

The Power of the Latino Vote in America

They Tipped Elections in 2008; Where Will They Be in 2010?

AUGUST 2010 UPDATE

LATINO VOTER TRENDS IN RECENT ELECTION CYCLES

Over the past decade, Latino voters have increased their political power and made a decisive impact in races at all levels, including the presidential election. In 2010, Latino voters are poised to play a crucial role in key House, Senate, and gubernatorial races across the country.

Many analysts have noted that as the Latino electorate grows in size and power, candidates from all political parties must take their views into account to remain viable in an increasing number of races. While the Latino electorate is trending Democratic overall, at least one segment—foreign-born, naturalized U.S. citizens of Latino descent, who represent 40% of the Latino voter population—has proven to be a true swing constituency.

Candidates for political office in 2010, elected officials, and political strategists would be wise to not just look at *how* Latino voters are likely to vote this cycle, but *why*. In particular, in an election cycle in which immigration is likely to play a major role in many races, the way Latino voters view the partisan dimensions of the immigration debate is of crucial importance in 2010 and beyond.

This updated report lays out trends in Latino voting patterns over the last several years, and examines some of the factors that influence this segment of the electorate. The report features a list of “Races to Watch”—forty-one battleground House, Senate and gubernatorial contests where Latino voters will play a key role—and details the congressional districts where Latino voting power is most concentrated.

The Latino Vote is Growing – In Size and Geographic Diversity

For the past few election cycles, Latino voters have been making an impact at ballot boxes throughout the country. In the 2008 presidential election, approximately 10 million Latinos voted, an increase of about 2.5 million voters nationwide from 2004 and nearly 4 million from 2000. From 2000 to 2008, Latino voter registration grew 54% and turnout grew 64%.ⁱ

Latino voters are making an impact in major cities and traditional “gateway” states, as well as diverse regions of the country. Texas and Florida, which have significant Latino populations going back generations, saw Latino voter turnout grow by 31% and 81%, respectively, between 2000 and 2008. Moreover, as Latinos increased their presence in “new immigrant” states

between 2000 and 2008, Latino voter turnout exploded by 157% in South Carolina, 164% in Nevada, 250% in North Carolina, and 392% in Georgia.ⁱⁱ

Latino voters are poised to exert even greater influence in 2010 and beyond. As House Democratic Caucus Vice-Chairman Representative Xavier Becerra (D-CA) put it, "If you are in a district that is not accustomed to seeing a lot of diversity, the rule now is that you are going to see it. And you can't ignore it: That is the face of America tomorrow."ⁱⁱⁱ

The Latino Vote is Trending Democratic – With Big Implications for the Electoral Map

Latinos have been trending Democratic for years, but the Democratic Party does not necessarily hold a lock on these voters. Latinos nationwide voted for the Democratic presidential nominee over the Republican by a margin of 59% to 40% in 2004 (Kerry-Bush) and 67% to 31% in 2008 (Obama-McCain). The swing was even more pronounced among foreign-born Latino voters, with 52% choosing Kerry in 2004 and 48% choosing Bush—nearly breaking even—while in 2008 75% chose Obama and 25% supported McCain.

In battleground states like Colorado, Florida, New Mexico, and Nevada, 2008's increased Latino turnout and the Latino electorate's break towards Democrats were major factors in Obama's victories and in Democratic House and Senate pick-ups. In Florida, for example, Latino voters grew by 403,000, or 49%, compared to 2004; they backed Obama by a 57-42% margin after having backed Bush by a 56-44% margin in 2004. Similarly, in Nevada, Latino turnout grew by 47,000, or 65%, compared with 2004; Latino support for the Democratic candidate jumped from a 60-39% margin in 2004 to a 76-22% margin in 2008.

While it is possible that this trend will continue in 2010 and beyond, there is a segment of the Latino electorate that is volatile: Spanish-dominant Latino voters, most of whom were born in other countries and are naturalized U.S. citizens. These voters are closest to the immigration debate and the people harmed by a lack of action on comprehensive immigration reform.

The failure to advance immigration reform this year, combined with historic trends of low turnout during midterm elections, could have a significant impact on Democratic fortunes this November. Still, the nationwide attention to the debate over Arizona's anti-immigration law—and the copycat measures popping up around the country—could have a mobilizing effect on Latino voters that would spell trouble for the party most associated with these proposals, the GOP.

In 2010, both parties will need to work hard to give Latino voters a reason to turn out for them in the midterm elections. This is crucial, because the political behavior of Latinos will have big implications for races in the Southwest, Florida, and other states with large Latino populations, as well as "new immigrant" areas across the map.

Spanish-Dominant Voters – A Hidden Swing Demographic

In 2004, Republican strategist Karl Rove and President George W. Bush recognized that Spanish-dominant Latino voters—slightly less than half of the overall Latino electorate— were a potent audience for GOP political appeals. Most of these voters are foreign-born, naturalized U.S. citizens, and the Republican emphasis on “family values” resonated with many of them. According to NDN, the GOP more than doubled its share of the Latino vote from 1996 to 2004 by prioritizing outreach to Spanish-dominant Latinos.^{iv}

These voters are extremely close to the frontlines of the immigration debate, having been through the process themselves and knowing relatives and friends who are still battling with the broken system. Bush and Rove understood the role immigration reform plays in their political decisions, and it was no coincidence that President George W. Bush began 2004 with a major White House speech on the need for comprehensive immigration reform.

During the general election in 2008, both presidential campaigns courted these voters, especially in the battleground states of Colorado, Florida, New Mexico, and Nevada. Candidates Obama and McCain ran major ad campaigns in Spanish-language media, each trying to portray the other as unreliable on the issue of comprehensive immigration reform. According to analysis by America’s Voice, nine out of thirteen immigration-related ads in the 2008 presidential campaign were aired in Spanish, targeting this crucial swing demographic.^v

However, candidate McCain’s immigration ads were not enough to win this crucial swing vote. While McCain had previously been a leader on comprehensive immigration reform, he tacked right during the 2008 Republican primary, and famously distanced himself from his own immigration reform bill. His party had also gone through a very public and very brutal civil war over the issue during the 2006 and 2007 congressional debates, and many Latino voters were turned off by the GOP’s demonization of Latino families. While Obama did well among the overall Latino electorate in 2008, perhaps the biggest upset of the year was his consolidation of that key swing constituency: Latino immigrant voters. After nearly breaking even between Democrats and Republicans in 2004 (they voted for Kerry by a 52-48% margin), these voters swung dramatically for Obama in 2008 (75-25%).^{vi}

In 2010, the turnout levels and political preferences of Spanish-dominant voters could be a key factor. Currently, these voters are twelve percentage points less likely to turn out for the 2010 elections than U.S. born Latinos, according to a poll from Dr. Ricardo Ramirez of the University of Southern California for the National Association of Latino Appointed and Elected Officials (NALEO) Education Fund.^{vii} This poll and others also found that immigration has surged as an issue of importance to Latino voters.^{viii}

The Immigration Debate – A Key Factor in The Shift Toward Democrats

Although immigration was not traditionally the number one issue for most Latino voters, it has long been a defining, threshold issue. In a December 2009 poll of Latino voters by Bendixen & Amandi, 62% of Latino voters said that they personally know someone who is undocumented.^{ix} As the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) phrased it, “the potency of immigration as a ‘voting issue’ should not be underestimated. Both polling data and Hispanic voting behavior over multiple election cycles shows that immigration serves as a lens through which Latinos assess the political environment and candidate attitudes not just toward immigrants, but toward their community as a whole.”^x

However, the current immigration debate—including the national attention to Arizona’s anti-immigrant law and the way many politicians have embraced harsh, anti-immigrant approaches — has helped catapult immigration from being an important threshold issue to being the top issue, tied with the economy. A summer 2010 poll of Latino voters in California, Colorado, Florida, and Texas by Dr. Ricardo Ramirez of the University of Southern California for the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Education Fund found that immigration was the highest ranked response to the question, “what general issues would be most important to you in deciding whom to vote for?”^{xi} Similarly, according to a June 2010 poll of Latinos nationwide by LatinoMetrics, on behalf of the Hispanic Federation and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), “since the end of 2009, immigration has catapulted to the top issue of personal concern among 1 in 4 Latinos—tied with jobs & the economy.”^{xii}

Because of the way many Republican policymakers have handled the immigration issue in Congress and campaigns over the last several years, the GOP brand is increasingly identified with people who want to deport Latino immigrants, while Democrats are generally seen as more welcoming. Richard Nadler, the late conservative commentator and president of the America’s Majority Foundation, described the challenge facing Republicans as follows: “Opponents of comprehensive immigration reform are sitting on a demographic time bomb . . . If immigration reform is the evil that ‘enforcement only’ partisans claim it to be, they will need not one fence bordering Mexico, but multiple barriers to partition California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Colorado, Florida, New York, and New Jersey from the rest of the nation.”^{xiii}

Former Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL) made the same observation, stating on “Meet the Press” in 2008, “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.”^{xiv} This year, a poll of Hispanic voters was conducted by the Tarrance Group for the conservative group Resurgent Republic. The poll revealed that Hispanic voters have an affinity for the Republican Party and are open to persuasion toward the GOP on key issues such as the economy, health care and national security. Notably, however, Latinos remain

overwhelmingly in favor of comprehensive immigration reform—a position at odds with most Republican elected officials, although not with general Republican voters.

Tarrance Group President & CEO Ed Goeas stated, “This is a negative that Republicans have to be careful of. We had a president in President George W. Bush who was for comprehensive reform when it came to immigration. You had a presidential nominee in John McCain who had a very strong record in terms of comprehensive reform for immigration reform. But we had a very vocal group of Republicans in the House of Representatives, in particular in 2006, that I think drove some wedges between the Republican Party and the Hispanic-Latino community...there is still the danger that in talking about immigration, the more vocal anti-immigration proponents in the Republican Party will be seen as the Republican Party. We have to be very careful we don’t get back there again.”^{xv}

Former Bush administration staffer and political analyst Leslie Sanchez also said, “On the issue of immigration reform...it’s the lens by which these voters view either candidates or parties. So it is to any candidate’s detriment to use it as a wedge issue to try to drive people apart. It’s something I think people want a solution for.”^{xvi}

Still, the GOP’s identification with the Arizona anti-immigration law and the extreme rhetoric used by many Republican politicians make it clear that the Party is siding more with the anti-immigrant side, at least in 2010. When LatinoMetrics asked, “With which political party do you most closely identify?” only 13% of Latino voters said the Republican Party.

The same poll also asked, “How do you think the immigration issue would impact how you feel about politicians and the parties they represent?” Sixty-eight percent said they would support candidates who favor immigration reform, while only 19% said they would be willing to support a candidate who opposed immigration reform. Similarly, 54% of Latino voters in Dr. Ramirez’s poll said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate or party espousing an immigration position they disagreed with, even if they agreed with most of that candidate or party’s positions on other issues. The same poll also asked a generic ballot question about party preferences for House races this November and found that that 60% of respondents favored Democrats and only 21% favored Republicans.

What’s Next for Latinos, Immigration, and Politics?

The story of the November 2010 election is still to be written, and there are tremendous cross-currents at play that will impact the way Latino voters perform in individual races. While the lack of action on comprehensive immigration reform could contribute to Latino voter apathy this cycle, recent polls make it clear that the combination of national attention to Arizona’s anti-immigration law and the way many Republicans have wholeheartedly embraced an anti-immigrant agenda could energize Latinos to turn out and vote against Republicans.

As noted, the Spanish-dominant subset of Latino voters has been the key swing voting bloc of the Latino voting population in recent elections. In the poll by Dr. Ricardo Ramirez for NALEO, foreign-born voter respondents expressed a direct linkage between their turnout and the immigration debate. While 52% of U.S. born Latinos said that the immigration debate is making them more likely to vote in November (with 20% saying it made them “certain” to vote), 61% of foreign-born Latino voters said the same, including 25% who said “certain.”^{xvii} Whether this engagement continues throughout the fall of 2010 could be consequential for midterm races.

