



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **FLORIDA HISPANIC SURVEY SHOWS BUSH WITH SIGNIFICANT LEAD OVER KERRY**

*– Bush Leads Kerry 62-29 Among Hispanic Registered Voters –*

**Washington, D.C.** – The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition today released the Florida results of their annual National Survey of Hispanic Adults. The survey shows that Florida Hispanic voters prefer President Bush by a 2-1 margin.

“This survey shows that President Bush has been able to develop a significant lead among Florida Hispanic registered voters, and could make the difference in who wins Florida in November,” said TLC President Robert Deposada. “According to VNS, in 2000 Bush won the Hispanic vote by a 49%-48% margin. But if the election were today, President Bush’s lead could solidify Florida’s electoral votes to his column. The Florida numbers confirm the national trend showing the race for Hispanic Registered Voters is very tight, with Senator Kerry with only a nine points lead over President Bush (47-38). At this stage in the game, the Democratic Presidential candidate should have been with a two-to-one lead and securing around 60% of the Hispanic vote. This is a serious problem for Senator John Kerry, if he is to carry key swing states with large Hispanic populations like New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada and Florida.”

In the U.S. Senate race in Florida, Hispanic registered voters prefer Republican Mel Martinez over Democrat Betty Castor by a 65% - 25% margin. Martinez leads among Cubans (77-14) and among non-Cubans (42-37).

In a significant shift from last year’s survey, when asked about the November election for President and which issue is more important to them when deciding their vote, 51% said keeping America safe and secure, while 46% said improving the economy and creating jobs. The Florida numbers were much overwhelming in favor of keeping America Safe and Secure (66-31). This is a very important development for the Bush campaign because by a margin of 50% to 34% nationally and by 71% - 21% in Florida, Hispanic voters believe that President Bush is a more decisive and stronger leader than Senator Kerry and by a similar margin of 50% to 36% nationally, and 72%-20% in Florida believe that Bush would do a better job than Kerry in keeping America safe and fighting terrorism.

Senator Kerry’s strength among national Hispanic voters lies on domestic issues, but those numbers are not reflected in Florida. National Hispanic registered voters believe he would do a better job in improving the economy (54-34), improving education (52-35), and improving health care (55-30). But in Florida Bush leads in all categories: 62-29 in the economy, 57-27 in education, 50-31 in health care. While the war in Iraq is opposed by national Hispanics by a margin of 55% - 39%, the numbers reverse in Florida to 59%- 36%. Bush also leads Senator Kerry among Florida Hispanic voters on representing their personal and family values (62-26) and representing their views on immigration (57-23), on being in touch with the Hispanic community (61-19), and in handling the War in Iraq (65-23).

“Senator Kerry’s weak standing among Florida Hispanic voters could be complicated even further if President Bush’s campaign focuses more on promoting their record on a variety of issues Hispanic voters care deeply about”, Deposada added. “The President’s cornerstone program in education, the No Child Left Behind program has strong support among Hispanic voters (81-12). His immigration initiative has a 57% level of support and there’s strong support for reducing taxes among Hispanic registered voters,” Deposada added.

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When asked what is the best strategy to get the economy moving and create jobs 57% said lowering taxes on families and businesses, while only 10% supported raising taxes to increase government spending. Only 26% would keep taxes and spending at current levels.

While health care is Senator Kerry's strongest issue against President Bush, Hispanics voters strongly support some of the President's key initiatives and oppose some of the major campaign promises of Senator Kerry. For instance, by a margin of 57% - 36%, Hispanic voters prefer to be covered by a private health care system over a government-run program like Medicaid. Only 27% of Florida Hispanic registered voters believe that the Medicaid program is run well. Hispanics also strongly support President Bush's tax credit initiative for uninsured workers with 80% supporting this program, and a majority believe that the President's Medicare reform will improve the program for seniors by a margin of 52% - 18%. Those over 55 years of age were even more supportive of the reform by a 57% - 16% margin.

Hispanic voters also show strong support for key social conservative issues, such as their support for parental notification laws before their daughter has an abortion (77- 18) and their opposition to gay marriages (74-17).

"Senator Kerry is making the same mistake made by California Lt. Governor Cruz Bustamante during his campaign for Governor during the recall last year," Deposada added. "Senator Kerry is focusing his Hispanic strategy in addressing the issues of concern to the more radical liberal segments in the Hispanic community, and by doing so is alienating more mainstream Hispanic voters who could become the swing voters in targeted states he needs to carry in November. His message is more targeted at the needs and concerns of those who are not registered to vote."

Bush has a strong lead over Kerry among Cuban Americans (77-17), while Senator Kerry leads among non-Cubans by a 49%-40% margin. Bush also leads among those 55 and older by a 72% -22% margin, while Senator Kerry leads among younger voters between the ages of 18-25 (56-44). "The problem for Senator Kerry is that Cuban Americans and Hispanics over 55 years are registered at very high levels (89% and 90% respectively) while only 37% of younger voters are registered," Deposada said. "Kerry is focusing his message to the non-registered population, and that is hurting him among more moderate Hispanic voters who do not necessarily identify with those needs and concerns. The undecided Hispanic voters are better educated, with higher incomes, and have different needs."

The registration numbers also drop significantly among Mexican Americans (57%) and those of Central American descent (63%) where Senator Kerry holds a lead over President Bush (among Mexican Americans 64%-21% and is tied among Central Americans at 44%). Bush also leads Kerry among Puerto Ricans (46-42) and among South Americans (52-38). Registration levels among Puerto Ricans and South Americans are high (82% and 76% respectively).

The National Survey was conducted by Opiniones Latina/Latino Opinions between September 27<sup>th</sup> and October 3<sup>rd</sup>, among 1,000 Hispanic adults. Interview selection was at random with predetermined population units. These units were structured to statistically correlate with the nation's adult Hispanic population according to the 2000 U.S. Census. All interviews were conducted by professional Spanish and English speaking interviewers via telephone. The accuracy of this national survey of 1,000 Hispanic adults is within a  $\pm 3.1\%$  margin of error at a 95% confidence interval. An over-sample was conducted in Florida to achieve a sample size of 200 interviews, and the results in Florida were weighted down into the national survey, to be proportional to the actual census distribution.

The Latino Coalition is a non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, D.C. TLC was established to address policy issues that directly affect the well-being of Hispanics in the United States. TLC's agenda is to develop and promote policies that will foster economic equivalency and enhance overall business, economic, and social development of Hispanics. For more information, or to download the entire survey, please visit their website at [www.TheLatinoCoalition.com](http://www.TheLatinoCoalition.com).

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