



# **William C. Velásquez Institute**

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Antonio Gonzalez, President, William C. Velasquez Institute

**From:** Steven A. Ochoa, Vice President of Public Policy and Research, William C. Velasquez Institute

**Date:** Thursday, October 16, 2008

**RE:** Latino Vote Trends for the 2008 Presidential Election in the United States and Key Battleground States

### **Background**

Since 1992, the Latino Vote has doubled in size, helping the community move from the fringes of national political power to influencing or determining key presidential battleground states. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were just over 5.1 million Latino registered voters for the November 1992 General Election (Graph 1).<sup>1</sup> Today, the William C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI) estimates there are 10.4-11.4 million Latino registered voters in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Translated into shares of the Total Registration, Latinos went from 4% of the national vote in 1992 to an estimated 7% of today's electorate (Graph 2). Latino turnout in Presidential elections is also substantial. In 2004, the Census Bureau estimated 81.5% of registered Latinos turned out to vote. History shows Latinos turnout is consistently around this figure during Presidential election years.

Of course, when examining the race for the Presidency, one must also look at it through the prism of 51 individual contests for Electoral votes. Looking at current key battleground states between the 2008 Democratic nominee, Senator Barack Obama, and the 2008 Republican nominee, Senator John McCain, the Latino vote is clearly an influential block of voters in four: Colorado, Florida, Nevada and New Mexico. In Colorado, Florida, Nevada, and New Mexico, the Latino vote represents a higher share of the electorate than the national voter registration share (Graph 3).<sup>3</sup> The data shows that these rates have steadily risen since 1984.

Latinos have been influential in these four states for at least a generation. Each state has elected Latino governors or U.S. senators.<sup>4</sup> In Presidential elections New Mexico and Florida Latinos have been influential in recent past elections. Latinos in New Mexico (1992, 1996, 2000) provided the margin of victory for the Bill Clinton and Al Gore, and Latinos in Florida (1992, 2000) provided the margin of victory for George H. Bush and George W. Bush.

With the Latino vote an important factor in these battleground states, examination of polling trends to figure out how much of a role Latinos will play merits investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [US Census Bureau](#), *Current Population Reports: Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1972-2006*.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.svrep.org/latino\\_vote/2008/ag\\_outreach\\_report1.html](http://www.svrep.org/latino_vote/2008/ag_outreach_report1.html)

<sup>3</sup> 2008 Registration Percentages from <http://www.vcsnet.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Arizona: Raul Hector Castro (Governor 1975-77); New Mexico: Jerry Apodaca (Governor 1975-1979), Toney Anaya (Governor 1983-1987), Bill Richardson (Governor 2003-present); Florida: Robert Martinez (Governor 1987-1991), Mel Martinez (Senator, 2005-present); Colorado: Ken Salazar (Senator, 2005-present)

**Summary**

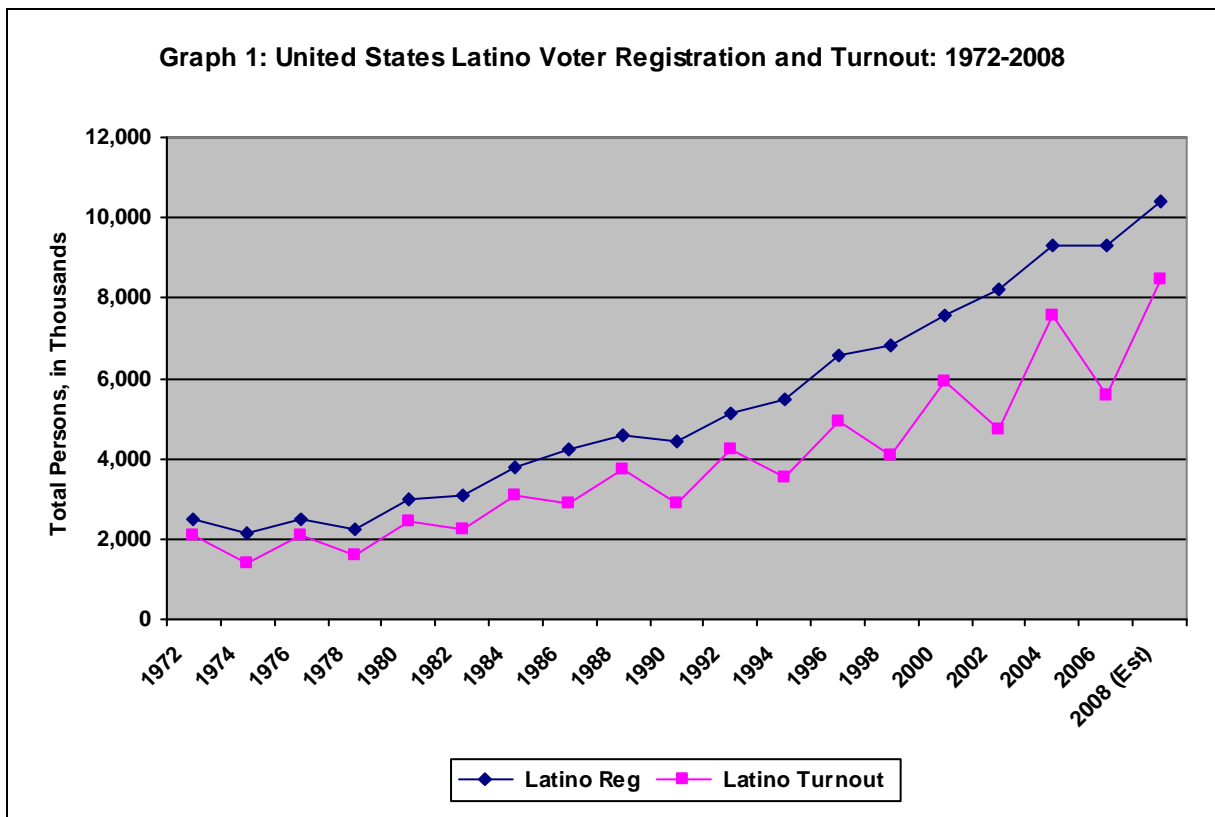
WCVI’s analysis of public surveys (from June 9 through Sept 29) shows Senator Barack Obama consistently leading Senator John McCain among Latino registered voters by large margins. Nationally, Senator Obama has maintained the anywhere between support of 53%-66% of Latino registered and/or likely voters (see Table 1, Graph 4). This translates into a 15-48 point margin for Senator Obama nationally, among Latino voters.

