Latino Vote Project

OVERVIEW

A projected 32 million Latinos will be eligible to vote in 2020, which would mark the first time that Latinos will be the largest racial or ethnic minority group in the electorate. While initial post-election reports laid out the gains made in previous elections and the critical importance of the Latino vote in the 2020 election, none presented a comprehensive analysis that addresses the impact of the timing and level of investment in relation to Latino voter engagement, turnout, and electoral wins and opportunities.

The Latino Vote Project set out to evaluate the turnout of Latino voters in the last three elections - 2014, 2016, 2018 - as a function of the investments made, programs implemented, and opportunities leveraged by grassroots organizations and donors in four key states: Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Texas.

Through data analysis of Latino turnout in specific geographies and Congressional Districts in key states, in-depth interviews with Latino leaders on the ground, and an analysis of wins and losses in 2014, 2016 and 2018, the Latino Vote Project unearthed a snapshot of the current Latino political infrastructure, revealed lessons and insight on the timing and overall investment in programs to engage and turnout Latino voters, and identified missed opportunities to leverage for future elections.

The findings and recommendations in this report are to provide a clear understanding of the growing political clout of Latinos as an electoral force, and the critical importance of early and sustained investment in organizations and infrastructure building durable power and driving increased Latino voter engagement and participation ahead of the 2020 elections.

LATINOS: AN ELECTORAL FORCE

Latinos were essential to making 2018 statewide elections competitive in Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Texas. Absent the Latino vote in Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Texas, Republicans would have won by landslide margins.

- Across these four states Latinos comprised a larger share of the statewide electorate compared to 2014, while the White share decreased.

- In all four states Latinos voted for Democrats at significantly higher rates relative to their Democratic support in 2014. The White vote for Democrats shrank in Florida, but grew in Arizona, Nevada and Texas (though at a much smaller rate than Latinos).

- Catalist's analysis finds the majority of White voters supported Republican Senate candidates in 2018 (Arizona 55%, Florida 61%, Nevada 56%, Texas 67%). Thus, the Latino electorate's rate of growth, size, and Democratic vote share is largely responsible for Democratic wins in Arizona (2.4-point difference between Sinema and McSally) and Nevada (5-point difference between Rosen and Heller), and making races close in Florida (.3-point difference between Scott and Nelson) and Texas (2.6-point difference between Cruz and O'Rourke).

- Latino Decisions precinct analysis confirms the Catalist voter file analysis conclusions. Using precinct data provided by Secretary of State offices in Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Texas, Latino Decisions documents that the largest voter turnout increases took place in Latino-majority precincts in all four of these states.

- In addition to the extensive outreach by civic organizations, 67% of Latinos who voted in the 2018 midterms said they had personally asked their friends or family to register or vote in 2018 (specifically: Arizona 65%, Florida 66%, Nevada 64%, Texas 68%).

LATINO POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE, ENGAGEMENT & INVESTMENT

In the 2018 midterm election, Latinos had a higher turnout and vote share compared to the prior midterm elections. Compared to 2014, Arizona, Florida, Nevada and Texas were between 1 to 7 points more Latino in terms of composition, sometimes even as high as the last presidential election. In many places this change in share of the vote was due in part to younger Latinos (18-24 /18-29) turning out in greater force.

Furthermore, substantial shifts in support compared to 2014 among Latino voters favored Democrats, with support margin shifts as high as 60+ points more Democratic, however, support did not change uniformly for all candidates, especially compared to 2016, speaking to the need for Latino-specific engagement and investment.

To better understand the impact and existing Latino political infrastructure and Latino-specific engagement and investment, we conducted a series of qualitative in-depth interviews and surveys with Latino leaders on the ground and key organizations in Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Texas, revealing lessons and insights on the timing and overall investment in programs to engage and turnout Latino voters.

The scope of the questions examined a number of areas, including: organization structure, budget, staff, funding sources and timing, programs, goals and tactics. The following key findings surfaced from the interviews and revealed similar challenges faced by grassroots organizations on the frontlines.

