

Background

This memorandum summarizes the findings of a survey we conducted with Puerto Rican residents living in the I-4 corridor in Florida. Specifically:

- ✓ We interviewed 400 respondents by telephone; one third of the calls were conducted by cellphone.
- ✓ The interviews were conducted between August 20 and September 4, 2014
- ✓ Respondents were sampled from people with Hispanic surnames residing in the Orlando and Tampa markets and counties along I-4. Interviewees were screened by asking if they were of Puerto Rican descent.
 - Our incidence rate was 1 in 4. In other words we had to contact over 1,600 respondents in order to interview 400 respondents of Puerto Rican descent
- ✓ The interviews were conducted by bi-lingual interviewers. Ninety-two percent of the interviews were conducted in Spanish.
- ✓ The margin of error associated with the results is +/- 4.9%

Topics

Our interviewees responded to questions on a variety of topics, including

- ✓ Descriptions of their demographic background and political orientation
- ✓ Descriptions of their communication and news preferences
- ✓ Their views and priorities regarding status resolution for Puerto Rico
- ✓ Their views of a variety of candidates and candidate positions

Demographic and political profile

Most Puerto Ricans living in the I-4 corridor are longtime residents of the US mainland. Some but relatively few left Puerto Rico in the last few years. However, most did come from Puerto Rico originally, relatively few were born in the US

Most of our respondents came to Central Florida by way of another state; 12% moved directly from Puerto Rico. Most reported arriving in Central Florida from New York and New Jersey. Specifically:

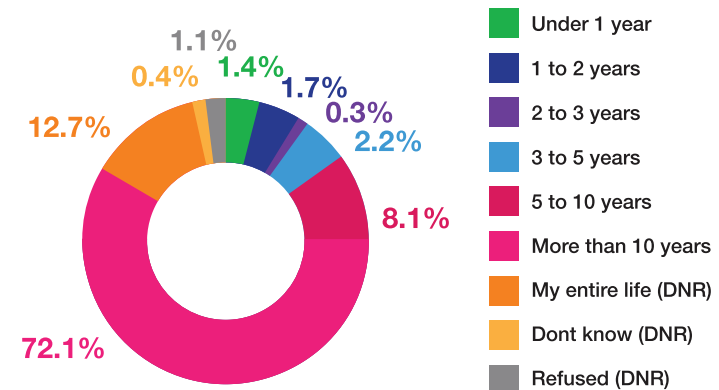
- ✓ 12% of the sample came to Central Florida directly from Puerto Rico.
- ✓ 51% came to Central Florida after moving to New York and New Jersey first.

Even if most I-4 Puerto Ricans arrived by way of another state, most have lived there for quite a long time: 69% reported having lived in Central Florida for more than 10 years. In line with this many respondents are older with quite a few in retirement age. Thirty-three percent of respondents reported being 65 or over, 22% reported being between 55 and 64.

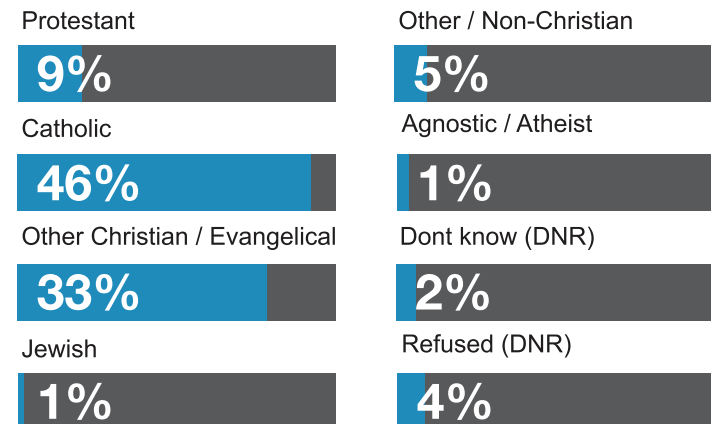
As far as religious preference is concerned most Central Florida Puerto Ricans are Catholics (46%); however a significant number reported belonging to another Christian affiliation or being evangelicals (33%). Relatively few people reported they were Protestants (9%)

Most Central Florida Puerto Ricans frequently attend church. 1/3rd goes once a week, and 13% goes more than once a week, both high rates compared to other groups in the US. Very few of the Catholics reported attending church more than once a week, while a very large percentage of the Protestants did, suggesting these are fundamentalists attending mid-week prayer meetings.

