

Top Line Report "Puerto Rico Voter Sentiment and Political Landscape: 2024 Plebiscite and Election Insights"

August 2024

Methodology

A total of 1,138 interviews were conducted with a representative sample of adults in Puerto Rico, all of whom are registered voters across the 8 senatorial districts.

Voter Profile

- **Primary Participation:** 41% of respondents had participated in previous primaries, with 64% participating in the Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP) primaries and 30% in the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD) primaries.
 - **Voting History:** 53% of surveyed voters mentioned having voted mixed in the past. Of these, 31% have considered voting for independence at some point, primarily those affiliated with the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (PIP) and the Movimiento Victoria Ciudadana (MVC). Meanwhile, 60% have considered voting for statehood, mainly from the PNP and MVC.
 - **Party Loyalty:** More than half of the voters cast their ballots for a party regardless of the candidate, usually older voters, while younger groups prioritize the candidate over the party.
 - **Party Affiliation:**
 - 37% feel associated with the PNP.
 - 20% with the PPD.
 - 5% with the PIP.
 - 4% with Proyecto Dignidad.
 - 4% with MVC.
 - 26% reported not being affiliated with any party.
 - **Education Level:** Voters with higher education levels are more likely to be in the Unaffiliated and PRO Independence groups.
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Plebiscite

- **Support for Plebiscite:** About 4 out of 10 respondents agree with holding the plebiscite in November 2024. Those opposed cited reasons such as the expense, the belief that nothing

ever comes of it because it's not a congressionally sanctioned plebiscite, and that it is a waste of time.

- **Plebiscite Outcomes:**
 - **Statehood:** 45% of voters would choose statehood.
 - **Sovereign Free-Associated State:** 23%.
 - **Independence:** 11%.
 - **Statehood vs. Independence:** In a plebiscite offering only these two options, 73% would select statehood.
 - **Independence Support:** 31% of voters would support a party that favors independence.
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Social Issues

- **Puerto Rican Representation:** For nearly 8 out of 10 voters, maintaining Puerto Rico's representation in events like sports and beauty pageants is important.
 - **American Citizenship:** 85% of voters consider maintaining their American citizenship very important, and this same 85% believe they should vote for the President of the United States.
 - **Economic Perception:**
 - 43% rate their economic situation as fair or excellent.
 - 16% believe the economic situation will be difficult next year.
 - **Puerto Rico's Situation:**
 - 13% rate the situation in Puerto Rico as good or excellent.
 - 36% expect it to be difficult or very difficult in 2025.
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Voting Preferences for Upcoming Elections

- **Governor Preference:**
 - 44% prefer Jennifer González of the PNP.
 - 21% prefer Juan Dalmau of the PIP.
 - 16% prefer Jesús Manuel Ortíz of the PPD.
 - 6% prefer Javier Jiménez of Proyecto Dignidad.

- **Resident Commissioner Preference:**
 - 35% would vote for William Villafañe (PNP).
 - 22% for Pablo José Hernández (PPD).
 - 13% for Ana Irma Rivera of the MVC.
 - 5% for Viviana Ramírez of Proyecto Dignidad.
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United States

- **US Party Affiliation:**
 - 47% of voters identify with the Democratic Party of the United States.
 - 22% with the Republican Party.
 - 24% with neither.
- **Direction of the United States:**
 - 41% believe the US is heading in the right direction.
 - 46% believe it is not.
- **Presidential Election:**
 - If the presidential election had been between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, Trump would have won with 44% of the votes compared to Biden's 30%.
 - In a matchup between Trump and Kamala Harris, Harris would slightly edge out Trump with 39% versus 38%, essentially a tie.
- **Social Conservatism:** Puerto Ricans generally do not favor the legalization of abortion, firearms, or open borders for undocumented immigrants. They also do not favor same-sex marriage.
- **Religious Attendance:** 25% mentioned not attending religious services.
- **US Family Ties:** 90% mentioned having close family in the United States.
- **Statehood Benefits:**
 - 51% believe that if Puerto Rico became a state, many people would not have to leave the island for the continental United States.
 - 50% frequently pay attention to news from the continental US.

- **Media Consumption:**

- Younger voters primarily use social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook.
- The rest of the voters use CNN en Español, YouTube, X (Twitter), and local news outlets.

- **Statehood Concerns:**

- 26% are not worried about Puerto Rico becoming a state.
- 21% are concerned about additional taxes.
- 19% think cultural identity would be lost.

- **Conclusion**

- The study reveals significant insights into the current political and social landscape of Puerto Rico. A substantial portion of voters remains loyal to traditional parties, with the PNP leading in affiliation. However, there is a noticeable shift among younger voters who prioritize candidates over party loyalty.
- The plebiscite results indicate a strong inclination toward statehood, but there is also a notable minority that supports independence. Economic concerns and social issues, such as the importance of maintaining American citizenship and Puerto Rican representation in international events, remain critical to the electorate.
- The upcoming elections could see a close contest, particularly in the gubernatorial race, where Jennifer González holds a lead, but with significant support for other candidates as well.
- Voters' ties to the United States are evident, with a majority identifying with US political parties and having close family connections in the mainland. Despite this, there is a strong conservative streak on social issues.
- Overall, the data suggest a complex and evolving electorate, with deep-rooted concerns about Puerto Rico's future status, economic stability, and cultural identity.