

## 2006 National Survey of Latinos: The Immigration Debate

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Latinos are feeling more discriminated against, politically energized and unified following the immigration policy debate and the pro-immigration marches this spring, according to the 2006 National Survey of Latinos conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center. More than half (54%) of Latinos surveyed believe the debate has increased discrimination. Almost two-thirds (63%) think the pro-immigrant marches this year signal the beginning of a new and lasting social movement. And in marked contrast to prior surveys, a majority (58%) now believes Hispanics are working together to achieve common goals.

The survey reveals that Latinos to some extent are holding the Republican Party responsible for what they perceive to be the negative consequences of the immigration debate, but the political impact of that perception is uncertain. At the same time, however, the Democratic Party showed no significant gains among Hispanic registered voters and by some measures may have lost some support. If anything, the survey shows that a growing number of Latinos are dissatisfied with both parties.

**About this report:** The 2006 National Survey of Latinos is the first major public opinion poll of the Hispanic population since the pro-immigration marches and policy debate this year. It was conducted by telephone among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Hispanic adults from June 5 to July 3, 2006. The survey has a margin of error of 3.8% for the full sample.

**About the Pew Hispanic Center:** Founded in 2001, the Pew Hispanic Center is a nonpartisan research organization supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts, a Philadelphia-based charity. The Pew Hispanic Center's mission is to improve understanding of the diverse Hispanic population and to chronicle Latinos' growing impact on the nation. The Pew Hispanic Center is a project of the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" in Washington, D.C., that provides information on the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping America and the world; it does not advocate for or take positions on policy issues.

## Executive Summary

Latinos are feeling more discriminated against, politically energized and unified following the immigration policy debate and the pro-immigration marches this spring, according to the 2006 National Survey of Latinos conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center.

More than half (54%) of Latinos surveyed say they see an increase in discrimination as a result of the policy debate, and three-quarters (75%) say the debate will prompt many more Latinos to vote in November. Almost two-thirds (63%) think the pro-immigrant marches this year signal the beginning of a new and lasting social movement. And a majority (58%) now believes Hispanics are working together to achieve common goals — a marked increase from 2002, when 43% expressed confidence in Latino unity.

54% of Latinos see an increase in discrimination as a result of the debate over immigration reform

The 2006 National Survey of Latinos was conducted by telephone among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Hispanic adults from June 5 to July 3, 2006. The survey has a margin of error of 3.8% for the full sample.

The survey shows that Latinos to some extent are holding the Republican Party responsible for what they perceive to be the negative consequences of the immigration debate, but the political impact of that perception is uncertain. Party affiliation among Latino registered voters has not changed significantly since the spring of 2004. However, the share of Latinos who believe the Republican Party has the best position on immigration has dropped from 25% to 16% in that time, with virtually the entire loss coming among foreign-born Hispanics (28% vs. 12%), who potentially represent an important and growing pool of future voters.

A growing number of Latinos are dissatisfied with both political parties

At the same time, the survey provides little solace for the Democratic Party, which showed no significant gains among Hispanic registered voters and which by some measures has lost some support. If anything, the survey shows that a growing number of Latinos are dissatisfied with both of the major parties. For example, one out of every four Hispanics (25%) now believes that neither political party has the best position on immigration issues, more than triple the

share (7%) who felt that way just two years ago. Among registered voters, the share picking neither party on immigration has increased from 9% in 2004 to 20% in the current survey.

The 2006 National Survey of Latinos is the first major public opinion poll of the Hispanic population to be conducted since this spring's pro-immigration marches and congressional debate. The survey helps provide answers to some of the most pressing questions that arose from those events. Among them:

- Do native-born Latinos feel threatened by a policy debate that has generated widespread denunciation of illegal immigration and resulted in numerous proposals to reduce or contain it? The survey indicates that this does seem to have happened. Among native-born and foreign-born Latinos, more than half (54%) say the immigration policy debate has made discrimination against Latinos more of a problem.
- Could the immigrant marches be the start of a new Latino social movement? Most Latinos think so. Native- and foreign-born Latinos in almost equal measures (62% and 64%, respectively) view the marches as indeed the beginning of a new Hispanic social movement that will go on for a long time rather than a one-time phenomenon. The share of Latinos who see Hispanics from different countries working together to achieve common political goals is also on the rise, and a clear majority of foreign-born Latinos (66%) and a substantial minority of the native born (44%) said they would participate in a future march.
- Will the marches and the debate have an impact on how Latinos will vote? Unclear. Across the board, including among registered voters, about three-quarters of Latinos predict that more Hispanics will vote in the November election as a result of the immigration debate, but the survey did not produce clear signs of a shift in Latino loyalties toward the two major political parties compared with surveys conducted in 2004 and earlier.
- Is the immigration debate relevant mainly to Mexicans, or are all Latinos equally affected by it and in general agreement on its consequences? Yes and no. A majority of Latinos, regardless of country of origin, believe that the immigration debate will drive more Hispanics to vote and that the marches signal the rise of a new and lasting movement. But Puerto Ricans and Cubans, who are not directly affected by the immigration debate and who are political opposites in many ways, have more restrictive views about immigration policy and are not convinced the marches created a favorable impression of unauthorized migrants.

## About the Authors

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## A Note on Terminology

The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably in this report.

Unauthorized migrant refers to a person who resides in the United States but who is not a U.S. citizen, has not been admitted for permanent residency and is not in any of the authorized temporary statuses permitting residency or work.

