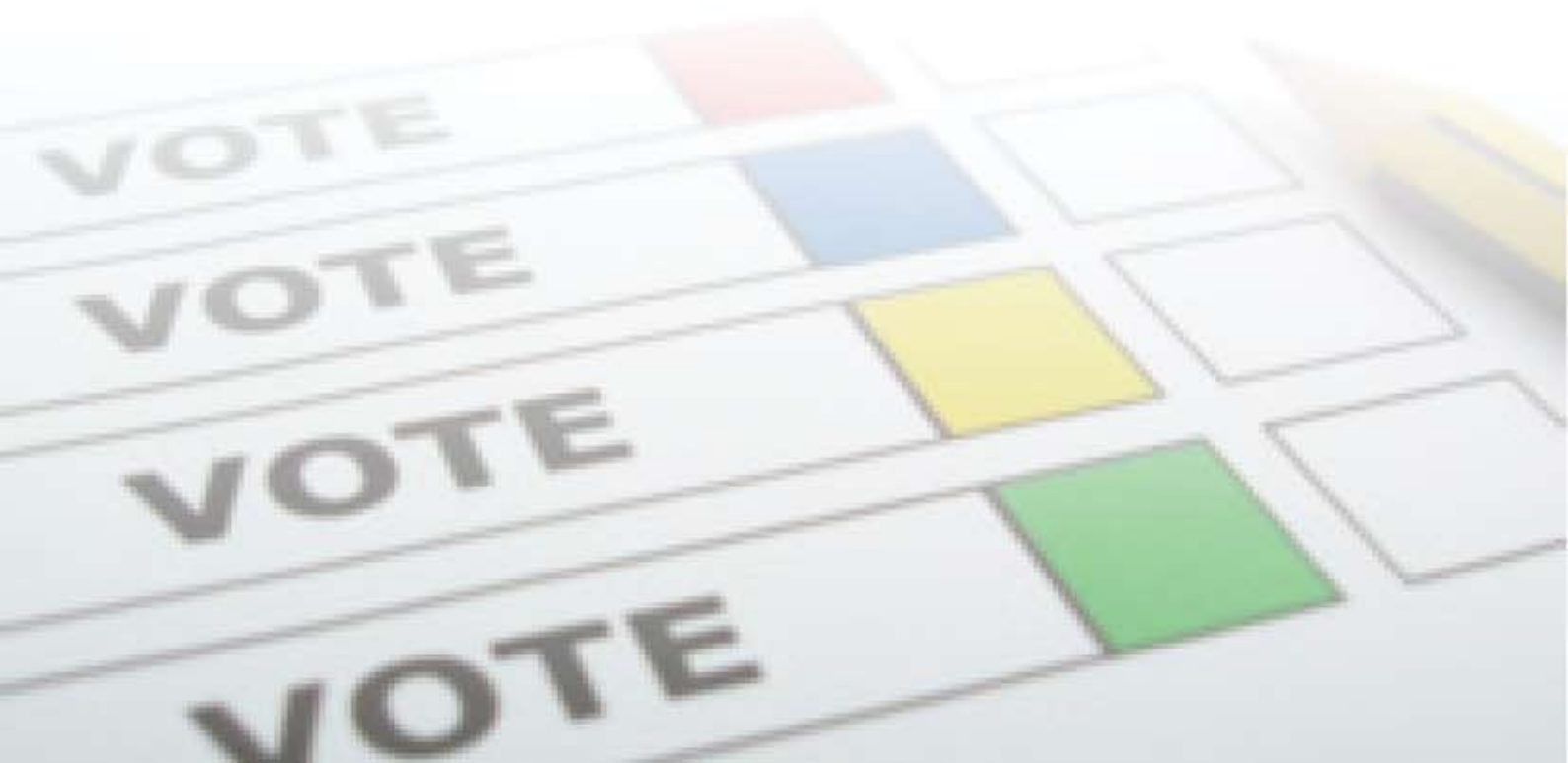


The Power of the Latino Vote in the 2010 Elections

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



The Power of the Latino Vote in America

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

February 2010

LATINO VOTER TRENDS IN RECENT ELECTION CYCLES

Over the past decade, Latino voters have steadily increased their political power, and made a decisive impact in races at all levels, including the Presidency. In 2010, Latino voters are poised to play a crucial role in key House and Senate 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 House and Senate races as well as future Presidential contests. While trending Democratic overall, at least one segment of the Latino electorate—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*.

This report lays out trends in Latino voting patterns over the last several years, and examines some of the factors that motivate and influence this segment of the electorate. The report features a list of “Races to Watch”—forty battleground House and Senate 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, a growth of about 2.5 million voters nationwide compared to 2004 and a nearly 4 million person increase since 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 the 2000 and 2008 elections. However, as Latinos increased their presence in “new immigrant”

states, Latino voter turnout between 2000 and 2008 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 future elections. As House Democratic Caucus Vice-Chairman Representative Xavier Becerra (D-CA) said, “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 Barack Obama and 25% supported John McCain.

In battleground states such as Colorado, Florida, New Mexico, and Nevada, 2008's increased Latino turnout and the Latino electorate's break towards Democrats were major factors in Barack 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, and 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, and Latino support for the Democratic candidate jumped from a 60-39% margin for Kerry in 2004 to a 76-22% margin for Obama in 2008.

While it is possible that these trends will continue over the coming election cycles, there is a segment of the Latino electorate that is clearly up for grabs. Both parties will need to work hard to continue to court the Latino vote, with 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 attract 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}

Immigration Debate – A Key Factor in Shift Toward Democrats

Although immigration is not the number one issue for most Latino voters, it is clearly a defining issue. Like all Americans, the economic crisis continues to be the biggest concern for Latinos voters. However, their closeness to the immigrant experience makes immigration reform a threshold issue for many.

