



2022

PRIMARY ELECTION PROFILE

CALIFORNIA



ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2022

PROJECTED LATINO VOTE FOR NOVEMBER 2022: 3,251,000

TOTAL POPULATION (2020):

39,538,223

LATINO POPULATION (2020):

15,579,652



The landscape for the 2022 midterm primary and general elections in California includes several policy and political developments that could affect Latino participation and political progress in the state. These elections will be the first to take place after the reapportionment that followed Census 2020, where California lost a congressional seat for the first time in the state's history. In addition, this was the second redistricting cycle where California's Citizens Redistricting Commission drew the lines for congressional, state legislative, and Board of Equalization districts. There was widespread mobilization of diverse community members to engage them in the redistricting process by community, civic, and voting rights organizations. These efforts contributed to the Commission adopting maps that increased electoral opportunities for Latinos and other communities of color.

Additionally, in 2016, California adopted the Voter's Choice Act (VCA), which allowed certain counties to replace traditional precinct-site voting with a system that provides greater options for voting — including vote centers, enhanced access to early voting, and availability of vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots. As of this writing, 25 California counties will be holding their primary elections in 2022 using the VCA model, including several with sizeable Latino electorates, such as Fresno, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Merced, Orange, San Benito, San Diego, Sacramento, Santa Clara, and Ventura (Riverside and Santa Cruz also hope to implement VCA elections, but it is not clear that they will get a required approval from the Secretary of State in time for the primary). Moreover, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, California enacted legislation requiring counties to send all registered voters vote-by mail ballots for the November 2020 election. In 2021, the state made this a permanent requirement for all future elections.

While the VCA election model has significant potential for improving Latino access to the electoral process, research examining Latino perspectives and experiences with voting in VCA counties indicates that many still lack information about the options available to cast ballots. The California Secretary of State, VCA counties, and non-partisan voter engagement groups have recognized the need to conduct voter education and outreach about the VCA model and the measures being taken to help ensure that voters can cast their ballots safely during the pandemic. However, in a July 2020 survey of eligible voters in California, the Center for Inclusive Democracy at the University of Southern California Price School of Public Policy found that Latino and Asian American voters were less likely to know where to find information about polling place locations than Black or non-Hispanic white voters. Just over one-fourth (26.7 percent) of California eligible voters knew that their counties changed options for how and where ballots could be cast in the March 2020 election. NALEO Educational Fund's [2022 Los Angeles Voter Snapshot](#) poll, which examined the perspectives and experiences of Los Angeles City Latino registered voters found that over 55 percent had not yet received any information about voting-by-mail (VBM) or vote centers, and 30 percent did not know who to ask for a ballot or information about vote centers or VBM.

Election 2022 also comes on the heels of an unsuccessful attempt to recall Governor Gavin Newsom in September 2021. Media reports and political observers suggest that Governor Newsom increased his outreach efforts to the Latino electorate in the latter part of the campaign. In addition, there were robust efforts by community organizations to mobilize Latino participation in the recall election.

Furthermore, California congressional, state legislative, and statewide contests are held under the “top two primary” system, where all candidates running in the primary election – regardless of their party preference – appear on a single primary election ballot, and people can vote for any candidate. The top two overall vote-getters (not the top vote-getter from each political party) move on to the November general election. On the ballot, candidates can list their affiliation with a political party or indicate “No Party Preference”. As a result, two candidates from the same political party may face each other in the general election.

Additionally, in 2015, California enacted legislation requiring certain localities to move their election dates to coincide with statewide election dates if there was a significant difference between turnout in the locality’s elections and statewide elections. While the legislation generally gives localities until November 2022 to implement consolidated elections, many have moved forward with consolidation in advance of that deadline. Depending on the timing of city council and mayoral elections, the 2022 primary and general elections may be the first time some voters will see mayoral candidates on the same ballot as federal and state candidates. Moreover, primary ballots may have long lists of candidates for many offices, because all contenders appear on the ballot. For example, 26 candidates are listed in the race for governor. Thus, the top two primary system and the consolidation of election dates may result in some voters being confronted with extremely long ballots. Researchers and political observers will continue to assess whether the length of voters’ ballots affects the outcome of California contests and the extent to which members of the electorate vote for particular offices.

