

# GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER RESEARCH

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## One Week Out, Medina Pulls to Single-Digit Lead

*Race will likely be decided by younger women*

**To:** Diario Libre

**From:** Ana Iparraguirre, Jessica Reis

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Heading into the final week of the campaign, Danilo Medina emerges with a slight lead over former president Hipólito Mejía. The latest survey from *Diario Libre* gives Medina a slim majority of 51 percent of the vote – 5 points over Mejía’s 46 percent vote share. Among those Dominicans most likely to vote (72 percent of the electorate), both candidates inch upwards, with 52 percent for Medina and 47 for Mejía.

Yet Medina is far from assured a first round victory. Nearly 10 percent of the electorate may still change its mind, and survey data indicates that young women will likely play a large role in deciding the next president. Should a second round be necessary, the vote looks identical to the first round given that most parties have endorsed either the PLD or PRD party candidate.

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, an international polling firm based in Washington, D.C., conducted and analyzed this survey together with *Diario Libre*. The poll interviewed 1,022 Dominican adults, of whom 737 were identified as likely voters, from May 2 to May 7, 2012. The margin of error on truly random samples of 1,022 and 737 are plus or minus 3.1 and 3.6 percent, respectively, at confidence intervals of 95 percent.

The race is marked by a significant gender gap between the PLD and the PRD. Medina has an 18-point lead among women, while Mejía is up 8 points among men. Medina is stronger among higher educated Dominicans, winning the vote of the university-educated by 16 points; among those with primary and secondary education, the vote remains statistically tied.

Geographically, Medina is ahead in all regions except for Mejía’s native North, where the PRD leader is ahead 53 to 45 percent.

The survey data suggests that Danilo Medina has been able to capitalize on increased support for current president Leonel Fernandez. Fernandez’s favorability rating has grown by 4 points since the last *Diario Libre*-Greenberg Quinlan Rosner survey was conducted in late March, and his approval rating is up 5 points to 66 percent approval. Among current Medina voters, a majority – 50 percent – say the best reason to support Medina is that he will continue the good of Fernandez.

Medina also see improvement in his own ratings. A plurality of Dominicans give the PLD candidate a favorable rating (47 percent), up 4 points from late March. And more voters think Medina will do a better job at handling specific issues: a majority – 53 percent – say Medina would do a better job at handling the economy, a 5-point increase for Medina since *Diario Libre* Greenberg

Quinlan Rosner's early March poll and 9 points higher than the share that say Mejía would do a better job on the economy.

Much of Medina's growth is driven by younger women. In fact, women under the age of 35 emerge as a key constituency in this race. In late March, women under 35 gave Mejía a 10-point advantage – 5 weeks later their vote swings strongly in Medina's favor and back to early March levels. The vote among younger men, as well as those over 35, has remained stable.

Medina's running mate, Margarita Cedeño de Fernandez, has also helped bring these women back to the PLD. Cedeño de Fernandez has higher favorability ratings than the two presidential candidates, with a majority (54 percent) giving her a favorable rating. Among the coveted younger women, fully 64 percent give the first lady a favorable rating – 15 points higher than ratings for both Leonel Fernandez and Danilo Medina, and 31 points higher than the amount that give Mejía a favorable rating.

### The final week counts

Medina holds a 5-point lead on the presidential race, but the way the candidates close their campaigns may have an effect on the final result. Eight percent of the electorate reports that it still may change its mind in their vote. Medina stands to gain from those who could change their mind: a majority are Mejía supporters (55 percent) while only 31 percent are currently supporting the PLD candidate. Yet Mejía can also court these voters with a strong change message, particularly focused on security. Nearly three-quarters of these voters who can change their minds are pessimistic about the direction of the country (73 percent say the Dominican Republic is headed in the wrong direction, compared to 49 percent overall) and they are significantly more concerned about crime than the overall electorate (60 percent say it's one of their top-two concerns, compared to 55 percent overall). And among those who may change their vote, Mejía has a 25-point edge over Medina.

Over a third of voters who may still change their minds are young women (36 percent compared to 25 percent of the overall population), suggesting that the jury is still out on how this swing group will vote. One week from the election, young women are supporting Medina decisively, but their vote is far from locked.

Another big question for May 20 will be who turns out to the polls. Among the 72 percent of the electorate most likely to vote, 52 percent support Medina to 47 percent for Mejía. Likely voters tend to be older and more male than the overall population. Eight-two percent of Dominicans over 35 are likely voters, compared to only 62 percent of those under 35.

Regionally, 79 percent of voters in the North are likely to vote, showing that Mejía's base district is enthusiastic to participate, while only 64 percent in the National District are likely to vote. The swing group of young women are the least likely to turn out next Sunday. Only 58 percent of women under 35 are likely voters, compared to 66 percent of their young male counterparts.

"Reaching young women is critical in this tight election," said Jessica Reis, a senior associate at Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, who led the poll. "They have flirted with Hipólito, but now many have turned back to Danilo. But with many unsure of their vote, and a good share less likely to vote at all – whoever can win these young women over is best positioned for May 20."

### **Perceptions of Negative Campaign**

Accusations of rising tensions and acts of violence have become the hallmark of the 2012 Dominican presidential race. Yet a majority of voters do not see this election as any more negative than previous campaigns. About a third (31 percent) say it is roughly the same electoral climate and a quarter believe the race to be *less* negative than in the past.

Mejía voters are more likely to say the campaign is negative: a majority (54 percent) of those supporting the PRD candidate say this race is more negative, while only 28 percent of Medina supporters believe this to be the case.