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To: Interested Parties

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On behalf of: Immigration Hub and UnidosUS Action Fund

Barreto Segura Partners (BSP Research) and EquisLabs completed a large 1,800 survey of Latino voters across battleground states and congressional districts. The findings are clear: Latino voters care deeply about immigration reform, support President Biden's immigration approach and Democratic immigration policy solutions and are willing to reward action on the issue. In this memo we outline key findings and opportunities to better message and communicate with the Latino electorate.

CRITICAL TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Latino voters strongly want policy solutions to fix the immigration system and despite qualitative based assumptions, did not support President Trump's immigration policies.** Latinos are very supportive of Biden efforts to rollback Trump-era policies, reunify families and provide legalization to undocumented immigrants in the United States. There is also high support for the regional work being done by Vice President Harris to address the root causes of migration from Central America.
- 2. There is a crucial and necessary opportunity to communicate and clarify Democratic immigration proposals and action to gain Latino voter support.** Based on the results, Latino voters believe Republicans are attempting to work with Democrats on immigration, but also believe that Democrats should go at it alone if Republicans attempt to obstruct. Democrats have the opportunity to win the debate and gain voter support by consistently and publicly informing Latino voters what Democrats are doing on immigration while defining Republicans and their efforts to obstruct.
- 3. Latinos are ready to credit President Biden and Democrats for finally addressing immigration, but there needs to be action.** When the immigration policies are laid out, Biden and the Democrats have a great opportunity to shore up and energize Latino vote, by an 80-20 margin. Taking action on the issue will be rewarded, but the results make clear that there can be significant electoral consequences if no action is taken.

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Immigration continues to rank as a top priority among Latino voters, just second to addressing the coronavirus pandemic (27% v. 36%). The poll found widespread support for policy proposals to create a new path to citizenship and President Biden's immigration solutions to address the border and migration. The survey results make clear that despite immigration policy remaining a key issue to Latino voters, they are not clear on what Democrats and Republicans are fighting for when it comes to immigration reform. After more than a decade of inaction, Latinos are anxious to see immigration reform happen now and the poll reveals that they will hold both parties accountable if this does not happen.

This context provides caution for Democrats, but if they lean in on this issue and act, they will be rewarded by Latino voters. All solutions that Democrats have on the table, including those which passed the House, have wide support among Latinos which provides a valuable opportunity to galvanize the

Latino vote in key battleground districts across the country. However, as the poll makes clear, there can be significant electoral consequences if no action is taken.

Top Findings

Across the board, Democratic proposals to create a new path to citizenship carry more than 80% support among Latino voters.

- 82% support for the American Dream and Promise Act
- 82% support the Farm Workforce Modernization Act
- 80% support for earned legal status and path to citizenship for essential workers

Additionally, progressive solutions to the border and immigration carry 75% to 80% support among Latinos. While more needs to be done to make voters aware of President Biden's solutions, once fully informed on the details, Latino voters overwhelmingly support the Biden-Harris agenda on fixing the immigration system.

On the border, only 22% support more money and agents and a tough approach, while:

- 78% support a new more efficient strategy that focuses on technology and orderly migration
- 79% support for an orderly and humane process for people seeking asylum for a fair hearing
- 78% want a larger regional role for US in Central America to address root causes of migration
- 79% support the initiative led by VP Harris to address the regional root causes from Central America

Much more must be done to shore up knowledge and awareness of what Biden and Democrats are promoting while seizing the opportunity to clearly define Republicans as blocking progress. Even as the Republican Party has admitted obstructing the president's agenda, Latino voters are still not aware of their position or believe they are interested in bipartisan efforts – this presents a need and an opportunity to better define Democratic solutions and Republican efforts to obstruct.

- While over 60% say they have a good idea of the Biden immigration plan, only 22% say they know **exactly** where Biden stands on immigration, and 36% admit they are not too sure where he stands.
- Importantly, 50% Latino independents and 54% of Latino undecided voters report that they are unsure where Biden stands on immigration.
- When asked specifically what they thought Republicans were currently doing, Latino voters had little information with **32% responding that the GOP was working with Biden on bipartisan solutions to immigration and 29% said they don't know.** Just 39% answered that Republicans are blocking President Biden on immigration.

