

April 17, 2012

Anzalone Liszt Research

National Polling Summary

Friends,

Below you will find the weekly Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Summary, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

This week, we examine Hispanic voters and the role they will play in the race for the White House.

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

STORY THIS WEEK: HISPANICS AND 2012 ELECTION

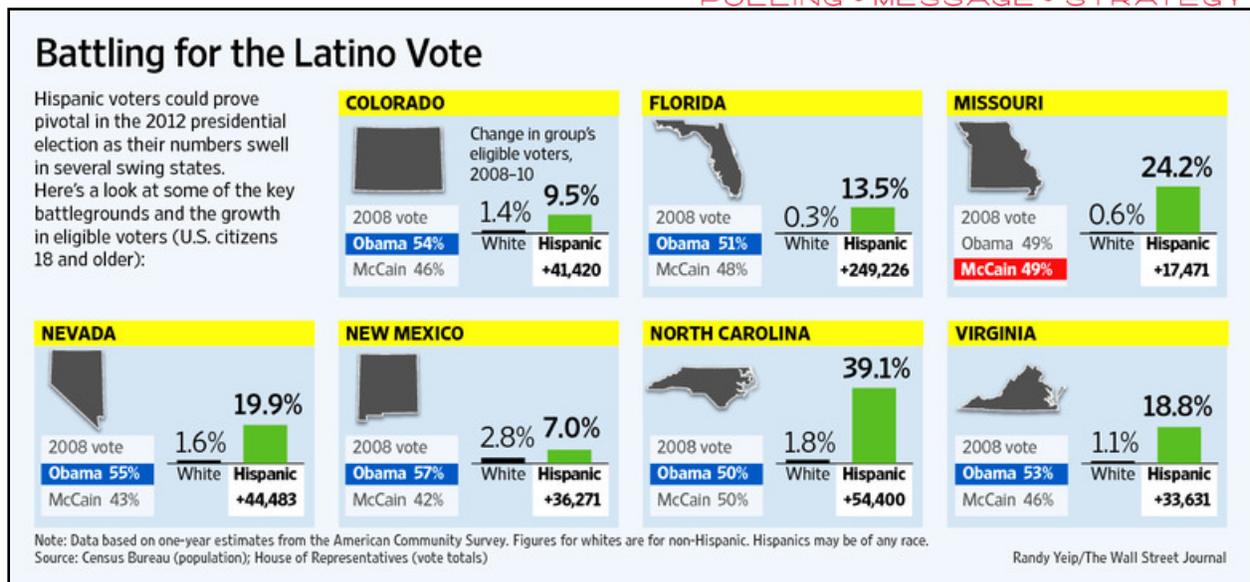
Rick Santorum's abrupt exit from the Republican primary has hastened the arrival of President Obama's general election showdown with Mitt Romney, and one storyline to follow in the coming months is how both parties plan to court Latino voters.

Obama [took two-thirds](#) of the Latino vote in 2008 (67%) and will be counting on broad support in the Hispanic community again this year. GOP strategists, meanwhile, are hoping to capitalize on dissatisfaction with the economy to make inroads among Latino voters.

Population Growth in Swing States

The Hispanic electorate wields serious clout because of its booming population growth nationwide and an emerging presence in the swing states that decide presidential elections. The [2010 Census](#) counted 50.5 million Latinos in America, 16.3% of the total population, and up 43% in ten years. Almost half of all Hispanics (47%) still live in either Texas or California, but a growing share is moving into politically-contested terrain.

This graphic from [The Wall Street Journal](#) illustrates the rise in eligible Hispanic voters since 2008 in swing states, a demographic trend that could prove pivotal in 2012.



The double-digit gains in Nevada and Florida are particularly notable, given that Hispanics already made up about 15% of the electorate in both states in 2008. And in Florida (where Obama won 57% of the Hispanic vote according to [2008 exit polls](#)), the [recent growth](#) is coming primarily from Democrat-friendly subgroups like Puerto Rican-Americans.

This list also excludes another potentially pivotal state: Arizona. While the Obama campaign opted not to challenge native son John McCain there in 2008, a February [PPP poll](#) found the President in a dead-heat with Romney among Arizona voters. Obama will be helped by the 63% increase in voting-eligible Hispanics since 2000, as well as the presence on the ballot of Hispanic U.S. Senate candidate – and former U.S. Surgeon General, decorated veteran, sheriff, SWAT Team leader (and ALR client) – [Richard Carmona](#).

Hispanic Voters' Priorities

While immigration is an important threshold issue for Hispanics, its importance to Hispanic voters is frequently overstated. A December [Pew Hispanic](#) study of Latino adults found the highest importance placed on job creation – half (50%) consider it extremely important, followed by education (49%) and health care (45%). Only a third of Latino adults (33%) considered immigration extremely important. The Fox News [survey](#) produced the same order of priorities: almost half (49%) rated the economy as issue number one, followed by education (15%), health care (14%) and then immigration (11%).

One issue that is disproportionately important to Hispanic voters is education. A January 2008 Pew [study](#) showed a majority (51%) of Latino adults nationwide named education as an “extremely important” priority for the new Obama administration, trailing only the economy (57%). And in a November 2011 Univision poll of likely Latino voters, the [top-rated concern](#)

among all respondents was, “our kids are not getting the quality education they need.” The level of concern for education was almost identical among Latino Democrats (36%), Republicans (36%) and independents (37%).

Views on Obama and Romney

Results from the latest [Fox News Latino](#) poll of likely Latino voters nationwide reveal the extent to which Hispanics back the President and remain suspicious of Mitt Romney. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Hispanic voters approve of his job performance overall. He also leads Romney by 55 points (Obama 69% / Romney 14%), exceeding his 2008 Hispanic vote share even with 17% still undecided. Meanwhile, Romney’s favorability rating is underwater (23% favorable / 43% unfavorable).

