

2024

LDC U.S. LATINO VOTER REPORT™

THE EVER-
EVOLVING U.S.
ELECTORAL
LANDSCAPE



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ABOUT THE LATINO DONOR COLLABORATIVE

The Latino Donor Collaborative (LDC) is a non-profit and non-partisan organization that creates original economic research about the Latino/Hispanic community in the United States.

Our data is used by decision-makers and resource allocators to promote growth in the new mainstream American economy. Together with our partners at top U.S. research centers, we produce fact-based data to identify opportunities.

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A LETTER FROM THE LDC

We are thrilled to present the 2024 LDC U.S. Latino Voter Report™: The Ever-Evolving U.S. Electoral Landscape. In this report's first edition, we demonstrate the power of the Latino vote and its impact on the national political landscape—shattering the long-held myth that Latinos are disengaged or apolitical. It presents compelling evidence that Latinos are a decisive force in shaping both local and national elections.

Latinos now comprise nearly 20% of the U.S. population and are the fastest-growing segment of eligible voters. Latino youth, who make up 25% of Americans under the age of 18—with 94% born in the United States and English as their first language—are not only engaged but are also increasingly shaping the course of elections. Each year, about 1.4 million Latinos become eligible to vote. In 2024, it is anticipated that 17.5 million Latinos will cast a ballot, and 1 in 5 of them will do so for the first time in a presidential election. Our community is young, dynamic, and deeply invested in the future of this country.

Latino voters have been a driving force behind major electoral shifts in the United States, as demonstrated in California, Nevada, Florida, Washington, and Arizona, to name a few. It also explores the impact they will have in the upcoming 2024 elections, where the U.S. Latino vote will be decisive in five out of seven swing states. This is evidenced by the significant Latino presence in states like Arizona and Nevada, where Latino registered voters make up 27% and 21% of the electorate, respectively. Latino voters are reshaping the American electoral landscape, and we have only just begun to see the full extent of their power.

Our analysis highlights the critical opportunity for political leaders and decision-makers to engage this powerful cohort. For too long, assumptions and stereotypes have led to missed opportunities to reach Latino voters. Latinos have felt taken for granted. Political parties can no longer afford to rely on outdated narratives and stereotypes. To truly understand and connect with this vibrant community, they must invest in authentic, meaningful outreach efforts that reflect the real issues Latinos care about. It's not about party loyalty or one-off promises; it's about addressing the real issues that directly impact their lives.

The findings in this report are not only a call to action but a roadmap for political actors who want to authentically connect with and more effectively engage Latino voters. The strength and influence of the Latino electorate are undeniable, and understanding this demographic is crucial for anyone looking to shape the future of America. We invite you to explore this report, take in the data, and use these insights as a tool for strategy and action.

The data in this report make one thing clear: Political leaders who fail to engage meaningfully with Latino voters are missing the mark entirely. The Latino community is not just a part of the electorate but a driving force that will shape the political landscape for generations to come. Latinos are shaping the future with every vote they cast. Ignoring or underestimating this electorate is no longer an option.

Wishing you continued success,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sol Trujillo".

Sol Trujillo
Co-founder and Chairman of the Board
The Latino Donor Collaborative



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana Valdez".

Ana Valdez
President and CEO
The Latino Donor Collaborative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Latinos are the second fastest-growing racial and ethnic group in the U.S. electorate, with higher rates of growth in voting and registration than among White and Black voters since 2000 and record turnout in the last election. As the largest ethno-racial minority in U.S. elections, their influence has been instrumental in key state elections since 2004. Latinos are politically active, with participation rates that often exceed those of traditionally active groups. The data contradict the often misrepresented portrayal of Latinos as apolitical or disinterested.

This report demonstrates the power of the Latino vote and its impact on the national political landscape—a narrative that has remained largely invisible in legacy media. It presents compelling evidence of how Latinos have positively transformed the electoral landscape, resulting in significant gains at the national and subnational levels across the United States. As such, this report underscores the political power of Latinos, their growth, and the urgent need for political actors to actively engage this cohort.

Key findings:

Latinos have the power to swing elections. There is strong evidence that Latinos were highly influential in shaping the outcomes of key state elections in the past, much like their impact on elections in California, Nevada, Florida, Washington, and Arizona. They have also played a significant role in influencing general election outcomes.

Young Latinos are a political game changer. 25% of young Americans are Latino, 94% were born in the United States, and English is their first language. As the fastest-growing group of eligible voters, they represent a new generation with unique ideals and demands that political parties cannot afford to ignore.

Latinos are a crucial factor in today's and future elections. With Latinos accounting for nearly 71% of the U.S. population growth between 2022 and 2023, primarily due to births, their influence will only continue to grow with each election (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024).

Latinos are interested in politics. Contrary to the popular media narrative, most Latinos are neither apolitical nor disinterested in politics; rather, political parties have historically underinvested in Latino-focused outreach efforts. Latinos show a similar level of interest in politics compared to other ethno-racial groups in the United States. In fact, once registered, Latinos tend to vote.

Latinos are sophisticated voters. Latinos are not a single-issue voting bloc. The interaction of several factors, including demographic variables, issue prioritization, partisanship, and candidate, influences the direction of their vote.

No party can take the Latino vote for granted. The Latino vote must be earned. Relying on assumptions and myths about the Latino electorate is a missed opportunity that results in all parties leaving millions of Latino votes on the table.

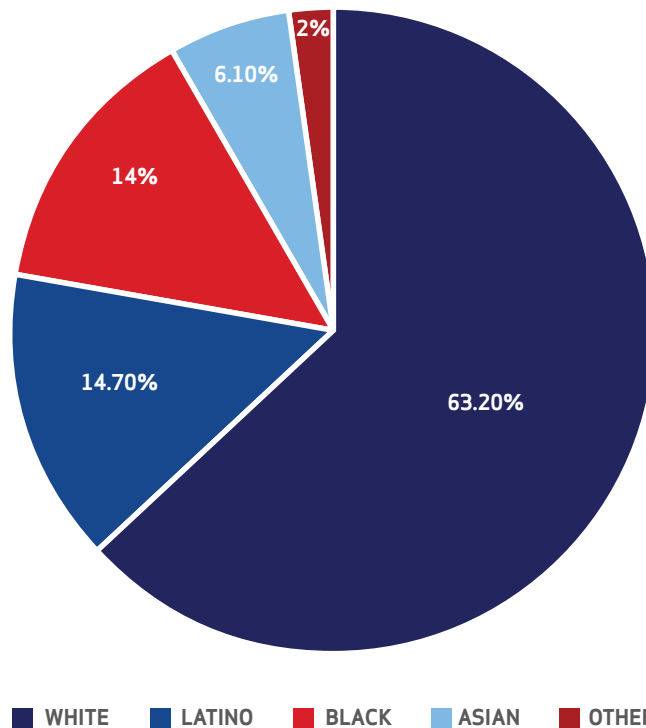
This report presents data that reflect a fact-based narrative about the Latino voter, which will help shed light on this highly influential cohort and support more effective voter outreach.

