



Conservative and Republican Quotes on the Need to Get Immigration Right & Improve Latino Voter Outreach

1980

- **George H. W. Bush** during a 1980 [presidential debate](#), “We’re doing two things: we’re creating a whole society of really honorable decent family-loving people that are in violation of the law and second we’re exacerbating relations with Mexico. The answer to your question is much more fundamental than whether they attend Houston schools, it seems to me. I don’t wanna see a whole thing of 6- and 8-year-old kids being made one totally uneducated and made to feel they’re living outside the law. Let’s address ourselves to the fundamentals. These are good people, strong people.”
- [In the same debate](#), **Ronald Reagan** said, “Rather than making them – or talking about putting up a fence, why don’t we work out some recognition of our mutual problems, make it possible for them to come here legally with a work permit and then while they’re working and earning here, they pay taxes here. And when they want to go back, they go back. And they can cross – and open the border both ways by understanding their problems.”

2001

- Former Secretary of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush and Republican Governor of Pennsylvania, **Tom Ridge**, [said](#) at Georgetown University on March 1, 2001, “At some point in time you've got to say to yourself, ‘We're not sending 12 million people home.’ Let's get over it...so let's just figure out a way to legitimize their status, create a new system, and I think that will add more to border security than any number of fences we can put across the border.”

2007

- Former Bush-Cheney Campaign Chairman and RNC head **Ken Mehlman** in [Politico](#) on May 1, 2007: “Reaching out to Hispanics is critical to our future. The fastest-growing,

and most conservative, segment of the population are natural Republicans. The question is whether we will reach out and welcome these new voters into our ranks. While I don't yet speak Spanish, there is one phrase I memorized as Republican National Committee chairman: "Mi partido es su partido." ("My party is your party.")"

2008

- On April 27, 2008, then U.S. Attorney in New Jersey, **Chris Christie** at a [church forum](#) said, "being in this country without proper documentation is not a crime...The whole phrase of 'illegal immigrant' connotes that the person, by just being here, is committing a crime...Don't let people make you believe that that's a crime that the U.S. attorney's office should be doing something about."
- **William Kristol** on [FOX News Sunday](#), November 9, 2008, said that "There's been a lot of self-inflicted damage by Republicans. Hispanics—let's take one group. Some political scientist did some calculations and told me that if Hispanics had voted in 2008 as they had done in 2004, McCain would have carried Florida, Nevada, and New Mexico. Totally self-inflicted wound by House Republicans, thinking, 'Hey, let's be really tough on immigration and let's demagogue and let's not work with President Bush to pass legislation.'"
- **Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice** told the [New York Times Magazine](#) in an interview published November 13, 2008: "I was a major proponent of the temporary-worker program and finding some way to normalize the status for these people. I think that it goes to the core of who we are. I hear some people talking about, well, maybe there should be a timeout on legal immigration, check your last name and see whether or not it came over on the Mayflower. Improving the economic conditions that would allow people who are clearly ambitious — if they're going to walk across the desert to get here, they're ambitious people — improving the capability of those people to stay home and contribute is the last piece of that puzzle. Comprehensive immigration reform is the one thing I wish we'd been able to do, and it's going to have to be done, and I hope it's done soon."
- **Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)**, in the [Washington Post](#) on November 14, 2008: "If the administration wants to move forward with immigration again, I stand ready to do that."
- **Karl Rove** in [Newsweek](#) on November 15, 2008 said, "Hispanics dropped from 44 percent Republican in 2004 to 31 percent in 2008. The GOP won't be a majority party if it cedes the young or Hispanics to Democrats. Republicans must find a way to support secure borders, a guest-worker program and comprehensive immigration reform that strengthens citizenship, grows our economy and keeps America a welcoming nation. An anti-Hispanic attitude is suicidal. As the party of Lincoln, Republicans have a moral obligation to make our case to Hispanics, blacks and Asian-Americans who share our values. Whether we see gains in 2010 depends on it."

