

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Priorities USA  
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DATE: July 22, 2019

RE: Latino Voters in Florida, Arizona, and Nevada Survey Research

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**Summary**

Latino voters will make up an increasing share of the electorate in 2020 and, while they predominantly support Democrats over Trump, there is a significant amount of work to be done. Health care and immigration are the top issues for Latino voters in Florida, Arizona and Nevada, but Democrats must conduct significant outreach to engage voters on the specifics of Trump's policies to fully take advantage of the salience of the messages available to us, particularly on economic issues. While views on the strength of the economy are generally positive, a majority of voters surveyed in all three states said they do not believe they benefit personally from Trump's economic policies.

Trump's immigration policies are deeply unpopular with the Latino communities in these states, and can be seen as emblematic of his larger racist and divisive message that, not surprisingly, is toxic with Latino voters.

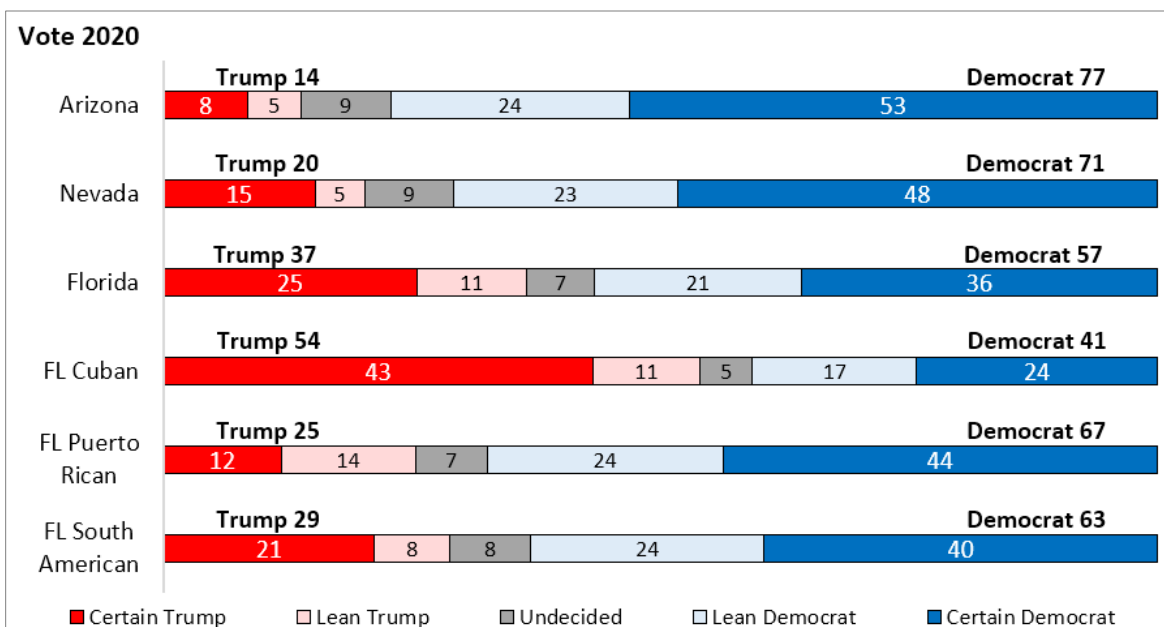
While the effectiveness of health care and other economic messages are similarly strong among Latino voters as across all battleground voters, it is a strategic imperative to make the messaging and creative culturally competent and relatable to the diversity of experiences within the Latino community.

## Key Research Findings

- Democrats enjoy a substantial lead over Trump with Latino voters, but that support is somewhat soft, with one-third falling into the lean or undecided categories.
- Opposition to Trump's immigration policies and worry about health care costs are clear issue priorities. Voters also express worry about personal economic circumstances when asked in very specific terms.
- Messaging on Medicare and Social Security, health care affordability, and prioritizing working families resonated most across groups. In Arizona, immigration and standing up for the Latino community against Trump's attacks were especially powerful with key segments (Democrats, men, naturalized citizens). In Florida, Hurricane Maria was a strong motivator among Democrats, Puerto Ricans, and younger voters.
- While most are hesitant to say they would consider supporting Trump, those that do feel that protecting jobs and the economy are the top reasons they might consider voting for him. At a personal level, few believe they benefited from Trump's tax and economic policies.
- In Florida, Puerto Rican and South American voters are very similar in terms of their opposition to Trump (over 60% disapprove and plan to vote Democrat), issue priorities, and response to various messages. Cuban origin voters in Florida are a consistent outlier, the only Trump-friendly segment: 43% certain Trump, and 11% lean Trump. Still, 41% of Cubans in Florida are planning to vote for the Democrat in 2020, and another 5% are undecided.

