



THE 2006 POLITICAL STUDY

HISPANIC AND NON-HISPANIC POLITICAL OPINION AT THE 2006 MIDTERM ELECTION

Part of the Americanos Poll Series

December 22, 2006

Key Findings

- Democrats at a 2-1 advantage over Republicans among Hispanic likely voters
- Immigration not among issues most driving voter choice
- Hispanic and non-Hispanic outlooks regarding state of the nation are similar
- Approval ratings for President Bush similar among Hispanics and non-Hispanics, significantly different for parties in Congress



Introduction

Encuesta, Inc. undertook the 2006 Political Study to explore how U.S. Hispanics and non-Hispanics are alike and different with regard to political opinion, attitudes, and behavior at the time of the 2006 midterm election. Below we report findings that focus on the opinions and intentions of Hispanic and non-Hispanic registered voters relevant to the election itself, including voter intentions, perceptions of the pre-election environment, Presidential and Congressional approval ratings, and the importance of numerous issues, among others.

Findings on more general political beliefs and behavior will be made available under separate cover, as will be data tables with the study results.

Methodology

The study is based upon telephone interviews with a representative national sample of the U.S. adult population that reflects U.S. Census proportions for gender, age, U.S. citizenship, and voter registration status. The sample comprises n=300 Hispanics and n=300 non-Hispanics. Interviews were conducted from October 11th to October 30th, 2006. The margin of error for the entire sample of n=300 is approximately +/- 4%, with a higher margin of error for subgroups. Statistically significant differences between the population groups at a 90% confidence level are noted in red.

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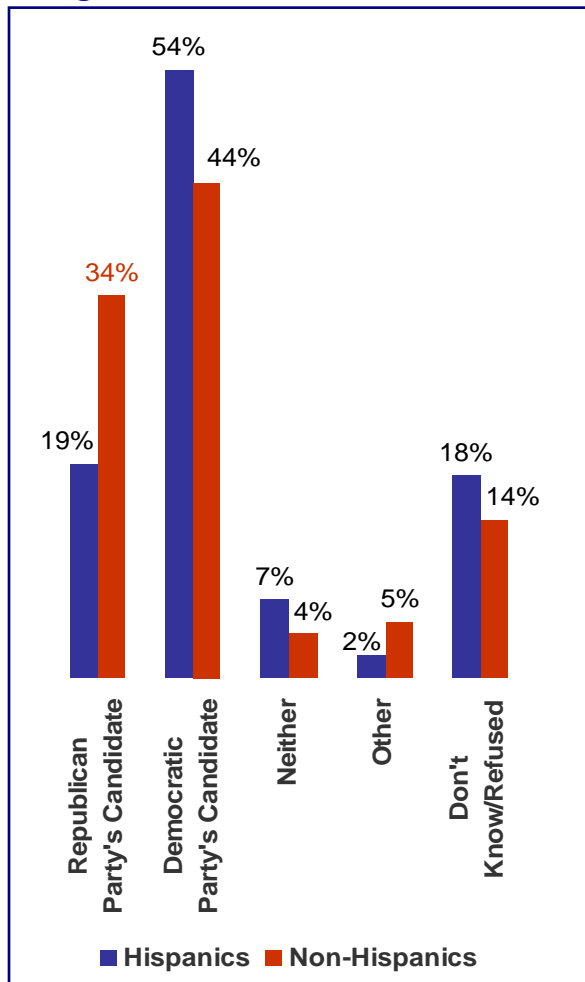
Intent to Vote and for Which Party's Candidate

Among registered voters, non-Hispanics are generally more likely to say they will vote in elections than Hispanics. For instance, 83% of non-Hispanics indicated they planned to participate in all elections in the future, including primaries and local elections, compared to the 68% of Hispanics who said the same. About one-tenth of Hispanics (11%) said they planned to vote only in certain elections, such as Presidential races, compared to 3% of non-Hispanics.