## A Note on Charts

Percentages in charts may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

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## Introduction

In December 2005 the U.S. House of Representatives passed an immigration bill that aimed to toughen border enforcement and make illegal immigrants liable to criminal prosecution. From mid-March to May 1, immigrant rights advocates, churches, unions and others groups organized marches in dozens of cities to protest the House bill and to seek legal status for unauthorized migrants. In late March, the U.S. Senate took up the immigration issue. It eventually passed a compromise bill that included some stepped-up enforcement measures and a legalization program whose greatest benefits would go to unauthorized migrants who have been in the country for at least five years. Meanwhile, President George W. Bush pressed throughout the spring for immigration reform, particularly his proposed guest worker program.

To explore the impact of these events on Latino public opinion, as well as other topics that will be presented in subsequent reports, the Pew Hispanic Center conducted the 2006 National Survey of Latinos. The survey included both new questions that relate specifically to recent events and questions that have appeared on previous surveys by the Center to chart changes in attitudes over time. Interviews were conducted from June 5 to July 3, a period that followed the last of the major marches and congressional votes and preceded the round of field hearings conducted by committees of both chambers of Congress this summer.

The survey was conducted by telephone and has a sample of 2,000 Latino adults who had the option to respond in Spanish, English or a combination of the two languages. The sample was drawn using Random Digit Dialing (RDD) methodology and was stratified according to density of Hispanic population and country of origin groups. The sampling design produced an oversample of Latinos of Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central and South American origins to allow for an analysis of differences in attitudes and experiences among those groups. As a result, both Latinos of Mexican origin and native-born Latinos in effect were somewhat under-sampled, although the survey produced a robust number of respondents in both these categories.

Results were weighted controlling for age within sex, gender, education, country of origin, and foreign/native born status, using 2005 Current Population Survey data. The full sample has a margin of error of +/-3.8. The margin of error for native-born respondents (N=569) is +/-6.55. The margin of error for foreign-born respondents (N=1,429) is +/-4.35. Fieldwork was conducted by International Communications Research (ICR) of Media, Pa. (See Appendix A for a detailed discussion of the survey methodology).

The 2006 National Survey of Latinos found that the marches and policy debate have had a clear impact on Hispanic public opinion and that a majority of Latinos see direct consequences from those events.

Attitudes toward the Latino population as a group, particularly in the extent to which the population acts in concert on a common political agenda, are heightened in comparison to prior surveys. Most Latinos see the immigration marches as the beginning of a social movement with staying power and say they would participate in a future march.

Most Hispanics see the immigration marches as the beginning of a social movement

Meanwhile, compared with prior surveys, a larger share of Latinos now sees discrimination as a major problem for Latinos as a group. And a majority believes that the immigration policy debate has prompted greater discrimination. Three out of four Latinos believe that many more Latinos will vote in the elections in November as a result of the debate, a view held equally among the native and foreign born, those who are registered to vote and those who are not.

There are other possible indications of the impact of the events. In this survey, native-born Latinos express somewhat more favorable views toward immigrants on two issues that the Pew Hispanic Center has probed repeatedly in prior surveys: A greater share of native-born Latinos (45%) now favors increasing the number of legal immigrants from Latin America, and the share saying illegal immigrants help the economy (72%) is bit higher than the trend evident in surveys going back to 2002.

More native-born Latinos now favor increasing the number of legal immigrants from Latin America

Despite the strong majorities that agree on many points, several variations in opinion among sub-groups of the Hispanic population emerge from the survey. As is often the case in polls of Latinos, some of the clearest differences are between Latinos born in the United States and those born elsewhere. The native born, for example, are more likely than the foreign born to say the policy debate has heightened discrimination, but they are less likely to say they would participate in a future march. Differences also emerge among Latinos of different national origins. Hispanics of Cuban descent and to a lesser extent those of Puerto Rican origin stand out as being less likely to ascribe consequences to the marches and the policy debate compared with Latinos of Mexican origin.

The survey shows there are areas where the marches and debate have not had an obvious impact, particularly in political viewpoints. For example, attitudes toward the two major political parties do not demonstrate a significant and consistent shift compared with prior surveys. Although the restrictive measures that have provoked a negative reaction among most Latinos are associated with the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives, the Republican Party shows no significant slippage in party affiliation among Latino registered voters compared with surveys conducted since 1999. In fact, affiliation with the Democratic Party seems to have eroded over time. Other measures show no change in registered voters' opinions of the two parties. To the extent that Republicans have suffered losses, they are most significant among Latino immigrants who are not citizens and are focused on the party's handling of immigration.



## Impact of the Immigration Debate

### Perceptions of Discrimination

As in 2002 and 2004, a significant majority of Latinos (82%) say that discrimination is a problem that prevents Latinos in general from succeeding in America. The intensity of that attitude, however, has increased: 58% of Hispanics now say discrimination is a “major” problem, compared with 44% in the 2002 National Survey of Latinos. Both the native and foreign born see greater problems with discrimination.

**In general, do you think discrimination against (Hispanics/Latinos) is a major problem, minor problem, or not a problem in preventing (Hispanics/Latinos) in general from succeeding in America?**

	PROBLEM			Not a problem	Don't know	Refused
	NET	Major	Minor			
2006 Total	82	58	24	15	2	1
Native born	80	48	32	17	2	1
Foreign born	84	66	18	13	2	*
06/2004*	81	51	30	16	2	*
06/2002**	82	44	38	16	2	NA

\*PHC/KFF Latino Survey on Politics    \*\*KFF/Pew Latino Survey 2002

The debate over immigration policy clearly emerges from the survey as an important factor in prompting the greater perception of discrimination. A majority of Latinos (54%) say that the debate over immigration policy has made discrimination against Latinos more of a problem while 15% said it has had no effect and 9% said it has made discrimination less of a problem.

