



2008 Latino Vote Survey in Key Battleground States

Introduction

A record number of Latino voters are predicted to cast ballots this November 2008. According to NALEO Educational Fund voter turnout projections, 9.2 million Latinos will vote in this year's national election. With respect to the Presidential contest, the Latino vote promises to play a decisive role in at least four important battleground states: Colorado, Florida, New Mexico and Nevada. At play in these states are 46 crucial electoral votes, 11 more than the 35 which helped decide the 2004 Presidential election. Recent battleground state polls show that in at least three of these four states the race for President remains a near statistical tie. Latinos comprise a significant share of the electorate in these battlegrounds, and their vote could help swing the election for either candidate. This survey provides one of the only windows into the opinions of actual Latino registered voters in battleground states. The survey finds that Latino voters may turnout in unprecedented numbers, that the economy is the issue of top priority, that nearly one in three Latinos believe that there is no difference between the parties with respect to their concern for Latinos, and despite strong support for Barack Obama, a noticeable share may still be persuaded to vote for either one of the two candidates.

Summary of Key Findings

Latino turnout will be high, but many voters remain undecided or show “not so strong” support towards either candidate.

Nearly 90% of Latino registered voters are almost certain they will cast ballots in November. In three of the four states, Democrat Barack Obama leads Republican John McCain by wide margins among strong supporters, 63% to 15% in Colorado, 61% to 20% in New Mexico and 55% to 14% in Nevada. In Florida, the battle for the Latino vote is nearly a statistical tie at 38% for McCain and 35% for Obama. However, a significant number of Latino voters still remain undecided, or only indicate not so strong

support for the candidate of their choice (1 in 5 in Colorado and New Mexico; 1 in 4 in Florida; and nearly 1 in 3 in Nevada).

What would you say the chances are that you will vote in the election for U.S. President?

	CO	FL	NM	NV
Almost Certain	89 %	86%	90%	82%
Probably	6%	6%	4%	9%
50-50	4%	7%	5%	6%
Will Not Vote	1%	2%	1%	2%

If the 2008 election was held today who would you vote for?

	CO	FL	NM	NV
McCain- strong	15%	38%	20%	14%
McCain- not so strong	3%	7%	3%	6%
Obama- strong	63%	35%	61%	55%
Obama- not so strong	8%	8%	6%	12%
Undecided	10%	10%	10%	12%

Democrats currently hold a strong edge over Republicans when it comes to positive partisan brand.

Nearly two-thirds of Latinos in Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada identified the Democratic Party as being more concerned for the Latino community than the Republican Party. Even in Florida, where there has traditionally been strong Latino Republican support, 40% of the Latinos surveyed identified the Democratic Party over the Republican Party (20%). Still, nearly one in three Latino voters believe there is no difference between the parties with respect to their concern for the Latino community. This may prove to be an important factor as voters decide who to cast their ballots in important congressional races.

Which political party do you think has more concern for the Latino community?

	CO	FL	NM	NV
Democratic	64%	40%	64%	62%
Republican	6%	20%	4%	7%
No Difference	26%	34%	27%	29%
Don't know	4%	5%	4%	3%

A majority of Latino voters cited the state of the economy or job opportunities as the most important issue for deciding how to vote in this election.

The impact of the current economic downturn on Latino voters in these states will likely continue to be a primary concern heading into the general election. The severe downturn in the housing and mortgage sector is likely to impact many Latinos. A majority of Latino voters cited the economy as the issue most important to them, this election. Nearly one in three Latinos in these states say that they have had trouble making mortgage or rent payments at some point during the past 12 months. In Colorado, 35% of Latino registered voters have had trouble making mortgage/rent payments; another 30% in Florida, New Mexico, and Nevada. In Nevada alone, 80% of Latino voters are currently paying off home mortgage. With respect to economic issues, Latino voters tended to indicate that Barack Obama would do a better job than John McCain of improving the economy, creating more jobs and lowering gas prices.

Other top Latino concerns going into November are the war in Iraq, healthcare, and immigration reform.

