



PRESS RELEASE

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

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NEW REPORT REFUTES MYTHS ABOUT LATINA/O ATTITUDES ON SEXUALITY, HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING

“Unearthing Latina/o Voices”

Finds Family and Education Are Core Latina/o Values Influencing Decision-Making and Beliefs about Sexual and Reproductive Health

Los Angeles, CA—June 20, 2011--Latinas are the latest target in the crusade against reproductive justice and women's rights. Although the [recent racist and inflammatory billboards erected in Los Angeles](#) focus on abortion, the message diverts attention from the real issues that are important to Latinas/os: access to quality health care, good paying jobs to support their families, and significant educational opportunities.

“Unearthing Latina/o Voices,” a new report by California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (CLRJ) provides new insight on Latinas/os and their attitudes and priorities about sexuality, sexual health, and when and how to form their families and dismisses stereotypes like those propagated in the heinous billboards.

Based on interviews with about 900 English and Spanish-speaking adult Latinas/os across the state of California, this new brief examines Latinas' attitudes and beliefs regarding reproductive and sexual health issues, particularly around pregnancy; pregnant and parenting youth; communication around sexuality; and accessing reproductive and sexual health information and services, including pregnancy termination.

“Unearthing Latina/o Voices” highlights the critical importance of communication and family support regarding sexual health within the Latina/o community. Family, education and health are the primary values that influence Latinas/os sexual and reproductive health decisions.

Key findings include:

- 80% (of Latina/os interviewed) believe family communication about sexuality is “extremely important.”
- Eight (8) in 10 strongly agreed that every woman has the right to decide for herself the number and spacing of her children.

- 85% believe that pregnant and parenting youth deserve and need family support and educational opportunities; even though only 40% said that this support is actually given.

Marisol Franco, CLRJ's Director of Policy and Advocacy insists "understanding Latinas'/os' values is critical for creating and implementing relevant public policies to address the community's reproductive health care needs. Reproductive and sexual health needs must no longer be neglected, our research clearly shows that these are of utmost importance in Latina/o communities."

According to the 2010 national census, Latinas/os are projected to become the largest racial/ethnic group in California by 2020 and in the country by 2050. Currently, they are the largest group of residents under age 30. These findings can provide policymakers and advocates a more accurate, community-informed and value-based frames of reference around what are considered to be "taboo" and "wedge" issues.

Respondents also overwhelmingly support:

- Medically accurate and culturally competent sexual and reproductive health services that are accessible to everyone in their communities. Those interviewed feel that a lack of understanding about Latino culture is a greater barrier to accessing services than language.
- Medically accurate information about all pregnancy options and the information should not be coercive, shaming nor should it try to change a woman's mind.

These findings directly contradict assumptions that Latina/os are unconcerned about and unwilling to discuss sexual and reproductive health issues. The report also found that family is the most important value in sexual and reproductive health decision-making, not religion as is commonly assumed and asserted.

CLRJ's goal was not only to have a solid body of research on Latino/a attitudes about these so-called "controversial" issues but to fill in information gaps as well.

"An overall lack of substantive research directly from Latina/os has contributed to a poor understanding of Latinas' priorities and pigeon-holed Latinas/os based on assumptions that do not consider Latinas/os daily social, economic and political realities," said Ena Suseth Valladares, CLRJ's Senior Research Coordinator.

The full report is available here ([Unearthing Latina/o Voices](#)) along with the executive summary in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). For more information about the work of California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, visit their website: www.californialatinas.org.

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California Latinas for Reproductive Justice is the leading California-based policy advocacy organization whose mission is to advance California Latinas' reproductive health and rights within a social justice and human rights framework. CLRJ works to ensure that policy developments are reflective of the priority needs of Latinas, their families and their communities.