- **Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL)**, in [CBS News](#) on November 18, 2008: "We have a very, very serious problem. It was the tone of the debate. The tone of some Republicans was offensive to the vast majority of Hispanics."
- **Frank Guerra**, Hispanic media adviser for the McCain campaign, said in [Hispanic Business](#) on November 19, 2008, that Hispanic Republicans, "were turned off by the [Republican] discourse," and "the way Hispanics were being demonized." Mr. Guerra said that Republicans need to address their immigration discourse and stance and "it needs to be done in a way that does not alienate Hispanics who are here and who are voting...Because if they don't turn that sentiment around, they will continue to get this kind of low margin in the vote."
- **Hector Barajas**, communications director for the California Republican Party said in [Hispanic Business](#) on November 19, 2008, "Immigration is a very important issue for Latinos. Every Latino, whether you are a U.S. citizen, whether you are the second generation, we all tend to know someone who has gone through the immigration maze."
- **Jim Harper**, [from the Cato Institute](#) on November 24, 2008: "The political prescription going forward is clear. Anti-immigrant groups have vocal cords, but they don't have the voters. There is little risk to Democrats from squelching "internal enforcement" programs like E-Verify. E-Verify reeks of anti-immigrant animus, and it burdens the business sector with time-wasting red tape."
- "[S]top being [misguided] on immigration. We are alienating huge parts of the electorate, we are turning our primaries into single issue 'hate' contests and ignoring the single fastest growing bloc of voters in the country," said a **Republican consultant** with decades of experience to [National Journal's Charlie Cook](#) on December 2, 2008.
- **Rick Davis**, Chief Executive Officer of the 2008 John McCain for President campaign said at a [2008 post election panel](#) on December 11, 2008, the Republican Party has "got to change its attitude versus Hispanics" in order to win in the future. Given the "really crazy things said on talk radio" in the name of the GOP, Davis said, "I don't blame Hispanics for not voting for us. California, Colorado, Texas, Florida – we can't win in these states any more."
- **Colin Powell** said in an [interview with CNN](#) on December 11, 2008, "I think the party has to take a hard look at itself," Powell said in the interview, which was taped Wednesday. "There is nothing wrong with being conservative. There is nothing wrong with having socially conservative views — I don't object to that. But if the party wants to have a future in this country, it has to face some realities. In another 20 years, the majority in this country will be the minority."

- **Former Attorney General under George W. Bush Alberto Gonzales** said [in an interview with Ruben Navarrette](#) on December 12, 2008, “The Republican Party has lost ground in attracting Hispanics and, given the tremendous growth of the Hispanic population, it presents a real challenge. ... Obviously, the tone has to change on certain issues like immigration.”
- **President George W. Bush** in [Politico](#) on December 16, 2008 spoke about the need to rebuild the GOP brand. He said the party needs to embrace reform and broaden the party’s outreach, especially to Hispanics. Looking back at the heated immigration debate of 2006, Bush said Republicans came off as “anti-Latino.”

2009

- **President George W. Bush** as quoted by the [Washington Post](#) on January 12, 2009, said in an interview with “Fox News Sunday” the previous day that “[The Republican Party] should be open-minded about big issues like immigration reform, because if we're viewed as anti-somebody -- in other words, if the party is viewed as anti-immigrant -- then another fellow may say, “Well, if they're against the immigrant, they may be against me.”
- **President George W. Bush** told the [Associated Press](#) on January 12, 2009 that the divisive immigration debate created an image of his party that was "Republicans don't like immigrants.”
- **Grover Norquist** responded to [National Journal](#) in a Q&A on January 15, 2009, when they asked how the right-of-center media structure is developing, and the role of blogs. He responded by saying “I think that the radio talk shows that were so helpful for the center-right in 1993, '94, '95 became destructive in some ways in 1998 with the focus on [Bill] Clinton's sex life. I think they did something similar to us in the last decade with this focus on immigration. Beating up on immigrants is endlessly fascinating on radio talk shows and does not move a single vote for a Republican candidate anywhere in the country. In fact, it loses you votes.” National Journal followed up asking if Republicans are going to move back toward [his] position on immigration. “I think that it's necessary. Can I guarantee it? No. However, the history of this is clear in terms of elections. In 2006, we ran as the party that is going to deport your relatives and build a wall. How did that work out?”
- **Richard Nadler**, the late conservative commentator and president of the America’s Majority Foundation, analyzed the role of immigration in ninety competitive House races in 2008 found that: “Immigration was a wedge issue benefiting the Democratic Party, but not the GOP.” Nadler also wrote in [National Review](#) on February 23, 2009, “At some point, conservatives must reflect on how many allies, and how many issues, we are willing to sacrifice in a fey and futile attempt to get field workers, busboys, and nannies out of the country. The steady drumbeat of restrictionist defeat invites — no, requires — conservatives to revisit a concept we have glibly reviled: comprehensive immigration