THE LATINO VOTER

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that, as of 2023, there were nearly 65 million Latinos in the United States. Today, Latinos account for over 19.5% of the entire U.S. population and 25% of Americans aged 18 and under, and they are the second-largest ethnic group after non-Latino Whites (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). In addition, 94% of young Latinos are U.S.-born (LDC-Kantar Group, 2024).

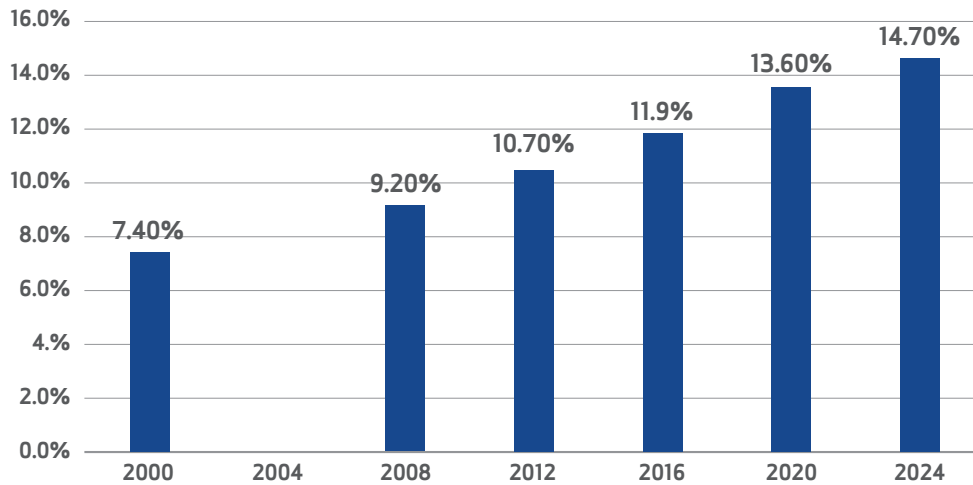
In 2020, the Latino-eligible voting population represented 13.4% of the total electorate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024) and was projected to increase to 14.7% in 2024, marking an all-time high (Krogstad et al., 2024). This translates to approximately 36.2 million eligible Latino voters for the upcoming presidential election, an increase of four million since 2020 and more than double the 14.3 million eligible voters in 2000. As a result, Latino voters are now the nation's second-largest group of eligible voters, surpassing Black and Asian American voters and trailing only White voters (Krogstad et al., 2024).

FIGURE 1: PROJECTED SHARE OF U.S. ELECTORATE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



Source: Krogstad et al. (2024) and U.S. Census Bureau (2022).

FIGURE 2: LATINO ELIGIBLE VOTING POPULATION AS A SHARE OF THE U.S. ELECTORATE, 2000–2024



Source: Garcia and Sanchez (2021) and Krogstad et al. (2024)

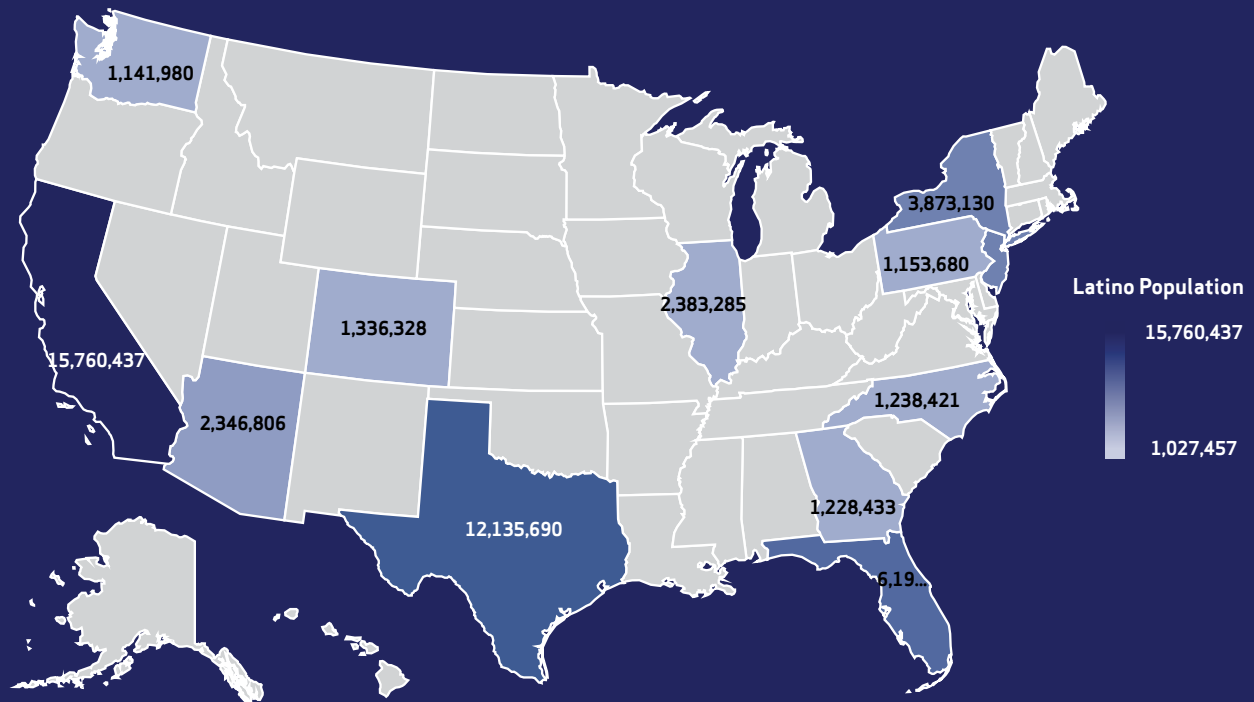
The Latino population is younger than the average American population: 25% are Gen Z and Gen Alpha. Latino eligible voters also tend to be younger than eligible voters overall. Only 33% of Latino eligible voters are 50 and older, compared to 48% of all U.S. eligible voters (Krogstad et al., 2024). Hundreds of thousands of new eligible voters are being added each month. From 2012 to 2022, nearly eight million Latinos joined the eligible voting base (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023a). Currently, about one million young voters are added to the Latino electorate each year (UnidosUS, 2024).



Latino Voters by State

In California and Texas, Latinos are the most numerous pan-ethnic group (15.8 million in California and 12.1 million in Texas). Other states are expected to follow this trend in the coming years as the Latino population grows at more than twice the national average. Thirteen states now have one million or more Latino residents: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023b).

