

## 4. The Hispanic Catholic Vote

The Catholic Hispanic vote represents millions of Americans, and is a growing force in American political and cultural life. In many ways, these voters are quite similar in their thinking as other Catholic voters, but in many other ways they have their own characteristics.

### The presidential vote

At this point in the presidential campaign, the preference of Hispanics voters reflects their general Democratic Party affiliation. Forty-seven percent of Hispanic Catholic voters are supporting Democrat John Kerry, while 30% support Republican George W. Bush, 2% support Ralph Nader and 20% are undecided.

The margin for Kerry widens among Hispanics when those leaning toward a candidate are included. Support rises to 59% for Kerry and 34% for Bush. US born Hispanics (63% Kerry; 33% Bush) and those of Mexican descent (64% Kerry; 30% Bush) exhibit higher levels of support for Kerry than do other Hispanic Catholics.

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### Party Identification

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Q28. Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent or something else?

|                | Catholics Overall | Hispanic Catholics |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Democrat       | 36%               | 47%                |
| Republican     | 35                | 32                 |
| Independent    | 27                | 18                 |
| Something else | 1                 | 2                  |
| DK/REF         | 1                 | 1                  |

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### War in Iraq

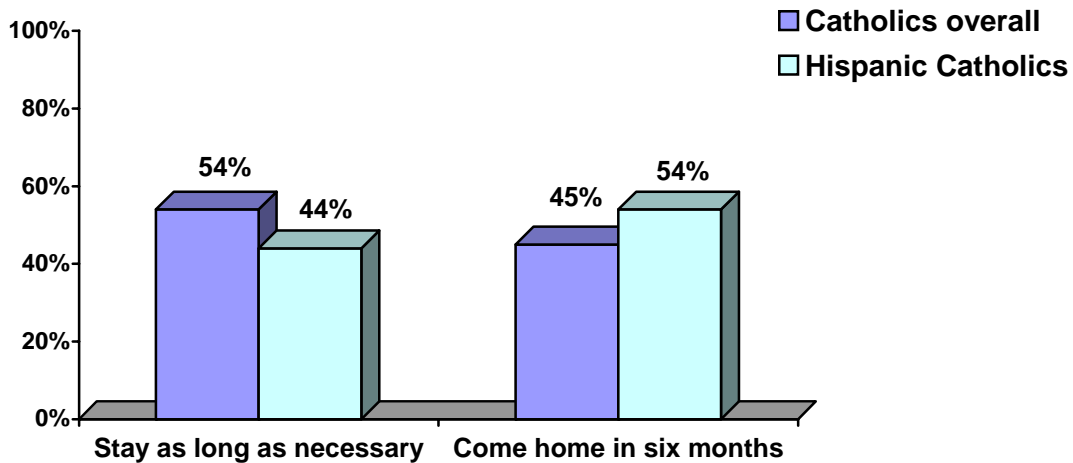
A key issue in this election for Hispanic Catholics is their views on the war in Iraq. They are among the most concerned with the current situation in Iraq; they hold a greater desire than most for the troops to come home, and they hold a lower level of confidence in President Bush's handling of the situation.

Hispanics are among the most likely Catholic voters to want the troops home within six months. A slight majority of Hispanics (54%) say the troops should be

brought home and 44% think they should stay as long as necessary. These results are the reverse image of Catholics overall, 45% of whom say the troops brought home and 54% who think they should stay.

Among Hispanic Catholic voters, those who feel most strongly about bringing the troops home are Hispanic women (59%).

