



RACES TO WATCH FOR SUPPORTERS OF IMMIGRATION REFORM
SENATE EDITION

September 2012

ARIZONA (OPEN)
FLORIDA (NELSON-D)
MASSACHUSETTS (BROWN-R)
NEVADA (HELLER-R)
NEW MEXICO (OPEN)
VIRGINIA (OPEN)

State: Arizona (open)

Candidates: Richard Carmona (D) v. Rep. Jeff Flake (R)

Rating: Lean Republican ([Cook Political Report, 9/24/12](#))

Latino Voters: 18.4% (see [LatinoVoteMap.org](#))

Arizona's Jeff Flake used to be a champion of comprehensive immigration reform, leading the effort to push for common sense solutions in the U.S. House of Representatives in the mid-2000s. However, Flake tacked right during the Senate primary, [following the playbook of Senator John McCain](#) in his transformation between the push for comprehensive reform in 2007 and the Republican presidential primary in 2008. Flake went so far as to vote against the DREAM Act in 2010. But the Congressman might not have gotten the memo: in the two years since the Arizona legislature passed SB 1070, voters have begun to realize that immigrant-bashing is distracting and destructive. SB 1070's lead sponsor, State Senate President Russell Pearce, was [kicked out of office](#) in an unprecedented recall election in 2011—then [defeated again](#) in 2012.

Furthermore, advocates and community leaders are working hard to ensure that Latinos (who measure [30.1% of Arizona's population and 18.4% of its voter base](#)) and immigrants in Arizona show resilience in the face of anti-immigrant bullying by showing up at the polls. If Carmona is able to beat Flake, it will be due to turnout of Latino voters. Jan Brewer and Joe Arpaio will be represented in the Senate by a [vocal supporter of comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act](#)—and it might prove that the head-in-the-sand anti-immigrant fad of the last few years has finally worn out its welcome.

For more, see America's Voice's [Spotlight on Arizona](#).

State: Florida (Nelson-D)

Candidates: Rep. Connie Mack IV (R) v. Sen. Bill Nelson (D), incumbent

Rating: Lean Democratic ([Cook Political Report, 9/24/12](#))

Latino Voters: 16.8% (see [LatinoVoteMap.org](#))

Florida's Latino community has long been a powerful force in state politics, constituting [13% of registered voters](#). The Republican Senate nominee, Rep. Connie Mack IV, once showed some promise of becoming a moderate on immigration—like [his father, Senator Connie Mack III](#). In the spring of 2010, Mack IV actually [spoke out](#) against Arizona's harsh SB 1070. But he soon fell in line with the Republican Party positions on immigration, voting against the DREAM Act in [December of 2010](#). (Three of Mack's Hispanic colleagues in the Florida congressional delegation, Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Mario Diaz-Balart and Lincoln Diaz-Balart, co-sponsored and voted for DREAM.) Senator Bill Nelson (D), on the other hand, has a strong record in support of immigrants. He voted to end the GOP filibuster of the [DREAM Act on December 18, 2010](#) and is a cosponsor of the legislation.

While Florida's Latino community has leaned Republican for decades, the Latino electorate is changing and becoming more Democratic. Perhaps that is why Florida Governor Rick Scott has engaged in an unprecedented partisan attack on the voting rights of certain citizens, including Latinos, this year. Will Nelson's consistent support for immigration reform help him in the race against Mack? Or will Mack trade on his father's good name, and convince just enough Latinos that he's on their side? The answer could mean the difference between a consistent vote for common-sense immigration reform, and a "likely no" on this key priority.

For more, see America's Voice's Spotlight on Florida.

State: Massachusetts (Brown-R)

Candidates: Elizabeth Warren (D) v. Sen. Scott Brown (R), incumbent

Rating: Toss Up (Cook Political Report, 9/24/12)

Latino Voters: 5.7% (see LatinoVoteMap.org)

As a Republican in Massachusetts, Scott Brown portrays himself as a moderate. But when it comes to the issue of immigration, he's a hard-liner. On December 18, 2010, Brown gave up all pretense of moderation when he voted in support of the Republican filibuster of the DREAM Act. To pile on, Brown also criticized the DREAM relief policy announced by President Obama on June 15, 2012, stating, "I opposed this policy in legislative form, and I oppose it today as an executive order." He has voiced strong support for the controversial "Secure Communities" program—which his state's governor, Deval Patrick, opposes because of its impact on community policing.

Warren's views on immigration are at the opposite—welcoming--end of the spectrum. She supports the DREAM Act, supports the President's administrative policy on DREAMers, and believes that Brown's vote against DREAM in 2010 was a mistake that "denied the dreams of these young people" and "cost our communities and our country."

