



SPOTLIGHT ON ARIZONA: IMMIGRATION, LATINO VOTERS AND THE 2012 ELECTIONS

Arizona is widely considered to be “ground zero” of the immigration debate and the laboratory for some of the most extreme anti-immigrant proposals in the country, from the nefarious “attrition through enforcement” agenda articulated in state law SB 1070 (most of which has been struck down by the Supreme Court of the United States) to the confrontational tactics of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, which has landed him in court several times to defend his practices.

There are small signs though that even in Arizona, being anti-immigrant has its limits. In 2011, the legislature rejected another raft of discriminatory bills, and then voters (many of them Latino) successfully removed one of the leaders of the anti-immigrant movement, State Senate President Russell Pearce, in a historic recall election. In 2012, Pearce lost what was supposed to be his comeback bid in the Republican primary, and political analysts are beginning to wonder whether (or when) Arizona will turn purplish-blue. The growing Latino population is expanding Arizona’s congressional delegation and making a number of Arizona House races more and more interesting with every election.

For now, though, the Republican Party still has the upper hand in Arizona. The U.S. Senate race in Arizona is garnering significant national attention, but is considered a likely Republican seat. As the power and potential of Latino voters continues to grow in Arizona, that calculation will change. In a state that has seen the Republican anti-immigrant agenda come to life, it’s no surprise that the question of who Latinos will vote for is relatively settled – but their role in this November’s election will depend on whether high enthusiasm and voter turnout allows their voices to be heard.

POLLING OF LATINO VOTERS IN ARIZONA

Unless otherwise indicated, all findings are from a June 2012 Latino Decisions/America’s Voice poll of 400 Latino voters in Arizona (part of a poll of 2,000 Latino voters across five battleground states). Full poll results for all states can be found [here](#), and further analysis can be found [here](#).

- When asked to name the most important issues facing Latinos that the President and Congress should address, a majority of Latino voters in Arizona—55%--named immigration. Twenty-six percent named the economy among the most important issues, and 23% named jobs.
- Latino voters in Arizona overwhelmingly favor Barack Obama over Mitt Romney. Seventy-four percent of Latinos said they were likely to vote for Obama in November, while only 18% expected to vote for Romney. Eight percent were undecided.
- Unsurprisingly, given the political debate in this state over the last few years, Latinos see immigration as a motivating issue. Sixty-two percent say that President Obama’s decision to protect DREAMers from deportation has made them more enthusiastic about voting for him, while

63% say Mitt Romney’s opposition to the DREAM Act and support for “self-deportation” make them less likely to vote for him in November.

- Immigration policy is personal to most Latino voters in Arizona. Over two thirds—68%--say they personally know an undocumented immigrant, and 37% know someone who is, or has been, in deportation proceedings. Their experience with SB 1070 has clearly colored their views: before the Supreme Court released its ruling on SB 1070, 65% of Arizona Latino voters said that if the law were upheld it would contribute to an anti-immigrant, anti-Hispanic environment in America.

ARIZONA LATINOS BY THE NUMBERS

1,895,149 Latinos in Arizona (2010 Census)	46.27% Growth in Latino Population, 2000- 2010 (2010 Census)	23.7% Latino Proportion of Eligible Voters (projection via William Frey/Ruy Teixeira, 2012)	18.4% Latino Proportion of Registered Voters (projection via Latino Decisions, 2012)
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COMPETITIVE 2012 SENATE RACE

Open seat due to retirement of Senator Jon Kyl (R)

Latino % of Population	17.7%
Candidates	Richard Carmona (D), former U.S. Surgeon General vs. Jeff Flake (R), U.S. Congressman
Competitiveness Rating	Likely R (as of 8/21) (Cook Political Report); 14 th most likely to flip parties among all Senate races (National Journal)
Immigration In The Race	<p>Democrat Richard Carmona has largely stayed off the political stage since leaving the Bush White House, though he has given private speeches on a number of issues (including the importance of immigration reform to national security). While he has generally kept a low national profile during the campaign, he has gotten national press on one occasion: when he joined other southwestern Democratic Senate candidates in asking the national party to put the DREAM Act on the Democratic platform, telling Univision: “What I really want is comprehensive immigration reform, which includes the DREAM Act. We need the whole thing done. If I can’t get all of that, I think the DREAM Act is an important part of that.”</p> <p>Republican congressman Jeff Flake is a former champion of comprehensive immigration reform who wrote a Republican version of reform in 2005. He has since followed the rest of his party, distancing himself from reform and voting against the DREAM Act in 2010. Like many Republican ex-reformers, his position is now “border security first”—or, as he said in an August debate, “a recognition that until we get better border security that we can’t move on to the other items of reform that we’re going to need at some point.”</p> <p>Flake defeated a primary challenge from businessman Wil Cardon, who attacked Flake’s former support for comprehensive reform, which he calls a euphemism for “amnesty,” saying “We can’t keep changing our minds and spend 10 years working on something and then change our minds and flip-flop and have a deathbed</p>

