NALEO
Educational Fund

2022

PRIMARY ELECTION PROFILE

TEXAS

ELECTION DAY:
TUESDAY MARCH 1, 2022

PROJECTED LATINO VOTE FOR NOVEMBER 2022: 1,795,500

TOTAL POPULATION (2020):
29,145,505

LATINO POPULATION (2020):
11,441,717

The landscape for Texas' 2022 midterm primary and November elections includes several policy and political developments, which could affect Latino participation and political progress in the state. The state's elections will be the first to take place after the reapportionment that followed Census 2020, where Texas gained two congressional seats in part due to Latino population growth. Despite this growth, the state legislature failed to create congressional and state maps during redistricting, which would provide fair electoral opportunities for the Latino community. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) has challenged the legislature's maps in court. In September 2021, the state enacted SB 1, which imposes several new restrictions on voting and registration, which could impair Latino access to the ballot. Election 2022 also involves several extremely competitive congressional and statewide races, where Latinos will play important roles both as candidates and voters.

REDISTRICTING

Between 2010 and 2020, Latino population growth was nearly half (49.5 percent) of the state's overall growth and helped the state gain two congressional seats during apportionment. The state legislature conducted a rushed redistricting process, generally depriving the public of advanced notice and sufficient time to analyze the proposed maps. The legislature also failed to provide meaningful opportunities for the public to provide input during the line-drawing process.

Texas has a long history of redistricting that discriminates against Latinos, followed by litigation against the state. In 2021, this pattern repeated itself. MALDEF has again challenged the lines drawn by the legislature, claiming that they diminish Latino voting strength and violate the U.S. Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act. For example, before the 2021 redistricting, 33 of the state's 150 State House of Representative districts had a majority Latino citizen voting-age population (these districts are referred to as "opportunity districts" because they generally provide Latinos with fair opportunities to elect candidates of their choice). However, the State House plan adopted by the legislature reduced the number of Latino opportunity districts to 30.

Despite the growth of the Latino population over the last decade, the Texas State Senate plan failed to create any new Latino opportunity districts. Moreover, even with the state gaining two congressional seats after reapportionment, the congressional redistricting plan reduced the number of Latino opportunity districts from eight to seven and weakened Latino voting strength in several existing opportunity districts. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has also sued Texas over its congressional and State House redistricting plans, and the various redistricting lawsuits are pending in federal district court.

RESTRICTIVE VOTING AND REGISTRATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

In October 2021, Texas enacted SB 1, which put new restrictive voting and election practices in place, thus potentially creating challenges for Latino access to the ballot box. For example, in 2019, the state implemented practices purportedly intended to "clean" the state's voter registration rolls by removing non-citizens — however, the practices resulted in the state mistakenly attempting to cancel the registrations of many eligible Latino naturalized citizens. After lawsuits challenging these practices, the state agreed to change them to ensure that eligible voters were not removed from the rolls. However, the state's implementation of its new registration roll practices has continued to result in the attempted cancellation of the registration of naturalized citizens and other eligible Latinos. Lawsuits are pending against the state to obtain records that will shed light on its new practices and their impact on eligible voters.

Under SB 1, Texas also requires voters to provide certain identification numbers on their vote-by-mail (VBM) applications and when they submit those ballots. County elections officials reject applications or VBM ballots if the numbers provided on these materials do not match those in the state's voter registration rolls. However, the state voter registration database has only one specific ID number for each voter that is used for this matching. Furthermore, the instructions on materials voters must complete are confusing and can be read as giving voters multiple options for the number to be provided. There are other sources of confusion about completing the materials, which also lead to mismatches and the subsequent rejection of the materials. According to a *New York Times* piece, as of February 18, the most populous counties in the state have rejected 10 percent of the VBM applications they received — or 12,000 applications. Elections officials have indicated that the number of rejections in 2022 far exceeds the number in elections before the new identification requirements, and Harris County has requested that the DOJ investigate the rejections.

