

October 7, 2009

PUBLIC OPINION  
STUDY OF CALIFORNIA  
LATINA ELECTORATE

*Report*



## **METHODOLOGY**

The findings in this executive summary are based on a statewide survey of the California Latina electorate sponsored by Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) by Bendixen & Associates (B&A). The sample was designed to be representative of the Latina electorate in California based on the latest voter registration statistics. The study also includes an oversample of 300 Latina registered voters that are “high propensity-new media.” These voters participated in both the 2006 and 2008 general elections in California. They also have access to the Internet and a personal email address. The survey was conducted from September 23 to September 27, 2009. A total of 500 telephone interviews were conducted by professionally trained bilingual operators. Respondents were given the choice of being interviewed in English or Spanish. The margin of error for the total sample of 500 interviews is approximately 4 percentage points.

RDD (Random Digit Dialing) methodology was employed to contact Latina voters in census tracts with 5 percent or more Hispanic density - more than 80 percent of the respondents. Using RDD methodology allows for maximum coverage and ensures that respondents with non-Hispanic names and those with unlisted telephone numbers are not systematically excluded from the sample. The remainder of the interviews contacted Latina voters in low Hispanic density census tracts. They were identified through “ethnic encoding” methodology.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **MAJOR FINDING**

**Access to the Internet and usage of “new media” are very important catalysts for the political and civic involvement of Latina voters in California. Latinas that have access to the Internet and an email address are significantly more likely to be informed about new state laws and the legislative process in Sacramento than Latina voters that are not connected to “new media.” They are also more likely to get directly involved in organizations that focus on issues that impact on their careers and the quality of life of their families.**

### **OTHER FINDINGS**

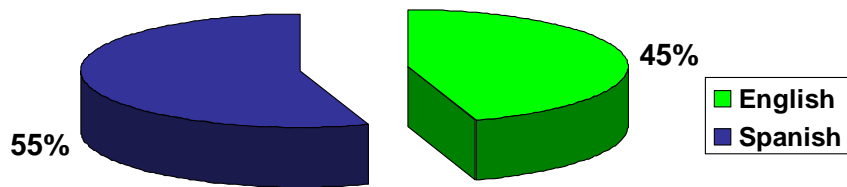
1. The California Latina electorate is about equally divided between those that are English dominant and their Spanish dominant counterparts. More than two-thirds of these voters have a high school diploma and more than half of these Latinas have either attended a 2-year college or have received a diploma from a 4-year university or a graduate school. Approximately one quarter of this electorate can be considered middle-class with annual incomes of more than \$50,000.
2. There is an important difference in the community and civic lifestyle of Latina voters. Those who are Spanish-dominant are mostly involved with the local church that they attend. English-dominant Latina voters are also involved in church activities but they are also more likely to be active in PTAs, labor unions, charities and neighborhood groups.
3. There is a substantial “language divide” when it comes to access to the Internet and text messaging. English dominant Latinas are much more likely to be connected to “new media” than Spanish dominant Latinas. Seventy-one percent of English dominant Latinas have access to the Internet in contrast to 41 percent of Spanish dominant Latinas. Other factors that impact access to the Internet are age, educational level, and the presence of children at home. A substantial majority of Latina voters between the ages of 18-34, those with a college or graduate degree, and mothers with children living at home are connected to “new media.”
4. Approximately one-third of Latina voters use their cell phone for text messaging. The language and educational “divides” for text messaging are similar to those for Internet access. About half of English dominant Latinas and three-fifths of those with at least a college degree text message on a regular basis in contrast to one-seventh of Spanish dominant Latinas and less than 10 percent of those without a high school diploma.

