



behavior research center's

Latino Poll

NEWS RELEASE
LTLP 2003-III-12

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CATHOLIC ALLEGIANCE DECLINING AMONG HISPANICS IN KEY POPULATION SUBGROUPS

Phoenix, Arizona, September 18, 2003. It may come as no surprise that seven out of ten Hispanics in Arizona consider themselves to be Catholic, but the future dominance of Catholicism among Hispanics here may be eroding. The proportion of Hispanics who identify with the Catholic faith falls off sharply from a high of 78 percent among the oldest Hispanic adults in the survey to only 54 percent among the youngest adults. At the same time, among the youngest adults, the proportion who have become “Christians” is double the average and among Hispanics in the 25 to 44 age groups, a fifth to a quarter call themselves either “Christian” or have joined other faiths, mostly Baptist, Pentecostal or Jehovah Witness.

Also of interest in the shifting patterns of religious affiliation is that the more fluent Hispanics become in the English language, the more likely is it that they will have switched to “Christian.” Similarly, Hispanics who have become Republicans are the most likely of Hispanics to have changed religions: barely half think of themselves as Catholic compared to 21 percent who self-identify as “Christian” and 15 percent who have become members of other churches.

Regardless of affiliation, church attendance is fairly impressive, with half going weekly and another 16 percent attending at least once a month. Sixteen percent never attend church and one in five appear to restrict their attendance to major religious events. Regular attendance at any church falls off among adults under the age of 35 and drops very sharply among those under the age of 25. It also declines among English speakers, men and among Hispanics who have left the Democrat or Republican party to become political independents.

The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 400 Hispanic heads of household across Maricopa and Pima Counties, conducted between March 19 and March 25, 2003, by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center’s independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The public is welcome to visit www.brcpolls.com to read this and other recent polls.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This Latino Poll (2003-III-12) is based on 400 telephone interviews with Hispanic heads of household across Maricopa and Pima Counties, conducted from March 19 through March 25, 2003. In the overall sample, one may say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 4.4 percent of what they would have been had the entire Hispanic adult population been surveyed. The Latino Poll is a part of the ongoing series of Rocky Mountain Polls conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

BELOW: Statistical data. For this and other polls. See www.brcpolls.com/results

STATISTICAL DATA

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“What religion, if any, do you consider yourself to be?”

	CATHOLIC	CHRISTIAN/ OTHERS	NONE
Age: 45+	78%	15%	7%
Democrats	78	16	6
Spanish-dominant	76	18	6
Women	72	20	8
Men	69	20	11
Bilingual	72	19	9
Non-voters	67	21	12
Age: 35 to 44	67	24	9
English-dominant	67	23	10
Age: 25 to 34	66	22	12
Political Independents	65	18	17
Republicans	55	36	9
Age: Under 25	54	24	22

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**STATISTICAL DATA**

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CHURCH ATTENDANCE

|                           | At Least<br>Once A<br>Week | At Least<br>Once A<br>Month | Less<br>Frequently | Do Not<br>Attend<br>Church |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| TOTAL                     | 49%                        | 16%                         | 19%                | 16%                        |
| <u>LANGUAGE DOMINANCE</u> |                            |                             |                    |                            |
| Spanish-dominant          | 59                         | 18                          | 11                 | 12                         |
| Bilingual                 | 50                         | 12                          | 22                 | 16                         |
| English-dominant          | 42                         | 18                          | 19                 | 21                         |
| <u>AGE</u>                |                            |                             |                    |                            |
| Under 25                  | 31                         | 15                          | 13                 | 41                         |
| 25 to 34                  | 43                         | 16                          | 22                 | 19                         |
| 35 to 44                  | 53                         | 14                          | 21                 | 12                         |
| 45 +                      | 52                         | 16                          | 18                 | 14                         |
| <u>GENDER</u>             |                            |                             |                    |                            |
| Men                       | 39                         | 18                          | 22                 | 21                         |
| Women                     | 59                         | 13                          | 16                 | 12                         |

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