Finally, several of the 2022 congressional and statewide races in California could be highly competitive. The change in the election calendar and the competitiveness of congressional and statewide contests are also factors in the political landscape, which could affect Latino turnout.

REDISTRICTING

In 2008 and 2010, California voters approved ballot measures which transferred responsibility for drawing congressional and state legislative district lines from the state legislature to a new California Citizens Redistricting Commission. The 2020–22 line-drawing was the second conducted by this body. The Commission’s membership is comprised of five Democrats, five Republicans, and four members not affiliated with either of those political parties. In part, because the first eight commissioners were chosen through a process that involves random selection and allows the state legislature to strike certain applicants from the qualified candidate pool, none of the first eight commissioners selected were Latino. The first eight commissioners select the final six, and together with other civic and community groups, NALEO Educational Fund successfully advocated for the addition of four Latinos to the Commission, including at least one in each political affiliation pool.

In addition, a broad and diverse coalition of civic and community organizations, together with voting rights advocates, worked together throughout the California redistricting process. This coalition provided input to the Commission on a wide range of issues, including how to hold accessible meetings and hearings and how to best obtain input from community members. NALEO Educational Fund worked with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) to educate Latinos throughout the state on the importance of redistricting and mobilize the community to provide testimony to the Commission. This initiative also included technical assistance to Latinos on how to navigate the Commission’s online platforms for submitting testimony and maps indicating the shared social, ethnic, economic, cultural, and other interests that unified their neighborhoods and communities (these areas are known as “communities of interest”).

The Commission’s first draft maps provided greater electoral opportunities for Latinos than those in effect before the redistricting. However, given the fact that Latinos accounted for over two-thirds (69 percent) of the state’s population growth between 2010 and 2020, and even more in some parts of the state, advocates worked for significant improvements to the Commission’s first drafts. MALDEF played a critical leadership role in this advocacy, submitting maps that showed how to increase electoral opportunities for Latinos at both the congressional and state legislative levels.

Ultimately, the Commission adopted maps that created several new districts with a majority of Latino voting-age citizens (sometimes referred to as “opportunity districts” because they generally provide Latinos with fair opportunities to elect candidates of their choice). For Congress, the Commission’s map increased the number Latino-opportunity districts from 10 to 16, strengthening Latino opportunities in the Central Valley, the Inland Empire, and the Central Coast and its adjacent areas. For the State Senate, the Commission’s map increased the number of Latino-opportunity districts from seven to 10, including new-Latino opportunity districts in the San Fernando Valley and the Santa Ana-Anaheim area. For the State Assembly, the Commission’s map increased the number of Latino-opportunity districts from 17 to 22, strengthening Latino opportunities in the Central Valley, Inland Empire, and creating a new Latino-opportunity district in the Antelope Valley area. The testimony of Latino community members also resulted in maps that retained or unified many Latino communities of interest throughout the state.

CONGRESSIONAL RACES

U.S. Senate

California's Latino incumbent U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D) is running for election for the first time, and has excellent prospects of victory in the primary and general elections. In January 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom (D) appointed Padilla to the seat vacated by Vice President-elect Kamala Harris (D) just before she became Vice President. Under California law, Padilla must run to fill both the remainder of Harris' term, and for a full six-year term ending in 2029. Thus, Padilla is on the ballot for both of these contests.

U.S. House of Representatives

Thirteen of California's 14 Latino incumbents are running for re-election. Veteran lawmaker Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, who was the first Mexican-American woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, is retiring at the end of her term. Latino incumbents with excellent prospects of prevailing in the primary and general elections include Democratic Representatives Pete Aguilar, Salud Carbajal, Tony Cardenas, Lou Correa, Nanette Diaz Barragan, Jimmy Gomez, Grace Napolitano, Raul Ruiz, Linda Sanchez, Norma Torres, and Juan Vargas.

