



To: Interested Parties

From: Winning the Issues

Re: Opportunities for Republicans Among Hispanic Voters

Date: March 26, 2021

The recent [New York Magazine interview](#) with Democratic pollster David Shor - and self-described socialist - provided insights on where Democrats intend to go for the 2022 midterms and where they think the challenges and opportunities are. One of the groups in focus is Hispanics - a group with which Republicans improved in the 2020 election and which took Democrats by surprise. This memo outlines our thoughts on why this occurred, how this is one of many opportunities for Republicans looking ahead toward 2022, and ideas on an approach for Republicans to further improve standing.

Key findings in this memo:

- In the last election, Congressional Republicans won 36% of the Hispanic vote, compared to 32% at the presidential level. From 2016 to 2020, both President Trump and Congressional Republicans improved among Hispanic voters. The improvement for Congressional Republicans came as a result of Hispanic women than men, as the vote among Hispanic men remained consistent with 2016 but there was a 6-point improvement among women.
- From the exit polls, a majority of Hispanics are **not** Democrats, and the largest ideological group is moderate, with conservatives being a larger group than liberals. There are several areas in which Hispanics behave more like independents rather than Democrats, and a Republican strategy should be viewing them this way and identifying issues to move more in this direction.
- On the ideological scale, Hispanic voters place themselves as slightly center-right; since the 2020 election, their placement of Congressional Democrats has moved to the left, meaning the distance from Hispanic voters to Congressional Republicans and Democrats is now more evenly matched and equidistant than it had been before.
- Similar to independents and Republicans, Hispanics have a clear preference for capitalism over socialism, while Democrats are much more divided on this choice. Also, liberal Democrats prefer socialism over capitalism, and with progressives driving the Democratic agenda, this is likely to alienate Hispanics.
- Hispanics prefer Democrats on issue handling but the margins are softer than they are among Democratic voters, with significant percentages of undecideds particularly on economic issues.
- Immediate opportunities to attract Hispanic voters include (but are not limited to) economy, jobs and taxes.

Insights from the 2020 Election

The Democratic Interpretation of What Happened

As we have seen before, Democrats are making electoral challenges and underperformance only about demographics, race and class, and not about voter belief systems and positions on issues. But Shor does recognize that white liberal elites are pushing the party to the left and alienating certain voter groups, including Hispanics. He focuses more on the racial aspect rather than the elitist problem, which is the larger core issue to us than race alone:

"And since white voters are sorting on ideology more than nonwhite voters, we've ended up in a situation where white liberals are more left wing than Black and Hispanic Democrats on pretty much every issue: taxes, health care, policing, and even on racial issues or various measures of "racial resentment." So as white liberals increasingly define the party's image and messaging, that's going to turn off nonwhite conservative Democrats and push them against us."

It is notable that this article attributes the improvement among Hispanics in part to "disinformation" - there does not seem to be a recognition that the changes in voter behavior were due to issues and beliefs, but rather "disinformation." **In our view, this is an incorrect approach if this is how Democrats are interpreting the result.**

"Closing that gap, through a "[Latino Anti-Disinformation Lab](#)," appears to be a focus of Democrats' postelection efforts to fix their problem with Hispanic voters."

Party and Ideological Affiliation in the 2020 Election

From the exit polls, party ID among Hispanics was 48% Democrat, 20% Republican, 32% independent. This means that the majority of Hispanics are **not** Democrats.

For Democrats overall, Democrats are 46% liberal, 43% moderate, 10% conservative. Democrats identify as liberal over conservative by 36 points. Comparatively, independents identify as conservative over liberal by 14 points; Hispanics identify as conservative over liberal by 7 points.

Self Identified Ideology from 2020 Exit Polls	Overall	Indep	Dem	Hispanic
Conservative	39	32	10	32
Moderate	38	50	43	43
Liberal	24	18	46	25
Conservative Vs Liberal Margin	+15	+14	-36	+7

Therefore, from an ideological identification standpoint, Hispanics are behaving much closer to independents than Democrats. Republicans should think about how to create points of alignment that don't necessarily convert Hispanics into becoming Republicans, but move more closer to behaving and voting like independents.

According to the exit polls, there is a higher percentage of Hispanic men that identify as Republicans (26%) compared to women (17%) but on ideology, a higher percentage of Hispanic women identify as conservative (35%) compared to men (27%). Among both men and women, the largest groups are moderate, not liberal.

