



William C. Velásquez Institute

For Immediate Release

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So. Cal. Latino Voters Have Very Green Attitudes

New WCVI Poll Shows Latinos May Prefer Greener Candidates

(June 27, 2013, Los Angeles, CA) A new poll of 600 southern California Latino voters showed surprisingly high percentages of support for a wide array of pro-environmental policies including decisive preferences for clean energy sources versus fossil fuel sources.

“For some time we have detected sympathetic attitudes among Latino voters towards aspects of the traditional environmental agenda in particular water and air quality, as well as more green space. These positions correlate to direct Latino interests, for example, for clean water, parks and remediation of asthma clusters, and so on,” said Antonio Gonzalez, WCVI president.

“But the results from this survey show a deepening of the Latino voter embrace for conservation and environment. Our survey shows over 80% support for solar power –this is unprecedented and profound especially since things like rooftop solar access are only just beginning to penetrate the Latino community. The bottom line is that green ideologies are being embraced by southern California Latinos,” continued Gonzalez.

The survey conducted a month ago even showed that Latino voters would favor a Latino pro-environment candidate over a Latino who was neutral on the environment.

“We may be entering a new era in which Latino campaigns employing a green platform may have a comparable election advantage with Latino voters over other Latino candidates with non-environmental priorities. We may be witnessing the birth of the “aguacate” movement in Latino politics –green on the outside, brown on the inside,” concluded Gonzalez.

A memo detailing more explicit findings is attached and the full survey may be found on www.wcvl.org.

WCVI is a leading national Latino policy and research organization with offices in Los Angeles and San Antonio.

To: Concerned Parties

From: Antonio Gonzalez, WCVI

Date: June 17, 2013

Re: WCVI Latino Voter Survey on Green Economy

Introduction

The Willie C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI) is one of the nation's leading Latino advocacy think tanks. Over the last several years, WCVI has made environmental and economic sustainability a hallmark of its research objectives.

The so-called "Green Economy" is of vital interest to a Latino community that now makes up nearly 40% of California's population. Therefore, issues of sustainable growth and public health are critical to the future standard of living of the California Latino community.

To gauge the interest of the community WCVI conducted a 600 respondent Latino voter survey across four Southern California counties (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino.) The research examined Latino attitudes from the state of the State to the sustainable economy and specifically Latino attitudes toward the current state and future of rooftop solar energy.

Conclusions

The data demonstrates there is overwhelming support among Latinos for increased use of clean, renewable energy sources, particularly solar energy; high levels of concern about air quality and a strong belief that encouraging the "Green Economy" will create jobs and spur the state's economy.

The data also show that environmental issues are increasingly likely to begin to define Latino candidate and campaign strategies. For the first time WCVI has found that "Latino green" candidates may have a competitive advantage over Latino candidates that downplay environmental priorities.

Key Findings

Latinos in southern California are positive regarding the leadership of the state – though not overwhelmingly so. Just over half (53%) approve of Governor Jerry Brown's job

