



# LATINO LEADERS ON TRUMP

NATIONAL LATINO OPINION LEADERS SURVEY:  
MARCH 2017

National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP)



# Latino Leaders on Trump:

Results from the March 2017  
National Institute for Latino Policy's  
National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey  
By Angelo Falcón

**W**ith [Latinos voting overwhelmingly against](#) the election of Donald J. Trump for President in November, as we move past the halfway mark of Trump's first one hundred days in office, it would be useful to get a sense of what this community's leadership thinks of his administration. This survey was conducted after Trump's message to a joint session of Congress in which he laid out the broad outlines of his priorities, providing a broader framework from which to assess his plans. The basic question we seek to explore is whether Trump's lack of support among the Latino electorate is reflected in its leadership and how unified this leadership is in this regard.

To our knowledge, no comparable ongoing survey of Latino opinion leaders exists at present. The National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey, therefore, is a unique resource that provides yet another window into the opinions of this important segment of the national electorate. To view past survey findings, [click here](#).

Because there are no clear parameters for determining the precise demographic mix of Latino opinion leaders, we do not report on the results of this survey for the total respondents but rather report on specific subsets. The main subset we use consists of the main racial-ethnic groups represented --- Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Other Hispanics (which includes other Central and South Americans).

This online survey was conducted by the National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP) during March 6-10, 2017. A total of 403 Latino opinion leaders participated from 31 states, Puerto Rico and Guam. While this may be the closest thing to an ongoing survey of national Latino leadership in existence today, it is not based on a scientific sample, making our findings only suggestive of broader trends and attitudes (to see a similar survey conducted once last year by another organization, [click here](#)). The intent of the NiLP survey is to stimulate discussion and debate on critical issues facing the Latino community by providing some insights into the thinking of a broad range of engaged Latino leaders.

The National Institute for Latino Policy is an all-volunteer nonpartisan policy center established in 1982. We publish the influential online information service, The NiLP Report on Latino Policy & Politics of which the National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey is one component.

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## Overview

The Latino opinion leaders were asked to assess Trump’s responsiveness to the needs of the Latino community. Overwhelmingly (93-100 percent), they felt he was not responsive. This position was consistent across the political orientation of the Latino opinion leaders; even among those indicating they were conservative, only 21 percent felt that Trump was being responsive to the Latino community.

How responsive is President Donald Trump to the needs of the Latino community?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Very responsive	0.0%	1.0%	2.1%
Somewhat responsive	0.0%	4.9%	3.1%
Not responsive	100.0%	91.7%	92.7%
Don't know/Not sure	0.0%	2.4%	2.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

Asked if they thought Trump would bring about the right or wrong kind of change to the country, the Latino opinion leaders overwhelmingly (84-93 percent) felt that he would most bring the wrong kind of change.

As president, do you think Donald Trump will mostly bring the right kind of change to the country, mostly bring the wrong kind of change, or will not really bring much change either way?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Right kind of change	1.1%	6.8%	4.2%
Wrong kind of change	93.4%	84.0%	91.7%
Not much change	4.4%	5.8%	3.1%
Don't know/Not sure	1.1%	3.4%	1.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

There is, however, a large difference ideologically among the Latino opinion leaders on whether they feel Trump will bring the right or wrong type of change to the country. While almost two-thirds (64 percent) of those identifying as conservative felt he would bring the right kind of change, those identifying as moderate, liberal and progressive overwhelmingly (81-95 percent) feel that he will bring about the wrong kind of change.

As president, do you think Donald Trump will mostly bring the right kind of change to the country, mostly bring the wrong kind of change, or will not really bring much change either way?				
	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Progressive
Right kind of change	64.3%	8.4%	1.1%	1.0%
Wrong kind of change	14.3%	80.7%	94.6%	93.2%
Not much change	14.3%	8.4%	2.2%	4.3%
Don't know/Not sure	7.1%	2.4%	2.2%	1.4%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

As a result of Trump’s [first address before a joint session of Congress](#) on February 28, 2017 in which he presented his overall priorities and for which he was widely lauded in the media for presenting himself as Presidential, the Latino opinion leaders were asked if they felt more or less hopeful about the next four years. Very few (4-8 percent) stated they felt more hopeful, with the largest percentage of Mexicans (52 percent feeling less hopeful, Puerto Ricans (46 percent) feeling it made no difference, and Others Latinos divided equally (47 percent) between being less hopeful and it making no difference,

Turning now to Donald Trump’s first Joint Address to Congress as President:  
Based on what you heard or read about this speech, did it make you feel more hopeful about the next four years, less hopeful, or did it not make any difference?

