



William C. Velásquez Institute

Memorandum

To: Concerned Parties

From: Antonio Gonzalez, WCVI President

Date: Nov 2, 2015

Re: The Latino Vote in 2014: “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”

Background

The results of the US Census Bureau Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Series in 2014 (hereafter CPS Survey) brings mixed news regarding the US Latino Vote. This report analyzes and compares CPS Surveys from 2010, 2012 and 2014.

WCVI has conducted regular analysis of the CPS Surveys since 2008.

Summary

The Latino Vote in 2014 deepened a contradictory trend first noticed in the 2006 mid-term elections in which Latino voter registration declined compared to the 2004 presidential election. A new normal of mid-term cycle voter registration contractions or busts bookended by presidential cycle booms was verified by the 6% Latino voter registration contraction in 2014 compared to 2012. The Latino vote contraction in 2014 will limit, as it did in 2010-2012, prospects for Latino voter registration and turnout growth in 2016.

Latino voter registration growth in 2014 appears robust when compared to 2010 but 100% of that growth owes to the Latino voter surge of 2012.

Latino votes cast in 2014 at 53% also took a significant dive compared to the 1998-2010 turnout average of 60%. But most of this national turnout decline was due to dismal Latino voter performance in California’s non-competitive elections.

Several states bucked the downward Latino voter turnout trend most notably Colorado, Pennsylvania and New Jersey where significant resource investments in the Latino vote coupled with hot elections for Governor and Senator significantly drove up Latino participation.

The Findings

The Latino Vote in 2014: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Comparing Latino Voter Participation in 2010, 2012 and 2014

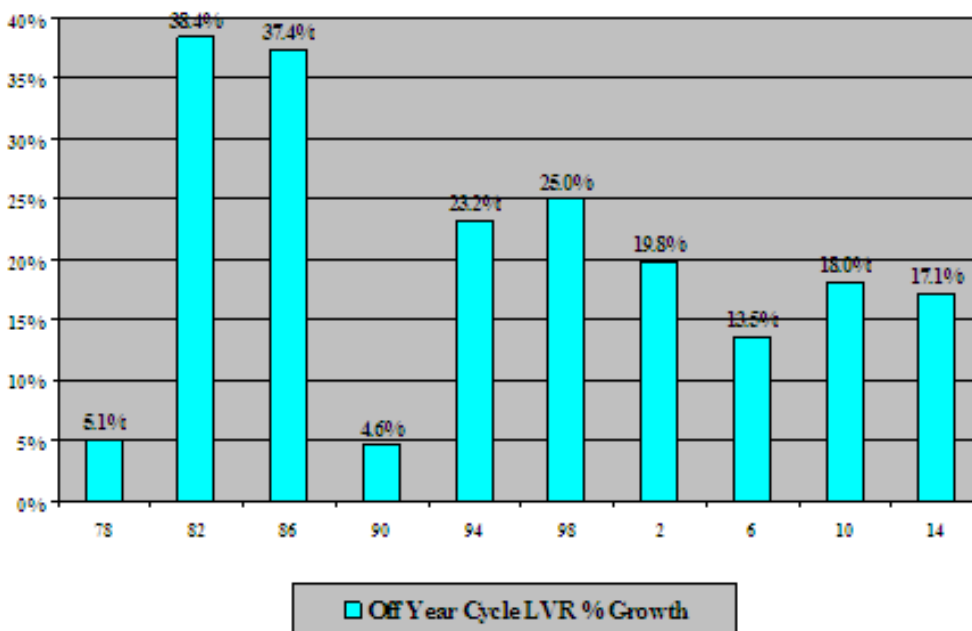
Finding 1 “The Good”: US Latino Registration grew during 2010-14; The Latino Mid-term Share of Voter Registration and Votes Cast was the Largest ever!

In Nov. 2014 US Latino registered voters increased by double digits for the eighth time in the last 10 mid-term elections or 17.1% over Nov. 2010's total.

In ten mid-term cycles from 1974 to 2014 measured by the CPS survey, the 2010-14 rate of Latino registration growth represented the fourth lowest percent (%) increase, but this a function of the growing size of the Latino electorate.

This is reflected in the chart below. In the 1980's mid-term cycle Latino voter registration growth rates in the 30 percentiles were the rule. In the 1990's growth rates in the 20 percentile range was common. And during 2002-14 period LVR growth rates in the teens was the trend.