KEY FINDINGS

While organization budgets and budget target goals varied, on average, the 9 participating organizations interviewed operated within a $2 to $5 million combined c3 and c4 budget, with most of the funding and spending being c3 money. The majority of the grassroots organizations received late funding, impacting the planning and execution of their programs, hindering their programs and field efforts, and ensuring these did not reach their full potential.

IMPACT OF AMOUNT AND TIMING OF INVESTMENT

- Lack of funds impacted capacity and limited gains and outcomes, which kept organizations from reaching their full potential capacity.

- Late investment and delayed delivery of funding had detrimental consequences:

- Field programs were not as effective. Organizations could not run larger field efforts and train the leadership needed to run it.
- Programs require time, therefore preparation and timelines were squeezed. Organizations found it difficult to ramp up quickly and launch a program for a month and yield effective results.
- Organizations had less flexibility and nimbleness to change course or strategy to overcome challenges and run a more effective program.
- Affected hiring timeline:
  - Hiring ramp was not on schedule.
  - Hindered organizing and building volunteer capacity to scale and grow exponentially.

- Organizations found it difficult to spend late funding/money efficiently and effectively.

- Greater general support funding is needed. Late, limited or no c3 designated funds hindered organizations' ability to do early and sustained political and issue-based education and outreach.

- Very limited or no access to funders and donors.

ISSUE AREAS

- Immigration was an important issue area that organizations used to reach Latino voters across all states, but it was not the primary or main issue that engaged all of Latinos.

- Criminal justice, through several lenses and sub-issues, was a main issue for Latino voters across the board in each state.

- President Trump, including his rhetoric and policies against Latinos and communities of color, were an effective issue area and point of activation for Latino voter engagement and turnout.

- Paid family leave and paid sick leave were also top issues for Latino voters.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Latino Decisions
American Election Eve Poll, 2018 Results</td></tr>
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- Trump's words and actions were upsetting to a strong majority of Latino midterm voters. Latino Decisions found 70% of 2018 Latino voters said something Trump has said or done made them angry, and 69% said Trump's words and actions have made them feel disrespected.
- The vast majority of Latinos view Trump and Republicans as divisive. Latino Decisions found 78% of Latino 2018 voters believe Trump and the Republicans are using toxic rhetoric to divide us from one another. (Specifically: Arizona 82%, Florida 72%, Nevada 77%, Texas 77%).
- Asked "what are the most important issues facing your community that our politicians should address", health care, creating jobs, and immigration were consistently the top three issues cited in the Latino Decisions 2018 survey of midterm voters. Specifically:

	AZ	FL	NV	TX
Improve economy	31%	34%	34%	31%
Health care	36%	32%	26%	31%
Immigration reform	27%	23%	24%	34%

PRIMARY TACTICS

- Main traditional tactics implemented by grassroots organizations were:
    - Canvassing
    - Phone Banking
    - SMS/text messaging

- In-person engagement and conversations through door knocking or hosted events, particularly culturally relevant events, were the most instrumental in connecting with new and existing Latino voters.

- Digital work complemented field programs in all 4 states, and were an effective tool for reinforcing messaging and reaching Latino voters through digital targeting, ads/messaging, Facebook and video.

- Earned media continued to play a significant role in reaching Latino voters. Many of the organizations have a deep partnership and trust with local Spanish-language and Latino targeted media. However, local Spanish media outlets have increasingly less staff and funds, which is greatly affecting their ability to cover a wide range of issues in depth.

- Candidate recruitment, particularly in low information/low turnout races, proved to be effective in engaging new Latino voters and driving higher turnout.

CONSTITUENTS:
- All organizations focused on Latinos specifically, but subsections of this population and other groups were also engaged depending on the state or race.

- People of color 18-35 years old.

- In Florida, organizations micro-targeted Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Pan-Americans.

