

Anti-Immigrant Politics and Lessons for the GOP from California

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1. Background

According to polling data from the California Field Poll, after winning the presidential election in 1980, former California Governor Ronald Reagan raised his share of the Latino vote from 35% to 45% in 1984 while carrying 59% of the entire state. Republicans went on to win the Golden state again in 1988. Since that election, three significant changes have reshaped California politics in a manner that has made the Republican Party nearly irrelevant:

1. The Latino share of the total California electorate has dramatically increased.
2. California Republicans embarked on an anti-immigrant agenda that alienated Latino voters and drove them into the open arms of the Democratic Party.
3. Republicans are unable to compete for California's 55 Electoral College votes, which amounts to 20% of the total 270 necessary to win a presidential election.

As the Latino voter population grows across other states, and a rigorous debate unfolds about immigration reform, we take this opportunity to revisit lessons learned from California. How did California go from a Republican stronghold to a Democratic lock? The answer is clear – anti-immigrant policy and a frustrated and mobilized Latino vote.

It is now well established in both the political science research community and real world campaign politics that the mid-1990s Pete Wilson era of California Republicanism was a historic turning point in the state's politics. Prop. 187, the infamous anti-immigrant ballot measure, which was championed by then Governor Pete Wilson in his re-election bid, resulted in significant backlash and political mobilization among California Latino voters. Following Prop. 187 were additional anti-immigrant measures such as Prop. 209 and Prop. 227 that proposed to outlaw affirmative action and bilingual education. Since 1996 when

Latinos first comprised more than 10% of the state electorate, Latino partisanship has grown to over 70% Democratic. In light of these dynamics, it is little wonder that California has become an easy win for the Democrats?

As Latino voter registration grew in the mid-to-late 1990s, the Republican Party continued to emphasize anti-immigrant ballot measures that led new Latino registrants to check the “Democrat” box on their registration cards. This trend has been clearly documented in political science research (see, Segura, Falcon and Pachon 1999; Ramírez 2002; Barreto and Woods 2005; Barreto, Ramírez, and Woods 2005). For instance, in an analysis of voter registration records in Los Angeles County between 1992 and 1998, Barreto and Woods (2005) found that just 10% of new Latino registrants affiliated with the Republican Party in the aftermath of the three so-called “anti-Latino” propositions in California.

New Latino citizens were flooding the voter rolls in 1996, 1998 and 2000 and they were identifying as Democrat by a nearly 6-to-1 margin. And more importantly, the anti-Latino initiatives motivated many new Latinos to vote. Pantoja, Ramírez, and Segura (2001) found that Latinos who naturalized and registered to vote during the 1990s were significantly more likely to turnout. Likewise, Barreto, Ramírez and Woods (2005) found the best predictor of voter turnout in 1996 and 2000 was whether or not Latinos were newly registered following Prop. 187. The overall result then was more Latinos registering and more Latinos voting as Democrats than in previous years.

However, the 2000 election suggested that Latinos’ aversion to the GOP might be waning. Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush used his closeness and understanding of Latino voters in Texas to rally support for the Republican ticket in the Latino community—quite the opposite of the Republican strategy during California Governor Pete Wilson’s administration from 1990-1998 (Nuño 2007). Even as Bush attempted to introduce a new compassionate face to the Republican Party, the Republican brand continued to be problematic for California Latino voters.

Most notably, a survey conducted by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute during the 2000 election revealed that 53% of Latino voters in California still associated the Republican

Party with former Governor Pete Wilson, a chief proponent of the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 (TRPI 2000). Ten years later when Jerry Brown squared off against Meg Whitman for Governor in 2010, a September 2010 LD survey found that 80% of Latino voters said they were very or somewhat concerned that Whitman had appointed Pete Wilson as a campaign co-chair — 12 years after he had left office! The result of Pete Wilson and Prop. 187 was a lasting legacy of strong support for Democratic candidates in California elections. The two figures below illustrate that as the Latino vote grew in influence, California became a more Democratic state. Most notably, the Latino vote became 10 to 13% more Democratic following the anti-immigrant policies endorsed by the GOP in 1994. In 1992 Democrats won 65% of the Latino vote, in 1996 Democrats won 75% of the Latino vote and by 2012 they were winning 78% of the Latino vote.

In addition to voting in presidential elections, Latinos in California have also become consistent Democratic voters in other statewide elections since the Reagan era. Statewide results indicate that Latinos voted two-to-one on average in support of Democratic candidates for Governor and U.S. Senate for every election between 1992 and 2002 (Barreto and Ramírez in 2004). While some may view the 2003 Gubernatorial Recall election as a potential shift away from the Democratic Party (Marinucci 2003), most analysis now concurs that the circumstances and context of this election were so unique that inferring trends from the 2003 Recall election is not valid, and further that the Republican surge was not long lasting (Kousser 2006). However, the 2003 Recall election does highlight just how important Latino voters are to the Democratic Party in California; in part due to the approximately ten-point drop in Latino support rates for Democratic candidates, Democratic Governor Gray Davis was recalled from office and replaced with Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger (DeSipio and Masuoka 2006). Had Latinos turned out at just slightly greater rates, and voted at their average support rate for the Democratic candidates, Davis would not have been recalled in 2003. While the peculiarities of the 2003 Recall election are unlikely to ever be reproduced in a national presidential election, the outcome reveals that Latinos are a key component to Republican success in California.

Table 1 reports population growth and voter registration growth in California from 1994 to 2004 – the most relevant political years for “lessons learned” – broken down by racial and ethnic group. While overall the state grew by nearly 15% (or 4.6 million people), it was almost entirely driven by Latino and Asian-American growth. Similarly, Latinos and Asian Americans drove voter registration growth in the Golden State. Between 1994 and 2004, the state of California added an estimated 1.8 million newly registered voters, of which 66% were Latino and 23% were Asian, leaving just 11% of new voters that were either White or Black.

	Total	Black	Latino	Asian	White
Population 1994	31,523,000	2,197,155	9,084,787	3,306,782	16,662,672
Population 2004	36,144,000	2,240,928	11,891,376	4,192,704	16,843,104
Growth	4,621,000	43,773	2,806,589	885,922	180,432
Growth Rate	14.7%	2.0%	30.9%	26.8%	1.1%
Voter Reg 1994	14,723,784	957,046	1,766,854	736,189	11,263,695
Voter Reg 2004	16,557,273	993,436	2,980,309	1,159,009	11,424,518
Growth	1,833,489	36,390	1,213,455	422,820	160,824
Growth Rate	12.5%	3.8%	68.7%	57.4%	1.4%

Looking back to the mid-1990s and early 2000s in California politics provides many clear lessons for the Republican Party today. The California in 2012 that delivered 60% of the vote to Obama did not get there by accident. It was not that long ago that California was a winnable state for Republican presidential candidates. The data and story that we review here remind us of the importance of the immigration issue, against the backdrop of a burgeoning Latino electorate. What California Republicans did in 1994-1998 effectively doomed their chances in any future state elections.