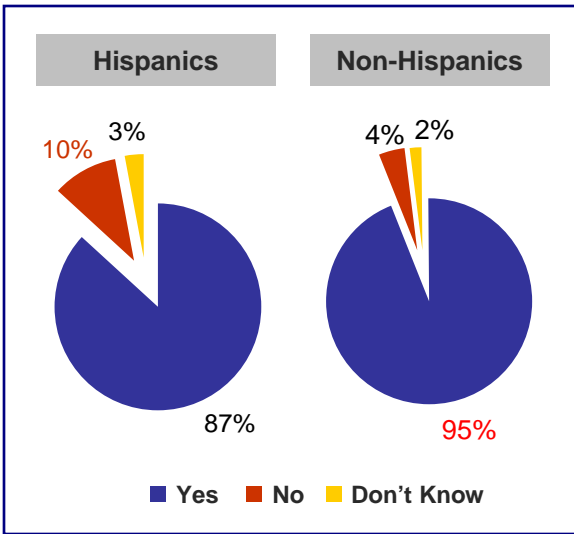
These general preferences were reflected in stated intent to vote in the 2006 midterm election specifically. Non-Hispanic registered voters were significantly more likely to say they would vote in November '06 than were Hispanics, although the vast majority of both population groups indicated they intended to vote.

The disparity between support for Democrats and Republicans when it comes to Congressional seats was far greater among Hispanics than among

Party Preference for 2006 Congressional Election



Intent to Vote



Q. Do you intend to vote in the upcoming 2006 elections for U.S. Congress? Base: Registered voters who in a previous question indicated intent to vote in future elections, Hispanic n=93, non-Hispanic n=220

Q. If the 2006 elections for U.S. Congress were being held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your congressional district: the (Republican Party's candidate) or the (Democratic Party's candidate)? (Order of party presentation was rotated.) Base: Registered voters who in a previous question indicated intent to vote in the upcoming 2006 elections for U.S. Congress, Hispanic n=84, non-Hispanic n=212

non-Hispanics, which was not surprising given that Hispanics in the U.S. have historically tended to identify with the Democratic Party more than with the Republican.

Despite inroads made by Republicans in recent years among Hispanic voters, Hispanic registered voters were still almost three times more likely to say they would vote for the Democratic Party's Congressional candidate than for the Republican's. About one-third (34%) of non-Hispanics said they would vote for the Republican candidate, significantly less than the one-fifth (19%) of Hispanics who said the same.

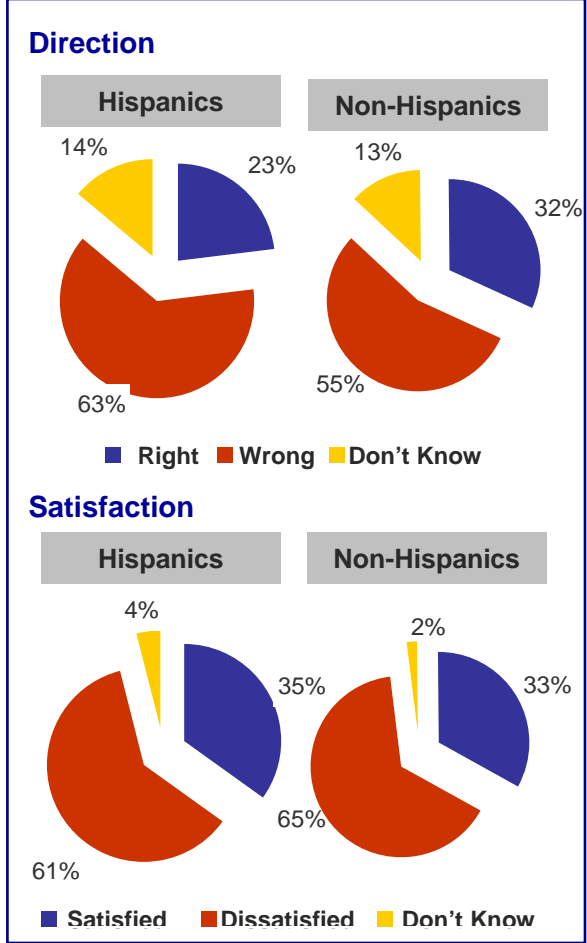
Generally speaking, both Hispanics and non-Hispanics (28%) were more likely to say they would vote for a new candidate to replace a current public official than to keep a public official in office (17% of Hispanics and 14% of non-Hispanics).

Voter Perceptions of the Pre-Election Environment

Prior to the November election, Hispanics' and non-Hispanics' views of the direction of the nation were similar. Over half of registered voters in each population said things in the United States are going in the wrong direction, and closer to two-thirds of each group said they were dissatisfied with the way things are going. Within each population, those whose outlook was negative significantly outnumbered those who saw things in a positive light. About one-quarter to one-third of each group thought things are going in the right direction or indicated they were satisfied with the country's direction.