The role of Latinos in American politics is only going to grow in importance as the 2010 Census and subsequent reapportionment process gets underway.^{xviii} According to a report by America’s Voice Education Fund, new Members of Congress in states projected to gain seats following the 2010 Census, such as Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, and Texas, will owe their positions in large part to the expanding Latino population. Additionally, the states projected to lose congressional seats following the Census would have fared worse had Latinos not moved there in record numbers. And the number of Latino voters—not just residents—in these states is increasing. In six of the eight states projected to gain seats after Census 2010, and in all ten of the states projected to lose seats, Latinos made up a greater share of the overall electorate in 2008 than they did in 2000.

But politicians are notoriously reliable for looking only as far into the future as their next re-election campaigns. Interestingly, it is in both parties’ interests to speak up loudly in favor of comprehensive immigration reform.

If the Democratic Party wants to energize, mobilize, and consolidate the Latino vote, it should raise its profile on reform during the election cycle, and put forward candidates who clearly and confidently embrace a comprehensive approach.

Similarly, the Republican Party has much to gain by engaging responsibly on comprehensive immigration reform. After multiple election cycles in which the GOP tried to use the immigration issue as a wedge to put Republican candidates over the top, it is time the Party learns that the strategy hasn’t worked, and in fact it is backfiring and putting whole areas of the country out of reach as the Latino electorate grows and engages. While the anti-immigrant rhetoric has been prominent in a number of Republican primaries in 2010, running in general elections on an anti-immigration platform has proved to be a dismal failure in races across the nation.

Latino voters’ potential as political kingmakers in many races is apparent while scanning the national political landscape. The following pages include descriptions of competitive 2010 races where Latino voters are poised to make an impact, and a breakdown of the congressional districts where Latino voters will matter most.

2010 RACES TO WATCH

After making their mark in key battleground states in 2008, Latinos are poised to continue to exert their influence in 2010. Following are snapshots of key contests in states where Latinos will make a difference this year. The analysis covers forty-one contests: six gubernatorial, eight U.S. Senate, and twenty-seven U.S. House races in twelve states where Latino voters matter most.

The report tracks races that were identified as “close” by either the Cook or Rothenberg Political Reports, or the Democratic and Republican Parties themselves, where there are significant numbers of registered Latino voters. It also looks at some races that have been competitive in recent elections and could shape up to be competitive yet again, depending on developing circumstances.

Latino Voters in 2008 Presidential Election, States Profiled in Report

State	2008 Presidential Margin of Victory	2008 Presidential Margin of Victory – Latino Vote	Statewide % of registered Latino voters
Arizona	McCain 54%-45%	Obama 56%-41%	14.8%
California	Obama 61%-37%	Obama 74%-23%	21.1%
Colorado	Obama 54%-45%	Obama 61%-38%	10.2% (Spanish Surname)
Connecticut	Obama 61%-38%	Unavailable	8%
Florida	Obama 51%-48%	Obama 57%-42%	12.8%
Illinois	Obama 62%-37%	Obama 72%-27%	7.5%
Nevada	Obama 55%-43%	Obama 76%-22%	12.4%
New Mexico	Obama 57%-42%	Obama 69%-30%	32.6%
New York	Obama 63%-36%	Unavailable	10.9%
Pennsylvania	Obama 55%-44%	Obama 72%-28%	3.8%
Texas	McCain 55%-44%	Obama 63%-35%	21.7%
Virginia	Obama 53%-47%	Obama 65%-34%	3.2%

[[Voter Contact Services](#), [CNN 2008 Election Center](#)]

ARIZONA

Latino Registered Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
14.8%	247	296	291	17.81%	-1.68%

Latinos are 14.8% of the registered Arizona electorate. In 2008, they voted for Obama by a margin of 56% to McCain's 41% in 2008. Between 2000 and 2008, Latino voter turnout in the state grew by 17.8%.

Candidates' positions on immigration are always important in a border state. However, with enactment of the anti-immigration bill SB 1070 and national attention to the state, the issue is definitely top of mind.

Governor

When President Barack Obama nominated Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano to be Secretary of Homeland Security, it created a vacancy in the governor's seat. Since the state has no Lieutenant Governor, Arizona Secretary of State Jan Brewer, a Republican, assumed the governorship. Governor Brewer secured the GOP nomination easily in the August primary.

Brewer has adopted a conservative stance on immigration and, since signing SB 1070, has used the issue to help raise her visibility. Her website highlights her record on immigration, stating "I am committed to fighting illegal immigration, and I have a proven track record of success. Last year, I worked with the legislature to make sure that no public services are being offered to anyone who is in this state illegally."^{xix}

After signing SB 1070 in April 2010, Brewer has continued to raise her profile nationally by talking about the issue and speaking out against the federal government's lawsuit to block the law.^{xx} When asked what criteria would be used to establish reasonable suspicion of someone's legal status, Brewer said, "I don't know. I do not know what an illegal immigrant looks like."^{xxi} Gov. Brewer has repeatedly spread falsehoods about immigration, such as claiming that most illegal immigrants are drug mules^{xxii} and that beheadings are a common occurrence by the border.^{xxiii}

Though Brewer initially faced several primary challengers for the nomination, most notably Dean Martin and Buz Mill, both candidates dropped out of the race during July 2010, virtually guaranteeing her nomination.^{xxiv}

On the Democratic side, Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard is the nominee. Goddard's campaign website says he "will push for immigration reform. True immigration reform must expand the work permits allowed and require those that entered this country illegally and wish to become citizens to pay back taxes, pay a fine for entering illegally, learn English and pass a criminal background check."^{xxv}

Goddard called SB 1070 "misguided" and expressed concern that the law would impose "unfunded mandates on law enforcement agencies" within Arizona.^{xxvi} Goddard initially promised to "vigorously defend" Arizona against a potential U.S. Department of Justice lawsuit challenging the law, but Gov. Brewer announced that she did not trust Goddard to represent the state and would hire her own counsel.^{xxvii} When federal judge Susan Bolton issued an injunction against some of the most controversial parts of the law in July 2010, Goddard applauded the decision, saying, "It is time to look beyond election year grandstanding and begin to repair the damage to Arizona's image and economy. Perhaps now we in Arizona can focus on effective steps to fight border crime and keep our families safe. Now we can focus on steps, such as the ones I have been taking, to go after border crime and cut off the cash that flows to organized criminal cartels that smuggle thousands into the U.S. Now, we should start making smart decisions about immigration— beyond sound bites, fear mongering and political stunts."^{xxviii}

U.S. Senate

Senator John McCain is running for reelection to his fifth term to the United States Senate. Former Congressman and radio personality J.D. Hayworth, with the backing of anti-immigrant groups, challenged McCain in the Republican primary largely on the issue of immigration.

While Senator McCain authored comprehensive immigration reform legislation with the late Senator Ted Kennedy in 2006 and 2007, he stepped back from his position during the 2008 presidential campaign. After fielding attacks from the restrictionist wing of the Republican Party for his work on immigration reform, McCain changed his message and said that the border needed to be secured before other reforms should be considered. He also said that should the legislation that he and Senator Kennedy authored be brought again for a vote, he would not support it.

Currently, McCain's campaign website states that ensuring the integrity of our Southern border "is an essential first step in moving forward with a comprehensive solution to our border security and immigration challenges."^{xxix} During the 2010 primary, McCain continued to show his support for increased border security by releasing a TV ad "that blamed illegal immigrants for all manner of problems facing his state: 'smuggling, home invasions, murder.' It is time, he

said, for Washington to 'complete the danged fence.'^{xxx} McCain has also praised SB 1070, saying it is "a very important step forward."^{xxxi}

Rodney Glassman, former vice mayor of Tucson, secured the Democratic nomination to challenge McCain. SB 1070 became a central issue in the Democratic primary, even inspiring a Latino activist who was not a career politician, Randy PARRAZ, to launch a primary bid to speak out against the law and the aggressive tactics of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. PARRAZ' campaign helped keep focus on the law and its effect on the Latino community for Glassman and other Democrats. Glassman has been vociferously opposed to the law, saying on his campaign website, "SB1070 is not the answer; it is a rash attempt to score political points. As a former Vice Mayor for the City of Tucson, I understand the importance of safety in our communities. SB1070 is an unfunded mandate and additional burden on local law enforcement at a time when every municipality in Arizona is struggling with budget cuts." He proposes increasing the number of Border Patrol agents and providing a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants already in the country who have otherwise obeyed the law.^{xxxi}

U.S. House: Arizona's 1st Congressional District

In 2008, John McCain won this district with 54% to Barack Obama's 44%. This mostly rural northern and eastern district, where Latinos represent 10.44% of registered voters, includes the cities of Flagstaff and Prescott. Democrat Anne Kirkpatrick defeated her Republican challenger with 55.88% of the vote in 2008.

On her campaign website, Congresswoman Kirkpatrick states that "our immigration system is broken and requires comprehensive reform," and that "Illegal immigrants seeking to earn legal status should be required to have employment, learn English, pay a fine, and go to the back of the line."^{xxxiii} Kirkpatrick has spoken out against SB 1070 but is opposed to the boycott and the federal lawsuit against Arizona.^{xxxiv}

Kirkpatrick's Republican challenger is dentist Paul Gosar. Gosar says on his website that "I strongly believe we need to immediately secure our border and oppose amnesty for anyone who blatantly violates our law," and touts endorsements from Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio as well as Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu (the two sheriffs in the state who have been loudest about the need to crack down on undocumented immigrants). A video on Gosar's website also promises that he will "fight for" SB 1070.^{xxxv}

U.S. House: Arizona's 3rd Congressional District

This central Arizona district is located just north of Phoenix, and Latinos represent 7.9% of registered voters. John McCain won this district with 56.08% of the vote over Barack Obama's 42.07%. In 2008, incumbent Republican Congressman John Shadegg won reelection with 54.08% of the vote. Shadegg plans to retire at the end of this term, opening this seat for the 2010 midterm elections.

Democratic nominee and attorney Jon Hulburd's campaign website states, "No discussion of immigration reform is possible without first addressing real border security. In addition to stemming the flow of undocumented workers at the border, we need to crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants." ^{xxxvi}

Attorney Ben Quayle, son of former vice president Dan Quayle, defeated a crowded Republican primary field to receive that party's nomination for the seat. Quayle's official statement on immigration, released soon after Governor Brewer signed SB 1070, does not mention the law. However, Quayle does say that "securing our borders and putting an end to illegal immigration are urgent national security priorities" and accuses President Obama and Speaker Pelosi of making "a greater political effort to bring the 9/11 terrorists to the United States than to keep illegals, drug smugglers and other would be terrorists out." ^{xxxvii} In an online campaign video, Quayle calls for a barrier across the entire southern border and more border troops. ^{xxxviii}

U.S. House: Arizona's 5th Congressional District

John McCain won this central Arizona district in 2008, encompassing the north and northeastern suburbs of Phoenix and the cities of Scottsdale and Tempe, with 52% to Barack Obama's 47%. The district's Latinos represent 8.1% of registered voters. Democrat Harry Mitchell currently represents the district and won reelection in 2008 with 53.16% of the vote.

In 2010, Congressman Mitchell is being challenged on the Republican side by his 2008 opponent, Maricopa County Treasurer David Schweikert.