- In Texas, organizations targeted and engaged youth (34 years and younger), people of color, women, first-time voters, and new primary voters.

- In Nevada, organizations specifically targeted APIA and Puerto Ricans.

The following table summarizes the comprehensive interview and survey results by organization, providing detailed information on each organization by state presence, legal status(es), budget, staff, membership, and 2018 role and involvement in races.

LATINO VOTE PROJECT COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY TABLE OF INTERVIEW AND SURVEY RESULTS						
Organization	State	Legal Status(es)	Budget	Staff	Membership	2018 Role & Races
PODER in ACTION	AZ	c3 c4 (2018)	$550k - c3 (Target $600k) $300k - c4 (Target $400k)	9 staff (full-time and part-time). 4 stipended staff. Diverse/POC staff.	N/A	State and federal races. Based in Phoenix and focused in neighborhoods of color. 20-25k doors / 2.5 touches. GOVT/Lit drop at 2,500 doors. 10k-12k doors Thank You canvasses.
Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA)	AZ	c3 c4 PAC SuperPAC	$1.8m - c3 $800K - c4	25 staff (15 organizers). 92% POC, 60% WOC.	2,400 dues paying members	Local (City Council - Goodyear, AZ; AG - Pima County), State (Governor, AG) races.

		- TBD				Over 1m doors knocked, close to 2m statewide.
Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC) and FLIC Votes	FL	c3 - FLIC c4 - FLIC Votes State PAC	$3m combined $2.2m - c3 $800k - c4	21 full-time employees in 6 counties. Majority POC.	40+ dues paying organizations and 200+ dues paying individual members. 40k contact list.	Won 70% of their races, many local. Ran own campaign in Senate districts 18 and 36. 40k doors in districts 18 and 36. Guided the Win Justice Coalition and elevate distinctions amongst Latinos.
For our Future (FOF) and FOF Action	FL	c3 c4	N/A	N/A	N/A	Focused in counties: Leon, Gadsden, Duval, Pasco, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pinellas, Polk, Osceola, Orange, Seminole, Brevard, Volusia, St. Lucie, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami Dade, Alachua.
Make the Road Nevada (MTR) and Make the Road Action	NV	c3 c4	$450k for both c3 and c4 (Targets $150k for c3 and $650k for c4)	16 permanent staff. 10 year-round paid canvassers. 97% Latino staff.	300 dues paying members. Membership canvass (year-round). 6700 active members.	Reversed the tier of their IDs, treated school board race as top-tier, then Governor's race, and Senate race as the last tier. School board race - Ward District D (won by 37 points). Ran the first Puerto Rican mobilization program in CD3 in the state. 33,000 doors. 77,311 SMS to Latino voters. Moved roughly 2,597 people through two GOTV rallies.

Battleground Texas (BGTX)	TX	c4 PAC (527) - DBA Student Voter Initiative c4	$2.1m *(Target $2.8m)* The last $400k came in after September 2018	7 HQ Staff 10 Organizers *(Goal was to hire total of 32 organizers)* Team ⅔ POC and 81% Texan	N/A	Registered 55k voters. GOTV universe of 175k voters. Endorse and organized in 8 State House districts (all women candidates), and won in 7 of them. Endorsed two women for Harris County Judge and Harris County Clerk, and won in both. Organized, registered voters, and GOTV in the two Congressional and two State Senate seats that flipped. Organized in conservative Tarrant County (Fort Worth), which turned Blue. Statewide Texas-specific voter protection hotline.
Texas Organizing Project (TOP)	TX	c3 c4 PAC SuperPAC for TX-23	$3.5m	Statewide staff size at their height was 340 (100 canvassers, 20 phone bankers, TX-23 30 canvassers)	388 members statewide doing work shifts	Focused efforts in Bexar County, TX-23, and in Harris County where they have built a strong infrastructure over time, with 50% returned paid canvassers.
MOVE Texas Civic Fund and MOVE Texas Action Fund	TX	c3 c4	$975k combined	12 staff, majority Latino.	N/A	March 2018 - began aggressive expansion effort outside base city of San Antonio, adding Laredo, Seguin, San Marcos and Austin by August 2018. 80% of voter registration came from fall semester. 29,688 voters registered and 68-71% turnout.