reform. The relevant question is no longer whether we want it, but what we want from it: what forms of border security, crime control, and employment verification. Every hour we postpone a border reform that respects the interests of employers and Hispanics, our entire agenda suffers.”

- **Mitt Romney**, former presidential candidate and Governor of Massachusetts, told [The Hill](#) on April 1, 2009, that he believes that one way to attract more minorities to the GOP is to pass immigration reform before the next election, saying the issue becomes demagogued by both parties on the campaign trail. “We have a natural affinity with Hispanic-American voters, Asian-American voters,” he said.
- **Mathew Dowd**, advisor and strategist to President George W. Bush said in the [New York Times](#), May 26, 2009, “[if Republicans] don’t get back to a place where they are getting roughly 40 percent net of the Hispanic vote, there is no way they can ever win.”
- **Dan Bartlett**, former President George W. Bush’s White House Communications Director, said in an interview with the [Texas Tribune](#) on November 3, 2009, that “based on the previous debate we had on immigration under George W. Bush nationally, and based on where candidates in the Republican Party position themselves statewide and locally, is that we are handing over politics, the power of seat of government.” He continued, “I think we are taking positions on issues, such as on the immigration debate, that is setting the [GOP] back many many years.”
- **Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL)**, [stated on NBC's "Meet the Press"](#) on November 9, 2009 that "the very divisive rhetoric of the immigration debate set a very bad tone for our brand as Republicans...there were voices within our party, frankly, which if they continue with that kind of rhetoric, anti-Hispanic rhetoric, that so much of it was heard, we're going to be relegated to minority status."

2010

- A senior unnamed Republican aide told [Politico](#) on January 15, 2010, that “The whole reason some people on the Democratic side view immigration as a great issue is because there is a side of the Republican Party that frankly cannot help itself on the issue. They go ballistic, and it comes across as anti-Hispanic — that’s not what they intend, but that’s the way it is perceived.”
- **Ed Gillespie**, former RNC Chairman, told the [Washington Post](#) in February 19, 2010 that Bush received 54 percent of the non-Hispanic white vote in 2000 and finished in a dead heat with Al Gore. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) got 55 percent of that vote in 2008 and lost the election by seven percentage points. "If the current voting percentages among white, black, Asian and Hispanic stay the same, the Republican nominee will lose by 14 points in 2020. We have to be more competitive."