In addition, SB 1 has imposed restrictions on practices that have made Texas voting less accessible to Latinos and other under-represented groups. These include prohibitions on late-night early voting and "drive-through" voting. SB 1 also places onerous requirements on persons who provide assistance to voters. Voting rights organizations, community organizations, and other advocates will be monitoring the extent to which these restrictions impair the ability of voters to cast ballots in the primary and general elections.

CONGRESSIONAL RACES

Texas' new congressional maps are affecting the political landscape for Latino candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives. Six of the state's seven incumbent Latino U.S. Representatives are running for re-election (Democrats Joaquin Castro, Henry Cuellar, Veronica Escobar, Sylvia Garcia, and Vicente Gonzalez — and Republican Tony Gonzales), while Democrat Filemon Vela is retiring. All of the incumbents have good prospects of victory in the primary and general elections, although U.S. Rep. Cuellar faces a somewhat competitive primary challenge from attorney Jessica Cisneros.

In the 7th Congressional District, mediator Rudy Atencio will have a tough contest in a crowded field of contenders in the Republican primary. If he prevails, he would also have an uphill battle in trying to unseat the likely victor of the Democratic primary, incumbent U.S. Rep. Lizzie Fletcher.

In the 10th Congressional District, community activist Linda Nuno is running unopposed in the Democratic primary but will have a difficult race in her general election attempt to unseat the likely Republican candidate, incumbent U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul.

In the 14th Congressional District, investor Ruben Landon Dante faces a tough contest in his Republican primary bid against incumbent U.S. Rep. Randy Weber, who also has good prospects of prevailing in the general election.

Texas' 15th Congressional District has several Latinos running in both of the major party primaries for the congressional seat held by incumbent U.S. Rep. Vicente Gonzalez (D), who has chosen to run in the 34th Congressional District, the seat being held by retiring U.S. Representative Filemon Vela (D). Republican primary candidates include retired Border Patrol agent Aizar Cavazos, educator Vangela Churchill, entrepreneur Monica De La Cruz, business owner Mauro Garza, and entrepreneur Angela Juarez, with De La Cruz and Garza being the most competitive candidates. Democratic primary contenders include educator Eliza Alvarado, small business owner Julio Garza, attorney Ruben Ramirez, attorney John Villarreal Rigney, nurse Vanessa Tijerina, and small business owner Michelle Vallejo. Some political observers believe that Villarreal Rigney is the frontrunner in the Democratic primary. While the 15th Congressional District was reconfigured during redistricting to become more favorable for Republican candidates, the district may still be fairly competitive in the general election.

In the 21st Congressional District, banker Cherif Gacis, physician Ricardo Villarreal, and budget analyst Claudia Zapata are the three Latinos among the contenders in the Democratic primary. They are facing a difficult contest to win the nomination. The primary winner will also have an uphill battle in the general election to unseat the likely Republican primary victor, incumbent U.S. Rep. Chip Roy.

In the 27th Congressional District, Latinos running in the Democratic primary include physician Victor Melgoza, broadcaster Maclovio Perez, and consultant Anthony Tristan. Latino candidates in the Republican primary — automobile business consultant Andrew Alvarez and oil and gas consultant Eric Mireles, will face a tough race in their battle against incumbent U.S. Rep. Michael Cloud, who is also likely to prevail in the general election.

In the 30th Congressional District, Latinos are running in both major party primaries for the seat being vacated by retiring U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D). The crowded field of Republican contenders includes paralegal Lizbeth Diaz and small business owner Kelvin Goodwin Castillo. Given the partisan leanings of this district, the Republican victor will face a difficult contest against the winner of the Democratic primary, where the frontrunners appear to be State Representative Jasmine Crockett and Abel Mulugheta, former Chief of Staff to State Representative Rafael Anchia.

