

To: Voter Participation Center / Center for Voter Information
Re: Poll of Latino voters in 6 battleground states on Voting by Mail
From: Matt Barreto and Angie Gutierrez, Latino Decisions
Date: August 18, 2020

Sample: On behalf of VPC, Latino Decisions implemented a battleground state poll of 1,552 Latinos in Arizona Florida, Colorado, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas. The poll ran from August 8-14 of 2020. Respondents are comprised mainly of registered voters (85%) with some eligible to vote, but not yet registered (15%). Overall margin of error is +/- 2.5 and 6.4 in each state.

Issues: For Latinos, the top issue in this election is increasing access and reducing costs of healthcare. The coronavirus pandemic has put greater pressure on access to care, as Latinos face major health effects. Beyond the pandemic, Latinos cite discrimination and racism as a top issue of concerns, both immigrant rights, as well as racism against Black people.

Big Concerns: The safety and reliability of vote by mail is an important concern for Latino voters this election given the realities of COVID-19. Latinos hold a range of views regarding vote by mail, many want to know more about vote by mail, but currently do not fully trust the process. Despite their own views, an overwhelming majority of Latinos believe that people should be able to decide whether or not they would like to vote by mail. Latinos remain concerned about possibly contracting coronavirus if they vote in person.

Requesting Vote by Mail

- There is limited knowledge on how vote by mail works, and 82% of respondents would like to receive clear instructions explaining how to sign up for and vote by mail.
- Only 60% of respondents have received adequate information on how to request Vote by Mail ballots.
- In Texas, which has very restrictive vote-by-mail, 57% of Latinos wrongly believe that anyone in Texas can request and receive an absentee ballot

Trust in Vote by Mail

- Latinos are mixed on trust and confidence. While 35% are very confident in vote-by-mail, 30% are not confident and 36% somewhat.
- 30% are concerned about signature matching requirements; and 37% do not trust the US Postal Service will deliver their ballot back to county elections department.
- 65% of Latino voters agree that they prefer to vote in person because they believe their vote is more likely to be counted than if they vote by mail.
- A majority of Latinos (55%) state that they do not trust election officials in their state to count their ballot if they vote by mail.

COVID-19 and Vote by Mail

- 76% of Latinos are concerned that they might be exposed to COVID-19 if voting in person. Concern is greatest among Latinos in Florida and Texas- two states with high case numbers.
- A majority of Latinos say they would leave their polling location if people are not wearing masks and anyone appears sick
- 70% of Latinos agree that vote by mail is safer because of COVID-19. This is highest in Arizona with 80% agreeing.

On Allowing Vote by Mail

- Voters are split almost 50/50 on whether they plan to vote in person or by mail, but 85% of Latino respondents agree that voting by mail should be a personal choice that should not be denied.

Recommendations: Based on the survey results, and consistent with VPC and CVI current plans, we recommend that more information be sent out to voters explaining not only how a person votes by mail, but also how they can verify that their ballot was counted. Latino voters are concerned about COVID-19 spreading at polling locations but need more information about vote by mail before they are able to trust the process.

- Using Colorado as an example of Latinos voting-by-mail increases confidence for 57%
- Reminding voters that vote-by-mail is safe in a time of covid garners 70% support
- Voters can avoid crowded precincts and long lines by using vote-by-mail
- Reminding Latinos that mail ballots count the same and are processed right away

Impact of Harris: The survey was in the field almost an equal number of days before and after the announcement of Senator Kamala Harris as the Democratic vice presidential candidate. Prior research has shown Harris to be popular among Latinos. When we split the data by interview date, those people interview up through the morning of Tuesday August 11th versus those people interviewed in the afternoon of the 11th or later, there is a noticeable bump in support for the Democratic ticket among Latinos, going from +33 Biden to +48 Biden.

LATINO VOTE	Pre-Harris	Post-Harris	Total
Vote for Trump	19.2	11.9	16.2
Leaning to Trump	6.9	5.3	6.2
Vote for Biden	42.8	46.0	44.1
Leaning to Biden	16.6	19.1	17.6
Someone else	1.3	2.8	1.9
Undecided	13.2	14.9	13.9
TOTAL TRUMP	26.2	17.2	22.4
TOTAL BIDEN	59.3	65.2	61.8
Net----->	33.2	48.0	