**Do you think that the debate over immigration policy in the U.S. has made discrimination against (Hispanics/Latinos) more of a problem, less of a problem or has it had no effect on discrimination?**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Native born</b>	<b>Foreign born</b>
Debate over policy has made it more of a problem	54	57	51
Debate over policy has made it less of a problem	9	7	10
Debate over policy has had no effect	15	13	16
Discrimination against Latinos is not a problem	15	17	13
Don't know	2	2	2
Refused	1	1	*

The perception that the debate has had a negative impact on discrimination is equally shared by a majority of Latinos, regardless of gender, age, education, income, religious preference or party affiliation. It held regardless of whether Hispanics lacked a high school diploma or had a college degree or higher; whether they earned \$30,000 or less or \$50,000 or more.

Given that much of the heated rhetoric was aimed at immigrants, particularly at those who are in the country without authorization, foreign-born Latinos might have been expected to register a stronger reaction than those who are native born. However, 51% of the foreign born see the debates as the cause of more discrimination, compared with 57% of the native born, and the difference between them is not statistically significant.

Examining responses by generation of nativity confirms that Latinos far removed from the immigrant experience in their family histories perceive the debate as a source of greater discrimination every bit as much as the most recent arrivals. Among the first generation—the foreign born—51% see more discrimination flowing from the debate compared with 47% of the second generation—the U.S.-born children of immigrant parents—and 60% of the third-plus generations—the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents. There is no statistically significant difference in those responses.

The view was held in similar measures by U.S. citizens and non-citizens, and by those who are registered voters and those who are not. In each case, a little more than half saw more discrimination as a result of the debate. Latinos who identify

themselves with the Republican Party were somewhat less likely to take this view (44%) than Democrats (57%) or independents (57%). And among Latinos who identified themselves as born-again or evangelical Christians—an important constituency for the Republican Party—55% said the debate made discrimination more of a problem. Among country of origin groups, only Cubans (35%) depart from the pattern. Puerto Ricans, who are U.S. citizens by birth, are as likely as foreign-born Mexicans to see more discrimination against Latinos resulting from the debate.

### Intentions to Vote

Participants in many of the pro-immigration rallies that took place across the country in the spring chanted, “Today we march, tomorrow we vote.” Three-quarters (75%) of Latinos surveyed agreed that as a result of the debate over immigration policy in Washington, many more Hispanics will vote in the November elections.

Latino voting still constitutes only a small portion of all votes cast in national elections—6% in 2004. Low levels of voter participation, combined with the high numbers of Latinos who are not eligible to vote because they are either not citizens or not old enough, meant that less than a fifth (18%) of all Hispanics voted in the 2004 elections. By contrast, about half (51%) of the non-Hispanic white population and about one-third (39%) of the black population voted in 2004, according to a Pew Hispanic Center analysis of population data.

Three out of four agreed that more  
Hispanics will vote in November

Nevertheless, both Latino preferences and participation are closely watched because as a group Hispanics are the only fast-growing share of the electorate. From 2000 to 2004, the number of Latino voters jumped by 1.4 million, or 23 percent, twice the growth rate of non-Hispanic whites. Hispanics are also younger than the rest of the population—34% of all Latinos are 18 and younger, compared with 22% for the non-Hispanic white population. Unlike other Hispanic age groups, Latinos 18 and younger are overwhelmingly native born and thus eligible to vote when they turn 18. Between the 2000 and 2004 elections nearly 1.5 million native-born Latinos became old enough to vote, and the pace of that growth will accelerate.

The survey found overwhelming agreement that the debate over immigration policy will result in more Latinos voting. This view was held by a significant majority of Hispanics regardless of age, income, language preference, national origin group or whether Latinos were native born or immigrants. Evangelical Christians were just as likely to agree as those of other religions (76% vs. 74%).

Those who were the most educated, with a college degree or higher, were just as likely to expect voter turnout to increase because of the debate as those with a high school degree or less.

**Some people say that as a result of the debate over immigration policy in Washington, many more (Hispanics/Latinos) will vote in the November elections. Others say that the debate will not have much effect on political participation. Which comes closer to your views?**

	<b>Many more will vote</b>	<b>There will not be much effect on political participation</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total	75	19	6	*
Native born	74	23	3	*
Foreign born	76	16	7	*

## Impact of the Immigration Marches

### A New Social Movement?

The pro-immigrant marches were notable both because of their size in some cities and because they took place in so many communities across the country. They were also notable because these unprecedented rallies were mainly the result of a grass-roots effort that involved the Spanish-language media, local immigrant rights coalitions, local labor leaders, the Catholic Church, other religious organizations, student groups and many more.

Asked to choose which of two statements came closest to their views, almost two-thirds (63%) of Latinos said the immigrant marches were the beginning of a new Hispanic/Latino social movement that will go on for a long time. In contrast, about one in four (24%) described the marches as a one-time event that will not necessarily be repeated. Latino Democrats (65%) and independents (64%) were more likely to take this view than Latino Republicans (52%). But overall—and regardless of income, education, language ability and other factors—Hispanics by a sizeable margin agreed that a new movement would emerge from the marches. There were no significant differences among country of origin groups on this question.

