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FAU Index Shows Hispanics Optimistic About Economy and Turn to Social Media for Political News

BOCA RATON, Fla. (September 8, 2016) – Hispanics in the United States are increasingly optimistic about the nation’s economy and their own personal financial situation, according to a new national survey by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative ([FAU BEPI](#)).

The Hispanic Consumer Sentiment Index (CSI) gained six points from 100.8 in July to 106.2 in August, the highest month on record in the two years FAU has been conducting the survey. The gain was fueled by an increase in three of the five components of the index, including respondents’ perception about their personal financial situation a year from now, their reading on U.S. economic conditions in the next five years, and their opinion as to whether now is a good time to buy big-ticket items.

“The upturn in these components suggest that Hispanics’ opinions about their future personal finances, buying plans for big-ticket items and future economic conditions have improved considerably despite the uncertainty experienced due to the U.S. presidential election,” said Monica Escaleras, Ph.D., director of the BEPI.

The increase in the CSI can translate to higher purchasing intentions of Hispanics in the future, she added. Overall, 82 percent of Hispanics think that a year from now they will be better off financially, which is a 5 percent increase from July. The percentage of Hispanics who expect good times economically over the next five years increased from 53 percent to 68 percent.

Overall, 74 percent of Hispanics said this is a good time to buy big-ticket items such as furniture, refrigerators or televisions, which is a 5 percent increase from July. Consumers 35 to 54 years of age and those with incomes of \$75,000 were most favorable to buying big-ticket items.

This month’s poll also surveyed Hispanics’ use of social media for political news. Overall, 77 percent of Hispanics use social media to read political news stories, including 87 percent of those 18 to 34 years old, and 86 percent of those earning \$75,000 or more a year.

The survey also highlighted which groups tend to go toward selective exposure when it comes to the political news they read. Males are more likely (44 percent) than females (33 percent) to seek out opinions that are in line with their own views, while those age 55 and above are more likely to seek out contrary opinions than younger people.

While television is still the top source for political news for Hispanics overall, younger Hispanics 18 to 34 years of age get most of their political news from the Internet (60 percent, compared to 34 percent for television).

“Those that want to reach the younger generation of Hispanics should recognize the importance of the Internet and social media,” Escaleras said.

For more information, contact Monica Escaleras, Ph.D., director of the BEPI, at 561-297-1312 or BEPI@fau.edu, or visit www.business.fau.edu/bepi.

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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.