5. There is an important opportunity for corporations, government institutions, political parties and candidates to increase their market share or their electoral appeal by directly communicating through “new media” with those segments of the Latina population that are more culturally assimilated and with those higher up on the socioeconomic scale.
6. The level of political and civic involvement among Latina voters in California is still fairly low. Only one out of every six Latina voters in California has made a financial donation over the Internet to a candidate for public office or to an organization that supports important Latina issues. Higher educated Latinas are more likely to have made a financial donation than those with a high school education or less.
7. Usage of social networking sites, such as MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter is still a new phenomenon among Latina voters. Only 6 percent of Latinas that have Internet access reported visiting a social networking website on a daily basis. Young Latinas (18-34) and those with a college or a graduate degree are more likely to access these sites more often.
8. Latina voters trust their community and neighborhood leaders much more than elected officials or media personalities. There is no cultural or educational “divide” when it comes to this question. Latinas of all ages and educational and economic classes tend to look at their communities and neighborhoods for political and civic leadership.
9. An overwhelming majority of Latina voters support measures that mandate that all high schools in California offer the necessary classes to prepare students for college.
10. Almost three-quarters of Latina voters select some type of economic issue (the weak economy, high unemployment, or the state budget crisis) as the most important problem facing California today.

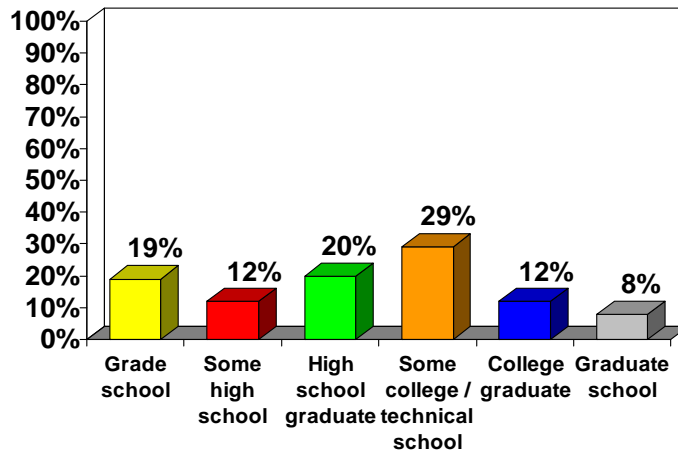
**POLL RESULTS**

A. The California Latina electorate is about equally divided between those that are English dominant and their Spanish dominant counterparts. More than two-thirds of these voters have a high school diploma and more than half of these Latinas have either attended a 2-year college or have received a diploma from a 4-year university or a graduate school. Approximately one quarter of this electorate can be considered middle-class with annual incomes of more than \$50,000.

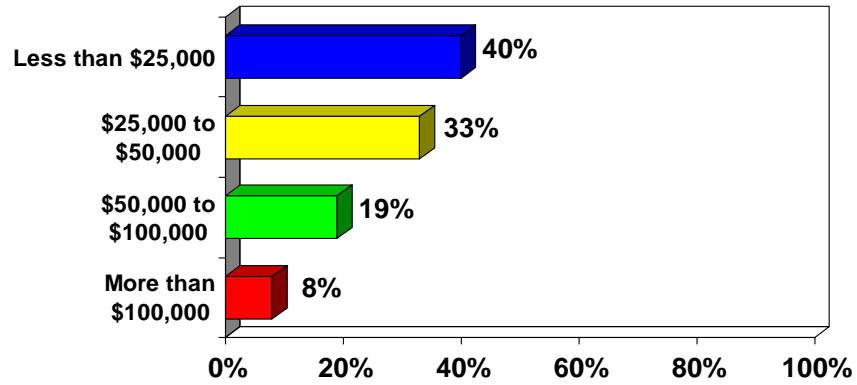
Language of Interview



Educational Attainment



## Annual Household Income



B. There is an important difference in the community and civic lifestyle of Latina voters. Those who are Spanish-dominant are mostly involved with the local church that they attend. English-dominant Latina voters are also involved in church activities but they are also more likely to be active in PTAs, labor unions, charities and neighborhood groups.

Which of the following community organizations do you belong to?\*

*By Language of Interview*

	<i>English</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
Church	56%	60%
Parent-teacher association	15%	7%
Labor union	13%	5%
Charity	10%	4%
Neighborhood group	9%	4%
Sports league	7%	4%
Another type of organization	12%	7%

\*Multiple responses accepted.

