


Equis Key States Series: Gun Safety Memo

OVERALL TAKEAWAYS

Most Latino voters strongly support stricter gun safety laws in the United States. In every state where Equis has asked about gun safety this election cycle, **a majority of Hispanics – and an even stronger majority of Latina women – have indicated support for stricter gun regulations, opposition to laws that make it easier to get a weapon and agreement with stances held by Democratic candidates calling for common-sense gun reforms.**

	State	Overall	Men	Women	Gender Gap
Side with the Democratic candidate's pro-gun control stance over the Republican candidate's anti-gun regulation view	FL	61%	55%	65%	10%
	NC	68%	57%	77%	20%
	NM	58%	60%	57%	3%
	PA	68%	64%	71%	7%
Dem candidate's gun control message is a convincing reason to vote for them	NV	63%	57%	67%	10%
Think gun laws should be stricter	AZ	67%	56%	78%	22%
Disagree with permitless concealed carry in public spaces	GA	69%	56%	81%	28%



After the May school shooting in Uvalde, gun safety has risen to be a top issue for Latino voters in several key states. In an early July poll, **28% of Hispanics in Texas named it as their top issue**, higher than the economy/cost of living (23%). Just a couple of months earlier, in an early May poll, only around 1% of Texas Latinos had brought it up as a concern.

Similarly, in a June poll in Pennsylvania, **23% of Latinos listed gun safety as their most important issue**, second only to the economy/cost of living (47%). And in Florida, 17% of respondents named public safety as their top issue (with 8-in-10 of them explicitly mentioning gun control), behind the economy/inflation at 44%. In an earlier survey, conducted in March, just 3% of Latino Florida voters had mentioned public safety as a worry.

For Latino voters, a key question of the election is: **who will protect me and my family?** It is true on the economy, and it is also true on an issue like responsible gun ownership.

Last updated: 09062022

A strong majority of Latino voters—and an overwhelming majority of Latinas—are aligned with Democrats' proactive stance on gun safety, in support of reforms that will protect their families. They reject the GOP's status quo position as a matter of values as much as policy.

In recent focus group discussions, Latinos have voiced deep worries about gun violence in the United States, which they perceive to be on the rise. In every conversation participants point to **mental illness as a key factor behind mass shootings and other senseless acts of violence.** That said, most participants—especially the women—have expressed their unease about the amount of guns in the country, the type of firearms available to the public, and how easy it is to get a weapon: “[Buying a gun] shouldn’t be as easy as buying candies in a store.”¹

Latinas’ level of concern about gun violence, and their backing for stronger gun regulations, is also evident in the polling. In all key states but Pennsylvania, **Latina voters were much more likely to support gun safety measures or Democratic candidates’ gun safety stances than Latino men.**

¹ Teresa, 28 y/o, Panamanian, Independent, North Carolina voter.

STATE-SPECIFIC TAKEAWAYS

Arizona

Latinos in Arizona overwhelmingly support tougher gun regulations. In a survey conducted in mid-June, 67% said laws related to the sale of guns and firearms should be stricter than they are now². Only 6% of Hispanic voters in the state think these should be relaxed, and around 2-in-10 (22%) believe gun laws should be kept as they are now.

Tougher gun laws were supported by 84% of self-identified Latino liberals, 69% of moderates, and 51% of conservatives. **This is largely due to Arizona Latinas' strong support for stricter gun regulations, regardless of ideology: 86% of liberal women, 80% of moderate women and 67% of conservative women think gun laws should be stronger.** There's a notable gap when compared to Latino men: Only 55% of moderate men and 39% of conservative men believe gun legislations should be more strict than they are now.

Overall, **Latinas in Arizona back stricter gun restrictions at significantly higher rates than Latino men: 78% of women think laws should be tougher, while only 56% of men feel the same way.** Over 3-in-10 (31%) Latino men in Arizona believe gun laws should remain as they are now, including half (50%) of those who identify as conservative.

<i>Gun laws should be:</i>	Overall	Men	Women	Mod. men	Mod. women	Cons. men	Cons. women
More strict	67%	56%	78%	55%	80%	39%	67%
Less strict	6%	8%	3%	10%	3%	8%	5%
Keep as now	22%	31%	14%	29%	15%	50%	23%

Support for stricter gun regulations was only somewhat higher among Latinos in Arizona living in rural areas (65%) than among those living in urban zones (56%).

Around 6-in-10 voters who were undecided in the Senate (59%) and Governor (60%) races thought gun laws should be stricter than they are now.