According to a report by the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), "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."^{vii} In a May 2009 poll of Latino voters by Bendixen & Associates, 82% of Latino voters said that the immigration issue is important to them and their families, and 69% said that they personally know someone who is undocumented.^{viii} A November 2009 poll of Latino voters by ImpreMedia, Latino Decisions, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy at the University of New Mexico found that immigration reform was the top issue for foreign-born Latino voters, who make up about 40% of the electorate.^{ix}

An overwhelming 87% of respondents in the Bendixen poll said they would not consider voting for a candidate who was in favor of forcing most of the undocumented population to leave the country.^x The same poll also demonstrated the damage inflicted to the GOP brand image by Republicans' tone on immigration. Only 23% of Bendixen poll respondents trusted congressional Republicans to "do the right thing on the immigration issue," while 60% did not trust the Republicans. Comparatively, by a 69-17% margin, poll respondents trusted Democrats in Congress to do the right thing on immigration and they trusted President Obama on the issue by an 83-10% margin.^{xi}

The immigration issue serves as a way to define the "good guys" and the "bad guys" for Latinos. 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, reinforced the Republicans' challenge stating, "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."^{xii}

Former Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL), also 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."^{xiii}

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

The growth of the Latino electorate is going to be an important factor in an increasing number of congressional races across the country, this year and beyond. Moreover, how both parties handle the issue of comprehensive immigration reform will have a serious impact on Latino political behavior. Do the Democrats advance comprehensive immigration reform this year as promised, or do they push the issue off for the future? If they wait, will delay dampen enthusiasm for Democrats among the Latino electorate, and impact key races? Does the Republican Party "sue for peace" and embrace a more inclusive stance on immigration reform in order to compete for these voters, as some in the party have advised? Or does the GOP continue to embrace a restrictionist agenda, ignoring the demographic and political realities of a growing electorate that is gaining stature and getting energized?

The role of Latinos in American politics is only going to grow in importance as the 2010 Census and subsequent reapportionment process gets underway.^{xiv} 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 five 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 rather than looking to the future, politicians are notoriously reliable for looking only as far as their next re-election campaigns. Interestingly, it is in both parties' interests to advance comprehensive immigration reform this year.

If the Democratic Party wants to energize, mobilize, and consolidate the Latino vote, it should keep its promise on immigration reform, and put forward a solution that works for Latino families and all Americans. This will galvanize the Latino electorate and show them that the Democratic Party is advancing practical solutions to a threshold issue.

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 anti-immigrant forces driving this strategy are all bark and no bite. They might have sway in a few Republican primaries, but they do not win general elections, and they actually put moderate districts in play when the most extreme candidate wins the GOP primary. If the Republican Party were to change course on immigration, and allow for a diversity of opinion among its ranks, it would go a long way toward rehabilitating its image—not only with Latino voters, but with business-oriented Republicans and Independent voters who want policymakers to offer practical solutions, not just heated rhetoric.

As this report and NCLR's analysis lay out, an important segment of the Latino vote is in play, and Republicans have a chance to reverse their steep decline if they get the issues right. In California, Latino support for Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's reelection campaign jumped from 31% in 2003 to 39% in 2006, after Schwarzenegger expressed support for comprehensive immigration reform and made a dedicated outreach effort to Latinos in the state.^{xv} Failure to change their brand on immigration, however, will mean an increasing number of Congressional seats, statewide races, and entire segments of the Electoral College become out of reach for the GOP almost overnight.

Latino voters' potential as political kingmakers is apparent while scanning the national political landscape, but the 2010 mid-term elections are all about the individual Senate and House races in play. 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 their influence in 2010. Following are snapshots of key contests in states where Latinos will make a difference this year. The analysis covers forty gubernatorial, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House races in twelve states where Latino voters matter most, including twenty-nine House, eight Senate, and three gubernatorial contests.

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 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%

It was expected that Senator John McCain would win his home state in the 2008 Presidential election, but his margin of victory (54-45%) was much lower than anticipated. According to exit polling, Latinos represented 14.8% of the Arizona electorate and voted for Obama by a margin of 56% to McCain’s 41%.

In a border state where immigration is a top concern, 2010 candidates’ positions on the issue could be a decisive factor in Latino voter turnout and candidate support.

U.S. Senate

Senator John McCain is running for reelection to his fifth term to the United States Senate. Despite his overall popularity among Arizona voters, McCain has three announced primary challengers and possibly two others who have yet to announce. Co-founder of the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps (MCDC), Chris Simcox; and U.S. Navy veteran and businessman Jim Deakin have both put their hats into the ring for the Republican slot, and former Congressman J.D. Hayworth is expected to officially announce his candidacy soon.

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 first 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 and Congress should take steps to secure the border first. Currently, his 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.”^{xvi}

As founder of the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps, a vigilante group operating on the Southern border, Simcox is an ardent opponent of comprehensive immigration reform. In his campaign website, he states he “will not reward those who have come to our country illegally with the precious gift of American citizenship, by granting them any form of amnesty.”^{xvii}

As former Member of Congress, J.D. Hayworth built a consistent anti-immigrant voting record and was the only Member of Congress to vote against the notorious “Sensenbrenner bill” in 2005 because it was not tough enough on undocumented immigrants. Hayworth was given an award for this stance by the Federation for American Immigration Reform^{xviii}, an organization that has been labeled a “hate group” by the Southern Poverty Law Center^{xix}. After losing his seat in Congress to Democrat Harry Mitchell in 2006, Hayworth became a radio host and continued to advocate mass deportation policies. On his official website, he has outlined twenty-eight reasons for “killing” the 2007 comprehensive immigration reform bill.^{xx}

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

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.”^{xxi}

Kirkpatrick’s possible Republican challengers include Arizona state Senator Rusty Bowers and attorney Bradley Beauchamp. On Bowers’ campaign website he states, “My main effort will be to focus like a laser beam on SECURING THE BORDER. Until that is accomplished every other responsible course of action is undermined.”^{xxii}

Both Bowers and Beauchamp attended the Payson Tea Party Sons and Daughters of Liberty/KCMA candidates’ forum where they addressed immigration. Referring to undocumented immigrants crossing the border, Bowers stated, “We must stop them by all means necessary.” Responding to the same immigration question, Beauchamp said: “The power (of Congress) is derived from the consent of the governed. The governed should pull their consent through the electoral process. Those making the rules are not following the rules,” he said. He added the nation’s indebtedness and open borders are also critical issues.^{xxiii}

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 has announced that he will retire at the end of this term, opening this seat for the 2010 midterm elections.