WCVI also conducted an analysis of four key battleground states with sizable Latino populations: Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Florida.

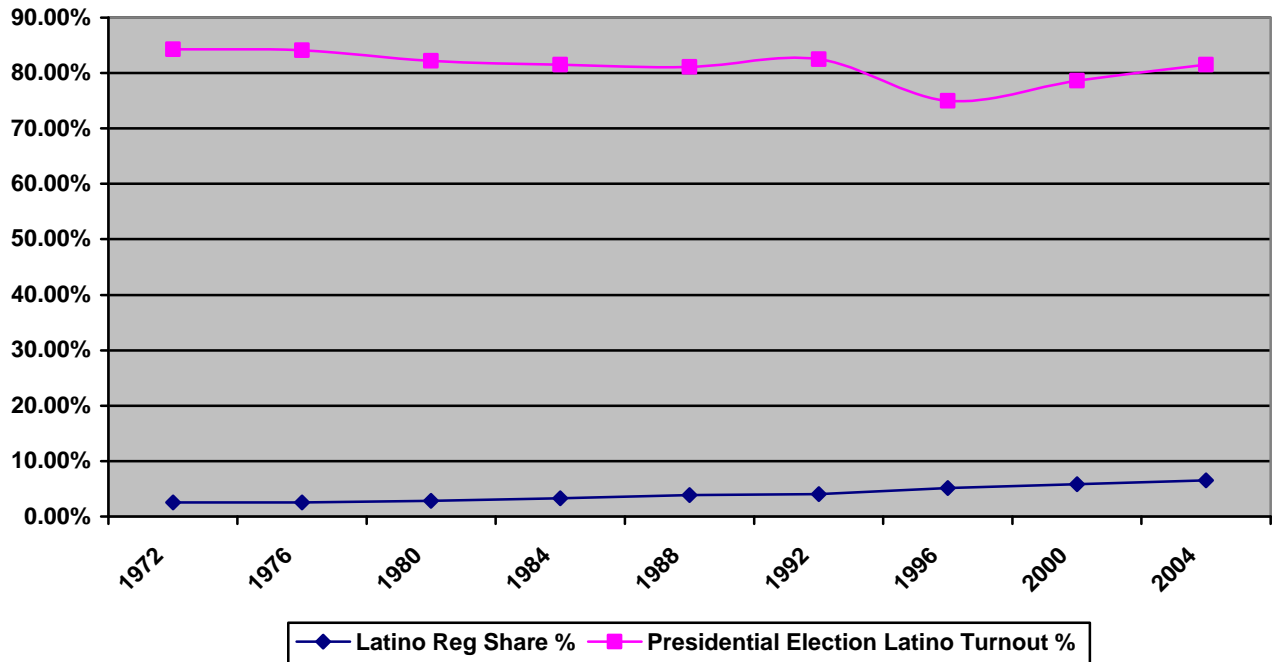
In the states of Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico, Senator Obama’s polling trends mirror the national trends, with sizable leads among Latino voters. In the cases of Colorado and Nevada, the lead among Latino voters accounts for the overwhelming share of Senator Obama’s overall lead over Senator McCain.

In New Mexico, Senator Obama’s lead over Senator McCain in the polls is more than accounted by the large margin that Mr. Obama enjoys among Latinos.

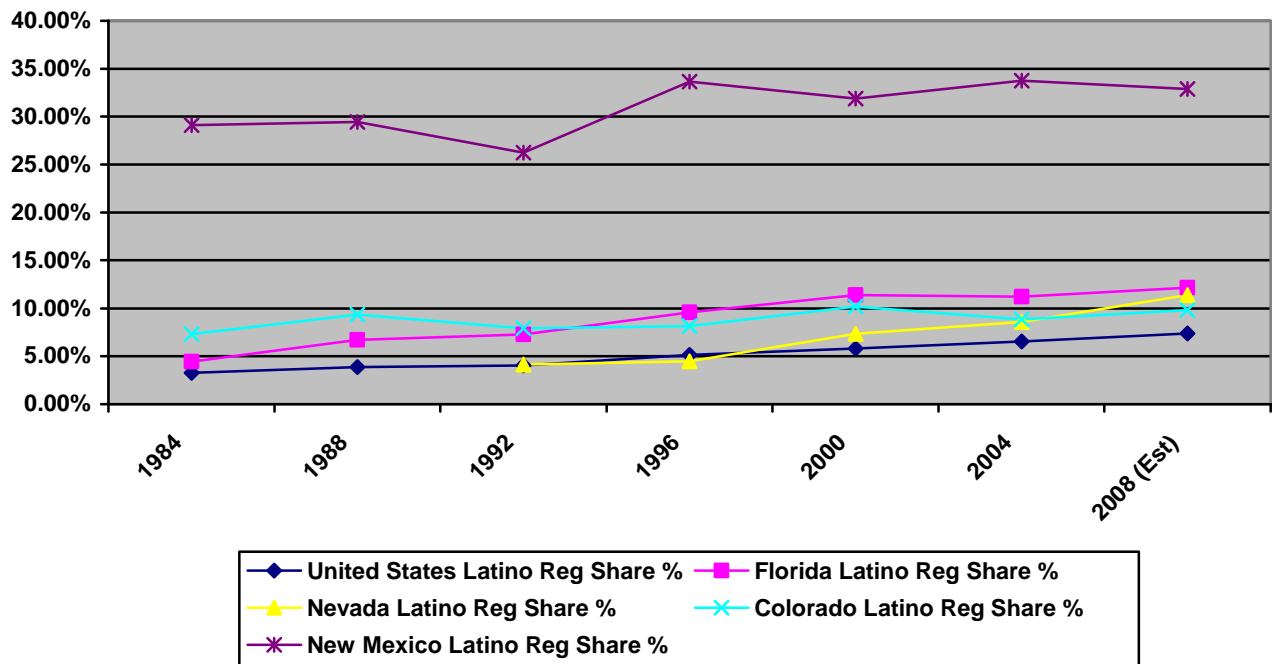
Florida shows a different pattern, with Senator McCain either leading or tied with Senator Obama in Latino voters, effectively neutralizing the Latino vote as decisive for either candidate.