Latino U.S. Representatives with more competitive contests in the general election include Democrat Mike Levin, who is likely to face either business executive Brian Maryott (R) or Oceanside City Councilmember Christopher Rodriguez (R) in the 49th Congressional District race. Levin won election to this district in 2018, when many political observers considered it a Republican stronghold. Republicans hope to regain the seat, with both Republican frontrunners having raised considerable campaign funds.

California's 27th Congressional District encompasses much of the same area formerly included in the 25th Congressional District before redistricting, which had been a swing district since at least 2018, when Katie Hill (D) defeated incumbent Representative Steve Knight (R). Hill resigned in 2019, and former U.S. Navy pilot and business development manager Mike Garcia (R) won both a 2020 special election for the seat and election to a full term of office that year in the general election. Democrats hope to regain this seat, with the frontrunners including Navy veteran and small business owner Quaye Quartey, and former Assemblymember Christy Smith, whom Garcia narrowly defeated by a 333-vote margin in 2020. Simi Valley City Councilmember Ruth Luevanos (D) is also a candidate in this race but will have a tough contest in her bid to win the primary.

Latinos are serious contenders in several open seat congressional races. In the 13th Congressional District, a new Latino-opportunity district created by the Commission, competitive Latino candidates include small business owner Phil Arballo (D) and educator and business owner David Giglio (R). Other competitive candidates in this crowded primary include Assemblymember Adam Gray (D) and farmer John Duarte (R). Business owner Diego Javier Martinez (R) faces an uphill battle to be one of the two contenders in the general election.

In the open-seat race for California's 42nd Congressional District, the most competitive candidates are Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia (D) and State Assemblymember Christina Garcia (D). Latinos who

will have tougher contests for the opportunity to compete in the general election include non-profit worker J. Nicole Lopez (D) and engineer Joaquin Beltran (D).

In the 37th Congressional District, community leader Sandra Mendoza (D) will face an uphill battle in a contest where the most competitive candidates include California State Senator Sydney Kamlanger (D), former Los Angeles City Councilmember Jan Perry (D), and journalist Michael Shure (D).

In the 22nd Congressional District, Assemblymember Rudy Salas, Jr. (D) is attempting to unseat U.S. Rep. David Valadao (R). Other somewhat competitive primary contenders for the seat include cattle rancher Chris Mathys (R) and business owner Adam Madeiros (R).

In the 18th Congressional District, San Benito County Supervisor Peter Hernandez (R) has good prospects of advancing to the general election, but will have an uphill battle to unseat U.S. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D) in the general election. U.S. citizenship instructor Luis Acevedo Arreguin (D) is also a candidate in the primary, and is facing a tough contest to win an opportunity to run in the general election.

Latinos who are in crowded fields of primary contenders and will have difficulties in advancing to the general election include neurosurgeon Archimedes Ramirez (R), who is facing U.S. Rep. Jared Huffman (D) in the 2nd Congressional District; Marine veteran and therapist Eric Garcia (D), who is facing U.S. Rep. Jim Costa (D) in the 21st Congressional District; Victorville City Councilmember Blanca Gomez (D), who is facing U.S. Rep. Jay Obernolte (R) in the 23rd Congressional District; Paloma Zuniga (R), who is facing U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff in the 30th Congressional District; business entrepreneur Tony Moreno (R) and pool maintenance professional Emmanuel Suarez (R), who are facing U.S. Rep. Mark Takano (D) in the 39th Congressional District; and small business owner Omar Navarro (R), who is facing U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters (D) in the 43rd Congressional District.