Republicans who have announced their candidacy include state Representative Sam Crump, state Senator Jim Waring, state Senator Pamela Gorman, and Paradise Valley Mayor Vernon Parker. The only announced Democratic candidate is attorney Jon Hulburd, but local Democrats are hoping Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon will throw his hat in the ring.

On his campaign website, state Representative Crump states, "When I was elected in 2006, I promised to do something about illegal immigration. I was proud to work on the employer sanctions law that we passed last year."^{xxiv} When state Senator Pamela Gorman first ran for the state legislature in 2004, she was interviewed by the Arizona Conservative and asked what the top issues facing the state were. In her response, she included immigration, stating, "Illegal immigration issues are multifaceted and have many ramifications ranging from increasing health care costs, encumbering our educational facilities, and the severe strain placed on our criminal justice system. When crimes are perpetrated by those entering our country illegally, they are in fact, never first offenses. The first criminal act was unlawful entry into the United States."^{xxv}

Arizona has a late primary scheduled in August, and the rest of the candidates in both the Republican and Democratic fields have not mentioned the immigration issue.

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

John McCain won this central Arizona district, 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.

Congressman Mitchell is running for reelection and is being challenged on the Republican side by his 2008 opponent, Maricopa County Treasurer David Schweikert as well as Scottsdale businessman Jim Ward.

Immigration is not mentioned in Mitchell's Congressional or campaign websites, but 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."^{xxvi} 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."^{xxvii}

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."^{xxviii}

In the 2008 campaign, Schweikert portrayed Mitchell as weak on immigration control, citing Mitchell's strong support for comprehensive immigration reform. Much like this year's campaign, in 2008 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.^{xxix}

Jim Ward's campaign website states: "We have a severe problem in this country and more specifically, here in Arizona. We have an illegal population that is, in fact, a burden on society because they are receiving and using government services such as schools and health care at our expense. We have a crime problem in the Phoenix metro area due to drug cartels infiltrating this country. In addition, we have a border that is not secured, not only to illegal immigration but also to terrorist activities that threaten our country. We have not dealt with this issue properly at the federal level through reform nor have we actively pursued existing law to counter this issue. And, what has been lacking is a positive immersion component to any reform. I do not support instant amnesty. I do not support granting illegal aliens social security benefits or any benefits they have not earned legally."^{xxx}

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%. Incumbent Democratic Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords won reelection in 2008 with 54.72%. Latinos in this district are 11.79% of registered voters.

In 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."^{xxxi} 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."^{xxxii}

Republicans challenging Giffords include Arizona state Senator Jonathan Paton, Brian Miller, an Air Force Reserves instructor pilot; Jesse Kelly, a construction company executive and former Marine; and veteran Andy Goss.

State Senator Patton’s campaign website states: “Since 2005, Jonathan has fought for his community at the state Capitol, championing tax cuts for families to grow the economy, policies to crack down on illegal immigration and sweeping reforms to the state’s dysfunctional Child Protective Services system.” At a local Republican meeting in Thunder Mountain, AZ, Giffords’ four Republican challengers gathered to answer questions on a number of policy issues. At this event, Paton said he “helped pass a state law to go after businesses that knowingly hire illegal immigrants and does not support amnesty.”^{xxxiii}

In his campaign website, Brian Miller lays out his position on immigration, stating: “We cannot secure our borders until we minimize the illegal immigration problem. To do that, Congress should: Demand the enforcement of existing laws to the maximum extent possible. Deny federal welfare for those here illegally, to sanctuary cities, and to nations whose citizens come here illegally. Deny “anchor-baby” and chain migration by clarifying the 14th amendment. Deny amnesty. Create a robust, market-based, legal immigration system. Create an accountable, employer-based, temporary worker program.”^{xxxiv}

Jesse Kelly’s 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.”^{xxxv} Andy Goss states: “We must insist our laws are enforced regarding our borders. People who are here illegally should not be rewarded with any sort of amnesty or benefits or a job. When caught, they should be returned to their country of origin. Those companies that hire illegal aliens should be punished and punished severely. This will result in attrition. If there are no jobs available for the illegals, they will leave on their own. Sanctuary cities like San Francisco and others should lose ALL federal funding. The E-Verify system should be law.”^{xxxvi}

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.”^{xxxvii} According to polling by Bendixen & Associates, 87% of Latino voters refuse to even consider voting for a candidate who advocates mass deportation of undocumented workers.^{xxxviii} Lately some Republican candidates, such as Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman, have attempted to adopt a more immigrant-friendly approach.

Governor

After serving two terms as governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger is term limited, leaving an open gubernatorial race in 2010. Barack Obama handily defeated John McCain in the state by a margin of 61% to 37%, and Democrats typically do well in the state. But statewide races are expected to be much harder fought this year, so California’s 21.1% Latino voters will be a key constituency for the candidates. Current state attorney general and former governor Jerry Brown is the expected nominee for the Democrats, while former E-Bay CEO Meg Whitman is the current frontrunner for the Republican nomination.