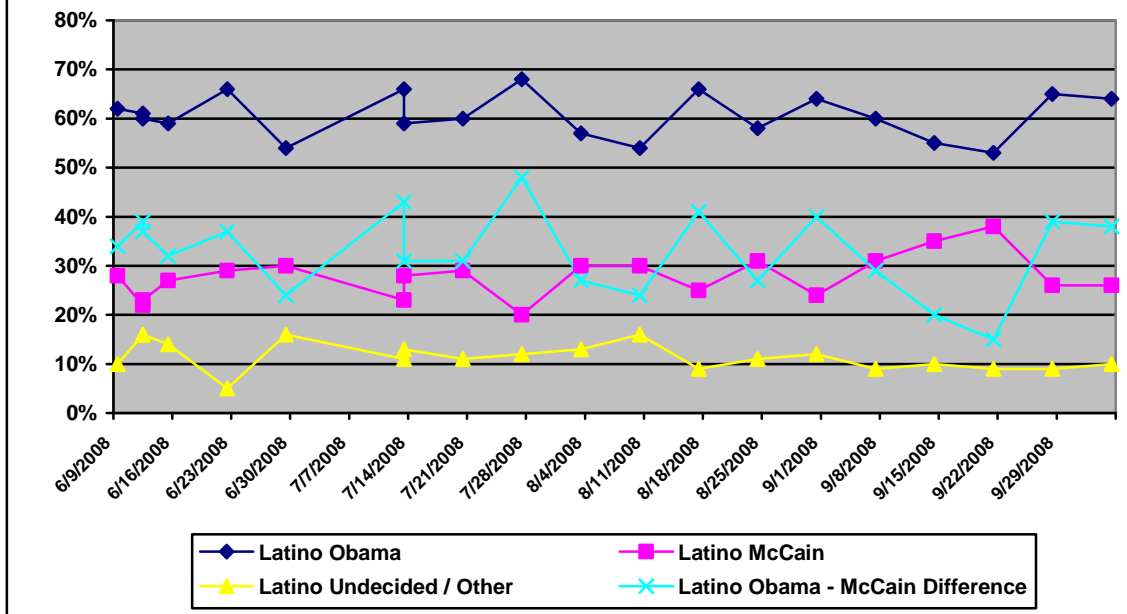
**Graph 2: United States Latino Turnout Percentage and Share of Total Registration in November General Presidential Election Years: 1972-2004**



**Graph 3: Colorado, Florida, Nevada, and New Mexico Latino Share of Total Registration in November General Presidential Election Years: 1984-2004, with Estimated 2008 Percentage**