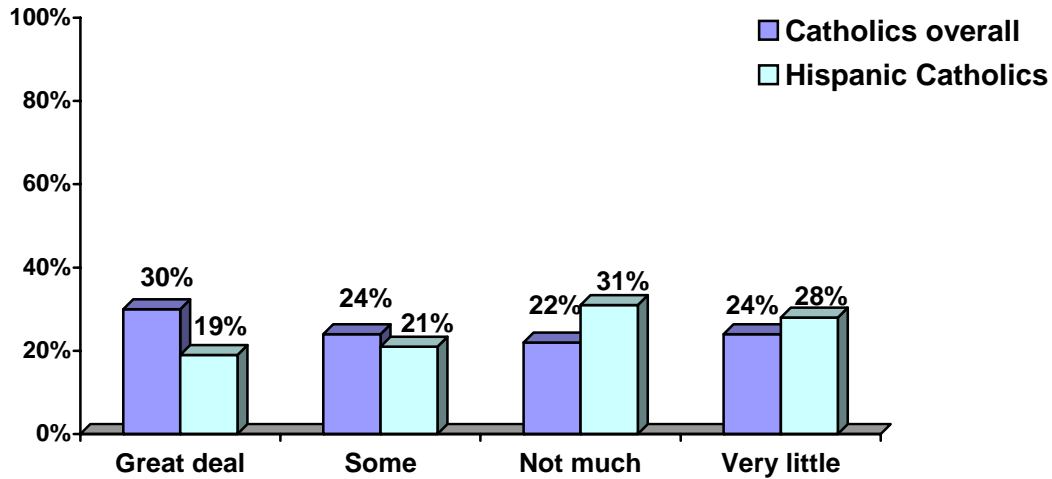
### Troops in Iraq



Q5. Even if you do not agree completely with either of these two statements, which one better describes your view: A) US troops should stay in Iraq as long as necessary to establish democracy and stability; or B) We should bring the troops home within six months, even if democracy and stability are not established.

Hispanic Catholic voters also express less confidence than Catholic voters overall in President Bush's ability to resolve the situation. Fifty-nine percent "do not have much" or "very little" confidence and 40% have a "great deal" or "some confidence." Hispanic voters are much less likely to have a "great deal" of confidence in Bush to resolve the war in Iraq (19%) than other Catholics (30%).

### Confidence in President Bush to Resolve War in Iraq



Q4. How much confidence do you have in President Bush to resolve the war in Iraq: A great deal of confidence, some confidence, not much confidence, very little confidence?

### Abortion

Hispanics' views on abortion are very similar to those of Catholic voters overall. Sixty-two percent of Hispanic Catholic voters agree that abortion should be legal and 36% disagree, while 61% of Catholic voters overall agree with legal abortion and 38% disagree.

Among Hispanics certain sub-groups express particularly strong support for legal abortion:

- US-born Hispanics (69%);
- Hispanic women (67%); and
- Hispanics of Mexican descent (65%).

Two-thirds of Hispanic Catholic voters (67%) do not feel a religious obligation to vote against candidates who support legal abortion. Hispanics born in the US (74%), those of Mexican descent and women (73% each) are particularly likely to feel this way.

## Other issues

**Priorities:** On the list of priorities for the next president, Hispanic Catholics score all fifteen more highly than do Catholics overall. Next to terrorism and the war in Iraq, their priorities are first improving education, then health care, protecting Social Security, and jobs.

**Canceling tax cuts:** More than eight in ten Hispanic Catholic voters support canceling some tax cuts and using the money to protect Social Security and improve Medicare (82%; 42% strongly) or to improve public education (80%; 41% strongly). Hispanics support these programs equally across all groups, with foreign-born Hispanics demonstrating higher levels of strong support for canceling tax cuts to improve public education (80% support; 51% strongly).

### Support for Canceling Tax Cuts Among Hispanics

Q12-Q13. Do you support or oppose each of the following?

|                        | Cancel tax cuts for Social Security and Medicare |                  | Cancel tax cuts for public education |                  |
|------------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
|                        | Support: (Strg+Smwt)                             | Strongly Support | Support: (Strg+Smwt)                 | Strongly Support |
| <b>Total Catholics</b> | <b>74%</b>                                       | <b>34%</b>       | <b>68%</b>                           | <b>27%</b>       |
| <b>All Hispanics</b>   | <b>82%</b>                                       | <b>42%</b>       | <b>80%</b>                           | <b>41%</b>       |
| Hispanic men           | 85%  | 46%              | 83%                                  | 44%              |
| Hispanic women         | 80%  | 39%              | 78%                                  | 39%              |
| Hisp born in US        | 83%  | 40%              | 81%                                  | 36%              |
| Frgn-born Hisp         | 81%  | 48%              | 80%                                  | 50%              |
| Mexican Hisp           | 82%  | 43%              | 85%                                  | 44%              |
| Other Hisp             | 83%  | 42%              | 76%                                  | 40%              |

**Education issues:** Nearly three quarters of Hispanics support allowing children of illegal immigrants to attend public schools (74%; 42% strongly) and allowing prayer in school (73%; 43% strongly). A majority of Hispanics (57%; 24% strongly) supports school vouchers, paid for with tax dollars, to send children to private and religious schools.

Support for allowing the children of parents who are in the US illegally to attend public schools receives higher support from Hispanics (74% support and 26% oppose) than Catholics generally (44% support and 56% oppose). Among Hispanics, support is steady: 55% of foreign-born Hispanics and 48% of

Hispanics of Mexican decent strongly support allowing children of illegal immigrants to attend public school.