With regard to the economy specifically, Hispanics' and non-Hispanics' perceptions were also similar. There was a significant difference, however, in how Hispanics perceive the direction of the economy and the state of the nation in general. Hispanics were more likely to say the economy was going in the right direction – 37% – than that things in general were headed where they should.

How Things are Going in the U.S.



Q. Generally speaking, would you say that things in the United States are going in the right direction or the wrong direction? Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=52, non-Hispanic n=124 Q. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States today? Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=51, non-Hispanic n=104

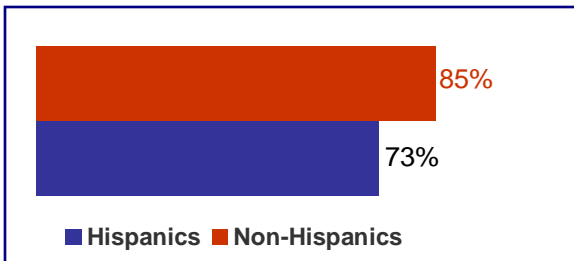


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When it comes to U.S. national security and the possible threat of a terrorist or other attack, Hispanics' and non-Hispanics' views are comparable regarding how the country's safety has evolved in the past year and past five years. One-quarter of each population said the U.S. is safer than one year ago, and 39% said the U.S. is safer than five years ago.

For the majority of each population group, the U.S. is not safer as a result of the Iraq War. Some 63% of Hispanics and non-Hispanics alike said they strongly or somewhat disagreed that the U.S. is safer as a result of the War, versus one-quarter (25% of Hispanics, 27% of non-Hispanics) who strongly or somewhat agreed.

Perceived Likelihood of Terrorist Attack on the U.S.



Q. How likely do you think it is that there will be another major terrorist attack on the U.S.? Do you think another major terrorist attack on the U.S. is...? Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=103, non-Hispanic n=228. Percent who answered "extremely" or "somewhat likely" on a 5-point scale.

Non-Hispanics are significantly more likely than Hispanics to believe a terrorist attack on the U.S. is likely. Some 85% said such an attack is extremely or somewhat likely compared to 73% of Hispanics.

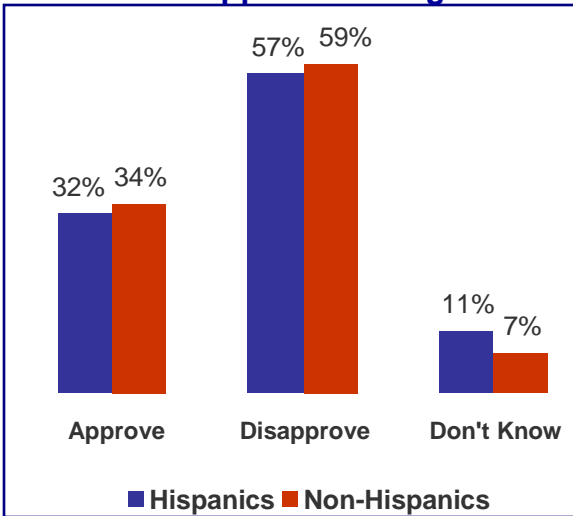
The President and His Administration

President Bush's approval ratings among Hispanic registered voters mirrored those of non-Hispanics. About one-third said they approved of the job the President was doing, while over half disapproved.

Many analysts predicted – and later concluded after Democrats took control of the Senate and gained seats in the House of Representatives – that the 2006 midterm election amounted to a referendum on the Bush Administration's Iraq policy. Indeed, only between one-quarter and one-third of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that President Bush was doing a good job handling the situation in Iraq and that he had a clear plan for successfully ending the situation in Iraq.

