

Big Majorities Still Support Elian's Papá and the Raid

As the Elian Gonzalez case heads back to court, public opinion remains solidly on the side of the boy's father and the federal raid that reunited them.

Two-thirds of Americans support the raid that removed the boy from his Miami relatives' home and nearly eight in 10 say Juan Miguel Gonzalez should have permanent custody of his son. These figures are unchanged since the raid almost three weeks ago.

	Custody of Elian:		The Elian raid:	
	Father	Relatives	Support	Oppose
5/10/00	78%	14	66%	26
4/24/00	76	20	65	32

Public support for returning the boy to his father rose steadily from just under half of Americans after Elian was rescued off the coast of Florida in November to about six in 10 before the raid. Opinion moved even more toward the father's side after he and his son were reunited.

Today the saga shifts to the courtroom, where a three-judge panel will consider the relatives' motion to grant the boy an asylum hearing. Juan Miguel Gonzalez seeks to drop the request for asylum with the hope of returning to Cuba with the boy.

GROUPS - Support for Elian's father and the government's raid is high across all demographic groups. In a relatively rare show of unity, solid majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents alike line up behind the father and the government.

	Custody of Elian:		The Elian raid:	
	Father	Relatives	Support	Oppose
Democrats	80%	13	71%	22
Independents	77	17	66	29
Republicans	79	15	65	29

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone May 7-10, 2000, among a random national sample of 1,068 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Field work by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Daniel Merkle.

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 (*= less than 0.5 percent):

9. On another subject, as you may know, federal officers removed Elian Gonzalez from his relative's home in Miami and returned him to his father. Do you support or oppose the federal action to remove the boy from his relative's home and return him to his father?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
5/10/00	66	26	7
4/24/00*	65	32	2

*Wording: On another subject, as you may know, federal officers removed the boy from his relative's home in Miami and returned him to his father on Saturday. Do you support or oppose the federal action to remove the boy from his relative's home and return him to his father?

10. Who do you think should be granted permanent custody of Elian Gonzalez - his father or his relatives in Miami?

	Father	Miami relatives	No opinion
5/10/00	78	14	8
4/24/00	76	20	4

END