I. Latino Rates of Registration Growth in Mid-Term Cycles, 1978-2014

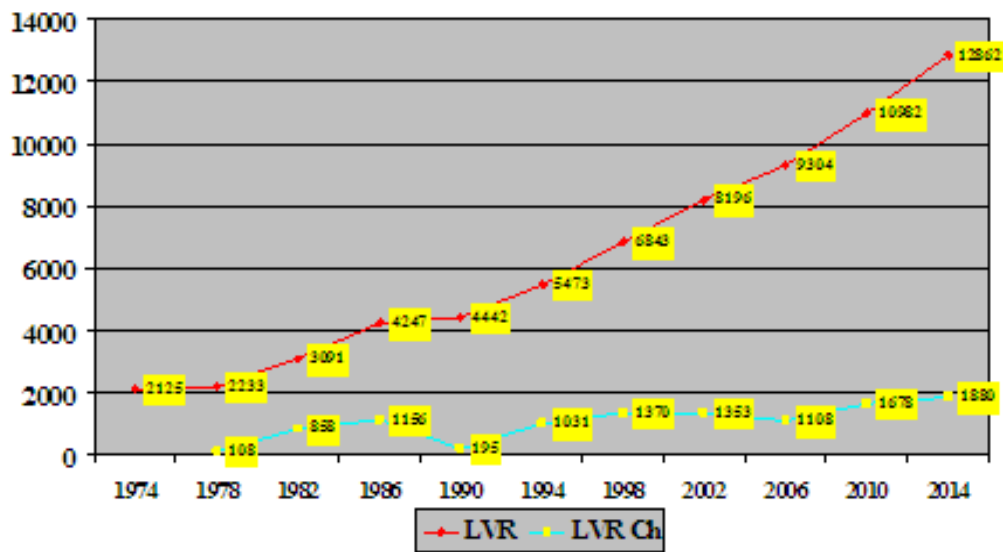


Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2014

But even as the growth rate percentage has declined over time numerical increase has been consistent. For example the numerical increase from 10.982 million in Nov. 2010 to 12.862 million in Nov. 2014 or 1.88 million registered voters was the largest mid-term cycle Latino numerical growth ever recorded by the CPS Survey.

II. Latino Voter Registration, Off-Year Elections, 1974-2014

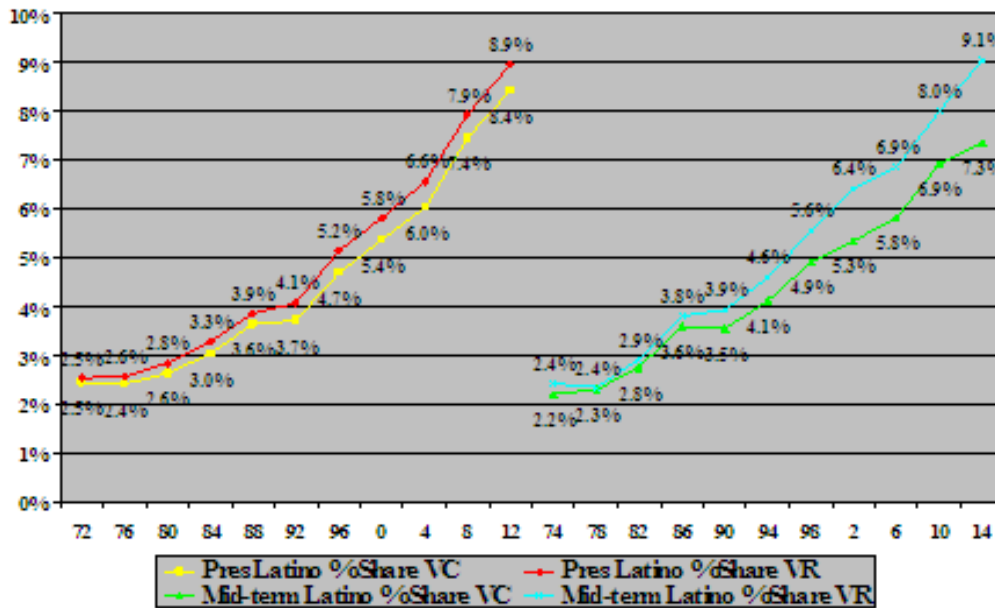
Numbers in Thousands



Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2014

In Nov. 2014 Latinos represented the largest share of all US voter registration ever (9.1%). Mid-term Latino votes cast expanded its share from 6.9% to 7.3% of all votes cast. In other words, even though Latinos cast roughly the same number of voters in 2014 as 2010, they represented a larger share of all votes cast – this is because non-Latinos cast significantly fewer votes in 2014 than in 2010.