War in Iraq: Significant majorities of the Latino voters surveyed believe the war in Iraq is not worth fighting, when one considers the costs incurred. Three out of every four Latino voters in Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada believe the war has been too costly and in Florida, 61% feel the same. This is an issue of particular importance to a significant share of Latino households in Colorado and New Mexico where more than one third (35%) have at least one family member who is currently serving or has served in the military. A majority of Latino voters in Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada believe Barack Obama will handle the situation in Iraq better than John McCain.

Healthcare: Nearly one in three Latinos surveyed said they did not have health insurance for a period of time or at all in the past year. Six out of 10 Latino voters believe that the government should ensure that all people have health insurance, even if it means raising taxes. In three of the four states, six in ten Latino voters trust Barack Obama to do a better job at handling health care and in Florida, John McCain and Barack Obama are at a statistical tie with respect to this issue.

Immigration Reform: Immigration reform rounded out the top four issues for Latino voters, particularly important in Nevada where 27% of Latino voters identified immigration reform as the most important issue for this election. A majority of Latino voters in each of the four states prefer an approach toward immigration reform that combines a concurrent focus on border security and dealing with undocumented immigrants already here.

If the presidential election were being held today, what general issues would be most important to you in deciding who to vote for? (Two responses allowed)

	CO	FL	NM	NV
Jobs/Economy	48%	51%	55%	54%
War in Iraq	27%	31%	34%	25%
Health Care	20%	17%	20%	13%
Immigration Reform	13%	11%	11%	27%
Education	12%	14%	9%	15%
Gas Prices	12%	7%	9%	9%
Taxes	6%	7%	5%	4%
Homeland Security	3%	8%	5%	6%
Morals/Values	2%	2%	4%	2%
Environment	1%	2%	1%	2%
Ethics in Government	1%	2%	1%	0%
War on Terrorism	1%	3%	2%	1%
Something Else	8%	8%	7%	5%
Don't Know	9%	5%	5%	6%

A majority of Latino voters place a greater degree of trust in Barack Obama when it comes to handling many of the key issues.

With the exception of the issue of U.S. foreign policy and immigration reform for voters in Florida, a majority of Latino voters say they trust Barack Obama to do a better job of handling the issues. Even on the issue of the war in Iraq, voters trust Obama to do a better job.

Tell me who you trust to do a better job handling each issue:

	<u>CO</u>	<u>FL</u>	<u>NM</u>	<u>NV</u>
<u>Creating more jobs</u>				
Obama	73%	48%	69%	66%
McCain	16%	38%	19%	18%
Neither	5%	6%	4%	5%
<u>Improving the economy</u>				
Obama	71%	47%	68%	64%
McCain	16%	41%	22%	21%
Neither	5%	5%	3%	5%
<u>The situation in Iraq</u>				
Obama	67%	48%	63%	61%
McCain	21%	44%	30%	27%
Neither	4%	4%	2%	5%
<u>Immigration reform</u>				
Obama	65%	42%	60%	56%
McCain	18%	43%	26%	21%
Neither	7%	7%	6%	8%

	<u>CO</u>	<u>FL</u>	<u>NM</u>	<u>NV</u>
<u>Health Care</u>				
Obama	74%	49%	68%	68%
McCain	14%	37%	20%	18%
Neither	4%	6%	4%	4%
<u>Lowering gas prices</u>				
Obama	61%	42%	62%	57%
McCain	20%	37%	22%	23%
Neither	10%	12%	8%	9%
<u>U.S. Foreign Policy</u>				
Obama	60%	37%	58%	53%
McCain	27%	51%	33%	33%
Neither	3%	3%	2%	3%
<u>Social Security</u>				
Obama	67%	40%	65%	59%
McCain	18%	41%	23%	22%
Neither	5%	7%	4%	7%

About the Survey

The NALEO Educational Fund commissioned the public opinion firm Latino Decisions to conduct a comprehensive bilingual telephone survey of Latino registered voters in four key battleground states (Colorado, Florida, New Mexico, Nevada), where the Latino vote promises to be decisive. During August 18th through September 10th, Latino Decisions surveyed 1,600 Latino registered voters. A total of 400 interviews were conducted for each state, with a margin of error of +/- 4.7% for each state. The sample size represents the largest sampling of Latino registered voters in these important states for this election. Survey respondents were selected from official state databases of registered voters. Official registered voter lists provided the survey with actual registered voters who were then verified to be Hispanic/Latino.

Special Thanks

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