

Issue Brief: Latina Women

Key Words (4-6)

Latina, Women, Hispanic, Minority Politics, Pay Inequality, Underrepresentation

Description: Latina women represent a growing demographic in the United States, and their views and political issues will only become more influential to the country. As a group, Latina women remain disadvantaged politically, socially, and economically, but their status in these areas has been gradually increasing and should continue to do so in the years to come.

Key Points:

- The Latina demographic is growing in size
- Latinas are underrepresented in politics at nearly all levels of government
- Latinas, like most other minority groups, tend to lean Democratic
- Latina-owned small businesses are the fastest growing of the female-owned small businesses
- There is significant pay inequality between Latinas and white men

Issue Brief:

Approximately 25 million Latina women reside in the United States, and by 2050, Latinas are expected to compose $\frac{1}{4}$ of the US female population. Latinas belong to several disadvantaged groups, being a racial minority, women, and often socio-economically below average. 25% of Latino households in the US are headed by a single mother, a rate 10% higher than that of white households. Latina immigrants often speaking Spanish at home and immerse themselves in the Hispanic community. For example, 65% of Latinas watch Spanish television news either daily or weekly. The Latina population is also heavily sided towards youth – 92% of Latinas under 18 were born in the United States.

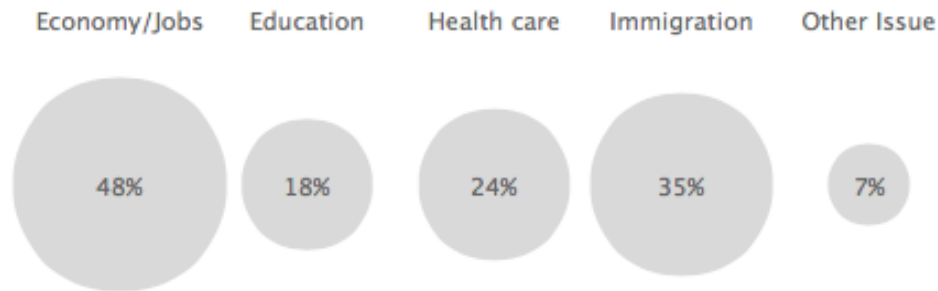
When it comes to political inclinations, Latinas tend to lean toward the Democratic Party, with 77% of the Latina vote going for Obama's re-election in 2012, and 21% for Romney. For the 2012 House of Representatives election, 78% of Latinas voted for Democrats, while 22% of Latinas voted for Republicans. Latinas are far behind general female representation, and even further behind male representation in politics. Only nine of the 99 women in the 113th Congress were Latina, and five of those nine women came from California. Of the 74 women in statewide elected offices in the United States, only five are Latina, and four of those five are from New Mexico.

Latinas tend to earn significantly less income than other Americans, regardless of race or sex. Immigrant Latinas, especially, find themselves working in underpaid jobs with limited benefits. In 2011, Latinas earned 60 cents to every white male dollar. The median Latina weekly income is \$518, less than that of black women (\$595), white women (\$703), and Asian women (\$751). For Latinas with bachelor's degrees, the mean yearly earnings in 2009 was \$39,566, which is \$31,720 less than that of white men with bachelor's degrees.

Even though they are economically disadvantaged, Latinas represent the fastest-growing segment of the US workforce. As of 2010, 56.5% of working-aged Latinas participated in the American workforce, and that number is only rising. Latina-owned businesses are the fastest growing part of the female-owned business markets. As of 2007, 52,044 Latina businesses held a combined value of \$39,556,475,000.

48% of Latinas think that the economy and jobs is the most important political issue for the government to deal with.

Most Important Issues



Source: ImpreMedia/Latino Decisions 2012 Latino Election Eve Poll.

Issues of greatest importance to female Latina voters according to the Latino Election Eve Poll, conducted by Latino Decisions, show that the economy/jobs is one of the main concerns for this demographic.

