As Pence and Democrats Head to Florida, New Poll Answers the Question, “What Do Latinos Want to See in a Presidential Candidate?”

Poll offers an in-depth look at Latino voters’ sentiment on parties, key issues and President Trump

WASHINGTON, DC—Today, UnidosUS (formerly National Council of La Raza)—the nation’s largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization—presented the findings of a new poll that takes the temperature on Latino sentiment toward the parties, sketches what Latinos want to see in a presidential candidate and takes a closer look at what lies behind Latino issue priorities. The poll, conducted by Latino Decisions, surveyed 1,854 Latino registered voters between June 1 and 14, 2019.

According to the poll, a candidate that “values diversity and brings people together” led the list of traits Latino voters would like to see, over traits like “prior experience in elected office,” or “business and private sector experience.” “Speaks Spanish” ranked last among the traits Latino voters prioritize, according to the survey.

“Our community’s voters are sending a strong message: candidates matter, positions matter, and meaningful outreach is essential. Latino voters continue to show that they care about substance,” said Clarissa Martínez de Castro, UnidosUS Deputy Vice President for Policy and Advocacy. “Historically, a substantial number of Latino voters have been potential swing voters not bound by party affiliation. But it is also clear that there is a shift away from the GOP, as the Republican party has come to be seen as embracing or leading the charge on anti-immigrant and anti-Latino rhetoric and actions,” she said.

The poll shows that Latinos are willing to vote for candidates based on issue positions. Thirty-seven percent of respondents said that they have voted for a Republican candidate in past elections, and 38 percent said they would consider voting for a Republican candidate who spoke out against President Trump’s harsh policies, treated Latinos with respect and worked to create more humane immigration laws. However, 66 percent of all Latino voters are frustrated with the way Trump and his allies have treated Latinos and immigrants, and only 16 percent of all Latino voters said they like the Republican party of today.
“The poll shows that support for the GOP is eroding. More than half of Latinos who have voted for Republicans in past elections say it is hard to support Republican candidates right now. While the president claims Latino support is growing, that is not based in reality. In fact, he has brought down the overall likeability of the entire party,” Martínez de Castro said.

At the same time, only 57 percent of self-identified Democrats polled said they were certain they would participate in their state primary or caucus. And 17 percent of all Latinos remain undecided about who they will vote for in 2020.

“Looking at the more immediate future, Democrats have their work cut out for them. Latino voters want a candidate who values them and will unify the country. They want a national leader who will get things done on the issues that matter most to them,” said Sylvia Manzano, Principal, Latino Decisions.

On issues, the top three priorities Latino voters would like to see their ideal presidential candidate focus on are health care, jobs and the economy, and immigration, with education and gun violence rounding off the top five. When asked to name their number-one priority for candidates, 23 percent chose economy and jobs, 17 percent health care and 15 percent immigration. Notably, the poll provides additional detail on what is driving those priorities. On the economy, voters are concerned about unemployment, lack of jobs and low wages. Under health care, voters are concerned about cost and access to coverage. And under immigration, voters want to see a stop to family separation, abuse and deportations.

It is estimated that by 2020, Latinos will be the largest minority voting bloc. “Future elections will increasingly hinge on Latinos. If candidates want to connect with Latinos, they need to show they embrace the nation’s diversity, have a plan to get things done, and advance real solutions particularly in the economic, health and immigration areas,” Martínez de Castro concluded.

Methodology:

On behalf of UnidosUS, Latino Decisions surveyed 1,854 eligible Latino voters between June 1 and 14, 2019. The poll carries of margin of error of + / - 2.3 percentage points. Surveys were conducted in English or Spanish, according to the respondent’s choice, and were completed using a blended sample that included live telephone interviews on landlines and cell phones, and online surveys. Data were compared to the best-known estimates of the U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) for demographic profile of the eligible Latino electorate and weights were applied to bring the data into direct balance with Census estimates for the Latino eligible voter population.

Full results of UnidosUS and Latino Decisions 2020 National Latino Electorate Survey can be found here.

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UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), is the nation’s largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos at the national and local levels. For more than 50 years, UnidosUS has united communities and different groups seeking common ground through collaboration, and that share a desire to make our country stronger. For more information on UnidosUS, visit www.unidosus.org or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.