Party and Ideology from 2020 Exit Polls	Hispanic Men	Hispanic Women
Republican	26	17
Independent	30	33
Democrat	45	50
Conservative	27	35
Moderate	42	43
Liberal	30	22

2016 and 2020 Vote Comparison

From 2016 to 2020, President Trump improved by 4 points among Hispanics (28% to 32%) with similar improvements at the House level (32% to 36%). However Congressional Republicans performed slightly better than the President in both 2016 and 2020.

2020 Vote (R-D)	2016 Presidential	2020 Presidential	2016 House	2020 House
Hispanics	28-66	32-65	32-67	36-63
Hispanic Men	32-63	36-59	35-63	36-62
Hispanic Women	25-69	30-69	30-69	36-63

By gender, President Trump’s vote among Hispanic men improved by 4 points from 2016 to 2020 (32% to 36%), with a 5 point improvement among Hispanic women (25% to 30%). At the House level, there was very little change in the vote among Hispanic men (35% in 2016 to 36% in 2020) with a 6-point improvement with Hispanic women (30% in 2016 to 36% in 2020) — putting the 2020 vote by gender at relative parity - 36% among both men and women. Additionally, Hispanic women voted for Congressional Republicans at a higher level (36%) than at the presidential level (30%), unlike men who voted for President Trump and Congressional Republicans at the same level (36%).

Other good performances at the Congressional level included these Republican candidates:

- Perdue got 43% of the Hispanic vote in the November Senate race in Georgia.
- Tillis got 42% of the Hispanic vote in North Carolina.
- Cornyn got 42% of the Hispanic vote in Texas.

Insights From Winning the Issues Research

At this time and given what we saw in the 2020 election, it may not be that Republicans are necessarily winning more Hispanics compared to past performance, but that Democrats, driven by a progressive agenda, are alienating them and they are turning elsewhere — becoming more open to Republicans. The Shor interview acknowledges that the white liberal elite agenda is alienating to Hispanics. From our work for Winning the Issues, here are some case study examples of where we see this occurring.

Issue and News Story Priorities in 2020 Voting Decisions

In terms of news stories and issues that Hispanics prioritized in the 2020 elections, issues in red are the top six areas where Hispanics aligned more with independents in how they prioritized these in voting decisions. Compared to the top six for Hispanics, independents identify 5 out of 6 as their top issues, thus there was significant alignment between these two groups.

2020 Winning the Issues Post Election - Issues/News Stories (1-9 scale where 1 is not important at all and 9 is extremely important in voting decisions)	Overall	GOP	Indep	Dem	Hispanic
The economy and jobs	1	1	1	3	2
Coronavirus	2	11	2	1	1
Free speech	3	3	4	7	7
State of scientific discovery and innovation, including status of a vaccine or a cure for coronavirus	4	14	3	4	4
Immigration and the situation at the border	5	2	7	10	3
Issues related to police	6	8	6	9	5
Affordable Care Act/health care/coverage of pre-existing conditions	7	15	5	2	6
Possible new tax rate increases	8	4	8	15	16
Foreign policy/Terrorism/Iran/North Korea/situation in the Middle East	9	5	9	13	8
Protests in cities across the country	10	6	10	11	12
Supreme Court confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett	11	7	12	14	14
Race relations	12	16	11	5	10
China	13	9	13	17	17
Court packing/expanding the number of Justices on the Supreme Court	14	10	15	16	9
Climate change	15	17	14	6	11
Biden statements about the oil industry and fracking	16	13	16	18	18
Allegations of Donald Trump ties to Russia	17	19	17	8	13
Hunter Biden emails and allegations	18	12	19	19	19
Trump tax returns	19	18	18	12	15

- Like Republicans and independents, Hispanic voters prioritized *the economy and jobs* as a top issue in their voting decisions.
- *Immigration and the situation at the border* was a priority to Hispanics (#3) while independents placed this lower at #7.
- Another moderate-level priority to Hispanic voters was *issues related to police* — #5 on their priority list, similar to #6 for independents. (This may also be of higher priority to Hispanics in certain geographic locations.)
- Also similar to independents was Hispanics’ ranking of the ACA/health care/pre-existing conditions. Hispanics ranked this as important at #6 similar to independents, who put this at #5, but slightly lower in priority compared to Democrats (#2). As noted above, Hispanic voters placed more emphasis on the economy and jobs than the ACA.