The 35th Congressional District primaries also include Latinos from both sides of the aisle, competing for the nomination to win the seat currently held by incumbent U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D), who is vacating this seat to run in the newly-created 37th Congressional District. Latino Republican candidates who face a tough race in a crowded field of primary contenders include construction worker Alejandro Ledezma, journalist Sam Montoya, and Michael Rodriguez. The Democratic field includes former Austin City Council Member Greg Casar, State Representative Eddie Rodriguez, and former San Antonio City Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, with Casar and Rodriguez being particularly competitive. Given the district's partisan leanings, the Democratic primary victor will likely prevail in the general election.

In the 37th Congressional District Republican primary, caregiver Jenny Garcia Sharon will face a difficult contest to win her party's nomination. The victor in the Republican primary will also face a tough general election battle against incumbent U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett, the likely Democratic primary winner.

The 38th Congressional District is the other new Texas Congressional district created after apportionment. In the Democratic primary, educator Diana Martinez Alexander is competing in a crowded field of contenders. In the Republican primary, former Colorado State Representative Philip Covarrubias, who has relocated to Texas, and executive consultant Roland Lopez will face a difficult race against primary frontrunner Army veteran Wesley Hunt, who is also likely to prevail in the general election.

STATEWIDE RACES

In Texas' Democratic gubernatorial primary, Inocencio Barrientez and Joy Diaz will have an uphill battle against frontrunner former U.S. Rep. and 2018 U.S. Senate candidate Beto O'Rourke. Political observers believe O'Rourke will be able to mount a competitive general election challenge to incumbent Governor Greg Abbott (R), and with Latinos comprising more than one of every four Texas registered voters (27 percent), the Latino vote will play a key role in this November contest.

In the race for State Attorney General, Latinos are running in primaries on both sides of the political aisle. The Republican candidates include Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush and attorney Eva Guzman, with Bush being considered a particularly competitive contender against

incumbent Ken Paxton. In the Democratic primary, attorney Rochelle Garza is running in a crowded field of candidates, and some political observers believe she is among that primary's frontrunners.

In the race for Comptroller of Public Accounts, author Angel Luis Vega faces an uphill battle to win the Democratic primary. The victor of that primary will see a tough general election fight to unseat incumbent Glenn Hegar (R).

Business owner Ben Armenta and retired Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agent Victor Avila are among a crowded field of competitors in the Republican primary for Texas Land Commissioner, where many political observers believe State Senator Dawn Buckingham is the frontrunner. In the Democratic primary, mental wellness policy advocate Sandagrace Martinez will also face a tough race against frontrunner business owner and filmmaker Jay Kleberg.