- **Michael Steele**, RNC Chairman, in the [Washington Post](#) in February 19, 2010: the vitriol on immigration "harkens back, quite frankly, to the Southern strategy that the Republicans embraced in the 1960s, causing black Republicans to abandon the party. A lot of stuff got miswired and screwed up in that debate. A lot of hotheads jumped in," he said of the immigration fight. "We have an obligation and an opportunity to reengage in that discussion and do a lot better than we did the last time."
- Former **Congressman Henry Bonilla** (R-TX) in the [Washington Post](#) on February 21, 2010: "'If you don't go out and bring more Hispanics to our party, the math isn't there to win, no matter what the other side does...If they're too blind to recognize that, it's their own selves doing them in."
- Republican consultant **Whit Ayers** in the [Washington Post](#) on February 21, 2010: "The numbers don't lie. If Republicans don't do better among Hispanics, we're not going to be talking about how to get Florida back in the Republican column, we're going to be talking about how not to lose Texas."
- **Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH)** [said in a press conference](#) in New Hampshire on March 30, 2010, "I think it's a good time to do [immigration reform]... I've always felt that we need a few basic things. First, we need to secure the southern border... Secondly, we need to make sure employers higher people who are here legally... Thirdly, we need a guest worker program... Fifthly, we need to address the fact that there's some, who knows how many, 12 to 15 million people who are here illegally. Without giving them a path to citizenship, we've got to give them a capacity to come out from behind the bushes and be here in visible ways."
- **Meg Whitman**, GOP candidate for California Governor in 2010 [said](#) at a conference in Texas on April 12, 2010, "My view is that the immigration discussion, the rhetoric the Republican Party uses, is not helpful; it's not helpful in a state with the Latino population we have. We as a party are going to have to make some changes, how we think about immigration, and how we talk about immigration."
- Republican **Rep. Connie Mack (FL-14)** said in a [Washington Post](#) op ed on May 28, 2010, "[T]rampling on the rights of some Americans to protect the majority conflicts with the values our nation was founded upon." He continued, "Conservatives' most important responsibility is to remember to protect freedom, liberty and the rights of every citizen. The Arizona immigration law doesn't do that, and that's why I oppose it."
- **Rupert Murdoch**, Chairman of the News Corporation, [spoke out](#) on June 24, 2010, saying, "This country can and must enact new immigration policies that fulfill our employment needs, provide a careful pathway to legal status for undocumented residents, and end illegal immigration."

- New Jersey's Republican **Governor Chris Christie** [told](#) ABC's "This Week" on July 24, 2010 that "The president and the Congress have to step up to the plate, they have to secure our borders, and they have to put forward a commonsense path to citizenship for people...States are going to struggle all over the country with this problem [until President Obama and Congress craft an immigration reform measure], and so is federal law enforcement, who doesn't have the resources to do it effectively."
- **Representative Jeff Flake (R-AZ)** in [Politico](#) on July 26, 2010 that "Republicans see a short-term benefit because of the popularity of the Arizona law. But then, a lot of Republicans realize, long term, this is not a winner for the party to take a position that is so distant from the largest-growing demographic."
- New Jersey Governor **Chris Christie** said on [ABC's This Week](#) July 26, 2010, "[immigration] is a federal issue that should be handled by the feds and should be fixed finally. As a former United States attorney, I had to deal with these issues for seven years, and we simply didn't have the resources to deal with them effectively. So the president and the Congress have to step up to the plate, they have to secure our borders, and they have to put forward a commonsense path to citizenship for people. And until they do that, states are going to struggle all over the country with this problem, and so is federal law enforcement, who doesn't have the resources to do it effectively."
- **Florida Governor Charlie Crist** said in a US Senate debate on September 16, 2010 that, "I also believe that we do have to have a pathway to citizenship — we are a nation of immigrants. Senator Mel Martinez, Senator John McCain, even President Bush agreed this was the right way to go."
- **Governor Charlie Crist** also told the [Huffington Post](#) on September 27, 2010, "Studies show that 11-14 million people are in the country as non-citizens, and if we are willing to have a thoughtful, reasonable pathway to citizenship -- earning citizenship -- then those 11-14 million people can become productive, participating members of the American economy, paying the payroll taxes, helping Social Security going forward, and making America stronger financially."
- **Michael Gerson**, conservative columnist for the Washington Post [said](#) on December 6, 2010, "[Republicans] have no intention of sharing the honor of citizenship with anyone called illegal - even those who came as children, have grown up as neighbors and would be willing to give their lives in the nation's cause."

2011

- **Jeb Bush**, former Florida Republican Gov. Jeb Bush, at [The Hispanic Leadership Network Conference](#), January 15, 2011, ""If you believe in the conservative philosophy as I do, it would be incredibly stupid over the long haul to ignore the burgeoning Hispanic vote...They will be the swing voters, as they are today in the swing states. If you want to

elect a center-right president of the United States, it seems to me you should be concerned about places like New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Florida, Texas, places where but for the Hispanic vote, elections are won and lost."