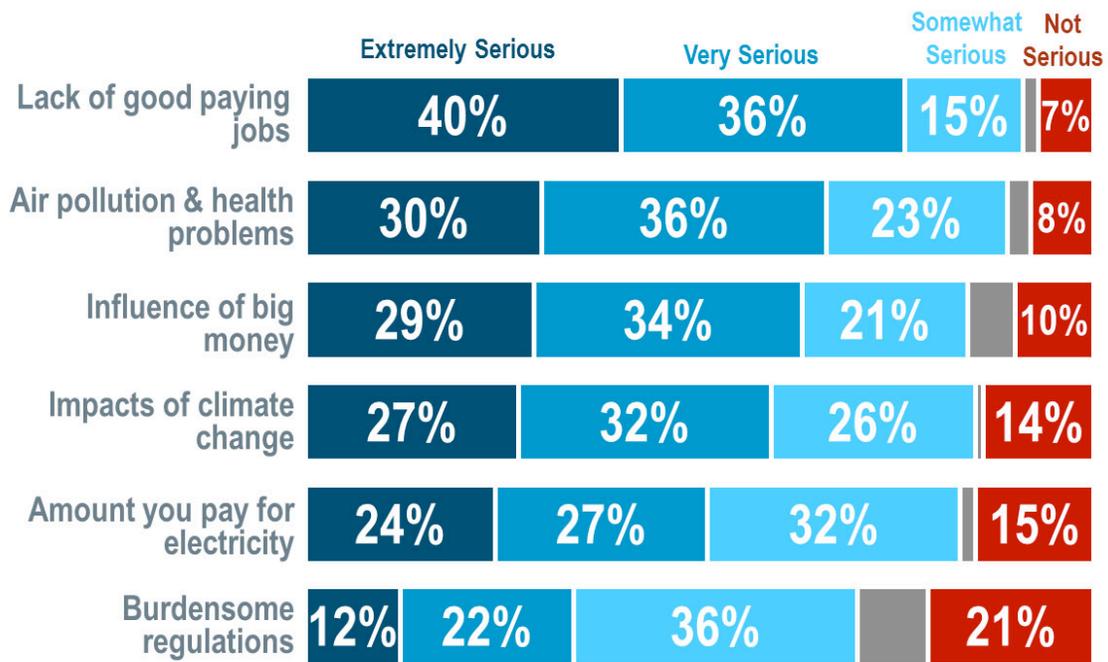
performance, with only 24% disapproving. Only 45% approve of the State Legislature’s job performance with 30% disapproving.

- There is little intensity of support for the job performance of either. Particularly notable is that only 9% of Latino voters “strongly approve” of the State Legislature’s job performance.
- This finding is important because Latino voters self identify as overwhelmingly Democratic (59%) or leaning Democratic (14%).

Environmental concerns among Latinos are strongly held and rank nearly as high as their concerns about jobs, as shown in table 1 on the following page.

- Nine-in-ten consider “air pollution and the health problems that result from poor air quality” to be a serious problem, with 67% describing air pollution as an “extremely” or “very” serious problem for them personally.
- Concern about broader environmental issues is just about as high. More than four-in-five (84%) consider “the impacts of climate change, sometimes called global warming” to be a serious problem, with 58% describing climate change as an “extremely” or “very” serious problem.
- Two-thirds strongly agree with the statement: “increasing the use of clean, renewable energy is important **to people like me**” (92% agree overall).

Table 1 – Issue Concerns



Solar Power is extremely popular among Latinos and they demonstrate a clear preference for solar compared to other energy sources, as shown in table 2 on the following page. Additionally, they strongly equate solar energy with job creation.

- More than half (54%) strongly agree with the statement: “growing the state’s solar energy industry will create new jobs in California” (87% agree overall).

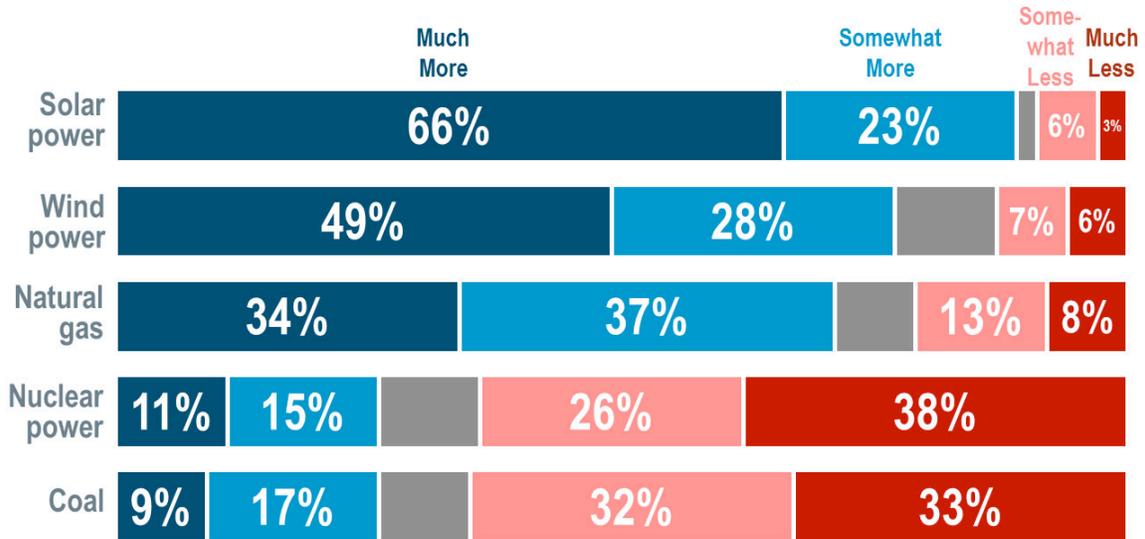
Specifically, rooftop solar generates substantial enthusiasm among Latinos.

