

WALL STREET JOURNAL

ROMNEY'S LATINO GAINS

By Jason I. Riley
October 15, 2012

The Romney campaign hasn't had much to celebrate concerning Hispanic voters. But a new survey brings encouraging news for Republicans.

National polls indicate that President Obama is crushing his GOP challenger by more than 30 percentage points among Latinos. However, in the key battleground state of Florida, the story is much different.

A new Florida International University/Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald poll shows Mitt Romney just seven points behind the president among Hispanics. "Mitt Romney is closing the gap on President Barack Obama among likely Hispanic Florida voters, a majority of whom say they're not better off than they were four years ago," reports the Miami Herald. "Obama is ahead of Romney 51-44 percent among Hispanics, a relatively narrow lead that could spell trouble for a Democratic campaign that is counting on minority support as non-Hispanic white voters flock to the Republican ticket in droves."

The Herald notes that Mr. Romney is doing especially well among Cuban voters, who comprise between 40 percent and 50 percent of the Hispanic vote in the state and overwhelmingly lean Republican. The president still leads Mr. Romney, 51 percent to 48 percent, on the question of who would do a better job of fixing the economy, and 55 percent to 44 percent on who would better handle immigration. But when pollsters asked if Mr. Obama had "fulfilled his promises to the U.S. Hispanic community," 51 percent said no.

Since the GOP convention, and to his credit, Mr. Romney has made a concerted effort to introduce himself to Latinos via Spanish-language media, and his Spanish-speaking son Craig has been featured in ads. One can only imagine what the Florida poll would look like today if the candidate hadn't taken such hardline stances on immigration during the Republican primary and had taken the advice of former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and others and begun these outreach efforts in earnest much sooner.