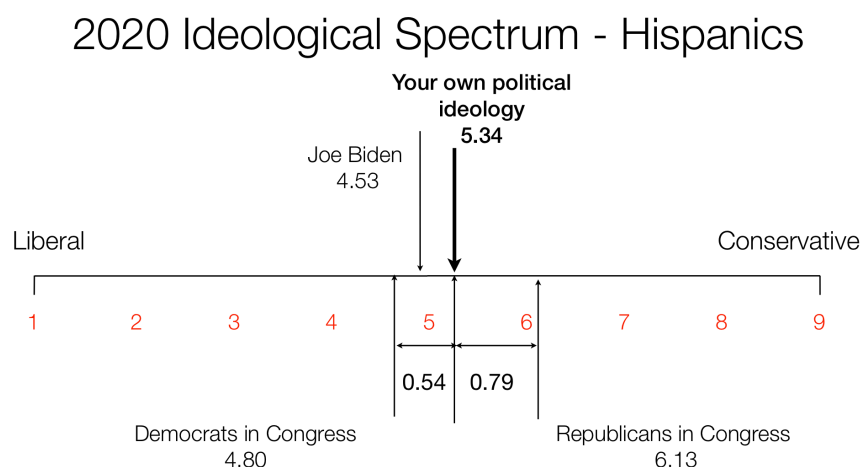
Capitalism Vs Socialism

Similar to voters overall, Republicans and independents, Hispanics believe capitalism is better by a large margin (47-28). (This preference is likely to be much larger among certain Hispanic subgroups, like Cuban-Americans, with particularly strong feelings about socialism.) Democrats are more divided on this question. Moderate Democrats prefer capitalism by a very weak margin (32-24), with the largest group that doesn’t know (44%), and liberal Democrats prefer socialism (36-44 capitalism-socialism). With liberal Democrats being the most vocal and prominent voices in the Democratic Party, this is only one example of how Democrats are alienating Hispanics.

Which of the following economic systems would be better?	Overall	GOP	Indep	Overall Dem	Mod Dem	Lib Dem	Hispanic
Capitalism	56	75	60	36	32	36	47
Socialism	19	12	14	30	24	44	28
Don't Know	24	13	26	34	44	20	26

Ideological Alignment

In the 2020 election, our post-election survey showed voters overall being center right - 5.83 on a scale of 1-9 with 1 being very liberal and 9 very conservative. Republicans in Congress were to the

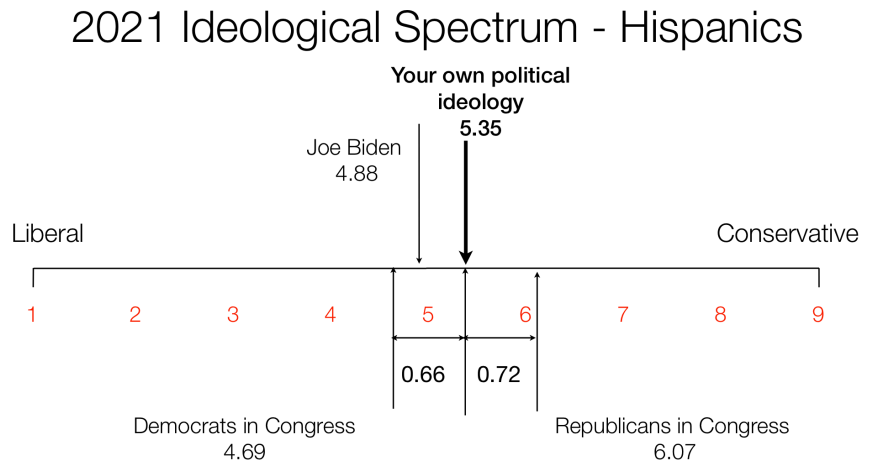


right at 6.64, with Democrats in Congress to the left at 4.03. The distance from the average voter was much closer to Congressional Republicans (distance of 0.81) than Congressional Democrats (1.80).

In the 2020 election, Hispanic voters also placed themselves as center right - 5.34 - closer to the center than voters overall but still

slightly to the right. They placed Congressional Republicans to the right at 6.13, and Congressional Democrats to the left at 4.80. Congressional Democrats were slightly closer at a distance of 0.54 compared to Congressional Republicans (0.79), but by only a small difference.