Length of residence on Mainland



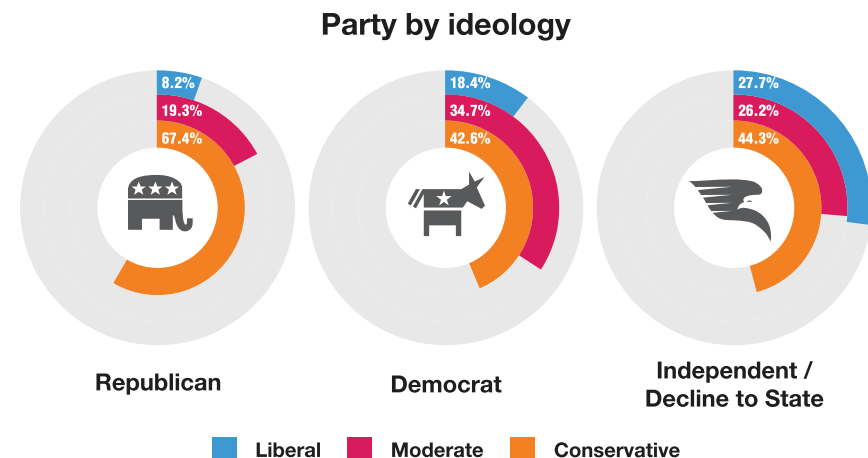
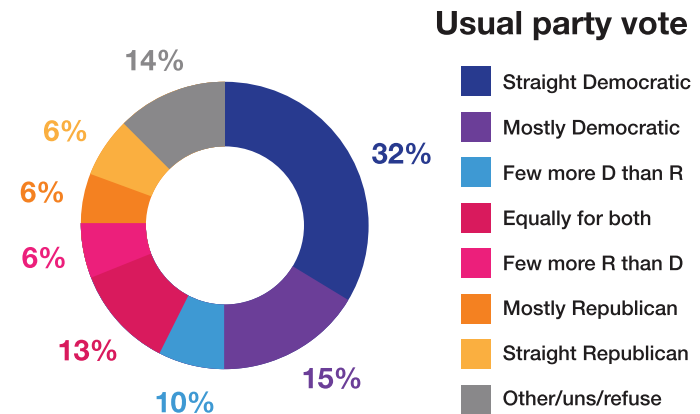
Religious Affiliation



At 92%, a very high proportion of Puerto Rican residents of the I-4 corridor reported being registered to vote. This is probably consistent with the fact that many are older, since older residents tend to both register and vote more than younger age groups do. It is also consistent with the very high voter participation rates in Puerto Rico.

Both by registration and by reported usual voting respondents reported being Democrats by large margins. Specifically: 55% report registering as Democrats, compared to only 19% who register as Republicans. Most of the remainder registered as Independents (17%), while some declined to tell us how they were registered. We obtained a very similar result when we asked people how they usually vote. Thirty-two percent said 'straight Democratic', 15% mostly Democratic and 10% said 'a few more Democrats than Republicans'. Few (13%) said they were mostly ticket-splitters ('vote about equally for both parties') and a sum total of 18% indicated they vote more, mostly or exclusively for Republicans.

However, when we asked respondents about their ideology we found they were quite conservative. Unlike most Democrats, most I-4 Puerto Ricans reported they were conservatives (48%), rather than liberals (17%); the remainder (29%) considered themselves moderates. While respondents who report registering as Republicans are substantially more conservative than their Democratic counter-parts, a very significant proportion of the registered Democrats (43%) in our sample also said they were conservatives. Below we'll show that these respondents are conservatives on social issues in particular.



