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## **NATIONAL HISPANIC SURVEY SHOWS PRESIDENTIAL RACE HISTORICALLY CLOSE**

**– KERRY’S LEAD DOWN TO SINGLE DIGITS –**

**Washington, D.C.** – The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition today released the results of their annual National Survey of Hispanic Adults. The survey shows that the Hispanic vote is up for grabs this November.

“This survey confirms the fact that the Hispanic vote is up for grabs this fall, particularly in the Presidential election,” said TLC President Robert Deposada. “Kerry’s lead among Hispanic Registered Voters is only nine points (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 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. This is a very important development for the Bush campaign because by a margin of 50% to 34% 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% believe that Bush would do a better job than Kerry in keeping America safe and fighting terrorism.

Senator Kerry’s strength among Hispanic voters lies on domestic issues. 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%). Also the war in Iraq is opposed by Hispanics by a margin of 55% - 39%. However, in areas where Democrats have traditionally outpolled Republicans, Senator Kerry’s lead is insignificant and in one case non-existent. Kerry leads Bush on representing their personal and family values (45% - 38%) and representing their views on immigration (43% - 35%), but is tied with the President on being in touch with the Hispanic community (37% - 37%).

“Senator Kerry’s weak standing among 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 (82% - 12%). His immigration initiative has a 56% level of support and there’s strong support for reducing taxes among Hispanic registered voters,” Deposada added.

When asked what is the best strategy to get the economy moving and create jobs 56% said lowering taxes on families and businesses, while only 7% supported raising taxes to increase government spending. Only 29% would keep taxes and spending at current levels.

On health care, while Senator Kerry has a significant lead over 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. Hispanics also strongly support President Bush's tax credit initiative for uninsured workers with 81% supporting this program, and a plurality believe that the President's Medicare reform will improve the program for seniors by a margin of 42% - 20%.

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 (69% - 26%) and their opposition to gay marriages (63% - 26%).

"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."

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.

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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