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Hispanics in the U.S. Optimistic about their Personal Finances *President Trump's Job Approval at 37 Percent Among Hispanics*

BOCA RATON, Fla. (April 12, 2018) – Hispanics in the U.S. are more optimistic about their financial situation and their economic conditions have generally improved in the first three months of 2018, according to a new national consumer sentiment index conducted by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative (FAU BEPI) in FAU's College of Business.

The Hispanic Consumer Sentiment Index (HCSI), taken from January through March 2018, stands at 98.9, up 5.4 points from the fourth quarter of 2017, and the highest score since the index went to a quarterly count in 2016. The index is 2.5 points below the 101.4 score for the overall U.S. population for December, as published by the University of Michigan.

Hispanics are more optimistic about their personal finances in the first quarter of 2018 compared to the last quarter of 2017. Overall, 69 percent of Hispanics indicate that they are financially better off today than a year ago, up 4 points from the last quarter. In addition, 78 percent of Hispanics are optimistic about their financial future, up 7 points from the previous quarter. Finally, 69 percent of Hispanics think it is a good time to purchase big-ticket items for their homes, up 17 points from the last quarter of 2017.

“Perhaps this is due to the fact that interest rates are going up and it is better to lock lower interest rates today,” said Monica Escaleras, Ph.D., director of FAU BEPI. “Most Hispanics expect interest rates to increase in the next few months.”

Level of debt has dropped among Hispanics, with only 22 percent reporting debt as a major problem, down from 30 percent in the previous quarter. Overall, 50 percent report debt as a minor problem and 28 percent said it was not a problem at all.

Nearly 6 in 10 Hispanics (59 percent) said it was a good time to buy a home and 62 percent said it was a good time to buy a car. However, the cost of living continues to increase for the majority of Hispanics, with 59 percent saying it has gone up while 23 percent saying it has gone down. A majority of Hispanics (53 percent) expect gas prices

to increase, while 17 percent think gas prices would go down.

U.S. President Donald Trump's approval rating among Hispanics rose from 33 to 37 percent in the first quarter of 2018, just two points below the high of 39 percent in the first quarter of 2017. Of those surveyed, 18 percent identified themselves as Republicans, 48 percent Democrats, 23 percent Independents and 11 percent were not registered.

The survey was conducted nationally from Jan. 1 to March 31, 2018. The random polling sample consisted of 755 Hispanics, 18 years of age and older, with a margin of error of +/- 4.3 percent. The survey was administered using both landlines via IVR data collection (24 percent) and online data collection (76 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 business.fau.edu/bepi 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.