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New Study Finds Young Latinos to Become one of Texas' most Important Voting Blocks

TEXAS -- "*We Are Texas: An Analysis of Young Latino Voters in the Lone Star State*" will be released Wednesday October 17, 2018 and is one of the most in-depth analyses of Latino voters in Texas and sheds light on this key demographic constituency. "*We Are Texas*" was undertaken by Jolt Initiative in partnership with Ethnifacts and US-ness to better understand the values, issues, voting patterns and barriers to civic participation of one of the state's largest and fastest growing demographic groups—young Latinos.

The health of our democracy and state hinges on an active and engaged citizenry. Young Latinos are the key to building a democracy and government equipped to meet the ongoing challenges and changes Texas faces. Today, one in two Texans under the age of 18 are Latino, and by 2022 Latinos will be the largest ethnic population group in the state.

"*We Are Texas*" researchers found that over the coming decade, over two million Latino citizens of the U.S. will reach voting age in Texas, representing half of the state's new age-eligible voters. In just four years, one in three Texans eligible to vote will be under the age of 30 and a majority will be Latino. However, at present, just 43% of Latinos under the age of 30 are registered to vote. This represents a critical opportunity and challenge for all institutions interested in the civic health of Texas and America. Today, under half (46%) of Latinos meet both the age and citizenship requirements to vote, compared to 74% of Non-Latinos, however, the growth of Texas' young Latino population will begin to reverse this trend.

The study found that what Latinos cared most about are often considered "liberal" issues in fact the top issues included legalizing marijuana, expanding gun control, canceling student debt, raising the minimum wage and protecting the environment, among others. However, "*We Are Texas*" researchers found that healthcare for all and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants were the top two priorities for younger Latino voters in the state. Currently Latinos have the highest uninsured rate in Texas, and 62% of Latinos in Texas are immigrants or children of immigrants.

"Anyone that cares about this state and its future must read this report and take its recommendations seriously. Texas cannot solve any of the major problems that our state faces without the voices, experiences and issues of Latinos being fully represented in our government," says **Cristina Tzintzún Ramírez** founder and executive director of Jolt Initiative.

Statistics show that Latinas are leading the way, especially among young voters. Latinas ages 18 to 24 are nearly 25% more likely to vote than Latino male counter-parts and 5% more likely to vote than their non-Latina female counterparts. "Personally, I think this must also become a call to action for Latino males of all ages to not be left behind," says **Dr. Carlos Arce**.

"*We Are Texas*" offers not only concrete data about the challenges but sound recommendations for policy makers, political parties and philanthropic organizations to ensure greater voter participation among one of our state's most important constituent groups.

This study is the result of nine months of research by Jolt Initiative, Ethnifacts, a survey research firm and US-ness an applied research firm, from primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was gathered from the Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey and the most recent data from the American Community Survey for the demographic

character of Texas. Additionally, *"We Are Texas"* researchers conducted 1,016 surveys of Latinos ages 18 to 45 and 65 in-depth, open-ended personal interviews with select participants that represented the social, civic and geo-demographic diversity of Texas Latinos.

About Jolt Initiative.

Jolt Initiative was founded in 2016 to increase the civic participation and leadership of young Latinos in Texas, with the goal of building a stronger democracy and state. Jolt Initiative focuses on registering young voters and building their leadership.

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