FIGURE 3: 2023 U.S. LATINO POPULATION



In New Mexico, 40% of all eligible voters are Latino, the highest share of any state. In California and Texas, Latinos represent about one-third of the eligible voter population (30.4% and 30%, respectively). The states with the next largest shares of Latino eligible voters are Arizona (27%), Nevada (21%), Florida (23%), Colorado (14%), and New Jersey (15%; U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Latino Voters in the 2024 Election Swing States

Latinos make up a notable share of the electorate in several of this year’s battleground states. Five out of the seven swing states have large and growing Latino populations. This matters because as the Latino population grows, so does the potential Latino electorate in each state. In the 2020 election, Latino voting power was particularly significant in swing states like Arizona and Georgia (Domínguez-Villegas et al., 2021).

Table 1 shows that from 2020 to 2023, the Latino population in swing states grew between 6% and 11%. In addition, the last column highlights the percentage of Latino voters in each state’s total electorate. In Arizona, for example, 27% of all eligible voters are Latino. And in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, the double-digit percentage change in their Latino populations—in just three years—provides a window into how Latinos are poised to transform the political landscapes of these states. The potential impact of Latino voters is huge.

TABLE 1: LATINO POPULATION GROWTH AND LATINO ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN SWING STATES, 2020–2023

SWING STATE	2020 LATINO POPULATION	2023 LATINO POPULATION	% LATINO POPULATION GROWTH	% LATINO AMONG TOTAL ELIGIBLE VOTERS
ARIZONA	2,194,792	2,346,806	7%	27%
NEVADA	890,420	956,401	7%	21%
GEORGIA	1,123,532	1,228,433	9%	6%
NORTH CAROLINA	1,116,154	1,238,421	11%	6%
PENNSYLVANIA	1,049,315	1,153,680	10%	6%
WISCONSIN	446,805	478,289	7%	5%
MICHIGAN	564,259	600,102	6%	5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin by State: April 1, 2020, to July 1, 2023

Historically, both the Democratic and Republican parties have used the fact that Latino populations are concentrated in “noncompetitive” states as a reason for their lack of investment in Latino-focused outreach efforts (Ramírez, 2013; Sanchez et al., 2020). Nevertheless, some states, such as California, have remained highly uncompetitive, primarily because Latinos have had such a significant impact on the state. As Barreto and Segura (2014) noted, it is precisely this high level of influence that has kept California a non-swing state.

In general, the Latino vote tends to be more influential when it stands out from the rest of the electorate in each state. Experts in the field of Latino electoral politics argue that measures of Latino voter impact need to move beyond the limitations of single-variable considerations. Barreto et al. (2010) created an index to measure Latino voter influence in each state by considering three dimensions: demographics, voting patterns and volatility (changes in registration rates, party preference, and turnout), and mobilization and resources. They argued that this approach paints a more complete and accurate picture of the contemporary electoral context. Using this index, Barreto et al. (2010) found strong evidence suggesting that Latinos were influential or decisive in election outcomes in key states in the 2008 presidential election. The “Historical Impact of the Latino Vote” section provides further examples of the decisive impact of the Latino voter on election outcomes.

Key Factors Influencing the Latino Vote

In order to properly appeal to Latino voters, political parties must first understand that the Latino electorate, like any other demographic group, is a diverse, multi-issue, non-monolithic voting bloc (Sanchez et al., 2020). If political parties do not have a fact-based understanding of how and why Latinos vote and instead rely on outdated stereotypical assumptions, they run the risk of leaving Latino votes on the table. This is a major loss as the Latino electorate grows in importance.

The interplay of several factors affects Latino voting behavior, including demographic variables (national origin, gender, generation), issue prioritization, party affiliation, and candidates.

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

National Origin

Latino national origin groups have distinct characteristics that may influence voting preferences. In terms of numbers, the top five Latino national origin groups are Mexican (58.4%), Puerto Rican (9.1%), Salvadoran (3.9%), Cuban (3.8%), and Dominican (3.8%), as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2. LATINOS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2021 BY NATIONAL ORIGIN

NATIONAL ORIGIN	TOTAL U.S. POPULATION	% OF U.S. LATINO POPULATION
MEXICANS	37.2M	58.40%
PUERTO RICANS	5.8M	9.10%
SALVADORANS	2.5M	3.90%
CUBANS	2.4M	3.80%
DOMINICANS	2.4M	3.80%
GUATEMALANS	1.8M	2.80%
COLOMBIANS	1.4M	2.20%
HONDURANS	1.1M	1.70%
ALL OTHER LATINOS	9.1M	14.30%

Source: Moslimani et al. (2023)



To be sure, while Latinos are diverse, they also exhibit identifiable attitudes and behaviors that shape their sense of group identity and *linked fate*.¹ They share a unifying Latino experience.

Gender

Turnout among Latinas is higher than that of Latinos, making them vital to the electoral landscape. For example, in the 2022 midterm election, Latinas turned out to vote at a higher rate than Latinos. In fact, 60% of eligible Latina voters registered to vote, compared to 56% of eligible Latinos who registered. Of these registered voters, 40% of Latinas voted, compared to 36% of their Latino counterparts (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Future research on Latina voters is needed, as this electorate is increasingly politically engaged.

Generation

The Latino population is young. In 2020, the median age for Latinos was 30, compared to 41.1 for non-Latino Whites. Latinos are also young future voters. In 2020, one in four children, 25.7% (18.8 million), in the United States were of Latino origin, 94% of whom were born in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023b). The impact of the Latino youth vote is key. According to UnidosUS (2024), 17.5 million Latinos are expected to vote in 2024, and 1 in 5 of them will be voting for the first time in a presidential election. In other words, the Latino electorate is dynamic and evolving.

PRIORITIZATION OF ISSUES

Like all demographic groups, Latinos prioritize issues that respond to their lived realities. The myth that Latinos are a single-issue voting bloc is naïve and misinformed at best.

In 2008, Latinos prioritized the economy. In 2012, the main issues were immigration, the economy, and health care (Barreto & Segura 2014). In 2016, the top priorities for Latinos were the economy (39%), immigration (30%), and health care (24%). In 2020, the issues prioritized were the handling of COVID-19 (48%), jobs/the economy/wages (52%), and anti-immigrant rhetoric (40%; Ocampo et al., 2021). And in 2024, the issues that Latinos prioritize are the economy (including jobs, inflation, and housing costs), health care, gun policy and crime, and immigration (Krogstad et al., 2024; UnidosUS, 2024).

TABLE 3: LATINO VOTER ISSUE PRIORITIES 2008–2024

ISSUES PRIORITIZED	2008	2012	2016	2020	2024
ECONOMY	X	X	X	X	X
IMMIGRATION		X	X	X	X
HEALTH CARE		X	X		X
COVID-19				X	
GUN POLICY/VIOLENT CRIMES					X

¹ “Linked fate” is the notion among groups that their individual fate is tied to the fate of other racial/ethnic groups (see Sánchez & Masuoka, 2010).

