



NEWS RELEASE

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*****ELECTION 2020 PRIMARY PROFILE*****

California: Nearly 4 Million Latino Voters Expected to Cast Ballots in Election 2020

Latino voters expected to play a critical role in the outcome of the California Democratic Primary

WASHINGTON, D.C. – One week before Latinos will make a decisive impact on the outcome of the California Democratic primary on Super Tuesday (March 3, 2020), the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund released its profile of the California Latino electorate and key Congressional races to watch in the state in 2020. The full California primary profile is available for download [here](#).

According to NALEO Educational Fund analysis, more than 4 million Latino voters will make their voices heard at the ballot box in 2020. Latino voter turnout in California more than doubled from 1,597,000 in 2000, to 3,345,000 in 2016, an increase of 109 percent.

“Within the last three decades, Latinos have become an established political force in California and with nearly 4 million Latinos expected to cast ballots this year, there is no doubt they will play a decisive role in the 2020 election,” stated Arturo Vargas, Chief Executive Officer at National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund. “Latino voters have a deep understanding of the stakes in Election 2020, and we are not sitting idly by while others make the decisions that will affect us for the next four years.”

Key Characteristics of the Latino Electorate/Community in California:

- **Population and Electorate Size**
 - California is home to nearly 16 million Latinos, who comprise 39 percent of the state’s total population (39.6 million).
 - The more than 5 million Latino registered voters (as of August 2019) in California account for 26 percent of all registered voters in the state (19.7 million) or more than one out of every four registered voters.
- **Party Affiliation**
 - Among Latino registered voters in California, 53 percent identify as Democrats, with the remaining 47 percent identifying as either Republicans (13 percent) or as not affiliated with either major political party (34 percent).
 - For both Latinos and non-Latinos, about one-third of the voters is not affiliated with either major political party.

- **Age**
 - Latino registered voters tend to be younger than non-Latinos, with 18- to 24-year-olds comprising 17 percent of all registered Latinos in California, compared to only 10 percent of the same age group for non-Latino voters.
 - Similarly, 24 percent of Latino registered voters are 25- to 34-year-olds, compared to 18 percent for non-Latinos, respectively.
 - In contrast, nearly half (48 percent) of non-Latino registered voters are 50 and older, compared to just 35 percent of Latinos.
- **Political Representation**
 - In 2019, 1,640 Latinos served in elected office in California, with 97 percent serving at the local level, including county, municipal, school board, judicial and law enforcement, and special district officials.
 - Between 1996 and 2019, the number of Latinos serving in elected office in California increased dramatically, from 693 to 1,640.

Since 1992, California has been a Democratic state in Presidential contests, with the Democratic candidates' margins of victory ranging from 10 percent to 30 percent. President George H.W. Bush was the last Republican to win the state in 1988. The Latino vote played a key role in California's partisan shift towards generally electing Democratic Presidential and statewide candidates. For example, according to CNN exit poll data, in the 1998 U.S. Senate race, where incumbent Senator Barbara Boxer (D) faced a challenge from then-State Treasurer Matt Fong (R), whites supported Fong over Boxer, by 50 percent to 46 percent. In contrast, Latinos supported Boxer over Fong by 72 percent to 23 percent. In the same election, whites favored gubernatorial candidate Gray Davis (D) over Dan Lungren (R) by a narrow 50 percent to 46 percent margin. In contrast, Latinos favored Davis over Lungren by 78 percent to 17 percent. Ultimately, both Boxer and Davis prevailed in their contests.

The Latino role in California's partisan realignment resulted in part from the harsh tone of the anti-immigrant rhetoric in the public dialogue in the mid-1990's. The state enacted Proposition 187, which would have denied certain benefits and services to undocumented immigrants, and several federal anti-immigrant measures were enacted as well. Many California Latinos held Republicans responsible for these measures, and between 1996 and 1998, the state's Latino lawful permanent residents naturalized and voted in record numbers. In Election 2020, President Donald Trump (R) is likely to continue to make immigration policy and harsh enforcement efforts a key issue in his campaign, and the extent to which this dialogue affects Latino participation in California and nationwide is a trend that bears watching.

Congressional Primary Races to Watch

Under California's "top-two" primary system, candidates for Congressional seats, state legislative offices and state constitutional offices are listed on the ballot with a political party preference or no party preference (NPP). However, only the two candidates receiving the most votes in the primary – regardless of party preference – move on to the general election. Thus, candidates from the same political party may face each other in the general election.

- All 14 of California's incumbent Latino U.S. Representatives are running for re-election, and 12 are very likely to emerge victorious in the primary and general elections.

- In the 24th Congressional District, U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D) will likely face a somewhat more competitive general election contest against challenger Andy Caldwell (R), a talk show host and non-profit executive.
- In a rematch of his 2018, 39th Congressional District race, U.S. Rep. Gil Cisneros (D) is facing a challenge from former State Assemblymember Young Kim (R).
- Several Latinos are competitive primary contenders in their pursuits to unseat incumbents – these contenders will face tough races if they succeed in advancing to the general election.
 - In the 9th Congressional District, retired U.S. Marshal Tony Amador (R) is vying to unseat U.S. Rep. Jay McNerney (D).
 - In the 16th Congressional District, Fresno City Councilmember Esmeralda Soria (D) is challenging U.S. Rep. Jim Costa (D).
 - In the 22nd Congressional District, small business owner Phil Arballo (D) is in a crowded field of contenders hoping to face U.S. Rep. Devin Nunes (R) in the general election.
 - In the 28th Congressional District, neighborhood advocate Jennifer Barbosa (NPP) is challenging U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff (D).
 - In the 43rd Congressional District, small business owner Omar Navarro (R) is facing retired Navy sailor Joe Collins (R) and U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters (D).
- Latinos are also competitive primary contenders in several open-seat Congressional contests.
 - In the 25th Congressional District race for the seat once held by U.S. Rep. Katie Hill (D), business executive Mike Garcia (R) is facing a crowded field of primary competitors.
 - In the 50th Congressional District, Latino business owner and educator Ammar Campa-Najjar (D) is also in a crowded field of primary contenders for the seat once held by U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter (R).
 - In the 53rd Congressional District, San Diego City Council President Georgette Gomez (D) is pursuing the seat held by retiring U.S. Rep. Susan Davis (D).

Ahead of Super Tuesday and in the lead up to Election 2020, NALEO Educational Fund will continue its efforts to ensure that Latino voters in California and nationwide have the necessary information to make their voices heard at the ballot box. These efforts include operating the NALEO Educational Fund toll-free bilingual Election Protection hotline 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (1-888-839-8682), providing vital information on every aspect of the electoral process, from registering to vote, to voter ID requirements, to finding polling places on Election Day.

NALEO Educational Fund's 2020 California Primary Profile is available for download [here](#).

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About NALEO Educational Fund

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-partisan, non-profit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.