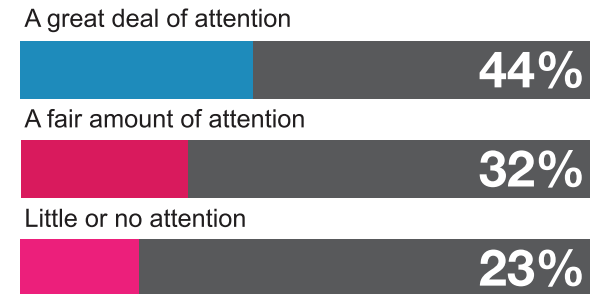
Communications and news preferences

Even though most have lived in the US for quite a long time Puerto Ricans living in the I-4 corridor pay close attention to what is going on in Puerto Rico. When asked *“how much attention do you pay to news coverage of issues and news from Puerto Rico”* most reported paying ‘a great deal’ or ‘a fair amount’ of attention. This, it turns out was true for most of the demographic subgroups of our sample with one exception. Regardless of age, gender or how long they had lived in the US, all groups reported paying a lot of attention. The only exception consisted of the respondents who had been born in the US mainland; they reported much lower levels of interest in news from Puerto Rico. Also, the more attention they paid to news about Puerto Rico, the more the preferred Spanish language news sources.

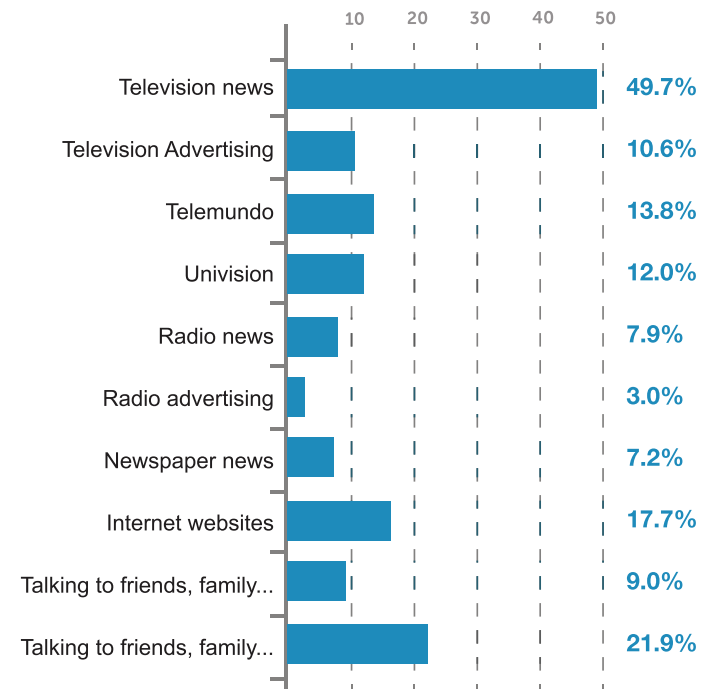
When asked how they got most of their news about Puerto Rico, the news source mentioned the most by far was television. While some mentioned specific channels like Telemundo and Univision, most simply mentioned TV news (the question was asked as a pre-coded open ended question; that is, the interviewers did not read respondents a list of options but recorded what people said into pre-existing categories). Few people mentioned news sources other than television, like radio news or newspapers. Also, compared to similar questions asked in other surveys, relatively few people mentioned Internet news sources. However, compared to similar questions asked in different surveys, many respondents mentioned ‘word of mouth’ as a source. Specifically, 9% mentioned talking to friends, relatives or neighbors in the US, and 22% mentioned friends, family and (former) neighbors in Puerto Rico as a news source.



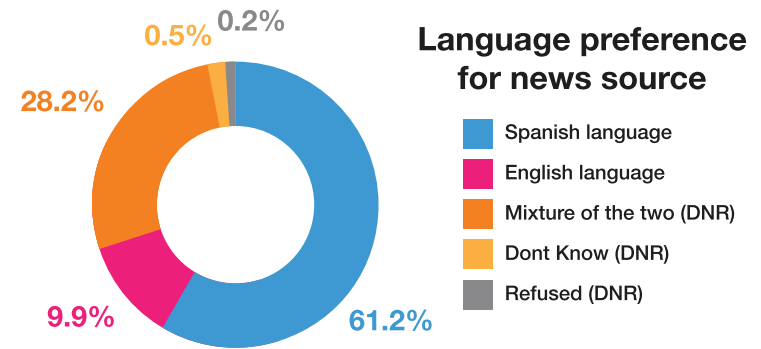
Attention to news from Puerto Rico



Source of news about Puerto Rico



Finally we found a strong preference for Spanish language news sources. Very few reported that they relied for the most part on English language sources of news about Puerto Rico. Similarly most people said they preferred to speak Spanish when discussing the news.



