

Majority Backs INS Decision to Return Boy to Cuba

Discontent in Miami notwithstanding, a narrow majority of Americans endorses the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service's ruling that six-year-old Elian Gonzalez should be returned to his father in Cuba.

Fifty-two percent now say the boy should go home to his father, up slightly from 46 percent in an ABC News poll taken before the INS decision was announced. Thirty-six percent say he should remain with his relatives in the United States.

	Return to Cuba	Remain in the United States
1/9	52%	36
12/12	46	33

Cuban-Americans in Miami have been protesting the INS decision to return Gonzalez, and Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., has sought to delay the move by issuing a subpoena to have the boy testify before a House committee in February. Gonzalez was found clinging to an inner tube on Thanksgiving Day, two days after a boat carrying illegal immigrants from Cuba to Florida capsized, killing 11, including his mother.

The question in this poll, completed Sunday, updated respondents on the Jan. 5 INS decision. The slight rise in support for sending the boy back to his father was accompanied by a drop in the number of people who are undecided on the question, from 20 percent to 12. The poll was conducted before a Miami judge issued a protective order Monday keeping Gonzalez in the United States, in defiance of the INS ruling.

There are a few notable differences among groups. Men - perhaps identifying with the father - are somewhat more apt than women to favor Gonzalez' return to Cuba. And better educated Americans are markedly more apt to say the boy should be returned.

	Return to Cuba	Remain in the United States
Men	56%	34
Women	48	38
H.S. Grad/Less	47	42
Some College	52	35
College/Post Grad.	61	26

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone Jan. 5-9, 2000, among a random national sample of 1,016 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Fieldwork by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:

<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

Here are the full results:

35. As you may know, The U.S immigration service has decided that a six-year-old Cuban boy whose mother drowned when their boat sank off Florida should be returned to his father in Cuba. Other relatives in Florida want the boy to stay with them. Do you think the boy should be returned to his father in Cuba, or remain with his relatives in the United States?

	Returned	Remain	No opinion
1/9/00	52	36	12
12/12/99*	46	33	20

*Wording: As you may know, a six-year-old boy from Cuba was rescued at sea off the coast of Florida recently. His mother drowned and his father in Cuba wants the boy back. Do you think the boy should be returned to his father in Cuba or should remain with his relatives in the United States?