STATE OFFICIALS

Latinos challenging incumbents for statewide offices will encounter difficulties advancing to the general election. These include attorney David Lozano (R), business executive Cristian Raul Morales (R), and business owner Armando Perez-Serrato (D), who are facing Governor Gavin Newsom (D); Cudahy City Councilmember Jack Guerrero, who is facing State Treasurer Fiona Ma (D); South Bay Union School District Board President Marco Amaral, who is challenging State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond in this non-partisan contest; and retired warehouse worker Raul Rodriguez Jr. (R), who is facing Secretary of State Shirley Webber (D).

Incumbent Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara (D) is virtually certain to be one of the winners of his primary contest, and he is likely to face a competitive challenge from Assemblymember Marc Levine (D) in the general election.

Board of Equalization Member Tony Vazquez (D) faces no serious opposition in either his primary or general bid for re-election to his 3rd Board District seat.

CALIFORNIA LATINO VOTER PROJECTION FOR ELECTION 2022

NALEO Educational Fund projects that more than 3.2 million California Latinos will cast ballots in the 2022 midterm elections in November. Our projection is based on trends in voter turnout in the past five midterm congressional elections. Between 2014 and 2018, there was a dramatic increase of 93.3 percent in turnout. As described in more detail in NALEO Educational Fund's [2022 Latino Vote Projections](#), several factors may have contributed to this increase, including the political dialogue around such issues as the migrant caravan crisis along the border, a rise in anti-Latino measures, and comments about immigrants from then-President Trump. Therefore, considering the trends in the past five midterm elections, we project the California Latino vote in November 2022 to mirror 2018 turnout and represent a 90.5 percent increase from 2014.

In addition, the Latino share of all California voters in 2022 is expected to be 25.3 percent, which mirrors the Latino share in 2018, and is a 32.5 percent increase from 2014.

Our Election 2022 projection is a floor, and the actual Latino vote could exceed the projection based on the political and policy environments leading into the November election. Furthermore, we note that one of the factors contributing to the groundbreaking turnout of Latinos in Election 2018 was the investment made by candidates and parties in Latino voter mobilization. This kind of investment will be crucial for the California Latino vote in Election 2022 to match or exceed the vote of 2018. More information about California Latino turnout can be found in "Voter Turnout" below and in NALEO Educational Fund's [analysis](#) of national and state projected turnout in Election 2022.



