

To: Coalition for the Rule of Law in Global Markets, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
 From: APCO Insight
 Re: Key Findings from Survey of Attitudes about Venezuela Key Findings
 Date: October 27, 2020

APCO Insight, the research and intelligence consultancy of APCO Worldwide, recently conducted a survey in Florida among likely 2020 voters to determine citizen attitudes toward the presence of U.S. companies in Venezuela and identify the reasons for their support.

Executive Summary

Venezuela has a net negative image. Florida survey participants have a low regard for Venezuela – 31% are favorable and 49% are unfavorable.

Survey respondents of Venezuelan origin view the situation differently. Unlike other survey respondents from Florida, including of Cuban or other Hispanic heritage, Venezuelan-Americans have a more favorable impression of their country of origin, support U.S. companies operating in Venezuela and strongly believe pulling U.S. companies out does not guarantee a return to democracy.

Venezuelan-Americans are highly aware of the U.S. role in Venezuela. In contrast to the general population of survey respondents, Venezuelan-American respondents are quite knowledgeable of developments in Venezuela, with 40% awareness of U.S. companies in the country and 60% aware of restrictions on U.S. companies.

An overwhelming majority of Venezuelan-Americans -- 80% -- support U.S. companies operating in Venezuela. Another 89% of respondents of Venezuelan descent agree that U.S. companies will be critical for rehabilitating Venezuela's economy when the political conditions change. The respondents believe U.S. companies should be allowed to remain in Venezuela.

Venezuelan-American participants across the political spectrum believe U.S. companies are a force for good in Venezuela. The survey revealed a vast majority of Venezuelan-American respondents (73%) believe that: U.S. companies serve as a stabilizing force in Venezuela and this belief was unaltered by party affiliation; U.S. companies provide well-paying jobs; invest in the development of local communities; and supply the immediate health and nutrition needs of the Venezuelan people by partnering with hospitals and relief organizations. Respondents believe U.S. companies are a force for good in Venezuela.

Most of the survey participants do not believe pulling U.S. companies out of Venezuela would guarantee a return to democracy. In Florida, 63% of respondents overall and 76% of Venezuelan Americans believe that pulling U.S. companies out does not guarantee a democratic transition. In fact, 80% of Venezuelan-Americans surveyed believe that U.S. companies are critical for maintaining a U.S. foothold in Venezuela. Respondents also deem that should U.S. companies leave, America's adversaries like Russia, China and Iran would increasingly influence Venezuela's future. Respondents also believe maintaining a U.S. presence in Venezuela is essential to prevent such global state actors seeking to undermine democracy from using their influence in-country to sow discord more broadly in the Western Hemisphere.

Similarly, 83% of Cuban-American responders overwhelmingly support U.S. companies operating in Venezuela provided financial payments are not made to the current regime. Even when it comes to U.S. oil companies, 72% of respondents believe the U.S. government should allow companies to remain in Venezuela, and only 28% believe they should be required to leave the country altogether.

Methodology

The results in this document are from a mixed mode (online and telephone) survey among a statewide audience of 800 likely 2020 voters in Florida. The confidence interval for this sample is ± 3.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For analytical purposes, we completed an additional 30 interviews among Venezuelan-American participants to bolster the total number in the sample to 40.

The survey was available in both English and Spanish.

The survey was conducted September 18-25, 2020.