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## Issue Brief: Latinos and Party Affiliation

### Keywords (4-6 words)

Immigration, Party affiliation, democrats, republicans, census

### Description (1-2 sentences)

This brief will use the most up to date research and census data on Latinos and party affiliation to prove that, except for a few cases, Latinos affiliate themselves to political parties based on the same standards that other race or ethnic groups use.

### Key Points (4-6 points)

- Latinos are the largest minority in the United States.
- Party Affiliations tend to follow the same guideline of other demographics in the U.S. (with the exception of Cuban who remain solidly republican.
- Gap between Democratic and Republican Latino registered voters appears to be widening.
- Immigration policies do not play a significant impact on the voting behavior of Latinos.



Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/barackobama/2271221/Barack-Obama-woos-Hispanic-vote-with-promise-of-citizenship-for-12m-illegal-migrants.html>

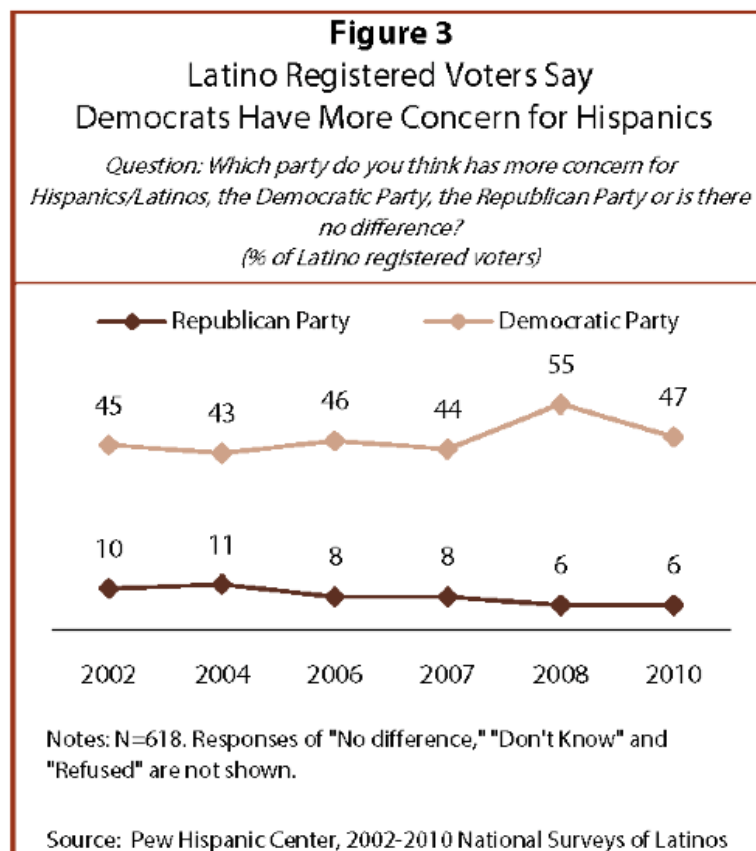
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**Brief** (500-700 words)

According to the U.S. Census, Latinos are the now the largest minority group in the nation with a population of over 46 million, making up 15% of the total U.S. Population. This continued growth indicates that the political value, in terms of voting, will begin to play an even larger role in the political discourse in the United States. One of the key issues politicians and interest groups will have to focus on is determining the factors that influence political party affiliation among Latinos. An article titled "Latinos and Political Party Affiliation" published in the *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science* in 2005, found that many of the political preconceptions attributed to Latino political behavior that are published in the media do not reflect the true political behavior of this demographic.

Through out much of the U.S. media, Americans are led to believe that the most salient issue for Latinos is immigrant rights and that this is a determining factor in their political affiliation. This is far from true. According to the pew Hispanic research center, only 38% of the 47 million Latinos in the U.S. are immigrants, and an estimated 19% are unauthorized immigrants. Despite what the media may lead Americans to believe, Latinos .are not monolithic. Even within the issue of illegal immigration Latinos are divided on possible solutions to this dilemma that America faces. The "Latinos and Political Party Affiliation" article cited research done by Alvarez and Garcia Bedolla (2003) that argued that Latino party identification "will follow traditional lines of social and demographic factors, political opinions, and economic perception." They also found that educational level is the only consistent variable that leads towards someone declaring Democratic affiliation.

This article also cited studies that found that the longer Latinos live in the U.S the more likely they are to not only identify as Democrats but also to have a more entrenched

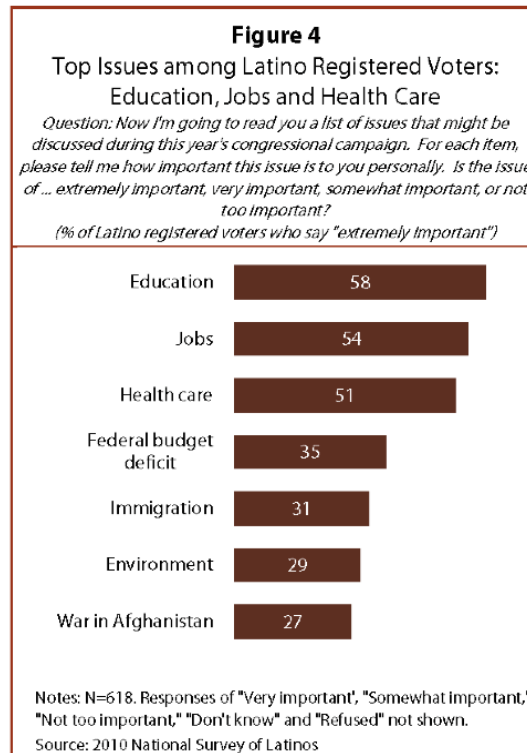


party preference. (Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner, 1991). The article also cites Alvarez et al in their observation that younger Latinos tended to be more independent, whereas older Latinos held more established party affiliation.

According to reports issued by the Pew Hispanic Center, “more than six-in-ten (62%) of Latino registered voters say they identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party, while one-quarter (25%) say the same for the Republican Party—a Democratic advantage of 37 percentage points.” According to their surveys this political identification is based largely on the beliefs within the Latino community that Democrats are more concerned with traditional American concerns: education, jobs, and health care. Their surveys also indicated that despite

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recent concern in the national media over Arizona's passage of SB1070, which allows state police to racially profile citizens who they suspect are illegal aliens, immigration issues rank fourth amongst important issues for Latinos.



My research into the issue of Latinos and political party affiliation revealed that there is still a lot more research that needs to occur to be able to create an accurate mosaic of what really determines Latino party identification. How will an increasing Latino middle-class effect political party identification? Does immigration from Latin American countries with oppressive regimes have a direct impact on party affiliation? These question and others have yet to be fully answered.

## Works Cited

1. <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/83.pdf>

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2. <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/127.pdf>

3. <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=128>

4. <http://hjb.sagepub.com/content/27/2/135.full.pdf+html>

5. <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9805EED81030F931A15752C0A9659C8B63&scp=6&sq=latino%20population&st=cse>

### **Websites**

<http://www.census.gov/>

<http://pewhispanic.org/>

<http://hjb.sagepub.com/>