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UCSB Releases Findings of Third Annual 'Central Coast Survey' Based on Poll of Santa Barbara, Ventura Residents

Researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara, today released the findings of the 2008 Central Coast Survey, a large-scale public-opinion poll of residents in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties on a variety of issues affecting quality of life in the region.

Conducted by the Social Science Survey Center at UC Santa Barbara, and funded by the UCSB Division of Social Sciences, the annual Central Coast Survey features telephone interviews with members of more than 1,000 households in the two counties, both English- and Spanish-speaking.

The results of the survey tap the public's attitudes on a wide range of important issues, from housing and energy use to views on the media. This year's survey also gave special emphasis to issues of immigration, quality of life, and health care.

Among its key conclusions, the survey found that:

- Despite the recent downturn in the real estate market, lack of affordable housing is the number one concern for fully one-third of Central Coast residents. At the same

time, a decline in the value of one's home is cited as only the third ranking problem in Ventura, and is not considered relevant by most residents of Santa Barbara County.

·Compared with 2006 findings, the percentage of respondents reporting that they feel economically better off than the previous year has dropped by half, while the percentage of those who feel worse off has tripled.

"One of the issues we focused on this year is financial hardship," said Sarah Fenstermaker, who directed the survey. "We live in a community that manifests great wealth, but too often we forget about our many families struggling with debt, unaffordable housing and exorbitantly priced health care. This year we included sections on financial strain, perceptions of the economic downturn, as well as many other indicators of quality of life. The results are often startling."

The full text of the report is available as a PDF file on the Social Science Survey Center's Web site: <http://www.survey.ucsb.edu/ccs>.

In addition, the survey found that:

·Thirty-nine percent of Latino respondents have no health insurance, compared with only 6 percent of white respondents.

·Fifty-eight percent of all respondents indicated that high gas prices have placed a strain on their household budgets, and 29 percent described that strain as substantial.

·In answers to queries related to immigration, responses between Democrats and Republicans were disparate, and often dramatically so. While 54 percent of Democrats agreed with the statement that undocumented immigrants should be allowed to obtain driver's licenses, only 20 percent of Republicans responded in the affirmative.

The survey was directed and the report written by Sarah Fenstermaker, professor of sociology and the survey center's acting director; Paolo Gardinali, the center's associate director; and Jonathan Cowden, a lecturer in the Department of Political Science. Also assisting in the survey were undergraduate students Evan Smith and Brian Shaw.

Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish and averaged 13.5 minutes in length.

All survey respondents were at least 18 years of age.

In total, 2,754 households were contacted, and 1,039 interviews were completed.

Related Links

[Central Coast Survey](#)

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