	repentance.” Flake, in response, ran ads attacking Cardon for having owned a group of Subway franchises that employed 151 undocumented immigrants (as discovered by an ICE investigation in 2008).
Polling	<p><i>Latinos</i> Carmona: 64% Flake: 19% Undecided: 17% (Latino Decisions, June 2012; see polling details in previous section)</p> <p><i>Overall</i> Carmona: 38% Flake: 38% Undecided: 25% (PPP, July 2012)</p>

COMPETITIVE 2012 HOUSE RACES*

House District	Latino Pop %	Candidates	Competitiveness Rating	Immigration in the Race
AZ-1— OPEN	20.8% (estimated)	Ann Kirkpatrick, former Representative (D) vs. Jonathan Paton, former state legislator (R)	R toss-up (Cook); 12 th most likely to flip (NJ)	Paton’s Twitter feed has touted his support for SB 1070 (he voted for it in the legislature) and attacked President Obama’s directive protecting DREAMers from deportation . He also praised Sheriff Joe Arpaio in a quote to the New York Times, saying he “is doing exactly what he has been elected to do, which is to uphold our laws.” Kirkpatrick was in the House when it passed the DREAM Act in 2010, but did not attend the vote.
AZ-2— Barber (D)	25.8% (estimated)	Ron Barber, incumbent (D) vs. Martha McSally, retired Air Force pilot (R)	Likely D (Cook); 72 nd most likely to flip (NJ)	No developments at this time.
AZ-09— NEW	26.9% (estimated)	Krysten Sinema, state legislator (D) vs. Vernon Parker, city councilman (R)	Lean D (Cook); 54 th most likely to flip (NJ)	Krysten Sinema has been one of the foremost defenders of immigrants in the Arizona state legislature: strongly critiquing SB 1070 in 2010, helping defeat additional extreme bills in 2011 , and introducing several bills to curb the abuses of Sheriff Joe Arpaio . Parker, on the other hand, ran a political fundraising group called “Defend Sheriff Joe” before his congressional run.

*Arizona gained one seat after the 2010 census, thanks largely to the growth of the state’s Latino population (which represented 47.5% of all population growth in the state). While the redistricting process was contentious, the state’s commission ultimately voted to create a new district with a large Latino population (the 9th) and merge two current Republican incumbents into a single district, rather than protecting all incumbents. While the six seats not listed in this chart are now considered “safe” districts for the parties of their current incumbents (4 Republican and 2 Democratic), this includes the district where 2 Republican incumbents are facing off (the 6th).

PREVIOUS ELECTION DATA

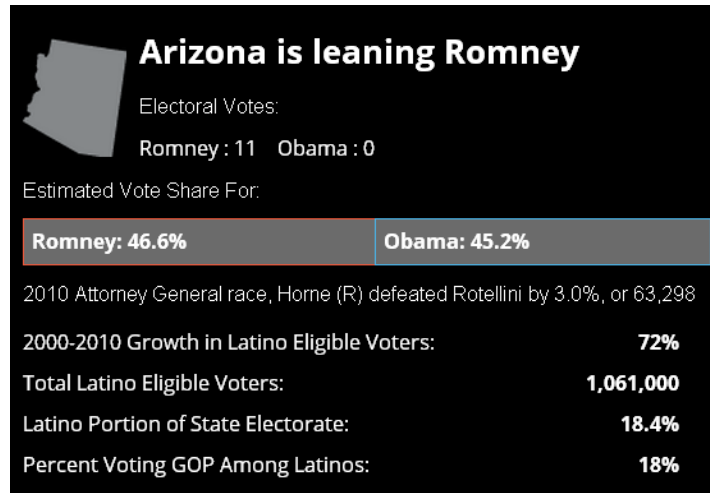
Election	Overall Result	Latino Result	Latino % of Electorate	Latino Contribution
2010 Arizona Senate	McCain (R) 59%- Glassman (D) 35% (CNN)	Glassman 78% - McCain 22% (Latino Decisions)	14% (Latino Decisions)	7.8% to Glassman (Latino Decisions)
2010 Arizona Governor	Brewer (R) 54% - Goddard (D) 43% (CNN)	Goddard 85% - Brewer 14% (Latino Decisions)	14% (Latino Decisions)	9.9 % to Goddard (Latino Decisions)
2010 Arizona U.S. House Races	Republicans 53.0%- Democrats 41.9% (Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives)	Democrats 83%- Republicans 17% (Latino Decisions)	14% (Latino Decisions)	9.2% to Democrats (Latino Decisions)
2008 Arizona Presidential Results	McCain 54% - Obama 45% (CNN)	Obama 56% - McCain 41% (CNN)	11.65% (2008 U.S. Census)	1.7% to Obama (2008 Census)
2008 Arizona U.S. House Races	Democrats 45.47%- Republicans 44.03% (Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives)	Not available	11.65% (2008 U.S. Census)	Not available