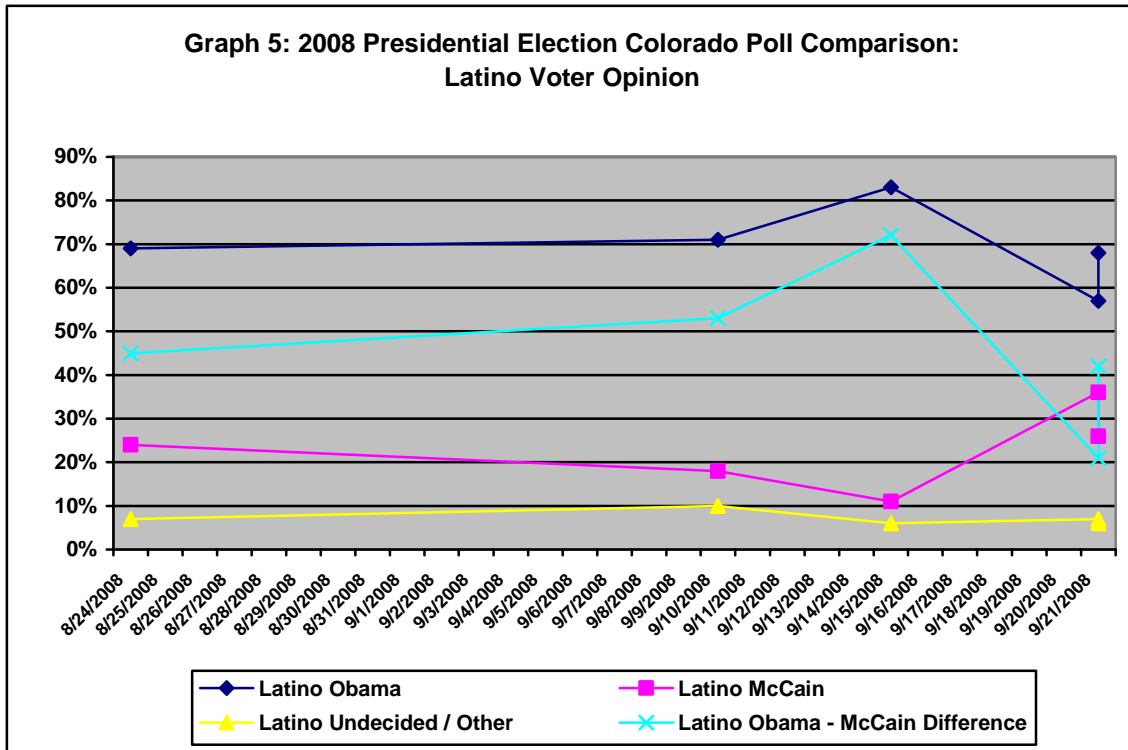


**Graph 4: 2008 Presidential Election United States Poll Comparison:  
Latino Voter Opinion**



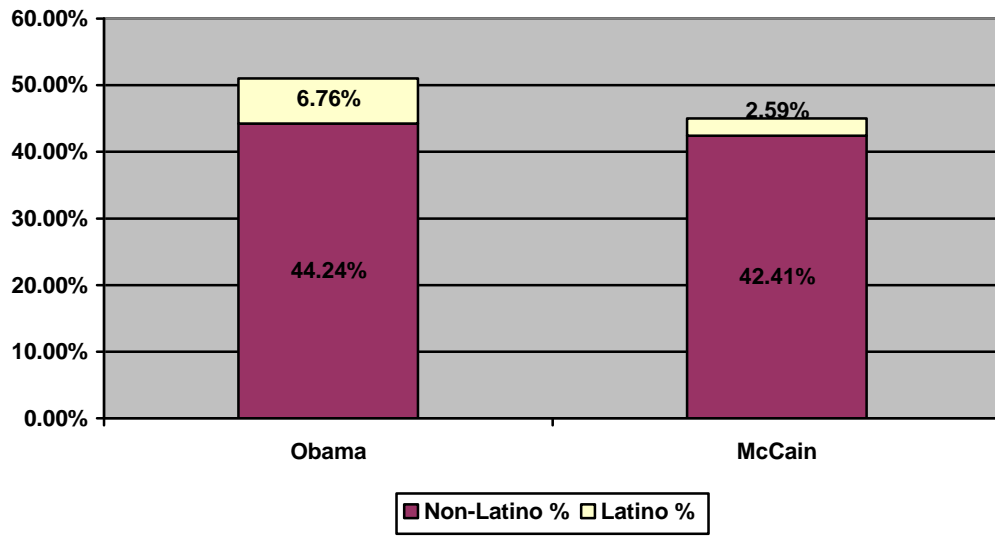
## Colorado

Recent polls in Colorado show Senator Obama leading 51%-45% (see Table 2) after being tied for most of the electoral season. Surveys of Colorado Latino registered voters show that Senator Obama enjoys a strong lead similar to the national surveys of Latino voters (Graph 5). In the most recent poll which reported Latino voters trends, Senator Obama lead Senator McCain 68%-26%. Given that Latinos are currently an estimated 10% of all registered voters, Latinos translate into an estimated 4.18% lead in the statewide vote for Senator Obama, which represents 70% of his lead (see Table 6, Graph 6). **In other words, Senator Obama is statistically tied among non-Latino voters, within polling margin of errors, and that the Latino voter boosts his overall lead past these margins. If the elections were today, Senator Obama would win because of the Latino vote.**



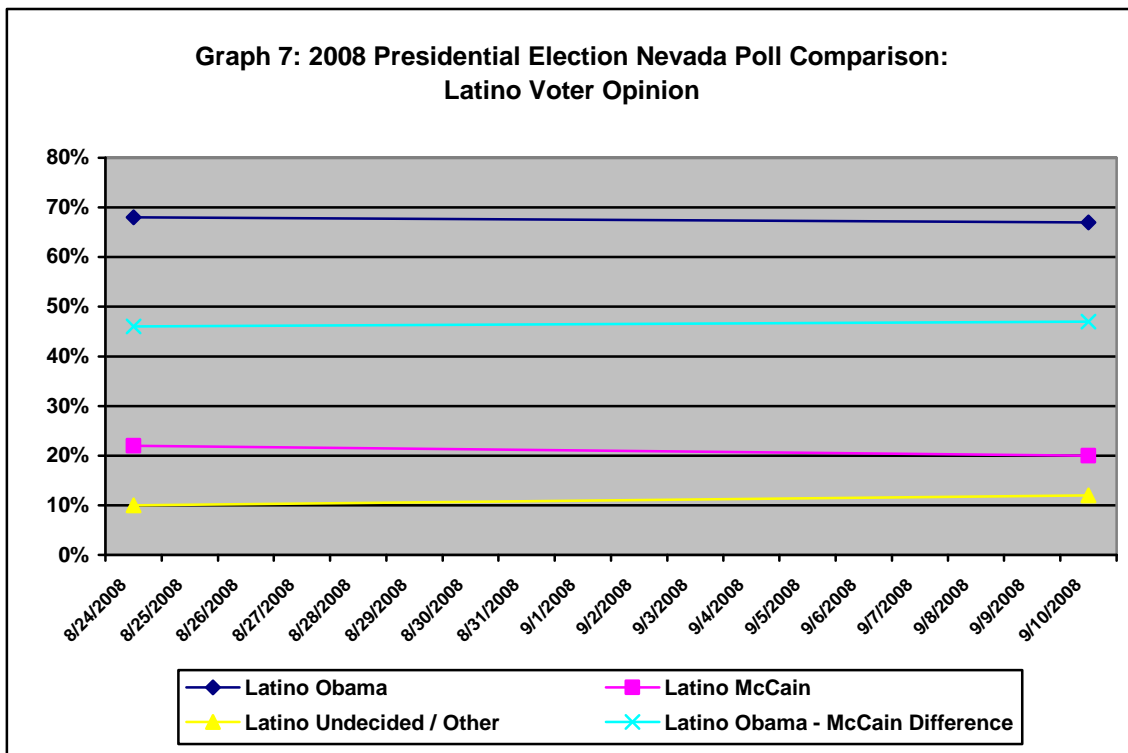
**Graph 6: Colorado 2008 Presidential Election Poll by Real Latino and Non-Latino Percentage Points**