**2020 Vote**

Going into the 2020 election, few Latino voters approve of Trump (20% Arizona, 26% Nevada, and 42% in Florida), and Democrats enjoy +20-point overall polling leads in all three states. His base (“certain Trump”) is significantly smaller than the yet-to-be determined 2020 Democratic candidate in all states and nearly all segments; Cuban origin Latinos in Florida are the sole Trump-friendly group.



A significant share of the Democratic lead (20% or more in each state) falls in the “lean Democratic candidate” column; an important distinction. It is essential that the softer Democratic supporters are targeted with messages that solidify their support.

**ISSUES**

Immigration and health care costs are the most pressing concerns cited among Latino voters in all three states.

*Most important issue want president to address (up to two issues cited)*

Florida		Arizona		Nevada	
Health care	25%	Immigration	30%	Immigration	26%
Immigration	23%	Health care	18%	Health care	21%
Gun violence	16%	Civil rights	15%	Climate change	13%

Message testing found that protecting Medicare and Social Security were especially important and motivating across all states and population segments, as were other messages that focused on economic issues.

How motivating is [reason] to vote? (Mean, 10-pt scale)	FL	AZ	NV
Protect Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid	8.0	8.2	8.0
Invest in quality, affordable education	8.0	7.8	7.7
Affordable health care, protect pre-existing conditions	8.2	7.8	7.4
Put working families ahead of wealth/big corporations	7.6	8.0	7.8

**IMMIGRATION & STANDING UP FOR THE LATINO COMMUNITY ARE MOTIVATING FOR MANY LATINO VOTERS**

Immigration resonates at a visceral level with voters even though they are not under threat of immigration detention or deportation. By definition these are American citizens, but their increasing experiences with discrimination and hostility have made these voters much more sensitive to immigration.

Among those citing immigration as a priority concern, the majority oppose Trump’s immigration policies (65% Florida, 77% Arizona, and 73% Nevada) and are specifically worried about immigrant children detained or abused at border area facilities. In addition to concerns about kids at the border, Latino voters also cited Trump’s racist

rhetoric about immigrants and not wanting a border wall as their top immigration-specific concerns.

In Arizona, messaging on immigration was especially motivating. “Standing up for Latinos and the immigrant community against Trump’s attacks” was the top or near the top reason to vote in Arizona for Democrats, men, 18-39-year olds, and naturalized citizens.

### **DEMOCRATS MUST NOT ALLOW TRUMP TO HAVE AN ADVANTAGE ON THE ECONOMY**

It is imperative that Democrats do not allow Trump to continue to define his record on economic issues without holding him accountable for policies that have hurt many working and middle-class Latinos financially. Even among these Democratic-leaning voters, there is a perception that the economy is moving in the right direction (60% in Florida, 50% in Nevada, and 41% in Arizona), and Trump gets stronger approval on his handling of the economy (58% approve in Florida, 43% in Nevada, and 35% in Arizona) relative to his overall approval.

Those favorable impressions are important to note because protecting American jobs and overseeing a successful economy are the most compelling reason these voters would consider supporting Trump. This is especially true for Latinos in Florida (50%), Nevada (40%), and persuasion voters (50% in Florida, and 43% in Arizona and Nevada).

Despite these openings for Trump, the majority do not believe his economic or tax policies provide any personal benefit: 59% in Florida, 67% in Arizona, 60% in Nevada, and 61% of persuasion voters in all three states said they did not benefit at all from Trump’s economic policies.

They sense they are left out of the economic growth taking place in the country. They’ve heard that Trump’s tax cuts benefited the already wealthy and

corporations (52% Florida, 63% Arizona, 61% Nevada) and that he uses his office to enrich himself and his friends.

