



New California Media (NCM)

www.ncmonline.com

Tel: 415-503-4170

Fax: 415-503-0970

NATIONAL POLL OF LATINO REACTIONS TO PRESIDENT BUSH'S IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL

Conducted by Sergio Bendixen, Bendixen & Associates
Sponsored by the James Irvine Foundation

Executive Summary

EMBARGOED Until Release at 11am (PST) Jan. 29, 2004

Overview

Latino reactions to President Bush's new immigration proposal are mixed. The proposal has significant backing but has so far not translated into increased election year support for the president.

Latinos demonstrated a high level of awareness that an immigration proposal was made by President Bush's administration. Once respondents received more information however, opinions about the proposal changed, with opposition increasing.

A large majority of respondents (74 percent) said they had heard of the proposal, which centers on a temporary worker program that will match undocumented workers living in the United States and potential workers abroad with jobs.

When first asked, a significant number of Latinos were aware of the plan and supported it (42 percent), while a lower proportion (20 percent) were aware and opposed it. The rest (38 percent) either were not aware of the plan or did not have an opinion.

Opposition to the plan doubled once respondents were informed that "most" temporary workers would have to return to their home countries.

With the additional information, respondents became evenly divided between those (45 percent) who opposed the plan, and those (45 percent) still supporting it.

This is how the Bush proposal was described to the poll respondents:

Let me tell you about President Bush's immigration proposal. It would grant working undocumented immigrants in the United States temporary legal status or work visas for three years. The work permits or visas would be renewable for an additional three years. After that, most of those in the program would have to return to their native country.

Respondents were questioned between Jan. 20 and Jan. 26. President Bush announced his immigration proposal to the nation on Jan. 7.

The survey involved a scientifically selected, nationally representative sample of 800 Hispanic/Latino adults who could choose to be interviewed in either Spanish or English. Before being asked for their immigration status respondents were assured the interview was 100 percent confidential. The poll has a margin of error of +/- three percentage points.

Q. 7 (Before Receiving Additional Information)	All Latinos	Registered Voters	Undocumented Immigrants
Support for Bush Immigration Proposal	42%	35%	58%
Opposition to Bush Immigration Proposal	20%	24%	19%
Don't Know/No Answer	38%	41%	23%

Q. 8 (After Receiving Additional Information)	All Latinos	Registered Voters	Undocumented Immigrants
Support for Bush Immigration Proposal	45%	42%	42%
Opposition to Bush Immigration Proposal	45%	47%	50%
Don't Know/No Answer	10%	11%	8%

Reactions to Proposal Details

Latinos found a lot to like in the Bush proposal. A majority of respondents said they thought it was a good idea that temporary worker participants would receive comparable credit for their social security deductions in home country retirement systems (79 percent); that temporary workers would be protected by labor laws like the minimum wage (81 percent); that temporary workers would be able to travel back and forth to home countries (83 percent); and that they would be allowed to bring members of their immediate family with them if they earned enough money to support them (78 percent).

The respondents were also asked to consider different specific criticisms aimed at the Bush proposal and say whether they agreed with these criticisms. Two criticisms resonated the most: a majority of Latinos (58 percent) said it was a valid criticism that the Bush plan does not guarantee a permanent residency visa or U.S. citizenship to undocumented immigrants that receive the proposed temporary legal status. A larger majority (63 percent) said it was a valid criticism that President Bush does not care about immigrants and that his plan is only aimed at getting Latino votes for 2004.

Also, the majority of respondents said they agreed with criticisms that the plan would give too much power to employers and lead to workplace abuses, and that it would create a second-class group of workers like the "bracero" program of the 1950s.

Latinos responded more positively to an alternate immigration proposal, which was discussed next. An overwhelming majority of Latinos (85 percent) said they supported a different immigration policy proposed by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus that would allow undocumented immigrants a way to earn legalization and become U.S. citizens.

That plan is similar to a bipartisan proposal introduced Jan. 21 while the poll was being conducted by Sen. Chuck Hagel, a Nebraska Republican and minority leader Sen. Tom Daschle, South Dakota Democrat.

When asked to choose between President Bush's plan and the Hispanic Caucus plan, a wide majority (75 percent) said they thought the Hispanic Caucus plan was better and a small proportion (16 percent) preferred the Bush plan.

