



Office of University Communications
777 Glades Road, IS 4
Boca Raton, FL 33431
561.297.3023 phone
561.297.3001 fax

MEDIA CONTACT: Joshua Glanzer
561-297-1168, jglanzer@fau.edu

Florida Atlantic University Poll Finds Democrats Keep Edge with Hispanic Voters Despite Split on U.S. President Obama

BOCA RATON, Fla. (October 28, 2014) –A new national poll by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economic Polling Initiative (FAU BEPI) finds 50 percent of Hispanics said they will vote for a Democratic candidate in the midterms compared to 28 percent who said they would vote Republican. However, Hispanics are split at 40 percent in their approval/disapproval of U.S. President Barack Obama, according to the survey.

“The data suggests that despite their disappointment with President Obama, Hispanic voters are not ready to abandon the Democratic Party. The Republicans have failed to take advantage of the president’s falling popularity in this growing community,” said Kevin Wagner, associate professor of political science at FAU and a research fellow of the Initiative. “The Hispanic vote could be in play, but the GOP has not made a sufficient effort to attract the voters away from the Democratic Party.”

This is particularly true with Hispanic voters who have a strong group identification. Hispanics who believe that policies affecting their group have an impact on their individual lives are more likely to support Democratic candidates in the mid-term election over Republicans by 20 percent (55 percent to 35 percent). The economy remains the most important issue for Hispanic voters at 38 percent, followed by healthcare at 20 percent, and 16 percent who have selected immigration policy as the key issue.

As with other groups, Hispanic turnout is helped by contact from the political parties. Hispanic voters who were reached by the parties expressed a greater desire to vote in the midterm election. According to the poll, almost 89 percent of Hispanic respondents who were contacted by one of the parties expressed intent to vote.

“There is an opening for the parties to increase their vote-share by reaching out to Hispanic voters who might not otherwise vote,” said Wagner. “Contact makes a significant impact with Hispanic voters. For Democrats, outreach through technology should be productive as potential Hispanic voters using social media significantly favor the Democratic Party.”

Other key findings:

- Democrats have a 54 percent approval rate for President Obama with 67 percent of Republicans disapproving.
 - Independent voters and those registered to another party have a 55 percent disapproval rating and a 27 percent approval rating.
 - Approval for President Obama increased with income level: with 38 percent of those making under \$25,000, 40 percent of those making \$25,001-\$75,000 and 45 percent of those making over \$75,000 approving.
- Those who opted to take the survey in Spanish were more likely to vote Democrat than Republican (57 percent to 17 percent) than those who took the survey in English (48 percent to 30 percent)
- Those who said they plan to vote were more likely to vote Democrat 57 percent to 31 percent for Republican.
- Those who answered the survey in Spanish had immigration as the top issue (31 percent)
 - Those who answered in English had the economy as the top issue (40 percent)
- Those who find that what happens to other Latino's affect their lives are significantly more likely to vote Democrat than Republican (60 percent to 21 percent)
 - Those who did not find what happens to other Latino's to affect their life were splitting their vote between Democrats (42 percent) and Republicans (39 percent)
- Those who answered the poll via a landline phone were more likely to get contacted by a campaign than those who answered via online.
- Those who answered the survey in English were more likely to get contacted by a campaign than those who answered in Spanish.

The FAU survey sample included 803 Hispanics across the nation with a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percent. The data was collected between Oct. 1 and Oct. 20, through IVR telephone and online. The full methodology and cross tabs can be found at www.business.fau.edu/bepi or by contacting Monica Escaleras 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 carry 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 three signature themes – marine and coastal issues, biotechnology and contemporary societal challenges – which provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.

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