Since the election, there have been some small yet significant shifts. Now at a 5.35 on the scale, Hispanics have stayed about where they were ideologically in the 2020 election (5.34). They place Republicans marginally closer to the center (6.07) and Congressional Democrats slightly farther to the left (4.69), so the distance from Hispanic voters to Republicans and Democrats (a distance of 0.66 for Democrats; 0.72 for Republicans) is now more equidistant and evenly matched than it was in the 2020 election.



The more that the Democratic agenda is driven by the left, the farther it will push Democrats away from Hispanics — which will create openings and opportunities for Republicans on issues. But if all they hear from Republicans is only about attacking Democrats, then that takes Republicans off the table. Given that Hispanics are not far away from Democrats, this does not attract them closer to Republicans, given our proximity to them ideologically.

Looking Ahead - Identifying Opportunities and Points of Alignment

Given what Democrats are doing around the economy, taxes, and energy, there are opportunities for Republicans with majority coalition groups needed for 2022 that would include Hispanics. For Republicans, one of the first steps to building a majority coalition for 2022 will be not letting Biden claim credit for the economy as Democrats plan to do, and conveying that policies already put into place by Republicans are why the economy is bouncing back. Another step to that end is finding priority issues that draw their attention and getting them to agree with our positions on those issues.

Issue Handling

In terms of issue handling on the four major issues, Hispanics prefer Democrats but not by margins that cannot be overcome. Compared to Democrats who prefer Democrats to handle those issues by over 80%, Hispanic preference for Democrats range from high 40s (jobs) to low 50s on economic issues, with health care being the strongest issue for Democrats.

Issue Handling (R-D)	Overall	Rep	Indep	Dem	Hispanic
The Economy	43-43	78-10	41-32	11-83	23-53 (24%)
Jobs	44-43	81-9	41-33	11-82	29-48 (23%)
Taxes	44-42	80-9	43-30	12-82	30-52 (18%)
Health Care	36-51	71-16	28-46	8-87	23-61 (16%)

Also among Hispanic voters, there are high percentages of undecideds especially on economic issues. One in four Hispanic voters is undecided on the economy (24%) and jobs (23%).

News Stories and Issues of Interest to Hispanic Voters

In terms of 19 news stories and issues that voters are currently following, economic issues are areas of alignment with independents as well as Republicans. On the news story/issue of economy and jobs, Hispanics prioritize this as number one, like independents and Republicans. Similarly, they prioritize discussions about reopening the economy as a top issue they are following (#3 on the list) similar to Republicans (#3) and independents (#2), and unlike Democrats, who put this farther down the list at #11.

Economic issues like jobs and taxes are examples of areas of opportunity and interest to Hispanic voters; it does not mean they necessarily agree with Republicans, but they are potential points of alignment that could achieve the goal of moving them toward voting closer to independents than Democrats. This also presents the opportunity to set up effective issue contrasts on these issues of interest and potential points of alignment.

Tax Contrast

An example of a potential issue contrast that could move Hispanic voters our way is on the economy/taxes. On whether keeping or repealing the tax cuts would help economic recovery from COVID, voters overall, including independents, say keeping the tax cuts will help (24-51 repealing-keeping among voters overall; 20-49 among independents). Among the parties, Republicans strongly say keeping the tax cuts in place will help economic recovery (15-64), and even Democrats say keeping the cuts will help, though by a narrow margin, with over a third favoring their repeal (35-40).

Which statement do you agree with more?	Overall	Rep	Indep	Dem	Hispanic
Repealing the tax cuts would help economic recovery from COVID	24	15	20	35	27
Keeping tax cuts in place would help economic recovery from COVID	51	64	49	40	36
Don't Know	25	21	30	25	37

While Hispanics have a large portion undecided on this question (37%), they nevertheless lean toward the view that keeping the tax cuts will help more in the post-COVID economic recovery (27-36), putting them closer to the behavior of independents than to Democrats.

Conclusion

The goal for a Republican strategy with Hispanic voters should be to move beyond traditional partisan affiliations and create opportunities for them to agree with us, and view them more as independents rather than a Democratic group. While defining Democrats and their progressive agenda will be important, to move this group closer to Republicans, we will need to define our positions effectively on issues and take advantage of the close proximity Republicans have to them on an ideological level. Immediate opportunities to begin attracting Hispanic voters toward Republicans are on the economy, taxes and jobs. Opportunities with Hispanics are not limited to these issues, but these are examples of where current issues in the political environment and news cycle present openings for us to begin addressing their concerns and beliefs around these issues.