President Bush and the 2004 Election

Before being asked specifically about the immigration proposal, a majority of Latinos polled (53 percent) gave President Bush positive job ratings, rating his job as "good" or "excellent."

After being polled on the immigration proposal, Latinos who were U.S. citizens and thus eligible to vote were asked whether they would support President Bush in the upcoming presidential elections.

A third (31 percent) said they would vote for President Bush. A higher number (48 percent) said they would choose the Democratic Party candidate.

The results were the same for the 396 Latino registered voters surveyed; a similar number (51 percent) said they would vote for a Democrat, while about a third of the respondents (30 percent) said they would vote for President Bush.

Bush's approval rating among Latinos and the percentage of Latinos intending to cast votes for him in 2004 did not show improvement over figures from recent national surveys completed before the immigration proposal was announced.

A New York Times/CBS poll conducted in July 2003 found that 52 percent of Latinos thought Bush was doing a good job.

A Pew Hispanic Center poll conducted Dec. 8-11, 2003 found that 46 percent of Latinos gave President Bush a favorable job rating; 27 percent of Latinos said then that they would vote for Bush. A follow-up Pew poll conducted Jan. 2-4, shortly after the capture of Saddam Hussein found that 54 percent of Latinos gave Bush a positive job rating. In that survey, thirty-seven percent of Latinos said they would vote for Bush, while 48 percent said they would vote for a Democrat.

President Bush won 35 percent of the Latino vote in the 2000 presidential elections.

Among Latinos, immigration ranked fourth as a concern, with less than one-fifth (15 percent) of respondents naming it as the most important issue. It ranked behind jobs and the economy (30 percent), education (26 percent) and health care (20 percent). Terrorism was the most important issue for 51 respondents (6 percent).

A majority of respondents (73 percent) said they thought it important that President Vicente Fox of Mexico had endorsed the proposal at the Summit of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico, Jan. 12-13. A majority (82 percent) also said that it was important that President Bush participated in the summit.

Polls of Latinos over a 6-month period	NYT/CBS Poll 7/03	Pew Hisp. Poll 12/03	Pew Hisp. Poll 1/2-1/4/03*	NCM Poll 1/20-1/26/03**
Latino Approval Ratings for Bush	52%	46%	54%	53%

* Before Bush immigration proposal announced

**After Bush immigration proposal announced

Registered Voters/ Undocumented Immigrants

For registered voters, the most established portion of the Latino population, levels of support and opposition did not vary as much after receiving additional information on the proposal.

Initial reactions among Latino registered voters who had heard of President Bush's proposal were slightly less enthusiastic than that of all Latino respondents: one-fourth (24 percent) said they opposed the plan; a relatively low number (35 percent) said they supported it.

Once the registered voters received the additional information, opposition increased (47 percent) and support increased slightly (42 percent).

Upon first being asked undocumented immigrants who said they had heard of President Bush's plan were largely (58 percent) in favor of it and a smaller percentage (19 percent) opposed it.

Once the undocumented immigrant respondents were given more information and were told that "most" of the workers in the program would have to return to their home countries after work terms expired, results changed: a higher number of the undocumented (50 percent) now said they opposed the plan.

Support decreased significantly, although a significant number (42 percent) of undocumented immigrants, the least established sector of the Latino population, still said they supported it.

This poll was made possible by the James Irvine Foundation.

About New California Media

New California Media is an association of over 700 print, broadcast, and online ethnic media organizations founded in 1996 by the non-profit Pacific News Service. NCM's goal is to raise the visibility of ethnic media, expand its access to the advertising dollar and promote an inter-ethnic editorial exchange. NCM is supported by grants from the American Association of Advertising Agencies, the Ford Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Community Technology Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, among others. Project partners include the USC Annenberg's Institute for Justice and Journalism, the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism at San Francisco State, and the Chinese American Voter Registration Committee. For more information, visit the website at www.ncmonline.com. □

About The James Irvine Foundation

The mission of The James Irvine Foundation is to expand opportunity for the people of California to participate in a vibrant, successful and inclusive society. The Foundation was established in 1937 by James Irvine, the California pioneer whose 110,000-acre ranch in Southern California was among the largest privately owned land holdings in the State. For more information, visit the website at www.irvine.org.