



**To: Interested Parties**

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**Date: June 11, 2014**

**Re: Key Findings from National Surveys of Hispanic Voters and Registered Voters Regarding Immigration Reform**

Using a collaborative effort among ten prominent Republican polling firms, FWD.us conducted two national surveys regarding immigration reform, one of 800 Hispanic registered voters, and the other of 800 registered voters, with an oversample to yield 505 Republican voters.

The survey of Hispanic voters was conducted May 27-June 1, 2014, with interviews conducted in both English and Spanish. The margin of error for the Hispanic survey is plus or minus 3.46 percent.

The survey of all voters was conducted May 17-23, 2014. The margin of error for the national survey is plus or minus 3.46 percent among the registered voters and 4.36 percent among the Republican voters.

## ***Survey of Hispanic Registered Voters***

The following are the key findings of the Hispanic survey:

- **Hispanics believe the current immigration system is seriously broken and Congress should take immediate action to fix it. They blame Republicans in Congress for the failure of immigration reform thus far.** Fifty-seven percent say the immigration and border security system is seriously broken, while 37 percent think it is working well. *Forty-nine percent blame Republicans in Congress for the failure to pass immigration reform thus far, while 11 percent blame Democrats in Congress and 11 percent blame President Obama.*
- **Hispanics think immigration reform will be good for the economy and will be very important in deciding their vote for Congress.** Sixty-nine percent of Hispanics think immigration reform will help the economy, while only 11 percent think it will hurt. *Fifty-six percent say immigration reform will be very important in determining their vote for Congress, and an additional 27 percent say somewhat important, for a total of 83 percent saying it will be at least somewhat important.*
- **Three-fourths of Hispanics would be more likely to listen to Republican ideas on other issues if they support immigration reform.** Seventy-six percent say they would be more likely to listen to what Republicans have to say on other issues if they support immigration reform. Hispanics say the Republican Party has decent ideas like lowering taxes, helping small business, and improving the schools, but it is hard to support them because they seem too unwelcoming to immigrants and Latinos.
- **After George W. Bush's success with Hispanic voters in 2004, Republicans have struggled with the fastest growing voter group in America.** According to the Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, in 2006 49 percent of Hispanics said they were Democrats or leaned toward Democrats, and 27 percent were Republicans or leaned toward Republicans, a 22-point Democratic advantage. After the immigration reform debate that year and the next, the Democratic margin grew to 39 points in 2008, and continued to grow to 48 points by 2012.
- **Hispanics believe Democrats care about their needs, make an effort to win their votes, and consider them valuable members of American society, while they are more likely to think Republicans are anti-immigrant.** Hispanic voters are far more likely to say the positive phrases describe Democrats better than Republicans. While they do not think the phrase "is anti-immigrant" describes either party very well, they are more likely to say that about Republicans than Democrats.
- **While Hispanics are not anti-government, they want government to emphasize opportunity over fairness, and they prefer smaller government with fewer services and lower taxes to a larger government with more services and higher taxes.** Fifty-two percent of Hispanic voters say the federal

government “can do a lot for people by helping them in their daily lives,” while 38 percent say “the federal government tends to hinder their daily lives by just getting in the way.” But 61 percent believe government policies should “promote opportunity by fostering job growth, encouraging small businesses, and allowing hardworking people to keep more of what they earn,” while only 36 percent believe “government policies should promote fairness by narrowing the gap between rich and poor, making the rich pay their fair share, and reducing income inequality.” Moreover, 63 percent prefer a smaller government with fewer services and lower taxes to a larger government with more services and higher taxes.

- **Two-thirds of Hispanics say they are conservative or moderate, and a majority has voted for Republican candidates in the past.** Thirty-six percent are conservative, 28 percent moderate, and 31 percent liberal. Fifty-three percent have voted for a Republican candidate in the past.
- **Hispanics support the immigration reform proposal and each of its component parts, including stronger border security and rigorous conditions for legal status.** At least three-fourths of Hispanics support each of the parts of the immigration reform proposal, including 76 percent for a visa tracking system, 77 percent for an e-verify system for employers, 78 percent for stronger border security, and 90 percent for allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain legal status if they pass a background check, pay a fine and taxes owed, have a job, and learn English.
- **Hispanics believe undocumented immigrants should be allowed to apply for either citizenship or legal status.** Given a three-way option, 47 percent want undocumented immigrants to be able to eventually apply for citizenship, 41 percent think they should be allowed to apply for legal status but not citizenship, and only 9 percent want them sent back to their home country.
- **About one-quarter of Hispanics will support Republicans regardless of whether they pass immigration reform, and about one-half will support Democrats regardless of what Republicans do. But passing immigration reform gives Republicans an opportunity to gain the support of the remaining quarter. Doing so solves a serious problem in a way that Americans, including Hispanics, overwhelmingly support, and improves Republicans’ standing with swing voters now, in the next Presidential election, and for years to come.** Despite intense Democratic efforts to win Hispanic voters in 2012, 27 percent still voted for Mitt Romney, 26 percent have an unfavorable view of the Democratic Party and 27 percent have an unfavorable view of Barack Obama, so about a quarter are likely to vote Republican regardless of immigration reform. Forty-eight percent of Hispanic voters say they are strong or not-so-strong Democrats, 47 percent are not very likely or not at all likely to vote for a generic Republican candidate for Congress, and 44 percent have never voted for a Republican, so about half are likely to vote Democratic regardless of what Republicans do on immigration. If they pass immigration reform, Republicans have an opportunity to win the remaining quarter.

## ***National Survey of Registered Voters***

The following are the key findings of the Registered Voters survey:

- **Americans overwhelmingly believe the immigration system in the country is broken and that Congress should take immediate action to fix it. Republicans are more convinced than either Democrats or Independents that immediate action is necessary.**
- **Most Americans don't believe "deportation" is a viable policy with respect to undocumented immigrants. In fact, there is an overwhelming consensus in support of some kind of legalization for undocumented immigrants (either "legal status" or "citizenship").** There is broad support for the immigration reform and border security proposal that was put forward. Republicans showed significantly higher support for the proposal than either Democrats or Independents, *with more than 75 percent of Tea Party Republicans, conservative Republicans and white evangelical Republicans all supporting it.*
- **A clear majority of Americans opposes amnesty for undocumented immigrants, but by more than a two-to-one margin, voters do not believe that this immigration reform plan provides amnesty.** In fact, by a 75 to 19 percent margin, voters who oppose amnesty support this immigration proposal.
- **Supporting this new immigration reform proposal should be good electoral politics for Republicans.** Potential overall support for a Republican candidate for Congress jumps nearly 20 points after voters learn that the candidate supports this legislation, including large movement with swing voters like moderates, single voters, Independent women and younger voters. Further, these GOP candidates' conservative and partisan bases remain intact after learning of the candidate's support for the proposal.

### ***Conclusion***

**There is a strong sentiment in the country that undocumented immigrants should not be granted amnesty; this immigration reform proposal addresses that issue by requiring that undocumented immigrants pay a fine, taxes owed, learn English and wait at least thirteen years until they can become citizens.**

**Americans across party lines believe this is not amnesty, but rather a fair and equitable way of dealing with the eleven million undocumented immigrants in the country.** Hitting the 70 percent mark nationwide, this proposal wins broad support from the electorate.

Finally, this generates a more positive electoral environment for Republicans, as it creates an opening to a significant number of swing voters for GOP candidates.

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