C. Latina voters trust their community and neighborhood leaders much more than elected officials or media personalities. There is no cultural or educational “divide” when it comes to this question. Latinas of all ages and educational and economic classes tend to look at their communities and neighborhoods for political and civic leadership.

What type of leader do you find the most credible when it comes to information about politics and civic engagement?

- Local community leader 44%
- Elected official 24%
- Business leader 8%
- Media personality 5%
- Entertainment leader 1%
- Sports figure 1%
- Don't know / No answer 17%

What type of leader do you find the most credible when it comes to information about politics and civic engagement?

*By Language of Interview*

	<i>English</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
Local community leader	51%	39%
Elected official	22%	26%
Business leader	7%	8%
Media personality	4%	6%
Entertainment leader	2%	0%
Sports figure	1%	1%



What type of leader do you find the most credible when it comes to information about politics and civic engagement?

*By Age*

	<i>18-34</i>	<i>65+</i>
Local community leader	53%	40%
Elected official	21%	21%
Business leader	18%	3%
Media personality	4%	5%
Entertainment leader	3%	0%
Sports figure	1%	2%

What type of leader do you find the most credible when it comes to information about politics and civic engagement?

*By Educational Attainment*

	<i>Some high school or less</i>	<i>College graduate or more</i>
Local community leader	41%	50%
Elected official	19%	23%
Business leader	10%	15%
Media personality	9%	1%
Entertainment leader	0%	3%
Sports figure	3%	0%

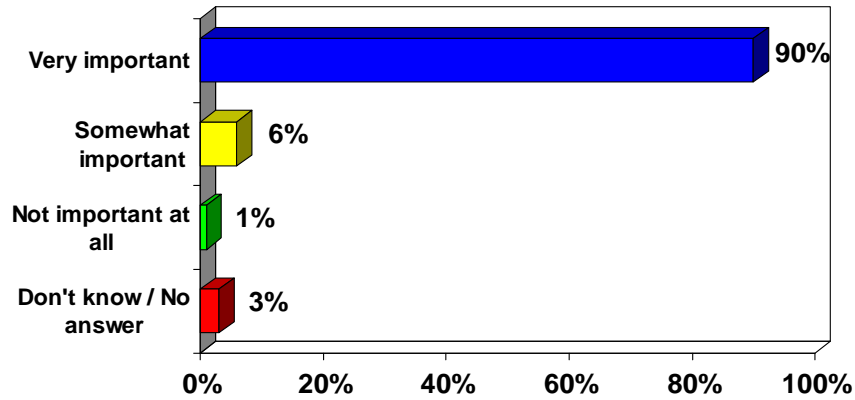
D. Almost three-quarters of Latina voters select some type of economic issue (the weak economy, high unemployment, or the state budget crisis) as the most important problem facing California today.

## Most Important Problem

- **Economy** 46%
- **Unemployment** 17%
- **Budget crisis** 9%
- Education 6%
- Crime 4%
- Immigration 3%
- Health care 3%
- Water shortage 2%
- Foreclosures 2%
- Other 3%
- No answer 5%

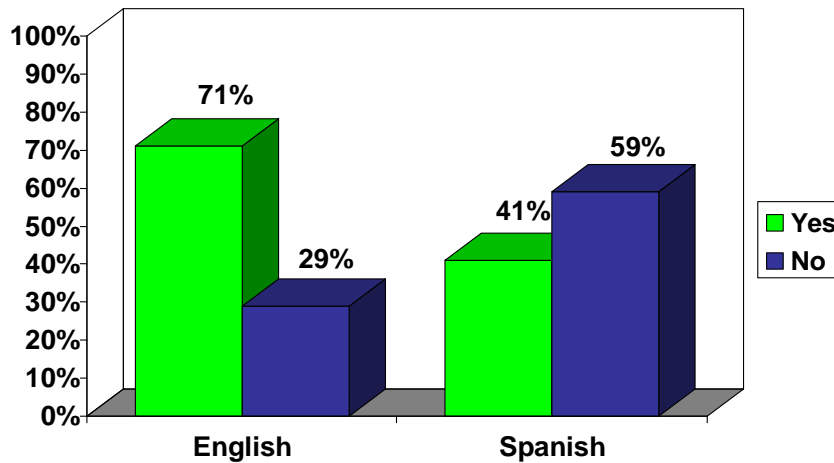
E. An overwhelming majority of Latina voters support measures that mandate that all high schools in California offer the necessary classes to prepare students for college.