Latinos' lived realities inform how they prioritize various issues. For example, the issue of immigration comes to the forefront when Latinos become the target of anti-Latino rhetoric. After the mass shooting in Uvalde, gun violence also became a top issue for Latinos, ahead of inflation, immigration, and health care. It is also important to note that 53% of respondents to a 2022 Axios poll reported that those in power do not take crime against Latinos seriously enough. In other words, to win the Latino vote, both parties need to show that they care and are informed about how these issues affect the Latino community at large (Talev & Contreras, 2022).

PARTISANSHIP AND CANDIDATE PREFERENCE

While Latino partisanship has increased from 2000 (24.4%) to 2020 (35.8%), a significant proportion of Latinos do not have strong ties to either the Republican or Democratic parties. In 2020, 25.3% of Latinos identified as strong Democrats, while only 10.5% identified as strong Republicans. That is to say, 64.2% of Latinos defined themselves as having low levels of party identification (partisanship) or as independent voters during this period, compared to 54.1% of non-Hispanic White voters (American National Election Studies [ANES], 2024). This is critical for political actors to understand: Latinos can be open to political persuasion when it comes to solutions to the issues that matter to them.

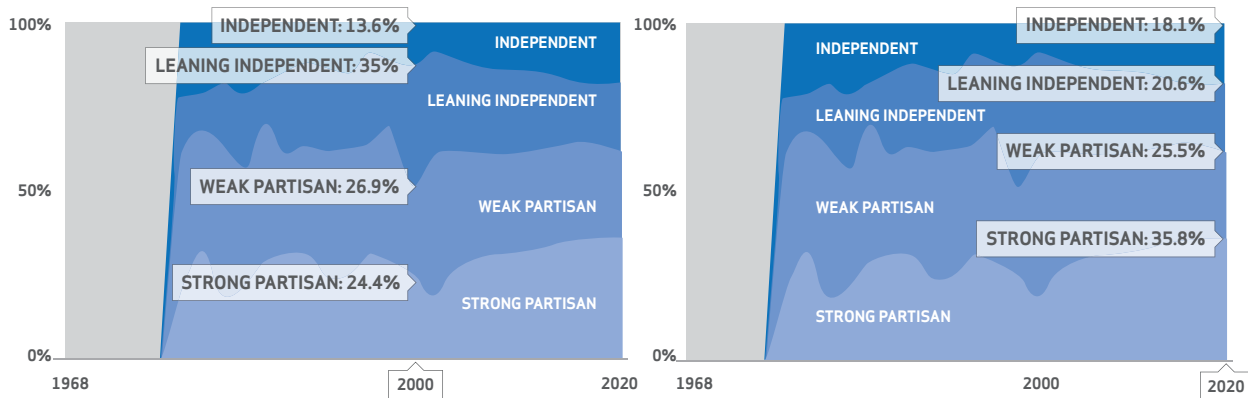
There are many reasons for this flexible partisanship. First, Latinos prioritize issues over candidates. For instance, in 2020, Latinos, for whom COVID-19 was the top issue, were more likely to vote Democratic. Those for whom the economy was a priority were more likely to favor Republicans (Ocampo et al., 2021).

Second, Latinos' strong sense of community leads many to vote for the party that best supports their community. A growing percentage cite their support for the Latino community as their primary reason for voting. Studies show that in 2016, 51% of young Latinos (ages 18–33) voted to support the Latino community rather than to support the Democratic Party (21%) or the Republican Party (8%; Sanchez et al., 2020).

Finally, the political parties' lack of authentic engagement with the Latino community and their focus on immediate electoral victories may explain why Latino voters feel like political pawns of politicians who do not really care about them (Talev & Contreras, 2024). It is not surprising, then, that Latinos have not historically demonstrated strong political partisanship.



FIGURE 4: LATINO PARTISANSHIP, 2000 VS. 2020

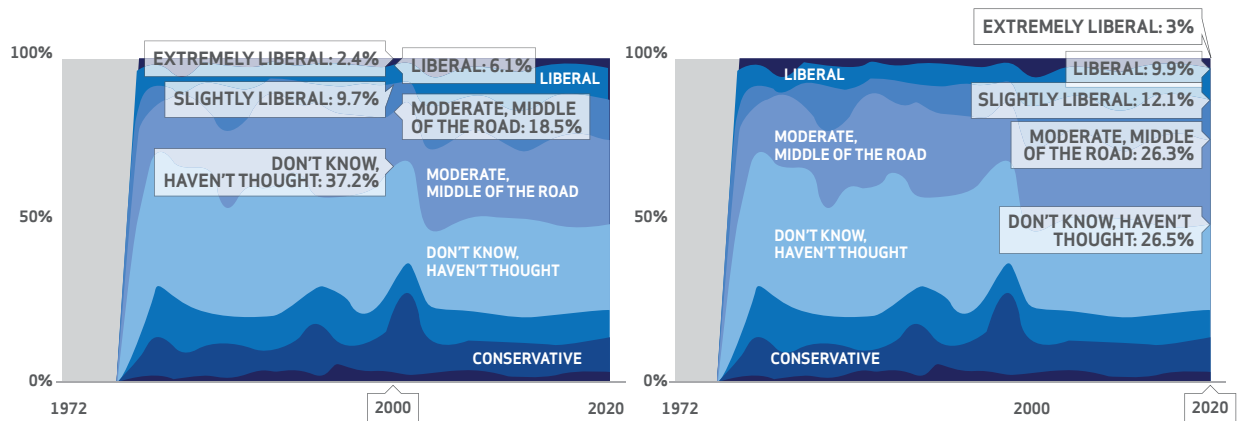


Source: ANES (2024)

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

In terms of political preferences, Latinos tend to be ideologically liberal. Nevertheless, according to ANES (2024), Latino ideological orientations are not static. In 2000, 18% of Latinos were on the liberal end of the political spectrum, 55% were moderate or undecided, and 26% were on the conservative end. By 2020, however, 25% were liberal, 53% were moderate or undecided, and 22% were conservative.

FIGURE 5: LATINO IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION



Source: ANES (2024)

Latinos' ideological orientations help us understand their voting patterns and political party preferences.

THE HISTORIC IMPACT OF THE LATINO VOTE

Latinos have been reshaping our nation’s political landscape for decades. At the national level, the growth rate of Latino voters and registration has consistently outpaced the growth rate of both White and Black voters in every presidential election from 2000 to 2020 (UnidosUS, 2024). In addition, the 2020 presidential election was historic for the Latino electorate—it was the first election in which Latinos comprised the largest minority group eligible to vote. Representing approximately 13% of the overall electorate, record Latino turnout helped the Democratic nominee win key battleground states (Ocampo et al., 2021).