It is also true that generic economic performance measures have little traction relative to more day-to-day personal finance/economic realities. At rates of 70% and above, Latino voters tell us that wages not keeping up with the cost of living is more important to them than stock market performance or job indicators.

**TO DO SO, DEMOCRATS SHOULD HIGHLIGHT TRUMP’S RECORD ON HEALTH CARE**

Concerns about health care are largely tied to economic concerns. The top cited personal economic concern that Latino voters “worry about a lot” is out-of-pocket health care costs. In Florida and Arizona, 45% worry a lot about prescription drug costs too. The rising costs of health care have made other personal expenses more difficult to manage (saving for retirement, paying for education, etc).

Other health care-adjacent issues also pose significant worry, including ability to handle an emergency expense and keeping up with basic expenses. And, as noted at the outset, the most motivating message was the appeal to protect Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

<b>Share that “worries a lot” about [personal economic issue].</b>	<b>FL</b>	<b>AZ</b>	<b>NV</b>
Medical/out-of-pocket health care costs	52	63	52
Ability to save for retirement	47	52	62
Housing, mortgage / rent	52	48	59
Basic expenses to keep up	48	52	51
Ability to pay for education (self or child)	49	47	54
Ability to handle emergency	46	46	41
Prescription drug costs	45	45	31

Democrats must ensure that Latino voters are hearing about Trump's disastrous health care record, especially through paid media. Only 49% in Florida (51% among Florida persuadables) have heard that the changes to the health care system Trump will advance could cause millions to lose coverage and end protections for preexisting conditions. The rates are higher in Arizona (59%) and Nevada (56%), and with persuasion voters in the West (56% Arizona and Nevada persuadables). More awareness on this issue could pay off significantly given the importance of health care costs, and their responsiveness to messaging on it.

### **TRUMP SOCIALISM ATTACKS FALL FLAT AGAINST PUSHBACK**

Several messages were effective at pushing back against attacks calling Democrats socialists. All four counter-messages were more appealing, but there are important differences with key sub-groups in the state.

- Highlighting Trump's dangerous economic ideas was most effective with South Americans (73%) and Persuasion targets (66%).
- Independents (60%) and Cuban origin (52%) were most responsive to the message that Democrats are fighting for health care and education.
- Naturalized citizens responded most to Trump's authoritarian tendencies (60%).
- These same messages may also be effective at pushing back on reasons many key segments in the Florida electorate would consider voting for Trump (e.g. supporting democracy around the world, and good at negotiating with world leaders).

**Which statement do you agree with most?** (*Florida % agree with counter-message reported*)

[Democrats are embracing the failed ideology of socialism, including dangerous ideas like government control of health care and higher taxes that have devastated countries in Latin America like Cuba and Venezuela.] OR....

	Trump authoritarian	Trump economic ideas dangerous	Trump health care ideas dangerous	Democrats are fighting for health care, edu
Florida	<b>60</b>	57	57	54
Cuban	43	45	47	<b>52</b>
South American	64	<b>73</b>	62	36
Naturalized	<b>60</b>	53	54	49
Independent	56	57	56	<b>60</b>
Persuasion	54	<b>66</b>	55	54

*(Trump authoritarian)* Trump is the one acting like an authoritarian, trying to go around Congress, acting like he alone makes the rules and the law does not apply to him. And Trump is the one who says he is friends with the North Korean dictator.

*(Trump dangerous economic ideas)* Trump has dangerous economic ideas, giving huge tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans and big corporations that endanger Medicare and Social Security.

*(Trump dangerous health care ideas)* Trump is the one with dangerous economic ideas, including making health care more expensive, taking away coverage from millions of Americans, and endangering protections for people with preexisting conditions.

*(Democrats fighting for health care, education)* Democrats are just fighting for affordable health care, better education, and retirement security for Americans. Trump and Republicans are standing in the way.



## **ABOUT THE RESEARCH**

On behalf of Priorities USA, Latino Decisions surveyed a total of 1,632 Latino registered voters in target states: Arizona (N=303), Florida (N=1,028), and Nevada (N=301), with oversamples in Florida of Cuban (N=353), Puerto Rican (N=359), and South American (N=200) origin groups. The study builds upon the May 2019 focus group research conducted in Miami and Phoenix with persuasion and turnout targets.