How important is it to you that the California Legislature supports laws and policies that mandate that all high schools in California offer the necessary classes to prepare its students for college?

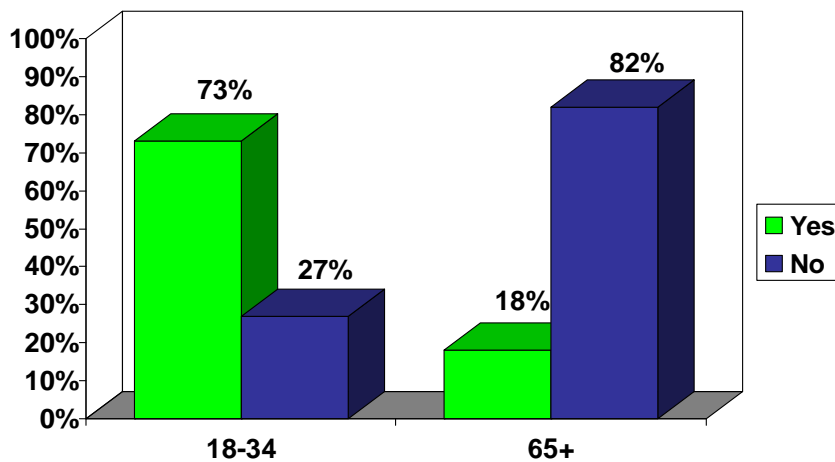


F. There is a substantial “language divide” when it comes to access to the Internet and text messaging. English dominant Latinas are much more likely to be connected to “new media” than Spanish dominant Latinas. Seventy-one percent of English dominant Latinas have access to the Internet in contrast to 41 percent of Spanish dominant Latinas. Other factors that impact access to the Internet are age, educational level, and the presence of children at home. A substantial majority of Latina voters between the ages of 18-34, those with a college or graduate degree, and mothers with children living at home are connected to “new media.”

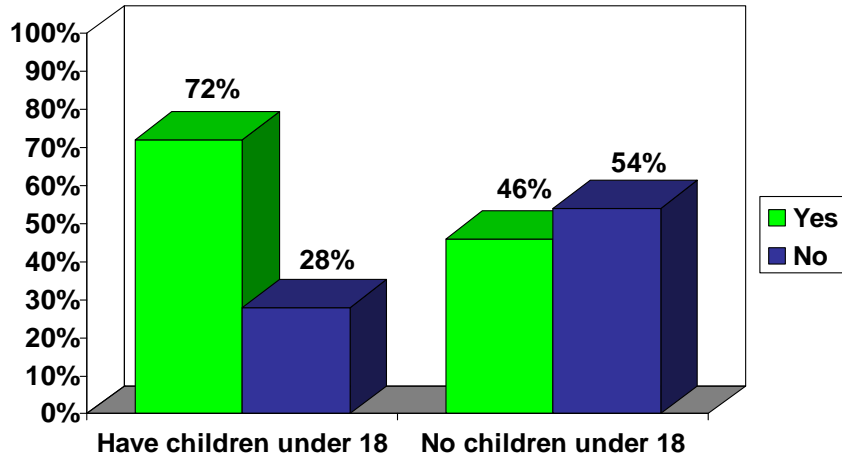
Do you currently have access to the Internet?  
*By Language of Interview*