Meg Whitman has stated that it is “simply not practical” to deport the estimated 12.5 million illegal immigrants living and working in the United States. She said the solution is to find a mechanism that allows them to live here legally. “Can we get a fair program where people stand at the back of the line, they pay a fine, they do some things that would ultimately allow a path to legalization?” she asked.^{xxxix}

In May 2007, during the debate over comprehensive immigration reform in the U.S. Senate, Attorney General Jerry Brown and then CNN host Lou Dobbs debated the issue on Wolf Blitzer’s *The Situation Room*. Brown stated, “Well, I mean, that’s part of a compromise to come up with a program that will put people on a path to citizenship. And it certainly is part of some compromise. That’s an element that you can’t take off the table.”^{xl}

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, along with former Congressman Tom Campbell, California Assembly member Chuck DeVore and former Assembly member Doug La Malfa are running for the Republican nomination. Latino turnout in this race will be critical. According to

Mark DiCamillo, the Field Director of a recent poll in California, “a low Latino and minority voter turnout could doom the Boxer and Brown campaigns.”^{xli}

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.”^{xlii}

According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, Fiorina said she supports "controlling the border" and establishing a better temporary worker program, but she declined to say whether she would vote to create a path to citizenship for millions of illegal immigrants now in the country.^{xliii}

Tom Campbell, former congressman and professor at Chapman University School of Law, announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate in January 2010. Campbell served in the U.S. House of Representatives, first representing California’s 12th Congressional District from 1989-1993 and then the 15th Congressional District from 1995-2001. In 1992, Campbell ran unsuccessfully for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate seat eventually won by Barbara Boxer. In 2000, he again ran for a seat in the U.S. Senate. While he won the GOP nomination, he was easily defeated incumbent Senator Dianne Feinstein. While he initially announced an exploratory committee to run for governor of California in 2010, Campbell eventually announced he would run for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate.

On his campaign website, Campbell states that he believes that “those who broke our laws to enter our country should not be permitted to stay. Amnesty programs invite future illegal entry...It is long overdue for us to punish the employer who breaks the law, as well as the illegal alien, and to secure our border with a fence enforced by our National Guard. Californians deserve an immigration policy that enforces its laws and protects its citizens.”^{xliv}

Assembly member DeVore, states that “any changes to our immigration laws must be fair to those who are following the rules overseas while honoring rule of law. Allowing a mass amnesty would violate these principles and would be grossly unfair to people living overseas who have been patiently following the rules in trying to come to America legally.”^{xlv} Speaking at a campaign stop in December 2009, Assemblyman La Malfa stated he “feels the government needs to enforce border control, yet still allow people to come into the country to work on authorized documentation.”^{xlvi}

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 County. President Obama narrowly won this district with 49.3% to John McCain's 48.8%. Lungren's main Democratic opponent is Indian-born physician Amerish Bera.

Lungren was a cosponsor of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 or the Simpson-Mazzoli Act, 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 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."^{xlvi} In polling conducted by Benenson Strategy Group in 2009, though, a majority of CA-3 voters supported passage of comprehensive immigration reform.^{xlviii}

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."^{xlx}

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 a crowded field of Republicans, including wine grape grower Brad Goehring; Values Advocacy Council President Larry Pegram; former U.S. Marshal Tony Amador; high school teacher Jeff Takada; former telecommunications executive David Bernal; businesswoman Elizabeth Emken; and Robert Beadles, a construction company owner.ⁱ

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."ⁱⁱ

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 County 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 Hendrick who has announced he will seek a rematch.

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.”^{lii}

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 in 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.”^{liii}

Bono Mack is facing Palm Springs Mayor and Democrat Steve Pougnet and a possible rematch from 2008 Democratic nominee Julie Borstein. There is no information available regarding their positions or views on immigration as of this writing.

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%, 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. Republicans Scott McInnis, a former Congressman, and businessman Dan Maes announced their candidacies, and Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper (D) also announced his intention to run for the governor's seat.

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."^{liv}

While McInnis, the GOP frontrunner, has not served in Congress since January 2005, his views on immigration issues in the state have recently been laid out in his Platform for Prosperity which has been endorsed by his one-time opponent, Senate Minority Leader Josh Penry, former Congressman Tom Tancredo, and former Governor Bill Owens. The Platform states a commitment to "support a mandatory workplace verification mechanism that will assist employers in ensuring that their employees are in the United States legally; oppose so-called 'sanctuary' policies, which violate state and federal law; and work to block the award of state grant dollars to any local government enacting such a policy."^{lv}

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 has been challenged for the Democratic nomination by former State House Speaker Andrew Romanoff. The race for the Republican nomination is a crowded field, including former Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton, Weld County District Attorney Kenneth Buck, and former state senator Tom Wiens.

Polling for the primaries show that Senator Bennet and Former Lieutenant Governor Norton are the frontrunners for their respective parties' nominations, but there are large portions of undecided voters in each race. Polls for the general election 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. The Senator's campaign website states that it is "time for practical, comprehensive reform that fixes our immigration system as a whole -- enhancing border security and creating sound policy solutions for undocumented immigration."^{lvi} 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.

Former House Speaker Andrew Romanoff has stated that he supports comprehensive immigration reform, but there is no mention of it on his website. He did preside over a special session of the State House of Representatives which passed a legislative package including mandatory employer verification of workers' employment eligibility, random audits of employers, prohibiting issuance of drivers' licenses or permits to undocumented immigrants, and imposing strict new documentation requirements for public benefits.

Among Republicans, Norton and Buck share similar views on immigration. Norton states that she will "make securing our borders and ending illegal immigration a priority." Her campaign website also states that she opposes "amnesty for illegal immigrants already in our country."^{lvii} 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^{lviii}, states that "we must enforce the laws that are already on the books to deal with illegal immigration,"^{lix} on his website.

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. On the Republican side, University of Colorado Regent Tom Lucero, State Representative Cory Gardner, Fort Collins City Councilman Diggs Brown, and Dean Madere, a heating company worker, are running.