Mitchell wrote on his campaign website, "I remain committed to securing our border and working toward a comprehensive, permanent fix." ^{xxxix} During a "state of the district" address in January 2010, Mitchell said: "Playing it safe, which I could have done, is why big problems—like healthcare and immigration reform—have yet to be tackled." ^{xl} Mitchell supported the comprehensive immigration reform bill which was passed by the Senate in 2006. When the Senate took up reform legislation again in 2007, he wrote an opinion piece in the *Arizona Republic* titled "Immigration Status Quo Unacceptable for Congress." He praised the work of those senators trying to find compromise on the issue: "And while their final product was far from perfect, they tried to do what voters send them here to do get something done to fix the problem." When the Senate failed to pass a bill, Mitchell said: "I am deeply disappointed that the Senate today let down the American people, who made clear last November that they are looking to Congress to end illegal immigration. At the very least, Congress owes the American people a vote on comprehensive immigration reform." ^{xli}

On his campaign website, Mitchell writes that he understands why the state legislature passed SB 1070, but doesn't think it will solve Arizona's immigration problem. Mitchell wrote, "The new state law, SB1070, reflects Arizonans' frustration with the federal government's failure to secure the border and fix our broken immigration system, and I believe calls to boycott Arizona

are not only shortsighted, but they are detrimental to our economic recovery. A majority of Arizonans support the new law because they are fed up with inaction. While it isn't going to solve the underlying problem, I believe it is a much-needed reminder to Washington to stop ignoring our needs in Arizona."^{xlii}

On his campaign website, David Schweikert states, "My plan to STOP illegal immigration is simple: To secure the border against illegal immigration, trafficking, smuggling and incursions once and for all by: Finishing construction of the fence. Holding companies accountable for hiring illegals. Using high-tech surveillance to monitor the border by deploying additional Predator-B U.A.V's. Hiring more border patrol agents and supplementing when necessary by placing National Guard troops on the border. Linking Homeland Security money to actual border security benchmarks. This begins by funding state law enforcement in amounts directly tied to the number of officers who become ICE certified. Finally we must end sanctuary city policies. For some, illegal immigration is a political issue to use and try to gain political points. This is wrong. As your next Congressman, I will try to push through real solutions to the illegal immigration problem. It's not about politics, it's about making sure our border is secure and our state ceases to pay such a high cost for the problem of illegal immigration."^{xliii}

In the 2008 campaign, Schweikert tried to portray Mitchell as weak on immigration control, citing Mitchell's strong support for comprehensive immigration reform. In 2008, much as he has in this year's campaign, Schweikert advocated a deportation-only approach to immigration. But Mitchell won over this district's voters, and even increased his winning percentage from 2006 to 2008."^{xliv}

U.S. House: Arizona's 8th Congressional District

John McCain won this southeastern Arizona border district with 52% of the vote over Barack Obama's 46% in 2008. Incumbent Democratic Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords won reelection in 2008 with 54.72%. Latinos in this district are 11.79% of registered voters.

On her congressional website, Giffords states: "It is extremely unfortunate that the Senate voted to end debate on comprehensive immigration reform legislation in June 2007. I have continued to push Congressional leadership to hold hearings and take up immigration reform legislation."^{xlv} During the 2008 election, Giffords said "Our immigration laws need to be overhauled. In Southern Arizona, we're in the thick of things. We've paid a heavy price for Washington's inability to update our laws."^{xlvi}

Giffords opposes SB 1070, but has also voiced opposition to the DOJ lawsuit challenging the law and efforts to boycott the state. Giffords stated that SB 1070 has served as a "wakeup call" to the federal government about the need to re-engage on immigration issues, and said, "If the federal government had been enforcing its own immigration laws, there would be no need for the state's divisive new immigration-enforcement law."^{xlvii}

Jesse Kelly, a construction company executive, is challenging Gifford for the Republicans. His website says: “Our borders must be secured and America needs an increased presence along our borders in order to halt drug trafficking and gang violence. I support a double fence along the border, like the one in San Diego.”^{xlvi} Kelly also says, “I strongly support employer sanctions and Arizona’s new law, SB 1070.”^{xlix}

CALIFORNIA

Latino Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
21.1%	1597	2081	2961	85.41%	42.29%

Latinos represent 21.1% of California’s registered voters and Latino turnout has increased greatly over the past decade. When Proposition 187 was enacted here in 1994, it created a backlash among Latino voters who turned against the state Republican Party that championed the measure. Since then, Republican candidates have struggled to compete with Democrats over this demographic group, which has become critical to winning statewide elections.

If politicians across the United States continue to demonize Latinos and immigrants through harsh rhetoric and policies, they are likely to experience the same long-term backlash that California Republicans have faced. As the late Richard Nadler stated, “The fear and the fury engendered in the broader Hispanic community by conservative efforts to remove illegals has destroyed conservative prospects in the Southwest, weakened them in the West, and wiped them out in New England.”ⁱ According to polling by Bendixen & Amandi, 72% of Latino voters refuse to even consider voting for a candidate who advocates mass deportation of undocumented workers.ⁱⁱ Recently, some Republican politicians, such as Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman, have attempted to adopt a more immigrant-friendly approach, though the right wing of the California Republican Party continues to call for harsh immigration approaches and complicate GOP candidates’ attempts to run “immigrant-friendly” races.

Governor

Current state Attorney General and former governor Jerry Brown is the nominee for the Democrats, while former eBay CEO Meg Whitman won the Republican nomination with 64% of the voteⁱⁱⁱ in a hard-fought victory over State Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner. Poizner made immigration the top issue of his campaign and pulled Whitman to the right during the primary.

During a March 15 gubernatorial debate between the Republican candidates, Whitman and Poizner were asked if they support federal legislation which would include a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented. Poizner—who supported Proposition 187, the controversial, anti-immigrant 1994 ballot measure that is widely credited for pushing California Latinos into the Democratic fold—stated, "We have to stop illegal immigration. The only way to do it is to turn the magnets off, by ending, once and for all, all the taxpayer-funded benefits for people who are here illegally, Meg doesn't want to go that far; I support Prop. 187; she opposes it."^{liii}

After facing a relentless barrage of such criticism from Poizner, Whitman shifted her public positioning on the issue, even going so far as to name former Governor Pete Wilson—who won re-election in 1994 while championing Proposition 187—as her campaign chairman. Wilson's high-profile role is likely to be an issue for Latinos. Maria Elena Durazo, head of the Los Angeles County AFL-CIO, told the *Washington Post*, "We ran against Pete Wilson for years after he was out of office. And, voilà! He's back—he's vouching for Whitman!"^{liiv}

Whitman also adopted tougher immigration rhetoric on the stump and in her campaign ads. Whitman stated, "Let me be very clear: I am 100 percent against amnesty, no exceptions. The truth is: we have not secured the border in any shape, form, or manner. My view is until we actually do secure the border and actually stop illegal immigration, we can't talk about any other solutions, and I am 100 percent against amnesty."^{liv} Whitman ran an ad promising "to secure our border with absolutely no amnesty," as part of her effort to "save California,"^{lvi} and in another ad she promised to be "tough as nails" against illegal immigration.^{lvii}

While Whitman remained opposed to the Arizona law throughout the primary campaign, she was careful not to criticize the state for taking action. In an interview with the *Orange County Register*, Whitman said, "I think I have a better plan for California," and emphasized her desired approach to crack down on employers and secure the border. "I have sympathy for what Arizona is going through and I understand their frustration with the abject failure of the federal government," she said. "But if that law were to come before me, I would oppose it."^{lviii} She ran a Spanish-language television ad during the World Cup reiterating her opposition,^{lix} and displayed a billboard saying "NO a la Proposición 187 y NO a la ley de Arizona."^{lx} However, in July 2010, Whitman told a talk show, "I would let the law stand for Arizona," and clarified that she did not think it would work for California because "we have a much bigger state with much bigger geography."^{lxi}

Anticipating the increased importance of the Latino vote in the general election relative to her Republican primary, Whitman advisors told the *New York Times* that, in the general election, she "would move away from immigration to broaden her appeal."^{lxii} Her campaign dodged a bullet when the California GOP failed to endorse the Arizona immigration law during its semiannual convention in August.^{lxiii}

But her tough primary stance, and her recent statements on SB 1070, mean that such a shift will not come easily. In one of the first ads timed for the general election, the California Nurses

Association ran a Spanish-language ad highlighting Whitman's support from Wilson and her tough talk on immigration in the primary campaign.^{lxiv}

Whitman's opponent is Democrat Jerry Brown, a former governor and long-time politician who supports comprehensive immigration reform. In a 2010 [interview](#) with the *Sacramento Bee*, Brown said, "We need immigration reform...I would make that a very important priority, getting immigration reform, a path to citizenship, and regularizing this movement of people."^{lxv}

U.S. Senate

Democratic Senator Barbara Boxer is running for her fourth term in the U.S. Senate. Carly Fiorina, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard, won the Republican nomination in June with 54% of the vote.^{lxvi}

While Senator Boxer voted for a comprehensive immigration reform bill in the Senate in 2006, she voted against cloture for a bill in 2007, largely due to her opposition to the bill's guest worker program. On her campaign website, she says she supports "comprehensive immigration reform that includes both a path to citizenship and tougher border security."^{lxvii} Senator Boxer has also routinely supported amendments to increase funding for building and extending the controversial fence at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Like Whitman, the Fiorina campaign moved rightward on immigration over the course of the primary race. At first, Fiorina condemned the "racist tone" of the border debate in an interview with *POLITICO*.^{lxviii} In that same interview, Fiorina stated that "The Democrats want to use immigration as a wedge issue for the Hispanic community. Barbara Boxer, in particular, has taken the Hispanic constituency for granted, for many, many years."

However, the campaign adopted a harsher tone regarding immigration and the Arizona law. Fiorina said she was "outraged" every time she heard "the people of Arizona vilified" by Democrats. "They are trying to change the subject," Fiorina said. "The most fundamental responsibility of the federal government is to protect its citizens...President Obama, the Department of Homeland Security, Barbara Boxer--they have all failed in this most fundamental of duties."^{lxix}

Eventually, Fiorina even publicly supported the Arizona law,^{lxx} and attacked the Justice Department for failing to go after San Francisco for its "sanctuary city" policy (a claim legal experts have said is false).^{lxxi} Fiorina has maintained a tough tone on immigration throughout the campaign, saying that, "illegal immigration has eroded Americans' trust in government, threatened our national security and hurt our fellow Californians."^{lxxii} She has not always echoed right-wing demands, however, as she opposes calls to change the 14th Amendment to the Constitution to end birthright citizenship.^{lxxiii}

According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, Fiorina supports "controlling the border" and establishing a better temporary worker program. But she has evaded stating whether she would vote to create a path to citizenship for millions of illegal immigrants now in the country, saying, "I don't think voters are going to tolerate a discussion of what we're going to do next until we do what actually has to be done, period...So I'm not prepared to even discuss what we do next."^{lxxiv}

While Fiorina's campaign may make it difficult for her to attract significant Latino support, Senator Boxer will need to work hard to increase the intensity of her support among Latinos. According to Mark DiCamillo, the director of The Field Poll, "low Latino and minority voter turnout could doom the Boxer and Brown campaigns."^{lxxv}

U.S. House: California's 3rd Congressional District

Republican Congressman Daniel Lungren is running for reelection, after winning in 2008 by a margin of 48% to 44%. The 3rd Congressional District, where Hispanics comprise 9.8% of registered Latino voters, covers most of Sacramento County and parts of Solano, Alpine, Amador, and Calaveras Counties. President Obama narrowly won this district with 49.3% to John McCain's 48.8%. Lungren's Democratic opponent is Indian-born physician Amerish Bera.

Lungren was a cosponsor of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which made hiring of unauthorized immigrants illegal and legalized the status of millions of undocumented immigrants. More recently, Lungren has cosponsored restrictionist bills such as the House-passed Sensenbrenner bill in 2005 and the Birthright Citizenship Act. On his congressional website, Lungren states that "in regard to the question of amnesty, I will oppose any bill brought to the floor of the House that includes an amnesty provision that confers citizenship status."^{lxxvi} In polling conducted by Benenson Strategy Group in 2009, though, a majority of CA-3 voters supported passage of comprehensive immigration reform.^{lxxvii}

At a recent fundraiser, Bera stated that "for undocumented immigrants there would be clear cut demarcation between those who are here and those who cross the borders illegally. There should be total stoppage of immigrants sneaking into the country illegally. For those who are already here, a rational solution needs to be found based on our needs and requirements on one hand, and human considerations on the other."^{lxxviii}

U.S. House: California's 11th Congressional District

This northern California congressional district encompasses parts of San Joaquin, Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara Counties. Barack Obama won this district, comprised of 16.21% registered Hispanic voters, by a margin of 53.8% to John McCain's 44.5%. Incumbent Democratic Congressman Jerry McNerney, who defeated Republican Congressman Richard Pombo in 2006, is running for reelection against David Harmer, who ran in a special election in the 10th District in 2009.^{lxxix}

On Congressman McNerney's campaign website, he states that "it's clear today that our immigration system is broken. To reform it, we need a comprehensive, common sense approach that addresses the full range of issues under consideration, beginning with securing our nation's borders."^{lxxx}

U.S. House: California's 44th Congressional District

Republican Congressman Ken Calvert has represented this Southern California district since 2003. The district covers parts of San Clemente, Orange, and Riverside Counties and has a 23.2% registered Hispanic voters. Barack Obama narrowly won the district with 49.5% to McCain's 48.6%. In the 2008 election, Calvert won a narrow 51% to 49% victory over Democrat Bill Hedrick, who is opposing him again in the 2010 election.