TEXAS LATINO VOTER PROJECTION FOR ELECTION 2022

NALEO Educational Fund projects that nearly 1.8 million Latinos will cast ballots in the 2022 midterm elections in November. Our projection is based on trends in voter turnout in the last five midterm congressional elections. There was a fairly slow increase in the number of Latino voters (11 percent) in the first four of those election cycles between 2002 and 2014. However, in the most recent cycle, between 2014 and 2018, there was a dramatic increase of 76 percent. With all of these trends considered together, it is unclear whether the Latino vote in 2022 will reach the level of 2018. Thus, our 2022 projection for the Texas Latino vote represents a possible 6.4 percent decline in the number of Latino voters from 2018 and a possible 64.4 percent increase from 2014.
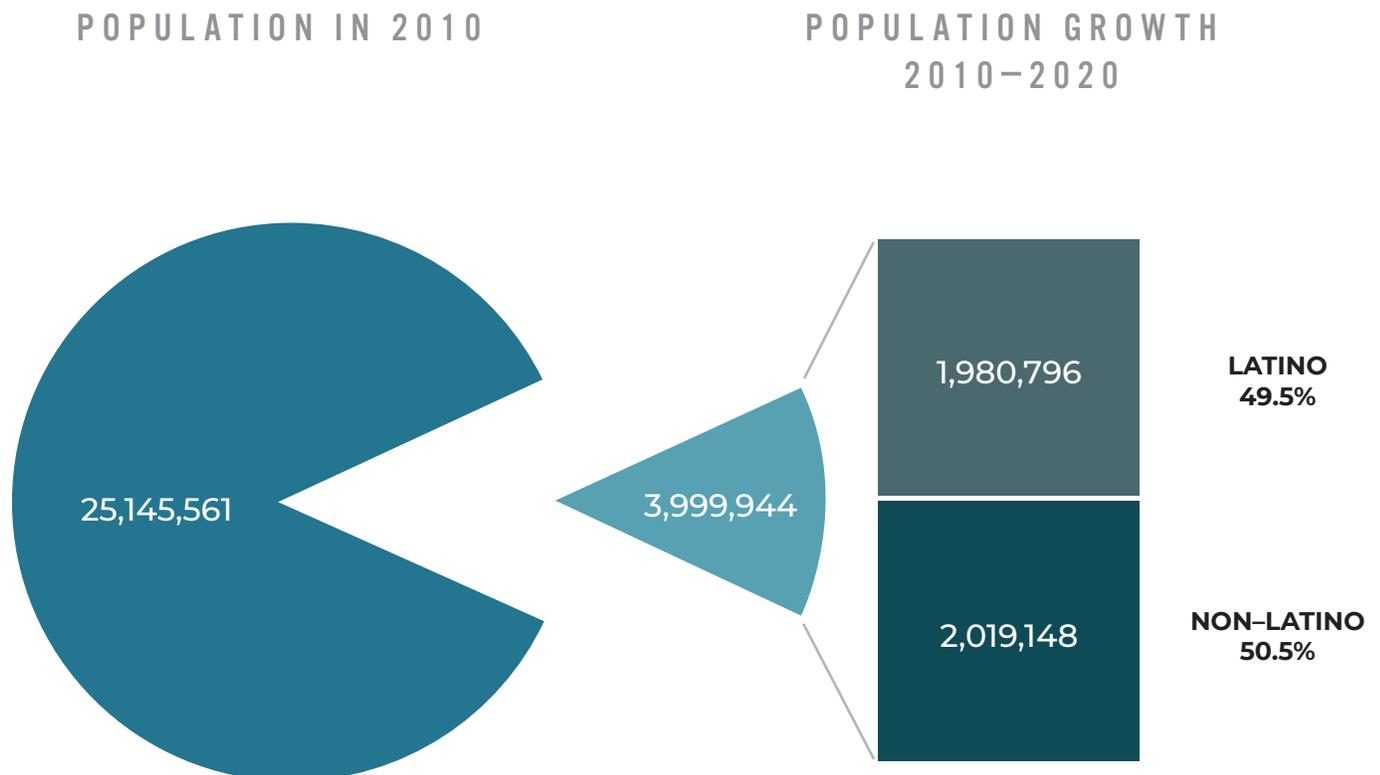
TEXAS

PROJECTED LATINO VOTE 2022	LATINO VOTE 2018	% CHANGE BETWEEN 2018 AND 2022	LATINO VOTE 2014	% CHANGE BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022
1,795,500	1,918,000	-6.4%	1,092,000	64.4%

In addition, we project that more than one of every five Texas voters are expected to be Latino in Election 2022 (21.2 percent), which mirrors the Latino share in 2018, and is a 13.1 percent increase from 2014.

Furthermore, our Election 2022 projection is a floor, and the actual Latino vote could exceed the projection based on the political and policy environment leading to the November election. In light of this, we note that one of the factors contributing to the groundbreaking turnout of Texas Latinos in Election 2018 was the investment made by candidates and parties in Latino voter mobilization, particularly for some of the highly competitive congressional and statewide races, including the Senate contest between Beto O'Rourke and Senator Ted Cruz. This kind of investment will be crucial for the Texas Latino vote in Election 2022 to match or exceed the vote of 2018. More information about Texas Latino voter turnout can be found in "Voter Turnout" below and in NALEO Educational Fund's analysis of national and state projected turnout in Election 2022.