Mi Familia Vota	AZ, CO, CA, FL, NV, TX	c3 c4	$4m - c3 $1.9m - c4	30-40 permanent staff. 300 staff during election cycle spread across states. 80% staff in AZ, FL, NV.	N/A	National presence and in local, state, and federal races across AZ, CO, CA, FL, NV, and TX.

STATE-BY-STATE DEEP DIVE

ISSUES AREAS, PROGRAM AND TACTICS

Although immigration continues to be an important issue area to Latinos and the community as a whole across all states, and one that is used to engage the Latino community, it was not the primary or the main issue that effectively engaged all Latinos.

An issue area that saw significant pick-up and interest among Latino voters was criminal justice. Every organization in each state touched on this issue from private prisons and police violence to designation of felonies and judges, leveraging the national attention and local activity and advocacy around the issue to engage voters.

Additionally, while President Trump and his policies were an effective issue area and point of activation for Latino voter engagement and turnout, paid family leave and paid sick leave were among the top issues for Latino voters.

Taking into account the issue areas that Latinos most cared about, organizations across all 4 states employed robust programs, incorporating leadership development, voter engagement/registration, GOTV efforts, civic participation, issue advocacy campaigns, volunteer recruitment and training, and educational programs.

The primary traditional tactics implemented by grassroots organizations were canvassing, phone banking, and SMS/text messaging. The most instrumental tactic to connect with new and existing Latino voters was in-person engagement and conversations through door knocking or hosted events, particularly culturally relevant events.

Digital engagement work complemented field programs in all 4 states, and were an effective tool for reinforcing messaging and reaching Latino voters through digital targeting, ads/messaging, Facebook and video. While all participating organizations employed some form of existing digital

tools, new and existing digital tools present many opportunities to reach Latino voters where they are, and this area remains ripe for further investment, testing, and greater use and deployment by grassroots organizations.

Following the 2016 election, a sprawling new ecosystem of politically geared technology and digital tools were created so that organizations and civic engagement programs can reach a greater scale in achieving larger outcomes in registering voters, doing issue organizing and persuasion and turnout work. To read in greater detail the opportunities, threats and important capacity gaps that exist to fully leverage the new suite of tools, tactics and approaches to better organize and build power for the Latino community, you can access the *Digital, Data, and Online Information Distribution: The (not so) New Frontie*r summary report in the attached appendix.

The following table provides an overview of the issue areas, program components, and tactics by state.

LATINO VOTE PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE OF ISSUE AREAS, PROGRAM, AND TACTICS BY STATE			
State	**Issue(s)**	**Program**	**Tactics**

Arizona	➔ Police unions
	➔ Private prisons
	➔ Immigration
	➔ Police Violence
	➔ SB1070
	➔ Arpaio
	➔ Trump
	➔ Candidate contrast
	➔ Guaranteed family leave
	➔ Fair work week
	➔ Criminal justice bills:
	  ◆ Probation fees
	  ◆ Designation of felonies, and reducing to misdemeanors
	  ◆ Eliminate historical felony and sentencing requirements
	  ◆ Minimum wage
	➔ Economic Justice
		Leadership Development
		
		Voter engagement / registration
		
		Civic participation / GOTV efforts
		
		Advocacy
		
		Issue advocacy campaigns
		
		Volunteer coordination/training
		
		Educational programs:
		  - Legal immigration
		  - Know your rights
		  - English classes
		  - Citizenship classes
			In-person engagement
			
			Voter registration
			  - Focused on marginalized communities
			
			Canvassing - paid and volunteer
			  - AZ and FL: Thank you canvass post-election
			