For both prayer in school and school vouchers, the distinctions among Hispanics are greatest when looking at those who strongly support the policies. Forty-eight percent of Hispanics of Mexican decent strongly support prayer in school, as do 47% of Hispanic men. School vouchers finds strong support among foreign-born Hispanics (67%; 35% strongly).

### Support for School-Related Issues among Hispanics

Q14, Q11, Q8. Do you support or oppose each of the following?

|                        | School for children of ill. immigrants |                  | Prayer in public school classrooms |                  | School vouchers for private or rel. schls |                  |
|------------------------|--|------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------|
|                        | Support: (Strg+Smwt)                   | Strongly Support | Support: (Strg+Smwt)               | Strongly Support | Support: (Strg+Smwt)                      | Strongly Support |
| <b>Total Catholics</b> | <b>44%</b>                             | <b>15%</b>       | <b>74%</b>                         | <b>39%</b>       | <b>56%</b>                                | <b>24%</b>       |
| <b>All Hispanics</b>   | <b>74%</b>                             | <b>42%</b>       | <b>73%</b>                         | <b>43%</b>       | <b>57%</b>                                | <b>24%</b>       |
| Hispanic men           | 73%                                    | 40%              | 76%                                | 47%              | 58%                                       | 24%              |
| Hispanic women         | 74%                                    | 44%              | 71%                                | 39%              | 58%                                       | 25%              |
| Hisp born in US        | 70%                                    | 35%              | 72%                                | 41%              | 53%                                       | 19%              |
| Frgn-born Hisp         | 82%                                    | 55%              | 76%                                | 46%              | 67%                                       | 35%              |
| Mexican Hisp           | 81%                                    | 48%              | 77%                                | 48%              | 56%                                       | 22%              |
| Other Hisp             | 70%                                    | 37%              | 71%                                | 37%              | 61%                                       | 28%              |

Stem cell research and physician assisted suicide: Seven in ten Hispanics support allowing stem-cell research (71%; 37% strongly). Foreign-born Hispanics (74%; 48% strongly) and Hispanics of non-Mexican descent (76%; 42%strongly) exhibit particularly strong support for stem cell research.

About four in ten Hispanics support legalizing physician assisted suicide (42%).

Death Penalty: A smaller majority of Hispanics (58%) than Catholics overall (71%) support the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. Foreign-born Catholics are particularly less likely to support the death penalty (50%) and those of non-Mexican descent (53%).

### Issues Among Hispanics

Q16, Q7, Q9. Do you support or oppose each of the following?

|                        | Stem cell research   |                  | Death penalty        |                  | Physician assisted suicide |                  |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
|                        | Support: (Strg+Smwt) | Strongly Support | Support: (Strg+Smwt) | Strongly Support | Support: (Strg+Smwt)       | Strongly Support |
| <b>Total Catholics</b> | <b>72%</b>           | <b>34%</b>       | <b>71%</b>           | <b>40%</b>       | <b>53%</b>                 | <b>18%</b>       |
| <b>All Hispanics</b>   | <b>71%</b>           | <b>37%</b>       | <b>58%</b>           | <b>36%</b>       | <b>42%</b>                 | <b>15%</b>       |
| Hispanic men           | 75%                  | 35%              | 57%                  | 36%              | 41%                        | 12%              |
| Hispanic women         | 69%                  | 40%              | 60%                  | 37%              | 44%                        | 19%              |
| Hisp born in US        | 71%                  | 32%              | 64%                  | 40%              | 46%                        | 14%              |
| Frgn-born Hisp         | 74%                  | 48%              | 50%                  | 31%              | 38%                        | 18%              |
| Mexican Hisp           | 69%                  | 33%              | 63%                  | 41%              | 45%                        | 18%              |
| Other Hisp             | 76%                  | 42%              | 53%                  | 31%              | 40%                        | 12%              |

Gay marriage: Hispanic Catholics oppose making marriage of gay couples legal. Nearly two-thirds (64%) oppose, with 46% feeling strongly negative. Hispanic men are most likely to opposed marriage for gays and lesbians (68%; 52% strongly).