**I am now going to read you two statements about the immigrant marches in many American cities that took place this spring. Please tell me which comes closest to your views.**

	<b>The immigrant marches are the beginning of a new (Hispanic/Latino) social movement that will go on for a long time</b>	<b>The immigrant marches were a one-time event that will not necessarily be repeated</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total	63	24	12	1
Native born	62	26	11	1
Foreign born	64	22	13	1

The survey also asked Latinos whether they thought the marches had a positive effect on the way the rest of the American public thinks about illegal or undocumented immigrants, a negative effect or no effect at all. A majority (52%) thought the marches had a positive effect, but almost one in four (24%) characterized the effect as negative. On this question there were significant differences among Latinos, particularly between those who were native born and those who were foreign born. Among native-born Mexicans, for example, only 45% thought the marches had a positive effect on the way the rest of the American public thinks about illegal or undocumented immigrants, compared with 63% among foreign-born Mexicans. Similarly, only 48% of third-generation Hispanics viewed the marches as a positive, compared with 60% among first-generation Latinos. Among those who were English dominant, 32% said the marches had a positive effect on the way Americans viewed undocumented immigrants, compared with 64% among those who were Spanish dominant.

**Do you think the recent immigrant marches this spring had a positive effect on the way the American public thinks about illegal or undocumented immigrants, a negative effect or no effect?**

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>No effect</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total	52	24	16	9	*
Native born	42	30	20	8	*
Foreign born	60	18	12	9	*

To measure the potential long-term impact of the marches on Latino attitudes, the survey asked: “If there was going to be another of these marches in your home town this weekend, would you participate or not?” More than half (56%) said they would participate in a future march, an indication of how well-received the demonstrations were among Latinos overall.

**If there was going to be another of these marches in your home town this weekend, would you participate or not?**

	<b>Yes, would participate</b>	<b>No, would not participate</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total	56	39	4	*
Native born	44	52	4	*
Foreign born	66	29	4	1

### For Some, United We Stand

Hispanics in surveys routinely describe themselves as culturally distinct from one another, with the country of origin being a significant marker. For example, in this poll, three-quarters (75%) of the respondents say that Latinos from different countries all have separate and distinct cultures while slightly under one-quarter (23%) say that they share one culture. But those fundamental attitudes appear to be shifting, and the events of the spring of 2006 may have accelerated the shift.

#### Which comes closer to your views? (Hispanics/Latinos) from different countries ...?

	Share one (Hispanic/Latino) culture	All have separate and distinct cultures	Don't know	Refused
Total	23	75	2	1
Native born	22	76	2	1
Foreign born	23	74	2	1
2002	14	85	2	*

In the 2002 National Survey of Latinos, the question on separate cultures produced an 85% to 14% split compared with the 75% to 23% split in this survey. Both in 2002 and in this survey, the native and foreign born had the same views on this question. More significantly, the same basic trend toward a somewhat greater sense of unity is apparent when Latinos are asked whether Hispanics from different countries are working together politically or not.

Latinos were and remain split over whether they see themselves working to achieve common political goals, but the share of Hispanics who see a common effort is significantly higher now, particularly among the foreign born. In 2002 a plurality of Latinos surveyed (49%) said Hispanics were not working together politically and a smaller share (43%) said they were in fact working together to achieve common goals. There was no significant difference in responses between the native and foreign born.

The 2006 survey reveals a somewhat greater sense of solidarity. Now, 58% of Latinos see fellow Hispanics from different countries working together to achieve common political goals, versus 34% who say they are not working together. This

is a significant swing in public opinion, and it is evident to some extent throughout the Latino population, with Cubans being the notable exception. However, the perception of common political effort is strongest among Latinos of Mexican origins, with 66% of the foreign born and 56% of the native born agreeing on this greater sense of solidarity.

**Which comes closer to your views? (Hispanics/Latinos) from different countries...?**

	<b>Today are working together to achieve common political goals</b>	<b>Are not working together politically</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
2006 Total	58	34	8	1
Native born	52	40	8	1
Foreign born	62	29	7	2
2002 Total	43	49	8	--
Native Born	45	48	7	--
Foreign Born	42	50	8	--



## Political Repercussions

President Bush made important gains among Latinos in the 2004 presidential election, capturing 40% of their vote, up from 34% in 2002 and the best share recorded for a Republican presidential nominee, according to a Pew Hispanic Center analysis of exit poll data. The election also marked a watershed moment for the Republican Party. The exit polls showed that 27% of Latino voters in 2004 identified as Republican, a higher mark than the GOP has recorded among registered voters in any of the Center's surveys. For political strategists, a lingering question is whether the Republican Party will be able to secure and expand on Bush's 2004 gains among Hispanics, who as noted before are important because they are the only fast-growing part of the electorate and will be for many years to come.

The debate over immigration reform divided the Republican Party, as demonstrated by the House and Senate legislative versions and Bush's own positions. One concern voiced by some Republican strategists is whether Hispanics will hold the Republican Party responsible for the legislation approved by the House, which was advanced by Republicans and which many Latino activists view as punitive. A broader question is whether the Democrats, who among Latino registered voters generally hold a two-to-one advantage over the Republican Party, will make any significant gains as a result of the immigration debate.