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 to have a visa system in place to make sure that these industries can get the workers they need legally so that our crops are not dying on the vine."^{lx}

The Republican candidates share similar positions which call on the federal government to enforce the current immigration laws and oppose amnesty. According to Tom Lucero's website, he believes that "we have to close our borders. The federal government needs to do its job if it will not allow the states to act. However, the flow of those coming here illegally will not stop until we remove the incentives: we must stop providing benefits, education, and hold accountable those who employ them."^{lxi}

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."^{lxii}

Councilman Diggs Brown states that he looks at illegal immigration as a national security issue. “We should know who’s coming across our borders. I would increase border security and give our border agents the resources they need to protect us. We must streamline our legal immigration process and expand our work visa programs so that there’s less incentive for people to come here illegally.”^{lxiii}

Dean Madere’s position on the issue focuses on enforcement. “We need to enforce our laws on immigration. What is the point to having a law if it is not enforced? The number of legal immigrants can be debated, and even a guest worker program, but our laws should not.”^{lxiv}

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 is now the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination, while the Republican field includes former U.S. Congressman Rob Simmons, Former CEO of World Wrestling Entertainment Linda McMahon, and businessman and former Ron Paul advisor, Peter Schiff.

Very little is known about any of the candidates’ positions on immigration. Yet, while in the House of Representatives, Rob Simmons’ record includes a vote for the controversial Sensenbrenner bill, H.R. 4437.

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

Gaining 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 a crowded field of possible GOP challengers, including state Senator Dan DeBicella, former State Senator Rob Russo, businessman and entrepreneur Rob Merkle, non-profit executive Will Gregory, and former mayoral candidate Rick Torres. At a Republican candidates' forum in January 2010, all of the candidates were asked about their positions on illegal immigration.^{lxv}

At the forum, Rob Merkle stated: "We need to enforce the laws that are already on the books. We're not doing that right now. People talk about deporting immigrants who are already here. We are not going to get rid of 20 million illegal immigrants; however we can put into place a policy that is not amnesty, that imposes penalties for back taxes, costs for their citizenship, requirements that they learn English and know our laws and know their civics and then become citizens. If they haven't done that or if they are criminals, if they are engaged in illicit activity, if they're on the government dole and they're just lazy, get them out."

Will Gregory said: "We cannot selectively enforce our laws. They are on the books. We need to make sure that we go to the root cause. We need to make sure that employers aren't violating our laws by knowingly employing illegal immigrants." Rob Russo said: "We just simply can't forgive people who came here and broke our laws. If we are holding open the golden door of legal immigration, we have to close the door of illegal immigration."

Rick Torres stated: "I am in favor of putting up massive walls so that we can take control of our immigration. However, with the 20 million or so here today, I must say that pragmatically speaking, you are not going to get those folks out of here in a way that is acceptable to the world economy, to world opinion. So my recommendation is a blue card that says to the illegal immigrant, you are here illegally and you have to get out to get a green card."

State Senator 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."

FLORIDA

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
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 McCain’s 48.4%. Given their substantial numbers at 12.8%, Latino voters clearly matter in Florida. 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.

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. Former Florida House Speaker Marco Rubio, born in Miami to Cuban immigrant parents, also announced he would be running and challenged Crist for the Republican nomination. On the Democratic side, Florida Congressman Kendrick Meek is the frontrunner.

Governor Crist has a mixed record on immigration reform. While he supported Senator Martinez’ efforts to enact comprehensive immigration reform in 2006, recently he has taken a harder line on the issue. After announcing his candidacy, Rubio took a hard line as well, 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.”^{lxvi} His campaign website goes further stating, “If I had been in the Senate at the time, I would have opposed the McCain-Kennedy bill.”^{lxvii}

While both Republican candidates are tacking right on immigration before the GOP primary, this stance could be harmful during the general election. Congressman Meek, on the other hand, has consistently supported comprehensive immigration reform. He is currently an original cosponsor of the immigration reform bill authored by Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL)^{lxviii}. 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.”^{lxix}

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

Barack Obama won Florida's 8th Congressional district with 52% of the vote. In Congressional race, 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."^{lxx}

Grayson's Republican challengers include former pilot Dan Fanelli, GOP activist Patricia Sullivan, physician Ken Miller, former GOP congressional candidate Todd Long, and entrepreneur Armando Gutierrez. Long, a conservative author and radio show host, is the most outspoken candidate on immigration issues and states on his campaign website, "Sadly 12 to 20 or more illegal immigrants reside in the nation many delivering 'anchor babies' destroying the fabric of the nation and creating an unaffordable economic burden on us citizens, while greatly increasing gang, drug and criminal activity. The Federation for American Immigration Reform estimates the cost to the U.S. taxpayers of the illegal population is \$36 billion annually for just primary and secondary education, medical care in emergency rooms and incarceration."^{lxxi}

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. Announced Republicans include former state Representative Dennis Ross; Polk County Commissioner Randy Wilkinson; and banker Thomas Snyder. The Democratic hopefuls include 2008 nominee Doug Tudor, a retired Naval officer; and Polk County Elections Supervisor Lori Edwards.

Democrat Doug Tudor states in his campaign website: "Global terrorism forces us to take immediate and decisive action to secure our borders with Mexico and Canada. We also must take a measured approach to our refining our immigration policy. Doug will vote for legislation which recognizes the enormous benefit of orderly legal immigration and which treats all immigrants in a humane and dignified manner"

There is no available information on immigration positions for Republicans Ross, Wilkinson, and Snyder or Democrat Lori Edwards.^{lxxii}

U.S. House: Florida's 16th Congressional District

Latinos comprise 7.96% of registered voters in this South Central Florida district which stretches from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Coast. John McCain won the district with 52% of the vote to Obama's 47%.