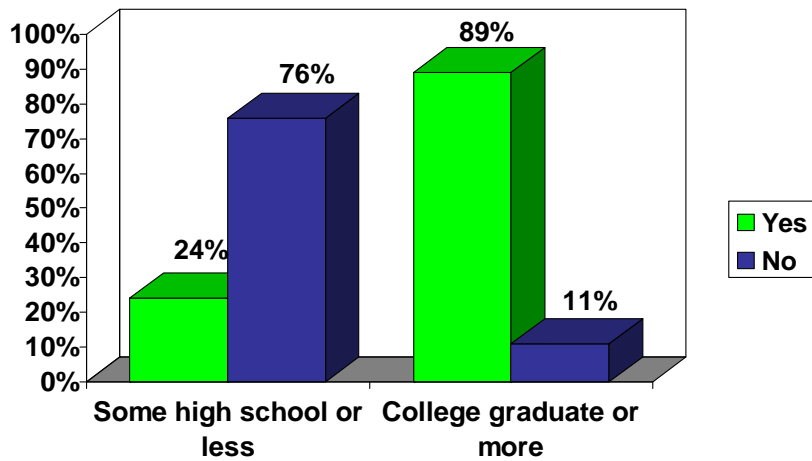
Do you currently have access to the Internet?  
*By Age*



Do you currently have access to the Internet?  
*By Children under 18 at Home*

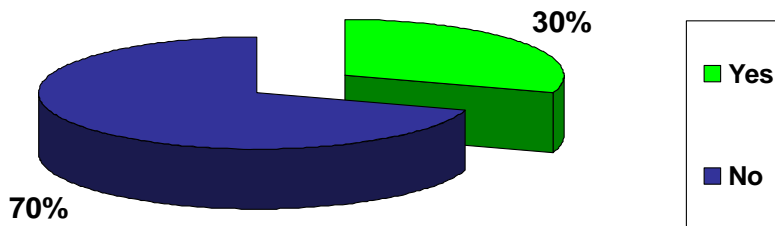


Do you currently have access to the Internet?  
*By Educational Attainment*

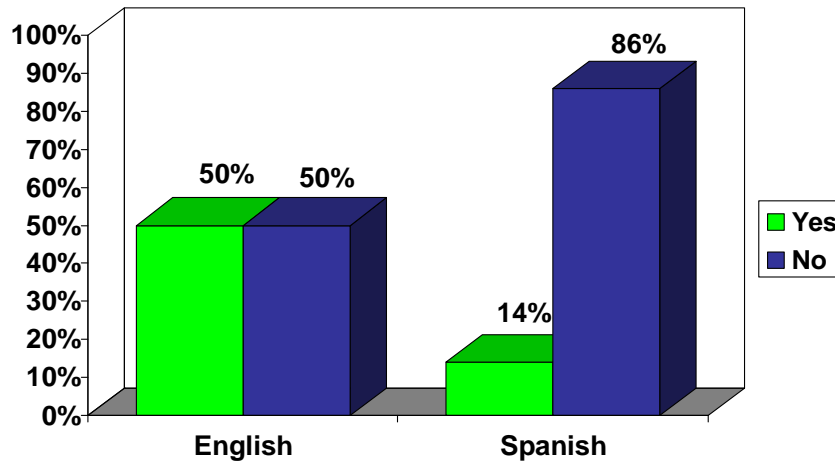


G. Approximately one-third of Latina voters use their cell phone for text messaging. The language and educational “divides” for text messaging are similar to those for Internet access. About half of English dominant Latinas and three-fifths of those with at least a college degree text message on a regular basis in contrast to one-seventh of Spanish dominant Latinas and less than 10 percent of those without a high school diploma.

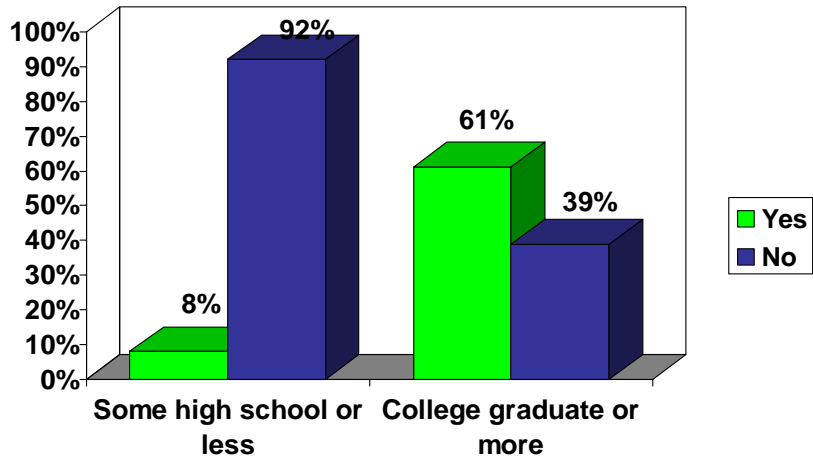
## Do you use your cell phone for text messaging?



