



## WITH ELECTION LOOMING, THREE POLLS CONFIRM IMMIGRATION TOPS LATINO VOTER CONCERNS

Three recent polls of Latino voters show how the current immigration debate—including the national attention to Arizona’s anti-immigrant law—has dramatically influenced Latino voters’ view of political candidates, as well as their propensity to vote in November.

The polls, conducted by [LatinoMetrics](#) for the Hispanic Federation and League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC); [Dr. Ricardo Ramirez](#) of the University of Southern California for the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Education Fund (NALEO); and the [National Opinion Research Center \(NORC\)](#) at the University of Chicago for Associated Press-Univision, find that the immigration debate and the controversial Arizona law are having a mobilizing effect on Latino voters. These polls provide further proof that railing against undocumented immigrants has a profound negative impact on the way legal, voting American citizens of Latino heritage view the two parties.

The story of the November 2010 election is still to be written, and there are tremendous cross-currents at play that will impact the races. While the lack of action on comprehensive immigration reform could contribute to Latino voter apathy this cycle, the polls make it clear that the combination of national attention to Arizona’s anti-immigration law and the way many Republicans have wholeheartedly embraced an anti-immigrant agenda could energize Latinos to remain active this year.

- **Immigration Now Top Concern for Latinos:** The LatinoMetrics poll on behalf of the Hispanic Federation and LULAC found that, “since the end of 2009, immigration has catapulted to the top issue of personal concern among 1 in 4 Latinos—tied with jobs & the economy.” The poll by Dr. Ramirez for NALEO Education Fund found similar results, with immigration being the number one response to the question, “what general issues would be most important to you in deciding whom to vote for?” In previous polls, immigration had [ranked below](#) education and the economy as the community's most pressing concern.
- **Latino Feel Under Siege Because of Immigration Debate:** When asked, “What do you think is the real issue at the heart of the Immigration Reform debate?” and recent measures to crack down on illegal immigration in the Latino Metrics poll, the most popular reason respondents gave was, “racism and prejudice against Latinos.” In the poll by Dr. Ramirez, 89% of respondents said Latinos were facing more challenges than other groups in the U.S. [According](#) to Arturo Vargas, NALEO’s Executive Director, “Latinos are feeling less optimistic and more under siege.”

- **Immigration – and Arizona’s SB1070 – are Driving Voting Energies and Preferences:** LatinoMetrics found that 8 in 10 Latinos disapprove of SB 1070, 7 in 10 disapprove of the law strongly; and only 13% approve of it. While Dr. Ramirez’s poll didn’t ask specifically about SB1070, it found that 57% of Latinos in California, Colorado, Florida, and Texas said that “the current immigration debate,” presumably including the controversy over the Arizona law, made them more likely to vote this November.
- **Latinos Are Getting Motivated to Vote:** LatinoMetrics found that 6 in 10 respondents are registered to vote while 24% of those who aren’t currently registered were intending to do so before the November 2010 elections. In total, 8 in 10 of those registered or planning to register intend to vote this year. Dr. Ramirez’s poll found that 70% of Latino voters were likely to vote and an additional 8% said it was possible.
- **Latino Voters Will Punish Republicans Who Oppose Immigration Reform:** When LatinoMetrics asked, “With which political party do you most closely identify?” only 13% said Republican. The same poll also asked, “How do you think the immigration issue would impact how you feel about politicians and the parties they represent?” Sixty-eight percent said they would support candidates who had favor immigration reform, while only 19% said they would be willing to support a candidate who opposed immigration reform. Similarly, 54% of Latino voters in Dr. Ramirez’s poll said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate or party espousing an immigration position they disagreed with, even if they agreed with most of that candidate or party’s positions on other issues. The same poll also asked a generic ballot question about party preferences for House races this November and found that that 60% of respondents favored Democrats and only 21% favored Republicans.
- **Latino Voters Want Democrats to Deliver:** The NORC poll found that, by over a 3:1 margin, Latinos favor Democrats over Republicans. Similarly, when LatinoMetrics asked, “With which political party do you most closely identify?” 54% chose the Democratic Party. However, disillusionment with the Congress’ handling of immigration could impact turnout in November. LatinoMetrics found that if immigration reform legislation does not pass, over half of the 84% of Latino voters who support it said they would consider voting for different candidates or parties. Additionally, 27% of those supporting immigration reform said that they would abstain from voting this November if reform does not pass.
- **Lack of Action on Immigration Hurting President Obama:** Respondents to the NORC poll gave President Obama a 57% approval rating. However, only 43% said he is "adequately addressing their needs," while 32% said Obama was doing "neither a good job nor a poor job" and an additional 21% said he was doing a poor job. While President Obama remains popular with Latino voters, they are less positive about his handling of issues specific to them and their families – issues like immigration. Notably, in the NORC poll, Spanish-dominant voters gave Obama lower marks than English-dominant Latinos, which is unsurprising due to these voters' personal connection to the immigration debate and the lack of progress on the issue to date.

- **Foreign-Born Latino Voters are the Major Swing Bloc Who Care Most About Immigration:**  
Naturalized citizens are a key sub-group of the Latino vote, whose engagement and preferences may help tip the scales one way or the other. These voters feel more of a personal connection to the immigration debate, and were the crucial swing bloc that helped George W. Bush in 2004 and Barack Obama in 2008. Currently, these voters are 12 percentage points less likely to turn out for the 2010 elections than U.S. born Latinos, according to the poll from Dr. Ramirez. However, the same poll also found that the immigration debate was causing this voting group to engage more politically. While 52% of U.S. born Latinos said that the immigration debate is making them more likely to vote in November (including 20% who said it made them “certain” to vote), 61% of foreign-born Latino voters said the same, including 25% who said “certain.” Foreign-born Latino voters also feel more persecuted and under siege than U.S. born Latinos – in Dr. Ramirez’s polling, by a 20 percentage point margin, naturalized citizen voters were more likely to say that Latinos “are facing a lot more challenges” than U.S. born voters.

## Full Polling Results

- **Polling by LatinoMetrics**, co-sponsored by the Hispanic Federation and League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), May 26th to June 8th, 2010, of 504 Latino voters nationwide:  
<http://lulac.org/assets/pdfs/HF-LatinoMetrics-Immigration-BriefStudy.pdf>
- **Polling by Dr. Ricardo Ramirez** of the University of Southern California for the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Education Fund (NALEO), June 14<sup>th</sup> to June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, of 1,600 Latino voters in CA, CO, FL, and TX (400 in each state):  
<http://www.naleo.org/downloads/Latino%20Vote%20in%202010%207-20-10.pdf>
- **Polling by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC)** of the University of Chicago for AP/Univision, March 11<sup>th</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, of 1,521 Latinos nationwide:  
[http://surveys.ap.org/data%5CNORC%5CAP-Univision%20Topline\\_posting.pdf](http://surveys.ap.org/data%5CNORC%5CAP-Univision%20Topline_posting.pdf)