Latinos in the 2012

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Latino Decisions
• Latinos will exert significant effect on the 2012 elections:
  – May determine electoral votes of Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia.

• Neither party has a firm grasp on how to reach Hispanics;

• Outcome will be a dynamic function of Democratic enthusiasm and Republican rhetorical excess;
• In this presentation, I will summarize the state of play as we see it today;

• I will explore a central obstacle to GOP growth, namely the ideological orientation of Latinos to government;

• I will adjudicate claims regarding the relative importance of immigration and economic concerns in shaping Latino votes;

• I will argue that there is significant room for messaging on immigration, and that it is not the toxic issue among non-Hispanics that both parties appear to believe it is.
STATE OF PLAY 2012
• As a testament to the instability of 2012 in the GOP, in November, we tested Obama against Romney, Cain and Perry.

• In January, we tested Obama against Romney and Newt Gingrich.
Representative Sample of Latino Registered Voters in 21 Largest Latino States, November 2011

- Obama: 67%
- Romney: 24%
- Undecided: 9%
- Obama: 65%
- Cain: 22%
- Undecided: 13%
- Obama: 68%
- Perry: 21%
- Undecided: 11%
Latinos in the 2012

Representative Sample of Latino Registered Voters, Nationally, January 2012

- Obama: 67%
- Romney: 25%
- Undecided: 8%
- Obama: 70%
- Gingrich: 22%
- Undecided: 8%
Favorable/Unfavorable Evaluations of GOP Primary Candidates, November 2011 and January 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Nov-Jan</th>
<th>Romney</th>
<th>Santorum</th>
<th>Gingrich</th>
<th>Paul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov-11 Favorable</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-11 Unfavorable</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-11 No Opinion/Never Heard</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-12 Favorable</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-12 Unfavorable</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-12 No Opinion/Never Heard</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change Nov-Jan:
-8 to -13, -4 to -11, -13 to -18, +8 to -4
• President Obama comfortably leads his rivals;
  – Undecided hovers around 8%;
  – In other questions, it is clear that enthusiasm for the president is weaker than four years ago.

• Favorability among Latinos is a real problem for all GOP hopefuls:
  – Information/name recognition started low, but
  – As information has risen, these candidates do even worse;
  – And favorability is a problem for these candidates among the general electorate as well.
• GOP enthusiasm up over 2008, Democratic down.
• HOWEVER—in the last three months, the gap is narrowing.
  – Reps have gone from +23 to +6.
  – Dems gone from -24 to -8.
• Enthusiasm among Latinos is the $64k question in the wake of 1 million deportations and no CIR or Dream Act.

• While there is considerable evidence of decreased relative energy between Latino Democrats and Republicans...

• GOP rhetoric and stepped up efforts on the Democratic side appears to be trimming this disadvantage.
Which issues will drive Latino Vote Choice?
Most important issue facing the Latino community that you would like Congress and the President to address, Nov 2011 and Jan 2012.

- Jobs and Economy: 54% (50%)
- Immigration Reform: 46% (46%)
- Education Reform: 16% (14%)
- Health care: 9% (12%)
Most important issues in how you evaluate the candidates and decide to vote

- **Jobs and Economy**:
  - All voters - Nov 2011: 74%
  - Latinos - Nov 2011: 65%
  - Latinos Jan 2012: 61%

- **Immigration Reform**:
  - 10%

- **Health care**:
  - 21%
  - 16%
  - 14%

- **Education Reform**:
  - 5%
  - 12%
  - 16%
• What’s at stake in this question?
  – Both parties, for different reasons, would prefer to pretend that immigration doesn’t matter;
  – Latinos are not immune to the vagaries of the economy—and appear to have been hurt profoundly in the recession;

• Question wording and approach matters but beware charlatans, spin and bad survey design!

