.

Other top problems facing the Latino community more so than the country, in general, according to these leaders, are immigration/undocumented immigrants and education. They identified for the country in general specifically political problems, more so than for Latinos, of partisan politics and the role of the Congress.

Do you feel things for Latinos in this country are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?



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What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?		
	In General	For Latino Community
The economy, jobs	27.2	28.9
Income gap/disparity	32.1	24.1
Immigration/undocumented immigrants	2.4	15.1
Education, school loans	6.1	12.0
Racial, ethnic discrimination	4.0	7.5
The Congress	8.3	3.9
Partisan politics	11.0	2.7
Health care, health insurance	1.8	1.8
Barack Obama/The president	3.4	1.5
Housing	0.3	1.2
Islamic extremists, Al Qaeda, ISIS	2.1	0.3
Terrorism in general	0.9	0.3
Unsure	0.3	0.6

Source: NILP National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - April 6-13, 2015

Immigration. Our past surveys have documented the large support by Latino opinion leaders for a more humanitarian form of comprehensive immigration reform, in the current survey we asked them to assess President Obama 's executive action on immigration. A large majority (58 percent) feel it did not go far enough, compared to only 10 percent who believe it has gone too far and 26 percent who feel it is about right. There is a sharp partisan division on this question, with 64 percent of Democrats feeling that the President's action on immigration do not go far enough, compared to 70 percent of Republicans who feel they have gone too far. The majority (55 percent) of independents agree with the Democrats on this issue.

Overall, would you say that President Obama's executive action on immigration went too far, did not go far enough, or is it about right?				
	With which political party are you currently registered or affiliated?			
	Democratic	Republican	Independent (no party affiliation)	Total
Too far	2.7%	69.7%	5.8%	10.1%
Not far enough	63.5%	18.2%	55.1%	58.6%
About right	29.7%	6.1%	30.4%	26.3%
Unsure	4.1%	6.1%	8.7%	5.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: NILP National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - April 6-13, 2015

Net Neutrality. The recent passage of a significant "net neutrality" ruling by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) extending federal regulation over the Internet has wide support but has been controversial within Latino civil rights circles. The Latino opinion leaders were asked if they support this ruling. A large majority (62 percent) indicate they support this "net neutrality" ruling. Support was especially strong among Democrats (67 percent) and independents (71 percent), but was opposed by a large majority of the Republicans (61 percent).

The U.S. government recently decided to regulate the Internet, supporting the approach known as "net neutrality." With this ruling, the Federal Communications Commission will regulate the Internet like it does radio and television. What is your opinion?

	Democratic	Republican	Independent (no party affiliation)	Total
I support this "net neutrality" ruling	66.7%	15.2%	71.4%	62.2%
I do not support this "net neutrality" ruling	11.4%	60.6%	14.3%	17.4%
I do not know enough about "net neutrality"	15.1%	18.2%	12.9%	14.7%
Unsure	6.8%	6.1%	1.4%	5.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: NILP National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - April 6-13, 2015

Voting Rights. There was almost unanimous agreement by 91 percent of the Latino opinion leaders that the federal Voting Rights Act was still necessary to protect the ability of Latinos and other protected classes to vote. The exception was among the Republicans who were divided. With 50 percent feeling that the Voting Rights Act is no longer necessary, compared to 96 percent of both Democrats and independents who felt it was still necessary.

As you may know, the Voting Rights Act was passed in the 1960s to prevent state and local governments from using rules and procedures that prevented many blacks and Latinos from voting. Do you think the Voting Rights Act is necessary today to make sure that Latinos are allowed to vote, or do you think the Voting Rights Act is no longer necessary?

	Democratic	Republican	Independent (no party affiliation)	Total
It is still necessary	95.9%	43.8%	95.7%	90.5%
It is no longer necessary	3.2%	50.0%	2.9%	7.7%
Unsure	.9%	6.3%	1.4%	1.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: NILP National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - April 6-13, 2015

Labor Unions. The Latino opinion leaders were asked how much influence they felt that labor unions needed to have today. The majority (59 percent) feel that unions should have more influence (as do 65 percent of Democrats and 56 percent of independents). An even larger percentage of Republicans (70 percent) feel that unions should less influence.

Would you, personally, like to see labor unions in the United States have more influence than they have today, the same amount as today, or less influence than they have today?

	Democratic	Republican	Independent (no party affiliation)	Total
More influence	65.0%	12.1%	55.7%	59.1%
Same amount	21.4%	15.2%	18.6%	19.4%
Less influence	9.5%	69.7%	15.7%	16.5%
Unsure	4.1%	3.0%	10.0%	5.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: NILP National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - April 6-13, 2015

Minimum Wage. With past surveys indicating that Latinos strongly support raising the minimum wage, the Latino opinion leaders were asked whether they find the finding by the Congressional Budget Office that raising wages will result in job losses for the

country. While most of those having an opinion on this trade-off felt that it was acceptable for their support of a minimum wage increase, the most interesting result was the majority who rejected the Congressional Budget Office's findings. A majority (56 percent) of the Democrats rejected the CBO findings, along with 33 percent of the Republicans and 41 percent of the independents. On the other hand, among the Republican, 46 percent find the trade-off between minimum wage increase and job loss unacceptable. The minimal influence that an official government report has in the opinion of these Latino leaders is striking.