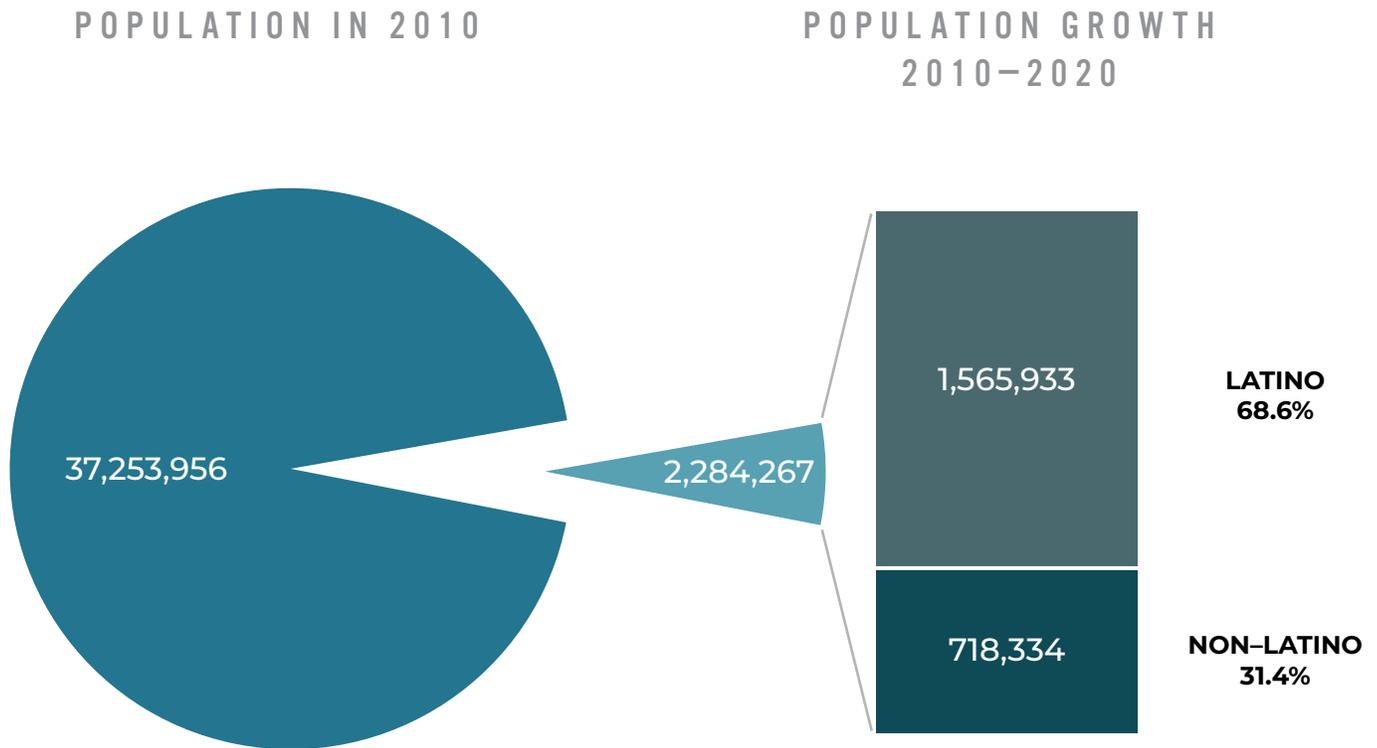
CALIFORNIA

PROJECTED LATINO VOTE 2022	LATINO VOTE 2018	% CHANGE BETWEEN 2018 AND 2022	LATINO VOTE 2014	% CHANGE BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022
3,251,000	3,300,000	-1.5%*	1,707,000	90.5%