**NOTE: Latinos an estimated 9.94% of Total Colorado Registration**



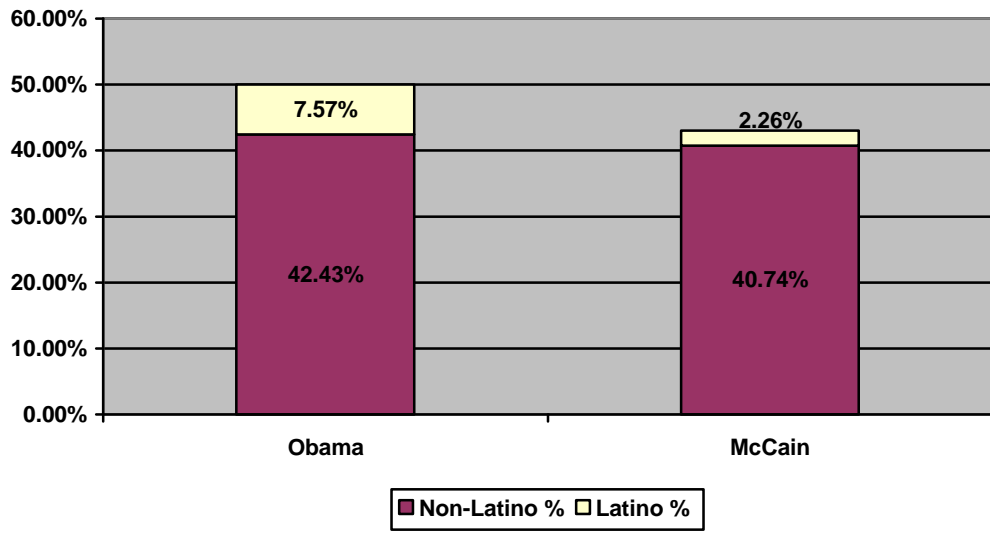
## Nevada

Nevada polling shows a competitive race, with both Senators Obama and McCain having held the lead in various polls in the last two months (Table 3). Recent polls indicate Senator Obama leading. The little Latino polling data available indicates that Senator Obama leads Senator McCain by over 40% among Latino registered voters (Graph 7). Nevada boasts one of the fastest growing Latino populations, and that reflects in its voter registration. Latinos represent 10% of the Nevada electorate. If this figure is applied to Latino polling for the Presidential Election, this translates into 5.31 statewide lead for the Democratic nominee in the Latino vote, which represents 76% of Senator Obama's current lead. (Table 6, Graph 8) **Therefore, like in Colorado, Senator Obama is in a statistical tie among non-Latino voters. The Latino vote increases Obama's overall lead beyond the margin of error. If the elections were today, Senator Obama would win because of the Latino vote.**



**Graph 8: Nevada 2008 Presidential Election Poll by Real Latino and Non-Latino Percentage Points**

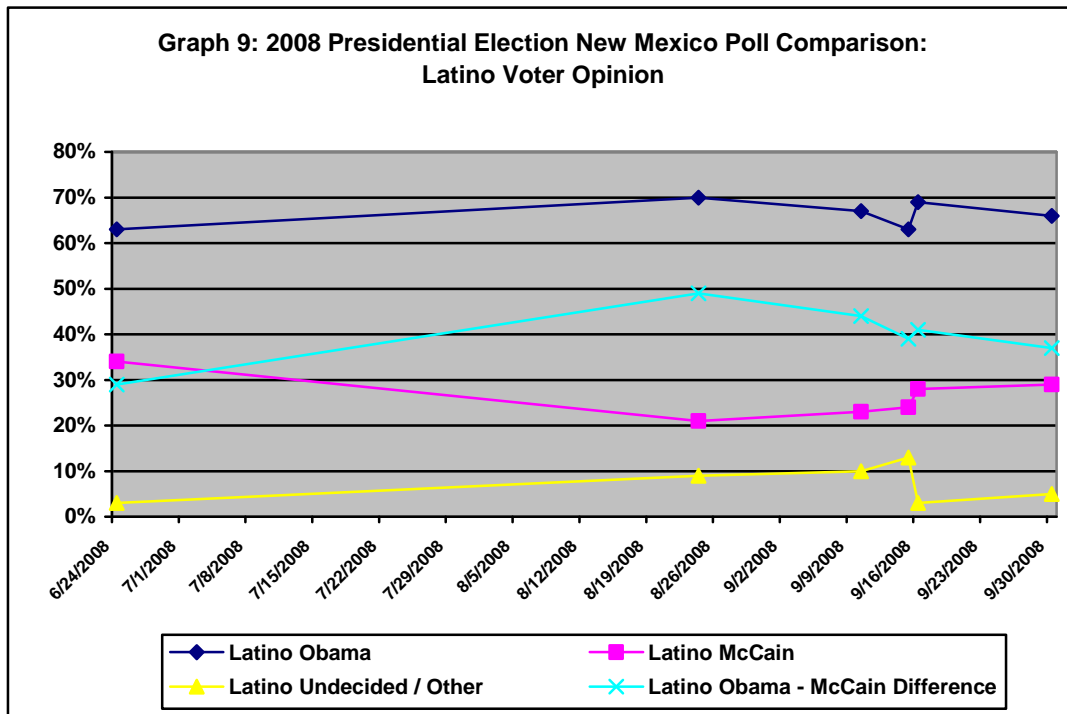
**NOTE: Latinos an estimated 11.39% of Total Nevada Registration**