Today other states such as Arizona, Texas, or even Virginia and North Carolina face their own immigration politics and a fast growing Latino electorate. Already the lessons of

California appear to be taking hold in neighboring Nevada where Sharron Angle's anti-immigrant bid for the U.S. Senate in 2010 resulted in Democrat Harry Reid's reelection in what was otherwise a strong Republican electoral cycle. The question is whether or not the Republican Party in other critical states, or nationally, wants to remain politically viable? Not just in 2014, but in 2016 and beyond.

2. How badly did Prop. 187 hurt the GOP?

In light of the anti-immigrant policies advocated by Republicans in California throughout the 1990s, the next section provides a detailed analysis of political consequences of this shortsighted strategy. It is well documented by scholars that in the 1990s, the presence of anti-immigrant policies and candidates in California led Latinos to naturalize and vote in record numbers while turning away from the Republican Party. However, a detailed analysis of how this dynamic played out across congressional and state legislative elections in the state has yet to be carried out. In addition, we contend that the consequences of the GOP strategy in California reverberated beyond that state and had a direct impact on politics in other states and the nation. Finally, it is important to emphasize that the political effects of anti-immigrant policies in the 1990s echoed beyond Latinos and this decade. In other words, anti-immigrant policies alienated Latinos *and* Anglos in California; and once activated, the Latino electorate continued voting in record numbers in favor of Democrats in and outside of the Golden State over several election cycles.

3. Congressional Races

We first consider the impact of the Latino vote in California's U.S. House delegation by identifying U.S. House districts where Latino voters could be potential difference makers in the 2014 midterm election and beyond. Nationally, there are 44 Republican held and 61 Democratic held districts where the 2012 Latino voting age population was larger than the 2012 margin of victory. Depending upon the ratio between the Latino voting age population and the incumbent's 2012 margin of victory (as well as the district's 2012 presidential vote), these districts can be placed into one of three tiers.

Table 2: Latino Influence in U.S. House Districts in California

Tier	Member	District	2012 Margin	Obama - Romney	White VAP	Latino VAP
<i>Republican Held Districts</i>						
1	Denham	10	5.4	3.6	51.8	34.9
1	Miller	31	10	16.6	34.4	44.4
2	McKeon	25	9.6	-1.9	50.3	31.5
3	Valadao	21	16	11.1	23.3	65.8
3	Royce	39	16	-3.7	37.1	28.9
3	Issa	49	16	-6.7	65.6	22.2
3	Cook	8	15	-13.9	56	30.3
3	Nunes	22	24	-15	48.1	39.3
3	Calvert	42	21	-15.1	50.8	32.1
<i>Democratic Held Seats</i>						
1	Peters	52	2.4	6.4	64.6	11.5
1	Bera	7	3.4	4	61.2	13.7
1	Swalwell	15	4.2	38.2	40.9	21
1	Brownley	26	5.4	10.3	50.8	38.5
1	Ruiz	36	5.8	3.2	51.9	39.4
1	Waxman	33	8.0	23.8	70.3	10.3
2	Garamendi	3	8.4	11.2	55.1	23.6
2	Capps	24	10	11	62	29
2	McNerney	9	11	17.7	42	32.7
2	Negrete McLeod	35	12	36.8	19.3	64.7
3	Lowenthal	47	13	22.5	38.5	29.6
3	Costa	16	15	19.2	30.2	52.8
3	Roybal-Allard	40	18	65	6.6	84.3
3	Takano	41	18	25.2	30.9	50.2
3	Hahn	44	20	71.1	9	64.5
3	Sherman	30	21	33.2	56.7	24
3	Davis	53	23	25	48	27.7
3	Sanchez	46	28	25.2	22.5	60.9
3	Napolitano	32	31	32.7	21.1	57.8
3	Sanchez	38	35	31.9	21.9	57
3	Vargas	51	43	40.5	17.6	63.9
3	Cardenas	29	48	56.5	21.8	64.1

Given the growth in California's Latino population, the average Latino voting age population (2012) in California's 53 House districts is 34%. This is roughly two and a half times the national average. In 31 California House districts the Latino voting age populations exceeds the 2012 margin of victory. While Democrats represent most of these districts, including six Tier 1 districts (see Table 2), in 2012 Republicans did win nine of these districts. Among these nine, three Republican incumbents appear to be particularly susceptible to the politics of immigration and Latino influence: Denham (CA - 10th) and Miller (CA - 31st), who represent Tier 1 districts, and McKeon (CA - 25th) whose district is classified as Tier 2.

According to data collected by America's Voice, through September 2013, among vulnerable California Republicans only Denham has publicly supported comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship. The three other California House Republicans - Valadao (CA - 10th), Issa (CA - 49th), and Nunes (CA - 22th) - also supporting immigration reform legislation that includes a pathway to citizenship represent large numbers of voting age Latinos, but do not appear vulnerable in 2014.

So while the Republicans' failure to respond constructively to California's changing political demography has cost the party plenty in the last two decades, there still exist contexts where the Latino vote can be decisive. In large part, the continued vulnerability of California's dwindling number of House Republicans is an artifact of the state's 2001 redistricting plan, which was designed to preserve the state's seniority in Congress by protecting incumbents of both parties. As a consequence, just one of California's House seats (the 11th in 2006) changed parties under the old maps; a particularly notable accomplishment given that majority control of the House of Representatives changed parties twice during the decade.

However, with the passage of Proposition 20 in 2010, authority over redistricting was removed from the California Legislature and placed in the hands of a 14-member panel of citizens (the Citizens Redistricting Commission, which also oversees state legislative redistricting). As part of this reform, neither incumbency nor partisanship could be considered in the state's new congressional boundaries. Instead, districts were required to

follow city and county boundaries and wherever possible, preserve neighborhoods and communities of interests.

By removing the political machinations that typically dominate redistricting negotiations, the district boundaries that emerged in California in 2011 are more organic than their progeny and thus, may allow for a truer expression of voters' political preferences than is the norm in House elections. Unfortunately, for Republicans, outside of a dwindling few pockets, the new maps provide another indicator of how little appetite California voters have for the party and its policies. Running in unprotected districts, Republicans lost four times as many House seats in 2012 than during the prior five elections combined; not a promising omen for a delegation whose ranks have dwindled to 15.

4. The State Legislature

The dynamics working against Republicans in California are even more acute in the California Legislature, where after the 2012 election Republicans hold a total of 37 of 120 seats – 12 in the Senate and 25 in the Assembly. The state legislative context is also where the effects of California's open primary, another reform seeking to weaken partisan influences, can be more easily observed. Specifically, California elections, thanks to another 2010 ballot measure, are now two round affairs with all voters and candidates operating in the same pool. The top two vote finishers, regardless of party, move to the second round; a process that ensures a majority winner, but not necessarily two party competition.