A recent report by the Congressional Budget Office says that raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 over the next three years would increase the incomes of 16.5 million Americans while eliminating 500,000 jobs. Does that tradeoff seem acceptable or unacceptable?

	Democratic	Republican	Independent (no party affiliation)	Total
Acceptable	31.8%	12.1%	33.3%	30.1%
Unacceptable	10.5%	45.5%	17.4%	14.7%
I reject their conclusion	55.9%	33.3%	40.6%	51.3%
Unsure	1.8%	9.1%	8.7%	3.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: NILP National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - April 6-13, 2015

Global Warming. To get a sense of their support or opposition of proponents of the problem of global warming, the Latino opinion leaders were asked if they felt claims about it in the news were accurate. A large majority (87 percent) feel that these claims have been either under-estimated or generally correct. However, only 36 percent of the Republicans agreed, with 58 percent feeling it is being exaggerated.

Thinking about what is said in the news, in your view is the seriousness of global warming generally exaggerated, generally correct, or is it generally underestimated?

	Democratic	Republican	Independent (no party affiliation)	Total
Generally exaggerated	5.0%	57.6%	5.7%	10.0%
Generally correct	37.3%	18.2%	41.4%	36.8%
Generally under-estimated	56.4%	18.2%	45.7%	50.3%
Total	1.4%	6.1%	7.1%	2.9%

Source: NILP National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - April 6-13, 2015

Islamic Religion. A major debate is underway about the nature of the Islamic religion's role in terrorist violence. The Latino opinion leaders were as asked if they felt that the Islamic religion is more likely than others to encourage violence among its believers. The largest percentage (42 percent) feel that it does not, compared to 24 percent who feel that it does encourage violence. While pluralities of both Democrats and independents feel it does not promote violence, a large majority (70 percent) of Republicans feel that it does.

Which statement is closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right? The Islamic religion is more likely than others to encourage violence among its believers. OR, The Islamic religion does not encourage violence more than others.

	Democratic	Republican	Independent (no party affiliation)	Total
Does not encourage violence more than	42.9%	18.2%	47.1%	42.2%
More likely to encourage violence	16.4%	69.7%	27.1%	23.9%
Both	10.5%	6.1%	2.9%	8.0%
Neither	20.5%	0.0%	14.3%	16.8%
Unsure	9.6%	6.1%	8.6%	9.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: NILP National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - April 6-13, 2015

Discussion

This review of the views of Latino opinion leaders on key public policy issues begins with a pessimistic note with a strong feeling that things for Latinos have gone seriously off the wrong track. The key issues identified by these leaders were economic,

There was, however, some difference in the identification of top problem between those for the population in general and those specifically facing the Latino community. While those facing Latinos included immigration and education, it was interesting that they view explicitly political issues --- partisanship[and the Congress --- to more general problems.

In the specific policy areas the Latino opinion leaders were asked to assess, the key role played by partisanship is striking. In this clear division between Republicans and Democrats, those characterizing themselves as independents generally sided with the Democrats. This was the case even with issues such as immigration and voting rights that many views as "naturally" Latino issues.

The inability of Latino racial-ethnic group consciousness to override partisanship raises interesting questions about assumptions of a natural Latino voting bloc. Although the vast majority of the Latino opinion leaders are Democrats, and similarly-issue oriented independents, the clearly strong Republican counter-current on public policy opinion warrants close watching given increased resources going to conservative organizing among Latino voters.

Future reports on the results of this survey will examine the view of the Latino opinion leaders on other issues areas. These will include those related to race, the criminal justice system, and U.S.-Latino American relations. Also to be covered in future reports are their views on President Obama and of the state of Latino political leadership.

Methodology

This is based on respondents from the influential online national information network of the National Institute for Latino Policy that represents a broad cross-section of Latino opinion leaders throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. These are made up of elected officials, government officials, heads of community-based organizations and national advocacy groups, religious leaders, business leaders, academics and others. Through our National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey, we poll this group from time to time on important issues facing the Latino community given this stratum's important role in Latino agenda-setting and framing.

While the polling that is being conducted on Latino issues by the media and polling organizations is of the broader community, this more select group of opinion leaders has a unique place from which to view these questions within our community. While not a scientifically generated sample of Latino elites, we expect this survey will result in useful insights on the main issues facing the Latino community in New York City today. While the findings of this survey are not generalizable to the community as a whole, they represent the views of an influential set of opinion leaders within this community who help set the framework for its issues and priorities. These findings should be seen more as a heuristic device as one might take the results of a focus group.

***The NiLP Latino Policy & Politics Report** is an online information service provided by the National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP), edited by Angelo Falcón. For further information, visit www.latinopolicy.org or contact editor@latinopolicy.org.*