- 80% agree that “our state legislators should make it a high priority to increase the amount of **rooftop** solar energy in California.”
- 70% support the net metering law that allows owners of rooftop solar panels to receive credit for the excess energy they generate (with only 20% opposed). The core value statement behind the net metering law is slightly more popular: 74% agree with the statement “If customers are required to buy power from the utility for a certain price, the utility should have to buy excess power created by customers’ solar panels for the same price”

Issues related to air quality, solar power and the Green Economy overall are voting issues for Latinos. If legislators are perceived to be in the pocket of utility companies, they may pay a price at the ballot box.

- 60% are much more likely to re-elect a legislator who “voted for stronger clean air standards to reduce air pollution,” with a total of 88% more likely to re-elect a legislator matching that description.
- Two-thirds of these voters are less likely to vote to re-elect a legislator who “took large campaign contributions from monopoly utility companies and voted their way and against the interests of working families and the environment,” with 45% much less likely to re-elect that legislator.

Table 2 – Preference for Energy Sources



Most Southern California Latino voters are concerned that the political influence wielded by utility companies over legislators means their desire for increased use of clean energy will not be realized.

- 69% agree that “because utility companies donate so much money to our elected officials’ campaigns, we cannot trust them to enact laws that promote more clean energy.”
- Generally, 63% describe “the amount of influence that big money corporate interests have over our elected officials” as an extremely or very serious problem.

By a substantial margin, Latino voters demonstrate a clear preference for candidates who embrace the “Green Economy.” They were read descriptions of two Latino candidates who had differing positions on this issue. One placed the priority on controlling energy costs and using cleaner fossil fuels until other energy sources became more affordable, in order to improve the state’s economy. The other candidate took on the utility companies directly and made the case that increasing the use of clean energy would both improve public health and create jobs. The actual language and results are shown in table 3, below.

Table 3 – Candidate matchup on Energy Policy

<p>Candidate Reyes says the time for the Green Economy is NOW and the utilities are just stalling at the expense of working families. He points out that encouraging more clean energy, including rooftop solar, will both improve the health of our families and provide us with a stable long-term energy supply. He also points to studies proving that these energy sources are affordable today and that by growing the Green economy, we create</p>	<p>62% more likely to vote for Reyes</p> <p><i>(37% much more likely)</i></p>
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jobs and encourages economic growth far more than by staying with the old ways of generating energy.	
Candidate Campos says we need to be realistic about the so-called Green Economy. He believes that to improve the California economy we need control energy costs for working families and businesses. Campos will work with our utilities to encourage use of cheaper and cleaner burning fossil fuels as we wait for solar and other forms of clean energy to become more affordable.	<p>35% more likely to vote for Campos</p> <p><i>(18% much more likely)</i></p>

METHODOLOGY

- This memorandum summarizes the results from a live telephone survey conducted by Global Strategy Group of 600 randomly selected self-identified Latinos who voted in the November 2012 general election (according to the voter file). The survey was conducted from May 28 to June 5, 2013.
- The estimation error associated with a sample of 600 is 4.0% at the 95% confidence interval. This means that in 95 of 100 cases, the results of this poll are within plus or minus 4.0 points of the results that would have been obtained if all likely voters had been interviewed. Note that special care was taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the actual electorate are properly represented including the fact that 100 of the surveys were conducted in the Spanish language.