* Not statistically significant

POPULATION GROWTH BETWEEN 2010 AND 2020

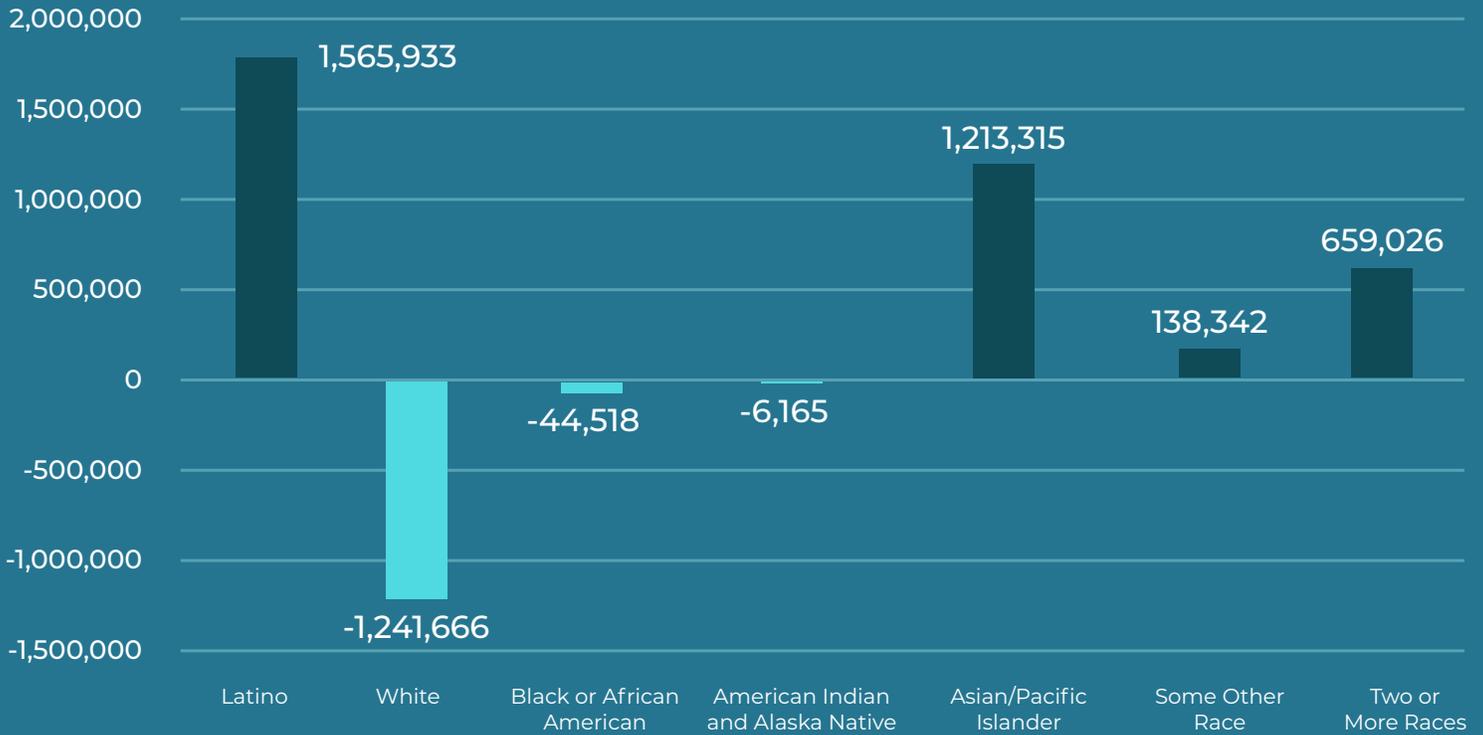
Between 2010 and 2020, California's population grew from 37.3 million to 39.5 million, increasing 6.1 percent. During the same period, the state's Latino population grew from 14.0 million to 15.6 million, increasing 11.2 percent. By comparison, the state's non-Latino population increased by 3.1 percent. The increase in California's Latino population accounted for over two-thirds (68.6 percent) of the state's population growth during the past decade.



See "Sources" at the end of this profile for information about the potential impact of the national net undercount of Latinos in Census 2020 on the data in this profile.

GROWTH OF CALIFORNIA POPULATION GROUPS 2010-2020

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



CALIFORNIA LATINO POPULATION 2020

	POPULATION	SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATION
All Latinos	15,579,652	39.4%
Latino Adults	11,083,294	36.0%
Latino Voting-Age Citizens	7,861,159	30.5%

