



PRESS RELEASE

September 30, 2021

Most Americans See Latinos As Biggest Boost to U.S. Economy, but Continue To Have Misconceptions About Hispanic Entrepreneurship and Business Leadership

New national survey conducted by BSP and commissioned by The Latino Donor Collaborative in partnership with LCDA, UnidosUS, Raben Group and Friends of the American Latino Museum reveals specific, conflicting views about Latinos in the United States, displaying vast room for awareness about their actual make-up, workforce contribution, and political power.

Washington, D.C. | Sept. 29, 2021—Seven out of 10 Americans attribute the country’s economic growth to Latino population growth, reflecting real figures that U.S. Hispanics have the highest workforce contribution rate (65.6%) and started the most small businesses out of any other population group over the last decade. However, according to a nationally representative survey—conducted by BSP Research and commissioned by the [Latino Donor Collaborative](#) in partnership with [Latino Corporate Directors Association](#) (LCDA), [UnidosUS](#), [Raben Group](#) and the [Friends of the American Latino Museum](#)—decades-old stereotypes and underestimations of the group remain prevalent among Americans across ethnic and racial backgrounds.

“We are glad to see that, comparing the results of this survey with our 2012 LDC Perception of Latinos Report, the needle has moved from Latinos mostly being perceived as ‘takers’ to being mostly perceived as ‘contributors’ today. Still, there is much work to do, specifically with media which has the capacity to help eliminate damaging stereotypes,” said **Ana Valdez, Executive Director of the Latino Donor Collaborative**. “The release of today’s data is invaluable because it identifies specific mischaracterizations of Latinos we must correct, so we have a clearer vision for all Americans: the more we risk making ill-informed decisions, the higher the cost in real dollars when we’re investing resources as employers and as national leaders.”

The survey found that Latinos are most often seen inaccurately as essential workers or farm workers or laborers—with 48% of non-Latinos viewing Hispanics in these roles—despite the fact

that among all racial/ethnic groups, **Latinos command the highest rates of business creation, proving their role as entrepreneurs and business leaders.** Additionally, while more than 75% of Americans feel that Hispanic immigrants have a lot to offer the country, most of them vastly overestimate that specific population and underestimate the U.S.-born share of Latinos. **Non-Latinos estimate that the U.S.-born share of Latinos is as low as 31%, when in reality it is more than double that figure at 67%.**

“This poll has good news and bad news for our community. The good news is that most Americans recognize the importance of Latinos and Latinas to our economy and appreciate our work ethic and values. The bad news is that most Americans also believe in widely inaccurate and negative myths and stereotypes—perpetuated by the news and social media—about our size and immigration status that are holding our country back from making the investments and enacting the policies that will benefit both our community and our nation. Overcoming these misconceptions and telling a more positive and accurate story about the Hispanic community, then, is even more important for the future of us all,” **said Janet Murguía, UnidosUS President and CEO.**

“Business leaders—both non-Latino and Latino—play a critical role in driving an accurate story of the Latino community and its huge impact on the American economy,” said **Esther Aguilera, President and CEO of the Latino Corporate Directors Association.** “We need business leaders everywhere to lean in, learn more, and speak up about the dynamism and success of the Latino community. Otherwise, these misconceptions and contradictory views of our community will continue to slow progress for everyone.”

Misconceptions of the actual make-up of the Latino community also have an effect in how non-Latinos perceive the political power of the community. Many non-Latinos, particularly Whites at 45%, expressed belief that increased Latino voter turnout would make no difference to the country, even while agreeing that elected officials would also pass more laws that benefited the group. Black and Asian adults in the U.S. hold different views about Latinos’ voting power, however. More than 50% of Black and Asian adults in the U.S. said we’d be better off as a country if more Hispanics voted.

“These results also provide helpful information about how other communities perceive Latinos and may help create alliances and bridges to work together to further amplify the value of our nation’s diversity” said **Estuardo Rodriguez, President and CEO, Friends of the American Latino Museum.** “With the recent Congressional approval to create a National American Latino Museum, there’s a huge opportunity right now to lift up the contributions Latinos have made for over 500 years in the founding and building of our nation. Dispelling misconceptions and driving a more accurate narrative of our community will only serve us on our collective path to becoming a stronger nation.”