POPULATION GROWTH BETWEEN 2010 AND 2020

Between 2010 and 2020, Texas' population grew from 25.1 million to 29.1 million, an increase of 15.9 percent. During the same period, the state's Latino population grew from 9.5 million to 11.4 million, an increase of 20.9 percent. The increase in Texas' Latino population accounted for nearly half (49.5 percent) of the state's total population growth during the past decade.

POPULATION IN 2010

POPULATION GROWTH
2010—2020

25,145,561

3,999,944

1,980,796

LATINO
49.5%

2,019,148

NON-LATINO
50.5%

GROWTH OF TEXAS POPULATION GROUPS 2010-2020

The Texas Latino population increase between 2010 and 2020 exceeded the growth of other population groups.

Bar chart values:
- Latino: 1,980,796
- White: 187,252
- Black or African America: 557,887
- American Indian and Alaska Native: 4,839
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 623,029
- Some Other Race: 79,604
- Two or More Races: 566,537

Y-axis: 0 / 200,000 / 500,000 / 1,000,000 / 1,500,000 / 2,000,000 / 2,500,000
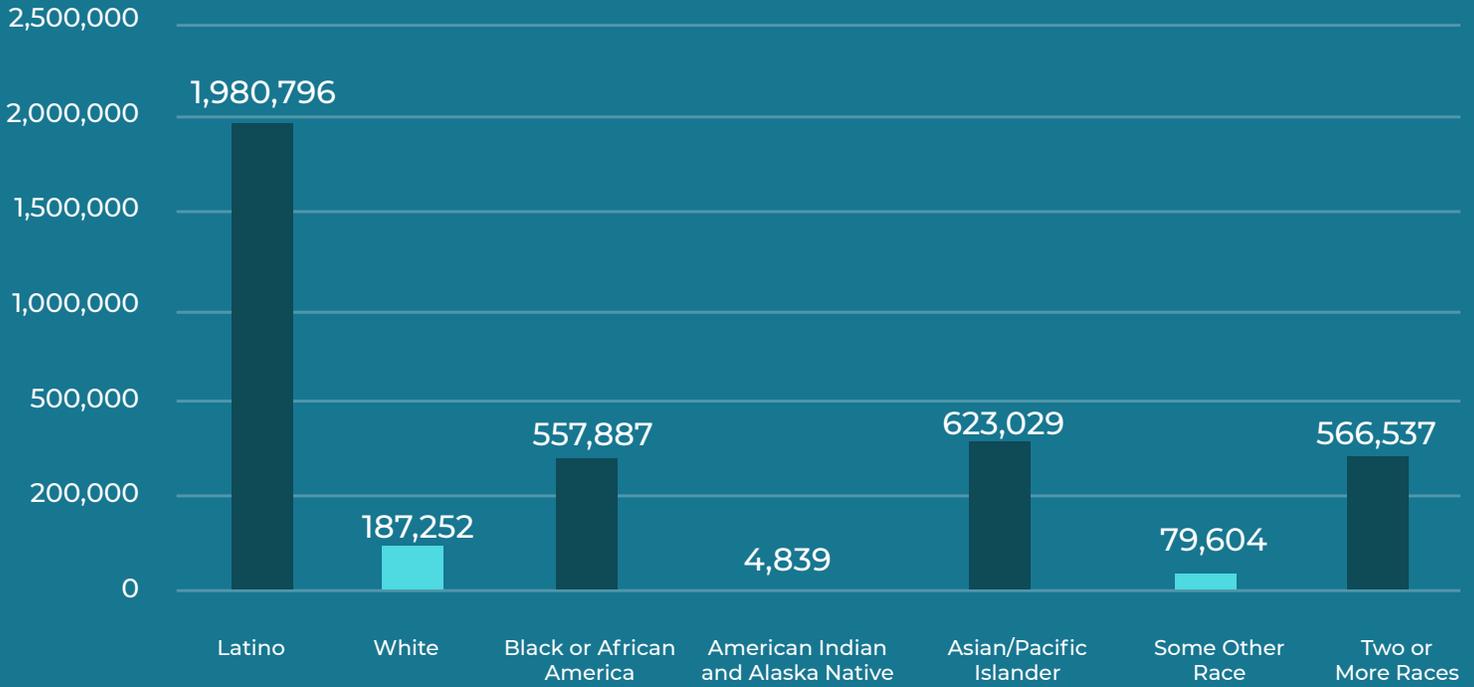
TEXAS LATINO POPULATION 2020