As with the state's new redistricting process, the state's primary reforms offer indirect evidence of the GOP's problems this time in terms of the party's capacity to compete. Specifically, in November 2012, all 80 Assembly seats and half of the state's 40 Senate seats were on the ballot. However, just 74% of these contests featured a Republican and Democrat competing on Election Day. In 20 districts, two candidates of the same party faced off (11 Democratic and seven Republican Assembly districts and two Democratic Senate districts). In four other contests Democrats defeated minor party opponents and in two Assembly districts, Democrats ran unopposed. Or put differently, in 19 state legislative elections the Republicans did not even have a candidate. If that was not bad enough, the

politically neutral district boundaries further exposed the GOP diminished standing as the Democrats picked up three additional state Senate seats in 2012.

Given the growth in the state’s Latino population, in 49 of the 74 state legislative districts that were contested by both parties in 2012, the Latino voting age population (2010) exceeds the margin of victory and in over half (64) of the seats in the California legislature the Latino voting age population exceeds either the 2012 margin or the party registration difference between Democrats and Republicans (see Table 3). Yet, as is the case with California’s U.S. House seats, there remain a handful of competitive state legislative districts where Latino voters are positioned to be influential in coming cycles.

Specifically, Table 3 applies the similar methodology used to identify Latino influence districts in our U.S. House analysis to the California Assembly and Senate with three differences. First, we do not incorporate information about the 2012 presidential vote. Second, absent election returns, for the twenty Senate seats that will be on the ballot in 2014, we use voter registration data to estimate competitiveness. A district is considered competitive if the Democratic and Republican voter registration difference is 10 points or less (based upon the California Secretary of State’s February 2013 update). While this measure has obvious limitations, not the least of which is that over 20% of Californians are registered as nonpartisans (just seven percentage points fewer than the GOP), it is sufficient for our purposes. Third, because of data limitations, we use the 2010 Census, as opposed to the 2012 voting age population estimates. Thus, if anything, our analysis underestimates Latino voting age population, and overestimates the white electorate.

Table 3: Latino Influence in California Legislative Districts

Tier	Member	District	2012 Margin	Dem - Rep Registration	White VAP	Latino VAP
<i>Republican Held Districts</i>						
1	Morrell	Assembly 40	0.80	1.59	40.5	37.45
1	Linder	Assembly 60	3.60	-4.68	35.96	47.49
1	Fuller	Senate 18	-	35.31	33.12	51.50
1	Cannella	Senate 12	-	15.79	30.32	59.14
1	Berryhill	Senate 14	-	17.78	21.93	66.27

Tier	Member	District	2012 Margin	Dem – Rep Registration	White VAP	Latino VAP
<i>Republican Held Districts</i>						
2	Gorell	Assembly 44	5.80	1.97	49.59	38.15
2	Nestande	Assembly 42	9.40	-8.17	65.78	24.50
2	Nielsen	Senate 4	-	-6.40	70.39	16.37
2	Huff	Senate 29	10.20	-3.95	35.17	32.36
3	Logue	Assembly 3	11.20	-7.18	70	18.30
3	Mansor	Assembly 74	13.20	-12.85	65.87	13.39
3	Wilk	Assembly 38	13.80	-6.07	58.65	23.19
3	Donnelly	Assembly 33	18.00	-5.71	51.38	33.74
3	Hagman	Assembly 55	19.40	-8.32	36.52	26.86
3	Olsen	Assembly 12	21.20	-5.71	58.31	29.45
3	Achadjian	Assembly 35	22.60	-5.22	61.13	30.05
3	Wagner	Assembly 68	21.60	-16.38	52.3	24.73
3	Waldron	Assembly 75	25.40	-19.78	56.47	30.83
3	Conway	Assembly 26	35.00	-10.21	41.51	51.16
3	Knight	Senate 21	15.20	-1.16	45	36.31
3	Emmerson	Senate 23	12.60	-6.69	51.04	32.82
3	Walters	Senate 37	14.00	-14.53	59.45	18.77
3	Wyland	Senate 38	-	-14.78	63.16	23.30
3	Anderson	Senate 36	-	-16.01	67.04	20.63
3	Vidak	Senate 16	-	-16.16	57.41	30.82

Democratic Held Districts

1	Fox	Assembly 36	1.10	0.32	42.87	37.21
1	Quirk-Silva	Assembly 65	4.00	0.78	35.23	33.94
1	Correa	Senate 34	-	2.64	33.22	41.48
1	Galgiani	Senate 5	1.00	5.41	45.49	32.93
2	Salas	Assembly 32	5.80	19.55	23.46	63.64
2	Fong	Assembly 8	8.60	4.57	65.54	14.73
2	Muratsuchi	Assembly 66	9.60	5.76	49.3	18.59
2	Pavley	Senate 27	7.20	7.95	61.19	22.20
2	Yee	Senate 8	-	-8.69	61.24	24.02
2	Lieu	Senate 28	-	-8.12	53.53	35.32
2	Roth	Senate 31	10.60	2.37	33.16	47.15
3	Jackson	Senate 19	11.40	12.17	47.65	42.49
3	Chau	Assembly 49	12.80	17.19	13.9	29.45
3	Holden	Assembly 41	15.40	11.24	49.52	27.17
3	Gray	Assembly 21	16.40	10.91	39.2	48.47
3	Jones-Sawyer	Assembly 9	17.80	14.66	38.9	22.66
3	Hernandez	Assembly 48	18.80	19.29	22.66	59.25
3	Gatto	Assembly 43	20.40	20.15	58.18	21.31

Tier	Member	District	2012 Margin	Dem - Rep Registration	White VAP	Latino VAP
<i>Democratic Held Districts</i>						
3	Williams	Assembly 37	20.80	15.61	58.57	33.02
3	Medina	Assembly 61	22.00	8.69	30.35	46.81
3	Weber	Assembly 79	23.40	14.83	38.02	29.69
3	Calderon	Assembly 57	25.00	20.41	21.26	63.19
3	Vacant	Assembly 45	26.80	23.54	53.18	27.11
3	Perea	Assembly 31	28.00	18.72	21.52	63.74
3	Eggman	Assembly 13	30.80	18.17	32.59	36.35
3	Alejo	Assembly 30	30.80	29.22	29.39	61.20
3	Lowenthal	Assembly 70	31.60	27.20	40.12	33.62
3	Rodriguez	Assembly 52	32.00	20.76	20.66	63.08
3	Perez	Assembly 56	32.20	19.71	27.03	66.08
3	Daly	Assembly 69	35.20	27.23	15.36	71.14
3	Gonzalez	Assembly 80	39.20	27.76	17.76	62.90
3	Garcia	Assembly 58	43.60	31.81	15.66	63.26
3	Rendon	Assembly 63	49.00	40.01	13.52	70.88
3	Liu	Senate 25	21.60	10.50	55.22	23.12
3	Padilla	Senate 20	-	22.48	19.06	63.78
3	Torres	Senate 32	-	22.51	22.27	56.53
3	Hueso	Senate 40	-	22.84	19.56	57.90
3	DeLeon	Senate 22	-	23.70	14.15	48.90
3	Hernandez	Senate 24	-	46.94	14.15	61.91