Republican Tom Rooney was elected in 2008 with 60.09% of the vote. Rooney, who is a member of the restrictionist Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus, is being challenged by Democrat and St. Lucie County Commissioner Chris Craft.

Rooney's website states: "Congressman Rooney believes we should do a better job enforcing current immigration laws, we need to continue to work to secure our borders and crack down on illegal aliens. Rooney supports the continued construction of the fence on the Southwest border."^{lxxiii} His website also states: "Congressman Rooney opposes amnesty in any form for illegal aliens. We are nation of immigrants but we are also a nation of laws. Rooney will not support rewarding illegal behavior with amnesty when thousands of other immigrants are playing by the rules and going through the proper channels to become American citizens. Rooney also supports adding more border patrol agents and finishing the border fence along the southern border."^{lxxiv}

No information was found on Chris Craft's immigration position.

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 Colombian-American banker Annette Tadeo, but won her re-election 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 has no announced challengers for the 2010 elections as of this writing.

U.S. House: Florida's 21st Congressional District

Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart has represented the 21st Congressional District since 1993. The district includes a small portion of Northern Miami and several northeast suburbs. The district, arguably the most Republican-leaning in South Florida, is composed of 55.6% registered Hispanic voters and John McCain won it with 51% to Barack Obama's 49%. In 2008, former

Hialeah mayor Raul Martinez ran against Diaz-Balart. Both are Cuban-American. Diaz-Balart was reelected with 58% of the vote to Martinez' 42%.

Diaz-Balart has also been a consistent supporter of comprehensive reform, having cosponsored reform bills and voted against anti-immigrant measures such as the "Sensenbrenner bill" which would have criminalized the undocumented immigrants and the clergy, nurses, doctors and teachers who assist them. No candidates have announced their intent to challenge Lincoln Diaz-Balart as of this writing.

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%. 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 with 11.23% Latino registered voters.

While little has been reported on Kosmas' views about immigration reform, her Republican challengers have made their views known. Anesthesiologist Ken Miller stated in his campaign website "I do not believe that we should reward illegal immigrants with amnesty. Nor should we give people, whose first act in the U.S. is breaking our law, a fast track to citizenship. Had I been in Congress in 2007 during the McCain Amnesty Plan, I would NOT have voted for it."^{lxxv}

Winter Park City Commissioner Karen Diebel and State Representative Sandy Adams are also challenging Kosmas. In an interview with the Baltimore Examiner, Adams recently 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."

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

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, the brother of Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart, has represented Florida's 23rd Congressional District since 2003. The district, composed of 52.55% of registered Hispanic 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.

While he has no announced challengers as of this writing, Mario Diaz-Balart's opponent in 2008 may seek a rematch. Diaz-Balart has maintained a consistent record of support for comprehensive immigration reform. In the 110th Congress, he cosponsored H.R. 1645, the STRIVE Act, a comprehensive reform proposal. In 2008, the *St. Petersburg Times* called Diaz-Balart "a Cuban-American who bucked his party leadership to support McCain and Martinez's immigration bill."^{lxxvi}

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, versus 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 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.

The Democrats have nominated Illinois State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias; The Republican candidate is Congressman Mark Kirk.

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.”^{lxxvii}

Congressman Kirk on the other hand has built a consistent voting record opposing common sense immigration reform and voting for enforcement only legislation, including the controversial “Sensenbrenner bill” in the 109th Congress. He has also 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.”^{lxxviii}

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. The district has 6.2% registered Latino voters, and the 2010 match-up is likely 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.”^{lxxxix}

Robert Dold stated in the elections 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.”^{lxxx}

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 Kimzinger.

Halvorson does not mention immigration on her Congressional or campaign website, 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.^{lxxxii}

While Adam Kimzinger does not mention immigration on his campaign’s website, he did respond 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.”^{lxxxii}

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 the registered voters. Republican Congresswoman Judy Biggert won reelection to her 6th 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.”^{lxxxiii} 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.”^{lxxxiv}

No information Scott Harper’s immigration position was found.

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

Congressman Bill Foster represents Illinois’ 14th Congressional, which includes north central parts of the state and some of Chicago’s western suburbs and has 10.2% registered Latino voters. 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%. He then went on to win for a full term in November with 58%. Barack Obama won this district with 55% of the vote.

Foster notes the need for comprehensive reform in 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.”^{lxxxv}

In 2010, Foster 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.”^{lxxxvi}

NEVADA

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
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 there. 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) is facing some of the lowest approval ratings of his tenure and of the state's history. He is facing a challenge within his own party from former federal judge and former Nevada Attorney General Brian Sandoval, and from North Las Vegas Mayor Mike Montandon. Among Democrats, Clark County commissioner Rory Reid is the only announced candidate. Reid also happens to be the son of U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who is up for reelection this year.

Jim Gibbons' campaign website does not feature his position on immigration. Yet having represented Nevada's 2nd Congressional District from 1997-2006, he build up a consistently restrictionist record culminating in his vote for the controversial Sensenbrenner bill, H.R. 4437, in the 109th Congress. Meanwhile, 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* he does not favor that approach stating, "With tighter border control and stepped up enforcement on employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers, the problem would subside."^{lxxxvii} Sandoval's campaign website goes on to say, "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."^{lxxxviii} 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.

Montandon's campaign website does not mention his position on immigration, but while addressing a group of campaign supporters in December 2009, he was asked about his position by Nevada Republican Assemblyman Bob Beers. Asking Montandon if he would have supported and signed legislation he introduced which would have punished employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers, Montandon said, "Absolutely, that's what we need to have."^{lxxxix}

U.S. Senate

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is running for reelection in 2010, in what is expected to be a very close race. At this point, the field of Republicans seeking to challenge Reid is quite crowded, and includes former Assemblywoman Sharron Angle, Nevada Republican Party Chairwoman and former State Senator Sue Lowden, and real estate owner Danny Tarkanian.

