

Polling Memo and Summary for Florida Release  
*2015 Environmental Attitudes Survey*

Submitted to

Earthjustice and GreenLatinos

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**Latino Decisions**  
Everything Latino Politics

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## Polling Memo and Summary for California Release

### *2015 Environmental Attitudes Survey*

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Latino Decisions in partnership with Earthjustice and GreenLatinos conducted a national survey of Latino registered voters and their attitudes toward the environment. The survey, fielded between June 24 and July 8, is based on a national sample of 1,200 Latino registered voters who were interviewed by landline, cell and on-line in English and Spanish. As part of that effort, California and Florida were oversampled, with 300 interviews completed in each of those states. The state samples carry a nominal margin of error of +/-5.7 percentage points.

Here we examine results from Florida. The national results find that Latinos care deeply about the environment and specifically about its impact on their families. We found that Latinos are as engaged, if not more so, in issues of climate and environment, that they have strong personal interests in seeing the environment improved, and that these issues matter in their political calculi. Here, we take an in-depth look at the Florida results. Florida is home to over 4 million Latinos, which constitutes one-quarter of the state's total population. Historically, Cuban Americans have wielded significant influence in Florida politics, specifically in the counties of Miami-Dade and Broward. However, the composition of the Latino electorate in Florida is changing. Of the 1.5 million eligible Latino voters in the state 36% are Cuban, 32% are Puerto Rican and 21% are Central/South American. Thus, it would be a mistake to equate the Latino electorate in Florida as exclusively composed of Cuban Americans.

When highlighting important claims in your external communications, we believe the poll best illustrates the following themes:

1. Cuban Americans have historically aligned themselves with the Republican Party and tend to take conservative positions on a number of domestic and international issues. Although the size of their electorate is shrinking relative to other Latino groups in the state, their views create distinct patterns when surveying Latinos statewide. Nonetheless, the key take-away from our survey is that Florida's Latino population is more alike than different from Latinos in other states when it comes to environmental attitudes. There are of course, notable differences, which we will highlight. For example, in the battery of questions related to environmental and

non-environmental policy priorities, “promoting economic growth” (91% saying it was an important issue) and “combating terrorism and ISIS” (87% saying it was an important issue) were ranked highest. Nonetheless, environmental issues also figured prominently among Latinos in Florida. Of the top five highest ranked issues (by report of importance of issue), three of them were related to the environment. The top three environmental issues for Latinos in Florida were strengthening the Clean Water Act (84%), increasing water conservation (82%) and developing clean energy sources (81%).

2. Nearly three quarters (74%) of Latinos in Florida are worried (somewhat to very) about climate change and they, more than other Americans, see climate change as a consequence of human activity. Two-thirds (66%) accept anthropogenic explanations of global warming. Comparing our results to other national surveys of the broader population, the differences are around 14 percentage points. Although these two figures are slightly lower than those found among Latinos in California, the fact that the differences are within the margin-of-error suggests that Latinos in the Golden State and Sunshine State are more alike than different.
3. Latino concerns are transnational. Over two-thirds (65%) of Latinos are aware of environmental degradation and climate impact in their countries of origin and consider this when developing their views.
4. Access to clean water and air seem to be less pressing for Latinos in Florida. In the survey we asked respondents to assess whether contaminated water and air pollution in the city were serious threats to the health of their families. Although there was concern about contaminated water (60% said it was a somewhat to very serious health issue); Latinos in California displayed higher levels of concern (80% said it was a somewhat to very serious health issue). The results from California emphasized how air pollution was a major environmental issue for Latinos in the state. In Florida air pollution was not regarded as a serious health threat, with 49% saying it was a serious (somewhat/very) health issue. In California, 77% said it was a serious health issue.
5. Latinos in Florida do not accept the jobs/environment trade-off and believe green energy and environmental reform is either good for economic opportunity and job growth (55%) or has no effect (22%). Only 12% accepted the jobs/environment tradeoff. (Nationally, 59% thought environmental reform was good for the economy.)

6. Latinos want to reward candidates and office-holders who address environmental problems. Respondents reported feeling more favorably (by 71%) about officials who act on behalf of the environment. This finding is politically significant given that Latino politics in Florida is synonymous with the Republican Party. The results show that Latinos are supportive of candidates that take a progressive position on the environment. This finding should be highlighted to both Democratic and Republican candidates and elected officials.
  