Calvert has promoted restrictionist policies while in Congress, ranging from ending birthright citizenship to making E-Verify, the employer verification program, mandatory. According to his campaign website, he is "wholeheartedly against any form of amnesty." He goes on to say, "We cannot reward people whose first action was to break out laws by coming here illegally. U.S. citizenship is a privilege – not a right."^{lxxxi}

Bill Hedrick's current campaign website does not mention immigration. However, he has been endorsed by the advocacy group Immigrants' List, which says he supports a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.^{lxxxii}

U.S. House: California's 45th Congressional District

This district in Southern California, where Latinos are 23.9% of registered voters, covers parts of Riverside County, including the cities of Palm Springs, Moreno Valley, Hemet, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Indio and Coachella. In 2008, Barack Obama narrowly won this district with 51.5% of the vote against John McCain's 46.9%. Republican Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack won reelection in this district with 58.29%.

Congresswoman Bono Mack, who voted for the controversial Sensenbrenner bill (H.R. 4437) in the 109th Congress, states on her congressional website that "In addition to securing our borders, I believe that comprehensive immigration legislation must include a temporary legal employment document program."^{lxxxiii}

Bono Mack is facing Palm Springs Mayor and Democrat Steve Pougnet. Pougnet has said that "We have to find the pathway to citizenship" for undocumented immigrants, and that "it is 'unconscionable' that the Republican incumbent hadn't taken a stronger lead on this issue," according to the *Palm Springs Desert Sun*.^{lxxxiv}

COLORADO

Latino Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
10.2%	158	165	195	23.42%	18.18%

In 2008, Latinos turned out in record numbers in Colorado, and most voted for Barack Obama (61% versus 38% for John McCain). Given Obama’s overall margin of victory (54% to John McCain’s 45%), the state’s Latino voters played a decisive factor in swinging the state from red to blue. At 10.2% of the state’s registered voters, Colorado’s Latino voters will continue to make an impact in the 2010 midterm elections.

Governor

In January 2010, Colorado Governor Bill Ritter (D) announced he would not run for reelection. Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper (D) announced his intention to run for the governor’s seat, and businessman Dan Maes beat former Governor Scott McInnis for the Republican nomination. Former Republican congressman—and anti-immigrant standard-bearer—Tom Tancredo is running under the American Constitution Party banner.

Hickenlooper’s campaign website does not lay out his stance on immigration. However, in April 2009, Hickenlooper told a panel that “he favors immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants. ‘If you create a system where there isn’t that ultimate goal for these people willing to work hard enough for it or have made sacrifices to go through the ordeal, then you end up creating a second class of citizens in our country,’ Hickenlooper said.”^{lxxxv} The Hickenlooper campaign has responded forcefully to attacks from Tancredo calling Denver a “sanctuary city” by pointing to the city’s record of cooperation with the federal government under Senate Bill 90, which requires local law enforcement to report any arrestee officials suspect to be undocumented to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.^{lxxxvi}

Dan Maes’ campaign website says, “We must secure our borders with reasonable and cost effective means to assure not one more illegal alien enters our country. As an ex-police officer, I remember taking illegals off trains and holding them until immigration officials could pick them up. That needs to happen every time one is apprehended no matter what country they are from.” Maes also says that “We must enforce existing law per Senate Bill 90 that requires law enforcement to investigate anyone one they have ‘probable cause’ to believe is an illegal alien and act accordingly if that person is here illegally. Finally, I will introduce legislation to add more state patrol officers to the illegal immigration division. We also need to pass legislation in

our state that reduces the incentives to live, work, and transfer funds from Colorado as Arizona has done regarding this issue.”^{lxxxvii}

Tancredo initially attempted to run as a Republican by forcing both Maes and his primary opponent to withdraw; when Maes refused, Tancredo entered the race as the candidate from the American Constitution Party. Tancredo has built a career on opposition to illegal immigration, as a congressman and presidential candidate, and immigration is the central issue of his gubernatorial campaign. His website promises to implement “Arizona-style” laws and “audit state and local government compliance with state immigration laws.” The website also claims he will “withhold state funds from local governments that enact so-called ‘sanctuary policies,’”^{lxxxviii} which he says are rampant throughout the state.^{lxxxix}

U.S. Senate

Senator Michael Bennet (D), appointed by Governor Bill Ritter (D) to fill the seat vacated by former senator and current Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, is up for reelection to a full six year term. Senator Bennet defeated a challenge for the Democratic nomination from former State House Speaker Andrew Romanoff. Weld City District Attorney Ken Buck beat out the rest of a crowded primary field to win the Republican nomination. Polls indicate that this race could be very close.

Since his appointment to the U.S. Senate, Senator Bennet has consistently and vocally supported comprehensive immigration reform. Bennet’s Senate website states that “Washington can no longer afford to delay comprehensive immigration reform. It is time for action on a comprehensive plan that secures the border and requires undocumented immigrants to become legal, pay a fine and appropriate taxes and learn English. This is the only way to fully address the pressing problems in our immigration system. I look forward to working with anyone, from any party, who shows a genuine commitment to restoring common sense to our immigration system.”^{xc} He has also cosponsored the DREAM Act, a bill which would allow certain undocumented students who arrived in the United States as children and graduate from high school to gain conditional permanent residency.

Buck, who as District Attorney issued dozens of arrest warrants for identity theft against undocumented immigrants whose tax records were seized in Operation Number Games^{xcii}, states on his website: the “immigration system in our country is broken. We need to revamp the system so that we can ensure it is a safe, viable option for those wanting to migrate legally into our country. First, we have to secure the border to stop the flow of illegal immigration. It is essential to our security that we curb the number undocumented immigrants coming into our country. Second, we need to establish a program that will help make legal immigration a feasible option. This will allow legal immigrants to fill jobs that American labor cannot fill. Finally, we need to stand firm and say ‘no’ to amnesty. Illegal immigrants must return to their country of origin to enter the United States with respect to our laws. This will ensure that

immigrants receive the proper protections of law and not be forced into the shadows of our society.”^{xcii}

U.S. House: Colorado’s 4th Congressional District

In 2008, Betsy Markey defeated three-term Republican incumbent Marilyn Musgrave to represent Colorado’s 4th Congressional District, a district that John McCain narrowly carried with 50% of the vote. Markey won the election with 56% of the vote compared to Musgrave’s 44%. Latinos comprise 8.82% of voters in this district. State Representative Cory Gardner is running on the Republican side.

Markey’s comments regarding immigration have focused mainly on enforcement and employer verification. According to her campaign website, Markey opposes amnesty, but supports increased funding for border security efforts, and strong and workable employer verification programs. She also states that we need a “visa system in place that recognizes the positive impact immigrants have had, in addition to ensuring that important agricultural industries in Colorado can get the workers they need legally so that our crops are not dying in the fields.”^{xciii}

According to the *Akron News-Reporter*, when asked about immigration at a campaign stop, State Representative Gardner said, “We need to secure our borders; put up fences where appropriate, enforce current immigration laws and if necessary, have the National Guard patrol our borders.”^{xciv} He has also said that “Arizona was doing what they believed best for Arizona” by passing SB 1070 because federal policy had failed, and that “If we can’t secure the borders, then whatever immigration policies and choices we make, they fail.”^{xcv}

CONNECTICUT

Latino Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
8%	61	56	89	45.90%	58.93%

U.S. Senate

Senator Christopher Dodd’s announcement that he would not seek reelection opened the door for a competitive race in a state that Barack Obama won with 61% to John McCain’s 38%. In a state with 8% Latino voters, this segment of the electorate could make a difference in a hotly contested Senate race. State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal won the Democratic nomination, while the Republican nominee is former CEO of World Wrestling Entertainment Linda McMahon.

Linda McMahon's campaign website says that "While I believe immigration reform is needed, I believe reform starts with securing the border. Border enforcement should be followed by interior enforcement and a revamp of the visa process."^{xcvi} According to the *New York Post*, at a campaign stop, McMahon said "I'm opposed to amnesty, but you can't deport everyone." The *Post* added that "She'd like to see stricter fines and penalties for employers, maybe make illegals carry electronic key cards with them everywhere."^{xcvii}

Richard Blumenthal does not take a position on immigration on his campaign website. The *Litchfield County Times* reports that Blumenthal "supports better enforcement at the American border and a deportation of illegal immigrants with criminal records."^{xcviii}

U.S. House: Connecticut's 4th Congressional District

With 60% of the vote to John McCain's 40%, Barack Obama decisively won this suburban New York City district. Latinos are 9.8% of registered voters here. In 2008, Democrat Jim Himes defeated incumbent GOP Congressman Chris Shays with 51.32% of the vote.

Himes' campaign website from 2008 states: "Our dysfunctional immigration policy is shameful, and we must enact comprehensive reform in the next Congress. Today, our borders are not secure and we have 12 million undocumented workers living in the shadows. In addition, comprehensive immigration reform must include a practical and humane approach to the 12 million undocumented immigrants who either entered our country illegally or who overstayed their visas. The most viable way to encourage undocumented workers to come out of the shadows is to offer an earned path to citizenship. Specifically, Jim believes that law-abiding, hardworking, and tax-paying immigrants should be assessed a meaningful penalty for breaking our immigration laws, and should then be allowed to go to the 'back of the line' for citizenship."

Himes is facing Republican State Senator Dan DeBicella. The *Westport Patch* reported that DeBicella "Opposes amnesty, but proposes a 'blue card' for those illegal immigrants willing to step forward and register with the government – so long as they are employed and pay taxes. However, if someone with a 'blue card' loses their job they must find new employment within three months or risk being deported. Describes this a middle ground between amnesty and path to citizenship. 'The kick everybody out mentality is not good. Immigration is what makes this country great.'"^{xcix}

At a forum in January 2010 for Republican primary candidates, DeBicella said: "I propose that we make it easier for people to come here legally. At the same time, we need to crack down on illegal immigrants. We do need to try to send them home. We should deport them. We should crack down and punish companies that hire illegal immigrants."^c

FLORIDA

Latino Registered Voter Percentage of Overall Registered Voters	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
12.8%	678	824	1227	81%	48.91%

In modern presidential elections, Florida has always been a battleground and “must win” state, with twenty-seven votes in the Electoral College. The 2008 presidential race in Florida was one of the closest margins of victory that year. Barack Obama won the state with 50.9% to John McCain’s 48.4%. Given their substantial numbers at 12.8% of the electorate, Latino voters clearly matter in Florida, and for a long time were considered a “Republican” constituency. The Obama campaign’s strong focus on courting the Latino vote in Florida helped him carry the state that supported George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004. Notably, while Latino voters favored Bush by a 56% - 44% margin over John Kerry in 2004, their 57% - 42% support for Obama helped provide the margin needed to defeat McCain.

According to an August 2010 report from the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO), “The demographic changes in Florida’s Latino population are reflected in the partisan affiliation of the state’s Latino registered voters, who comprise 13% of the state’s electorate. According to January 2010 voter file data, Latino Democrats outnumber Latino Republicans, who are still a sizeable portion (32%) of the electorate. About 29% of Florida’s Latino registered voters have some other or no partisan affiliation. Thus, candidates from both major political parties have opportunities to win the support of Florida’s Latino electorate.”^{ci}

Governor’s Race

Immigration is proving to be a hot topic in the 2010 race to succeed Charlie Crist as Florida Governor. Republican nominee Rick Scott’s harsh line on immigration pushed his primary challenger, Bill McCollum, to introduce an anti-immigrant bill in his capacity as state Attorney General. McCollum’s reversal on immigration in the weeks before the primary created a huge controversy among his Latino advisors and base of support, which led to depressed turnout in Dade County and cost McCollum the nomination.