- **Alex Castellanos**, a Republican political consultant who worked on the Bush campaigns, at [The Hispanic Leadership Network Conference](#), January 15, 2011, "We do have a challenge on the Hispanic vote...It is a language problem. It is a tonal problem."
- **Bettina Inclan**, former executive director for the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, at [The Hispanic Leadership Network Conference](#), January 15, 2011, "You have to communicate with Hispanics, not preach to them. You don't have to cater to Hispanics, but you do have to tailor your message."
- **Mike Murphy**, a senior Republican strategist who worked on former eBay chief executive Meg Whitman's campaign for California governor in 2010, told the [Washington Post](#) on March 27, 2011 that the reason his side has struggled to make inroads with Hispanics is "mostly driven by the fact that too many Republicans have attempted to use illegal immigration as a wedge issue." Continuing, he said it is a "base-driven strategy that has injected red-hot rhetoric into our party's message on immigration" and "primary politics have made the situation even worse."
- Former House Majority Leader **Dick Armey** said at an event at the [National Press Club](#) in August 25, 2011, ""Who in the Republican Party was the genius that said that now that we have identified the fastest-growing demographic in America, let's go out and alienate it?...Republicans have got to get off this goofiness...Ronald Reagan said, 'Tear down that wall.' Tom Tancredo said, 'Build that wall.' Who's right?"
- **Reverend Samuel Rodriguez**, head of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, in the [National Journal](#), August 25, 2011, "The problem with the tea party is it's missing chips and salsa...It's going to be very difficult to win critical swing states without engaging the Hispanic electorate."
- Utah's Republican Attorney General **Mark Shurtleff**, in the [National Journal](#), August 25, 2011, "The only voice you hear from the Republican Party is a shrill, 'Round them all up and take them home.' It's hurting our efforts to attract [independents], including the Latino vote."
- Conservative syndicated columnist **Ruben Navarrette**, in the [Austin-American Statesman](#), on September 25, 2011, "The Republican Party has dug itself an awfully deep hole with Latino voters. And every time a Republican talks about immigration, the hole gets a little deeper. That includes nearly all the 2012 Republican presidential candidates."

- Republican Political Consultant **Mike Murphy** on [Meet the Press](#), October 2, 2011, “If we want to beat Obama, especially in those western states where the Hispanic vote is exploding in size, 43 percent increase in the Latino population in 10 years, we've got to do better with that vote...if we have an ax fight over immigration in the Republican primary, we're going to do ourselves a lot of harm.”
- Republican strategist **Ana Navarro** in [Politico](#), October 4, 2011, “We have a unique opportunity to capitalize on a broken promise to the Latino community, and instead of capitalizing on that, we are fighting over who is tougher and meaner and stricter when it comes to immigration. We’re completely missing the boat.”
- **Ryan Call**, chairman of the Republican Party of Colorado, in the [New York Times](#), October 19, 2011, “The discussion of creating electrified fences from sea to sea is neither prudent nor helpful... they’re throwing red meat around in an attempt to mollify a particular aspect of the Republican base.”
- **Robert Ramirez**, a Republican state representative from Colorado, in the [New York Times](#), October 19, 2011, “We can’t pretend the Latino vote doesn’t exist...it’s time we became the party of inclusion.”
- Republican strategist and former advisor to ex-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California, **Adam Mendelsohn** told the [Associated Press](#), October 23, 2011, “The fundamental question will be whether the economic concerns of the Latino community are so severe that they are less critical of anti-immigrant positioning by the Republican party...If the conventional wisdom is that Romney won the nomination because he beat up Perry on immigration, that’s a narrative that will alienate Latinos.”
- Republican strategist, **Javier Ortiz**, on [NPR](#), October 24, 2011, “How they are going to secure that 35 to 40 percent of the Hispanic vote if they are going to continue that kind of rhetoric that we are hearing now on immigration?”
- **Robert Ramirez**, a Republican state representative from Colorado, in [USA Today](#), on October 27, 2011, “It's always been, 'Here's my candidate, and here's a mariachi band. So we're good, right?'”
- **Ryan Call**, state party chairman for the Colorado Republican Committee, in [USA Today](#), October 27, 2011, “The Republican candidate for president needs to win an important segment of the Hispanic vote. And part of determining the ... party's position is going to come as a result of an ongoing conversation with that community.”
- **Mark Shurtleff**, Republican Utah Attorney General, in the [New York Times](#), on October 28, 2011, “The rhetoric I hear from the Republican candidates, and that state legislatures that are passing enforcement-only provisions, are both damaging the economy. We ought not

to be doing things to hurt the economy right now, and I think this hurts us politically.”