Other key findings of the survey, which was conducted among 2,200 Americans between late August and early September 2021, include:

- **Incorrect misperceptions about the broader Latino population are often connected:**
 - Latinos comprise 18.7% of the U.S. population, but non-Latinos overestimate that figure by double at 38%.
 - U.S.-born Latinos are two-thirds of the broader Latino population, but all groups estimate that the majority are immigrants.
 - These misperceptions contribute to ideas that illegal immigration or lack of citizenship are the biggest barriers Latinos face today.
- **There are significant areas where misconceptions about the Latino workforce can be corrected:**
 - More than 75% of Americans believe Latino immigrants have a lot to offer this country and are an economic boost (Asian 87% Black 85%, White 76%).
 - Many non-Latinos also believe undocumented immigrants are taking jobs Americans depend on (Asian 55%, White 53%, Black 49%), though undocumented immigrants make up only 13% of all Latinos in the United States.
 - The view that Latinos are farmworkers is prevalent, even among Latinos, who believe half of Latinos fit that description. A commonly held misperception is that “farmworker” describes more Latinos than “entrepreneurial or business-minded,” despite U.S. Latinos creating the most small businesses in the country over the last 10 years.
- **There are positive signs of intercultural cooperation, but major opportunities exist for more accurate learning between groups:**
 - More than 60% of non-Latinos feel they know Latinos enough to work together on common causes (White 68%, Black 66%, Asian 63%).
 - Over 60% of non-Latinos personally interact with Latinos on a regular basis, and over 80% have relationships with Latinos in a variety of social or professional settings.
 - Despite personal relationships and frequent contact, only about half of Americans believe Latinos share their values, even among Latinos themselves (Latino 57%, Black 56%, White 53%, Asian 48%). At the same time, family-orientedness, belief in the American Dream, and religiousness are the traits most commonly attributed to Latinos, and more than half of Latinos are also viewed as optimistic and experiencing discrimination.
- **Latinos themselves—especially business leaders and community-based organizations—can lead on correcting misconceptions:**
 - After Latinos that people personally know, Whites and Latinos say their next-most trusted messengers for opinions about this group are Latino business leaders (30% and 33%) and community-based organizations (30% and 34%).

For more detail on the above findings, as well as findings about national patterns of media consumption related to Latinos, visit latinodonorcollaborative.org.

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About the Latino Donor Collaborative

The Latino Donor Collaborative is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to reshaping the perception of Latinos as part of the American social mainstream. We are self-funded and independent, and created by an accomplished group of Latino national leaders that generously donate their time to promote friendly high-level dialogue, with the goal of finding best ways to grow revenue and market share – by targeting and serving the Latino audiences. We do this through a nonpartisan agenda that includes outreach to influential people in media, advertising, politics, corporate America, and civil society by confronting stereotypes with data that brings understanding and appreciation of the actual roles being played by Latinos in society, politics, and commerce. The board is passionate about empowering every Latino to be the best they can be, and know that by empowering Latinos, they create a rich, united, and more powerful United States of America.

About the LCDA

The Latino Corporate Directors Association (LCDA) is a national organization promoting C-level and board diversity to maximize business success. LCDA serves as an advocate and resource to corporate boards, search firms, private equity, and institutional investors interested in gaining access to exceptional Latino board talent. Our program areas focus on growing the supply of high-caliber boardroom candidates and providing quality corporate governance programming for experienced and aspiring directors.

About UnidosUS

UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), is the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos at the national and local levels. For more than 50 years, UnidosUS has united communities and different groups seeking common ground through collaboration, and that share a desire to make our country stronger. For more information on UnidosUS, visit www.unidosus.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

About Friends of the National Museum of the American Latino

The Friends of the National Museum of the American Latino organization strives to create a museum in our nation's capital to educate, inspire and encourage respect and understanding of the richness and diversity of the American Latino experience within the U.S. and its territories by highlighting the contributions made by Latino leaders, pioneers and communities to the American way of life. **The FRIENDS organization is not affiliated in any way with the Smithsonian Institution**

About The Raben Group

The Raben Group is a national public policy, strategic communications, and organizational consulting firm, and is committed to solving problems and inspiring change across the corporate, nonprofit, foundation, and government sectors. Our practice areas include Government Affairs, Media & Communications, Issue Campaigns, Strategic Planning, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Impact Entertainment. We lead by example, we support the values of our clients, and we believe in leaving the world in a better place than when we found it.

Media Contacts:

Chris Lechuga, The Raben Group
915-274-2407
clechuga@rabengroup.com

Monique Navarro, Latino Corporate Directors Association
915-790-7788
mnavarro@latinocorporatedirectors.org

UnidosUS
news@unidosus.org

Ana Valdez, The Latino Donor Collaborative
310-749-8414
AValdez@LatinoCollaborative.org