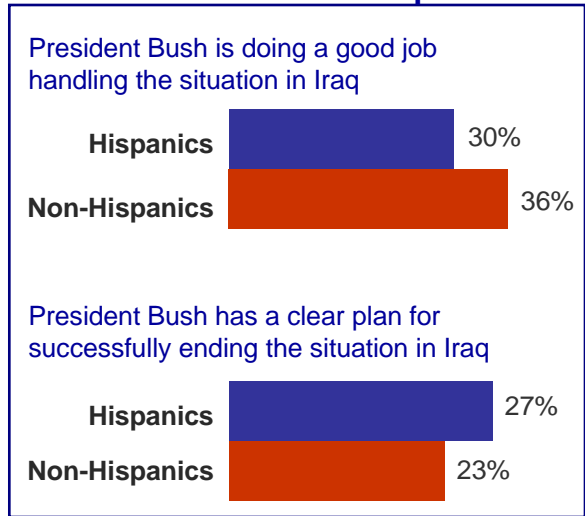
Both Hispanics and non-Hispanics were more likely than not to say the Bush Administration deliberately misled the public about the extent to which Iraq was a threat to the U.S. in order to justify the war: 49% of Hispanics and 54% of non-Hispanics strongly or somewhat agreed versus 33% and 36%, respectively, who strongly or somewhat disagreed. Each group was also more likely to agree that the Bush Administration uses terrorism and security to its political benefit (55% of Hispanics and 64% of non-Hispanics strongly or somewhat agree; 26% of Hispanics and 25% of non-Hispanics strongly or somewhat disagree).

Presidential Approval Ratings



Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Bush is doing in general? Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=103, non-Hispanic n=228

The President's Job in Iraq



Q. Now I have some questions about the United States' involvement in Iraq. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=103, non-Hispanic n=228. Percent who answered "strongly" or "somewhat agree" on a 5-point scale.

As far as the decision to use military force against Iraq, however, Hispanics were more likely than non-Hispanics to disagree with the decision. Some 57%

of Hispanics indicated they strongly or somewhat disagreed that the U.S. made the right decision compared to 47% of non-Hispanics, while 47% of non-Hispanics strongly or somewhat agreed it was the right decision compared to only 33% of Hispanics.

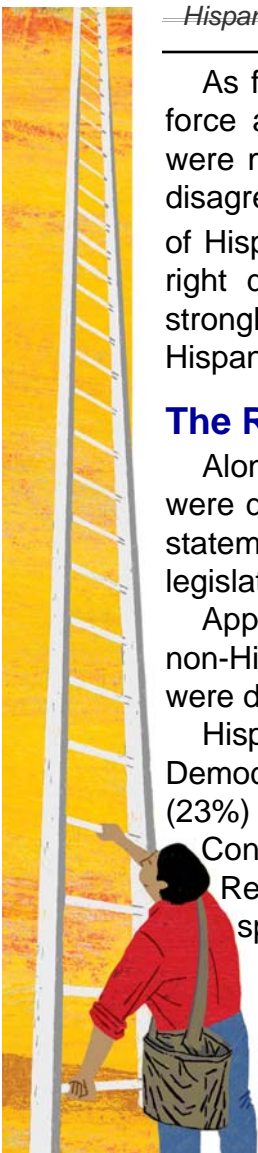
The Republican and Democratic Parties

Along with those of the President, approval ratings for the Republicans in Congress were dismal (23-26% approval). If the outcome of the midterm election was in fact a statement about the Iraq War, voters appear to have been associating both the legislative and executive branches of government to Iraq policy.

Approval of Democrats in Congress was significantly different among Hispanics and non-Hispanics. Some 53% of Hispanics approved of the job Democrats in Congress were doing in general compared to only 38% of non-Hispanics.

Hispanics were also more likely to assert that the country would be better off if Democrats controlled Congress (47%) than non-Hispanics (36%). Almost a quarter (23%) of non-Hispanics said the country would be better off with Republican control of Congress, versus a significantly lower 12% of Hispanics.

Respondents were also asked which party does a better job when it comes to specific issues, and with regard to most issues tested, including improving education, making health care more accessible, representing the respondent's views on immigration, handling the situation in Iraq, and making public policy



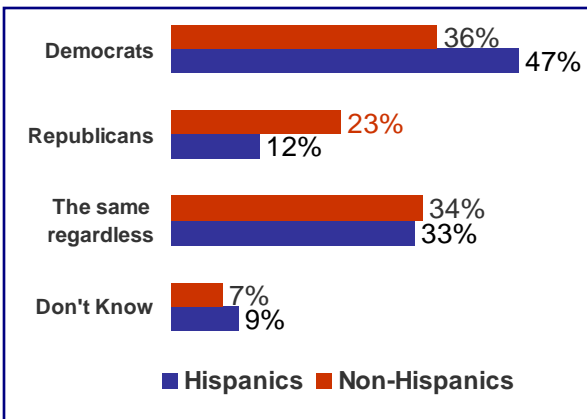
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that is moral and ethical, Hispanic and non-Hispanic views were statistically similar.