- **Mitt Romney**, GOP Presidential hopeful, told [ABC News](#), November 8, 2010, “I think we do an ineffective job too early communicating with young people and Hispanic voters. Another weakness of us – we’re not doing very well with Hispanic voters and other minorities..The Hispanic vote is a very large population of our voting public, and ours is the party that wants to preserve the American opportunity that theirs or their ancestors came here for.”
- **Alex Garza**, Vice Chair of Latin Chamber of Commerce Community Foundation, in a [Christian Science Monitor](#) report, November 16, 2011, “We [Republicans] don’t do a good job of acknowledging the contributions the Latino community has given this country... And we do a bad job at messaging the illegal immigration issue... We’ll never make headway 'til we change the rhetoric.”
- Arizona State Senator-elect, **Jerry Lewis**, told [Fox News Latino](#), November 15, 2011, “I think we can make a pretty good assumption that the Hispanic vote really made a huge difference in this election,” Lewis said in reference to his defeat of Russell Pearce in Arizona’s recall election. “I did a lot of door-knocking in Hispanic neighborhoods. I went on Hispanic shows.”
- **Marco Valera**, aid to Republican freshman Rep. Joe Heck of Nevada, in [Christian Science Monitor](#), November 16, 2011, ““The Hispanic vote is a sleeping giant. More and more, Hispanics are aware of the political power they hold.”
- **Alex Garza**, vice chairman of the Latin chamber and a Republican, in [Christian Science Monitor](#), November 16, 2011, “We don’t do a good job of acknowledging the contributions the Latino community has given this country. And we do a bad job at messaging the illegal immigration issue... We’ll never make headway 'til we change the rhetoric.”
- **Jamie Estrada**, a Republican organizer in New Mexico who worked in President George W. Bush's administration, in the [Associated Press](#), November 19, 2011, ““The Senate race is competitive here and the Hispanic community is going to play an important role.”
- **Leslie Sanchez**, Republican strategist who worked on the McCain campaign, in the [Washington Post](#), November 28, 2011, “Unfortunately Romney has a history of throwing around the a-word, as in amnesty, without defining what it means. It is still toxic among Republican voters, including Hispanic Republican voters, but none of the Republican primary candidates support amnesty or a full pardon...In this case Romney is trying to quickly neutralize Gingrich on immigration during his ascension. But there are problems with this: For one, it’s Newt, and two, Hispanics have long memories.”

- **Javier Ortiz**, a Republican strategist, in a blog post in [The Hill](#), November 28, 2011, “The GOP establishment has done little to begin communicating with Latino voters, the segment of the electorate I believe could decide the outcome of the presidential contest.”