Across both chambers there are 20 districts - nine in the Senate and 11 in the Assembly - where either the 2012 margin of victory or the two-party voter registration difference is 10% or less and the Latino voting age population exceeds the difference in support between Democrats and Republicans. In the Assembly, two Democratic (36 and 65) and two Republican (40 and 60) held districts are rated as Tier 1 Latino influence districts, as are two Democratic (5 and 34) and three Republican (12, 14 and 18) held Senate district. That is, these districts are highly competitive and have significant numbers of voting age Latinos. The three Tier 1 Republican held Senate seats, all of which will be contested in 2014, appear to be particularly vulnerable owing to the substantial Democratic registration advantages and majority-minority voting age populations. Indeed, all three have Latino voting age populations that either exceed or are close to 50%. The other eleven districts are rated as Tier 2 districts where Latinos are influential, but the districts are less

competitive. In terms of partisanship, Democrats hold seven of the Tier 2 districts, including four in the Senate.

The implications of this analysis are at least twofold. Even with the Democrats enjoying super-majority status in both chambers of the California Legislature, the relentlessness of the state's political demography provides additional opportunities for the Democrats to expand their margins. While so much of the increased Democratic support in California stems from the growth in the Latino electorate and these voters' overwhelming support for Democratic candidates, the full consequences of this shift may not yet be fully realized in the California Legislature.

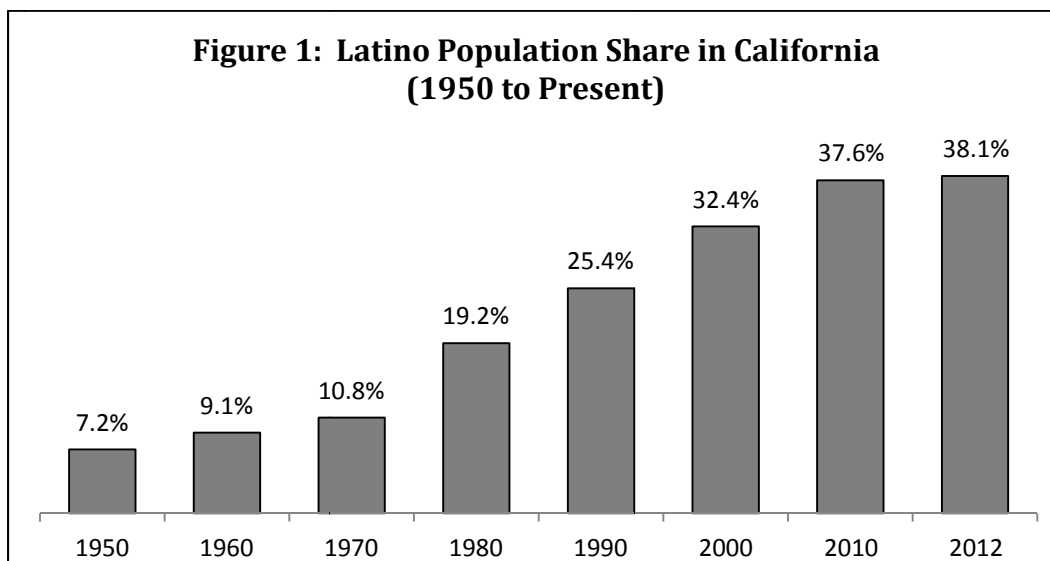
In contrast, if the GOP were to put forth a less alienating brand of politics, there are few opportunities for the party to improve its standing owing to the limited number of competitive state legislative districts. To this end, even if the GOP were to sweep all Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts in 2014 and 2016 (while holding all of its present seats), the party would still be a significant minority in both chambers.

5. Presidential Politics

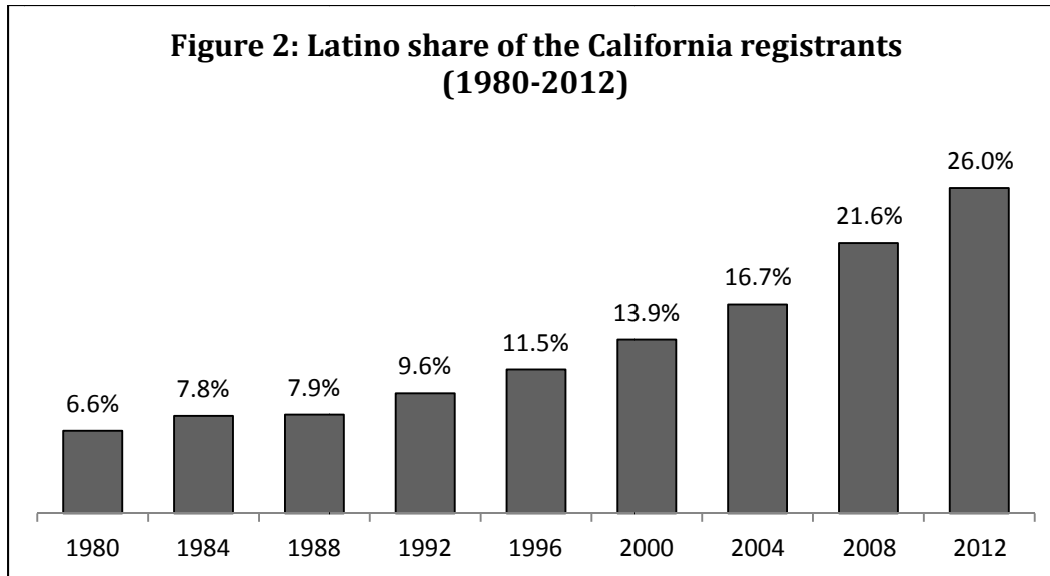
Perhaps the electoral context where the impact of the Latino vote in California can be best illustrated are presidential elections. Although polling data on Latinos has historically been unreliable, the available data show a steady increase in support for Republican presidential candidates among Latino voters until 1994. For example, polling data from a California Field Poll show that Ronald Reagan increased his share of the Latino vote from 35% in 1980 to 45% in 1984 (Barreto et al. 2009). The decision on the part of Governor Pete Wilson and other supporters of Proposition 187 to criminalize immigrants resulted in a dramatic turn away from the GOP by Latinos and other minorities. Research by Bowler, Nicholson and Segura (2006) also find that the anti-immigrant campaigns led many non-Hispanic whites to distance themselves from the Republican Party in California. Thus, there was overall movement in the state, by minorities and whites toward the Democratic Party.