### Do you use your cell phone for text messaging? *By Language of Interview*

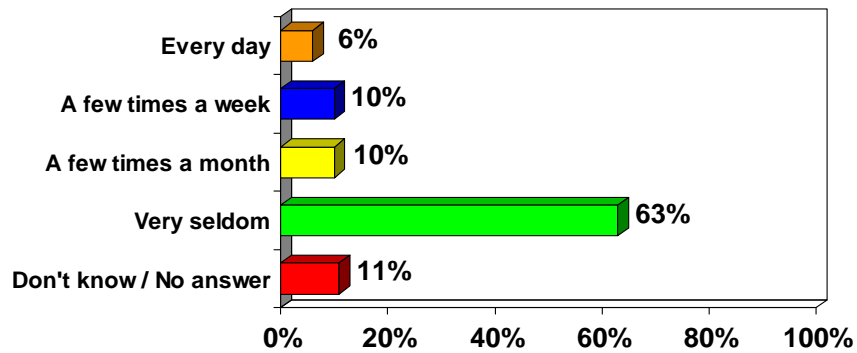


Do you use your cell phone for text messaging?  
*By Educational Attainment*



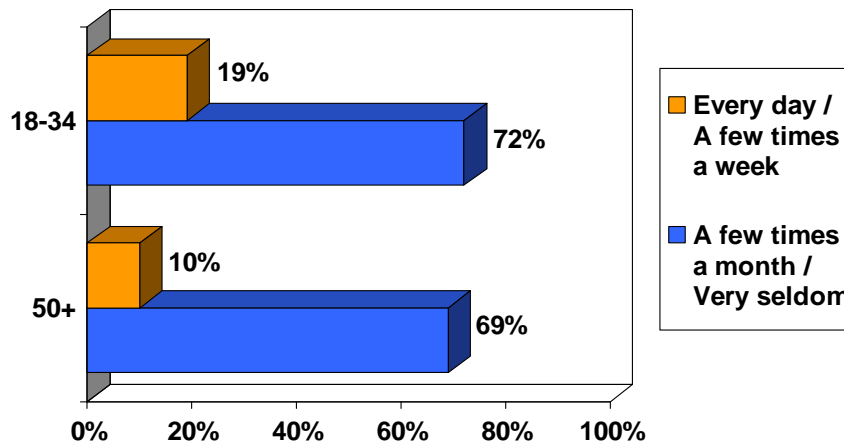
H. Usage of social networking sites, such as MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter is still a new phenomenon among Latina voters. Only 6 percent of Latinas that have Internet access reported visiting a social networking website on a daily basis. Young Latinas (18-34) and those with a college or a graduate degree are more likely to access these sites more often.

How often do you visit social networking websites like MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter for information about politics and government?



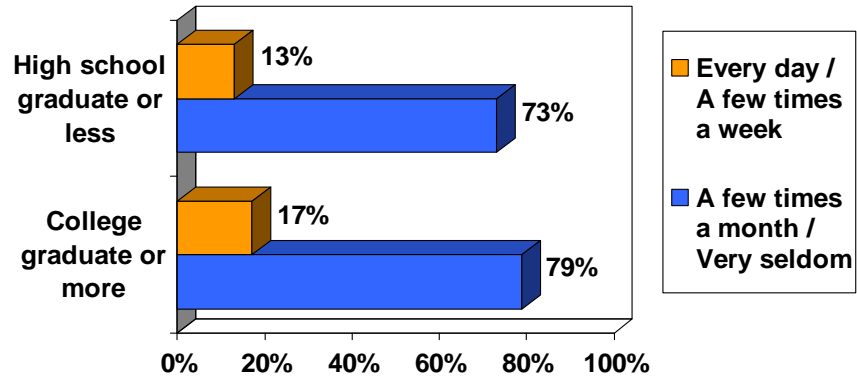
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*By Age*