 “The key takeaway isn’t that immigration will be a defining issue in the election; it is that a conversation between two sides begins with respect and recognition that both have something valuable to offer. While Republican candidates may feel like that is a given, it may be the Hispanic voter who sits on the other side of the table may not agree. This chasm, which has expanded due to the ineffectiveness of the party and candidates actively to reach out to Hispanics, will leave little time next year for the presidential campaign to make up the difference. There is a real chance by next winter the GOP nominee will ask, why didn’t we do more?”
- **Senator Norm Coleman**, chair of the Congressional Leadership Fund, a Super PAC that works to elect Republicans to the House, in [The Christian Science Monitor](#), November 29, 2011, “When Tancredo is seen as being the voice of the Republican Party, that hurts,” Coleman said. In 2010 “we got thumped in Colorado across the board by Hispanics, which I think helped cost us a Senate seat.”
- **Mercedes Schlapp**, former Spanish-language spokeswoman in the Bush administration, told [MSNBC](#), December 1, 2011, “We can all say secure the border, but what are you going to do about the 12 million people here?” she asked. “Really, everyone’s giving these simplistic answers to this very complex issue.”
- **Sharon Castillo**, a former Republican National Committee (RNC) official in charge of Spanish-language outreach, told [MSNBC](#), December 1, 2011, “I think it should be pretty obvious to most Republican candidates in the field right now that they need to have a large and welcome tent. And Hispanics being the largest minority in the country, it would be less than strategic to alienate them.”
- **Senator John McCain** on [CNN’s “State of the Union,”](#) December 4, 2011, “The Republican Party has to discuss this in as humane a way as possible...We have to have empathy, we have to have concern and we have to have a plan.” Senator McCain also noted the importance of Latino voters in 2012, saying, “The demographics are clear that the Hispanic vote will play a major role in national elections,” and highlighted the importance Latino voters place on the immigration issue while taking a shot at President Obama on immigration, saying, “the enthusiasm on the part of Hispanics for President Obama is dramatically less than it was in 2008, because he has not fulfilled his campaign promises either. So I view the Hispanic vote up for grabs.”
- **Mike Gonzalez**, vice president of communications at the Heritage Foundation, in [Roll Call](#), December 5, 2011, “What we will see over the next 12 months, sadly ... is a lot of cynical plays with Hispanic voters.”

- **Alfonso Aguilar**, Executive Director of the Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles, told [NPR](#), December 8, 2011, "I think [Romney] has been ill advised, because he hears the traditional strategy from political pundits that say, you know, 'Forget about the Latino community during the primary. They don't play a role in the GOP primary. Engage them after you're the nominee.' Well, Latinos are listening to you right now, many of the debates were broadcast in Spanish through CNN en Espanol or Univision or Telemundo. They know exactly what Mr. Romney has been saying."
- **Karl Rove**, GOP strategist, in [NPR](#), December 8, 2011, "From a tonal perspective, I'm personally more in line with the opening thrust of what the speaker was saying. Newt was saying, we can't throw these people out," Rove says. "I will readily admit, though, that he and I are in the minority thinking that that's what we need to do inside the Republican Party."
- **Fergus Cullen**, former New Hampshire Republican Party Chairman, in the [Houston Chronicle](#), December 8, 2011, "First, the small number of immigration hard-liners aren't going to like Perry, because he actually had a good, practical and pragmatic record on this issue consistent with the realities of being a border-state governor. Second, embracing a guy like Arpaio, with his atrocious record, doesn't help Perry appeal to voters who hold more nuanced views on immigration."
- **James W. Ziglar**, a senior fellow at the Migration Policy Institute and a commissioner of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service under President George W. Bush, in the [Texas Tribune](#), December 9, 2011, ""We are not going to deport these people. We need to deal with the problem and provide them with a way to a legal status."
- **Alfonso Aguilar**, Executive Director of the Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles, in [Fox News Latino](#), December 14, 2011, "A lot of the GOP campaigns have been ill-advised by strategists who truly don't understand the views of likely Republican voters on the issue of immigration."
- **Ed Gillespie**, former Republican National Committee chairman, in the [National Journal](#), December 15, 2011, "That rhetoric comes across as more than anti-illegal-immigration. It's perceived as anti-immigration, which in turn is perceived by Hispanic voters as anti-Hispanic...When you're getting a shrinking percentage of the fastest-growing share of the electorate, you don't have to be a math major to figure out that's not good, long-term, for the party."