These patterns suggest a number of important considerations. First, demography matters, as it provides a base for potential citizens and voters. Figure 1 shows the growth of the

Latino population since the 1950s. Latinos have essentially turned California into a majority-minority state. Second, demographic growth has led in an increase in the size of California’s Latino electorate as noted in Figure 2. Third, the increase in the size of the Latino electorate has been facilitated by fewer registration restrictions and the availability of Online Registration in both English and Spanish (Garcia-Bedolla and Velez, 2013). Fourth, Latino voting strength has increased the number of Latino elected officials in the state. Fifth, Latinos have made California a solidly blue state, which has led to a decline in the number Republican officeholders in the state and a denial of 55 Electoral Votes to Republican presidential candidates. These factors make Latinos a major force behind the Democratic *reconquista* of California.



The passage of Proposition 187 in 1994 led to a notable increase the number of Latinos participating in California presidential elections. The participation has sustained itself over numerous electoral cycles. For example, between 2000 and 2008, voter turnout increased from 1.6 million to nearly 3 million voters (NALEO Education Fund 2012). This number was expected to reach a record 3.9 million - representing a 32.1% increase from the previous presidential election (NALEO, Education Fund 2012). The estimated voter turnout also reflects a larger, nationwide trend where 12.5 million were expected to participate (Taylor, Gonzalez-Barrera, Passel, and Lopez 2012).



Despite this increase in Latino voter turnout, California was perhaps one of the most under-mobilized states during 2012. The 2012 LD election eve poll shows that only 30.97% of Latino voters said that they were contacted by a campaign, political party or community organization and asked to vote or register to vote. This outcome is comparatively smaller than other key battleground states, including Ohio, Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado where 48 to 59% of the respondents said that they were contacted. Reports on national advertisements also demonstrate a lack of attention in California. While supporters of both candidates spent a total of \$892 million across in advertising, the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) reports that only \$330 was spent on two national ads – one in Bakersfield and the other in the Chico-Redding area (CNN 2012). This finding is also comparable to the 2004 presidential election in which national advertisements were diverted to other more politically contentious states (Barreto, Ramirez, Fraga, and Guerra 2009, 15-16).

This does not suggest, however, that Latinos were completely ignored in the Golden State. Despite having control over California politics, Democrats continued to play a greater role in mobilizing registered Latino voters than Republicans. Among those respondents who say they contacted, the 2012 LD poll indicates that a majority, 55.68%, were contacted by Democrats and only 3.63% were contacted by Republicans. Even with lower levels of outreach by both parties, these results suggest that the Democratic Party did not have to direct a large amount of resources to California to secure the coveted 55 delegates. The

apparent lack of Latino outreach suggests that Republicans were willing to hedge their bets elsewhere, such as Florida and Ohio, where they believed themselves to be more competitive. Given this lack of competitiveness and a failure to also “recognize changing demographics” (White 2013), Jim Brulte, the California Republican Party’s new chairman, later called on California Republicans to “venture outside of their traditional power base” and “increase outreach to minority communities” (Edwards 2013; White 2013).

The 2012 LD Data also demonstrates that local community organizations played an important role in mobilizing Latino voters. According to our 2012 LD Poll, 34.29% said they were contacted by local community organizations. Although these community organizations were less likely to contact Latinos than Democrats, the proportion of Latinos who say they were contacted is nearly 16% points greater than rest of the nation (18.52%). This outcome is not surprising given the rich and deeply engrained presence of Latino organizations in California and the disproportionate number of Latinos who continue to go unregistered in the state.

During the 2012 presidential election, Latino-based organizations, such as Mi Familia Vota, canvassed neighborhoods and organized voter registration drives (2012). Efforts to increase Latino participation, moreover, were quite different from other more traditional party efforts, as they sought to place greater emphasis on disadvantaged communities and the youth (Latino Youth Civic Mobilization 2013; Olson 2012). These strategies, moreover, were also far-reaching. In addition to focusing on urban and metropolitan areas of the state, outreach groups moved to more rural regions of the California, such as Central Valley that tends to be more ideologically conservative (Latino Youth Civic Mobilization 2013; Daniel 2012). Thus, national and grassroots organizations served as important mobilizing agents that supplemented the relative lack of attention by the two national parties.

Like other segments of the national electorate, Latinos voters were especially tuned in to the 2012 presidential election. In the final weeks leading up to the election, a nation-wide tracking poll by impreMedia and Latino Decisions showed enthusiasm about the 2012 presidential election was quite high in the months leading up to the election, as 87% of

registered voters said they were all but certain to vote in the upcoming presidential election (Latino Decisions 2012a).

Table 4 shows California's Latino electorate was enthusiastic about re-electing President Obama, where 78% voted in favor of the President.

Table 4: Partisanship and Vote Choice in the 2012 Presidential Election

	Romney	Obama	Total
All Respondents	22.32%	77.68%	100%
Republican ID	56.20%	43.80%	100%
Democrat ID	2.66%	97.34%	100%

Note: All descriptive statistics are row percentages and weighted according to state.

These results are somewhat higher than the national average, where LD polling indicates that 75% of Latinos nationally voted for the incumbent. Given this broad support for president, it is apparent that Latinos played a key role in keeping California a Democratic state. It has been well established that party identification is a strong predictor of vote choice. Not surprisingly, 94% of Latinos who identified themselves as Democrat voted to keep Barack Obama in office for a second presidential term. Latino Republicans, however, were quite split over their decision for president. While 56% voted in favor of the Romney, a large percentage (43%) also showed their support for Barack Obama.

Indeed, Latinos did not abandon the Democratic Party despite concerns that enthusiasm and support would be low as a result of a failure to pass immigration reform. What explains this continued support among Latino voters in California? We contend that the salience of immigration, coupled with candidates' attitudes towards immigration, helped to solidify Latinos' choice for president. Table 5 shows the relationship between Latinos' attitudes towards immigration and vote choice. Among those who believed immigration to be an important issue, 81.73% voted in favor of Barack Obama. Less than 20% of Latino voters, however, said that they would cast their vote for Governor Romney.

Table 5: Immigration and Vote Choice in the 2012 Presidential Election

	Romney Vote	Obama Vote	Total
IMMIGRATION SALIENT	18.27%	81.73%	100%
KNOW SOMEONE UNDOCUMENTED			
Yes	21.73%	78.27%	100%
No	23.28%	76.72%	100%
ENTHUSIASM FOR OBAMA			
More	8.37%	91.63%	100%
No Effect	38.53%	61.47%	100%
Less	58.87%	41.13%	100%
ENTHUSIASM FOR ROMNEY			
More	81.52%	18.48%	100%
No Effect	33.09%	66.91%	100%
Less	11.01%	88.99%	100%

Note: All descriptive statistics are row percentages and weighted according to state.