² "Generally speaking, do you think the laws covering the sale of guns and firearms should be more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now?"

Last updated: 09062022

Kelly's messaging highlighting his support of gun safety measures³ ranked highest among the eight messages tested in Equis' March poll. Nearly 7-in-10 Latinos in Arizona found it to be a very or somewhat convincing, including 74% of women and 62% of men. The message did best among older women (81% found it very or somewhat convincing), and fared well among self-ID Independent Latinas (69%) and Republican Latinas (57%). Over 4-in-10 Trump voters also found the message convincing.

Florida

Public safety and gun control emerged as a top three concern in Florida in a July poll, after the economy (22%) and cost of living (22%). 17% of respondents named it as the most important issue they want the federal government to address; in an earlier poll from March, only 3% of people had named public safety as an issue that worried them.

While a plurality of Latino voters in Florida (46%) indicated that they'd back Republican Gov. DeSantis over Democrat Charlie Crist (32%) in the upcoming November election, **6-in-10 Hispanics sided with Crist's gun safety stance⁴ in contrast to DeSantis' pro-gun rights position.⁵**

Overall, more Latinas supported Crist's stance (65%) than Latino men (55%). Women supported the gun safety position at a significantly higher rate than men, regardless of ideology: 79% of self-identified liberal women, 76% of moderate women and 41% of conservative women aligned with Crist's stance, while the same was true for 76% of Liberal men, 68% of Moderate men and only 18% of male conservatives (*81% of conservative men sided with DeSantis*). **Between conservative men and women, there was a 23 point difference in how they feel about candidates' positions on gun laws.**

³ "Senator Mark Kelly is a gun owner, veteran and an advocate for commonsense, effective gun laws. His wife, Gabby Giffords, was nearly killed in a shooting outside of a Safeway in 2011. Kelly supports universal federal background checks, cracking down on violent criminals with guns, and blocking domestic abusers from owning firearms."

⁴ "Democrat Charlie Crist supports common-sense gun laws, including banning assault rifles in order to protect our children and families, and ensure that nothing like the Pulse or Parkland shootings happen again".

⁵ "Republican Ron DeSantis does not believe we need stricter regulations on who can buy or own guns. In fact, DeSantis is pushing for a bill allowing Floridians to publicly carry firearms even if they have not taken a training course or gotten a permit."

Last updated: 09062022

<i>View on gun laws:</i>	Overall	Men	Women	Mod. men	Mod. women	Cons. men	Cons. women
DeSantis	38%	44%	33%	32%	22%	81%	58%
Crist	61%	55%	65%	68%	76%	18%	41%

When we looked across language, almost 7-in-10 (69%) Spanish survey-takers aligned with Crist's stance, compared to 57% of English survey-takers

Finally, by country of origin, nearly 7-in-10 Puerto Ricans and South Americans supported Crist's stance on gun safety, while Cubans were split: 48% for the Crist position, 50% for DeSantis'.

Nevada

Gun safety ranked as a top 5 issue in Nevada in our August poll. Around 10% of respondents named it as top concern, behind abortion rights (14%), immigration (20%), and the economy/cost of living (50%).

Gov. Sisolak's pro-gun safety messaging⁶ was one of the top performing messages of the five we tested. Roughly 63% of Latino voters said it made them more likely to support him in the upcoming election, resonating particularly well with women (67%) and Spanish survey-takers (84%).

By ideology, 71% of self-ID Latino liberals, 64% of moderates and 50% of conservatives said it made them more likely to vote for Sisolak.

Texas

Gun safety was the top concern for Latino voters in Texas in our July poll, conducted around six weeks after the Uvalde mass shooting. About 28% of voters mentioned it as the issue they wanted most the state government to do something about, ranking higher than cost of living (11%) and the economy (12%) combined. Forty-one percent (41%) of those that named

⁶ "Sisolak will protect Nevadans from gun violence. As Governor, he passed common-sense measures like background checks on all gun sales and red flag laws that keep guns away from criminals and those who are mentally ill to keep our schools and families safe."

Last updated: 09062022

gun safety as their priority self-ID as Democrats, 20% as Independents and 12% as Republicans.

Over 6-in-10 Latino voters said they disapproved of Gov. Greg Abbott's handling of gun laws. Women rejected his performance at higher rates than men: 73% of Latinas in Texas said they disapproved of Abbott's handling of the issue, while only 47% of men felt the same way. This gender gap is particularly noticeable among younger Latinos. Nearly 8-in-10 (78%) of young Latinas disapprove of Abbott's handling of gun laws, while only about 4-in-10 (43%) of young Latinos feel the same.