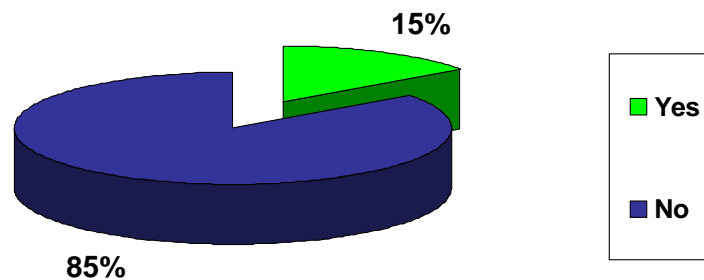


How often do you visit social networking websites like MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter for information about politics and government?  
*By Educational Attainment*



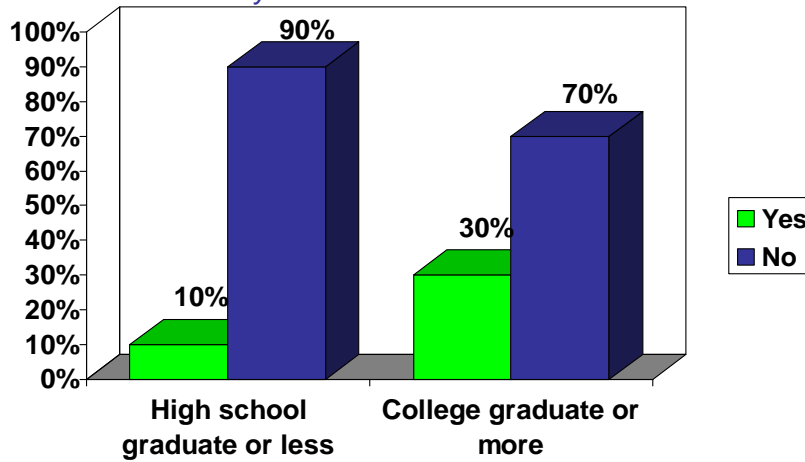
I. The level of political and civic involvement among Latina voters in California is still fairly low. Only one out of every six Latina voters in California has made a financial donation over the Internet to a candidate for public office or to an organization that supports important Latina issues. Higher educated Latinas are more likely to have made a financial donation than those with a high school education or less.

Have you ever made a financial donation to a political cause, to a candidate for public office, or to an organization that supports issues important to you through the Internet?



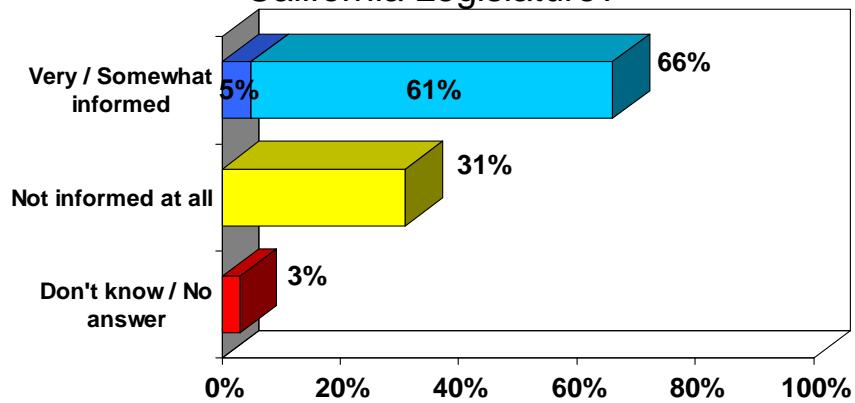
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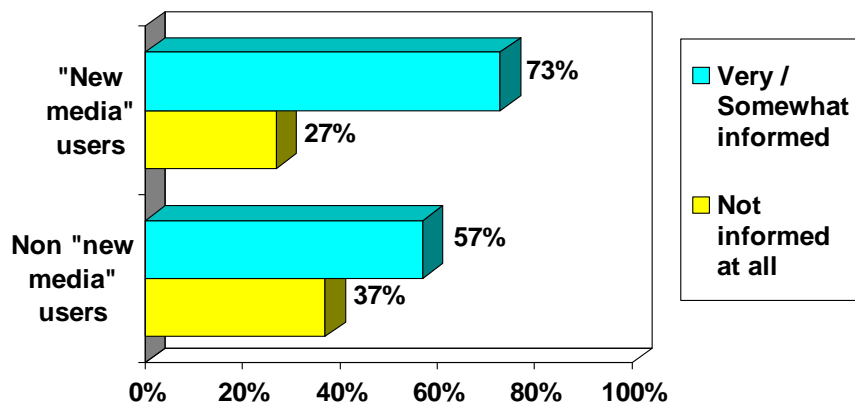
J. Access to the Internet and usage of “new media” are very important catalysts for the political and civic involvement of Latina voters in California. Latinas that have access to the Internet and an email address are significantly more likely to be informed about new state laws and the legislative process in Sacramento than Latina voters that are not connected to “new media.” They are also more likely to get directly involved in organizations that focus on issues that impact on their careers and the quality of life of their families.