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

CALIFORNIA LATINO ELECTORATE

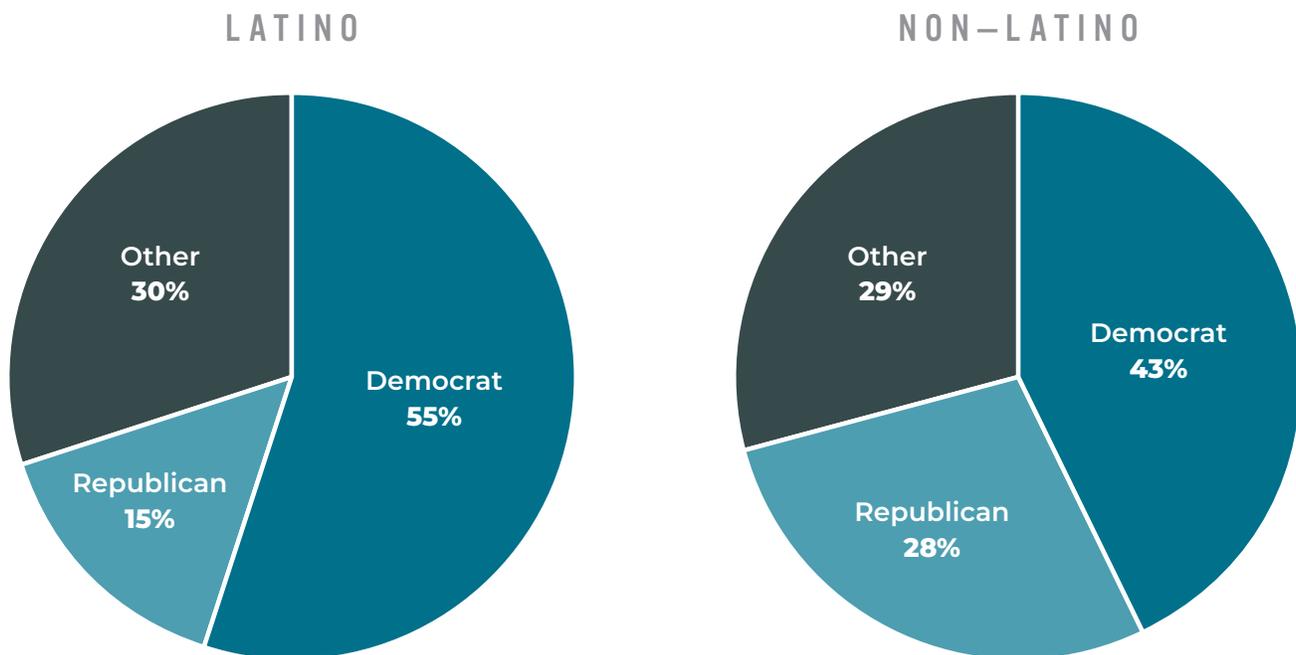
(as of April 2022, from
VAN voter file)

Total Registered Voters	21,618,515
Latino Registered Voters	6,152,383
Latino Share of Registered Voters	28.5%

Over 28 percent of California registered voters are Latino.

PARTY AFFILIATION

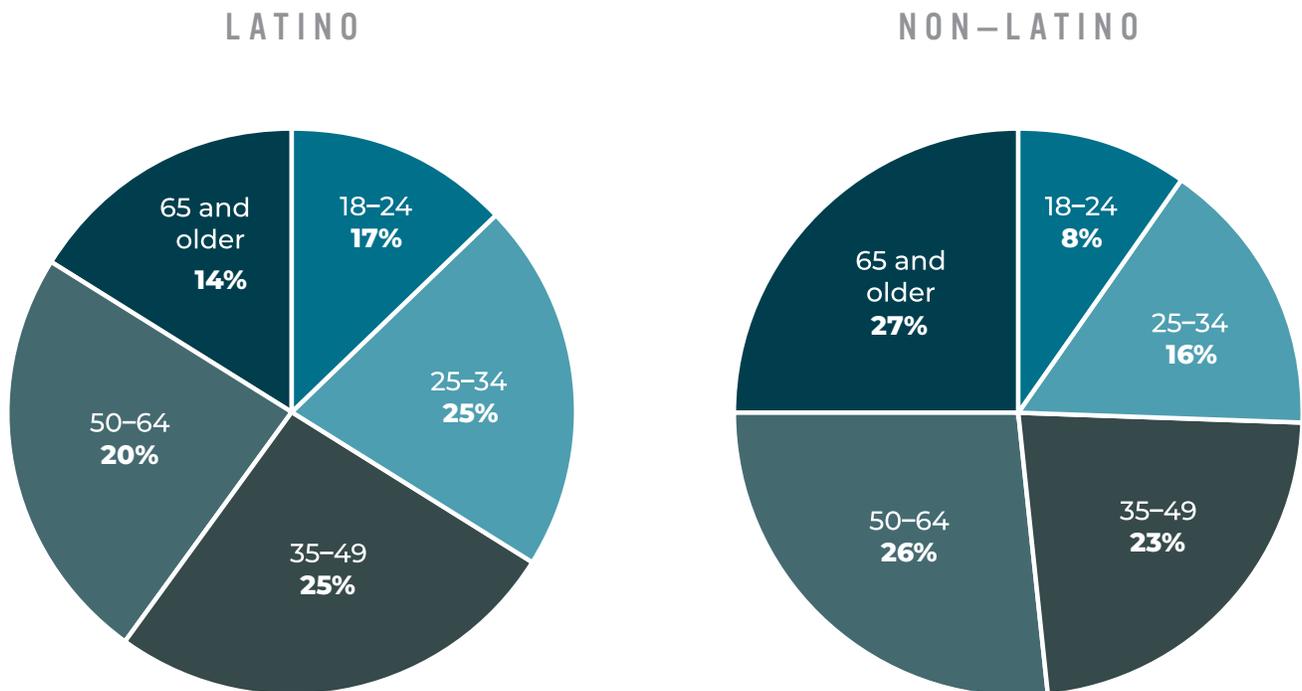
Latinos are more likely to be Democrats than non-Latinos, with 55 percent of Latinos affiliating with the Democratic Party, compared to 43 percent of non-Latinos. Furthermore, Latinos are less likely to be Republicans than the non-Latino electorate, and similar shares of both groups are not affiliated with either political party. Less than one of every six Latino registered voters (15 percent) is Republican, compared to 28 percent of non-Latinos. Thirty percent of Latinos are not affiliated with either major party, compared to 29 percent of non-Latinos.