The gender gap is also prevalent among self-IDed conservative voters: while a majority (52%) of conservative women disapprove of Abbott's handling of gun laws, only about 23% of conservative men share that perspective.

When asked whether politicians should prioritize restricting access to weapons⁷ or investing in mental health services⁸ to address gun violence, Latino voters in Texas did not show overwhelming support for one position over the other. While more voters (44%) agreed that gun safety should be prioritized, a significant share (34%) believed focusing on mental health services was more important than limiting access to guns. Nearly 2-in-10 (18%) said both should be a priority.

While prioritizing gun safety strongly resonated with self-identified Democrats (61%), more Independents (38%) and Republicans (63%) sided with the mental health approach.

Spanish-survey takers in Texas chose the gun safety position (59%) at higher rates than English-survey taking Latinos (41%).

A majority of women (51%) prioritized gun safety as the solution, while only 36% of men did. More independent women (43%) sided with the gun safety statement, while more independent men (47%) chose the mental health assertion.

⁷ "The best way to stop more tragedies like the Uvalde mass shooting is to pass stronger gun safety laws, like age requirements and a ban on assault weapons. Mental health is an important factor, but we need to do more to keep our children and communities safe."

⁸ The best way to stop more tragedies like the Uvalde mass shooting is to invest in mental health services and improve school safety. Stricter gun regulations won't stop dangerous people from accessing weapons and will contribute to the increase of illegal guns.

<i>What should be prioritized to combat gun violence?</i>	Overall	Men	Women	Younger women	Ind.	Ind. women
Gun safety	44%	36%	51%	54%	31%	43%
Mental health⁹	34%	42%	27%	26%	38%	28%
Both	18%	15%	20%	19%	22%	25%

Georgia

Gun safety emerged as a top three issue for Latino voters in Georgia in our August poll. Around 9% of respondents mentioned it as their top priority, virtually tied with immigration policies (9%) and women’s rights (10%), but far behind the economy/inflation (35%).

When faced with a forced choice, 59% of Latinos sided with Democrat Raphael Warnock’s gun safety stance¹⁰ over Republican Herschel Walker pro-gun rights position.¹¹ Support for Warnock’s stance was high among Latinas (68%) while Latino men were divided on the issue (50% sided with Warnock, 48% with Walker).

Nearly 7-in-10 Latino voters in Georgia disagree with the law that allows permitless concealed carry in the state. Rejection of the measure is stronger among Latina women (81% disagree) than Latino men (56% disagree).

The opposition to permitless concealed carry varies by partisanship: 85% of self-identified Democrats, 60% of Independents, and 44% of Republicans disagree with the law. Among women it is even stronger: 90% of Democratic women, 81% of Independent women and 52% of Republican women disagree with the measure.

⁹ The best way to stop more tragedies like the Uvalde mass shooting is to invest in mental health services and improve school safety. Stricter gun regulations won’t stop dangerous people from accessing weapons and will contribute to the increase of illegal guns.

¹⁰ “Democrat Raphael Warnock believes politicians must act to protect families from gun violence. He supports enacting gun safety reforms, like raising the minimum age to purchase guns and limiting the ability to buy automatic weapons.”

¹¹ “Republican Herschel Walker believes politicians must protect Americans’ constitutional right to keep and bear arms. Restricting access to guns won’t stop violence but will undermine law-abiding Americans’ right to defend themselves and their families.”

Last updated: 09062022

The biggest gap in rejecting the measure is between Latina women and Latino men aged 30-49: while almost 9-in-10 women in that age group disagree with permitless concealed carry, men are split on the law (50-50). Furthermore, around 33% of men 30-49 strongly agree with the measure, compared to just 7% of women that age.

Permitless concealed carry in GA	Overall	Men	Women	Men 30-49	Women 30-49	Independents
Agree	29%	43%	16%	50%	12%	37%
Disagree	69%	56%	81%	50%	87%	60%

In a May 2022 survey, conducted before the Uvalde shooting, around 8% of survey takers had mentioned gun control and public safety as their top issue, ranking just below the economy (29%) and immigration (12%).