Scott, a multimillionaire businessman, is vocal about his stance on immigration, saying he “is opposed to amnesty and will fight amnesty for lawbreakers.”^{cii} In an online video, Scott criticizes Obama’s stance on immigration and says illegal immigration “endangers our citizens.”^{ciii} Scott has donated money to Arizona’s legal defense fund so that the state can

uphold SB 1070^{civ} and repeatedly urged Florida lawmakers to “Bring the Arizona immigration law here to Florida. Now. Pass it in the special session” in September (in the words of a statewide radio ad he aired in May).^{cv}

In August, McCollum, attempting to strengthen his primary bid against Scott, made just such a proposal himself. In fact, the *Miami Herald* and other media outlets described his bill as ““tougher than Arizona’s.”^{cvi} McCollum’s proposal (which may still be passed in September’s special session) includes some of the provisions of SB 1070 which were enjoined by a federal judge in July, such as the provision requiring police officers to check the immigration status of anyone they stop if they suspect he or she might be undocumented. Furthermore, it would allow judges to make immigration status a factor in setting bail, and would allow undocumented immigrants who are suspected of crimes to be charged with a higher-level offense than they would if they were legal residents.^{cvi} Several of the state’s most prominent Republicans oppose the bill, including Representatives Mario Díaz-Balart^{cvi} and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and former governor Jeb Bush.^{cix}

The Democratic nominee is Alex Sink. Sink’s campaign website says that her “plan for Florida is to ensure that illegal immigrants don’t take jobs away from Floridians or get a free ride off the state welfare system when they don’t pay taxes and don’t play by the same rules as everybody else.” She supports requiring all business owners to validate the legal status of employees, and state agencies to check the immigration status of anyone seeking benefits.^{cx} In July, Sink said in a statement that “I support comprehensive federal immigration laws that are enforced by Washington. I am opposed to amnesty for illegal immigrants — any path to citizenship must be reserved for those who obey the law, pay taxes, and go to the back of the line.”^{cx} However, her campaign website does not mention a path to citizenship.

While Sink has not commented on McCollum’s proposal, her campaign website says that “the law passed in Arizona does not meet Florida’s needs”^{cxii} and she said in a June video that a similar law would be “very, very bad for Florida.”^{cxiii} In June, a campaign spokesperson for Sink said that “she would veto that type of legislation.”^{cxiv}

U.S. Senate

When former Senator Mel Martinez (R) announced his retirement in August 2009, Florida Governor Charlie Crist said he would run to replace him. However, when former Florida House Speaker Marco Rubio posed a serious threat to win the Republican primary, Crist chose to run as an independent. Rubio, born in Miami to Cuban immigrant parents, is now the Republican nominee. Florida Congressman Kendrick Meek defeated billionaire Jeff Greene in the Democratic primary.

Governor Crist supports comprehensive immigration reform. According to his campaign website, “Governor Crist supports immigration reform that provides an earned path to citizenship. Today there are as many as 14 million illegal immigrants in America as part of an

underground economy. Congress needs to provide an earned path to citizenship to those seeking to stay in the country. By doing so, they would be required to seek citizenship and all that implies with the result being an end to the underground system which exists today and is actually a form of fraud which costs everyone. Just imagine if these 14 million illegal immigrants became law abiding, tax-paying citizens and paid into the social security system how much better off America would be.”^{cxv} In May 2010, Crist told the Associated Press that immigration reform with a path to citizenship would help ensure that Social Security remains solvent.^{cxvi} When McCollum released his proposal in August, Crist told CNN that “I don’t support the Arizona bill. I don’t think it’s the way to go.”^{cxvii}

After announcing his Senate candidacy, Rubio took a hard line on immigration, saying that “If you grant amnesty, the message that you’re sending is that if you come in this country and stay here long enough, we will let you stay. And no one will ever come through the legal process if you do that.”^{cxviii} His campaign website goes further, stating, “If I had been in the Senate at the time, I would have opposed the McCain-Kennedy bill.”^{cxix}

Rubio was initially critical of Arizona’s law, but soon switched to supporting it. According to the *Miami Herald*, “A few tweaks was all it took for Rubio to get comfortable with a law viewed as the harshest crackdown on illegal immigration in the country...‘The second [version of the bill] that passed hit the right note. Yes,’ he said. ‘I mean no one is in favor of a bill that would force American citizens to have to interact with law enforcement in a way that wasn’t appropriate. And the first bill I thought held that door open. Since then, the changes that have been made to the bill I think greatly improve it.’”

While Rubio has not commented directly on McCollum’s proposal, a spokesperson said that “he believes the best approach is for the federal government to deal with border security and immigration, and he hopes state efforts like Arizona are a wake-up call for Congress to get its act together.”^{cxx}

On the Democratic side, Congressman Meek has “opposed an Arizona-style immigration law in Florida.”^{cxxi} Meek has consistently supported comprehensive immigration reform. He is currently an original cosponsor of the immigration bill authored by Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL).^{cxxii} On his campaign website, Meek states that “we need comprehensive immigration reform so that America can meet the economic and security challenges of the 21st century.”^{cxxiii}

U.S. House: Florida’s 8th Congressional District

In 2008 Barack Obama won Florida’s 8th Congressional District with 52% of the vote. In the congressional race that year, Democrat Alan Grayson defeated incumbent Rick Keller 52% to 48%. This district has 17.8% registered Latino voters.

Although Representative Grayson's congressional and campaign websites do not touch upon immigration, according to the *Orlando Sentinel*, "Grayson says illegal immigrants aren't a threat to anyone, but they are a distraction from more pressing issues. 'They're here because they love America,' he said. 'They didn't go to China or India. They came here.' He said the answer is to enforce existing immigration laws."^{cxxiv}

Grayson's Republican challenger will be former state Senate Majority Leader Daniel Webster. While Webster's campaign website does not state a position on immigration as an issue, Webster is in favor of the Arizona immigration law.^{cxv} In the State House, he has introduced legislation to increase penalties on employers who knowingly hire undocumented immigrants.^{cxvi}

Tea Party candidate Peg Dunmire has also entered the race for Florida's 8th district. On her website, Dunmire wrote that "We must require our voter registrations be verified for citizenship. How can we do that? We could expand the use of the E-Verify tool that is presently available for employers. Expand this to be used by ALL government agencies, including voter registration, to verify legal status of the person requesting government services. On the other hand, I do not support requiring employers be mandated to verify legal status or use the E-Verify tool for new employees. It is the role of government NOT business to enforce immigration." She also believes that "I support our law enforcement officers in all services to enforce the laws of the land. This includes asking for identification of any person who is questioned in the course of the officer executing his or her duties."^{cxvii}

U.S. House: Florida's 12th Congressional District

John McCain narrowly won this Central Florida district with 50% of the vote, while Barack Obama received 49%. Latinos comprise 11.9% of registered voters in this district. Republican Congressman Adam Putnam, who was reelected with 57.46% of the vote in 2008, is retiring to run for Florida Agriculture Commissioner. Former State Representative Dennis Ross is running as the Republican candidate, and Polk County Elections Supervisor Lori Edwards is the Democratic nominee. Polk County Commissioner Randy Wilkinson was originally running in the Republican primary as well, but is now running as a Tea Party candidate.

Lori Edwards' campaign website does not mention immigration, but she told the *Winter Haven News Chief* that "'we have to have the courage to make comprehensive reforms.' That, she said, means clarifying a path to citizenship for the millions who are currently in the county illegally, securing the borders, and enforcing the federal laws that are currently in place both for immigrants and those who hire them."^{cxviii}

Republican Dennis Ross' campaign website says, "I believe new immigrants to America should be required to; learn English, American civics and culture, have a job and be legally permitted to work, and participate in programs that promote assimilation. While America is better off for the diversity of heritage, culture, and talents that come to our shores, our nation, just like any

nation, must have an identity that makes us who we are and most importantly, unifies us.” Ross opposes “amnesty” and is in favor of local enforcement of immigration law, but supports “a smooth guest worker program that rewards lawful behavior.”^{cxxix}

There is no information available on immigration positions for Tea Party candidate Randy Wilkinson.

U.S. House: Florida’s 18th Congressional District

Eleven-term Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen represents Florida’s 18th Congressional District, which includes most of the city of Miami, Miami’s southern suburbs and the Florida Keys. Ros-Lehtinen was the first Cuban-American and first Latina elected to Congress. Barack Obama won this district, with 44.46% registered Latino voters, by a 51%-49% margin. In 2008, Ros-Lehtinen received a strong challenge from banker Annette Tadeo, but won her reelection 58%-42%.

Ros-Lehtinen has been a consistent supporter of comprehensive immigration reform, having cosponsored a reform bill in the 110th Congress and stated in early 2009 that while she may disagree with President Obama on many issues, she would work with him on passing comprehensive immigration reform. Ros-Lehtinen was a co-chair of Bill McCollum’s “Hispanic leadership team,” but was not consulted about McCollum’s proposed immigration bill. She told the *Miami Herald*, “I’m disappointed and was blindsided by Bill’s decision to promote this, and I encourage the candidates to focus on plans that will improve Florida’s economy, bring jobs to our state and jump-start our tourism. I fail to see how promotion of this issue will accomplish that, and I was taken aback.”^{cxxx}

Ros-Lehtinen is being challenged by Democrat Rolando A. Banciella. On his campaign website, Banciella says he believes in “no amnesty for illegal immigration but no deportation either.” He supports northern and southern border fences and legalization for undocumented immigrants who pay a fine.^{cxxxi}

U.S. House: Florida’s 24th Congressional District

Florida’s 24th Congressional District is represented by Democrat Suzanne Kosmas, who defeated incumbent Rep. Tom Feeny with 57% of the vote to Feeny’s 41% in 2008. John McCain carried this district with 51% to Barack Obama’s 49%. The close results of the presidential election demonstrate the importance of this district, where Latinos make up 11.23% of registered voters.

While little has been reported on Kosmas’ views about immigration reform, her Republican challenger, Sandy Adams, has made her views known. In an interview with the *Brevard County Examiner*, Adams said, “By its own description, illegal is illegal. I do not believe in amnesty. I come from a law enforcement background, I believe we’re a nation of laws and if we have the

laws we should enforce the laws.”^{cxxxii} She is “not involved” with McCollum’s bill but claims to have introduced “similar” bills in the State House several times.^{cxxxiii}

U.S. House: Florida’s 25th Congressional District

Republican Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, the brother of Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart, has represented Florida’s 25th Congressional District since 2003. The district, in which Hispanics compose 52.55% of registered voters, includes parts of Miami-Dade, Monroe and Collier counties in the southern-most part of Florida. Diaz-Balart defeated his 2008 opponent, former Miami-Dade Democratic Party chair Joe Garcia, 53% to 47%. John McCain won a narrow victory in this district with 50% of the vote.

When Lincoln Diaz-Balart, who represents Florida’s neighboring 21st Congressional District, announced in February 2010 that he would not seek reelection in November, Mario Diaz-Balart announced that he would run for his brother’s open seat rather than running for reelection in the 25th District. Florida State Representative David Rivera is running in the 25th District as a Republican. Garcia, the 2008 Democratic nominee, is running again in 2010.

Rivera says he “believes that stopping illegal immigration starts by controlling our borders and strengthening existing penalties for people entering the country illegally. There are also many businesses that subsist on the work of illegal immigrants and Rep. Rivera believes that the federal government must enact harsh penalties against employers that hire illegal immigrants.”^{cxxxiv} Rivera has stated that the Arizona law is a “distraction”^{cxxxv} and that immigration is “a federal obligation and federal responsibility.” He endorses securing the borders, cracking down on employers and instituting a guest worker program. “If we can get past those three issues, and let the American people feel comfortable, then and only then can we continue on to the next step of comprehensive immigration reform.”^{cxxxvi}

According to Garcia’s campaign website, “Americans are honest hard working citizens that want to see our immigration problems resolved. We need immigration reform that’s tough, fair, and practical. Those who are here illegally must be required to pay taxes and earn their citizenship. And if you’re here illegally and have committed a crime, you should be deported. We must also secure our borders because the American people should get to decide who enters our country. And we must penalize employers who hire illegal immigrants for jobs that otherwise would be American jobs.”^{cxxxvii}

Garcia opposes McCollum’s proposal and has hit David Rivera for remaining silent on the issue, saying, “It is deeply troubling to see that as Bill McCollum is trying to bring an Arizona-style immigration law to Florida, David Rivera says he isn’t ready to comment on where he stands on yet another issue.” Garcia added that “while I may not always agree with Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen and Rep. Diaz-Balart, I admire their clarity on this issue and I look forward to reaching across the aisle and working with them on immigration reform.”^{cxxxviii}

ILLINOIS

Latino Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
7.5%	218	294	314	44%	6.80%

Barack Obama won 61.8% of the vote in his home state of Illinois to John McCain's 36.9%. Democrats also picked up a seat in the 11th Congressional District in November 2008, following another special election victory in the 14th Congressional District in early 2008. Latinos represent 7.5% of the state's registered voters.