• How can we adjudicate the relative effect of immigration and the economy?
• Bush administration still receives a greater share of the economic blame…
  – Especially among Latinos;
• But…

• Nationally, the GOP and Dems are tied on the handling of the economy.
  – Not so among Latino voters.
Experiment: The Economy and Immigration

Let's say one of the candidates had a plan to improve the economy that you supported, and on the immigration issue the candidate said, quote:

[half of sample receives each quote]

“illegal immigrants are a threat to America who have committed a crime, we can never support amnesty for illegals”

“America is a nation of immigrants, we need to treat immigrants with respect and dignity and help them assimilate into America instead of attacking them”

end quote.

Would that statement make you more likely to support the candidate, less likely to support the candidate, or would you not care what they said about immigration if you agreed with their plan for the economy?
Candidate who you agree with on the economy, and makes anti-immigrant statement

- More likely to support
  - All voters
  - Latinos

- Less likely to support
  - All voters
  - Latinos

- Would not care what they said
  - All voters
  - Latinos
Candidate who you agree with on the economy, and makes positive statement about immigrants

- More likely to support: Latinos
- Less likely to support: All voters
- Would not care what they said: All voters

Voters are divided by race:
- All voters: 50%
- Latinos: 70%

More likely to support: Latinos 80%
Less likely to support: Latinos 10%
Would not care what they said: 0%
Preferred Policy Regarding Undocumented Persons in the US

- Path to Citizenship
- Guestworker program
- Deport illegal immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Voters Nov 11</th>
<th>GOPers Nov 11</th>
<th>Latinos Nov 11</th>
<th>Latinos Jan 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Path to Citizenship</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guestworker program</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deport illegal immigrants</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dream Act Experiment?

Prompted by the Romney veto promise, what effect does Dream Act opposition have on Latino voters?
• Significant majorities of all voters support the Dream Act.
Dream Act Experiment?

• Random assignment of half the sample:

• Recently, a candidate running for President has said – quote – The DREAM Act is a handout that rewards criminal activity by illegals with special benefits. If the Congress passes the DREAM Act, I will veto it. – end quote.

or

• Recently, a candidate running for President has said – quote – We should not penalize immigrant children who came to this country illegally. The DREAM Act is important to give immigrant youth an opportunity go to college and earn citizenship in America and I will pass it – end quote.

• Would that statement make you more likely to support the candidate, less likely to support the candidate, or would you not care what they said about immigration policy?
The Dream Act remains a powerful motivator among Latino registered voters.
THERE IS ROOM TO MESSAGE TO Non-HISPANICS ON IMMIGRATION

• Non-Hispanics are generally supportive of the Dream Act;

• Non-Hispanics favor comprehensive immigration reform;

• Immigrant-bashing is a net negative among non-Hispanic voters too.
Latinos are Liberals
Views Regarding Government Action to Solve Problems, by Race and Ethnicity

- National Weighted: 58.9%
- White (non-African): 52.6%
- African Americans: 14.2%
- Hispanic or Latino: 82.1%
- Asian American: 68.8%

Do More
Attitudes Regarding Government Growth, by Race and Ethnicity

Problems we face are bigger, govt’ needed
Gotten involved where it shouldn’t be
Preferences for Free Market vs. Government Solutions, By Race and Ethnicity

- National: 31.8%
- White (non-Hispanic): 35.8%
- African: 84.9%
- Hispanic or Latino: 83.3%
- Asian: 24.2%

Free Market can Handle these Problems.
Evaluation of Party Efforts Toward Hispanics

- **Democratic Party**
  - Reaching Out: 47%
  - Don't Care: 18%
  - Hostile: 3%

- **Republican Party**
  - Reaching Out: 20%
  - Don't Care: 33%
  - Hostile: 14%

- **National**
  - Reaching Out: 45%
  - Hostile: 8%

- **Latinos**
  - Reaching Out: 42%
  - Hostile: 30%

- **Don't Care**
  - Democratic Party: 18%
  - Republican Party: 13%
  - National: 14%

- **Hostile**
  - Democratic Party: 3%
  - Republican Party: 14%
  - National: 8%
View towards Same-sex Marriage

- No legal recognition: 26%
- Civil unions: 13%
- Legally Marry: 43%