The 2006 National Survey of Latinos shows that Hispanics to some extent are holding Republicans responsible, though the cost of this in political terms is uncertain. Only 16% of Latinos believe the Republican Party has the best position on immigration, a decrease from 25% in 2004. Almost all of the loss occurred among the foreign born, with the share favoring the GOP on immigration dropping from 28% to 12%. Although most of these Hispanics are not eligible to vote because they are not U.S. citizens, they potentially represent a large and growing pool of future voters. However, Republicans did not lose ground among Latinos who are currently registered voters as the survey showed no change in their views on this point.

At the same time, the survey provides little solace for the Democratic Party, which showed no gains among Hispanic registered voters as a result of the immigration debate. The share of Hispanics picking the Democrats as the best party on immigration issues declined from 2004 to 2006 among both Latinos overall (39% to 35%) and Latino registered voters (48% to 43%).

**In general, which of the political parties has the best position on immigration issues?**

	<b>Republicans</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total	16	35	25	22	1
Native born	22	40	22	16	*
Foreign born	12	32	27	28	1
03/2004*	25	39	7	27	1

\*PHC Hispanic Media Study

If anything, the survey shows that a growing number of Latinos are dissatisfied with both of the major political parties. One out of every four (25%) now believes neither political party has the best position on immigration issues, more than triple the share who felt that way just two years ago. Similarly, on another question that asks which party has more concern for Latinos, the share of Latinos who see no difference between the parties is the same as those who favor the Democrats (37%). Among registered voters, however, the Democrats have a major advantage over Republicans (46% vs. 9%) as the party that is perceived to have more concern for Latinos.

**Which party do you think has more concern for (Hispanics/Latinos)—the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, or is there no difference?**

	<b>Democratic Party</b>	<b>Republican Party</b>	<b>No difference</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total	37	9	37	15	2
Native born	42	8	40	9	1
Foreign born	33	9	35	21	3
08/1999*	44	10	38	8	NA

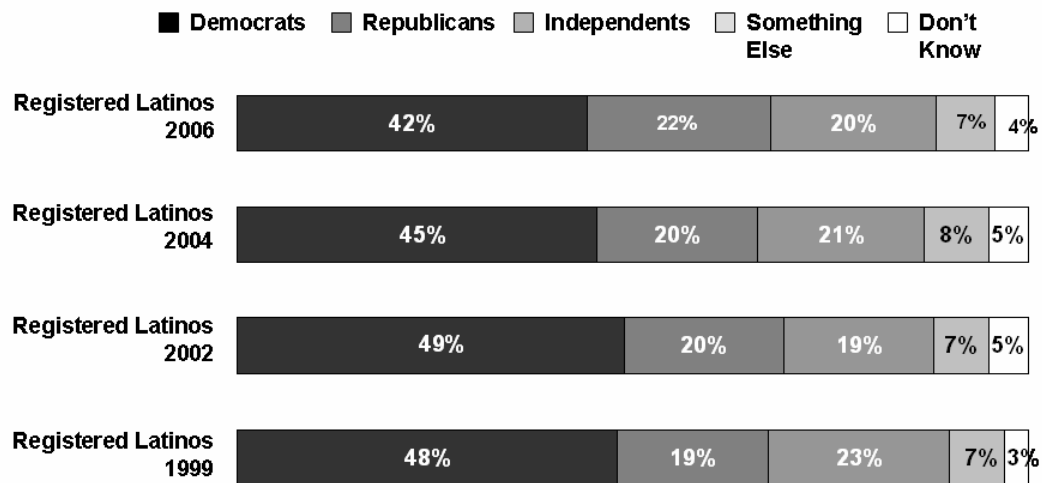
\* WP/KFF/Harvard Latino Survey 1999

Measures of party identification have been fairly steady over time, although the survey data suggest an erosion of support for the Democratic Party in recent years. In the Center's surveys, the share of Latinos identifying with the Democrats

is down from 49% in 2002 to 42% in the most recent survey. However, the Republicans show no significant gains, with their share at 20% in 2002 and 22% in the current survey.

## Party Affiliation of Registered Latino Voters

Percent of registered Latinos who say they consider themselves ...



Sources: Pew Hispanic Center *2006 National Survey of Latinos*, conducted June 5- July 3, 2006; Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Politics and Civic Engagement*, July 2004 (conducted April – June 2004); Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: The Latino Electorate*, October 2002 (conducted April- June 2002); Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard *National Survey on Latinos in America*, January 2000 (conducted July – August 1999)

## Views on Policy Options

The pro-immigrant marches were a response to the debate over immigration reform in Washington, which has produced two legislative proposals. The first, approved by the House of Representatives in December, would mandate construction of a 700-mile fence along the U.S.-Mexico border, require employers to verify the Social Security numbers of all employees, increase fines against those who employ unauthorized workers, and make it a felony to enter the country illegally. In addition, the legislation would make it a felony to assist anyone who enters or attempts to enter the country illegally or remain in the country illegally.

The bill passed by the Senate in April would mandate construction of a 370-mile fence along the border, require employers to use an electronic system to verify that new hires are legal and increase fines against employers who hire illegal workers. It also would set different requirements for illegal immigrants: Those who have been in the country for five years or longer would be allowed to remain and eventually become legal residents as long as they met certain requirements; those who have been in the country for two to five years would be required to go to a point of entry at the border and file an application to return; and those who have been in the country for less than two years would be forced to leave. The proposal also would create a guest worker program for an estimated 1.5 million immigrant farm workers who could earn legal permanent residency, and it would provide 200,000 new temporary guest worker visas a year.

