

For immediate release:

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New Poll Shows Erosion of Support for Cuba Policy:

Pro-Family Approach Could Win Cuban-American Votes in Florida

WASHINGTON , DC – The results of a new poll of 800 Cuban Americans in South Florida show that there is discontent among many Cuban Americans about the President's Cuba policy. The poll was commissioned by the William C. Velasquez Institute and conducted by the MirRam Group, and released in Washington , DC and Miami , FL , Friday, July 9th. The Latin America Working Group and Washington Office on Latin America believe that a more humane and pro-family policy is necessary, and these poll results show that Cuban Americans concur.

“These new, harsh policies only divide Cuban families and senselessly punish those in need of humanitarian aid,” said Mavis Anderson, Senior Associate at the Latin America Working Group. “The poll results show that the tired Cuba policy is not fully supported by the Cuban-American community.”

The new restrictions on travel divided the community, which believes that travel should be allowed for family visits and in the case of an emergency and death in the family.

“The restrictions are dividing the Cuban-American community politically and contributing to an erosion in support for the President, especially for among younger Cuban Americans and those who came after 1980,” said Geoff Thale , Senior Associate at the Washington Office on Latin America . Indeed, the numbers show that while Florida Cubans voted 82% for Mr. Bush in 2000, only 66% would support him today. The top issues for the community are jobs/economy (18%), education (13%) and immigration (9%).

The House of Representatives voted by a margin of 221-197 on Wednesday to reject part of the inhumane new restrictions. Echoing the sentiments of most Americans, the House rejected limits on baggage weights on flights to Cuba and limits on what types of items could be included in gift packages sent to relatives. Members promised that this was just the beginning of a sustained effort to roll back these new restrictions.

“The restrictions are the absolute wrong approach” said Mavis Anderson. “They do nothing to support the people of Cuba or to promote democracy or human rights. It's time for a new approach; one of engagement and dialogue.” The poll results show that a majority of the Cuban-American community agrees that the current approach has not worked.

The survey was conducted by telephone among 812 Cuban American registered voters and voting age citizens from June 29 to July 7, 2004 , by trained bilingual interviewers. Respondents were drawn from four Florida counties containing 91% of all Florida Cubans (Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach , and Hillsborough). The margin of error for the

survey is +/- 3.4% at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error on sub-samples is larger.