How informed are you about new state laws and policies being considered in Sacramento by the California Legislature?

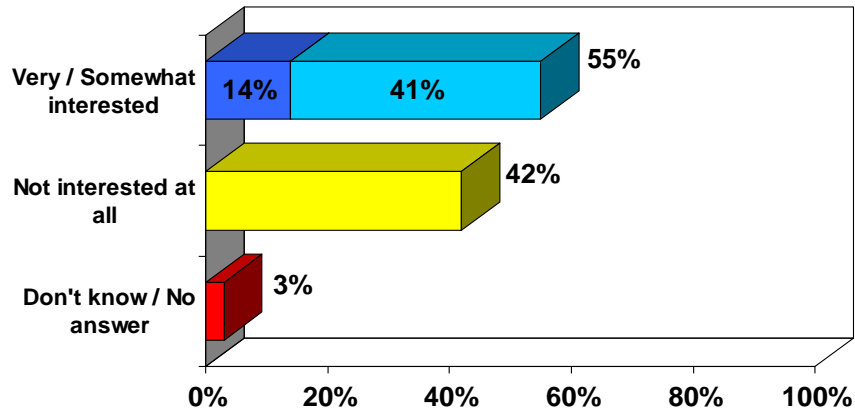


How informed are you about new state laws and policies being considered in Sacramento by the California Legislature?

*By New Media Usage*

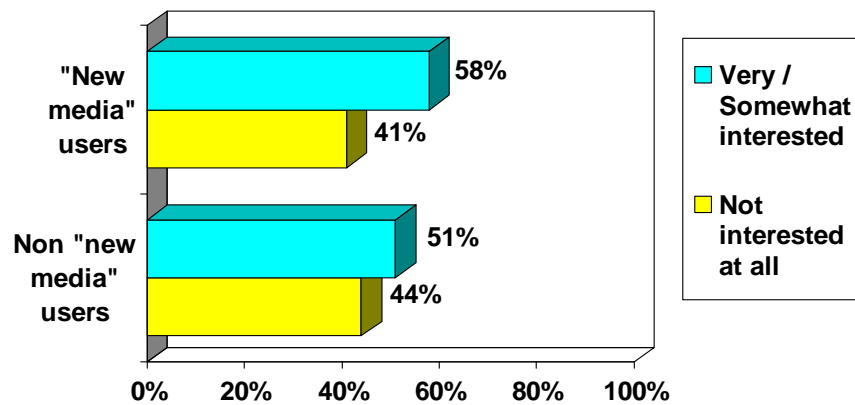


How interested would you be in joining an organization that provides you with information about what is going on in Sacramento and about issues that influence your career development?



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K. There is an important opportunity for corporations, government institutions, political parties and candidates to increase their market share or their electoral appeal by directly communicating through “new media” with those segments of the Latina population that are more culturally assimilated and with those higher up on the socioeconomic scale.