



## Elected Officials’ of Color Support for No Child Left Behind is Lukewarm: Mirrors Support among the General Population

The US has spent years debating and implementing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). At the time it was passed in 2002, NCLB enjoyed widespread bipartisan support and passed by a large majority in Congress. Since that time, NCLB has faced some sharp criticism. A recent national poll by the Educational Testing Survey found about even support and opposition among the general population.<sup>1</sup>

The Gender and Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) survey of elected officials of color holding state and local offices found similar results. Among surveyed elected officials, support was lukewarm. When asked whether they strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose “The No Child Left Behind Act mandating public schools to meet certain testing standards for federal funding,” slightly less than half (48%) strongly favored or favored it. A slightly higher percentage opposed or strongly opposed it (52%).

Educational Testing Service Survey Support for No Child Left Behind, June 2007 (%)					
	General Public	Republicans	Independents	Democrats	Teachers
<b>Favor</b>	41	52	35	35	20
<b>Oppose</b>	43	34	48	51	77

Source: Educational Testing Service Survey, June 2007 (N=1526).

Support For NCLB Mandating Public Schools to Meet Certain Testing Standards for Federal Funding among GMCL Survey of Elected Officials of Color (%)

	Survey Population	Republicans	Independents	Democrats	Teachers <sup>2</sup>
<b>Favor</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>34</b>
Strongly Favor	14	8	19	14	10
Favor	34	49	29	33	24
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>65</b>
Strongly Oppose	19	10	17	20	22
Oppose	33	33	35	34	43

Source: Gender & Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) Survey, June, 2006-March 2007 (N=1177<sup>3</sup>).

### Partisanship

Though NCLB had bipartisan support five years ago, this no longer seems to be the case. The ETS survey found that in the general population, support increased among Republicans. This remains true among elected officials of color. The GMCL survey found more support among Republicans (57%) than among Independents or Democrats. Democratic elected officials of color are the most likely to oppose NCLB (54%). Support among Independents falls in between the two parties, with 48% favoring the act and 52% opposing it.

### Teachers, School Board Members and State Legislators: Strong Opposition

Of particular interest is the strong opposition to NCLB by teachers who were among the elected officials in the GMCL survey. We found a thirty-percent gap between those who gave their occupation as “teacher” and those who did not (65% of teachers oppose it vs. 50% among non-teachers). Further, more than four times as many teachers in the GMCL survey strongly oppose NCLB than strongly favor it. The GMCL survey also found strong opposition among school board members (59%). Thus, those who arguably are the most actively involved with NCLB tend to oppose it.

Although school board members of color show strong opposition to NCLB, the GMCL survey found the strongest opposition among state legislators of color. More than two-thirds (70 percent) are opposed or strongly opposed to the Act. While less than 3% of state legislators strongly favor NCLB, almost a third (31%) are strongly opposed to it.

## Race and Gender

This ETS survey found increased support for NCLB among Latinos/as (55 percent favorable, 24 percent unfavorable). This was especially true among those who took the survey in Spanish (67 percent favorable, 14 percent unfavorable).<sup>4</sup> However, the GMCL survey did not find this to be the case among elected officials. Less than half (47 percent) of Latino/a elected officials support NCLB. This level of support closely matches the general support levels among other elected officials of color, as well as that among the general population. The lowest support for NCLB was found among Asian and American Indian elected officials.

Support For NCLB Mandating Public Schools to Meet Certain Testing Standards for Federal Funding among GMCL Survey of Elected Officials of Color, by Race (%)

	Black	Latino	Asian	American Indian
Strongly Favor	16	13	3	12
Favor	34	34	37	29

Source: *Gender & Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) Survey, June 2006-March 2007 (N=1186<sup>3</sup>)*. Because we did not sample American Indians at all levels of office, the data on this racial group may not be representative of the population of American Indian officials a whole.

The biggest difference in NCLB support is along gender lines. Only 42 percent of female elected officials supported the Act, while 51 percent of male elected officials supported it. This gender difference is even more pronounced among Latinos.

Support For NCLB Mandating Public Schools to Meet Certain Testing Standards for Federal Funding among GMCL Survey of Elected Officials of Color, by Race and Gender (%)

	Black		Latino		Asian		American Indian	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Favor/ Strongly Favor	44	53	39	51	33	43	60	29
Oppose/ Strongly Oppose	56	47	61	49	67	57	40	71

Source: *Gender & Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) Survey, June, 2006-March 2007 (N=1186<sup>3</sup>)*. Note: The data for American Indians are included but are too small for meaningful analysis. Because we did not sample American Indians at all levels of office, the data on this racial group may not be representative of the population of American Indian officials a whole.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Educational Testing Service. Standards, Accountability and Flexibility: Americans Speak on No Child Left Behind Reauthorization, June 2007, p. 6. Downloaded from [http://www.ets.org/Media/Education\\_Topics/pdf/5884\\_Key\\_Findings.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/5884_Key_Findings.pdf) on June 28, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Includes elementary and secondary school teachers.

<sup>3</sup> Does not include those who answered "Don't Know/Not Sure/Does Not Apply," or who refused to answer.

<sup>4</sup> Educational Testing Service, p. 6.

## About the Gender & Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) Project

The GMCL Survey is to date the nation's most comprehensive multiracial, multi-office national survey of Black, Latino, Asian, and American Indian elected officials holding positions at the state and local levels. A total of 1,354 elected officials of color were included in this report of the telephone survey conducted between June 5, 2006 and March 21, 2007, by the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) at the University of New Mexico. The response rate was 72%. The margin of error for the entire sample is  $\pm 3\%$ .

Besides the survey, other components of the GMCL Project include a **national database** of elected officials of color, by race and gender (as of spring 2006); an annotated **bibliography** and **analytical framework** on the intersection of gender, race/ethnicity, and class; and a project **website** for public education.

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*For more information on the project and findings from the survey, or to contact the Principal Investigators, visit our website: [www.gmcl.org](http://www.gmcl.org).*



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