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FAU National Index Shows Hispanics Souring on Direction of U.S. Economy as Approval for Trump Drops to 31 Percent

BOCA RATON, Fla. (October 11, 2017) – Hispanics in the U.S. are souring on the direction of the economy and showing growing dissatisfaction with U.S. President Donald Trump, according to a new national consumer sentiment index conducted by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative ([FAU BEPI](#)) in the College of Business.

The Hispanic Consumer Sentiment Index (CSI), taken from July through September, stands at 92, down nearly three points from the second quarter of 2017, when FAU conducted its last quarterly survey of Hispanic consumers nationally. Only 23 percent of Hispanics said the economy was getting better, while the number of respondents who said things were getting worse continued to climb for the third straight quarter – from 16 percent in the first quarter to 22 percent in the second and 29 percent in the third.

Hispanics are still optimistic about their personal finances, however, with 65 percent saying they are better off than they were a year ago and 74 percent saying they will be better off over the next year.

When asked about buying big-ticket items, Hispanics were less optimistic than previous quarter with one notable exception – the purchase of a home. Overall, the percentage of Hispanics who thought it was a good time to buy a big-ticket item for their home fell three points to 61 percent. Only 53 percent thought it was a good time to buy a car, which is down 6 percent from the second quarter. However, perhaps in response to the expectations of high interest rates in the future – 50 percent of respondents expect interest rates to rise – nearly six in 10 Hispanics (58 percent) said it's a good time to buy a house, up seven points from the previous quarter.

Overall, 66 percent of Hispanics think the cost of living has increased, up 10 points from last quarter. In addition, a majority of Hispanics (54 percent) continue to expect the price of gas to go up, while 21 percent think it will go down.

President Trump’s approval rating among Hispanics fell for the third straight quarter – from 39 percent in the first quarter to 33 percent in the second and 31 percent in the third. Of those surveyed, 16 percent identified themselves as Republicans, 52 percent Democrats, 19 percent Independents and 13 percent were not registered.

“Although Hispanics are not very optimistic about the direction of the economy, most are optimistic about their personal finances,” said Monica Escaleras, Ph.D., director of FAU BEPI. “That’s good news for retailers now that the holiday season is approaching.”

The survey was conducted nationally July 1-Sept. 30. The random polling sample consisted of 1,000 Hispanics, 18 years of age and older, with a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percent. The survey was administered using both landlines via IVR data collection (14 percent) and online data collection (86 percent) using [Survey Sampling International](#). Responses for the entire sample were weighted to reflect the national distribution of the Hispanic population by region, education, gender, income and age according to latest American Community Survey data.

For more information, polling results and full cross-tabulations, visit the [BEPI](#) website or contact Monica Escaleras, Ph.D. at 561-297-1312 or BEPI@fau.edu.

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About FAU BEPI:

The Florida Atlantic University Business and Economic Polling Initiative conducts surveys on business, economic, political and social issues with a focus on Hispanic attitudes and opinions at regional, state and national levels via planned monthly national surveys. The initiative subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research and is a resource for public and private organizations, academic research and media outlets. In addition, the initiative is designed to contribute to the educational mission of the University by providing students with valuable opportunities to enhance their educational experience by designing and carrying out public opinion research.

About Florida Atlantic University

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU’s world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU’s existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.