			Phone banking - paid and volunteer
			
			SMS / text messaging
			  - Relay
			  - Hustle

Florida	➔ Immigration
	➔ Criminal Justice
	➔ Candidate contrast
	➔ Trump
			Digital
			  - Ads
			  - Facebook
			  - Videos

Nevada	➔ Economic justice ➔ Paid sick leave ➔ Minimum wage increase ➔ Housing and rent control ➔ Immigration integration work ➔ Decriminalization of traffic citations		- NV: $20k in paid digital targeting of Latino and APIA voters Earned media Literature Vote cards Events - Rallies to vote - AZ and FL: Día de los Muertos - AZ: Burritos and briefings Candidate forums Actions Community organizing - residents/neighborhoods, high school students, college students Lobbying days Building a pipeline of new, younger, POC leadership Candidate recruitment, particularly in low information/low turnout race
Texas	➔ Immigration ➔ Criminal Justice 　◆ District Attorney 　◆ Judges ➔ Paid sick ➔ Trump ➔ Hurricane Harvey / flooding recovery		

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data analysis and qualitative interviews, the Latino Vote Project identified missed opportunities to leverage for future elections and recommendations to build durable power and increase Latino voter engagement and participation ahead, and beyond, the 2020 elections.

With earlier and greater funding organizations could:
- Plan and execute programs earlier.
- Start voter outreach earlier.
- Increase voter touches.
- Hire on schedule to match program ramp up needs with time to allow for volunteer recruitment and training.
- Hire the right team and canvassers from the same communities they are targeting to allow for authentic conversations and voter engagement.

Tactics that could have been deployed if funding existed and/or missed opportunities:
- Rapid response (for earned media).
- Understanding Latino subgroups / Microtargeting of Latinos.
  - Opportunity to leverage political / politicized experience of Latinos, particularly refugees.
- Greater use, and capacity building within organizations, of digital tools.

In Arizona:
- Presence on the group could have been expanded to include a third county - Coconino (houses Flagstaff).
- Establish a workers rights' center to incorporate "Know Your Rights" training and partner with unions such as Painters Union and UFCW.

In Texas:
- Potential impact on outcome of TX-23 race had organizations have had more funding.
- Much more planned and larger program in Ft. Bend county.
- Built deeper partnerships and identified progressive champions on the ground with more time.
- BGTX could have been able to register a larger number of voters, 75k-80k, instead of 55k.

In Nevada:
- If MTR would have met their target budget, they could have had 3 voter touch/passes of roughly 45k voters.
- Funding to hire election protection workers and train canvassers.

ABOUT AND METHODOLOGY

The Latino Vote Project, a project of America's Voice and the Immigration Hub, is a multiphase, comprehensive analysis that addresses the impact of the timing and level of investment in relation to Latino voter engagement, turnout, and electoral wins and opportunities.

The Latino Vote Project set out to evaluate the turnout of Latino voters in the last three elections - 2014, 2016, 2018 - as a function of the investments made, programs implemented, and opportunities leveraged by grassroots organizations and donors beginning with four key states: Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Texas. In the coming months, the Latino Vote Project will release further analysis of Georgia, North Carolina, New Mexico, Minnesota, Virginia, Colorado, California, and New York.

In each identified geography, the Latino Vote Project collected data on Latino voter turnout in the 2014, 2016, and 2018 elections, and analyzed the data in correlation to investments made in groups working to mobilize the Latino vote.

Leveraging data accessed through Catalist and other sources, the Latino Vote Project analyzed Latino turnout in AZ, FL, NV, and TX and key Congressional Districts, and analyzed wins and losses in 2014, 2016, and 2018. Additionally, the project carried out 10 qualitative in-depth interviews and surveys with Latino leaders of organizations in these states to chart money flow to these groups, the programs they engaged in, and the timing of these programs against recorded voter mobilization and turnout. Please note the sample for the research reflects the contributing Latino partner organizations and their respective missions and organizing efforts.