Where differences were statistically significant, Hispanics viewed Republicans less favorably and/or Democrats more favorably than did non-Hispanics. The issues were job creation (Republicans: H 15%, NH 28%), lowering taxes for everyone (Republicans: H 16%, NH 32%), and spending tax dollars wisely (Democrats: H 47%, NH 35%).

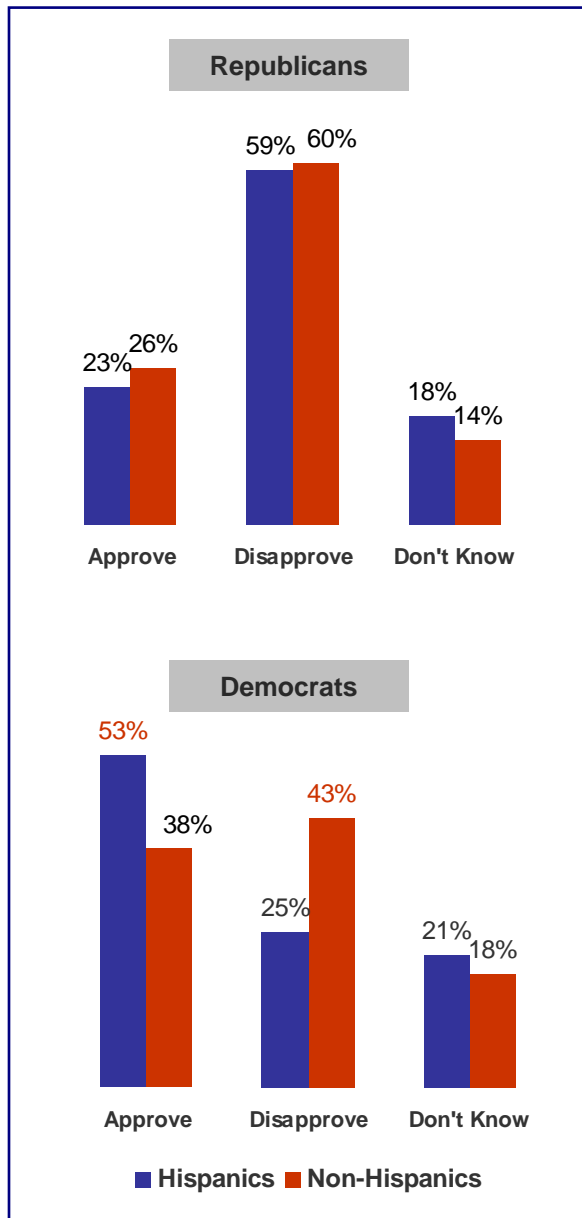
Of particular interest was the difference between the population groups with regard to protecting the country, on which Republicans have tended to have a stronger reputation than Democrats. On this issue, Hispanics favored Democrats significantly more than did non-Hispanics (42% versus 30%) and also favored Republicans significantly less than did non-Hispanics (18% versus 30%).

Party With Which the Country Is Better Off



Q. Do you think the country would be better off if the (Democrats) controlled Congress, if the (Republicans) controlled Congress, or would the country be the same regardless of which party controlled Congress? (Order of party presentation was rotated). Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=103, non-Hispanic n=228

Congressional Approval Ratings



Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Republicans in Congress/the Democrats in Congress are doing in general? Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=103, non-Hispanic n=228

Factors That Determined The Votes

The study explored the importance of different factors that might influence voter choice, including issues as well as candidate characteristics and the stated effect of media.

Asked on an unaided (open-ended or unprompted) basis, the most serious issue facing the country today, according to both Hispanics and non-Hispanics, is war – sometimes specified by respondents as the Iraq War, but also including “military overseas” and “bringing the soldiers home.” It was the top response from significantly more non-Hispanics than Hispanics, however.

Governmental and political issues followed in importance for Hispanics, including foreign policy issues (not including the war) and domestic issues such as corruption and lack of leadership.

Economic issues ranked third, followed by security, including terrorism and crime. For non-Hispanics, on the other hand, security is a more serious issue facing the country than economic issues.