41% of Latinos say only some of the undocumented migrants should be allowed to stay in the country

Latino views on immigrants and on the major policy options have generally remained consistent over several years. In the current survey, most Latinos (72%) said illegal immigrants help the economy by providing low-cost labor, while a minority (21%) says they hurt by driving down wages. Majorities favor a temporary worker program for all undocumented immigrants. But like the rest of the American public, though to a lesser extent, there are divisions among Latinos on immigration and the policy options. For example, a significant minority (41%) said only undocumented immigrants who have been in the country for at least five years should be permitted to stay. Unlike the general public, however, only a small fraction of Latinos (5%) said that no undocumented immigrants should get a chance to stay and become citizens.

## Economic Impact of Illegal Immigration

In four previous surveys, the Center has probed Hispanic views on the economic impact of illegal immigration, and the results have been highly consistent. In this survey again about seven of 10 Latinos said that illegal immigrants help the economy by providing low-cost labor, while a significant minority of nearly a quarter (21%) said that they hurt the economy by driving wages down.

Nativity has repeatedly proved to be the major dividing line on this topic, with nearly twice as many native-born Latinos (28%) seeing economic harm from illegal immigration. Among national origins groups, much smaller majorities of Puerto Ricans (57%) and Cubans (50%) take a positive view of the economic impact of illegal migration than among Mexicans (78%) or Central and South Americans (71%). All Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth and virtually all Cubans are either U.S. citizens or legal immigrants. Both Puerto Ricans (35%) and Cubans (39%) are more than twice as likely as Latinos of Mexican origins (16%) to say that illegal immigrants hurt the economy.

**Some people say unauthorized or illegal immigrants help the economy by providing low-cost labor. Others say they hurt the economy by driving wages down. Which is closer to your views?**

	<b>Help the economy by providing low-cost labor</b>	<b>Hurt the economy by driving wages down</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
2006 Total	72	21	6	1
Native born	64	28	6	1
Foreign born	78	15	6	1
08/2005 *	68	23	8	2
06/2004**	69	23	8	1
03/2004***	72	23	5	1
06/2002****	71	23	6	NA

\*PHC Survey of US Latinos 2005, \*\*PHC/KFF Latino Survey on Politics

\*\*\*PHC Hispanic Media Study \*\*\*\*KFF/Pew Latino Survey 2002

## Legal Migration

Views on the flow of legal immigration from Latin America are highly consistent. In 2002, for example, and again in this survey, nearly half (48%) of Latinos favor increasing the number of legal immigrants from Latin America, nearly a third (32%) favor keeping the same number and a slightly more than one in 10 favor reducing the number. On this point, Puerto Ricans differ significantly, with only 28% favoring an increased flow, 40% favoring no change and 23% favoring a reduction. Republicans and Democrats take similar views. The native born are somewhat less supportive of increased flows although the difference with the foreign born is not statistically significant.

**Some people think the United States should allow more Latin Americans to come and work in this country legally; some people think the U.S. should allow the same number as it does now; and others think it should reduce the number who come and work in this country legally. Which is closer to your opinion?**

	<b>Allow more Latin Americans to come and work in this country legally</b>	<b>Allow the same number as it does now</b>	<b>Reduce the number who come to work in this country legally</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
2006 Total	48	32	12	7	1
Native born	45	36	15	4	*
Foreign born	51	28	9	10	1
06/2002*	46	34	15	4	NA

*\*KFF/Pew Latino Survey 2002*

## Enforcement Policies

Most Latinos (66%) oppose building more fences along the U.S.-Mexico border, and even more (70%) are against sending the National Guard. But only half (51%) is against increasing the number of border patrol agents. As for increasing the number of border patrol agents, a bare majority (51%) opposes it.

Several border control measures are under consideration. For each tell me whether you are in favor or do you oppose it.

	Total	Favor	Oppose	Don't know	Refused
Build more fences		28	66	6	1
Increase the number of border patrol agents	43	51	5	1	
Send National Guard	25	70	4	*	

On these policy issues, there are significant differences between native-born Latinos, who tend to favor some restrictions and limits on immigration, and Latino immigrants, who generally express overwhelming support for increased immigration and in particular for undocumented immigrants. For example, a majority of native-born Hispanics (53%) supports adding border patrol agents, while a slightly larger majority (59%) of foreign-born Hispanics opposes an increase in enforcement.

Native born	Favor	Oppose	Don't know	Refused
Build more fences	37	57	5	1
Increase the number of border patrol agents	53	41	4	1
Send National Guard	34	63	3	*

Foreign born	Favor	Oppose	Don't know	Refused
Build more fences	20	73	7	*
Increase the number of border patrol agents	35	60	5	*
Send National Guard	19	76	4	*

There were also stark differences on whether the government should create a data base of all legal workers and require employers to verify employees. While a majority of Latinos (55%) overall support a database, among foreign-born Latinos the support fell to 42%. By comparison, 70% of all native-born Latinos favor a data base. A similar deep divide exists among Mexicans. Among foreign-born Mexicans, a little more than a third (38%) support a data base while almost three-quarters (72%) of Mexicans born in the United States approve of one.