At the subnational level, the Latino vote has been decisive in key battleground states. In 2008, for example, Latino voters were highly influential in flipping Nevada and Florida from Republican to Democratic control between 2004 and 2008 (Barreto & Segura, 2014). In the 2018 midterm elections, Latinos turned out to vote in the form of a “blue wave” across several competitive districts that helped Democrats retake the U.S. House of Representatives (Barreto et al., 2019). And in 2020, Latino voters were decisive in Arizona and contributed significantly to keeping Washington a non-swing state (Domínguez-Villegas et al., 2021).

Historically, Latinos have had the greatest impact at the state level, where the margin of victory is narrow and in places with the highest concentrations of eligible Latinos. This is especially true in competitive presidential elections in states where Latinos have voted as a “bloc” for a particular candidate, such as California and Arizona.

Furthermore, attacks on the Latino community have fueled Latinos’ group identity, which translates into increased political engagement. 1994 California is a prime example of how, despite attempts to demobilize the growing power of the Latino vote, Latinos across the nation have responded to political threats by reshaping the national political landscape.

This section dismantles the myth of Latino voter apathy by revealing the myriad ways in which Latinos have transformed the electorate at the national and subnational levels. As the Latino share of the population increases and voter registration rates continue to rise, Latinos are increasingly exercising their voting power.

1994 California: Prop 187 and the Rise of Latino Voting Power

1994 California is a prime example of Latino voter mobilization in response to political threats. California was a predominantly Republican state from the end of World War II until the passage of Proposition 187, which was championed by Governor Pete Wilson during his 1994 reelection campaign (Barreto & Segura, 2014). Both Prop. 187 and Wilson's campaign rhetoric were anti-immigrant political threats—and Latino voters responded forcefully. Community mobilizers and organizations pushed back, protests erupted, and record numbers of Latinos registered to vote and turned out (Chavez & Partida, 2020; Pantoja et al., 2001).

Pushing back against the myth of Latino voter apathy, studies have found that the best predictor of voter turnout in 1996 and 2000 was whether Latinos were newly registered following Proposition 187 (Barreto & Segura, 2014). Moreover, in 1998, Democratic Latinos in Los Angeles County voted at higher rates than any other group, including non-Latino White Republicans (Pantoja et al., 2001).

However, California's Democratic shift cannot be attributed solely to Latino turnout but to Latinos' preference for the Democratic Party. Of all new Latino voters between 1992 and 1998, only 10% registered as Republicans (Barreto & Segura 2014). In other words, Prop. 187 and Governor Wilson's racist reelection rhetoric boosted turnout among Latino Democratic voters. Although Wilson was reelected, this proved to be a short-term victory for California Republicans. The party's long-term loss was more significant: Republicans lost their stronghold in California due to the rise of Latino voting power.

Prop. 187 was a ballot initiative championed by Republican Governor Pete Wilson during his 1994 reelection campaign. Both Prop. 187 and Wilson's reelection rhetoric were anti-immigrant. Prop. 187 denied undocumented immigrants access to public services such as public education and health care. It also required public officials, including doctors and teachers, to report suspected undocumented individuals to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS; Pantoja et al., 2001). Wilson's ads featured a grainy video of people running across the southern border into the United States, with a fear-mongering voiceover claiming, "They keep coming—two million illegal immigrants in California" (as cited in Denkmann, 2019). The proposition passed (59%), but most of its provisions were subsequently ruled unconstitutional in federal court. After a protracted legal battle, California withdrew its legal defense in 1999, effectively killing the law (Barreto & Segura, 2014).

This is one example of how racialized politics impact Latino political engagement. Importantly, pro-immigration positions not only mobilize Latino voters but also appeal to the majority of non-Latinos who overwhelmingly support comprehensive immigration reform, expanding the potential for voter pushback against racialized politics (Barreto et al., 2019).

Other Examples of Latino Political Influence Over the Years

Since California in 1994, Latinos have influenced the political landscape at both the national and sub-national levels in a variety of ways:

- In 2005, HR 4437 (also known as the Sensenbrenner Bill) was introduced in Congress. This anti-immigrant bill sought to criminalize both undocumented immigrants and anyone aiding them (Title II, Sections 203, 205). Across the country, mass Latino mobilizations followed, and millions marched in protest, which helped prevent HR4437 from becoming law (Zepeda-Millán 2017).
- In 2008, Latino influence at the subnational level was strong in Nevada and Florida, two of the most hyped battleground states. While Florida is now Republican, Latino influence helped flip both states from Republican to Democrat from 2004 to 2008 (Barreto & Segura, 2014, p.124). Therefore, Latino influence was decisive in specific states. **Lower institutional barriers** and **targeted outreach efforts** by political campaigns mobilized Latino voters (Barreto & Segura, 2014). Another indicator of the rise of the Latino electorate is the gap between the number of registered Latino voters and the number of actual voters. This gap has, at times, been smaller among Latinos compared to other groups. In Nevada this gap was 2.9% for Latinos compared to 7% for non-Latino Whites. And, in Florida, the gap was 5.2% for Latinos compared to 6.4% for non-Latino Whites. In other words, in these cases, once registered, Latinos were more likely to vote than their non-Latino White counterparts (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).
- In 2010, Arizona passed SB 1070, which legalized racial profiling and allowed police to arrest undocumented immigrants. A poll of Latino voters found that they attributed much of the responsibility for its passage to Republicans. Given the projected continued growth of the Latino electorate, this antipathy toward the Republican party, regardless of party affiliation, could have indicated a potential reshaping of Arizona's political landscape (Magaña & Lee, 2013).



