

## **Some Tips on How to Best Message on Immigration to Hispanics**

America and Hispanics share a deep and enduring history. Hispanics have been part of this land since the 15th century, and while our influence began modestly, it has steadily grown over time. Our story is beautifully woven into the fabric of American history.

More than 10,000 Hispanics fought in the Civil War, most on the Union side. Around 20,000 served in World War I, and more than 400,000 fought bravely in World War II.

Today, Hispanics represent nearly 20% of the U.S. population about 65 million people, making us the nation's second-largest demographic group. We generate \$1.2 trillion in GDP and wield more than \$4.1 trillion in purchasing power. Nearly 18% of active-duty U.S. military members are Hispanic.

We carry a rich tradition of values deeply rooted in Scripture, and family is central to our culture. We are entrepreneurs, business owners, scientists, doctors, lawyers, musicians, pastors, and agents of change within our communities. We are Americans (some by birth, some by choice) and most of us are deeply grateful to live in a country that has provided opportunity and freedom. Within the Hispanic community, women often serve as matriarchs and play a significant role in shaping household decisions. That's where we come in, if we can influence the women we significantly impact the home.

Why explain all of this? Because understanding these realities helps us communicate in ways that are effective, informed, and inclusive. Some of us arrived recently (I am second generation), while others have been here far longer. Additionally, women generally possess a natural ability to communicate truth with both clarity and compassion. This places us in a unique position to lead thoughtful conversations on controversial issues.

One of the most prominent issues today is immigration, and I want to offer a few practical tips on how to approach these discussions. We can, and should, maintain a firm stance on the importance of following the law and immigrating legally. At the same time, how we communicate matters. A message delivered with understanding is far more likely to be received than one delivered aggressively.

### **1. Listen first.**

Every situation is different. Most Hispanics who entered the country—even illegally—did so to work, not to commit crimes. Yes, crossing the border illegally is a federal crime, and overstaying a visa is a civil violation, but you understand the point. In many cases, the person you're speaking with may not have entered illegally but may have close friends or family members who did. This is why conversations can quickly become emotional or defensive; people may feel as though you're attacking someone they love. Be mindful of this reality. Even if some individuals cannot vote, their children often can.

## **2. Reframe the conversation by asking thoughtful questions.**

Using Mexico as an example (since it is the largest Hispanic demographic in North Carolina), ask: What are Mexico's immigration policies? Should Mexico prioritize Hondurans, Americans or Mexicans? Should countries prioritize their own citizens? Can you think of any example where that is not the case?

It's helpful to research immigration policies in other countries to reinforce the importance of legal immigration. When the discussion shifts to criticizing President Trump and his administration, ask what meaningful immigration policies Democrats have actually put forward. Historically, Clinton signed the IIRIRA, Obama deported more illegal immigrants than any president in U.S. history, and the Biden administration didn't care for those who were already here but instead overwhelmed the border, allowing approximately 21 million illegal crossings, while many began receiving benefits almost immediately.

## **3. Address the dangers of illegal border crossings.**

The reality is grim. Approximately 80% of women are raped during the journey. Many migrants from South America die crossing the Darién Gap. Over 400,000 children have gone missing, more than 70% of whom are Hispanic. Human trafficking is rampant, and cartels profit heavily, often requiring repayment with interest. These are not abstract statistics; they represent real human suffering.

## **4. Emphasize dignity and compassion.**

We are not interested in importing a new slave class. We value human dignity too much to be complicit in such a system. We want people to immigrate legally, not only because the law matters, but because we care. We do not want individuals living in the shadows. We want them fully integrated into society, with access to the same protections, opportunities, and benefits afforded to legal immigrants and U.S. citizens. We do not want them exploited with slave wages by employers, large corporations, or nonprofits.

These are just a few approaches that can help foster more productive conversations with the Hispanic community on immigration. In North Carolina alone, there are over 400,000 registered Hispanic voters, and only 16–18% identify as Republicans. We can change that; women have a powerful and persuasive way in communicating and this is a meaningful place to start. Micah 6:8

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