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National Latino Poll Reveals Surprises

The Board of Directors of the Hispanic Business Roundtable (HBR) and The Latino Coalition (TLC) released today the results of the first comprehensive national survey of U.S. Hispanics taken since U.S. Census declared Latinos the largest minority in the country. The survey showed the most important issue affecting U.S. Hispanics is discrimination, followed closely by quality of education. Tied for third place were jobs/unemployment and immigration.

"One gets a sense when you read this survey that Latinos across the country feel they are being left behind. That explains why their number one issues is discrimination," said TLC President Robert Deposada. "Of course, you will feel discriminated when you are three times as likely to be uninsured as the rest of the population. Of course, you would feel that way when your schools are failing your kids, and when only a third have savings for their retirement. This is a recipe for failure and dependency, and Latinos strongly believe that this has to stop. The survey shows Latinos support necessary reforms to make the system more responsive to their needs and concerns."

The bilingual survey went into great depth to study the top political issues of today, including Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security, and such controversial issues as school vouchers and bilingual education. The survey, conducted by Opiniones Latinas (Latino Opinions) consisted of 1000 interviews of Hispanic adults conducted July 9-11, and has a confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of +/- 3.1. Opiniones Latinas is a polling company formed by New York's McLaughlin & Associates, and California's Rodriguez & Company.

Regarding Medicare, almost two thirds (63%) of Latinos believe Medicare needs reform and that it should be modeled after the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, offering a variety of choices among different plans (64%). The survey also shows 66% want a federal prescription drug plan to focus the assistance on low-income seniors who can't afford prescription drugs. "We urge congressional leaders from both parties, and the White House, to take a close look at these numbers as they review legislative opinions on prescriptions drugs under the Medicare program," Deposada added.

The survey shows only 35% of Latinos have \$5,000 or more saved or invested for their retirement. It also shows 47% don't feel confident they will receive their Social Security benefits after retirement. Their lack of confidence of receiving their Social Security benefits reached 63% when Latinos understand the long-term financial problems facing the current Social Security system. A high 62% of Latinos polled said they support the creation of personal retirement accounts.

"It's not hard to understand why Latinos want to see a major change in the Social Security structure. Nearly have don't believe they'll ever see their checks, and nearly two-thirds say they won't see any money once they know the financial troubles facing Social Security," said Hispanic Business Roundtable Chairman, Mario Rodriguez.

[2001 LATINO POLL RESULTS](#)

By a margin of 58% to 38%, Latinos have a negative opinion of the local public school system. The survey shows that violence and drugs (38%) is the biggest problem facing public education, followed by lack of quality teachers (19%), lack of basic reading, writing and math skills (12%), and overcrowding (11%). 54% of those polled said too much of current education money is spent on bureaucracy and not enough gets to the students and teachers. 40% advocate spending more money to help teachers and students.

"While Latinos support increased Federal & State spending on education, a majority believe that too much is being spent on bureaucracy and not enough gets to the classroom," said TLC Chairman Dorene Dominguez of Los Angeles, California. "The frustration of Hispanic parents is evident when 74% support vouchers to help low-income families send their children to a better public or private school."

The survey also showed:

- 49% regularly access the internet
- 56% own credit cards
- 72% regularly watch Spanish-language television
- 66% regularly listen to Spanish radio
- 70% have savings and/or checking accounts
- 33% admitted to regularly sending money to family members outside the U.S.
- 43% use a cellular telephone
- 75% support expanding NAFTA to other Latin American countries

By a 2-1 margin classify themselves as pro-life (63%) versus pro-choice (29%)

On the political side, 54% have a favorable view of Democrats in Congress compared to 23% who have a favorable view of Republicans in Congress. With regards to the President, 47% have a favorable view of George W. Bush. "These numbers show that Republicans in Congress have a way to go before they can legitimately claim Hispanics as part of their coalition," Deposada added.

The Latino Coalition and the Hispanic Business Roundtable are non-profit, non-partisan organizations based in Washington, D.C. HBR was established in 1995 to address policy issues that directly affect the well being of Hispanics in the United States and merged into TLC in 2001. TLC and HBR's agenda is to develop and promote policies that will enhance overall business, economic and social developments of Hispanics. For more information or to download additional survey results, please visit our websites at www.hbrt.org or www.TheLatinoCoalition.com.

The Latino Coalition and the Hispanic Business Roundtable are non-profit, nonpartisan national organizations based in Washington, DC. For more information on these organizations please visit our websites at www.hbrt.org and www.TheLatinoCoalition.com.

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