Status Resolution

Respondents attached a high priority to resolving the status of Puerto Rico; if anything this issue is more important now than it was 10 years ago. When asked *“how important is it to you that Congress and the President move to resolve the status of Puerto Rico”*, 37% said this was extremely important and another 34% said this was very important. A 2005 survey found 34% extremely important and 35% very important. The total ‘important’ rating (summing these two figures) has increased from an already high 69% in 2005 to 76% today. Looking at subgroups of the sample we found that all demographic subgroups attach a high priority to status resolution.

Few respondents were aware of the fact that Congress has provided funding to conduct a referendum on status resolution. Only 1/3rd of the sample was aware of Congressional action on this. Once explained, however, most people approved: when asked *“do you approve or disapprove of conducting a referendum with options to be approved by the Department of Justice”* 74% said they approved, including 42% who said they strongly approved (13% disapproved).

We also asked specifically how respondents would feel *“if Congress ordered a yes or no referendum on statehood”*. Approval for this scenario was also very high; in this case 76% approved, while 53% strongly approved (14% disapproved).

In both cases approval levels were high across all subgroups of the sample. We did find slightly higher approval levels among younger voters for an up or down referendum on statehood, but no group opposed such a referendum. Also, the more attention people paid to news about Puerto Rico and the more important status resolution was to them, the more likely they were to approve both of Congressional action in general and of a binding referendum on statehood. Also, even people who prefer options other than statehood (supporters of sovereign status or independence) approved of these two steps, although by narrower margins.



Importance status resolution

Extremely Important



Very Important



Somewhat important



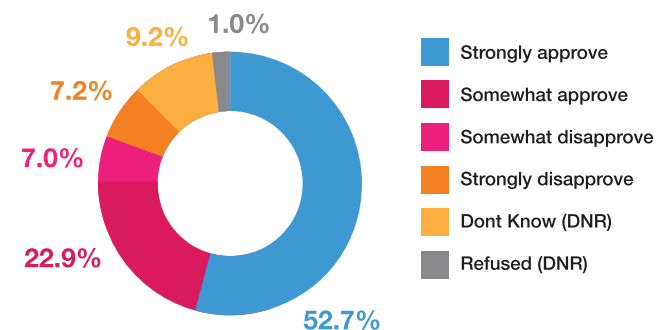
Not very important



Not at all important



Up or down vote on statehood



In addition to dealing with status resolution, we asked direct questions about how to resolve the status; these questions indicate a preference for statehood by a substantial margin; moreover, it looks as if support for statehood among I-4 Puerto Ricans has increased. Given a choice between the following 3 options 64% preferred statehood; *“of the following 3 choices which one do you think would be best?”*

- ✓ That Puerto Rico become a state: 64%
- ✓ That Puerto Rico become a sovereign country in free association with the US 18%
- ✓ That Puerto Rico become a completely independent nation 8%

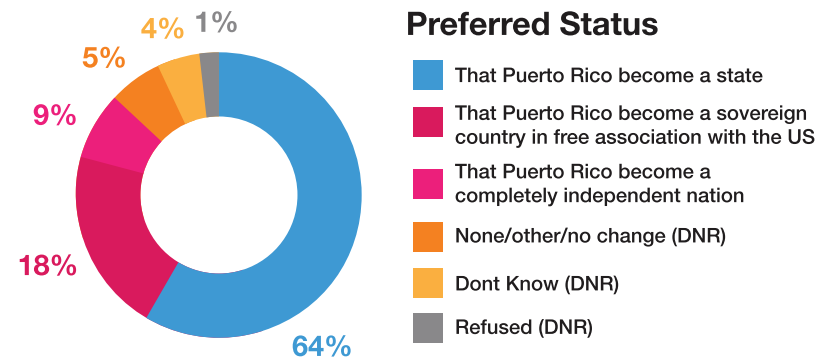
This reflects a higher level of support for statehood than was found in the November 2012 referendum in Puerto Rico. A comparable question asked in 2005 was worded slightly differently; however the results suggest support for statehood has increased. The wording in 2005 was