### Opposition to Gay Marriage

Q15. Do you support or oppose each of the following?

|                        | Gay marriage       |                 |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                        | Oppose (Strg+Smwt) | Strongly Oppose |
| <b>Total Catholics</b> | <b>64%</b>         | <b>46%</b>      |
| <b>All Hispanics</b>   | <b>63%</b>         | <b>46%</b>      |
| Hispanic men           | 68%                | 52%             |
| Hisp women             | 57%                | 40%             |
| Hisp born in US        | 64%                | 45%             |
| Frgn-born Hisp         | 60%                | 47%             |
| Mexican Hisp           | 64%                | 46%             |
| Other Hisp             | 60%                | 45%             |

US aid to other nations: Almost seven in ten (69%) Hispanics are “very much” or “somewhat” in favor foreign assistance, while 30% are “very much” or “somewhat” opposed. Foreign-born Hispanics (79%) and those who are not of Mexican descent (78%) are particularly likely to favor foreign assistance.

However, Catholic Hispanics, like all Catholics, are generally more likely to agree that we should cut back on humanitarian assistance to developing countries because of our needs at home (68%) than disagree with such cuts (28%).

On the issue of funding for voluntary funding for family planning in developing countries, Hispanics are split: 49% support and 48% oppose. Foreign-born Hispanics are more likely to support funding for family planning (61%).

### Influence of the church

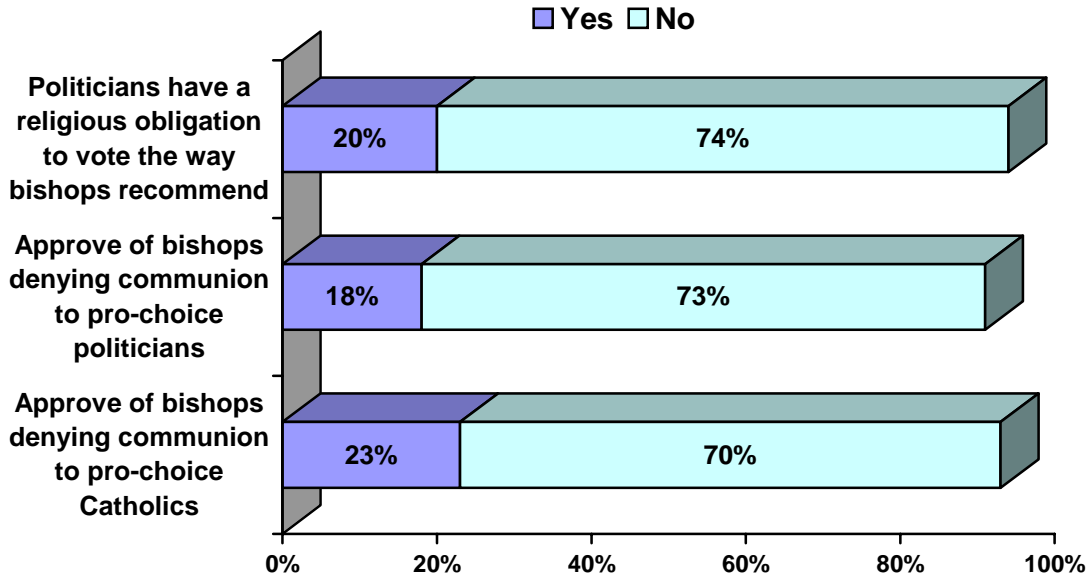
Hispanic Catholics, like other Catholics, disapprove of political involvement by the Catholic church.

Only 11% of Hispanic Catholic voters say the views of Catholic bishops in the US are “very important for you in deciding who to vote for” in the coming election. Another 20% report “somewhat” important and 66% say the views of the bishops are unimportant. Hispanics born in the United States (72%) and Hispanic men (71%) are most likely to say the views of the bishops are “not very” or “not at all” important to their vote.

Almost three quarters of Hispanic Catholic voters (74%) do not believe that politicians who are Catholic have a religious obligation to vote on issues the way Catholic bishops recommend.

Similarly, a large majority disapproves of denying communion to Catholic politicians who support legal abortion (73%) or to other Catholics who support legal abortion (70%). US-born Hispanics (79%) and Hispanics of Mexican descent (80%) are particularly likely to feel prochoice Catholic politicians should not be denied communion. US-born Hispanics are also more likely to disapprove of the denial of communion to prochoice Catholics generally (77%).

### Hispanics' Views on the Influence of the Church



Q19. Do you believe that politicians who are Catholic have a religious obligation to vote on issues the way Catholic bishops recommend? Q21. Do you believe that politicians who are Catholic and who support legal abortion should be denied communion? Q22. Do you approve or disapprove of Catholic bishops denying communion to Catholics who support legal abortion?