In more recent years, immigration policy has increasingly become more salient to Latinos. Next to the economy (39%), our California sample provides clear evidence, indicating that immigration was the second most important issue (24.5%) facing Latino voters. We believe that there are two reasons driving this outcome. First, Republicans brought immigration into the national spotlight by initiating a series of anti-immigrant initiatives. In 2010, for example, Arizona passed Senate Bill 1070, which among other things, allowed local law enforcement to check the immigration status of detained individuals. Subsequent copycat legislation was also passed throughout other regions of the U.S, including parts of the South and the Midwest (Lam and Morse 2012). Since the law gave greater discretion to law enforcement authorities, many have argued that it could lead to racial profiling and anxiety among Latino citizens as well as the undocumented (Nuño 2011).

A nationwide poll from Latino Decisions carried out in July demonstrated that 79% of Latino voters believed that it was likely that they will be pulled over by the police and asked about their immigration status (Latino Decisions 2012b). The Supreme Court would later overturn several of its provisions. However, the main provision of the law (“show me your papers”) remains. Second, the saliency of immigration has been reinforced by a majority of Latinos who say they currently have social connections with undocumented

immigrants. For example, the 2012 LD poll shows that 54% of Latinos in California say that they know someone who is undocumented, including a family member, friend, or coworker. This is not surprising given that California has the largest number of undocumented immigrants (2.5 million estimated) in the U.S. (Passel and Cohn 2011).

Moreover, there is good reason to expect that many Latinos continue to live in ethnically homogenous neighborhoods where undocumented immigrants are more likely reside. For example, Logan and Stults (2011) find that the segregation of Hispanics is more likely to occur in major-metropolis cities, such as Los Angeles. Although these personal relationships add to our understanding of issue saliency, it is also plausible that these ties could increase the likelihood of voting for Barack Obama, who was viewed as the more immigrant-sympathetic candidate. The results from our analysis, however, indicate that approximately 75% of respondents from both groups voted in favor of the president. Overall, this outcome implies that while knowing someone undocumented may be important for understanding issue saliency, the decision to vote for the president was based on more than just close personal relationships.

Clearly, California has undergone a dramatic political transformation as a result of the growth of the Latino electorate and failure of the Republican Party to court their vote. Latinos in the state, and elsewhere were often referred to as “the sleeping Giant” because of their failure to transform their demographic growth into a political advantage. This is no longer the case in California, the state with the largest number of Latino voters. In an interview, Jaime Regalado, executive director of the Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs said, “No one is talking about the sleeping giant anymore...The giant is here now, and Republican’s aren’t recruiting it” (McClatchy 2011). The failure of the GOP to reach out to Latinos in California has been politically disastrous for the party. The solid support for the Democratic Party among Latinos in California meant that there was little uncertainty as to who was to win the 55 Electoral College votes. Consequently, the 2012 presidential candidates turned their attention to battleground states where the outcome was less certain. However, even in these battleground states such as Colorado, Florida, and Nevada the GOP’s limited engagement with Latino voters proved costly.

The case of California is instructive because it nicely captures the political consequences resulting from hostility towards a fast-growing minority population that was about to flex its political muscles. Yet, we believe Republicans could turn their Latino problem into an opportunity. After all, there are fears among some Latino leaders that the Democratic Party could take the Latino vote for granted. Arturo Vargas, executive director of the National Association of Latino Elected officials noted, “We absolutely need Latinos involved in both parties. The Latino community doesn’t benefit from a partisan monopoly” (Wisckol 2011).

How could Republican’s turn their fortunes around? The 2012 LD poll and other surveys allow us to outline two key lessons that could be used to develop a new Latino strategy that might allow the Republicans to cut into the Democrats outsized margins of support among Latino voters. First, don’t use immigrants as scapegoats for political gains, or as GOP Assemblyman Rocky Chavez of Oceanside noted, “Why invite me to dinner but only let half my family in” (Skelton 2013). As we have noted, the effects of attacking immigrants has been politically shortsighted and devastating for the Republican Party. Second, offer Latino non-citizens a pathway for political, social, and economic inclusion by passing a comprehensive immigration reform bill that includes a reasonable pathway to citizenship. In the mid-1990s, California became ground zero for what was to become a dramatic rupture between the GOP and Latinos and the beginnings of the Democratic Party *reconquista* of California. In the next decades, the GOP could begin their political *reconquista* of the state once it reengages the Latino electorate. Abandoning anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies as well as the passage of a comprehensive immigration reform bill that puts the undocumented on a path toward citizenship are steps in the right direction.

6. Blowbacks and Echoes: The Lasting Impact of Anti-Immigrant Strategies

In this section, we note that the consequences of anti-immigrant policies echoed beyond the Latino electorate and extended over several election cycles. While Latinos may have been the targeted group of anti-immigrant initiatives we show that Anglo voters were equally effected, but not in the expected direction. Rather than embracing the GOP strategy, as some anticipated, many Anglos were turned off by these policies and begin voting for the Democratic Party. Essentially, the GOP experienced a political blowback from Latinos *and*

Anglos in California. In addition, we demonstrate that the effects of this blowback echoed across several elections.

First, we argue that like much of the country, Latinos in California had been drifting toward the GOP in the period prior to the initiatives. The GOP had experienced substantial gains in voter identification during the 1980s in California (Jacobson 2004), and these dynamics were visible among Latinos as well, perhaps as a result of the GOP's role in proposing and ultimately passing the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, among other factors. If we are correct in this contention, then these propositions did not merely make a Democratic constituency more Democratic, but rather, reversed a trend that had been drawing larger numbers of Latino voters into the GOP fold.

Second, we believe that the shifts that have become apparent occurred as a cumulative result of these initiatives and should not be attributed to a single event. Rather than Prop. 187 alienating Latinos, it was the cumulative effect of repeated efforts that made the pro-Democratic shift so sizable (see Tolbert and Hero 2001).

Third, the effects of these initiatives were visited on more than just Latinos in California. In contrast to most studies of racial threat, we expect both the racial minority and majority to move in the same partisan direction. In addition to providing a racial threat to Latinos, we believe that Californians across all racial subgroups perceived these initiatives as racialized appeals and generally anti-minority. Although the initiatives did not threaten Anglos, a substantial number of non-Hispanic whites likely perceived them as explicitly racial and perhaps a violation of the norm of racial equality. Mendelberg (2001) argues that racial appeals succeed only when campaign messages are implicit because most white voters reject blatantly racial appeals. If white voters perceive campaign messages as blatantly racist, these messages do not activate anti-minority stereotypes or racial resentment but rather violate deeply held egalitarian norms. Coupling this with the highly partisan nature of these initiatives, we expect these ballot propositions to have a substantial effect on partisan loyalties. Thus, we expect movement of both Latinos *and* Anglos into the Democratic Party.

