

## Hispanics and Non-Hispanics Share Numerous Common Views on Immigration

*Large Majority of Both Groups Agree Status of Undocumented  
Workers Should be Legalized One Way or Another*

Miami, Florida, April 28, 2006 – While debate surrounding the recent protests by Hispanics concerning immigration policy has largely pitted pro-immigration Hispanics against anti-immigration non-Hispanics, the two groups share some common ground on the topic, according to a poll conducted by Encuesta, Inc.

Both groups are quite concerned about illegal immigration in the U.S., with a majority of Hispanics and non-Hispanics indicating it is an “extremely” or “very serious” problem (76% and 62%, respectively, on a five-point scale). Among Hispanics, the foreign-born are even more concerned than the U.S.-born, with 42% of the former saying the problem is “extremely serious” compared to 26% of the latter.

When it comes to the reasons for concern over illegal immigration, like numbers (H 21%, NH 25%) indicated terrorism and national security are most important. Similar numbers said the main cause of their concern is that “entering the U.S. illegally can be dangerous for immigrants,” (H 12, NH 11%), and 1% of each group said it is because foreigners don’t belong in the U.S. Almost three-quarters of each population also agreed that the U.S. would be safer by registering all illegal immigrants through a work program or similar policy (H 74%, NH 73%).

Hispanics and non-Hispanics also tend to concur on the underlying reasons for illegal immigration. About two-thirds (67% H, 69% NH) “strongly” or “somewhat” agree, on a five-point scale, that as long as it’s possible for illegal immigrants to find work in the U.S., no change at the border with Mexico will be effective in decreasing illegal immigration. Four-fifths (83% H, 80% NH) “strongly” or “somewhat” agree that until the economic situation improves in other countries, foreigners will continue to have a reason to enter the U.S. illegally.

Most Hispanics and non-Hispanics agree that the status of illegal workers should be legalized one way or another. Hispanics are more likely than non-Hispanics to favor eventually giving illegal workers the opportunity to apply for citizenship (56% versus 36%), and 41% of non-Hispanics and 35% of Hispanics indicated there should be a temporary but renewable guest-worker permit.

The agreement (“strongly” or “somewhat” on five-point scale) of U.S.-born Hispanics with various policies tested consistently falls between that of foreign-born Hispanics and non-Hispanics:

	NH(%)	H(%)	USB(%)	FB(%)
Requiring employer verification of employee eligibility	83	48	66	40
Military and local law enforcement to enforce immigration laws	63	27	38	22
Punishment for knowingly hiring illegal immigrants	63	20	36	13
U.S. Constitution should be changed so that ... a child's parents would have to be legal U.S. residents for a child born in the U.S. to be a U.S. citizen	46	24	32	20
Criminalizing illegal immigrant status	35	9	19	4
Criminalizing help to illegal immigrants	27	7	11	5

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Hispanics have a more favorable view of the economic impact of illegal immigrants, with 90% saying they “strongly” or “somewhat” agree, on a five-point scale, that illegal immigrants fill the jobs that U.S. citizens are not willing to take (compared to 66% of non-Hispanics). By the same measure, 79% of Hispanics and 57% of non-Hispanics believe that the U.S. economy would suffer if all illegal immigrants were sent back to their country of origin.

On a number of points on which Hispanics and non-Hispanics differ, U.S.-born Hispanics are clearly influenced by both their Hispanic heritage and their U.S. identity. For instance, 24% of non-Hispanics cited the drain on government benefits and services as the main reason for their concern about illegal immigration, compared to 17% of U.S.-born and only 4% of foreign-born Hispanics. Some 9% of non-Hispanics are concerned because illegal immigrants’ rights are not protected, versus 20% of U.S.-born and 44% of foreign-born Hispanics.

Among the U.S. citizens interviewed, Hispanics are more likely than non-Hispanics to have indicated that illegal immigration will influence their next Presidential or Congressional vote more than any other issue (21% versus 11%). That’s not good news for President Bush, whom 45% of Hispanic U.S. citizens and 51% of non-Hispanic U.S. citizens believe is doing a “poor” job, on a four-point scale, at keeping the level of illegal immigration to the U.S. as it should be.

Encuesta, Inc. conducted the poll by telephone between April 6 - 13, 2006, among a representative national sample of 305 non-Hispanic and 321 Hispanic adults, in their language of choice. The margin of error for the entire sample is approximately +/- 4%, with a higher margin of error for subgroups.

Data on other immigration-related questions are available, as are breakdowns by demographic and other variables including citizenship, employment status, occupation, and religious and political preference. Contact: Lourdes Prado, 305-661-1492 x126, [lourdes.prado@encuesta.com](mailto:lourdes.prado@encuesta.com)

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