WHY LATINO TURNOUT MATTERS IN ARIZONA

In June 2012, Latino Decisions and America’s Voice Education Fund unveiled a new online tool, [LatinoVoteMap.org](#), an interactive map that allows users to simulate different outcomes in the 2012 election by adjusting Latino turnout levels and candidate support.

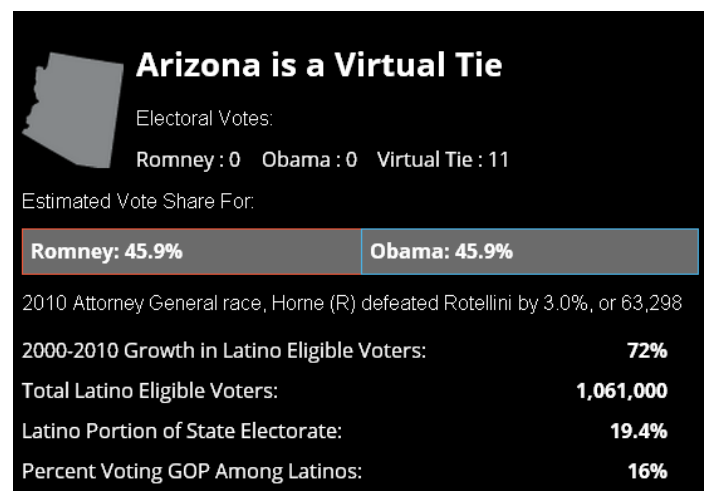
NOTE: The Latino Vote Map is updated regularly with the most recent polling and registration data, so projections and estimates are subject to change, and the scenarios discussed here for the Latino vote may not lead to the same projections for the statewide vote. Double-check the projection for any scenario discussed here by clicking on Arizona, then moving the sliders above the map until the bottom two numbers in the box match the numbers in the screenshot provided. This section is based on the September 4th update to the map.

[The Latino Vote Map](#) currently labels Arizona as “leaning Romney.” Based on registration and census data, its median estimate is that Latinos will make up 18.4% of the Arizona electorate. Assuming that Romney wins 18% of the Latino vote in Arizona, consistent with the June Latino Decisions poll, and that 18.4% of all voters in the state are Latino, Romney will defeat Obama in Arizona with 46.6% of the statewide vote to Obama’s 45.2%:



While the race is close, if these conditions hold, Latinos alone will not have enough voting power in 2012 to turn the state blue.

However, as Latino Decisions' Matt Barreto [has written](#), because of the size of Arizona's Latino electorate, "slight changes" in turnout or voter preference "could push (Arizona) squarely into battleground range." As Barreto explained in August: "the Latino electorate is now estimated at 18.4% up from 14.1% in 2008, and the Arizona Latino electorate is currently trending the strongest towards Obama of any state." If Republicans continue to alienate Latinos in Arizona, Romney's lead over Obama will narrow. Turnout could play an even more significant role. As Barreto writes: "If voter registration continues to grow in Arizona and turnout is high (perhaps behind a Carmona surge), Latino voters could headline a major upset for the Democrats where Romney currently leads by 8 points." If the share of Latinos voting for Romney in Arizona dips only slightly, to 16%--still higher than the proportion of Latinos who voted for Jan Brewer in 2010—and turnout increases to 19.4% of the electorate, Obama can pull even with Romney in the state, with each receiving 45.9% of the vote:



However, Arizona is likely to see attempts to suppress the Latino vote. In 2010, one anti-immigrant group's effort to recruit vigilante "poll watchers" led the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice to send federal election monitors to Maricopa County. If such efforts are repeated in November, and succeed in depressing Latino turnout, Romney's victory will be relatively assured.

Visit LatinoVoteMap.org to see for yourself how Latino voters are poised to impact the 2012 elections in Arizona and beyond.