

A recent island wide poll conducted by a nationally recognized opinion research firm amongst 805 likely voters in the U.S territory shows a dramatic increase of support for Statehood, when compared with previous polls conducted over the years. The environment for a statehood campaign and for New Progressive Party (PNP for its Spanish acronym) candidates is extremely favorable as we move towards the 2016 election year. This is against a backdrop of continuing widespread, dire feelings about the economy in Puerto Rico.

### ***The economy***

The issue of the economy dominates voters' concerns. Fully 54% of voters say it is the most important problem facing Puerto Rico, up from 37% last year.

Voters give very negative ratings to the strength of the economy and are pessimistic it will improve. Consider these numbers...

- 69% of voters think the economy is weaker than last year, and;
- 63% think business condition will be *worse* 6 months from now.

The Puerto Rican government is increasingly blamed for economic conditions. Currently, 47% of voters blame the Puerto Rican government and 20% blame the world economy. Three years ago, in 2012, it was the opposite—41% blamed the world economy and 27% blamed the Puerto Rican government.

### ***Political leaders and parties***

Negative feelings about Governor Garcia Padilla and, to a degree, about the Popular Democratic Party (PPD for its Spanish acronym) dominate the political landscape. In fact, all PPD politicians tested in our poll have net negative favorable ratings, and all PNP politicians have net positive ratings.

- Alejandro Garcia Padilla (21% favorable / 70% unfavorable)
- Eduardo Bahatia (36% / 48%)
- Jamie Perelló (27% / 48%)
  
- Pedro Pierluisi (61% / 26%)
- Ricky Rosselló (42% / 38%)
- Thomas Rivera Schatz (44% / 42%)
- Jenniffer Gonzalez (56% / 29%)

Puerto Rican voters are more likely to identify with the PNP (33%) than the PPD (17%) by nearly a 2-to-1 margin. In addition, those who identify with the PNP are much more likely to describe their commitment to the party to be *strong* than those who identify with the PDP (75%, compared to 54%).



## *Statehood*

Voter support for statehood is at an all-time high. Contrary to what is traditionally projected by some media outlets, the issue of political status is important to voters in Puerto Rico. Two thirds of those interviewed, 66% of likely voters polled, answered that the issue of status is important to them personally. Furthermore:

- 61% of voters favor seeking statehood for Puerto Rico, compared to 60% last year. At the end of the survey (after respondents heard arguments for and against statehood), support increases to 69%.
- In a three-way status plebiscite, 58% would pick statehood, 22% keeping current status, and 9% independence.
- In two-way matchups, statehood wins handily over other options...
  - Statehood (71%) or Independence (14%)
  - Statehood (62%) or Keeping things as they are (27%)
  - Statehood (63%) or Estado Libre Asociado Soberano (25%)

Statehood is supported for a range of reasons, including at the top of the list:

- Creating jobs and fixing the economy (87% very important reason)
- Reducing corruption in Puerto Rican politics (81%)
- Getting all the same Constitutional rights and legal protections as citizens on the mainland (81%)

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