

To: Latino Victory, Giffords

Date: July 31, 2020

From: Sylvia Manzano, Principal, Latino Decisions

Subject: Texas Latino Voter Survey – One Year After El Paso

On behalf of Giffords and Latino Victory, Latino Decisions conducted survey of Texas Latino voters between July 23-30, 2020. The study included a total sample of 800 registered voters oversamples in the El Paso, Houston, and the Dallas-Fort Worth metro areas. The survey carries a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points.

After witnessing the horrific attack targeting the Latino community in El Paso last year, Latino voters remain concerned about gun violence. Support for stricter gun laws and concerns about violence that targets their community will weigh heavily in their voting decisions this year.

Despite the importance of these issues, most Latino voters did not have a clear sense of where marquee candidates stand on issues like universal background checks. Candidates should make their positions on this, and other gun policies, absolutely clear so that voters can decide which candidates stand with them and their community.

1. One year after the El Paso shooting, Latinos in Texas remain strongly supportive of stronger gun laws to protect their communities. In the most general terms, 74% believe gun laws should be stronger than they are now. Support increases when asked about specific policies:

- 86% support universal background checks, 67% “strongly support”.
- 85% support extreme risk policies that to temporarily remove guns from those who pose an immediate danger to themselves or others, 58% “strongly support”.
- 74% support a ban on assault weapons, 54% “strongly support”.

2. Addressing gun violence remains highly salient, even in the midst of a pandemic and significant job loss. For many, it is a “deal-breaker” that can weigh as heavily on their decision as health care or protecting immigrant children at the border.

- 70% said a candidate’s position on universal background checks and other gun safety policies are more important (50% “much more”) now than they were in 2016.
 - Relatedly, 57% feel much more motivated to vote in 2020 relative to 2016.
- 70% will not support a candidate who does not support universal background checks.
 - It is notable that similar rates also view reducing health care costs (70%) and protecting immigrant children (69%) as deal-breakers, non-negotiable in their voting decisions.
- 64% believe the gun lobby has too much influence on gun policy in the U.S.

3. Latino voters in Texas believe a toxic combination of easy access to guns and racism were the biggest contributing factors in the El Paso shooting.

- 73% agree that the shooter’s own words, about a “Hispanic invasion of Texas” were inspired by comments Trump has made about a “migrant invasion at the border”.
- Over half of Latino voters assigned the most weight and responsibility to:
 - Easy access to assault and military-style weapons (65%).
 - Lax laws that make it easy for dangerous people to buy guns (63%).
 - Trump’s anti-immigrant and anti-Latino rhetoric (62%).
 - Rise in white supremacy and nationalism (60%).

4. The imperative to action on gun laws remains, but candidates have not distinguished themselves on gun policy.

- 72% remain concerned that their own community will become a target for similar attacks, and 84% worry (54% “very concerned”) about gun violence motivated by racism and/or anti-immigrant hate.
- 63% believed elected officials would take action and strengthen gun safety laws after the events in El Paso.
- There is a lot of uncertainty about where President Trump, Sen. Cornyn, and Senate candidate Hegar stand on these issues. For example:
 - Asked about where GOP Sen. Cornyn stood on universal background checks: 26% said he supports, 27% said he opposes, 29% said he doesn’t really care, and 18% did not know.
 - Similarly, with Democratic candidate Hegar: 43% said she supports it, 16% opposes, 21% doesn’t care, and 19% did not know.
 - 28% believed Trump supports, 22% said Trump opposes, 40% said Trump does not really care, and 10% did not know where he stood.