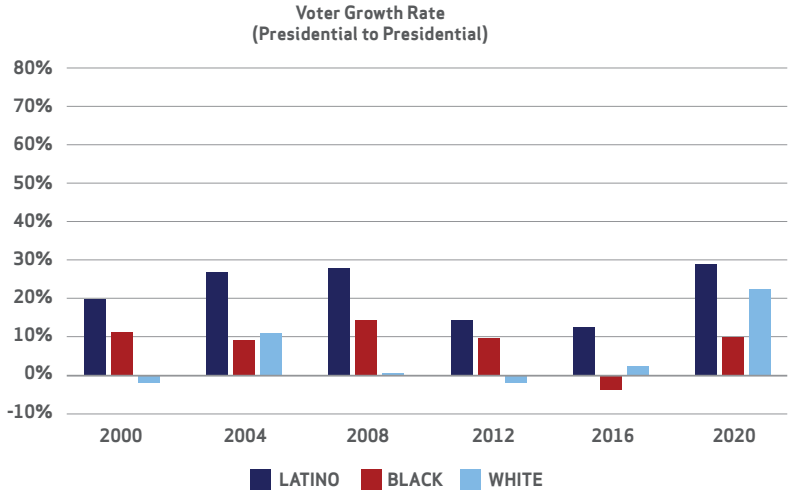
- In 2012, Latino voters made history by turning out for the Democratic candidate in record numbers: From 2008 to 2012, Latinos added 1.5 million votes (from 9.7 to 11.2 million votes cast). Obama received 75% of those Latino votes, compared to 23% for Romney. Studies suggest the Latino vote was directly responsible for the presidential candidate's margin of victory, as the margin Latinos provided to the Democratic candidate (5.4) exceeded the overall margin by which he won (2.8). For the first time ever, Latinos were the difference that made the difference (Barreto & Segura, 2014; Collingwood et al., 2014).
- In 2018, Latinos also turned presumed defeats into victories for Democrats in Senate races in Nevada and Arizona (Barreto et al., 2019). In these elections, Latino voter turnout increased significantly, much more than non-Latino Whites. In other words, Latino voters made up a larger share of the electorate, which amplified their impact. Across the board, the increase in voter turnout was greater in precincts with more Latinos. The largest increase was in Nevada (Barreto et al., 2019).
- In 2020, COVID-19 lowered barriers to voting, including mail-in ballots and extended registration deadlines, resulting in the largest voter turnout since 1900 (Ocampo et al., 2021). And for the first time, Latinos were the largest minority group in the electorate (Ocampo et al., 2021). In Arizona, the Latino vote flipped the state from red to blue, and Biden became the first Democratic candidate to carry the state since Clinton in 1996 (and before that, Truman in 1948; Statista, 2024). The growing Latino electorate in Washington played an increasingly important role in keeping it a non-swing blue state. In high-density districts (60% or more of registered voters are Latino), Biden was supported at higher rates than voters in low-density districts (10% or fewer Latino; Domínguez-Villegas et al., 2021).



Additional Indicators Highlighting the Impact and Growing Influence of the Latino Vote

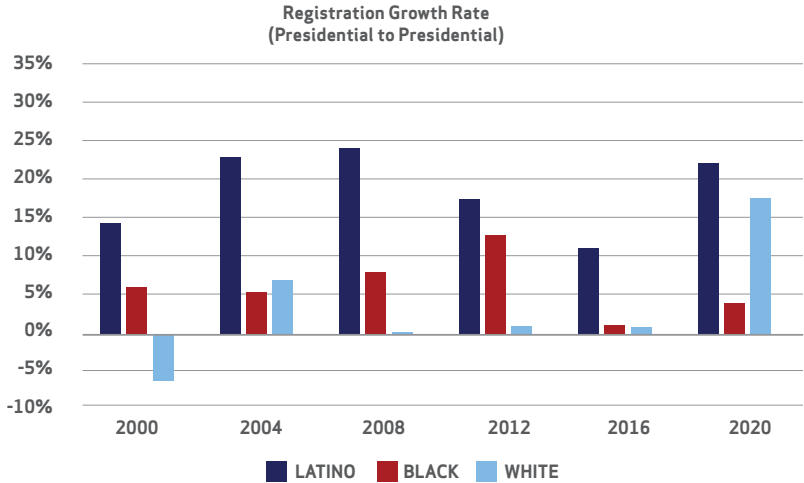
Other indicators, such as the increased proportion of Latino voters registered to vote compared to other groups, highlight the undeniable importance of the Latino electorate. The growth rates of Latino voters and voter registration have consistently outpaced the growth rate of both White and Black voters in every presidential election from 2000 to 2020 (UnidosUS, 2024).

FIGURE 6: VOTER GROWTH RATE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Voting and Registration Reports for 2000 through 2022. Rate of growth calculations by UnidosUS for comparable previous election cycles (i.e., midterm to midterm, presidential to presidential).

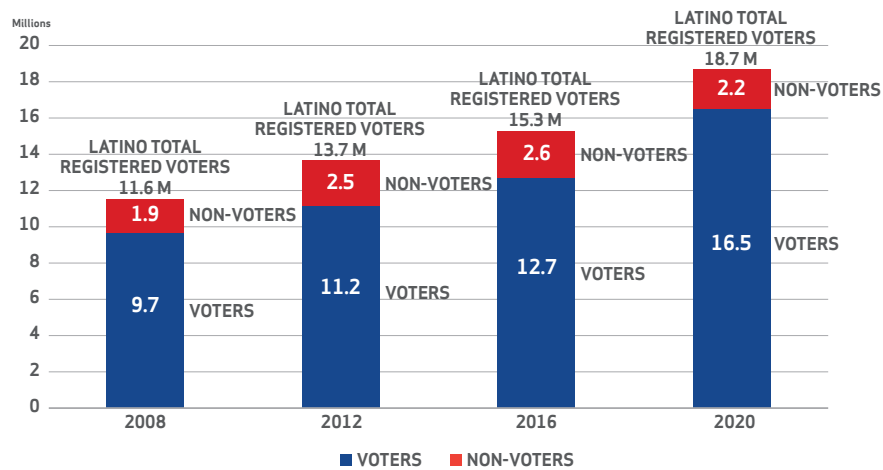
FIGURE 7: REGISTRATION GROWTH RATE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Voting and Registration Reports for 2000 through 2022. Rate of growth calculations by UnidosUS for comparable previous election cycles (i.e., midterm to midterm, presidential to presidential).

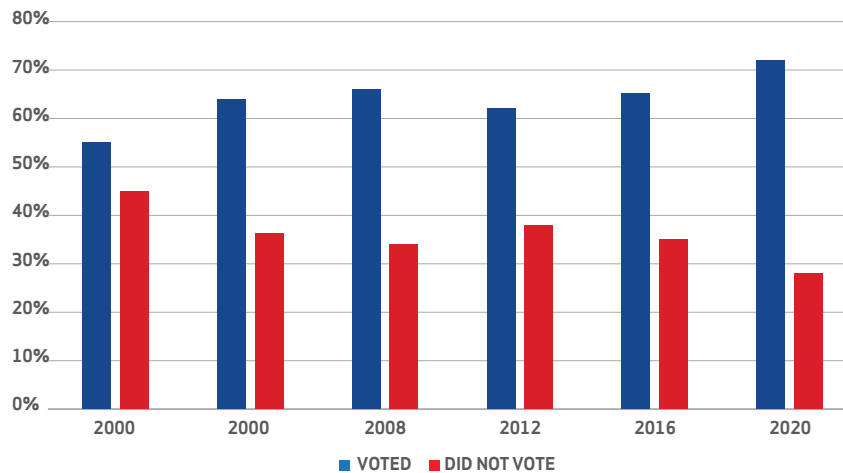
Significantly, as Figure 8 shows, once Latinos register to vote, they tend to vote: Between 2008 and 2020, 80%–88% of registered Latino voters cast their ballots.

FIGURE 8: LATINO REGISTERED VOTERS, VOTERS, AND NON-VOTERS



In addition, Figure 9 reveals that self-reported Latino voter turnout has increased significantly through the years. Indeed, Latino voter engagement is dynamic and evolving.