**Do you think the government should create a data base of all legal workers and require verification by employers before hiring a worker?**

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
Total	55	39	5	*
Native born	70	26	4	*
Foreign born	42	50	7	*

### Legalization and Temporary Workers

There are similar divisions over what should be done with illegal immigrants already residing in the country. Among foreign-born Latinos, for example, 61% said all illegal immigrants should be allowed to stay permanently and be given a chance at citizenship, while only 42% of native-born Hispanics agreed. On this issue, as with other policy matters, income, education and generation all were factors in shaping perceptions.

Family ties and direct experience of immigration are the most powerful indicators of attitudes on this subject. Latinos closest to the immigrant experience are most likely to support the most generous legalization options. Among first-generation Latinos, or the immigrant population, 61% favor allowing all illegal immigrants to remain in the country. In the second generation, or the children of immigrants, the rate is 51%. And, in the third –plus generations, or the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents, 40% concur with blanket legalization. Among those Latinos whose language was Spanish, 65% favor allowing all illegal immigrants to stay, compared with 41% among those whose primary language was English and 42% of bilingual Latinos.

Survey questions on temporary worker programs consistently show that a majority of roughly between 55% and 70% favor this alternative while a significant minority of 30% to 40% opposes it. The opposition to such programs draws both people who do not want to grant any form of legal status to



unauthorized migrants, those who think a temporary program is insufficiently generous and those who question whether a temporary program is practical.

**As you may know, the U.S. Congress has various proposals for dealing with the millions of illegal immigrants who live in this country. Let me read you three of the options under consideration, and please tell me which you would support. Would you support...?**

	<b>All should be allowed to stay in the U.S. permanently and have a chance to become citizens</b>	<b>Only those who have been here for at least five years should be allowed to stay and become U.S. citizens</b>	<b>None should be allowed to stay and become citizens</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Total	52	41	5	2	*
Native born	42	48	8	2	*
Foreign born	61	35	2	2	*

Survey questions on temporary worker programs consistently show that a majority of roughly between 55% and 70% favor this alternative while a significant minority of 30% to 40% opposes it. The opposition to such programs draws both people who do not want to grant any form of legal status to unauthorized migrants, those who think a temporary program is insufficiently generous and those who question whether a temporary program is practical.

**As an alternative to a permanent stay, another proposal would allow thousands of migrants to come in as temporary workers for a limited period of time but only if they agree to return to their country. Are you in favor or do you oppose this kind of program?**

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Refused</b>
2006 Total	60	34	6	*
Native born	54	39	7	*
Foreign born	65	29	6	*
06/2004*	55	38	7	1
06/2002**	71	27	2	NA

*\*PHC/KFF Latino Survey on Politics \*\*KFF/Pew Latino Survey 2002-modified*

## Immigration as an Issue

About 14% of Latinos cited immigration as “the most important problem facing the country today,” second only to the war in Iraq (22%). But Hispanics, who in past surveys have not ranked immigration as a top-tier issue, are divided on how much of a concern it is to them. As with other matters involving immigration, the split is generally between Latino immigrants and Latinos who are born in the U.S. Foreign-born Latinos in this case were more than three times as likely to see immigration as the most important problem compared with native-born Latinos (20% vs. 6%).

Among first generation Hispanics, for example, one out of five (20%) cited immigration as the most important problem facing the country today, making it the top priority for this Latino sub-group. By comparison, only 9% of second-generation Latinos viewed it as such. Third-generation Hispanics were even less inclined—only 5% viewed it as the most important issue. The difference among Mexicans is just as pronounced. While 20% of foreign-born Mexicans viewed it as the most important problem facing the country, only 3% of U.S.-born Mexicans regarded it as such.

## Other Resources

[Attitudes Toward Immigrants And Immigration Policy: Surveys Among Latinos in the U.S. and in Mexico](#), Pew Hispanic Center, August 2005.

[Hispanics and the 2004 Election: Population, Electorate and Voters](#), Pew Hispanic Center, June 2005.

[Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation 2004 National Survey of Latinos: Politics and Civic Participation](#), July 2004.

[Changing Channels and Crisscrossing Cultures: A Survey of Latinos on the News Media](#), Pew Hispanic Center, April 2004.

[Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation 2002 National Survey of Latinos](#), December 2002.

[Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of Latinos: The Latino Electorate](#), October 2002.

[The Washington Post/Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University National Survey on Latinos in America](#), January 2000.

## Appendix: Methodology

The Pew Hispanic Center conducted a public opinion survey among people of Latino background or descent that was designed to ask questions specific to the topic of immigration. To fully represent the opinions of Latino people living in the United States, International Communications Research (ICR), an independent research firm headquartered in Media, Pa., conducted interviews with a statistically representative sample of Latinos in target regions of high Latino concentration so that they could be examined nationally. Furthermore, to increase the statistical power of various sub-groups, the design was stratified to include fewer Mexicans and greater numbers of non-Mexicans, as will be described below.

The study was conducted for The Pew Hispanic Center via telephone by ICR. Interviews were conducted from June 5 – July 3, 2006 among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Latino respondents ages 18 and older. Of those respondents, 569 were native born (including Puerto Rico) and 1,429 were foreign born (excluding Puerto Rico). The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.80 at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error for native-born respondents is +/-6.55 at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error for foreign-born respondents is +/-4.35 at the 95% confidence level.

For this survey, ICR maintained a staff of Spanish-speaking interviewers who, when contacting a household, were able to offer respondents the option of completing the survey in Spanish or English. A total of 468 respondents were surveyed in English, and 1,560 respondents were interviewed in Spanish (16 were surveyed in both languages).

