

Democracia USA Releases Results of National Poll of Young Latino Voters

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Miami – Democracia USA (D-USA), a leading national non-partisan Hispanic civic engagement and voter registration organization, released the results of a comprehensive national poll of young Latino voters. Considered to be the most comprehensive of its kind, the study measures the moods and tendencies of 1,500 Latino voters and citizens between the ages of 16 and 29 on issues like patriotism, discrimination, culture and political inclinations.

The poll reveals compelling information on the fastest growing segment of the U.S. Hispanic community. It is estimated that every year, for the next twenty years, half a million Hispanics will turn 18 and be eligible to vote, positioning them to potentially be the most influential bloc of voters for future elections.

“When the Latino vote made a marked difference in several swing states during the 2008 elections, many experts said that the sleeping giant had awakened. The findings of this poll show that the young giant is now awakening too,” said Jorge Mursuli, President of Democracia USA.

The major findings of the poll are:

ON ISSUES OF CULTURE

- The overwhelming majority of young Hispanic voters were born in the US
- Even though three-fifths of young Hispanic voters consider themselves bilingual, a substantial majority is English dominant.
- Even though almost every young Hispanic believes in the American Dream, a surprising 83 percent of them believe that discrimination is an important problem to them personally. The majority believes that it is a “very important problem.”
- As a result, almost 90 percent of young Hispanics remain strongly connected to the Hispanic community.

ON MEDIA USAGE

- Similar to other young people in the United States, Hispanic youth gets most of their information from the Internet and a majority of them regularly visit social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace.
- More than half of young Hispanic voters say that they watch Spanish-language television frequently.
- This reinforces previous findings about the bicultural nature of this group and its strong link to the Hispanic community.

ON POLITICS

- Young Hispanic voters are fairly liberal in their political thinking. Large majorities believe in a strong role for government in our society and that government should be heavily involved in the creation of jobs and in the improvement of the economy. Nevertheless, young Hispanics state that they do not know what their political ideology is.
- Young Hispanics are registering Democratic by a four-to-one margin. Many state that the Democratic Party is more inclusive of minority groups.
- President Barack Obama enjoys very favorable ratings among this group of Hispanic voters.
- A plurality of young Hispanic voters believes that the recently approved health care law is good policy.
- Nevertheless, more than a third indicate that they are not well informed about the impact of the new law on their lives.
- Less than ten percent of young Hispanic voters express an interest in the upcoming elections for the U.S. Congress at this time.

The poll was conducted by Miami based polling and research firm Bendixen & Amadi.

“This study offers incredible insight into the worlds that young Hispanics straddle as they grow up and develop a cultural, political and social identity in this country. These are Americans that feel comfortable with two languages, preserve their ethnic roots and are more concerned with family values than material possessions. But, like other young adults, they are obtaining news and information by communicating online and are relatively disengaged from politics,” added Mursuli.

“It is also no surprise that they strongly view discrimination as a major problem considering the rancorous debates around immigration reform and the Arizona law. By virtue of their bi-cultural identity, this group is hearing all of that hateful vitriol in both English and Spanish.”

Mursuli concluded that the promise offered by the growth of the young Hispanic voter population based on sheer numbers will only translate into a meaningful political force if this group increases its civic activism and political engagement. He said, “There is a lot on the line for all generations of young voters. But, this group in particular, seems to have more at stake in light of the strong passions generated on issues that matter to their parents and grandparents. They have a real opportunity to make a difference if they become active and engaged.”

To view a full version of the poll, please visit www.democraciausa.org. For more information or interview requests, please contact Gabriela Castillo at: gaby@balseracommunications.com or at: 305.441.1272.

Democracia USA

Democracia U.S.A. (D-USA) is a national non-partisan Hispanic civic engagement, voter empowerment, community organizing, and leadership development organization founded in 2004. D-USA is actively engaged in non-partisan civic engagement, voter registration, and GOTV (Get-out-the-Vote) efforts throughout Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Nevada, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Texas. In 2006, the Associated Press (AP) credited D-USA as having generated 70 percent of all new non-partisan voter registrations in the Hispanic community.

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