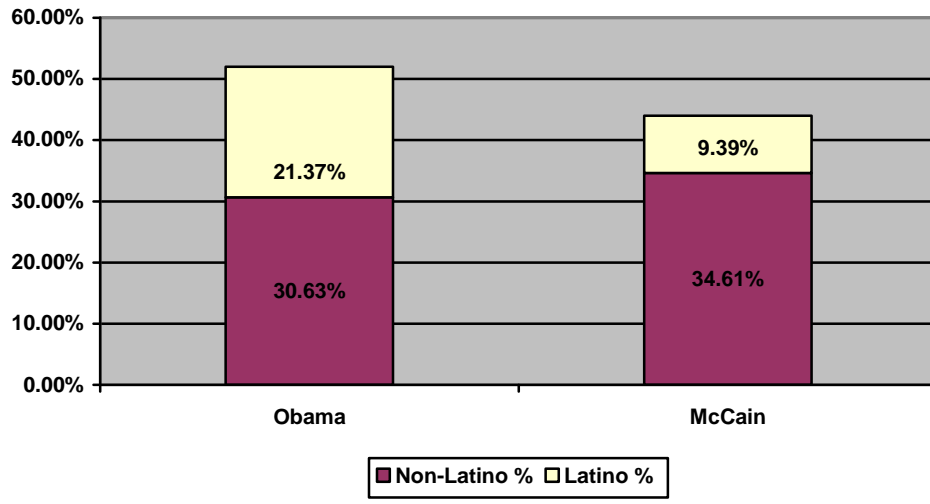
## New Mexico

By percentages, New Mexico boasts the largest Latino electorate in the United States. Recent voter registration estimates show that 32.37% of New Mexico registered voters were Latino (Table 6). Overall, New Mexico has been leaning for Senator Obama, with recent polling showing the Democratic nominee leading beyond poll margins of error (Table 4, Graph 9). Among Latino voters, Senator Obama maintains a significant 35-40 point lead over Senator McCain, and as high as 50 points in some polls. When translating the Latino vote lead into statewide percentages, Latino votes give Senator Obama a 12 point statewide advantage, which exceeds his 8 point overall lead (Table 6, Graph 10). **Therefore, it is fair to say that Senator Obama would win today in New Mexico because of the Latino vote. Expressed differently, without the Latino vote, Senator Obama would lose in New Mexico if the elections were today.**



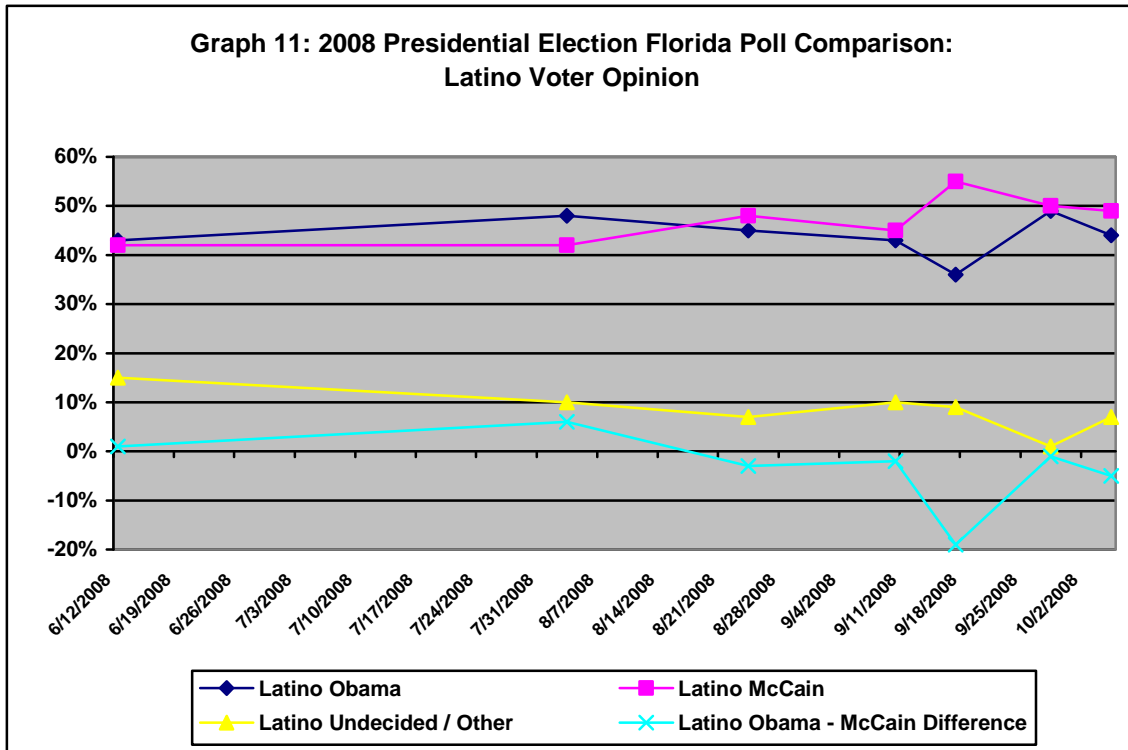
**Graph 10: New Mexico 2008 Presidential Election Poll by Real Latino and Non-Latino Percentage Points**

**NOTE: Latinos an estimated 32.37% of Total New Mexico Registration**



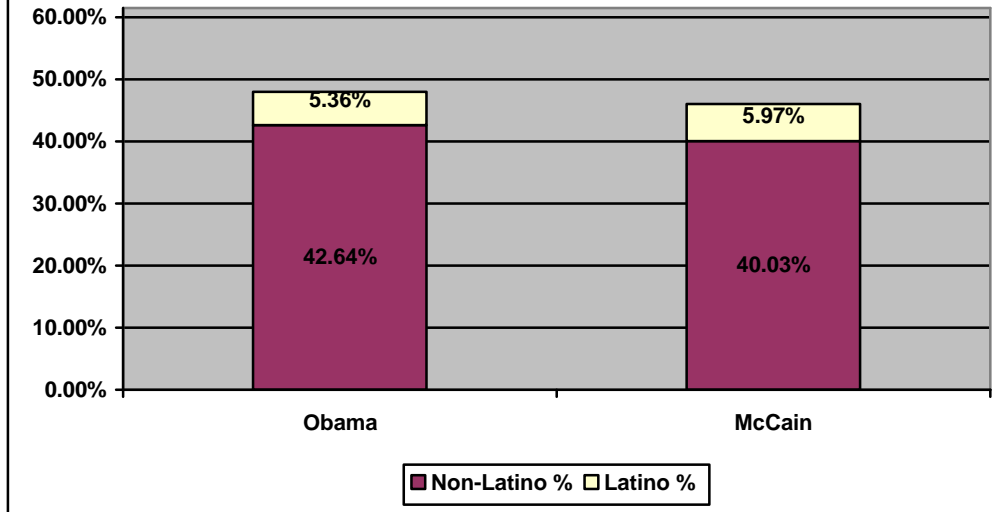
## Florida

Florida is a unique state, as it maintains one of the more politically heterogeneous Latino communities in the nation with its large Republican-leaning Cuban-American presence. This political diversity certainly manifests itself in Latino polling as Florida differs from other states and the national trends. Latino vote polls show Senator McCain leading or tied in Florida (Table 5, Graph 11). Total voter polling indicates a tightening race for President (Table 5). As Senator Obama enjoys a slight 2.6% lead among non-Latino voters, Senator McCain's slight .6% Latino real point lead is nullified (Graph 12, Table 6). **If the election were held today Senator Obama and Senator McCain would be in a statistical dead heat. The Latino vote would not be decisive**