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

AGE

California Latino registered voters tend to be younger than non-Latinos, with 18–24-year-olds comprising 17 percent of registered Latinos, compared to 8 percent of non-Latinos. Similarly, 25 percent of Latino registered voters are 25–34-year-olds, compared to 16 percent of non-Latinos. In contrast, 53 percent of non-Latino registered voters are 50 and older, compared to 34 percent of Latinos.



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

LATINO VOTER TURNOUT

Latino voter turnout in California midterm elections decreased 17 percent from 2,058,000 in 2010, to 1,707,000 in 2014. However, between 2014 and 2018, there was dramatic growth in the number of Latino voters from 1,707,000 to 3,300,000 — an increase of 93.3 percent.

● VOTING AGE CITIZENS ● REGISTERED VOTERS ● ACTUAL VOTERS



LATINOS IN CALIFORNIA ELECTED OFFICES 1996–2021

In 2021, 1,833 Latinos served in elected office in California, with 97 percent serving at the local level, including county, municipal, school board, judicial/law enforcement officials, and special district officials.

CALIFORNIA	1996	2001	2007	2013	2021
U.S. Senators	0	0	0	0	1
U.S. Representatives	4	6	7	9	14
State Executives	0	1	0	0	2
State Legislators	14	26	28	26	30
Local Officials	675	734	1,128	1,330	1,786
TOTAL	693	767	1,163	1,365	1,833

SOURCES

NALEO Educational Fund, National Directory of Latino Elected Officials, 2016–2021.

Generally, data on the overall California and Latino populations for 2020 are from the 2020 Census Redistricting Data Summary Files. However, because these data do not include information on residents' citizenship, data on the 2020 citizen voting age population of California overall and Latinos are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016–2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data. Therefore, this should be taken into account when making comparisons between population data in this profile.

Additionally, in March 2022, the Census Bureau released its first official estimate of the accuracy of Census 2020, which revealed large national net undercounts of the Latino population (4.99 percent), the Black or African American population (3.30 percent), and the American Indian and Alaska Native population living on reservations (5.64 percent). The national net undercount of Latinos raises significant concerns about an undercount of Latinos in California. NALEO Educational Fund is advocating that the Census Bureau provide disaggregated data by levels of geography lower than at the state level and that it conducts additional evaluation and assessments to enhance our understanding of the accuracy of the Census 2020 counts of California.

The source of the voting and registration data in the profile, unless indicated otherwise, is from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) and its *Voting and Registration in the Elections of November: 2002–2020* report. 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

For California, NALEO Educational Fund derived its 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 data and *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 current circumstances, including 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, April 2022: 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 publications about the Latino population or Election 2022, please contact Dorian Caal at dcaal@naleo.org or (213) 765-9450.