While the President receives good marks from Hispanics for his job performance overall, they are divided on how he has handled immigration (44% approve / 42% disapprove). Clearly there is softness there, but the GOP has yet to present a palatable alternative. By a 6:1 margin (64% / 10%), Hispanics still trust Democrats over Republicans on immigration reform.

Republicans hope that the current state of the economy provides an opening with Hispanic voters. A conservative-leaning group called the Libre Initiative released [a poll of likely Hispanic voters](#) last week that found a majority saying the country is on the wrong track, businesses have become harder to open, and that the government spends too much. Also, fewer Hispanics approve of the job Obama is doing on the economy (58% approve / 31% disapprove) than say they would vote for Obama against Romney, so at first glance this is an opportunity for Republicans. (When evaluating a poll of Hispanics, it’s important to look at whether it surveys Hispanic adults, or registered or likely voters. This will have a major impact on results, as Hispanic adults are even more Democratic-leaning than Hispanic voters. Just 33% of Hispanic adults are [registered to vote](#) – compared to 61% of whites and 58% of African Americans.)

Hispanics not Flocking to GOP

With that said, most Hispanics reject the conclusion that Republicans are the answer. January’s Univision [survey](#) asked registered Hispanic voters who they trusted more to fix the economy, and Democrats led Republicans by 37 points (61% D / 24% R), including by 23-points among Hispanic independents. Furthermore, two-thirds of Hispanics hold George W. Bush responsible for the economic crisis (66%) while only 18% blame Obama.

There is also deeply-ingrained negativity among the Hispanic community towards the Republican Party. While harsh GOP anti-immigrant laws in places like Arizona and Alabama may play well with angry white voters, they turn off Hispanic voters and drive Hispanics to Democrats. Three-quarters of Latinos (72%) – including two-thirds of Latino independents

(66%) – characterize Republicans’ Hispanic outreach as either “uncaring” or “hostile”. A similar proportion of Hispanics – 70% in a *Wall Street Journal* [poll last year](#) – opposed Arizona’s immigration law. And no doubt due partly to Mitt Romney’s extreme positions on immigration, a majority of Latinos (52%) say the GOP candidate “doesn’t care about Latinos”.

While President Obama and the Democrats currently find themselves in much stronger position with Hispanic voters than the GOP, they can not afford to be complacent. Romney and his SuperPAC allies will work aggressively to make inroads with these voters over the coming months. To consolidate his support among Hispanic voters, President Obama and his allies must be equally aggressive in drawing contrasts with Romney not only on immigration and the Dream Act, but also on education and building an economy that works for the middle class.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Obama enjoys huge likability advantage: The latest [Washington-Post/ABC News poll](#) finds Obama leading Romney by 12 points on who understands people’s economic problems and by nearly 40-points on who is more friendly and likable.

Another big Crossroads ad buy: But before Obama supporters start feeling too optimistic, the Karl Rove led SuperPAC Crossroads GPS just went up with a [1.7 million dollar TV ad buy](#) in six pivotal swing states and a [new radio ad](#) in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

And much more to come: [A mystery donor](#) just gave Crossroads GPS another \$10 million. For those skeptical that such ads move voters, we refer you to [Newt Gingrich](#) and [Rick Santorum](#).

Shifts in polls can be misleading: When evaluating shifts from one poll to another, it’s always important to compare the partisan make-up of the polls. But when we tried to determine whether the 5-point drop in the President’s job approval rating reported by last week’s [Fox News poll](#) was driven by the partisanship of the sample -- the latest poll was split evenly between Democrats and Republicans, while [most other polls](#) of voters show Democrats with a 3 or 4 point edge in party ID -- we found that the link to last month’s poll was [gone](#).

New Kerrey ad: Smart [new ad](#) from Bob Kerrey in the Nebraska Senate race.

Teen birthrates: [Teenage pregnancies](#) are down nationally but highest in the Bible Belt.

And the Craziest Republican is... the votes are in for ALR's Crazy Republicans Bracket, and the winner is Chuck Winder, a state senator from Idaho who said that women use rape as an excuse to get abortions. It was truly a Sin-derella story as Winder, the 13 seed, beat marquee madmen like Newt Gingrich and Rush Limbaugh to claim the title. To keep up-to-date on GOP lunacy - along with other news, opinions and analysis - follow us on Twitter @AnzaloneLiszt.

Missed a past newsletter? They can be found on our website, here.

PUBLIC POLLING

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
<i>Gallup</i>	April 13-15	Adults	48%	45%
<i>Rasmussen</i>	April 13-15	Likely Voters	51%	47%

PRESIDENTIAL HEAD TO HEAD

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Obama	Romney
<i>Rasmussen</i>	April 13-15	Likely Voters	44%	47%
<i>FOX News</i>	April 9-11	Reg. Voters	44%	46%
<i>ABC News/WaPo</i>	April 5-8	Reg. Voters	51%	44%

PARTY SELF ID

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Ind/Other
<i>Pollster.com Trend</i>	April 16	Adults	36.1%	30.9%	30.6%

GENERIC HOUSE BALLOT

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep
<i>Rasmussen</i>	April 2-8	Likely Voters	40%	45%
<i>McClatchy/Marist</i>	March 20-22	Reg. Voters	43%	47%

OBAMA POPULAR VOTE SHARE

Polling Firm	Date	Polly Vote	Polls	Iowa Electronic Markets	Econometric Models	Index Models
<i>PollyVote</i>	April 13	52.3%	52.3%	52.9%	49.9%	54.6%

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Right Direction	Wrong Track
<i>ABC News/WaPo</i>	April 5-8	Adults	33%	64%