**Graph 12: Florida 2008 Presidential Election Poll by Real Latino and Non-Latino Percentage Points**

**NOTE: Latinos an estimated 12.18% of Total Florida Registration**



## Appendix 1: Tables

### National Trend

**Table 1: 2008 Presidential Election United States Poll Comparison: Total Voters and Latino Voters, Sorted by Most Recent Date**

Total Obama	Total McCain	Total Undecided / Other	Latino Obama	Latino McCain	Latino Undecided / Other	Latino Obama / McCain Difference	Source	Start Date	End Date	Universe (Total N)	Margin of Error	Notes/Concerns
52%	41%	7%					Gallup	10/5/2008	10/7/2008	2747	0.5%	
49%	43%	8%	64%	26%	10%	38%	Gallup	9/29/2008	10/5/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
48%	44%	8%	65%	26%	9%	39%	Gallup	9/22/2008	9/28/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
49%	44%	7%	53%	38%	9%	15%	Gallup	9/15/2008	9/21/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
45%	47%	8%	55%	35%	10%	20%	Gallup	9/8/2008	9/14/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
47%	45%	8%	60%	31%	9%	29%	Gallup	9/1/2008	9/7/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
48%	42%	10%	64%	24%	12%	40%	Gallup	8/25/2008	8/31/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
45%	45%	10%	58%	31%	11%	27%	Gallup	8/18/2008	8/24/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
45%	43%	12%	66%	25%	9%	41%	Gallup	8/11/2008	8/17/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
47%	42%	11%	54%	30%	16%	24%	Gallup	8/4/2008	8/10/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
45%	44%	11%	57%	30%	13%	27%	Gallup	7/28/2008	8/3/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
47%	41%	12%	68%	20%	12%	48%	Gallup	7/21/2008	7/27/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
46%	43%	11%	60%	29%	11%	31%	Gallup	7/14/2008	7/20/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
			66%	23%	11%	43%	Pew Hispanic Center	6/9/2008	7/13/2008	2015	2.8%	Latino Only Universe. Poll administered during extended period
46%	43%	11%	59%	28%	13%	31%	Gallup	7/7/2008	7/13/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
47%	43%	10%	54%	30%	16%	24%	Gallup	6/23/2008	6/29/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
45%	43%	12%	66%	29%	5%	37%	Gallup	6/16/2008	6/22/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
46%	43%	11%	59%	27%	14%	32%	Gallup	6/9/2008	6/15/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
			60%	23%	16%	37%	Latino Decisions	6/1/2008	6/12/2008	800	3.5%	Latino Only Universe.
46%	42%	12%	62%	28%	10%	34%	WSJ/NBC	6/6/2008	6/9/2008	n/a		Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher

Table 2: 2008 Presidential Election Colorado Poll Comparison: Total Voters and Latino Voters, Sorted by Most Recent Date

Total Obama	Total McCain	Total Undecided / Other	Latino Obama	Latino McCain	Latino Undecided / Other	Latino Obama / McCain Difference	Source	Start Date	End Date	Universe (Total N)	Margin of Error	Notes
51%	45%	4%					Insider Advantage	10/6/2008	10/6/2008	485	5.0%	
51%	45%	4%					Rasmussen Reports	10/5/2008	10/5/2008	1000	3.0%	
44%	44%	12%					Mason Dixon Polling and Research	9/29/2008	10/1/2008	625	4.0%	
49%	48%	3%					Rasmussen Reports	9/28/2008	9/28/2008	500	4.5%	
45%	48%	7%					American Research Group	9/23/2008	9/25/2008	600	4.0%	
44%	43%	13%					Ciruli Associates	9/19/2008	9/23/2008	501	4.4%	
51%	44%	5%	57%	36%	7%	21%	Public Policy Polling	9/20/2008	9/21/2008	1084	3.0%	Note: Latinos 14% of Poll; Margin of Error significantly higher
49%	45%	6%	68%	26%	6%	42%	Quinnipiac University	9/14/2008	9/21/2008	1418	2.6%	Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
45%	44%	11%	83%	11%	6%	72%	Allstate National Journal Magazine	9/11/2008	9/15/2008	400	4.9%	Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
48%	46%	6%					Rasmussen Reports	9/14/2008	9/14/2008	500	4.5%	
45%	48%	7%					American Research Group	9/10/2008	9/13/2008	600	4.0%	
48%	46%	6%					Zogby Interactive Survey	9/9/2008	9/12/2008	825	3.5%	
			71%	18%	10%	53%	Latino Decisions	8/18/2008	9/10/2008	400	4.7%	Latino Only Universe. Poll conducted during extended period.
42%	43%	15%					CNN/Time	8/24/2008	8/26/2008	670	4.0%	
			69%	24%	7%	45%	Latino Decisions	8/18/2008	8/24/2008	750		Latino Only Universe

Table 3: 2008 Presidential Election Nevada Poll Comparison: Total Voters and Latino Voters, Sorted by Most Recent Date

Total Obama	Total McCain	Total Undecided / Other	Latino Obama	Latino McCain	Latino Undecided / Other	Latino Obama / McCain Difference	Source	Start Date	End Date	Universe (Total N)	Margin of Error	Notes
50%	43%	7%					Research 2000 for Reno Gazette Journal	10/3/2008	10/6/2008	600	4.0%	
51%	47%	2%					Rasmussen Reports	10/3/2008	10/3/2008	700	4.0%	
51%	47%	2%					CNN/Time	9/28/2008	9/30/2008	684	4.0%	
47%	49%	4%					American Research Group	9/27/2008	9/29/2008	600	4.0%	
46%	49%	5%					Rasmussen Reports	9/11/2008	9/11/2008	700	4.0%	
			67%	20%	12%	47%	Latino Decisions	8/18/2008	9/10/2008	400	4.7%	Latino Only Universe. Poll conducted during extended period.
49%	44%	7%					CNN/Time	8/24/2008	8/26/2008	625	4.0%	
			68%	22%	10%	46%	Latino Decisions	8/18/2008	8/24/2008	750		Latino Only Universe
42%	45%	13%					Rasmussen Reports	8/11/2008	8/11/2008	700	4.5%	