- ✓ That Puerto Rico become the 51st state 51%
- ✓ That Puerto Rico become an independent nation 6%
- ✓ That Puerto Rico retain its commonwealth status 39%

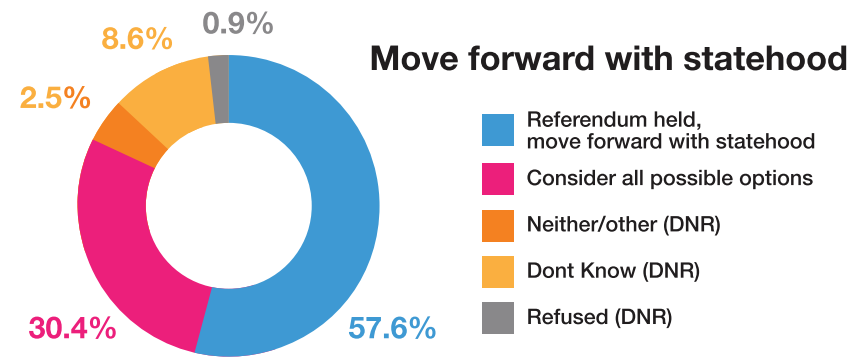
A proposal to make changes in Puerto Rico’s current status in order to comply with federal law was not popular. Most people agreed with the position that fixing territorial status won’t work, that statehood is the best solution:

Some people have proposed to modify Puerto Rico’s territorial status by making changes to meet legal requirements under federal law. Which opinion is closer to your view

<i>That keeping territorial status by making changes is the best solution for Puerto Rico</i>	28%
<i>That the federal government has already said that fixing territorial status is impossible, that statehood is the best solution for Puerto Rico</i>	59%



Finally a clear majority feels that the referendum that has already been held is dispositive, that Puerto Rico should move forward with statehood (58%). Only 30% believes that there was no clear majority for statehood, that all options should be considered including modifying territorial status (30%).