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
More hopeful	4.4%	8.3%	5.3%
Less hopeful	52.7%	41.3%	47.4%
Made no difference	40.7%	45.6%	47.4%
Don’t know/Not sure	2.2%	4.9%	0.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

### Issues

Two issues arose as top priorities for the Latino opinion leaders. For Mexicans (36 percent) and Other Latinos (35 percent) it was immigration; for Puerto Ricans (28 percent) it was jobs and economic growth. Immigration is not seen as the top issue by Puerto Ricans because they are all U.S. citizens. For Mexican (25 percent) and Puerto Rican (23 percent) opinion leaders, health care came in second, and for Other Latino opinion leaders (28 percent), jobs and economic growth came in second. It is interesting that [despite the Republican plan to repeal and replace Obamacare dominating the news](#) during period the survey was in the field, health care did not emerge as the top issue for the Latino opinion leaders.

Here are some issues that have been proposed for the federal government to address. Please indicate which of these items you think should be the top priority for the federal government (select only one)

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Climate change	11.1%	16.3%	10.4%
Deficit, government spending	2.2%	5.9%	0.0%
Health care	23.3%	25.1%	13.5%
Immigration	35.6%	13.8%	35.4%
Job, economic growth	18.9%	28.1%	28.1%
National security, terrorism	1.1%	3.4%	3.1%
Religious, moral values	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
Education (vol.)	3.3%	1.5%	3.1%
Other	4.4%	5.4%	6.3%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

The Latino opinion leaders were asked whether they approved of Trump’s handling of selected issues. On all of the issues presented, the disapproval rate was in large majorities ranging from 70-100 percent.

Overall, the greatest disapproval was of his handling of immigration issues, followed by foreign policy. His handling of the debt crisis of Puerto Rico, Israel and the economy received the least disapproval, although still in majorities (70-90 percent).

Disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling. . .			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Immigration	97.8%	92.7%	97.9%
Foreign policy	100.0%	88.2%	94.8%
Muslim travel ban	95.6%	86.9%	95.8%
Sanctuary cities	94.4%	88.3%	92.7%
The Threat of terrorism	93.4%	86.3%	93.8%
The economy	90.1%	75.9%	79.2%
Israel	76.7%	74.0%	78.1%
Puerto Rico debt crisis	69.7%	85.9%	72.9%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

Asked to express their approval or disapproval of three Trump signature initiatives, the Latino opinion leaders were disapproving of all of them (73-100 percent). They were most disapproving of his plans to open the [VOICE office](#) on immigrant crime, followed by his suspension of the Syrian refugee program, and third, the construction of the US-Mexico wall.

Thinking now about some of the specific actions Donald Trump has taken since he has been in office, would you say you approve or disapprove of each of the following? Only percent disapproving presented here . . . .

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Do you agree or disagree with Donald Trump's decision to create an office of Victims Of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) within the Department of Homeland Security?	100.0%	88.8%	92.6%
Indefinitely suspending the United States' Syrian refugee program	91.0%	86.8%	92.7%
Ordering the construction of a wall along the southern border with Mexico	87.8%	73.2%	83.2%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

## Immigration

How do Latino leaders view immigration policy? Are they supportive of open borders, or do they support sanctuary cities or strong border enforcement? More than two-thirds of the Latino opinion leaders support the deportation of those undocumented persons who have committed serious crimes, while few (8-18 percent) believe that no one should be deported. These findings indicate little support for an open borders approach and strong support for the Trump/Obama stated focus on deporting only those with serious criminal records. The problem with this latter position is that it is unclear how the Trump Administration is defining what a serious crime is.

Thinking about people who have immigrated to the U.S. illegally, who do you think should be deported			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
None of them	13.2%	8.3%	17.7%
Only those who have committed a serious crime	79.1%	75.7%	72.9%
Only those who have committed any crime	2.2%	12.1%	8.3%
All of them	0.0%	2.4%	1.0%
Don't know/Not sure	5.5%	1.5%	0.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

Just before Trump's address before the joint session of Congress, the White House floated the idea that they had no plans to deport the DACA Dreamers and was considering granting them legal status. Majorities of the Latino opinion leaders (58-60 percent) expressed their lack of support for such an initiative. This negative reception to this proposal is probably the result of Trump's failure to mention it during his speech before the Congress and subsequent [ICE continuing deportations of Dreamers](#).