U.S. Senate

The race for President Barack Obama's former Senate seat has been marked by drama. With the announcement that Senator Roland Burris would not seek reelection, several candidates on both the Democratic and Republican sides announced their intention to run. Ultimately, the Democrats nominated Illinois State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias and the Republicans nominated Congressman Mark Kirk of Illinois' 10th District.

According to his campaign website, Giannoulias "believes that we should place the nation's 12 million undocumented immigrants on a responsible path to citizenship. He supports a plan that requires undocumented workers to pay a fine for entering the country illegally, learn English, pay taxes and wait in line to become citizens."^{cxviii}

Congressman Kirk, on the other hand, has built a consistent voting record against comprehensive immigration reform and for enforcement-only legislation, including the controversial "Sensenbrenner bill" in the 109th Congress. He has stated that one solution to the immigration debate is to ship contraceptives to Mexico as a way to "reduce the long-term illegal immigration pressure on America's borders."^{cxl}

U.S. House: Illinois' 10th Congressional District

GOP Congressman Mark Kirk is retiring from the House in order to run for the U.S. Senate. 2008 nominee Dan Seals is again the Democratic nominee this year. The GOP's nominee is businessman Bob Dold. 6.2% of the district's registered voters are Latino, and the 2010 match-up is likely to be very competitive.

Responding to a *Chicago Sun-Times* election questionnaire, Dan Seals stated, "there is no reason to believe that we cannot achieve a successful immigration policy, and furthermore, I

think timing is critical, as we cannot continue to deal with the consequences of not having one.” On the status of undocumented immigrants, he supports “a temporary legal status for workers who meet the following conditions: pass a background check; prove employment; pay a monetary penalty for entering the country illegally; and pay all the same fees paid by legal immigrants.”^{cxli}

Robert Dold stated in the election questionnaire, “I believe that we need to first build the fence along our southern border to stop the inflow of illegal immigration into our country. Meanwhile we need to have stronger enforcement of the laws that are already in place. We must also create a more efficient process for dealing with legal immigration.”^{cxlii}

U.S. House: Illinois’ 11th Congressional District

The 11th District is comprised of the southern exurbs of Chicago, including Joliet and portions of central Illinois. Latinos represent 5.68% of registered voters in this district. Barack Obama won here with 53% to McCain’s 45%. Democrat Debbie Halvorson won this district’s House seat with 58.4% of the vote. Her Republican challenger this year is Iraq war veteran Adam Kinzinger.

Halvorson’s campaign website says that “While people enter our borders illegally every day, Debbie is fighting to provide additional resources to secure our borders and keep our country safe.”^{cxliii} But as state Senate Majority Leader, Halvorson was praised by immigrant advocates for her strong support for comprehensive immigration reform. In addition, Halvorson declared her support for “earned citizenship” for undocumented workers at a Kankakee County Farm Bureau candidates’ forum in August 2008. In 2007, as the Illinois General Assembly considered legislation to authorize a special driver’s permit for undocumented residents, Halvorson said Democrats discussing the proposal viewed the bill as a positive for public safety.^{cxliv}

Adam Kinzinger’s campaign website says that “Illegal immigration places an extreme burden on our public services and our communities – a burden that is not sustainable. In order to address this issue effectively, we need to first and foremost secure our borders. If we solved our illegal immigration problem tomorrow, the matter would only become a problem again without proper actions in securing our borders. The National Guard is an effective tool in getting us one-step closer to securing our border.”^{cxlv} He responded to a question regarding comprehensive immigration reform in a *Chicago Sun-Times* candidate questionnaire, stating: “Only after the border is secure can we take the next steps but in order to find a solution to this complex issue one thing must be present: bi-partisanship. We cannot afford to politicize this issue to score electoral points. Surely, members of Congress can set aside an issue, as important as this one is, to ensure that our borders are secured and a set sensible policy on how to handle the millions that came here illegally. Only then will we be closer to having a comprehensive immigration policy.”^{cxlvi}

U.S. House: Illinois’ 13th Congressional District

Barack Obama won this suburban Chicago district, which includes parts of Cook and DuPage Counties, with 54% of the vote to McCain’s 44%. In this district, Latinos are 6.38% of all registered voters. Republican Congresswoman Judy Biggert won reelection to her sixth term with 54% of the vote. This year, she will face her 2008 Democratic challenger, businessman Scott Harper.

Congresswoman Biggert voted for the anti-immigrant Sensenbrenner bill, H.R. 4437, in the 109th Congress. On her congressional website, she states: “My view is that before we even think about guest worker programs or amnesty, we first must secure our borders to stop illegal aliens from entering this country. That’s why I supported House Resolution 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.”^{cxlvii} On her campaign website, she pledges to “establish control of all borders and ports: end “catch and release” through mandatory detention; and promote policies to deter illegal immigration and protect valid claims of asylum.”^{cxlviii}

Scott Harper does not feature his position on immigration on his website. However, he recently stated on Twitter that he is opposed to ending birthright citizenship, saying it is “not the answer to our immigration issues.”^{cxlix}

U.S. House: Illinois’ 14th Congressional District

Congressman Bill Foster represents Illinois’ 14th Congressional District, which includes north central parts of the state and some of Chicago’s western suburbs, and in which 10% of registered voters are Latino. This is the district that former GOP House Speaker Dennis Hastert represented. Hastert’s resignation sparked the special election in 2008 which Foster won with 53% of the vote; Foster then went on to win a full term in November with 58%. Barack Obama won this district with 55% of the vote.

Foster notes the need for comprehensive reform on his congressional website. “Rather than dealing with one aspect of our immigration crisis, it will be best to consider such measures as part of broader immigration reform that deals simultaneously with all aspects of this problem: secure borders, rapid and reliable workplace enforcement, background checks, and realistic and humane quotas that meet the needs of our businesses and communities.”^{cl}

In 2010, Foster faces Republican State Senator Randy Hultgren. Responding to questions regarding comprehensive immigration reform in a *Chicago Sun-Times* questionnaire, Hultgren stated that he is “strongly opposed to amnesty for illegal immigrants; it sends the wrong message about the rule of law.”^{cli}

NEVADA

Latino Voter	Latino Voter	Latino Voter	Latino Voter	Growth in	Growth in
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Percentage of Overall Electorate	Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Turnout 2004	Turnout 2008	Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
12.4%	45	72	119	164.44%	65.28%

Nevada was one of the key Democratic pickups in the 2008 Presidential contest, and Latino voters were a crucial factor here. Barack Obama won Nevada with 55% of the vote, compared to John McCain's 43%. Latinos represent 12.4% of voters in Nevada, and 76% of them voted for Obama in 2008, helping him win a state which was won by George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004.

Governor

In the midst of a string of personal and ethical scandals, incumbent Governor Jim Gibbons (R) lost his party's primary to former federal judge and former Nevada Attorney General Brian Sandoval. Clark County commissioner Rory Reid is the Democratic nominee. Reid also happens to be the son of U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who is up for reelection this year.

According to the *Las Vegas Sun*, Sandoval is opposed to a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. Sandoval's press secretary, Mary-Sarah Kinner, told the *Sun*, "With tighter border control and stepped up enforcement on employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers, the problem would subside."^{clii} Sandoval's campaign website reiterates this: "One of the questions I'm asked out on the campaign trail is 'do you support amnesty?' I do not support amnesty... I believe that we must enforce our laws, secure our borders and respect the efforts of those who have become a citizen through the proper legal process."^{cliii}

A Hispanic himself, if nominated by Republicans, Sandoval will have to reconcile his position on immigration when reaching out to Nevada's crucial Latino electorate. As the *Las Vegas Sun* story pointed out, "he'll have to thread a political needle because on one of their most important issues — immigration reform — he has cleaved to the Republican base and its favored position: No path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, now or ever." Sandoval's ethnicity became even more relevant when Univision Nevada news director and *El Tiempo* columnist Adriana Arévalo revealed that "he said in an interview on Univision that he vehemently supported Arizona's anti-immigrant law. In reference to the same law, he was asked how he would feel if he his children were stopped in the street and asked for their papers. He answered, with a note of pride in his voice, 'my children don't look Hispanic.'"^{cliv} Sandoval denied making the comments, but they were confirmed by the *Las Vegas Sun*.^{clv}

Rory Reid's campaign website says he favors "comprehensive immigration reform and common sense solutions," and opposes the Arizona law.^{clvi}

U.S. Senate

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is running for reelection in 2010, in what is expected to be a very close race. The race pits one of the Senate's most vocal champions of comprehensive immigration reform against Sharron Angle, a Republican candidate supported by the Minuteman PAC.^{clvii}

Senate Majority Leader Reid has been a champion of comprehensive immigration reform. On his Senate website, Reid states that he remains "committed to comprehensive immigration reform and hope that we are able to enact it soon."^{clviii} During an April 10, 2010 rally in Las Vegas, he promised to push for immigration reform that could include a path to U.S. citizenship. "We're going to have comprehensive immigration reform now," Reid said. "There are no excuses. This is something America needs. We're going to do immigration reform just like we did health care reform."^{clix}

"I believe immigrants here without legal status must be required to register with the government, learn English, pay their taxes, pass criminal background checks and pay fines and penalties for being here unlawfully--or face deportation," Reid wrote in a letter published April 18 in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. "Far from getting on an 'expedited path to citizenship,' they must go to the back of the line." He also calls for effective border security and tough sanctions against employers who hire illegal immigrants, and wants to improve legal channels leading toward U.S. citizenship. "Right now we have a system where our back door is broken and our front door is shuttered," Reid wrote. "We need to keep out criminals and those who will not contribute meaningfully to our society, and welcome the best and the brightest and those who will work hard to help our economy to grow."

Reid opposes the Arizona immigration law. He has said that it illustrates why the United States needs comprehensive immigration reform: "because the issue is too big and too important to do in a piecemeal way." Sharron Angle supports the measure.^{clx}

Angle has said that she opposes "amnesty proposals, which send a ruinous signal that breaking the law is acceptable in our country."^{clxi} She also supports increasing physical security along the U.S.'s borders, including "military assistance" to help the Border Patrol do its job.^{clxii}

Latino voter turnout will be crucial to Senator Reid's re-election, with major implications for the Democratic and Republican Parties.

U.S. House: Nevada's 3rd Congressional District

Nevada's 3rd Congressional District, which includes the suburbs of Las Vegas, is made up of 13.24% Latino voters. In 2008, Barack Obama won this district with 55% to John McCain's 43%. Democratic Congresswoman Dina Titus defeated Republican incumbent John Porter by 47% to 42% in 2008. Although her campaign website does not indicate a position on immigration issues, during her campaign for Governor of Nevada in 2006, Titus stated that undocumented

immigrants should apply for a program that allows them to become citizens after waiting many years and clearing hurdles such as paying fines and taxes.^{clxiii}

Titus' Republican opponent in 2010 is former State Senator Joe Heck. He supports increased border security and enforcement including the 287(g) program and mandatory E-Verify, as well as "streamlining our nation's bureaucracy to manage the legal immigration infrastructure." Heck said: "Our economic stability and our nation's security are dependent on enacting border security measures that take away the incentives that people have to crossing the border illegally."^{clxiv}

NEW YORK

Latino Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
10.9%	502	613	743	48.01%	21.21%

U.S. House: New York's 13th Congressional District

John McCain narrowly won this traditionally Republican district, located in Staten Island and a small portion of Brooklyn, with 51% to Barack Obama's 49%. The growing Latino population in this district represents 10.41% of registered voters. Democrat Mike McMahon was elected to this House seat with 60.94% of the vote. Michael Allegretti, a non-profit government relations director, and former FBI Squad investigator Michael Grimm are running for the Republican nomination to challenge McMahon.