### Eligible Respondent

The survey was administered to any person ages 18 and older who is of Latino origin or descent, though some screening was necessary to interview fewer Mexicans and Central Americans (as described below).

### Field Period

The field period for this study was June 5 – July 3, 2006. The interviewing was conducted by ICR. All interviews were conducted using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing system. The CATI system ensured that questions followed logical skip patterns and that the listed attributes automatically rotated, eliminating “question position” bias.

### Sampling Methodology

A stratified sample via the Optimal Sample Allocation sampling technique was used for the survey. By utilizing a stratified sample, one sample source was used to complete all interviews. This technique provides a highly accurate sampling frame. In this case, we examined a list of all telephone exchanges within a target area (national, by state, etc.) and listed them based on concentration of Latino households and specific Latino heritage. We then divided these exchanges into various groups, or strata.

Consequently, we used a disproportionate stratified RDD sample of Latino households. The primary stratification variables are the estimates of Latino household incidence and heritage in each NPA-NXX (area code and exchange) as provided by the GENESYS System – these estimates are derived from Claritas and are updated at the NXX level with each quarterly GENESYS database update. The basic procedure was to rank all NPA-NXXs in the United States by the incidence of Latino households and their ethnicity. This produced strata that were called Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central American, South American, High Latino, Medium Latino, and Low Latino. These strata were then run against InfoUSA and other listed databases, and then scrubbed against known Latino surnames. Any “hits” were subdivided into ‘surname’ strata, with all other sample being put into “RDD” strata. Overall, the study employed 18 strata, 9 (Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc.) x 2 (surname/RDD). There are two important aspects of this plan worth noting. First, the existence of surname strata does not mean this was a surname sample design. The sample is RDD, only telephone numbers were then divided by whether they were found to be associated with or without a Latino surname. This was done simply to increase the number of strata (thereby increasing the control we have to meet ethnic targets) and to ease administration (allowing for more effective assignment of interviewers and labor hours). Second, just because a stratum is called, for example, “Mexican,” did not mean Mexicans were the only respondents we interviewed in that stratum. Rather, we accepted any Hispanic as valid for the study, in every strata. The only exception to this was Mexicans, where even in this design, whose goal was in part of lower the overall number of Mexican interviews, we still had to exclude every third Mexican household we encountered.

For purposes of estimation, we employed an optimal allocation scheme. This “textbook” approach allocates interviews to a stratum proportionate to the number of Latino HH but inversely proportionate to the square root of the relative cost, the relative cost in this situation being a simple function of the incidence. As such, the number of completed interviews increases as you move from a lower incidence strata to a higher incidence strata. Again, this is a known, formulaic approach to allocation that provides a starting point for discussions of sample

allocation and associated costs. We have also provided estimates of the “effective sample size” associated with the resultant disproportionate allocation.

Sample generation within each defined stratum utilized a strict *epsem* sampling procedure, providing equal probability of selection to every telephone number.

The overall sampling design was as follows:

<b>Strata</b>	<b>Substrata</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Interviews</b>
Mexican	RDD	143	131
	Surname	74	71
Puerto Rican	RDD	78	61
	Surname	29	29
Cuban	RDD	66	61
	Surname	34	29
Dominican	RDD	88	88
	Surname	50	47
Central American	RDD	165	165
	Surname	96	96
South American	RDD	283	311
	Surname	171	182
High	RDD	271	272
	Surname	148	135
Medium	RDD	130	139
	Surname	77	86
Low	RDD	12	12
	Surname	85	85
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>

Overall, the design ended up with the following completes by ethnicity:

	National	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Dominican	Central American	South American	Other Hispanic or Not Specified
<b>Target</b>	2,000	714	217	234	160	232	271	172
<b>Interviews</b>	2,000	713	200	238	173	330	248	98

Approximately halfway through the study it was noted that we were going to get a disproportionate number of Central Americans in comparison to “Other” Hispanics. As such we promptly lowered the targets for the Central American strata. However, the High, Medium and Low strata also attained a significant number of Central Americans, and as such increasing the quota in those strata would not solve the problem. ICR then began to exclude Central Americans from the High, Medium and Low strata. That minimized the imbalance, though was not able at that point to completely solve it. Overall, however, the sample plan worked as designed, attaining an accurate number of Hispanics by heritage.

#### Weighting and Estimation

Weighting and estimation was performed independently within the strata. The first phase involved the adjustment of the actual final sample sizes to proportionality. Within strata, the population totals were determined from the 2006 Claritas data. An initial weight, or proportionality factor, was then computed for each strata.

Then, interviews were balanced using a sample balancing routine controlling for age within sex, gender, education, heritage, and foreign/native born status, using 2005 CPS data. The balancing process also controlled to produce weights scaled to the earlier determined proportionality weights.

### Response Rate

The overall response rate for this study was calculated to be 45.9% using AAPOR's RR3 formula. Following is a full disposition of the sample selected for this survey:

	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBERS DIALED	107,757
INTERVIEW (Category 1)	
Full interview	2,000
Short interview with non-Latinos	6,840
ELIGIBLE, NON-INTERVIEW (Category 2)	
Refusals	6,846
UNKNOWN ELIGIBILITY, NON-INTERVIEW (Category 3)	
No answer	13,394
Busy	361
No screener completed	6,304
NOT-ELIGIBLE (Category 4)	
Data/modem/fax line	5,837
Non-working, disconnected, business or government	48,179
No eligible respondents to answer	909
Overquota	2317
Non-residence	14,526
Other	244