	POPULATION	SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATION
All Latinos	11,441,717	39%
Latino Adults	7,907,319	36%
Latino Voting–Age Citizens	5,599,00	30%

See *"Sources"* at the end of this profile for information about the comparability of data sources for this table.
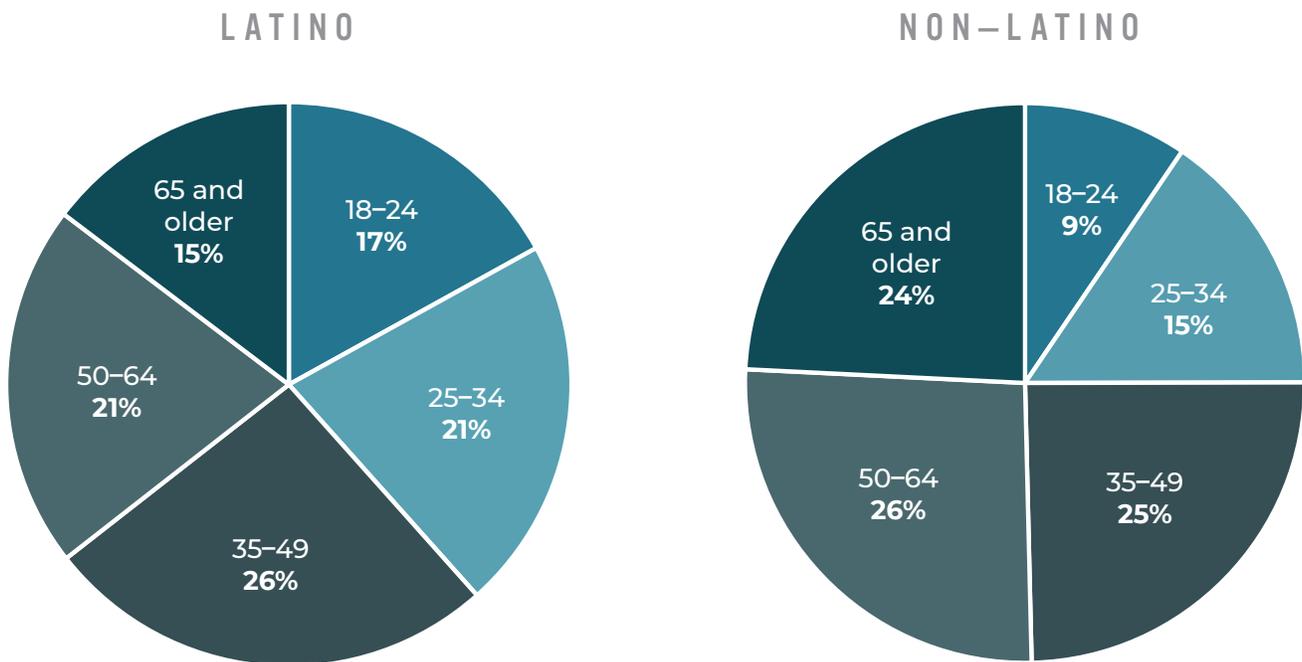
TEXAS LATINO ELECTORATE

(as of September 2021, from VAN voter file)

Total Registered Voters	15,642,266
Latino Registered Voters	4,161,930
Latino Share of Registered Voters	27%

More than one of every four Texas registered voters (27 percent) are Latino.