According to Latino Vote Matters, in Massachusetts, Latinos comprise 5.7% of the state electorate—a 98% increase between 2000 and 2010.

State: Nevada (Heller-R)

Candidates: Rep. Shelley Berkley (D) v. Sen. Dean Heller (R), incumbent

Rating: Toss Up (Cook Political Report, 9/24/12)

Latino Voters: 14.2% (see LatinoVoteMap.org)

Republican Senator Dean Heller wants to end birthright citizenship in the United States—but you wouldn't know it from his campaign materials. Heller has learned from his party's experience in Nevada in 2010, when Republican Senate candidate Sharron Angle's decision to make anti-immigrant attacks the centerpiece of her campaign backfired. Instead of being

intimidated out of voting, Latinos (14.7% of the state's voters and 26.5% of its residents) turned up in droves to support Senator Harry Reid, as part of a "Latino firewall" stretching across the West that saved the Senate for the Democrats.

This cycle, with the fate of the Senate again in the balance, Heller has opted to reach out to Latino voters through gauzy, biography-heavy Spanish-language ads and vague policy language on his Spanish-language website—hoping to obscure his opposition to birthright citizenship and his vote against the DREAM Act in the House in 2010. On the other hand his opponent Democrat Rep. Shelley Berkley, a DREAM co-sponsor who fought to put the bill on the national Democratic platform, is keen to remind Latinos that Heller's record is anti-immigrant.

On top of the candidates' own campaigns, Latinos in Nevada are being targeted by grassroots efforts to mobilize them to vote—and Astroturfed efforts to keep them from the polls. Will Dean Heller be able to hide his true colors from Latino voters, or will Berkley succeed in outing him?

For more, see America's Voice's Spotlight on Nevada.

State: New Mexico (open)

Candidates: Rep. Martin Heinrich (D) v. former Rep. Heather Wilson (R)

Rating: Lean Democratic (Cook Political Report, 9/24/12)

Latino Voters: 38.4% (see LatinoVoteMap.org)

New Mexico as a state has the single highest percentage of Latino voters in the nation—four out of ten eligible voters there are Latino. In the election to replace retiring Democratic Senator Jeff Bingaman, New Mexico voters have a choice between a pro-immigration reform, pro-DREAM Act champion and a candidate who has backed away from support of pro-immigrant positions.

Rep. Martin Heinrich (D) currently represents New Mexico's 1st District and recently led an effort to ensure that the DREAM Act would be included in the Democrats' national platform. On August 15th, the first day that DREAMers could apply for President Obama's new deferred action policy, Heinrich put up a page on his House website encouraging them to call his office for help with their applications. Former Rep. Heather Wilson (R)—whom Heinrich replaced in the House—co-sponsored a version of the DREAM Act in 2003 but moved to the right in her final years in the House, apparently in preparation for a tough primary battle in her first Senate campaign in 2008. This year, Wilson has refused to take a position on either the DREAM Act or deferred action. Recent polls have Heinrich leading 50-41%.

State: Virginia (open)

Candidates: Former Governor Tim Kaine (D) v. former Governor and former Senator George Allen (R)

Rating: Toss Up ([Cook Political Report](#), 9/24/12)

Latino Voters: 2.2% (see [LatinoVoteMap.org](#))

Although Latino voters only make up 2.2% of the electorate in Virginia, every vote matters here. According to Latino Decisions, between 2000 and 2010, the number of Latino voters in Virginia grew by 76%. As of this writing, both the U.S. Senate and the Presidential race are considered to be ties, and the last time George Allen ran for this seat in 2006, he lost by just 10,000 votes.

Tim Kaine has been a vocal supporter of comprehensive immigration reform for years. Under his leadership, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) finally began to prioritize the issue, regularly putting out strong statements in favor of common sense immigration solutions and criticizing extremism on the part of the GOP. In his Senate campaign, Kaine has once again leaned into immigration solutions. The issue is featured prominently on his campaign website and in this TV ad, which features the candidate speaking about it in fluent Spanish.

As Univision points out, 36% of Virginia Latino voters are naturalized citizens who have personally navigated the complicated immigration system. For them, the contrast between Kaine and George Allen on immigration couldn't be greater. As a U.S. Senator, Allen voted against the McCain-Kennedy immigration reform bill, which passed the Senate in 2006 with the support of 23 Republicans and 39 Democrats. When President Obama decided to stop the deportation of young students known as DREAMers in June, Kaine applauded the move while Allen blasted it. According to ABC News, Allen said: "For blatant political purposes President Obama is ignoring the proper Constitutional responsibilities of elected representatives and making it more difficult to enact reasonable long-term immigration reforms. This short-term ploy is disappointing in that it disregards the proper role of case-by-case judgment in these individual matters."