Senate Majority Leader Reid has, on several occasions, expressed his desire to make another attempt at passing comprehensive immigration reform this year. On his Senate website, Reid states that he remains “committed to comprehensive immigration reform and hope that we are able to enact it soon.”^{xc}

On his campaign website, Danny Tarkanian acknowledges the problem of illegal immigration, but states that the best way to solve it is to “enforce our immigration laws even if that means a physical barrier or electronic fence at our borders.”^{xci} While Sue Lowden does not currently highlight immigration on her campaign website, when John McCain won enough convention delegates to secure the 2008 Republican presidential nomination, she thanked Reps. Tom Tancredo and Duncan Hunter, “whose campaigns helped focus the nation on the very serious issue of illegal immigration.” Assemblywoman Sharron Angle states that she opposes “amnesty proposals, which send a ruinous signal that breaking the law is acceptable in our country.”^{xcii}

Given the state’s sizeable Latino population, these voters will play an important role in the Senate campaign and could be a decisive factor in whether the Senate Majority leader returns for his fifth term.

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.^{xciii}

Titus’ likely 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.”^{xciv}

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. Senate

After then-Senator Hillary Clinton retired to become Secretary of State, New York Governor David Patterson appointed the second term Congresswoman Kirsten Gillibrand (D) to the open Senate seat. Gillibrand will run again in 2010 for a full term to the Senate. The state is reliably Democratic in presidential elections, with Barack Obama winning with 63% to John McCain's 36%. Yet given that the current political climate for Democratic incumbents is not easy and that Senator Gillibrand is still relatively unknown statewide, this race is likely to be hotly contested. In such an atmosphere, the state's 10.9% Latino voters will be crucial to any electoral victory.

Senator Gillibrand's record on immigration while she served in the House was conservative, but she has changed her views on comprehensive immigration reform since becoming a statewide figure. According to her campaign website, she is "committed to working with President Barack Obama to fix America's broken immigration system-creating a real path to earned citizenship with strict accountability and providing fair labor rights to all workers."^{xv} Additionally, Gillibrand has worked with New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez to author a bill that would streamline reunification of families separated by outdated visa laws, and has cosponsored the DREAM Act.

Gillibrand may be challenged for the Democratic nomination by former Tennessee Congressman Harold Ford, who settled in New York following a failed campaign for a U.S. Senate seat from Tennessee. Ford's record on immigration while in the House was also quite conservative, having voted for the Sensenbrenner criminalization bill in 2005. As a Senate candidate, he criticized Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN) from the right on immigration issues.

On the Republican side, potential candidates include former New York Governor George Pataki and current gubernatorial candidate and former Congressman Rick Lazio.

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 growing in importance for the growing immigrant population in his district, which comprises one of New York City’s boroughs. During his State of the City address in January, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced he would make comprehensive immigration reform a major issue for his third term. Advocates in New York are lobbying their Members of Congress, including McMahon, to support legislative efforts to enact reform this year. When asked about the issues, 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."

Information on Allegretti and Grimm, the Republican hopefuls, is not currently available.

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 6.38% Latino 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.’"^{xvii} It is also important to note that 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, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act of 2009.

No information is available on Jon Barela's position on immigration as of this writing.

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 35.55% registered Hispanics. John McCain narrowly won this district with 50% of the vote, yet Teague won his seat in Congress during the same elections with 55% of the vote. Teague is running for reelection and is expected to run against the former Republican representative from the 2nd District, Stevan Pearce.

Addressing the status of undocumented immigrants in 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."^{xcvii}

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."^{xcviii} 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.^{xcix}

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”^c for undocumented immigrants, but was unable to turn his crusade against immigrants into electoral victory.

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.”^{ci} 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, has brought national attention to the governor’s race. On the Democratic ticket, former Houston mayor Bill White has emerged as the front runner 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 where a candidate needs only a plurality of votes to win.

Republicans Perry and Hutchison share similar positions on immigration. Hutchison points to her conservative track record on her website, including her votes against comprehensive immigration reform in 2006 and 2007, stating “Immigration is a critical part of our national heritage, but America is a nation based upon the rule of law and we must not encourage illegal behavior through amnesty. Tolerating illegal immigration serves only to undermine the law and threatens our national security.”^{cii} Governor Perry’s campaign website lists similar record touting increases in state-funded border operations.^{ciii}

White has less of a track record on federal immigration reform, but has dealt with local hot button issues like the role of 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.’”^{civ}

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, while four Republicans have announced their candidacy: his 2008 opponent, Rob Curnock, Timothy Delasandro, Dave McIntyre, and 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 also states that he believes “our nation's first priority is to secure our borders and to protect our homeland and [Edwards] strongly opposes amnesty in any form.”^{cv}

Republican candidates’ positions on immigration are varied. Curnock, a Waco businessman, states that as Congressman he would be “fighting to enforce existing immigration laws, increasing manpower, and supporting innovative technology-driven methods to keep our nation’s borders secure.”^{cvi} Delasandro, a nursing professional, states on his campaign website that, “once the border is sealed tight and incentives for illegal entry are removed, I would favor looking at ways to increase LEGAL immigration, as needed. I do not favor amnesty in any way.”^{cvii} On his web site, Army veteran and national security analyst Dave McIntyre says that illegal immigration is “a crime, it ought to be treated as a crime, and “anchor babies” ought not to be allowed to benefit from the crime their parents committed.”^{cviii}

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, was narrowly won by 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 and former CIA officer William Hurd are seeking the Republican nomination to challenge Rodriguez in November's midterm election.