Pennsylvania

The salience of gun safety dropped between June and August. Eight percent (8%) of Pennsylvania Latinos named guns as their top issue in our August poll, while 14% named crime and violence as their main concern. In an earlier June poll, conducted just a few weeks after the Uvalde mass shooting, gun safety had ranked as the second top issue (23%) for Latino voters in Pennsylvania, behind the economy and inflation (36%).

When presented with two contrasting stances from Shapiro and Mastriano on gun safety measures, nearly 7-in-10 Latinos in Pennsylvania favored Shapiro's position. His stance calling for gun safety reforms fared well among several key groups, including undecided voters in the governor's race (61%) and Puerto Ricans (66%). His position was also favored by most Independents (54%) and over 4-in-10 self-ID Latino Republicans in Pennsylvania.

Messaging on John Fetterman's stance of restricting access to guns and banning assault weapons¹² resonated very well with respondents: 82% found it to be a very or somewhat convincing reason to vote for him. It was the best performing message out of six included in the poll. The message was popular among a majority of Latinos regardless of partisanship: 9-in-10

¹² "John Fetterman believes enough is enough, and that we must act now to prevent one more senseless mass shooting. He supports common-sense reform like universal background checks for all gun sales and a ban on military-grade assault weapons and high-capacity magazines".

Last updated: 09062022

self-identified Democrats and over 6-in-10 Republicans found it very or somewhat convincing. **Furthermore, Fetterman's stance on gun safety also resonated with 85% of undecided voters.**

Unlike in other states, in Pennsylvania our polling did not show a notable gender gap in positions regarding gun safety.

North Carolina

Around 7% of Latino voters in North Carolina mentioned gun safety as their top issue in a June poll, ranking behind the economy and inflation (49%), reproductive rights (14%)¹³ and immigration reform (10%).

Nearly 7-in-10 voters aligned with Democrat Cheri Beasley's view in favor of more regulations for the purchase and ownership of guns¹⁴, while less than 3-in-10 chose Republican Ted Budd's strong defense of the Second Amendment and the right to bear arms¹⁵.

Just like Equis has seen in most other states, there was an important gender gap in North Carolina when it came to this issue. While 77% of Latino women agreed with Beasley's position, around 57% of Latino men did. This divide widens when considering other factors like party affiliation: 8-in-10 of self-identified Independent women supported the gun safety stance, while only 53% of Independent men felt the same. Beasley's gun statement also resonated far more with younger Latina voters (81%) than among younger Latino men (56%). This is particularly significant because Latinos under the age of 50 represent roughly 73% of the electorate in North Carolina.

Around 6-in-10 voters who said they were undecided in this U.S. Senate race aligned with Beasley's position.

Sen. candidate's	Overall	Men	Women	Young women	Ind. men	Ind. women	Undecided U.S. Rep race
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¹³ This poll was conducted 3 days after the Dobbs ruling was formally announced.

¹⁴ "Cheri Beasley believes everyone deserves to feel safe in their homes, schools, and workplaces. As Senator, Beasley will stand up to the gun lobby and corrupt politicians who stand in the way of common-sense gun reforms, like universal background checks and age requirements, so that no other parent ever has to experience the pain of those in Uvalde."

¹⁵ "Ted Budd is a proud gun store owner and believes any infringement on the Second Amendment right to bear arms will undermine law-abiding citizens' ability to defend themselves and protect their families. As Senator, he will vote against any legislation that aims to limit the sale and ownership of guns."

Last updated: 09062022

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<i>Beasley</i>	68%	57%	77%	81%	53%	81%	62%
<i>Budd</i>	27%	36%	19%	15%	43%	18%	25%

New Mexico

When presented with Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham¹⁶'s stance on gun safety versus Mark Ronchetti's¹⁷, nearly 6-in-10 (58%) Latino voters in New Mexico favored Lujan Grisham's position.

Her stance performed even better with younger voters 18-29 (67%), urban voters (70% v. 49% rural) and Spanish speakers (67% v. 48% of English-only Latino voters).

By ideology, 86% of self-ID liberal Latinos, 59% of moderates and 30% of conservatives preferred Lujan Grisham's stance over Ronchetti's.

¹⁶ "Governor Lujan Grisham will balance public safety with the rights of responsible gun owners so fewer New Mexican families suffer from gun violence. She has championed universal background checks and red flag laws that keep firearms away from dangerous people."

¹⁷ "Mark Ronchetti is a gun owner who believes our Second Amendment rights are under attack. He opposes new restrictions on guns and will stand up against anyone who seeks to criminalize law-abiding gun owners rather than focusing on prosecuting criminals."