FIGURE 9: SELF-REPORTED LATINO VOTER TURNOUT, 2000-2020



It is also worth noting that Latino youth involvement in politics represents a significant part of this trend (see “Latino Youth: A Political Game Changer” section).

REPRESENTATIONAL POTENTIAL

While the growth indicator might not seem relevant when Latino voting patterns remain stable, Latino representational potential is still at play. In other words, higher voting margins can lead to the election of Latino and pro-Latino candidates to important government positions, such as the Senate and/or governorships. This, in turn, could increase the potential for breaking down institutional barriers that typically lead to lower political participation. Thus, representational potential is a measure that can attest to the power of the Latino vote.

MEDIA COVERAGE AND LATINOS

Media attention to a particular ethnic or racial group during the election period can be an indicator of its perceived political power. Not only does overall media coverage matter, but so does the campaign budget allocated to media advertising. Therefore, an accurate understanding of the Latino electorate and its political power is critical. In the 2016 presidential election, Gross and Cuevas-Molina (2020) found that the media paid more attention to the potential impact of Latino voters on the outcome of the election compared to 2012.² This trend appeared to continue in the 2020 election (Gomez et al., 2020) and is expected to increase as the Latino share of the electorate and voter turnout grow.

CANDIDATE CAMPAIGNS COURTING THE LATINO VOTE

The extent to which a political campaign engages Latinos is another way to measure the perceived electoral power of this group. Campaign teams evaluate the resources they allocate to outreach to different groups based on their assessment of the benefits of such outreach in increasing their chances of winning (Collingwood et al., 2014; Gross & Cuevas-Molina, 2020). According to Gary Segura of BSP Research, the majority of Latinos (55%) have not been contacted by political parties in the final weeks leading up to the 2024 presidential election (as cited in Beauregard, 2024). This is an egregious oversight that speaks to a continued lack of understanding about the potential power of the Latino electorate. It also leaves millions of votes on the table.



² The media sample consisted of 11 high-circulation newspapers including *USA Today*, *New York Times*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Washington Post*, *Denver Post*, and *Tampa Bay Times*. The researchers purposefully selected this sample to better capture regional differences and their significance.

UNDEMOCRATIC RESPONSES TO THE RISE OF THE LATINO VOTE

Another less obvious indicator of the power of the Latino vote is the emergence of voter demobilization efforts by political actors who view higher Latino turnout as a threat to their electoral prospects (Gross & Cuevas-Molina, 2020). The expansion of institutional barriers that make it more difficult for Latinos to vote is an indicator of the growing power of the Latino electorate. For example, there were hundreds of polling place closures in the run-up to the 2016 election, with two of the top 10 states with the largest Latino populations experiencing the most closures: Texas (46%) and Arizona (24%). Other restrictions impacting Latino voting potential range from registration barriers to limits on early voting to the inequitable media coverage of Latino voters.

As the Latino share of the U.S. population and political participation increases, so does the importance of Latino voters, underscoring that the Latino vote cannot be ignored. Latinos have swung the elections in the past and will continue to do so in the future through the most empowered generation of Latinos the United States has ever seen: Latino youth.





LATINO YOUTH: A POLITICAL GAME CHANGER

Latino youth are shaping America's demographic, economic, political, and cultural future. Latinos make up 25% of the U.S. population under the age of 18, which represents a quarter of Gen Z and Gen Alpha. In addition, 94% of Latinos under the age of 18 were born and raised in the United States and are native English speakers. Therefore, Latinos who are eligible to vote tend to be younger than eligible voters overall. As noted above, only 33% of Latino eligible voters are 50 years of age or older, compared to 48% of all U.S. eligible voters. The importance of Latino youth to the future of our country cannot be overstated (Krogstad et al., 2024).

While they carry attributes of their parents and grandparents—cultural pride, family orientation, and a strong work ethic—the next generation of U.S. Latinos is remarkably different from older Latinos and other youth. According to a recent LDC study in partnership with Kantar (2024), key characteristics of Latino youth include the following:

Unapologetic self-definition

They are reinterpreting what it means to be an American Latino. They embrace inclusivity and open-mindedness, and they are leaving machismo behind. At the same time, they honor their roots and proudly explore their ancestry. Their strong connection to Latino culture is evident in many ways, including an increased interest in the Spanish language.

Drivers of cultural and social values

Latino youth are vocal advocates for social justice and accountability. Their passion for these issues is more intense than that of non-Latinos of their age. Their values and experiences are helping to articulate the values of America's Gen Z and younger millennials more broadly. Their influence is redefining U.S. culture with ripple effects on everything from family and workplace values to entertainment and media trends.

Positioned for upward mobility

Latino youth are positioned for upward mobility in ways that previous generations were not. They are ambitious, determined, and culturally confident. They are pursuing higher levels of education than their predecessors and will have a growing influence on the U.S. workplace culture. This is likely to include taking a stronger stance on workplace equity than previous generations. They also have growing economic power. Latino youth consumer spending is growing 1.3 times faster than that of non-Latinos, establishing them as an economic force to be reckoned with.

An undeniable force in U.S. politics and civic life

Latino youth will increasingly exert political influence. Each year, about 1.4 million Latinos become eligible to vote. This political power has been growing for several decades, with Latinos accounting for half of the increase in total eligible voters between 2020 and 2024.

Advocates and connectors

They are deeply committed to their communities and their families. They are driven by a sense of purpose and a passion for making a positive impact. Compared to their non-Latino peers, they are more likely to say that values related to social responsibility and human connection, including justice, advocacy, community, and family, are “extremely” or “very” important. Young Latinos are fighting for the rights that their parents may not have had, suggesting that Latino youth will play key roles in government and civil society.

Demand for authenticity

As they move forward in school, careers, and life, young Latinos are determined to break through barriers and change the narrative about Latinos in the United States—and they expect government and businesses to play an active role in making this happen. They are frustrated by the lack of authentic representation: 76% of Latino youth feel that organizations do not represent them well and expect companies to authentically reflect their values and identity.

As the fastest-growing group of eligible voters, Latino youth represent a new generation with unique ideals and demands that political parties cannot afford to ignore. Regardless of how they cast their ballots, this young, dynamic cohort will flex their muscles by voting in local, state, and national elections. But they will also make their mark on civic life in the United States beyond the ballot box—as volunteers, candidates for office, and advocates for issues important to their families and communities. These efforts will include addressing concerns such as student loans, health care for older relatives, climate change, racial discrimination, access to abortion, and immigration reform (Méndez, 2024).



THE IMPERATIVE OF ADDRESSING THE LATINO VOTE

As we have seen throughout this report, the impact of the Latino vote is undeniable. They have the power to swing elections—they have done so in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Young Latinos are highly engaged and are more likely than their peers to report values associated with social responsibility, such as justice, advocacy, and community. This suggests that Latino youth will not only continue to play a decisive role in elections but will also begin to play a key role in government and civil society.