AGE

Texas Latino registered voters tend to be younger than non-Latinos, with 18–24-year-olds comprising 17 percent of registered Latinos, compared to 9 percent of non-Latinos. Similarly, 21 percent of Latino registered voters are 25–34-year-olds, compared to 15 percent of non-Latinos. In contrast, 50 percent of non-Latino registered voters are 50 and older, compared to 36 percent of Latinos.

LATINO

- 18–24 **17%**
- 25–34 **21%**
- 35–49 **26%**
- 50–64 **21%**
- 65 and older **15%**

NON–LATINO

- 18–24 **9%**
- 25–34 **15%**
- 35–49 **25%**
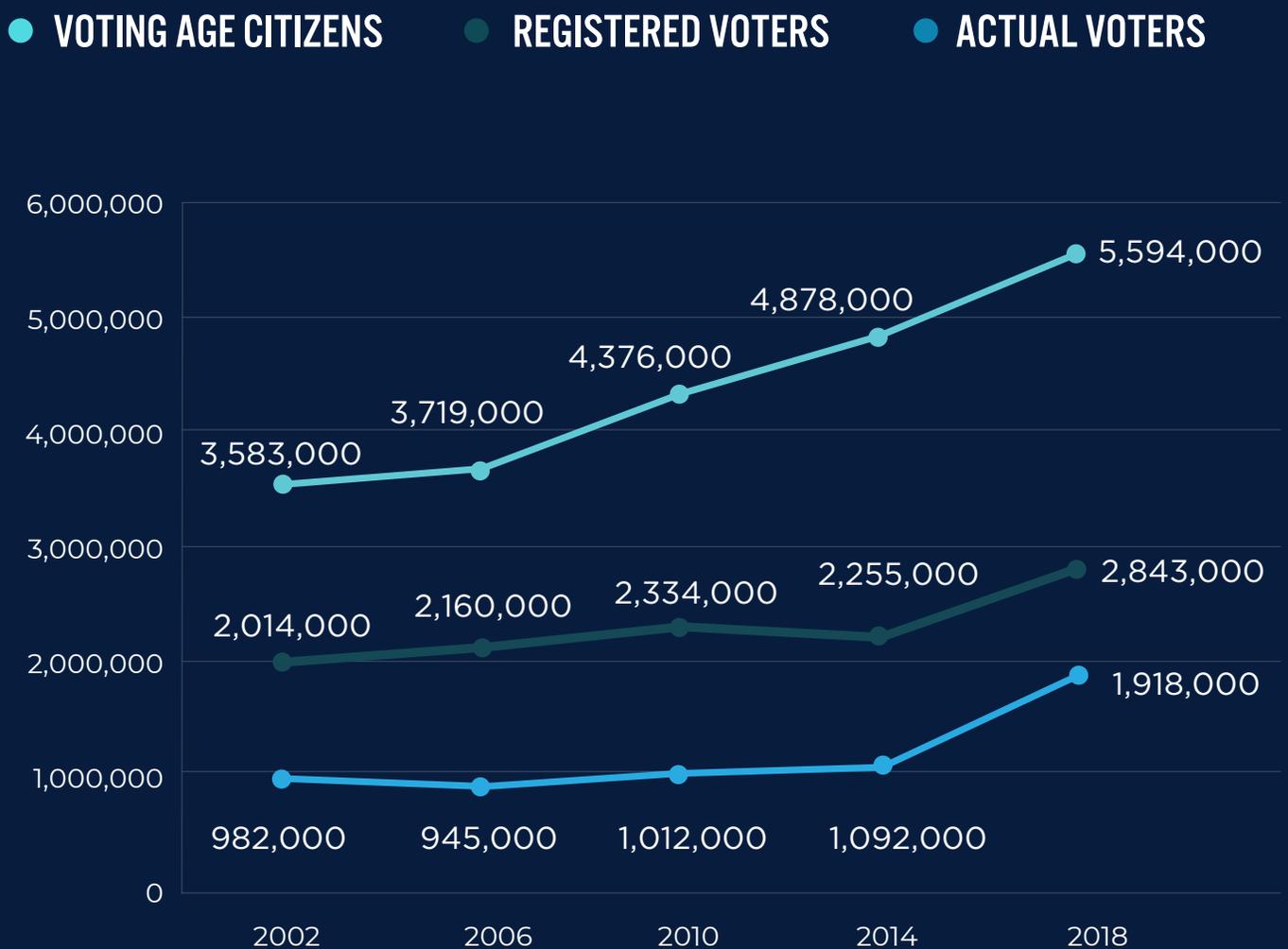- 50–64 **26%**
- 65 and older **24%**