Table 4: 2008 Presidential Election New Mexico Poll Comparison: Total Voters and Latino Voters, Sorted by Most Recent Date

Total Obama	Total McCain	Total Undecided / Other	Latino Obama	Latino McCain	Latino Undecided / Other	Latino Obama / McCain Difference	Source	Start Date	End Date	Universe (Total N)	Margin of Error	Notes
52%	44%	4%	66%	29%	5%	37%	Survey USA	9/29/2008	9/30/2008	698	3.8%	Note: Latinos 31% of Poll; Margin of Error significantly higher Note: Latinos 31% of Poll; Margin of Error significantly higher Note: Latinos a subsample, margin of error significantly higher
52%	44%	4%	69%	28%	3%	41%	Survey USA	9/14/2008	9/16/2008	671	3.9%	
49%	42%	9%	63%	24%	13%	39%	Allstate National Journal Magazine	9/11/2008	9/15/2008	400	4.9%	
			67%	23%	10%	44%	Latino Decisions	8/18/2008	9/10/2008	400	4.7%	
53%	40%	7%				0%	CNN/Time	8/24/2008	8/26/2008	659	4.0%	
			70%	21%	9%	49%	Latino Decisions	8/18/2008	8/24/2008	750		Latino Only Universe Note: Latinos 29% of Poll; Margin of Error significantly higher
49%	46%	5%	63%	34%	3%	29%	Survey USA	6/24/2008	6/24/2008	539	4.3%	

Table 5: 2008 Presidential Election Florida Poll Comparison: Total Voters and Latino Voters, Sorted by Most Recent Date

Total Obama	Total McCain	Total Undecided / Other	Latino Obama	Latino McCain	Latino Undecided / Other	Latino Obama / McCain Difference	Source	Start Date	End Date	Universe (Total N)	Margin of Error	Notes
52%	45%	3%					Rasmussen Reports for FOX News	10/5/2008	10/5/2008	1000	3.0%	Note: Latinos 12% of Poll; Margin of Error significantly higher
48%	46%	6%	44%	49%	7%	-5%	Mason Dixon Polling and Research	10/4/2008	10/5/2008	625	4.0%	
51%	43%	6%					CNN/Time	9/28/2008	9/30/2008	770	3.5%	
47%	47%	6%					Rasmussen Reports	9/28/2008	9/28/2008	500	4.5%	Note: Latinos 12% of Poll; Margin of Error significantly higher
47%	48%	5%	49%	50%	1%	-1%	Survey USA	9/27/2008	9/28/2008	599	4.1%	
45%	51%	4%	36%	55%	9%	-19%	Survey USA	9/16/2008	9/17/2008	707	3.8%	Note: Latinos 13% of Poll; Margin of Error significantly higher Latino Only Universe. Poll conducted during extended period.
			43%	45%	10%	-2%	Latino Decisions	8/18/2008	9/10/2008	400	4.7%	
			45%	48%	7%	-3%	Latino Decisions	8/18/2008	8/24/2008	750		
44%	50%	6%	48%	42%	10%	6%	Survey USA	8/1/2008	8/3/2008	679	3.8%	
			43%	42%	15%	1%	Latino Decisions	6/1/2008	6/12/2008	n/a	3.5%	Latino Only Universe

**Table 6: 2008 Presidential Poll Information by Total, Latino, and Non-Latino Percentage Points**

State	Nevada	Colorado	Florida	New Mexico
Total Registration*	1,024,851	3,061,692	11,866,499	1,006,663
Latino Registration	115,750	304,411	1,445,403	325,887
Latino Registration %	11.29%	9.94%	12.18%	32.37%
<b>Most Recent Poll**</b>				
Total Obama %	50%	51%	48%	52%
Total McCain %	43%	45%	46%	44%
Total Undecided %	7%	4%	6%	4%
Total Obama - McCain Difference	7%	6%	2%	8%
Latino Obama %	67%	68%	44%	66%
Latino McCain %	20%	26%	49%	29%
Latino Undecided %	12%	6%	7%	5%
Latino Obama – McCain Difference	47%	42%	-5%	37%
<b>Latino Registration Applied to Most Recent Poll***</b>				
REAL Latino Obama %	7.57%	6.76%	5.36%	21.37%
REAL Latino McCain %	2.26%	2.59%	5.97%	9.39%
REAL Latino Undecided %	1.36%	0.60%	0.85%	1.62%
REAL Latino Obama - McCain Difference	5.31%	4.18%	-0.61%	11.98%
REAL Non-Latino Obama %	42.43%	44.24%	42.64%	30.63%
REAL Non-Latino McCain %	40.74%	42.41%	40.03%	34.61%
REAL Non-Latino Undecided %	5.64%	3.40%	5.15%	2.38%
REAL Non-Latino Obama - McCain Difference	1.69%	1.82%	2.61%	-3.98%
REAL Latino Difference of Total Difference	75.83%	69.60%	-30.45%	149.73%
*Registration Figures from <a href="http://www.vcsnet.com/">http://www.vcsnet.com/</a>				
**Nevada Total Poll - Research 2000 for Reno Gazette Journal (10/7/08), Latino Poll – Latino Decision (9/10/08)				
**Colorado Total Poll - Insider Advantage (10/6/08), Latino Poll - Quinnipiac University (9/21/08)				
**Florida Total/Latino Poll - Mason Dixon Polling and Research (10/5/08)				
**New Mexico Total/Latino Poll – SurveyUSA (9/30/08)				
***REAL Data determined by multiplying Latino Registration % by Latino Poll information.				