Given the nature of these questions we need to look beyond a single election or single proposition that either mask these trends or are simply unsuited to uncovering them. Using California Field Poll data, we demonstrate at the individual level of analysis that California's partisan shift represented more than a demographic transition from white Republicans to Latino Democrats. Specifically, data for our analysis come from pooling 23 California Field Polls between 1980-2002, taking the latest poll in each year and confining our analysis to registered voters.

The data show that that the propositions collectively appear to push Latinos *and* Anglos as a group toward being Democratic. In both instances, the ballot propositions had the effect of lowering the probability that either a white or Latino voter identified as a Republican. To be sure, the effect on Latino voters is stronger, but the anti-GOP shift among whites, as a consequence of these initiatives, is significant and somewhat surprising. The presence of three ballot propositions raises the question of whether one had an impact disproportionate to others, and if these effects varied by group. Modeling the impact of each individual proposition illustrates some nuances to these patterns in a number of ways. Breaking out the propositions individually has no effect on the other variables in the model and clarifies the dynamics at work. The results suggest that Anglos were, if anything moved towards the Democrats by Proposition 187 and Proposition 227. This stands in sharp contrast to the expectation that the GOP would benefit in the long run from raising the salience of issues like immigration and bilingual education. With respect to Latinos, the shift is generally in the expected direction. However, contrary to most of the scholarly and media related discussions, the impact among Latinos may not have been primarily associated with Proposition 187, but rather spread across both Proposition 187 and 209. Note, again, that there appear to be no significant effects among African Americans. These results suggest that the effects of these propositions varied across groups and across initiatives.

We estimate the magnitude of these effects by calculating the changes in the predicted probabilities. The passage of Proposition 187 reduced the probability of identifying as a Republican by 5.1% for non-Hispanic whites and 11.4% for Latinos. The passage of 209

further reduced Latino probabilities of GOP identity by another 7.3% while 227 reduced the Anglo probability by an additional 2.7%. These, of course, represent meaningful shifts in partisan self-identification, especially since we are examining changes across partisan categories rather than merely gradations of partisan strength.

Table 6: Predicted Probabilities of Latino and Non-Hispanic White Partisan Outcomes With Respect to the Passage of Specific Propositions

	<i>Before Passage of 187, 209, and 227</i>	<i>After Passage of 187 but Before 209 and 227</i>	<i>After Passage of 187 and 209, but Before 227</i>	<i>After Passage of 187, 209, and 227</i>
Latinos				
Democrat	.38	.52	.62	.63
Independent	.28	.26	.23	.22
Republican	.34	.23	.15	.12
Non-Hispanic Whites				
Democrat	.30	.35	.34	.37
Independent	.32	.32	.32	.32
Republican	.38	.33	.33	.31

Cell entries are predicted probabilities that the dependent variable takes on each value at each point in the timeline of these three initiatives, holding all other independent variables constant, estimated using CLARIFY.

Source: California Field Polls Numbers 8006, 8104, 8206, 8303, 8405, 8504, 8606, 8704, 8806, 8905, 9005, 9103, 9207, 9304, 9406, 9503, 9607, 9704, 9807, 9903, 0006, 0104, 0204.

The effect of these shifts on the overall probabilities is best observed in Table 6. Table 6 reports the predicted probabilities of each outcome, varying across the passage of the three propositions and controlling for the rest of the independent variables (setting them equal to their means or modes). Prior to 187, Republicans had an eight-point advantage among Anglos, with the predicted probability of being a Republican equal to .38, while the predicted probability of identifying as a Democrat was .30, *ceteris paribus*. After the

passage of the three propositions, Democrats had reversed the situation, holding a six-point advantage over Republicans, .37 to .31, a notable change. Consistent with the analysis, the largest shifts among whites occurred after 187 and 227.

For Latinos, the shift is even greater. Prior to the initiatives, the data suggest a partisan breakdown that favored Democrats .38 to .34, with a substantial number of Independents which, the evidence suggests, regularly voted Democratic. In the wake of these initiatives, the Democratic advantage grew to 51 percentage points. The post-227 predicted probabilities favor the Democrats .63 to .12.

Among the other effects evident in Table 6 is the apparent shift that had been taking place outside of the politics of the ballot initiatives. Consistent with our discussion about the movement of the California electorate towards the Republican Party, the coefficient for Time for both Latinos and Anglos was positive and significant, suggesting that—apart from the effects of the initiatives—the general trend in both groups had been pro-Republican.

Just how substantial was this shift? Looking at the changes reported in Table 6, over the 22 years there is almost an 18% gain in the probability of a Latino respondent thinking of him- or herself as a Republican, *ceteris paribus*. The comparable number for Anglos is 9.1%. Whatever else was happening during the 1980s and early part of the 1990s in California, the state GOP was making sizeable gains among Latinos and to a lesser extent Anglos, in the electorate. While, on average, Latinos remained Democratic, the Republicans were making significant inroads among that vote bloc.

This trend, of course, makes the results for the ballot initiatives all that more important. The cumulative effect of the three initiatives, as seen in Table 6, is a 7.4% decline in Republican identification among whites and 19.5% among Latinos. These shifts in probability would seem to take away all of the GOP's gains among Latinos for that 22 year period. Perhaps more importantly, the effect among non-Hispanic whites, though smaller in magnitude, erases much of the rightward shift of the white population over the time period studied as well. In the results presented in Table 6, this time incorporating the effects of the entire model, the evidence suggests that both Latinos and non-Hispanic whites end the

period substantially more likely to be Democrats, and less likely to be Republicans, than when they started.

While the GOP may have anticipated, yet underestimated, the political blowback from Latinos, it is likely that they never expected the blowback from Anglo voters. Had this factored into their strategic calculus, it is unlikely they would have attached their name to the anti-immigrant propositions sweeping California in the mid-1990s. Clearly, Latino voters generally and immigrant specifically were activated shortly after the passage of these initiatives. The question remains, what were the long-term consequences of those initiatives for Latino voters? In other words, did Latinos remain engaged beyond the mid-1990s? To answer these questions, we turn to a study by Barreto (2005) who examined voter turnout among immigrant Latinos in the 2002 election in California.

Barreto’s work draws on official vote records between 1998 and 2002 from Los Angeles and Orange counties, California, to examine voter turnout in the November 2002 general election for more than five million registered voters, including differences between foreign-born and native-born Latinos. The results reveal that immigrant voters are driving the growth of the Latino vote in California, and further that in an election with generally low voter turnout foreign-born Latino voters outvoted native-born Latinos and non-Latinos.