Inaction on immigration will cost Democrats more than Republicans, however taking action can serve as a major boost for Democrats and President Biden.

- When asked who would deserve blame if immigration reform does NOT pass this year, Latinos are equally split with 30% blaming Biden/Democrats, 31% blaming Republicans and 40% blaming both parties equally.

- **However, when given the alternative scenario, that immigration reform does pass, Democrats emerge with a +47 margin with 57% crediting Biden/Dems to only 10% crediting the GOP.** This is particularly the case with key political segments such as Latino independents (48% credit Dems, 8% credit GOP, +40) and undecided Latino voters (45% credit Dems, 6% credit GOP, +39, and Latinos in Texas 61% credit Dems, 10% credit GOP, +51).

By an overwhelming margin, 80% to 20%, Latino voters are ready to credit Biden and Democrats for finally addressing immigration. The majority agree, including 80% of independents and 56% of Republican Latinos, with the following perspective:

Politicians have been talking about fixing immigration for over 30 years and nothing permanent has been done. If President Biden signs into law an immigration reform that gives Dreamers permanent legal status and a path to citizenship, and essential workers such as undocumented farmworkers legal status and a path to a green card, it may not fix everything, but it shows he is living up to his campaign promises to get things done.

Ultimately, there is a critical opportunity for Democrats to win overwhelming Latino support, including among Latino independents, if they act. For respondents who make a distinction on how the parties are addressing immigration, Democrats in Congress maintain an advantage over Republicans in better addressing immigration (52% say Dems vs 19% say GOP). **Once they are made familiar with President Biden’s immigration plan, Latino voters support it by a margin of 74-19 (+55) which is 16-points net ahead of 2020 vote choice 65-26 (+39) among the same group of voters in this poll.** Support for Biden’s immigration plan is strong across all sub-groups and states in the sample.

- Pushing the “trust Democrats” numbers up to 70% is very possible if Democrats take a more active role in selling their immigration plan to Latino voters and explain the contrast between Democratic solutions and Republican obstructionism and anti-immigrant policies they are promoting.
- When asked about Biden’s effort to roll back Trump-era immigration policies and reunite families, support is even stronger at 79-21 (+58). This is an area where Biden and Democrats can regain confidence and support from Latinos, by fixing a longstanding issue that is personally and symbolically important to many Latino families.

Conclusion

Latinos support the Democratic immigration agenda when presented with it and are willing to reward President Biden and Democrats should they deliver on the issue. However, Latinos are tired of inaction and will blame both parties if they do not see anything happen. The high support for action on immigration found in this poll is not yet matched by full confidence in Democrats to deliver on the issue, however increased messaging and communication will close this gap.

As a reminder, in 2014 advocates warned former Senator Mark Udall that he was not communicating effectively with Latinos and that his Republican opponent Cory Gardner was badly misleading Latinos on his immigration stance. In an election eve poll of Latino voters in Colorado, 48% said they did not know where Udall stands on immigration; and worse, Latinos were uninformed or misinformed about Gardner with 41% did not know his immigration stance and worse, 21% thought Gardner supported a path to citizenship. Only 38% identified Gardner as opposing immigration reform, despite his long-standing

record of blocking immigration reform in the House. In the end, the Latino vote in Colorado in 2014 was far lower than expected and contributed to Udall's narrow loss.

In 2012, advocates warned that the Latino vote was similarly looking less enthusiastic, with a New York Times headline "Obama faces a frustrated Hispanic electorate" however following Obama's DACA announcement, the Latino vote was significantly energized and credited as helping Democrats win key battleground states as the New York Times declared "A record Latino turnout, solidly backing Obama" and CNN headline of "Latino vote key to Obama's re-election."

While Latinos are quite supportive of Democratic immigration policy solutions, there isn't currently enough differentiation between the political parties on the issue despite Republicans clearly obstructing progress on immigration reform and weaponizing the "border" to undermine the Biden agenda and score political points. Democrats have an opportunity to win the public debate on immigration and build the foundation to gain Latino voter support in 2022 and 2024 by publicly articulating their position and moving forward bold and popular Democratic immigration solutions.