

Memorandum

From: Jan van Lohuizen

Date: Nov. 17, 2005

Re: Survey Results

As you know we conducted a survey of Central Florida residents of Puerto Rican descent. The interviews were conducted in mid-October by native Puerto Rican speakers. The bulk of the interviews were conducted in Spanish rather than in English. A total of 400 interviews were conducted; the margin of error associated with the results is +/- 4.9%.

The Census shows that the population of Hispanics of Puerto Rican descent in Central Florida is growing very rapidly. The 2005 count indicates 625,000 residents, a figure which by all indicators continues to grow. Our estimate of the proportion of registered voters in this population, at 82% registration, is around .5 million voters.

The survey results show that these voters are conservatives. While many are registered as Democrats, our analysis suggests that these are people who migrated to Central Florida by way of New York; in other words, they registered as Democrats in New York and kept this registration when they moved to central Florida. However, these Democrats are every bit as conservative as Puerto Ricans who arrived from elsewhere. Puerto Ricans support President Bush for instance by a net margin of 20%, beating his national numbers at the same time by roughly 30%. Moreover, 83% would approve of President Bush if he came out in support of *giving Puerto Ricans the right to vote in an election to either permanently resolve Puerto Rico's status or to maintain the current Commonwealth status.*

Puerto Ricans in Central Florida behave differently from other Hispanics. For one thing a larger proportion prefers to communicate in Spanish than other Hispanic groups, particularly when it comes to talking politics. Also, a very large proportion maintains an active interest in issues affecting Puerto Rico. Most rely on Spanish language media to stay in touch with news about Puerto Rico, principally relying on television news.

With regard to issues and priorities, status resolution is a very high priority. In addition, Puerto Rican voters are very likely to support political candidates who favor a permanent resolution of Puerto Rico's status, by having Congress call for a public vote in Puerto Rico to do so. While slightly over half support statehood for Puerto Rico, nearly 8 in 10 said they would be 'filled with pride' if Puerto Rico became the 51st state.

We ranked status resolution with other issues and found the following:

- √ Status resolution ranks near the very top of issues in attracting voter support, 3rd of 13 issues we tested.
- √ Other top issues were expanding minority home ownership and small business assistance
- √ Puerto Ricans are strong social conservatives. Every issue we tested in this regard did very well.

Finally, while President Bush, Governor Bush and Senator Martinez are well known and well liked among Puerto Ricans, the current batch of candidates for statewide office is not well known. Given Puerto Rican issue priorities, '06 candidates would do well to target this key vote in this key swing area of Florida.