Table 7:
SUMMARY OF VOTE GROWTH 1998-2002
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

	1998	2002	Growth	Percent
Latino	454,923	478,871	23,948	5.3%
Non-Latino	1,879,201	1,891,209	12,008	0.6%
Total	2,334,124	2,370,080	35,956	1.5%
% Latino	19.5%	20.2%	0.7%	3.7%
Latino Foreign	172,241	210,310	38,069	22.1%
Latino Native	282,682	268,561	-14,121	-5.0%
% Foreign	37.9%	43.9%	6.1%	16.0%

Before looking at turnout in 2002, he first offers a picture of the changing electorate in Southern California by examining growth in the number of voters between 1998 and 2002. Table 7 reports the total number of votes cast in those years, broken down by ethnicity for the two counties combined. While the non-Latino electorate remained stable between the two gubernatorial elections, the Latino electorate grew by a modest 5%, adding 23,948 new voters in 2002. However, when broken down by nativity, the results are more interesting. What's immediately apparent is that the growth of the Latino vote in Southern California is being driven entirely by new naturalized citizen voters. While the number of native born Latino voters dropped from 282,682 in 1998 to 268,561 in 2002, a decrease of 14,121 votes, foreign-born Latino voters increased by 38,069 new votes to 210,310 in 2002, resulting in an overall increase of Latino voters. This growth in foreign-born Latino voters resulted in naturalized citizens accounting for 44% of the Latino electorate in 2002, up from 38% in 1998. The raw growth of 38,069 Latino foreign-born voters is more new votes in the electorate than native-born Latinos and non-Latinos (12,008), as is the 22% growth rate. The clear implication of these findings is that foreign-born Latino voters are the fastest growing segment of voters and playing an increasingly larger role in the California electorate.

In addition to larger growth in votes cast than native- born Latinos and non-Latinos, naturalized Latino voters also demonstrated high rates of voter turnout in 2002, contrary to the existing literature. Among registered voters in Southern California, 39% of Latinos voted compared to 47.4% of non-Latinos in the 2002 election for Governor. However, upon closer inspection, the aggregate data reveal that among Latinos, naturalized immigrants voted at rates much higher than native-born Latinos, and almost equal to non-Latinos. In an election that produced record low turnout, just 34.6% of U.S.-born Latinos went to the polls, compared to 46.5% of foreign-born Latino voters. This difference of 11.9 percentage points is statistically significant by nature of the dataset (the universe of all registered voters in the two counties), but also substantively significant. Further, the aggregate turnout rate of naturalized Latino voters is almost equal to the voting rate of non-Latinos (46.5 vs. 47.4 respectively).

When the voter turnout rates for 2002 are disaggregated by US House district ($n = 22$), we find evidence of foreign-born Latinos voting at higher rates than non-Latinos. Table 3 details the turnout rates of non-Latinos, foreign-born Latinos, and native-born Latinos by Congressional district in Southern California. In addition, it lists the% of the district population that is Latino. In all 22 jurisdictions, immigrant Latino voters out-vote their native born counterparts. The results are more pronounced in majority-minority districts, consistent with recent empowerment theory findings for California (Barreto, Segura and Woods 2004; Gay 2001a, b). Foreign-born Latino turnout exceeded native-born turnout by 18 points in Roybal-Allard's district (77% Latino), by 16 points in Sanchez's district (65% Latino), and by 16 points in Becerra's district (70% Latino). Not only were there large differences between foreign-born and native born Latino rates of voting in majority-minority districts, but naturalized citizens also voted at *higher rates* than non-Latinos in nine out of the ten majority-minority districts in Southern California. The analysis confirms that Latino immigrant voter turnout surpassed that of other groups in the California electorate in 2002.

7. Conclusion

During much of the Cold War era, California could be classified as a Republican stronghold given that the GOP won every presidential contest from 1952 to 1988, except LBJ's 1964 landslide over Goldwater (Mataconis 2012). Today, the Republican Party in California is in a free-fall. Since 1992, no Republican presidential candidate has won the state. Presently, Republicans do not hold any statewide office and have seen their numbers fall below one-third in the Senate and Assembly. In the 2010 mid-term elections, when Republicans picked up 63 House seats nationally, they failed to pick up a single seat in California. In the 2012 election, running under politically neutral boundaries, the GOP lost seven legislative seats and four congressional seats. The Democratic Party has a two-thirds majority in the state Legislature for the first time since the 1880s. The share of Californians registered as Republican has declined from 37% in 1992 to less than 30% in 2012 (Nagourney 2012). If these trends continue, by the decade's end, there will be more persons registered as independents than Republicans. Whether the GOP has politically hit rock bottom in

California remains to be seen, as there are still Republican held seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and in the California Legislature where Latino voters are positioned to be influential.

The political decline of the GOP in California is not only the result of the changing composition of the state's electorate, i.e., larger numbers of Latino and Asian American voters. A more significant factor was the decision of Republican candidates and elites to pursue policies and campaigns that alienated immigrants, Latinos, Asian Americans, and other minorities in the state that drove Latino voters away from the GOP. The beginnings of this march of folly was the 1994 election when Proposition 187 the so-called "Save Our State" initiative became the centerpiece policy of Governor's Pete Wilson's re-election campaign. The initiative was designed to deny social services, including public education, to undocumented immigrants as well as require state officials, doctors and nurses to report suspected undocumented immigrants to the Immigration and Naturalization Service for deportation. The rhetoric and campaign in support of the initiative was racially-charged and essentially blamed Latinos and immigrants for most of the state's economic and social hardships (Nicholson 2005). Latinos felt under threat and record numbers of Latino immigrants naturalized and voted to counter this and other racially-charged initiatives, e.g., Propositions 209 and 227 (Barreto, Ramirez and Woods 2005; Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura 2001). Moreover, the adverse effects of these propositions for the GOP were not limited to the Latino community, but also alienated Anglo voters, further eroding Republican support in California.

In retrospect, attacking Latinos, immigrants, and other minorities was a shortsighted strategy given that the share of the non-Hispanic white population declined from 69.9% in the 1980s to 42.8% in 2010, while its share of the electorate declined from 83% to 65% (*The Changing California Electorate* 2009). During the same period, the share of Latino population grew from 19% in 1980 to 38% in 2010, while its electorate increased from 8% in the 1980s to 26% in 2010. Today, one in four Californians is an immigrant. Among the 18 million registered voters in the state, 28.9% are "New Americans" (*New Americans in California* 2012). Yet, demographic shifts alone do not explain why California has

undergone a radical political transformation in the last two decades. The political transformation is the result of a partisan shift brought about by a growing minority electorate that has moved away from the Republican Party (Segura, Falcon and Pachon 1997).