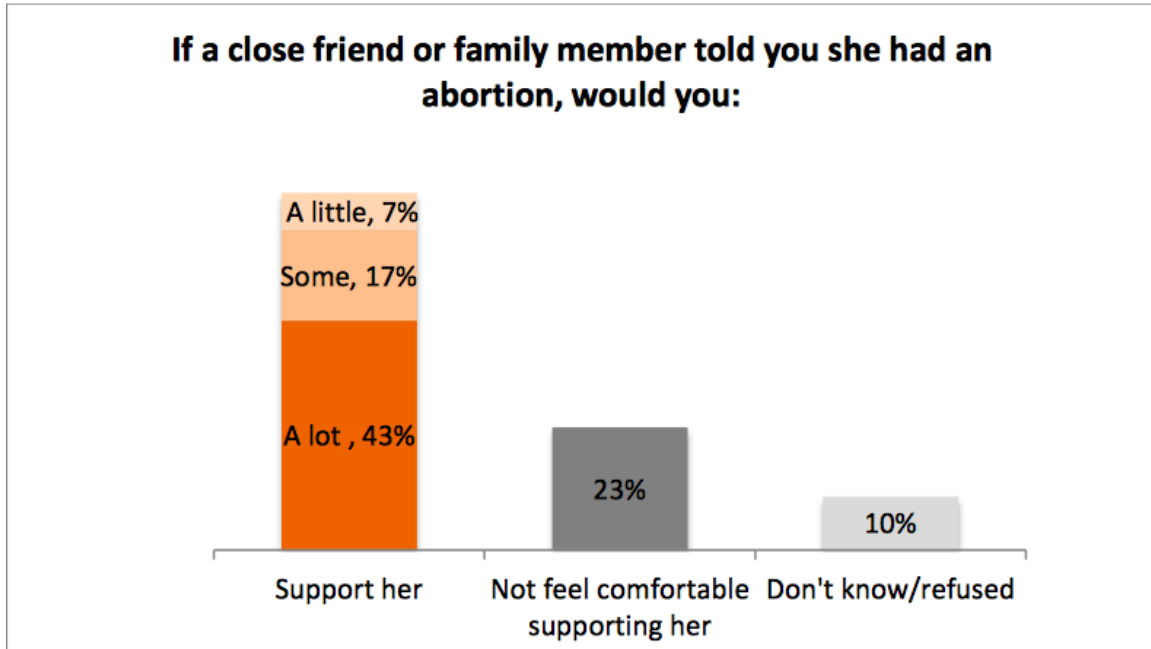
Latinas are underrepresented in American education. Only 8% of Latinas earned bachelor's degrees in 2006-2007, as opposed to 70.8% of white women. The level of educational involvement and dedication of Latina students has a wide range of variability, but research shows that Latino parents' attitudes about education greatly influences how students perform in school. Oftentimes, it is the parents with limited education that push the hardest for their students to perform well, wanting their kids to have an opportunity they never had.

24% of Latinas state that health care is the most important political issue for them. In 2010, 29.1% of Latinas were uninsured, and as a result, Latinas tend to be worse off in several health areas such as reproductive health services, cervical and breast cancer screening and treatment, family planning services, HIV/AIDS testing and treatment, and sexual education. 33.1% of Latino women were obese in 2010, compared to 24.5% of white women, and these higher obesity rates coupled with higher diabetes rates provides Latinas with higher risk factors for heart disease.

The Affordable Health Care Act aims at rectifying this issue by getting more people insured. 58% of Latinas wish to leave this legislation in place, while 27% of Latinas want it repealed. On issues of principle, 70% of Latinas believe that the government should ensure health insurance for its people, while 22% of Latinas believe that people should be responsible for acquiring their own health insurance.

Latinos are divided on the issue of abortion, with 74% of Latinos believing that a woman should be able to decide on her own whether to have an abortion

without any political input. 68% of Latinos believe that abortion should be legal regardless of what the Catholic Church says, but 23% of Latinos state that they would not feel comfortable supporting a friend or family member who got an abortion.



Source: New Polling on Latino/a Attitudes Toward Abortion

This chart demonstrates Latino views toward reproductive rights by asking individuals what they would do if a close friend or family member had an abortion.

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Relevant Websites:

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<http://www.thehispanicinstitute.net>

<http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu>