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# HISPANIC FEDERATION RELEASES SURVEY ON HISPANIC NEW YORKERS

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**CLINTON HAS SIGNIFICANT LEAD OVER OBAMA**

**BATTLE FOR GRACIE MANSION IS WIDE-OPEN**

**KEY ISSUES FOR HISPANIC VOTERS INCLUDE THE ECONOMY,  
EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE**

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**New York, NY** – On Thursday, January 31, 2008, the Hispanic Federation released the results of its 15th annual survey *Hispanic New Yorkers on Nueva York* reporting the opinions of Latino New Yorkers on the upcoming presidential primary, New York City's 2009 democratic primary elections for mayor, immigration reform and other public policy priorities.

The Hispanic electorate in New York has become an increasingly important and much sought after voting group locally and nationally. In fact, New York City has the second largest concentration of Hispanic voters in the country. The emergence of New York's Latino vote has been triggered in large part by our region's Latino population boom. The Hispanic population in New York City grew from 1.78 million in 1990 to more than 2.2 million in 2004, an increase of 23%. During this 14-year period, the number of New York City Hispanics registered to vote grew from 450,000 to more than 630,000 – a 40% increase. Today, Latinos represent over 20% of New York City's electorate.

"Latinos have major public policy concerns and responses to issues of the moment that are extremely important to highlight and understand," said Lillian Rodríguez Lopez, President of the Hispanic Federation. "We are pleased that through this survey we are able to shed light on the issues, values and experiences of our City's vibrant and growing Latino community."

The following are the findings of the Federation's 2008 survey *Hispanic New Yorkers on Nueva York*:

## **Party Affiliation**

Latino voters in New York City continue to overwhelmingly identify themselves as Democrats.

- Three-quarters (74%) of Latinos report that they are registered Democrats vs. only 8% who state they are Republicans. In other words, for every one Latino Republican in New York City there are nine Latino Democrats.

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**Taking Hispanic causes to heart**

The partisan affiliation of Hispanic New Yorkers has remained remarkably consistent since the Hispanic Federation began conducting Latino opinion polls in 1993. For instance, ten years ago, 72% of registered Latinos considered themselves Democrats. Although solidly Democratic in registration, Latinos do not vote for candidates necessarily because of political party affiliation. Issues or candidates have arisen in years past that have driven Latinos to or away from one of our nation's political party.

### **Political Races**

- Senator Hillary Clinton enjoys a 50-point lead over Senator Barack Obama among registered Latino Democrats and Latino Democratic-leaning voters (66% to 16%), with John Edwards receiving minimal support at 2%.
- Another 15% of Latino Democrats are still undecided at this time.
- Clinton performs very strongly regardless of gender, although support for her is slightly higher among Latinas (70%) than Latino men (63%). She also enjoys a substantial lead over Obama among non-college educated Latino voters (71%, vs. 14% and 2% for Obama and Edwards, respectively).
- Latinos 18-49 years-old support Senator Clinton over Senator Obama by a three-to-one margin (65% for Clinton vs. 20% for Obama).
- Older Latinos voters in particular are a big source of support for New York's Junior Senator. Clinton has a more than five-to-one lead over Obama among Latinos 50 years and older (68% vs. 12%).
- Among college-educated Latinos, Clinton's support slips to 50% while Obama support jumps to 27%, and Edwards receives 7%.
- Clinton does even better among registered democrats who said that they were dominant Spanish speakers (80%), and dominates among all the major ethnic groups (Puerto Ricans 62%, Dominicans 77% and Mexicans 93%)
- In a Republican primary election, Latinos prefer Rudy Giuliani (42%), John McCain (13%), and Mitt Romney (10%) with 19% undecided. Given the small sample of respondents identifying themselves as registered Republicans, the margin of error renders the numbers statistically unreliable.

### **2009 NYC Mayoral Democratic Primary**

This year's survey reveals that the democratic primary battle for Gracie Mansion is wide-open.

- More than half of Latino voters (57%) are undecided about who they would vote for in a hypothetical 2009 Democratic Primary election for New York City Mayor among Congressman Anthony Weiner, NYC Comptroller Bill Thompson and NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn.
- Thirteen percent of Latinos report they would support Speaker Quinn in her bid for the Mayor's Office. An equal number (11% each) say they will vote for Comptroller Bill Thompson and Congressman Anthony Weiner in the race for NYC mayor.
- Another nine percent of those surveyed did not answer the question, which means that at this point only one-third (34%) of Latinos have a preference for a mayoral candidate.

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The lack of familiarity with those presumed to be running for Executive of New York City appears to be one of the reasons Latinos have not settled on a candidate.

- Only one in five Latino registered democrats knew the presumed mayoral democratic candidates: 21% recognize Comptroller Bill Thompson, and 20% express familiarity with Speaker Quinn and Congressman Weiner, respectively.

While still in the very early stages of the race for the Mayor's office, the HF poll indicates that there is an opportunity for any of these presumed candidates and other mayoral political aspirants to capture a large share of the Latino vote through targeted outreach campaigns and a focused effort on addressing issues of concern to Latinos.

### **Issues and Concerns**

The priorities and concerns of Latino New Yorkers are, in fact, quite universal. Like other Americans, Latinos want improvements in education, increased economic opportunities, better access to health care, affordable housing and fair treatment. However, what does seem to be important for Hispanic voters is that candidates address these policy issues with an understanding of their impact on Latino workers and their families.

High on the lists of concerns for Latinos this year is the economy and jobs, health care, education and the war in Iraq. The following are the top issues Latino registered voters say will impact whom they vote for President this year:

- The economy and jobs (35%)
- Health care and Medicare (32%)
- Education (31%)
- The war in Iraq (28%)
- Immigration (12%)
- Social Security (11%)
- National security (10%)
- Crime (9%)
- Civil Rights (7%)
- Taxes (5%)

### **Economy and Jobs**

There is growing anxiety across the country about the state of our national economy. While labor force participation among Latinos is very strong, Latinos are disproportionately represented in factories and workplaces (such as the tourism and service industry) that often bear the brunt of layoffs and wage cuts that result from an economic slowdown. It is not surprising, then, that 35% of Latinos stated that the "economy and jobs" is the top issue that will determine who they vote for in the presidential race.

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## Health Care

Latinos are clearly concerned about our nation's system of medical care and their ability to access and receive quality health care. A majority of Latinos state that the lack of health insurance and lack of quality health care (cited by 36% and 15%, respectively) are the top health issues facing the Latino community today. The continuing health disparities Latinos face with HIV/AIDS and diabetes is also a serious concern for Latinos. Thirteen percent cite HIV/AIDS and 10% cite diabetes as major problems confronting Latinos today.

Hispanic New Yorkers want the presidential candidates to pay heed to their health care concerns and 32% of them say that it will be a defining issue for them in determining how they vote this year.

## Education

Education has consistently ranked as one of the top issues of concern for the Latino community in New York City. The Federation's surveys have found that Latino families are eager for their youth to embrace the challenges of academic life and desperately want their kids to have greater educational opportunities. This year nearly one-third (31%) of Latinos said that education was the issue that mattered most to them in selecting our next president.

Latino New Yorkers are divided about the quality of New York City public schools. Half (49%) of Latinos give positive ratings to the public schools in their neighborhoods, but two in five (41%) give their local schools poor grades.

Hispanic New Yorkers identified numerous problems facing Latino schoolchildren in this year's survey. A quarter of Latinos (26%) believe that the schools simply do not have enough access to needed educational programming, including after-school, early childhood and bilingual education programs. Latinos also state that parents are not as involved in their children's education as they should be. Twenty-two percent of those surveyed said that lack of parental involvement is one of the most important problems facing Latino youth. School violence is cited by 18% of Latinos as a major issue of concern for schools and Latino schoolchildren. Other "top two" problems include: overcrowded schools, cited by 14% of Hispanics; and the high Latino dropout rate, mentioned by 11% of those surveyed. Another 13% of Latinos state that all these issues or problems are serious challenges facing Latino youth.

The dropout rate is at the heart of the Latino educational crisis in New York City and the nation. Latino youth have a much higher dropout rate than other students and dropout of school much earlier than other groups. Well-funded and comprehensive dropout prevention efforts that involve parents, the community and school leadership are desperately needed. By and large Hispanic New Yorkers support this action agenda, with 25% saying that more parental involvement is needed to address the high dropout rate among Hispanic youth and 17% citing the need for extra help and tutoring services for students who need it. Another 16% state that offering more vocational and job training programs in schools is part of the solution, along with more after-school programs (cited by an additional 13% of those surveyed). Other important steps mentioned include increasing teacher quality (11%), school districts keeping better track of student performance (8%) and more summer school programs (8%). An additional 16% of Latinos cite all these steps as important strategies in reducing the dropout rate.

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**Taking Hispanic causes to heart**

## War in Iraq

Our nation's nearly 5-year-old military engagement in Iraq is still a central issue for Latino voters as they evaluate their presidential candidates. More than a quarter (28%) of Latino New Yorkers ranked it as one of their top two issues in determining who they would support for President.

## Immigration

The heated debate about undocumented immigrants and immigration reform continues to be an issue of great national focus and will undoubtedly be a key issue in the presidential elections. Hispanics in general recognize and value the contributions of our nation's immigrants - both documented and undocumented.

- In this year's survey, two-thirds (64%) of Latinos say that undocumented immigrants fill essential jobs and strengthen local economies through the taxes they pay and the services they provide.
- Only 2 in ten (22%) say undocumented immigrants are a drain on local economies.
- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Latino New Yorkers think that the U.S. should allow undocumented immigrants to obtain legal status and stay in the country.
- However, only 12% of Latinos said that immigration would be extremely important in determining who they would vote for this year.

## Additional Data

Total Sample Size was 801

### Gender

Men – 47%

Women – 53%

### Education

College Grads – 18%

Total non-college grads – 78%

### Age

18-24 – 15%

25-34 – 20%

35-49 – 28%

50-64 – 23%

65+ - 10%

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**Ethnicity**

Puerto Ricans – 35%  
Dominicans – 24%  
Mexicans – 8%  
Central Americans – 7%  
Ecuadorians – 6%  
Columbians – 5%  
Other South Americans - 6%

**Citizenship**

Citizens – 72%  
Permanent Resident – 17%  
Non-Permanent Resident – 3%  
Undocumented – 4%

**Immigration**

Foreign born – 50%  
Native – 45%  
Wouldn't identify – 5%

**Voter Registration**

Registered – 68%  
Not registered – 31%  
Refused – 1%

Total Sample Size of Registered Democrats - 402

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This survey of Hispanic New Yorkers was conducted among 801 Hispanic adults by Global Strategy Group during January 14 through 23, 2008. The accuracy of the survey is within a margin of error of +/- 3.5%. The sample size for questions relating to the political races is 543 registered voters.

The Hispanic Federation is a service-oriented membership organization of 97 Latino health and human service agencies dedicated to promote the social, political and economic well-being of the Latino community. The Federation provides a wide-range of services geared towards strengthening Hispanic families and supporting Latino institutions serving over two million Hispanics living in the Northeast region. The Federation polls Hispanic Americans in the states of New York and New Jersey on a regular basis to gauge opinions on critical public policy issues and performance by elected representatives at all levels of government. For more information on the Hispanic Federation, please visit [www.hispanicfederation.org](http://www.hispanicfederation.org).