Would you support the proposal floated by the White House to legalize the status, but not provide a path to citizenship, of the DACA Dreamers?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Yes, support	27.0%	20.5%	28.4%
No, do not support	58.4%	60.0%	60.0%
Don't know/Not sure	14.6%	19.5%	11.6%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

## Impacts

Asked whether they thought Trump will be doing more to unite or divide the country, the Latino opinion leaders overwhelmingly (93-99 percent) felt that he would be doing more to divide.

Do you feel that Donald Trump is doing more to unite the country as president, or doing more to divide the country as president?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Unite	0.0%	3.9%	4.2%
Divide	98.9%	93.2%	95.8%
Don't know/Not sure	1.1%	2.9%	0.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

However, there is an important difference on this question based on the Latino opinion leaders' political orientations. While those who considered themselves moderates, liberals and progressives overwhelmingly (93-99 percent) felt Trump was divisive, the majority (57 percent) of the conservatives felt he would unify the country. Only 4 percent of the Latino opinion leaders identified themselves as politically conservative.

Do you feel that Donald Trump is doing more to unite the country as president, or doing more to divide the country as president?

	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Progressive
Unite	57.1%	3.6%	1.1%	0.0%
Divide	28.6%	92.8%	98.9%	99.0%
Don't know/Not sure	14.3%	3.6%	0.0%	1.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

In terms of his ability to deal wisely with an international crisis, the Latino opinion leaders overwhelmingly (89-100 percent) stated that they are “uneasy about it” instead of having confidence that he could handle such a crisis wisely.

How do you feel about Donald Trump's ability to deal wisely with an international crisis?

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Have confidence he can	0.0%	4.4%	3.2%
Am uneasy about it	100.0%	88.8%	92.6%
Don't know/Not sure	0.0%	6.8%	4.2%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

## Resist/Cooperate

Given Latino voter opposition to Trump, the issue within the Latino community and among Democrats has become whether or not to cooperate with or resist working with the Trump Administration. Large percentages of the Latino opinion leaders feel that their elected officials need to stand up to the administration: 87 percent of the Mexican, 80 percent of the Puerto Rican and 82 percent of the Other Latino opinion leaders felt this way.

In general, would you like to see your elected officials stand up to President Trump, or would you like to see your elected officials do their best to get along with President Trump?

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Stand up to Trump	86.8%	80.0%	82.3%
Get along with Trump	0.0%	3.4%	4.2%
Depends	13.2%	16.1%	13.5%
Don't know/Not sure	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

Speaking of resistance to the Trump Administration, they have identified the mainstream media as an enemy. The Latino opinion leaders were asked if they approved of the way the new media has covered President Trump. Large majorities of the Latino opinion leaders approved of the role the media was playing in this regard: 65 percent of the Mexican, 59 percent of the Puerto Rican and 59 percent of the Other Latino opinion leaders.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the news media has covered President Trump?

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Approve	64.8%	58.5%	59.4%
Disapprove	25.3%	28.8%	34.4%
Don't know/Not sure	9.9%	12.7%	6.3%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

Despite feeling that their elected officials need to stand up to the Trump Administration, large percentages of the Latino opinion leaders feel that the Congressional Hispanic Caucus should continue to press for a meeting with the White House to discuss immigration although [the request for such a meeting has been repeatedly ignored by the Administration](#). 84 percent of the Mexican, 79 percent of the Puerto Rican and 89 percent of the Other Latino opinion leaders felt this way.

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus has been unsuccessful in repeatedly calling for a meeting with the White House to discuss immigration issues, Should they continue to press for such a meeting?

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Yes	84.4%	79.3%	88.5%
No	13.3%	18.2%	10.4%
Don't know/Not sure	2.2%	2.5%	1.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

### Obama

In reviewing Barack Obama's handling of his job as former President, the Latino opinion leaders overwhelmingly approved (82-90 percent). Obama's approval was felt more strongly ("approved a great deal") by the Puerto Rican (41 percent) and Other Latino (43 percent) opinion leaders than the Mexican opinion leaders (33 percent).

Did you approve, disapprove, or neither approve nor disapprove of the way Barack Obama has handled his job as President?

	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Approved a great deal	33.0%	40.5%	43.8%
Approved a moderate amount	47.3%	36.6%	41.7%
Approve a little	8.8%	5.4%	3.1%
Neither approved nor disapproved	0.0%	3.4%	2.1%
Disapproved a little	2.2%	2.9%	4.2%
Disapproved a moderate amount	5.5%	4.4%	1.0%
Disapproved a great deal	3.3%	6.8%	4.2%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

However, when asked about the impact that the election of Thomas Perez as chair of the Democratic National Committee on the responsiveness of Obama's party to the Latino community, the Latino opinion



leaders were sharply divided. Despite Perez being [the first Latino to lead the DNC](#), only about a third of the Latino opinion leaders felt he would make the party more responsive to Latinos: Mexican (32 percent), Puerto Rican (33 percent) and Other Latino (31 percent) opinion leaders felt this way.