Totals may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

VOTER TURNOUT

Latino voter turnout in Texas midterm elections increased from 982,000 in 2002 to 1,092,000 in 2014, an increase of 11 percent over four midterm election cycles. Between 2014 and 2018, there was dramatic growth in the number of Latino voters from 1,092,000 to 1,918,000, an increase of 76 percent.

(see "Texas Latino Voter Projection for Election 2022" above for more information about these turnout trends)

● **VOTING AGE CITIZENS**　　● **REGISTERED VOTERS**　　● **ACTUAL VOTERS**

	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018
Voting Age Citizens	3,583,000	3,719,000	4,376,000	4,878,000	5,594,000
Registered Voters	2,014,000	2,160,000	2,334,000	2,255,000	2,843,000
Actual Voters	982,000	945,000	1,012,000	1,092,000	1,918,000

LATINOS IN TEXAS ELECTED OFFICE: 1996–2021

In 2021, **2,808 Latinos served in elected office in Texas,** with 98 percent serving at the local level, including county, municipal, school board, judicial and law enforcement, and special district officials.

	1996	2001	2007	2013	2021
U.S. Senators	0	0	0	1	1
U.S Representatives	5	6	6	6	7
State Officials	1	1	1	0	1
State Legislators	33	35	36	40	45
Local Officials	1,650	1,786	2,127	2,477	2,754
TOTAL	1,689	1,828	2,170	2,524	2,808

SOURCES

NALEO Educational Fund, *2021 National Directory of Latino Elected Officials.*

Generally, data on the overall Texas population and the Latino population for 2020 are from the 2020 Census Redistricting Data Summary Files. However, because these data do not include information on the citizenship of residents, data on the 2020 citizen voting-age population of Texas overall and Latinos are from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), *Voting and Registration in the Elections of November: 2002–2020,* and this should be taken into account when making comparisons between population data in this profile. These CPS data are also the source of the voting and registration data in the profile unless indicated otherwise.

The CPS data used in this profile and the survey from which they are derived are subject to certain limitations. First, actual voter turnout and registration may be overestimated by the CPS because individuals may tend to over-report electoral participation. Additionally, the CPS is a national survey, and estimates derived for smaller sub-groups within the national population may be based on relatively small sample sizes. Consequently, the margin of error associated with estimates of voting and registration for these sub-groups is greater than the margin associated with the national population or larger population sub-groups.

PROJECTION METHODOLOGY

NALEO Educational Fund derived our projection of the Latino vote in Election 2022 by using a statistical modeling approach that takes into account trends in Latino voter turnout over the past five midterm election cycles. We determined Latino voter turnout in those cycles from U.S. Census Bureau CPS, *Voting and Registration in the Elections of November: 2002–2018.* Because the projections are based on past voting trends, they do not take into account the potential increase or decrease in Latino turnout that could result from challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, more robust voter engagement efforts, naturalization trends, changes in voter registration and voting laws and practices, or other factors.

NGP Voter Activation Network (VAN) voter file data, September 2021. VAN data are subject to some limitations regarding collecting, entering, maintaining, and analyzing voter file records. All estimates are of Registered Active Voters.

For more information about NALEO Educational Fund's Election 2020 publications, please contact Dorian Caal at **dcaal@naleo.org** or (213) 765-9450.