Most Serious Issue (Unaided Basis)

	Hispanics %	Non-Hispanics %
War	32	44
Government/Politics	16	12
Economy/Finance	14	9
Security	12	20
Social/Lifestyle	11	8
Immigration	8	6
Employment	7	3
Health	3	4
Education	3	2
Environment/Natural Resources	2	1
Population	1	2

Q. What do you think is the most serious issue facing the country today? Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=103, non-Hispanic n=228

Importance of Issues

	Hispanics Mean	Non-Hispanics Mean
The Economy	9.1	8.1
Global Warming	9.0	8.3
Illegal Immigration	9.0	8.0
Stem-Cell Research	9.0	8.5
U.S. Foreign Policy	9.0	8.7
The Quality of Public Education	8.9	7.8
Morality and Ethics	8.9	8.2
Corruption in Government	8.8	8.3
The War in Iraq	8.8	8.2
Alternative Energy Sources	8.7	8.0
Childcare	8.7	7.1
Crime	8.7	8.0
Drugs	8.7	7.7
Medicare	8.5	8.0
The Healthcare System	8.4	7.2
The Cost of Higher Education	8.3	7.9
Environmental Pollution	8.3	7.2
Ethnic and Racial Relations	8.3	6.9
National Security	8.3	7.4
Traffic Congestion	8.3	8.1
Dissatisfaction with Government	8.2	7.6
Natural Disaster Relief	8.1	6.1
Energy Policy	7.9	7.7
Family Values	7.9	8.5
Abortion	7.6	6.1
Terrorism	7.6	6.0
Same-Sex Marriage	7.4	7.0
Public Transportation	6.4	4.5

Q. I'd like your opinion about the importance of different issues to the country. Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "not at all important" and 10 means "extremely important," please tell me how important you think each of the following issues is to the country. Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=103, non-Hispanic n=228



When asked to assign a level of importance to a variety of issues, some additional topics that were not top-of-mind on an unaided basis also ranked high in importance, including stem-cell research and global warming. For the most part, the importance assigned by Hispanics to these issues was significantly higher than that assigned by non-Hispanics. The one exception was family values, which non-Hispanics gave a significantly higher level of importance on average.

The greatest difference in importance assigned by the two population groups was seen for natural disaster relief, public transportation, childcare, abortion, and ethnic and racial relations, in that order. In each case, Hispanics, on average, consider these issues to have greater importance to the country than do non-Hispanics.

With regard to economic issues specifically, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic registered voters assigned greatest importance to social security. The mean score for taxes among

Hispanics ranked it top on the list along with social security, whereas for non-Hispanics taxes earned a significantly lower score on average.

Again among this sub-set of topics, Hispanics tended to give greater importance to issues across the board. In the case of three of the issues tested, however, the difference in perceived importance was not significant: jobs moving overseas, the national debt, and the distribution of wealth.

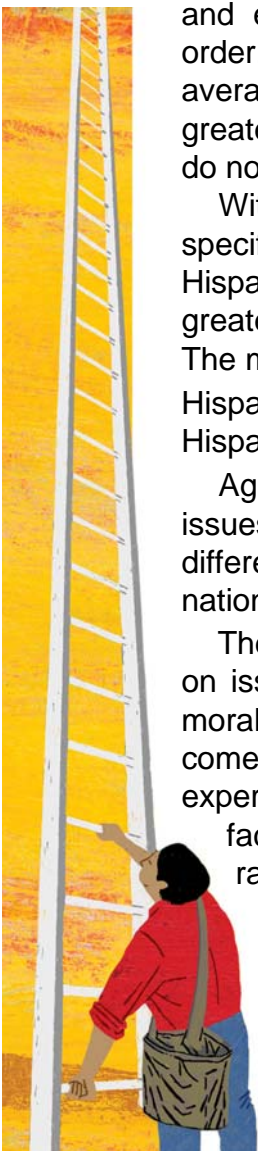
The findings suggest that a number of other factors besides a candidate's positions on issues influenced voter choices. Among Hispanics, for example, a candidate's moral character ranked higher than his or her position on specific issues when it comes to the basis for deciding upon a political candidate. The candidate's experience also ranked high in importance. These were also the top three factors among non-Hispanics, though the candidate's position on specific issues ranked higher than the candidate's moral character.