McMahon does not feature immigration on either his Congressional or campaign websites, but the issue is important to the growing immigrant population in his district, which comprises one of New York City's boroughs. When asked about immigration by the *Staten Island Advance*, McMahon stated, "Currently, my focus is on jobs and reducing our unemployment rate and deficit. Congress tackled so much last year with much success, but I believe that our priority should be getting people in our country back to work, plain and simple."^{clxv}

Michael Allegretti's website says that "Congress and the Obama Administration have been asleep at the switch when it comes to immigration. The more they avoid the problem the worse it becomes." He promises to "strongly oppose sanctuary cities, a common term used to describe cities like New York where illegal immigrants are allowed to live without any real fear of consequence," and says that America needs to "find the illegal immigrants" and "move them

out of the shadows and onto the tax rolls.” He supports offering citizenship for military service.^{clxvi}

Michael Grimm says on his website that “Realistically, you cannot simply ‘round-up’ and deport every person among the millions illegally in this county, but there are things we can do to reverse the tide of illegal immigration. If illegal aliens can’t work here or collect government benefits, they will not continue to come here, or want to remain here. With that in mind, as Congressman, I will seek the adoption of penalties, and enforcement of those penalties, that will absolutely deter employers from breaking our immigration rules. Additionally, I will not support any kind of non-emergency medical, taxpayer-paid benefits or services to illegal aliens.”^{clxvii}

NEW MEXICO

Latino Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
32.6%	191	276	289	51.31%	4.71%

U.S. House: New Mexico’s 1st Congressional District

This central New Mexico district based in Albuquerque, with Latinos making up 6.38% of registered voters, has historically been a battleground for both Congressional and presidential elections. Barack Obama won this district with 54% of the vote to John McCain’s 44%. Democrat Martin Heinrich was elected to Congress in 2008 with 55.65% of the vote. Heinrich will face former New Mexico Republican Party vice chairman Jon Barela in this year’s midterm election.

Heinrich does not feature his immigration position on his Congressional or campaign websites, but a statement during the 2008 campaign said that "When it comes to immigration, [Heinrich] believes in securing the border with personnel instead of ‘a monument to a political ideology;’ holding employers accountable for hiring undocumented workers; and he’d like to sort out NAFTA to be easier on northern Mexico ranchers and farmers." According to The Guardian, Heinrich also "condemns the Republicans’ planned US-Mexico fence as a ‘boondoggle’ and ‘great for contractors.’"^{clxviii} Heinrich has co-sponsored the only comprehensive immigration reform bill that has been introduced in the House of Representatives during the 111th Congress, H.R. 4321, Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act of 2009.

While the only position on immigration mentioned on Barela’s website is that “it is critical that we make sure our borders are secure,”^{clxix} Barela’s campaign told a *New Mexico Independent* reporter that “Jon is opposed to the Arizona immigration law and feels there is a better, more comprehensive way to reform our nation’s immigration system.”^{clxx} Barela has also told the press that he supports a guest worker program.^{clxxi}

U.S. House: New Mexico’s 2nd Congressional District

New Mexico’s Second Congressional district, encompassing the southern half of the state, is represented by Democratic Congressman Harry Teague. The district is home to a Hispanic population that is 35.55% of the overall registered voter population. John McCain narrowly won this district with 50% of the vote, yet Teague won his seat in Congress during the same election cycle with 55% of the vote. Teague is running for reelection against former Republican Representative Steve Pearce.

Addressing the status of undocumented immigrants on his website, Teague states that “we must find a way to include these individuals in our community so that they may come out of the shadows and have a real opportunity to join our society. Our government must provide a comprehensive pathway to citizenship that would allow for these individuals to learn English, pay back taxes, pass background checks, and pay a fine.”^{clxxii}

Meanwhile, Pearce’s campaign site states that during his previous tenure in Congress, “he worked to put 4,000 new agents on America’s borders. [He] will work to secure the border, to streamline the broken immigration system, to ensure that guest workers who enter the country do so legally and he will encourage legal immigration.”^{clxxiii} An analysis of his immigration position when he ran for the open U.S. Senate seat in New Mexico found that Pearce supported securing the border before addressing immigration in a comprehensive manner.^{clxxiv}

PENNSYLVANIA

Latino Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
3.8%	68	88	161	136.76%	82.95%

Pennsylvania was a battleground state in 2008, from the primaries to the general election. Attaining 55% of the vote, Barack Obama won a state divided between its more liberal urban areas and conservative rural areas.

The immigration issue was brought to the forefront in the 11th Congressional District, where the restrictionist mayor of Hazleton, Lou Barletta, ran for Congress against Democratic incumbent Congressman Paul Kanjorski. Barletta led a campaign to make Hazleton “one of the toughest places in the United States”^{clxxv} for undocumented immigrants, but was unable to turn his crusade against immigrants into electoral victory.

Senator Arlen Specter’s switch from the Republican to Democratic Party in 2009, and consequent defeat in the Democratic primary to Representative Joe Sestak, will once again make Pennsylvania a state to watch during the midterm elections. Former Congressman Pat Toomey will challenge Sestak in the general election in November. Political analysts and polling indicate that this race will be extremely close, so with nearly 4% of registered voters in the state, Latinos will be a factor in this and other races in the state.

U.S. House: Pennsylvania’s 15th Congressional District

Barack Obama won this Eastern Pennsylvania district, which includes Allentown and Bethlehem, with 56% of the vote to John McCain’s 43%. Latinos in this district represent 9.42% of registered voters. Republican Congressman Charlie Dent was reelected with 58.57% in 2008. He is being challenged by John Callahan, the Democratic mayor of Bethlehem, PA.

Rep. Dent is a member of the restrictionist Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus and he voted for the controversial Sensenbrenner bill (H.R. 4437) in the 109th Congress. On his campaign website he states: “A great, sovereign country must secure and control its own borders. We must be a 'nation of laws' and that is why I oppose granting amnesty to illegal immigrants. We cannot reward millions of lawbreakers over people who follow the rules.”^{clxxvi}

No information on John Callahan’s position on immigration is available as of this writing.

TEXAS

Latino Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
21.7%	1300	1533	1697	30.54%	10.70%

Comprising 21.7% of the state’s voters, Texas’ growing Latino population is poised to enhance competition in the state’s congressional and statewide elections this year. While John McCain won the state with 55% to Barack Obama’s 44%, the majority of Latino voters went for Obama, 63% to 35%. In 2004, the Latino vote was evenly split between former President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry, 50% to 49%. Given that Bush won the state with 61% of the

entire vote to Kerry's 38%, the Latino vote was a key factor in reducing the margin between Republican and Democrat in the 2008, and the growing group of Latino voters is poised to make even more of a difference in the coming years.

Governor

U.S. Senator Kay Bailey-Hutchison's (R) announcement that she would run for governor against incumbent Governor and fellow Republican Rick Perry brought national attention to the governor's race. In March of 2010, however, Rick Perry defeated Hutchison and Tea Party activist Debra Medina for the nomination. On the Democratic ticket, former Houston mayor Bill White won the nomination after forgoing a possible run for the U.S. Senate. The state's large Latino voting population is poised to be decisive in an election in which a candidate needs only a plurality of votes to win.

Governor Perry's campaign website presents a record of increases in state-funded border operations.^{clxxvii} "We cannot have homeland security without border security. Under Gov. Perry, Texas has been a leader on border security while the federal government has faltered. Under his leadership, Texas has put more boots on the ground, more technology to use, and more targeted operations to dramatically reduce all crime along the border."^{clxxviii}

White has a less-extensive track record on federal immigration reform, but has dealt with the role of local police in civil immigration enforcement. The *Associated Press* reported, "Mayor Bill White and police department officials deny Houston is a sanctuary city, saying officers will arrest anybody, including illegal immigrants, as needed. But White added that officers would be diverted from priority calls if they had to check the citizenship status of every person they dealt with. 'People are frustrated about the lack of a federal policy on immigration,' he said. 'But citizens should not allow their frustration on this issue to handcuff our law enforcement so they cannot respond to the complaints of citizens.'"^{clxxviii}

U.S. House: Texas' 17th Congressional District

Democratic Congressman Chet Edwards represents this central Texas district—one of the most heavily Republican districts in the country currently represented by a Democrat. John McCain won this district by 68% in 2008. Hispanics account for 9.24% of the district's registered voters. Edwards is running for reelection against businessman Bill Flores.

Congressman Edwards has a more conservative record on immigration than many of his Democratic colleagues, having voted for legislation such as H.R. 4437, also known as the Sensenbrenner bill, in the 109th Congress. His campaign website, however, states that he "strongly opposes amnesty for those here illegally, but he agrees with President Bush, the U.S. Chamber, the Farm Bureau and bipartisan groups, that it is impractical and would harm our economy to try to identify and deport over 12 million illegal immigrants, many of whom have been working in the United States for many years. Chet believes illegal immigrants who commit crimes should be

incarcerated or deported immediately. For those who have followed our laws after immigrating, he would like to see a bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform bill, with priorities on strengthening border security, enforcing employment laws and allowing those who respect the law, learn English, work to support their families, pay taxes and take responsibility for having immigrated illegally, to get in line for permanent residency behind all those who entered our country legally..^{clxxxix}

Flores' website states, "On the issue of illegal immigration, I will never support any program which grants unilateral amnesty to those who have broken our laws. Solving our illegal immigration issue and the billions of dollars of costs associated with it starts by fully enforcing our laws. For those who wish to come to our country, they must do so by obeying our laws and complying with our system."^{clxxx}

U.S. House: Texas' 23rd Congressional District

Texas' 23rd Congressional District, a predominantly rural district running along the border with Mexico between El Paso and San Antonio, went narrowly for Barack Obama with 51% of the vote to John McCain's 48%. Latinos in this district represent 46.52% of registered voters. In 2008, Democrat Ciro Rodriguez won reelection with 55.76% of the vote. San Antonio businessman Francisco "Quico" Canseco defeated former CIA officer William Hurd in a runoff election for the Republican nomination.

Rodriguez supported the Senate's efforts to pass comprehensive immigration reform in 2007. Upon the Senate's failure to do so, he stated: "This Congress has to act to secure our borders and address the illegal immigration crisis. Unfortunately, instead of moving forward legislation as a starting point for much needed immigration reform, Senate Republicans for all intents and purposes killed immigration reform today. They had the chance to help lay the foundation for Congress to reform our nation's immigration system, a system we all agree is broken, and instead they settled for an irresponsible do-nothing approach. I believe the time for immigration reform is now but the Republicans have once again failed to be part of the solution to this national problem."

Rodriguez was a cosponsor of a comprehensive immigration reform bill in the 110th Congress known as the STRIVE Act. Yet he also cosponsored the restrictionist Secure America through Verification and Enforcement (SAVE) Act, angering many Hispanic and immigrant advocacy groups. He was the only Hispanic Member of Congress of either party to cosponsor this bill. In the 111th Congress, although a majority of Hispanic Members of Congress have cosponsored the comprehensive reform bill CIR-ASAP, Rodriguez has yet to do so.

Rodriguez' Republican opponent stresses his support for immigration enforcement. Quico Canseco states on his website: "Beyond the threat of terrorism, our security is also threatened (by) illegal immigrant gangs, drug cartels, and human smugglers. We must make it a top priority to provide the funding, equipment, and personnel necessary to identify, apprehend, and

incarcerate or deport these criminals. It will send a message that we are serious and we are coming after them. For those who wish to come to our country to seek a better life and make America their home, they must do so by obeying our laws and complying with our rules. Amnesty is simply NOT AN OPTION.”^{clxxxii}

VIRGINIA

Latino Voter Percentage of Overall Electorate	Latino Voter Turnout 2000 (in thousands)	Latino Voter Turnout 2004	Latino Voter Turnout 2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2000-2008	Growth in Latino Turnout, 2004-2008
3.2%	90	70	74	-17.78%	5.71%

Barack Obama’s victory in Virginia in 2008, winning 53% of the vote to McCain’s 47%, was historic because the state had not voted for a Democrat since 1964. Virginians also elected a Democrat, Mark Warner, to the state’s open Senate seat, and a majority-Democratic state delegation to the House of Representatives. The state’s growing Latino and immigrant populations had a significant impact in turning this once reliably red state blue.