The Latino Vote Project is led by America's Voice senior staff, campaign consultants Emmy Ruiz, partner at NEWCO Strategies, and Sky Gallegos, Senior Political Advisor at NextGen, the Immigration Hub, Catalist, and Latino Decisions.

CATALIST

In support of this effort, Catalist provided the Latino Vote Project team and the senior staff of America's Voice with Catalist sourced data and analysis.

Catalist turnout, share of the electorate, and Democratic support estimates were developed using a variety of data sources and statistical models. The data includes individual-level vote history records where available, precinct and county level election results, large-scale national survey data, and archived individual-level voter files going back to 2008.

Vote choice estimates were built by combining these data assets using a statistical technique called Multilevel Regression and Poststratification (MRP). MRP blends flexible statistical models with large population datasets to provide more reliable estimates for small subgroups, where standard survey methods do not have enough sample size to work properly.

For Latino estimates, we rely on self-reported race or Catalist's probablistic race models, which are more reliable than standard race models on voter files for understanding turnout and voting trends.

LATINO DECISIONS

Latino Decisions precinct analysis

The Latino Decisions team of researchers downloaded more than 20,000 individual voting precincts across eight states with large Latino populations. For each precinct, we compared the total votes cast in 2014 to the total votes cast in 2018, to generate an increase in turnout, which we call total vote growth. For each precinct, we report the percent of all voters who are Latino, using data from the Catalist Q tool. Thus, for each of the 20,000 precincts, we can determine what the growth rate was, and whether this growth rate was higher, or lower, in Latino or non-Latino areas.

In addition to growth rate, Latino Decisions measured the raw growth in total votes cast across all precincts. Comparing the most heavily non-Latino precincts to the most heavily Latino precincts. Latino precincts actually saw a larger total vote increase in 2018, not just a large percent increase.

For California, we have total number of registered voters in 2014 and 2018 and can do a deeper dive into turnout rate change from '14 to '18. In California, comparing the most heavily non-Latino precincts to the most heavily Latino precincts. Latino precincts actually saw a larger average increase in voter turnout rate of +10.8% higher in 2018, while non-Latino precincts witnessed a +7.8% increase.

Latino Decisions polling data

American Election Eve Poll 2018: Latino Decisions completed 2,600 interviews with Latino registered voters who had already voted early, or were certain to vote in the November 6, 2018 general election. The overall Latino sample carries a margin of error of 1.9 percentage points. For individual states, a minimum of 400 interviews were completed to provide state-specific reliable estimates. The state-level results carry a margin of error of 4.9 percentage points.

Interviews were conducted through a combination of cell phone and landline telephone with live callers and self-completed online. Latino voters were given an opportunity to complete their interview in English or Spanish at the start of the interview. Respondents were randomly selected from a statewide, or district-wide sample frame, giving all voters an equal opportunity to be selected

for interviews. Respondents were reached on landline and cell phone-only households, from November 1-5, 2018. Voters were pre-screened based on their vote history in previous midterm elections, and date of registration to include a mix of new registrants and first-time voters, as well as those who had confirmed vote history in 2010 and 2014 midterms, or newer voters who first voted in 2016 and even newer registrants who were first-time voters in 2018.

Respondents were asked if they had already voted early, and if not, if they were 100% certain they would vote on November 6th, and approximately half of voters indicated they had already voted early, while half were Election Day precinct voters. The interview for any respondent who was not certain was terminated. Using this same methodology in 2014, 92% of the interviewed sample was subsequently confirmed (validated) as having voted when examining official vote records, with no meaningful deviation from reported totals.

Latino Decisions has employed this same methodology since the 2010 midterm election, and in 2018 the Associated Press abandoned the traditional Election Day precinct exit poll and now the AP also conducts an election eve poll using similar methodology to our American Election Eve Poll.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

We would like to acknowledge and thank the organizations and leadership for their participation.

Arizona

Texas

Florida

Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Texas

Nevada