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Annenberg Study Shows Political Differences Among Hispanics of various Heritages

As both major political parties intensify their efforts to win votes from Hispanic voters, the nation's largest minority, new poll findings highlight the political differences and similarities among Hispanics of various heritages, with only those of Cuban backgrounds tilting toward Republicans.

On many economic issues, most Hispanics were closer to the views of all Democrats. For example, 48 percent of the public said the federal government should try to reduce differences in income among Americans, while another 48 percent said it should not. But 59 percent of Democrats, 64 percent of all Hispanics and 77 percent of Hispanics from the Caribbean said the government should reduce income disparities.

But Hispanics supported, or went beyond, Republican attitudes on some social issues. For example, 37 percent of all Hispanics and 49 percent of those with Central American heritage said the federal government should ban all abortions, a view held by only 31 percent of all Republicans and 22 percent of all Americans.

"These findings of the National Annenberg Election Survey of 2000 can be considered basically reliable measures of current Hispanic attitudes because these subjects are more general than those that were asked about particular candidates or issues in 2000 and no dramatic events have intervened that would alter attitudes," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

The results of the Annenberg survey, the largest academic election poll ever conducted, are disclosed in *Capturing Campaign Dynamics: The National Annenberg Election Survey*, by Daniel Romer, Kate Kenski, Paul Waldman, Christopher Adasiewicz and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, just published by Oxford University Press, complete with a CD-Rom containing the data. The survey is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center.

The 2000 survey had more than 79,000 respondents, including panel studies and special polls of primary states, but in the basic rolling cross-section, 4,676 Hispanics were interviewed. The size of the sample made it possible to differentiate among Hispanics who trace their heritage to different countries, groups that would be far too small to measure reliably in most polls. Even the 2000 national exit poll conducted by Voter News Service had only 873 Hispanic respondents in all. Consequently its showing of that 62 percent of them voted for

Vice President Al Gore and 35 percent voted for then-Governor George W. Bush of Texas was subject to a margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points.

In the Annenberg survey, the margin of sampling error for all Hispanics was only plus or minus one percentage point. These were the margins of sampling error for Hispanics of particular heritages:

- Mexican, plus or minus two percentage points
- Puerto Rican, plus or minus four
- Central American, plus or minus five
- South American, plus or minus six
- Spanish, plus or minus seven
- Cuban, plus or minus eight
- Caribbean, plus or minus nine

Democrats and Republicans are both striving to reach more Hispanic voters in 2004. The Democratic National Committee's first two debates among presidential candidates will be held in states with substantial Hispanic populations, in Albuquerque, New Mexico on Thursday and on October 9 in Phoenix, Arizona. New Mexico's Democratic Governor, Bill Richardson has announced plans to organize nationally, telling the *Albuquerque Journal* not long ago, "Our objective will be to unify the Hispanic community in the country — Cuban-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Hispanics in New Mexico, across the board."

Republicans have made it clear that they will emphasize issues like abortion and school vouchers (favored by 43 percent of all Americans but by 58 percent of Hispanics) to win their votes. Rudy Fernández, the Republican National Committee's Director of Grassroots Development, said recently "President Bush and the Republican Party are committed to continue working so that more Hispanics can send their children to a good school, buy a home, expand their small businesses, and fully achieve the American dream."

Although they played a large role in Richardson's victory in New Mexico in 2002, Hispanics have rarely turned out to vote in large numbers. They amounted to about ten percent of the voting age population in 2000 but cast about 6.5 percent of the votes. One reason may be that politicians paid less attention to them. Just 17 percent of Hispanics said they had been contacted by a presidential campaign in the fall of 2000. Among all Americans, the figure was 32 percent.

Self-proclaimed political party identification fluctuates during a campaign, although less dramatically than candidate preferences. Among all Americans during the course of the 2000 campaign, 31 percent said they were Democrats and 28 percent said they were Republicans. But 37 percent of Hispanics said they were Democrats and only 18 percent said they were Republicans.

This is the breakdown among various Hispanics:

HERITAGE	Democrats	Republicans
Caribbean	48%	10%
Cuban	25	39
Central American	34	15

Mexican	37	15
Puerto Rican	41	18
South American	37	18
Spanish	34	28

Those who said independent or cited other parties not shown.

The Democratic preference was clearly affected by income; 37 percent of all Americans with household incomes of less than \$25,000 identify with Democrats and just 20 percent with Republicans. Among Hispanics with incomes under \$25,000, 34 percent said Democrat and 14 percent said Republican.

But income is not the whole story. Among all Americans, higher-income respondents identify more with Republicans, compared to Democrats – by 33 to 29 percent among those with incomes of \$50,000 to \$75,000 and 35 to 27 percent among those with household incomes over \$75,000. Among Hispanics generally, the \$50,000 to \$75,000 respondents identified with Democrats by 40 to 23 percent, and those over \$75,000 by 35 to 26 percent. Only among Hispanics of Cuban or Spanish background did the higher income groups tilt toward Republicans.

The survey found important latent support for some arguments made by most Democratic presidential candidates this summer – that the Federal government should spend more money to improve the public schools and more money providing health care for people who do not have it and guaranteeing health insurance for all children. On those questions, Hispanics mirrored the response of Democrats generally, with no statistically significant variations among Hispanics with different heritages.

But abortion was not the only issue where Hispanics came down on the more Republican side of the argument. Fifty-eight percent of all Hispanics, with majorities in all heritage groups ranging up to 71 percent among those with Caribbean backgrounds, said the Federal government should “give tax credits or vouchers to help parents send their children to private schools.” Fifty-four percent of all Republicans but only 36 percent of Democrats agreed.

There were few foreign policy questions not rooted in the events of 2000, but one remains clearly relevant today. Respondents in the telephone interviews were asked “Should the government use American military forces to stop civil wars in other countries or not?” Overall, 66 percent of the public said no, but Hispanic opposition was not as strong, with 55 percent opposing such use of the military.

National Annenberg Election Survey 2000 - Hispanic Views on Issues

	Favor more Federal spending on public schools	Favor more Federal spending to cover people without health insurance	Want Federal government to prohibit abortion	Want Federal government to provide tax credits or vouchers to help parents pay for private schools	Should Federal Government try to reduce income differences between rich and poor? Yes No	
All respondents	67%	66%	22%	43%	48%	48%
All Hispanics *	80	75	37	58	64	31

Heritage						
Caribbean	85	83	51	71	77	13
Cuban	74	76	24	51	47	43
Central American	84	82	49	64	59	34
Mexican	81	74	41	58	67	29
Puerto Rican	80	79	28	65	66	27
South American	82	80	39	58	65	32
Spanish	75	68	24	52	41	53
Political Party**						
All Republicans	55	49	31	54	32	64
All Democrats	77	79	17	36	59	36
All Independents	66	68	18	42	48	49

* Includes all respondents calling themselves Hispanic (regardless of specifying a country of origin).

** Respondents identifying with other parties or saying “don’t know” are not included.

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