In 2008, Virginia was the home of an extremely close House race in the 5th District, where anti-immigrant stalwart Virgil Goode (R) was narrowly defeated by moderate Democrat Tom Perriello.^{clxxxiii}

U.S. House: Virginia’s 11th Congressional District

This district in Northern Virginia includes parts of the Washington D.C. suburbs of Fairfax and Prince William County. Latinos represent 6.16% of this district’s registered voters. Barack Obama won this district with 57% of the vote and John McCain received 42%. After many years of representation by former Republican Congressman Tom Davis, who retired after the 2008 election, Democrat Gerry Connolly was elected with 54.69% of the vote.

Businessman Keith Fimian, Connolly’s 2008 opponent, will challenge him again in 2010 after defeating GOP Fairfax County Supervisor Pat Herrity in the primary.

Connolly’s congressional and campaign websites do not feature his positions on immigration reform. In the past, Connolly was recognized as a moderate on the issue. In a November 2007 *Roll Call* article, Morton M. Kondracke pointed out that his immigration position was more moderate than others: "in Fairfax County, the GOP candidate for board chairman, Gary Baise, campaigned to make Fairfax as immigrant-unfriendly as nearby Prince William County. He garnered 36 percent of the vote against incumbent Democrat Gerald Connolly." After several Northern Virginia counties passed resolutions cracking down on illegal immigration, as

Chairman of the Fairfax board Connolly "resisted calls from Prince William and Loudoun officials to pass a similar measure." Furthermore, "Connolly has said that immigration remains a federal responsibility and that he wants the county focus on illegal behavior not immigration status."^{clxxxiii}

During an editorial board interview by *Inside NoVA* in January 2010, Connolly stated, "comprehensive immigration reform is needed because there are even problems with situations as small as getting a foreign citizen into the country for a special event such as a wedding. So it's a system that's broken from top to bottom."^{clxxxiv}

However, when Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli declared in August 2010 that Virginia state law already allowed state and local law enforcement officers to check immigration status—much like a provision of Arizona's SB 1070 immigration law that was enjoined in federal court—Connolly joined other members of Virginia's congressional delegation in asking Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano to allow Cuccinelli's policy to go forward.^{clxxxv}

Keith Fimian's campaign website states: "I am 100 percent opposed to illegal immigration. We need to secure our borders for security and economic reasons. We need to build a wall, both physical and virtual. People who want to come here must follow the rules. I oppose amnesty for those who have broken the law and entered our country illegally. When someone is arrested for the committing a crime, the police should check their immigration status and turn them over to Federal authorities. We must be tough on those who break our laws. But we must remember that we are a nation of immigrants and people who come here legally to work and contribute to our nation should be welcomed, particularly highly educated, highly skilled individuals who can make valuable contributions to our economy. We need to encourage the young, highly educated people that come here to study to stay here and contribute to our economy."^{clxxxvi}

LATINO VOTERS: KEY CONSTITUENCY IN GROWING NUMBER OF DISTRICTS

Nearly one in five congressional districts has a Latino population that constitutes at least 25% of the district. Of these seventy-nine districts, Democratic Members of Congress represent fifty-four, or slightly over two-thirds. This means that 21% of the seats comprising the current Democratic majority (54/256) are in districts where Latinos make up a major share of the population. While the previous section outlined how Latinos will have an impact in close races around the country, the following chart shows the role Latino voters have played in electing the current Democratic majority in other districts.

Additionally, twenty-five Republican Members of Congress, concentrated in California, Florida, and Texas, also represent districts with 25% or greater Latino populations. While pro-immigration reform stalwarts such as Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL) and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) are included in this figure, notorious anti-immigration ringleader Lamar Smith (R-TX) is as well. As the number of Latino voters in these districts increase, Republicans who are on the wrong side of issues that affect their families directly—issues like comprehensive immigration reform—will find the road to re-election much more difficult.

Below is an overview of the seventy-nine districts with Latino populations of 25% or greater, as well as the percentage of Latino voters in the district.

Congressional Districts by Highest Concentration of Latinos

Districts with Latino Populations of 25% or More			
Congressional District	Current Member of Congress	% of Latinos in District (Population)	% of Latinos in District (Voters)
TX-16	Silvestre Reyes (D)	80.87%	67.33%
CA-34	Lucille Roybal-Allard (D)	80.24%	61.69%
TX-15	Ruben Hinojosa (D)	79.82%	65.26%
TX-28	Henry Cuellar (D)	78.78%	64.18%
CA-38	Grace Napolitano (D)	75.15%	61.47%
TX-29	Gene Green (D)	73.70%	51.72%
FL-21	Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R)	73.47%	55.63%
IL-4	Luis Gutierrez (D)	72.40%	52.23%
TX-27	Solomon Ortiz (D)	71.64%	59.38%
TX-20	Charles Gonzalez (D)	69.76%	58.99%
CA-31	Xavier Becerra (D)	69.02%	48.57%
CA-47	Loretta Sanchez (D)	68.69%	41.88%
FL-25	Mario Diaz-Balart (R)	67.93%	52.55%
CA-20	Jim Costa (D)	67.84%	51.39%

NY-16	Jose Serrano (D)	66.36%	52.37%
AZ-4	Ed Pastor (D)	66.34%	35.4%
CA-43	Joe Baca (D)	66.26%	46.15%
TX-23	Ciro Rodriguez (D)	65.48%	46.52%
CA-39	Linda Sanchez (D)	65%	47.8%
FL-18	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R)	64.75%	44.46%
CA-32	Judy Chu (D)	63.97%	52.40%
CA-51	Bob Filner (D)	60.14%	48.67%
CA-28	Howard Berman (D)	57.31%	33.3%
AZ-7	Raul Grijalva (D)	54.62%	38.29%
CA-35	Maxine Waters (D)	53.31%	26.79%
CA-18	Dennis Cardoza (D)	50.14%	35.38%
NM-2	Harry Teague (D)	49.91%	35.56%
NJ-13	Albio Sires (D)	49.30%	39%
CA-21	Devin Nunes (R)	48.46%	29.41%
CA-37	Laura Richardson (D)	48.42%	27.33%
CA-17	Sam Farr (D)	47.34%	26.44%
NY-12	Nydia Velazquez (D)	46.23%	38.22%
NM-1	Martin Heinrich (D)	45.53%	31.28%
NY-15	Charles Rangel (D)	45.08%	33.25%
CA-23	Lois Capps (D)	45%	25.69%
TX-32	Pete Sessions (R)	43.27%	16.21%
CA-45	Mary Bono Mack (R)	42.47%	23.82%
NY-7	Joseph Crowley (D)	42.06%	33.44%
CA-44	Ken Calvert (R)	42.01%	23.2%
TX-18	Sheila Jackson-Lee (D)	41.46%	18.35%
TX-30	Eddie Johnson (D)	41.24%	14.28%
CA-27	Brad Sherman (D)	41.23%	24.96%
TX-9	Al Green (D)	40.18%	16.18%
CA-16	Zoe Lofgren (D)	39.11%	25.55%
NM-3	Ben Lujan (D)	38.16%	31.52%
CA-25	Howard McKeon (R)	37.44%	21%
TX-25	Lloyd Doggett (D)	37.20%	28.18%
CA-33	Diane Watson (D)	36.29%	18%
CA-49	Darrell Issa (R)	35.15%	18.41%
NV-1	Shelley Berkley (D)	35.06%	16.6%
CA-19	George Radonovich (R)	34.54%	21.76%
CA-40	Edward Royce (R)	34.33%	19.22%
TX-11	Michael Conaway (R)	33.82%	21.5%
CA-41	Jerry Lewis (R)	33.09%	18.82%
CO-1	Diana Degette (D)	32.90%	14.63%*
CA-36	Jane Harman (D)	32.40%	18.34%
TX-19	Randy Neugebauer (R)	32.24%	22.1%
NJ-8	Bill Pascrell (D)	30.97%	18.48%

IL-3	Daniel Lipinski (D)	30.77%	18.8%
WA-4	Doc Hastings (R)	30.53%	10.88%
CA-53	Susan Davis (D)	30.50%	15.91%
CA-22	Kevin McCarthy (R)	29.39%	16.6%
CA-26	David Dreier (R)	28.80%	19.71%
IL-5	Mike Quigley (D)	28.36%	17.78%
CA-42	Gary Miller (R)	27.86%	19.5%
TX-14	Ron Paul (R)	27.81%	17.3%
FL-20	Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D)	27.75%	17.47%
TX-12	Kay Granger (R)	27.63%	12.94%
CO-7	Ed Perlmutter (D)	27.12%	12.6%*
CA-24	Elton Gallegly (R)	27.03%	15.14%
TX-21	Lamar Smith (R)	26.9%	16.91%
CA-7	George Miller (D)	26.51%	17.45%
TX-10	Michael McCaul (R)	26.10%	12.26%
CA-5	Doris Matsui (D)	25.60%	15.28%
TX-22	Pete Olson (R)	25.27%	15.1%
TX-24	Kenny Marchant (R)	25.17%	11.64%
FL-17	Kendrick Meek (D)	25.15%	17.82%
FL-11	Kathy Castor (D)	25.07%	15.97%
CA-29	Adam Schiff (D)	25.03%	18.89%

*Spanish Surname

[\[Voter Contact Services, National Journal\]](#)

LATINO VOTERS AND THE POLITICS OF IMMIGRATION REFORM IN 2010 -- WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

The Latino vote has grown exponentially since 2000, resulting in a changing political landscape. Latino voters were pivotal to the victories of both President Barack Obama and congressional Democrats during the election of 2008. The political behavior of these voters—whether they turn out, and who they support—will play a pivotal role in 2010 in a number of battleground House, Senate, and gubernatorial races across the nation. They also make up a core constituency in scores of less competitive districts as well.

Will they turn out to vote in high numbers, breaking historical midterm voting patterns and delivering a key rebuke to anti-immigrant politicians and candidates? Or, reflecting the failure of Congress to deliver on immigration reform and Democrats to deliver on past promises, will many Latino voters stay at home in 2010?

Amidst this uncertainty, what is clear is that the anxiety over Arizona's anti-immigration law and the heated rhetoric from many Republicans is having an effect on Latino voters. Both in 2010 and beyond, this is a dangerous development for the party most associated with the AZ law, the GOP.

Candidates and parties will find it increasingly difficult to compete in many states and districts throughout the country if they ignore or alienate Latino voters. As Janet Murguia, President and CEO of National Council of La Raza (NCLR) recently wrote in *POLITICO*, "Latinos are the youngest and fastest-growing group of voters in the country. What does that mean? In 1994, 3.5 million Latinos went to the polls. By 2008, that number was 10 million. There are still nearly 8 million Latinos who are eligible but have not yet registered to vote. Moreover, a half-million young Latino citizens will turn 18 every year for the next 20 years, according to Democracia U.S.A."^{clxxxvii}

Latino voter trends also have major implications for the 2012 elections, when President Obama will need to rely upon his "Latino firewall" to overcome potential losses in other swing constituencies, and when the Republican Party will need to rebuild its image with Latino voters in order to win. Heated rhetoric coupled with unrealistic policy solutions like mass deportation will turn off both the crucial Latino voting bloc and other swing voters, namely Independents, who are tired of Washington policymakers talking tough, but delivering little, and who favor pragmatism and national comprehensive reform over state-based enforcement approaches to immigration.

In short, candidates and parties need to support policies that recognize the contributions of Latinos and welcome immigrant Latinos into the American family, or face significant and lasting electoral consequences. The impact will be felt in scores of battleground races in 2010, and even more in 2012.

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