7. Outreach to Floridians by environmental organizations is modest and consistent with national numbers. Nationwide, 76% had never been contacted by a green organization, 74% had never taken any action like signing a petition or attending a meeting or rally, and 87% had never been an actual member of a green organization. By comparison, in Florida, 81%, 76%, and 93% respectively, meaning no significant variation between the national experience and Florida experience.

Below are Florida-specific take-aways for the press, elected officials, and the public:

- The recommendations outlined in the analysis of the national survey apply to Latinos in Florida with some important differences.
  
- In a battery of thirteen separate questions related to environmental and non-environmental policies issues; there is a slight reordering in the rankings of issue priorities. For Latinos in Florida, three of the top five ranked issues are environmental. These include strengthening the Clean Water Act, increasing water conservation and developing clean energy sources.
  
- Latinos in Florida do not accept the jobs/environment trade-off, but by a lower margin than Latinos in California. The gap may be due to the fact that California has taken more progressive positions on the environment, is a leader in developing and implementing cleaner energy sources, or that that its political leadership has embraced conservationist policies.
  
- Although Florida's Latino population and electorate are smaller than California's, Latino voters are politically significant in national elections given that Florida is considered a swing state. This enhances the political capital of Latinos in the state. The fact that Latinos in Florida have pro-environmental attitudes should not be lost on Democratic or Republican candidates.

**Gary M. Segura, Co-Founder and Principal**

**Dr. Gary Segura** is a co-founder and Principal at Latino Decisions. He is also Professor of Political Science at Stanford University, and Co-Principal Investigator of the American National Election Studies (ANES). He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Over the last 18 years, Segura has directed polling research that has completed over 100,000 interviews with Americans of all backgrounds on matters of social and political importance.

He has briefed members of both the U.S. House and Senate as well as senior White House officials and appeared on National Public Radio, the News Hour, Frontline, the CBS Evening News, MSNBC, and numerous other outlets. On the day after the 2010, 2012, and 2014 elections Segura led national press briefings to explain and unpack the Latino vote and his analysis was quoted in virtually every story about Latino voters in the days and weeks after each national election.

His research has been published in the most prestigious disciplinary outlets including the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and the *Journal of Politics*. Segura's most recent book publications include: *"The Future is Ours:" Minority Politics, Political Behavior and the Multiracial Era of American Politics*, (Congressional Quarterly Press), *Latinos in the New Millennium: An Almanac of Opinion, Behavior, and Policy Preferences* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), and *Latino America: How America's Most Dynamic Population is Poised to Transform the Politics of the Nation* (Public Affairs).

Segura has testified as an expert on political power and discrimination in both voting rights cases and LGBT civil rights cases, and has filed amicus curiae briefs on subjects as diverse as marriage equality and affirmative action. He has served as an expert witness in the two landmark LGBT rights cases of 2013, *Windsor v. United States* and *Hollingsworth v Perry*. In 2010, he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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**Adrian Pantoja, Senior Analyst and Project Leader**

**Dr. Adrian D. Pantoja**, is Senior Analyst for Latino Decisions and Professor of Political Studies and Chicano Studies at Pitzer College, a member of the Claremont Colleges. He received his B.A. from the University of San Francisco and Ph.D. in Political Science from the Claremont Graduate University.

At Latino decisions, Pantoja has directed all major research on Latino environmental attitudes and has provided critical insights into how and why Latinos view issues such as carbon pollution, conservation and climate change.

His academic research is published in over three-dozen journals and edited volumes. He has delivered over one hundred presentations at academic conferences and public forums. Presentations for Latino Decisions have been given at the Netroots Nation Conference, the Civil Justice Association of California meeting, the State of Arizona's Latino Vote Symposium, and the Center for American Progress. As a consultant he has carried out research for organizations such as the Center for American Progress, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, the Natural Resources Defense Council and others.

He has authored over a dozen political blogs and co-authored the following policy reports, *Building An All-In Nation*, *A View from the American Public*, *Anti-Immigrant Politics and Lessons for the GOP from California*, and *A Closer Look at Legal Permanent Residents' (LPRs): Motivations and Barriers to Naturalization*. Dr. Pantoja frequently provides expert political commentaries for various newspapers, newsmagazines, television, and radio programs.

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