- **Jeb Bush**, former Republican Florida Governor, in the [National Journal](#), December 15, 2011, “Candidates that focus exclusively on border protection and attack other candidates that take a more comprehensive view of border protection and additional measures will not be as effective in the general election.”
- **Steve Schmidt**, Republican strategist who ran John McCain’s 2008 presidential campaign, in the [National Journal](#), December 15, 2011, “The tone of how we talk about the issue, the lack of respect shown to the Hispanic community, are problems that Republicans have, and it’s a long-term problem.”
- **Jon Huntsman**, GOP Presidential Candidate, [during a debate](#) in Iowa, December 16, 2011, “Let’s not lose sight of the fact that legal immigration is an engine of growth for this country. Half of the Fortune 500 countries in this country today were founded by immigrants.”
- **Mario H. Lopez**, president of the Republican-leaning Hispanic Leadership Fund, in the [Washington Post](#), December 16, 2011, ““Romney’s tin ear on this topic, on immigration, will hurt him should he be the nominee, is hurting the Republican Party and is hurting every conservative who cares about passing conservative legislation in the future.”
- **Alfonso Aguilar**, Executive Director of the Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles, in the [Washington Post](#), December 16, 2011, “It pains me to say this, but if we have a negative narrative on immigration, it’s because of Mitt Romney.”
- **Lionel Sosa**, GOP Strategist, in the [Washington Post](#), December 16, 2011, in regards to Romney’s stance on Perry’s in state tuition legislation, “It makes it hard for a Latino to be able to warm up to a person that seems to come off unfriendly to a whole population of people.”
- **Alfonso Aguilar**, Executive Director of the Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles, in a [New York Times](#) report, December 28, 2011, “As the election draws near and Latino voters become more informed about the devastating effect the president’s policies are having on their community, they will increasingly look more seriously at the Republican candidate... And the Republican candidate only needs to get 40 percent of the Latino vote to win the election.”

2012

- **John McCain**, GOP Senator (AZ), on MSNBC's [The Daily Rundown](#), January 5, 2012, McCain bemoaned the GOP's lacking efforts to court the Latino vote, "I think that if not this election cycle, the demographics are that Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, even Texas will all be in play," McCain opined. "And if Republicans don't fix the problem?" [Chuck] Todd followed up. "Yes, yes. We have to fix our problems with the Hispanics," McCain acknowledged. "And it starts where?" Todd asked. "It starts with a way to address the issue of immigration in a humane and caring fashion, at the same time emphasizing the need to secure our borders because of the drug cartels and the people who transport people across our border and treat them terribly," McCain replied.
- **Kirsten Kurkowski**, RNC Spokeswoman, in [Roll Call](#), January 9, 2012, "We [GOP] have catching up to do. I think we'll admit we haven't been the best at reaching out to the community,"
- **Doug Heye**, former RNC communications director, in [Roll Call](#), January 9, 2012, "It's about communicating our policies in a smart way... If we [GOP] don't engage growing communities, we will eventually condemn ourselves."
- **Gabriel Salguero**, President of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition, in [Talking Points](#), January 10, 2012, "The GOP candidates' stance on immigration "is a political error and deeply alienating to our community. They should reconsider their position. Any candidate who doesn't see the writing on the wall is committing a serious, serious" error in judgment."
- **Ileana Ros-Lehtinen**, GOP Congresswoman, in [Fox News Latino](#), January 10, 2012, "I don't agree with Gov. Romney's position on immigration, but I agree with him solidly on the economy and for me, that's the driving force in this election."
- **DeeDee Garcia Blasé**, founder of Somos Republicans, in the [Wall Street Journal](#), January 17, 2012, "Romney committed political suicide when he received Kobach's endorsement."
- **Tamar Jacoby**, Republican immigration specialist and former advisor to Senator John McCain and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, in [Bloomberg](#), January 17, 2012, "The conventional wisdom and the general fear is right, that some Republicans, and some of the most important Republicans with the loudest microphones, are digging a very big hole for themselves that's going to be hard to get out of."
- **Tamar Jacoby**, Republican immigration specialist and former advisor to Senator John McCain and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, in [Bloomberg](#), January 17, 2012, "[Romney] is unfortunately taking one of the harshest tones. I have some hope for a

course correction, but I think right now, for many Latinos, all they can hear is that off-putting first statement that really translates into, 'We don't like people who look and sound like you.'"

- **Susana Martinez**, GOP Governor of New Mexico, in the [Associated Press](#), January 17, 2012, "What we [GOP] have to do is this: We have to tone down the rhetoric, and we have to have a sincere, honest conversation with the voters."
- **DeeDee Garcia Blasé**, founder of Somos Republicans, in [Fox News Latino](#), January 17, 2012, "[Gov. Romney] is done. He'll be lucky to get 8 percent of the Hispanic vote."