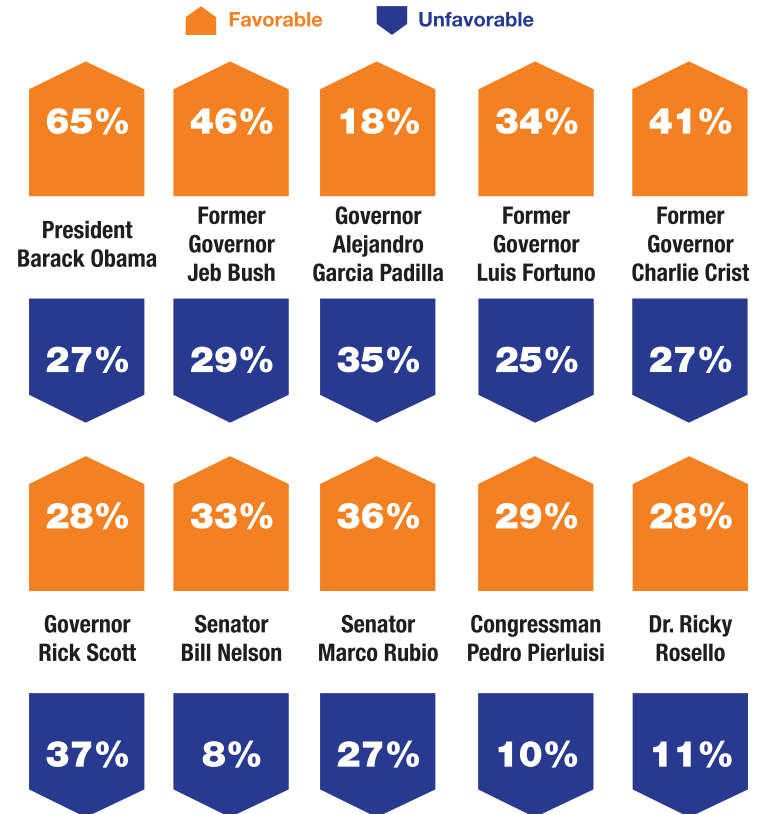


Issues and Candidates

A final segment of the questionnaire was concerned with a mixture of Puerto Rican and US issues and candidates. The chart to the right shows the extent to which people had a favorable or unfavorable impression of various people in the political arena. Several findings are worth noting:

- ✓ While the ratings of President Obama were hitting new lows in national polling in the US, I-4 Puerto Ricans continued to have strongly favorable views of him: 65% reported having a favorable impression of him, 41% a strong favorable impression.
- ✓ While they register as Democrats and have a favorable view of the President, I-4 Puerto Ricans also had positive views of some of the Republicans in the sample, including former Governor Jeb Bush and Senator Marco Rubio.
- ✓ Neither of the candidates for Governor did particularly well, although Crist was rated more favorably than Scott.
- ✓ While they pay attention to news about Puerto Rico, quite of a few of our respondents were not all that familiar with the Puerto Rican politicians on our list. Former Governor Fortuno was relatively well known and had mixed – positive ratings. Current Governor Padilla was not quite as well known and had net negative ratings. Finally Congressman Pierluisi and Dr. Rosello were known to only about 40% of our respondents; both were positively regarded.

Favorable / Unfavorable Ratings



Finally we asked respondents how they would react to candidates taking various issue positions. We asked them to react to candidates for the US Congress who took positions on issues both relating to Puerto Rican status resolution as well as issues that are current in US politics. The questions were asked on a 0 to 10 scale, rating the odds of voting for a candidate taking that position, from extremely unlikely (0) to extremely likely (10). The figures in the charts are averaged scores.

First with result to status resolution we found a very positive reaction to candidates who would work to resolve the status, who supports binding statehood, someone who wants Puerto Rico to become the 51st state so it will have 2 seats in the Senate and 5 seats in the House of Representatives, and who supports a referendum in Puerto Rico to resolve status. The only negative reaction we got was to someone who wants to keep Puerto Rico's current status without changes.

Reaction to candidate positions



Keep territorial status without changes

4.6



Congress to resolve the status of Puerto Rico

8.1



Supports a binding statehood bill for Puerto Rico

7.5



Congress to authorize a vote by Puerto Ricans to resolve status

8.3



Wants PR to become the 51st state with 2 Senators and 5 House Members

8.1

Earlier we reported that while they register as Democrats and support the President, I-4 Puerto Ricans do have a positive impression of some of the leading Florida Republicans. In a similar vein we reported that while they are Democrats, they tend to think of themselves as conservative. One place in which this is clearly shows up is on social issues. Our respondents reported being very likely to vote for candidates who support school prayer, candidates who support parental notification before minors can have an abortion, and for candidates who are pro-life on the issue of abortion.

On another domestic issue that is often considered key to US Hispanics, immigration reform, I-4 Puerto Ricans indicated by large margins that they would support candidates who support comprehensive immigration reform. They also indicated by a substantial margin that they would support candidates who support a path to citizenship for illegals. And finally, they agreed with the Republican position that our borders should be secured before passing any new immigration reforms.

Reaction to candidate positions



Support for prayer in public schools

8.8



Support for parental notification

8.4



Pro-life

8.1

Reaction to candidate positions



Comprehensive immigration reform

8.3



Path to citizenship for people who are in the US illegally

7.0



Secure borders before passing any immigration reforms

6.6

Finally, our respondents indicated support for Obamacare, and support candidates who favor expanded home ownership among minority groups and favored programs to assist small business startups.

Reaction to candidate positions



Someone who supports Obamacare

6.8



Expand minority home ownership

8.3



Someone who supports programs to assist small business startups

8.9