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 current 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 opponents stress their support for immigration enforcement. In his campaign website, William Hurd states: "Illegal immigration is by definition illegal, and must be stopped. While we are a country of immigrants, we are also a country of laws, and illegal immigration creates countless problems for our government and citizens. We must continue to support and streamline the legal immigration process, so that individuals who will be a benefit to our society and economy are able to enter. But, we must also enforce and secure our borders, before our borders become meaningless."^{ciX} Similarly, Quico Canseco states on his website: "Beyond the threat of terrorism, our security is also threatened 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."^{cx}

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 with 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 Democratic majority in the state’s delegation to the House of Representatives. The state’s growing Latino and immigrant population 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.^{cxix}

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.

Two Republicans are challenging Connolly in 2010—businessman Keith Fimian, his 2008 opponent, and GOP Fairfax County Supervisor Pat Herrity.

Connolly’s congressional and campaign websites do not feature his positions on immigration reform, but he is 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."^{cxix}

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.”^{cxiii}

Keith Fimian’s current campaign website does not cover his positions on immigration. However, his 2008 campaign website stated: “We always have and always will welcome immigrants who want to play by the rules and share the American dream. We welcome more immigrants to our shores than almost any other country; and this is one of our strengths... In order to preserve our standard of living and our security, we need to regain control of our borders and we need to know who is entering our country. Congress and the current administration have not done nearly enough to address this problem. Biometric technology should be used that will enable us to know who is here, and whether they have overstayed their welcome. America should also have a zero-tolerance policy towards illegal immigrants who commit crimes.”^{cxiv}

Pat Herrity’s website is more detailed, stating: “Immigration reform must start with securing our border. Our lack of a secured border is a national security issue first and foremost and it must be dealt with quickly and correctly. As a Supervisor in Fairfax County, I have pushed to ensure illegal aliens that have committed crimes are turned over to proper authorities to be deported. As a congressman, I will ensure that we help stop illegal immigration and instead work to develop a system that protects our borders and allows for legal immigration and naturalization.”^{cxv}

LATINO VOTERS: KEY CONSTITUENCY IN GROWING NUMBER OF DISTRICTS

Nearly one in five Congressional Districts has a Latino population that is 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 outlines how Latinos will have an impact in close races around the country, the following chart shows the role Latino voters played in electing the Democratic majority in other districts.

Additionally, twenty-five Republican Members of Congress, concentrated in such states as CA, FL, and TX, 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 25% or greater Latino populations, 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	Raymond 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](#)]

CONCLUSION

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. These voters are poised to prove pivotal yet again in 2010 in a number of battleground House, Senate, and gubernatorial races across the nation, and are a core constituency in scores of less competitive districts as well.

Immigration reform—and the way the two parties’ handled the congressional debates in 2006 and 2007 and in their campaigns—was a key factor in influencing these voters’ choices for political office in 2008. Polling of Latino voters shows that the Republican Party’s image has been severely damaged by GOP lawmakers’ demagoguery on the issue, and that the vast majority of Latinos simply will not vote for a candidate who advocates mass deportation instead of comprehensive immigration reform.

That said, if Democrats fail to show real leadership and keep their campaign promises to advance comprehensive immigration reform, they run the risk of alienating Latinos or facing depressed Latino turnout during the crucial 2010 elections.

Politicians of both parties also need to approach the issue responsibly during their election campaigns. Heated rhetoric coupled with unrealistic policy solutions like mass deportation will turn off both the crucial Latino voting bloc and other swing voters, who are tired of Washington policymakers talking tough, but delivering little.

In short, Latino voters will be a powerful force in 2010, and candidates who want to court their vote need to do more than say a few words in Spanish—they need to support policies that recognize the contributions of Latinos and welcome immigrant Latinos into the American family.

ⁱ Information on the Latino vote from U.S. Census Bureau, “Reported Voting and Registration of the Total Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2000,” <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting/p20-542.html> and “Reported Voting and Registration of the Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2008,” <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting/cps2008.html>.

ⁱⁱ Information on state-by-state Latino voter turnout from Census Bureau, *ibid*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ronald Brownstein, “The March of Diversity,” *National Journal*, December 19, 2009. http://www.nationaljournal.com/njonline/no_20091219_6555.php.

^{iv} NDN, “Hispanics Rising II,” 2008: <http://ndn.org/paper/2008/hispanics-rising-ii>.

^v America’s Voice, “Anti-Immigrant Ads Don’t Add Up in 2008,” November 4, 2008: <http://www.americasvoiceonline.org/page/content/AttackAds08>

^{vi} CNN, Presidential Election Exit Polls, 2008: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls/#USP00p1>; 2004: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>; 2000: <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2000/>

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- vii National Council of La Raza, *The Latino Electorate: Profiles and Trends*, 2007: <http://www.nclr.org/content/publications/download/46271>.
- viii "National Survey of Hispanic Voters on Immigration Policy," conducted by Bendixen & Associates on behalf of America's Voice, May 18, 2009: http://amvoice.3cdn.net/3c7baeb44f16c977ef_edm6bnqoi.pdf.
- ix Impremedia, *Latino Decisions*, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy at the University of New Mexico poll of Latino registered voters, November 1-16, 2009: <http://www.latinodecisions.com/>.
- x "National Survey of Hispanic Voters on Immigration Policy," conducted by Bendixen & Associates on behalf of America's Voice, May 18, 2009: http://amvoice.3cdn.net/3c7baeb44f16c977ef_edm6bnqoi.pdf.
- xi Bendixen poll.
- xii "The Great Immigration Shootout," America's Majority Foundation: <http://www.amermaj.com/lshootout.pdf>
- xiii NBC, "Meet the Press," Interview with Sen. Mel Martinez, November 9, 2008: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/27629956/page/3/>.
- xiv America's Voice Education Fund, "The New Constituents: How Latino Population Growth Will Shape Congressional Apportionment After the 2010 Census," November 2009: http://www.americasvoiceonline.org/pages/the_new_constituents.
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