With regard to three key issues, immigration, abortion, and the Iraq War, respondents were asked whether they could vote for a candidate with whom they agreed on all issues except the one in question. Hispanic and

Importance of Economic Issues

	Hispanics Mean	Non-Hispanics Mean
Social Security	9.1	8.6
Taxes	9.1	7.9
The Cost of Living	9.0	8.0
Poverty	9.0	8.0
Gas Prices	8.9	7.8
The Availability of Jobs that Pay Well	8.8	7.9
Government Assistance Programs	8.6	7.5
Minimum Wage	8.5	7.6
Unemployment	8.5	7.7
Jobs Moving Overseas	8.2	7.8
The National Debt	8.2	7.7
The Distribution of Wealth	7.7	7.1
Labor Union Decline	7.2	6.4

Q. Now I'd like your opinion about the importance to the country of some issues that have to do with economy and finances. Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "not at all important" and 10 means "extremely important," please tell me how important you think each of the following issues is to the country. Base: Registered voters, Hispanic n=103, non-Hispanic n=228



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non-Hispanics' responses were similar on abortion and the war, but Hispanics felt more strongly about immigration. On that issue, 39% of Hispanic registered voters said they could not vote for a candidate with whom they did not agree, compared with 26% of non-Hispanics. Some 45% of Hispanics and 46% of non-Hispanics said that to vote for a candidate, they had to agree with him or her on the war in Iraq, and 38% of Hispanics and 35% of non-Hispanics said they had to agree with a candidate on abortion.

Influence of Factors on Voter Decision

	Hispanic Mean	Non-Hispanic Mean
The Candidate's Moral Character	8.2	7.8
The Candidate's Personality	6.4	5.9
The Candidate's Experience	7.8	7.2
Issues	8.0	8.3
The Candidate's Political Party	6.0	5.5
The Opinion of Your Friends or Family	4.4	4.0
What You See on TV News Programs	6.2	5.0
What You Read in Newspapers	6.0	5.1
What You Read in Magazines	4.9	4.3
What You Read on the Internet	3.8	3.7

Q. I'd like to know what you base your decision on when deciding which political candidate to vote for. Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "does not influence at all" and 10 means "influences a lot," please tell me how much each of the following influences your vote for a political candidate. Base: Among registered likely voters, Hispanic n=93, non-Hispanic n=220

Testing the same issues reported with respect to perceived level of importance to the country, respondents were asked if each issue was "very important," "somewhat important," or "not at all important" when deciding to vote for one Presidential or Congressional candidate over another. For Hispanics, social security, the economy in general, and the War in Iraq were among those issues that ranked high on both questions.

Some interesting differences emerged, however, between the ranking of issues most impacting the vote and those perceived to be important for the country at large. Most surprising was that immigration, which was among the highest in importance

Influence of Issues

	H %	NH %
Terrorism	87	75
Social Security	85	77
The Economy in General	84	71
National Security	84	70
The Healthcare System	83	77
Family Values	83	69
The War in Iraq	83	81
Medicare	82	69
Corruption in Government	81	74
Gas Prices	80	59
Taxes	80	67

Q. Now I'm going to read a list of issues, and I'd like you to tell me if each is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important when you decide to vote for one Presidential or Congressional candidate over another. Base: Among registered likely voters, Hispanic n=93, non-Hispanic n=220. Percentage who answered "very important" on a 3-point scale.

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for the country, was behind dozens of other issues in importance when it comes to influence on voting.

Conversely, terrorism and national security were well below numerous other issues in terms of importance to the country, yet they topped the list of issues as measured by the percentage of Hispanic registered voters who said the issue was “very important” when deciding on a candidate.

Influence of Issues, Continued

	H %	NH %
The Cost of Higher Education	77	60
Crime	76	70
The Quality of Public Education	76	74
Drugs	75	63
Morality and Ethics	75	69
Unemployment	74	62
Energy Policy	73	60
Natural Disaster Relief	73	50
The Cost of Living	73	66
The Availability of Jobs that Pay Well	73	60
Childcare	72	50
Dissatisfaction with Government	72	58
U.S. Foreign Policy	71	64
Poverty	71	67
Illegal Immigration	70	56
Minimum Wage	69	62
Alternative Energy Sources	68	56
Government Assistance Programs	67	56
Ethnic and Racial Relations	65	51
Environmental Pollution	63	54
Global Warming	63	51
The National Debt	62	59
The Distribution of Wealth	60	45
Jobs Moving Overseas	59	58
Public Transportation	58	36
Abortion	57	39
Traffic Congestion	53	32
Labor Union Decline	47	33
Stem-cell Research	45	45
Same-sex Marriage	40	23