With the election of Thomas Perez as Chair of the Democratic National Committee, do you feel the Democratic Party will be more responsive to the needs of the Latino community?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Yes	31.9%	32.5%	31.3%
No	27.5%	30.1%	30.2%
Don't know/Not sure	40.7%	37.4%	38.5%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

One of the latest Trump controversies was the President's tweets charging former President Obama with secretly wiretapping his campaign. Trump eventually [had to walk back this charge](#). Overwhelming percentages of the Latino opinion leaders (88-96 percent) stated that they didn't believe the charge against former President Obama.

Do you believe Donald Trump's charge that President Obama ordered a wiretap of his campaign?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Yes	0.0%	2.0%	4.2%
No	95.6%	87.8%	93.7%
Don't know/Not sure	4.4%	10.2%	2.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

The Trump wiretapping charge against former President Obama raised questions about Trump's use of Twitter. The Latino opinion leaders were asked how he used this social media tool, with large majorities feeling that he uses it as a tool of diverting attention from criticisms, a position taken by 66 percent of the Mexican, 56 percent of the Puerto Rican and 69 percent of the Other Latino opinion leaders.

How do you mainly view Donald Trump's use of Twitter as President?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
It is an effective tool to reach the public and avoid the media	2.2%	12.2%	2.1%
It is a tool he consciously uses to divert attention from criticisms	66.3%	55.6%	68.8%
It is simply a bad habit he thoughtlessly uses	31.5%	28.8%	27.1%
Don't know/Not sure	0.0%	3.4%	2.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

## Impeachment?

Large majorities (65-73 percent) of the Latino opinion leaders believe that Donald Trump should be impeached as President.

Do you believe Donald J. Trump should be impeached as President?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Yes	72.5%	64.6%	71.9%
No	11.0%	13.1%	12.5%
Don't know/Not sure	16.5%	22.3%	15.6%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

Among those Latino opinion leaders who think Trump should be impeached, the main reasons given were the conflicts of interests with his business and his ties with Russia. The conflicts of interest reason were most cited by the Puerto Rican (31 percent) and Other Latino (27 percent) opinion leaders; the Russian connection by the Mexican opinion leaders (35 percent).

If you think Donald Trump should be impeached, what do you feel should be the main reason?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
I don't believe he should be impeached	9.6%	6.1%	5.6%
His ties to Russia	34.9%	15.5%	24.7%
His refusal to disclose his tax returns	1.2%	6.6%	2.2%
The conflicts of interest with his businesses	33.7%	30.9%	27.0%
Violation of Constitution in Muslim travel ban	1.2%	2.2%	10.1%
His support of torture and waterboarding	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know/Not sure	4.8%	12.2%	10.1%
Other (please specify)	13.3%	26.5%	20.2%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

As the issue of Trump's failure to release his tax returns continues, contrary to his assertion that only the news media is interested in this issue, overwhelming percentages (85-93 percent) of the Latino opinion leaders feel strongly about his need to release these returns.

How strongly do you believe Donald Trump should be releasing his tax returns now that he is President?			
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Other Latino
Very strongly	93.4%	85.4%	89.6%
Somewhat strongly	3.3%	5.9%	5.2%
Not strongly at all	2.2%	6.8%	4.2%
Don't know/Not sure	1.1%	2.0%	1.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National Latino Opinion Leaders Survey - March 6-10, 2017

## Discussion

The degree of agreement among Latino opinion leaders about the negative aspects of the Trump Administration is striking. While it flows from Latino voter opposition to Trump, the near negative consensus among these Latino leaders about the nature of the Trump Presidency halfway through his first 100 days in office raises serious questions about the future of this Administration.

While the opposition to Trump's immigration policies is easy to understand, it is significant that even his plans for jobs creation are viewed skeptically by these Latin leaders. Even gestures by the White House like raising the possibility of legalizing the status of the DACA Dreamers are opposed and eventually appeared to be false.

The upshot of these positions by Latino leaders is that position that Latino elected officials need to stand up to Trump, finding little to cooperate with. Ultimately, this results in strong support by Latino leaders for the need to impeach Trump as President.

The results of this survey at this early stage in the Trump Presidency provides a baseline by which to measure the perceived responsiveness of this Administration to Latino needs over time. Will Trump eventually decide to reach out to the Latino community or continue its current course of almost completely ignoring Latinos except as a wedge issue to placate his base?