Nevertheless, there is still a “large untapped pool of eligible Latino voters who have not been engaged sufficiently by political parties, candidates, and organizations to feel compelled to overcome the first hurdle of voter registration” (Sanchez et al., 2020, p. 253). Overcoming this first hurdle is crucial, as our findings show that once they register, Latino voter turnout increases significantly.

Latino Political Mobilization

When Latino voters are actively addressed by **campaign outreach efforts**, they are more likely to vote. And these efforts are more effective when they employ “identity appeals specifically tailored to Latino communities” (Ocampo et al., 2021, p. 3). A study by Ocampo et al. (2021) found that when contacted by a political party or organization, Latino voter turnout increased by 0.03 in 2016 and 0.14 in 2020.

It is also worth noting that while intragroup receptivity to mobilizing efforts varies, it depends on *who* is delivering the message about civic engagement. The person or group delivering the mobilizing message must be someone whom the potential voter considers trustworthy (Barreto & Segura, 2014). Messengers can be community leaders, media and entertainment personalities, friends and family, labor unions, and political parties.

Latino organizations also play a key role in mobilizing the Latino electorate (Ramírez, 2013). While political organizations tend to focus on mobilization during a specific election cycle, nonpartisan organizations have a different long-term goal—increasing the number of Latino registered voters and Latino voters. Recent studies suggest that nonpartisan Latino organizations have stepped into the void left by political campaigns, building massive Latino voter mobilization efforts over the past decade. These efforts have had a positive impact on Latinos, especially low-propensity voters who have historically been ignored by political campaigns (Ramírez, 2013).

Tactical campaign strategies focusing on immediate electoral victories leave out large segments of the potential Latino electorate. This neglect may explain the lack of strong political partisanship among Latino voters. It also presents an opportunity for political parties to appeal to the millions of Latino votes that are continually left on the table. Meanwhile, Latino organizations are stepping in and mobilizing these potential Latino voters. Their role in increasing the number of registered Latino voters—who are then likely to vote—is key.

CONCLUSION

Latino voters have reshaped the U.S. political landscape and are becoming an even more powerful force in elections, driven by their growing youth and increased engagement.

In the past, politicians have justified their lack of investment in Latino outreach by pointing to the concentration of Latino populations in “non-competitive” states. Yet, as this report demonstrates, it is precisely the significant impact of Latino voters that has made states like California and Washington non-swing states. In the upcoming 2024 elections, the Latino vote will be decisive, particularly in five of the seven swing states. This is evidenced by the substantial Latino presence in states like Arizona and Nevada, where Latino registered voters make up 27% and 21% of the electorate, respectively.

Understanding Latino voters for who they really are, rather than relying on media stereotypes, is an opportunity that political actors can no longer afford to ignore. This report offers a narrative that more accurately reflects the reality of Latino voters. As mentioned earlier, far from being disengaged or apolitical, Latinos have consistently outpaced White and Black voter growth rates in every presidential election since 2000. Furthermore, once registered, Latinos vote at high rates. In 2020, 88% of registered Latino voters cast their ballots at the national level. In California, that number rose to 91% (Domínguez-Villegas & Ríos, 2022).

Once Latinos are engaged in the political process, the interaction of various factors, including demographic variables, issue prioritization, partisanship, and candidates, affects the direction of their vote. Contrary to myth, Latinos are not a single-issue voting bloc. However, in response to political threats against Latinos, their group identity has historically been fueled, increasing their political engagement.

We also find that while a majority of Latinos tend to have liberal ideologies, they do not have a strong sense of partisanship. Thus, investing in Latino-targeted campaign strategies that demonstrate an authentic interest in the issues Latinos care about is paramount. The Latino voter is not apathetic, but political parties have failed to adequately invest in reaching out to Latinos in the past.

Relying on assumptions and myths is a missed opportunity that leaves millions of votes on the table by failing to understand the sophistication of the Latino electorate. The Latino vote cannot be ignored or taken for granted; it must be earned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To guide industry leaders, the LDC has formulated the following set of recommendations for consideration:

If you are a decision-maker in a political party, civic organization, or non-profit,

- Include **U.S. Latino representatives in key policy positions** and empower them to develop authentic solutions and outreach.
- Strive to understand the Latino reality so that more **effective, fact-based, Latino-focused outreach strategies** can be developed. In order to earn the Latino vote, political parties must make campaign outreach efforts that demonstrate an authentic interest in the issues that matter to Latinos.
- Acknowledge that the Latino electorate, like any other demographic group, is **diverse and multi-issue**, not a monolithic voting bloc. However, they are united by the shared experience of being Latinos in the United States, which is why anti-Latino rhetoric has historically galvanized their political engagement.
- Implement broader measures to **accurately assess the impact of the Latino vote** in shaping election outcomes. Rather than assuming that Latinos are located in “noncompetitive” states, evaluate how their vote helps maintain a state’s political alignment.
- **Use this and other LDC reports** to understand the impact and potential of the Latino vote. Latinos have swung elections in the past, and they will continue to do so, with one million young voters joining the Latino electorate each year.
- Recognize **Latino youth as future voters** and the impact of current policies on the lives of previous generations.
- Analyze Latinos individually, **avoiding broad terms like “BIPOC” or “POC”** that can diminish Latino reality.

If you are a Latino voter and want to create change,

- **Use the power of your vote.** Your voice has influence; express it with confidence.
- Look for **candidates who accurately represent you** and your community.
- **Spread the word!** Our free reports are available for download on the LDC website (www.latinodonorcollaborative.org). Use our reports, share our infographics, and serve as a community ambassador and spokesperson.
- Register on our website to receive the **LDC newsletter**.

METHODS

The methods used in this report combined textual analysis of the literature with the most reliable data available to assess Latino voter turnout in recent elections at the national and subnational levels. Descriptive statistics of cross-sectional data were used to triangulate our findings. Case study analyses of some of the most representative cases were conducted to demonstrate the significance of the Latino vote.

AUTHOR'S BIO

Dr. RL Nuñez Villanueva received her Ph.D. in Information Studies and Digital Humanities certification from UCLA. Her research is situated at the intersection of media, digital technologies, Latine Americans, labor, and social justice. Dr. Nuñez is a Race and Digital Justice Fellow and a Cota-Robles Scholar. Her publications include “The Implications of the Terms ‘POC’ and ‘BIPOC’ on U.S. Latino Media Participation” (2023), a Latino Donor Collaborative white paper. She is a contributing author to *Gig Economy: Workers and Media in the Era of Convergence* (2021) and has published in *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* (2019). Dr. Nuñez holds a BA in English Literature with an emphasis in creative writing (UCLA 2016, *summa cum laude*). She is also an entertainment media professional with a 20+-year career in Hollywood’s entertainment industry.

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