III. US Latino %Share of Votes Cast and Registration, 1972-2014

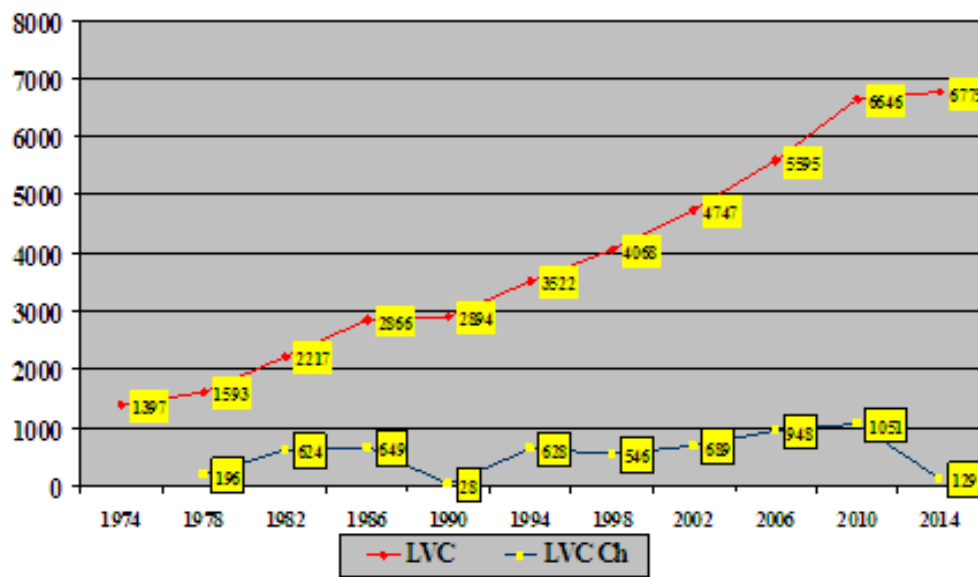


Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2014

Finding 2 “The Bad”: US Latino Votes Cast were Stagnant; the Rate of US Latino Votes Cast was its Lowest Ever;

According to the CPS Survey, Latinos cast over 6 million votes for the second time in their history (6.775 million votes cast or a 1.9% increase over 2010’s total of 6.646 million) for a small mid-term cycle increase of 129,000 votes cast over 2010. This represents the second smallest numerical increase for Latino voting in a mid-term cycle. Only 1986-90 was smaller (+28,000).

IV. Latino Votes Cast
Mid-Term Elections, 1974-2014
 Numbers in Thousands

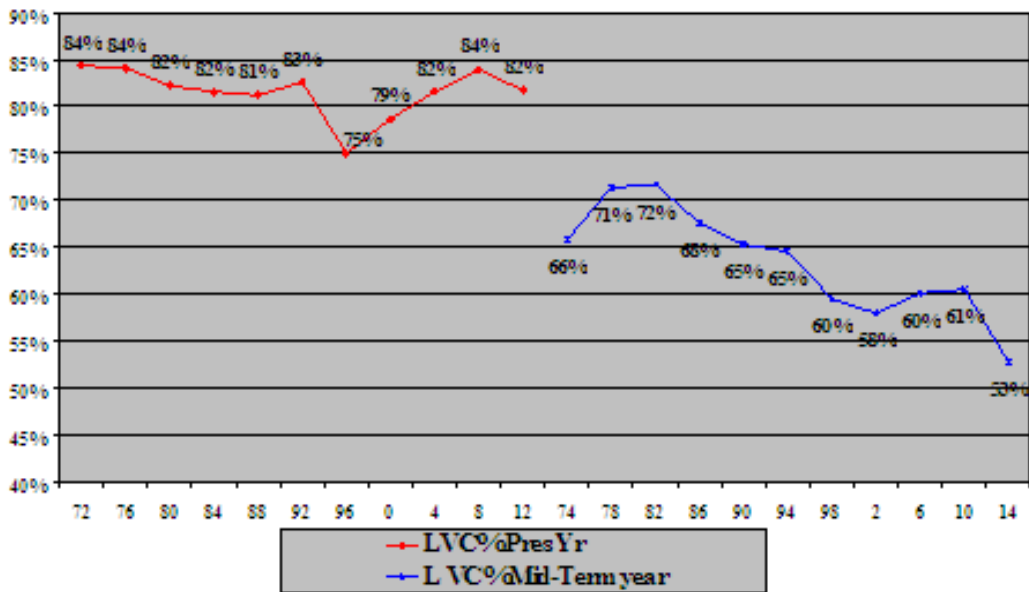


US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2014

The 2014 Latino turnout rate of 53% of registered was a record low reflecting a precipitous decline from the 1998-2010 Latino turnout average of 60%.

The decline in the 2014 rate of national Latino voter turnout echoed the national trend of voter alienation. This was different than 2010 when both Latino voting and Latino registration bucked the national low turnout trend and grew at robust rates compared to 2006. See WCVI’s analysis of the 2010 election for more information http://wcvl.org/press_room/press_releases/2012/120308_study.htm.

V. Latino Rates of Turnout, 1972-2012



Source: US Census Bureau Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2014

Finding 3 “And the Ugly”: The “National” Latino Voter Turnout was Stagnant Due to Collapse in California.

A state by state analysis of the top 20 states where 96% of Latino voters are concentrated shows that California Latino turnout plummeted in a particularly non-competitive mid-term election.

Indeed instead of growing at its 1998-2010 Latino cast growth rate of about 250,000 net new Latino votes per mid-term cycle, California voter turnout collapsed by -351,000 Latino votes to only 1,707 million votes cast (causing a turnout shortfall of 600,000 voters in the national Latino vote total).

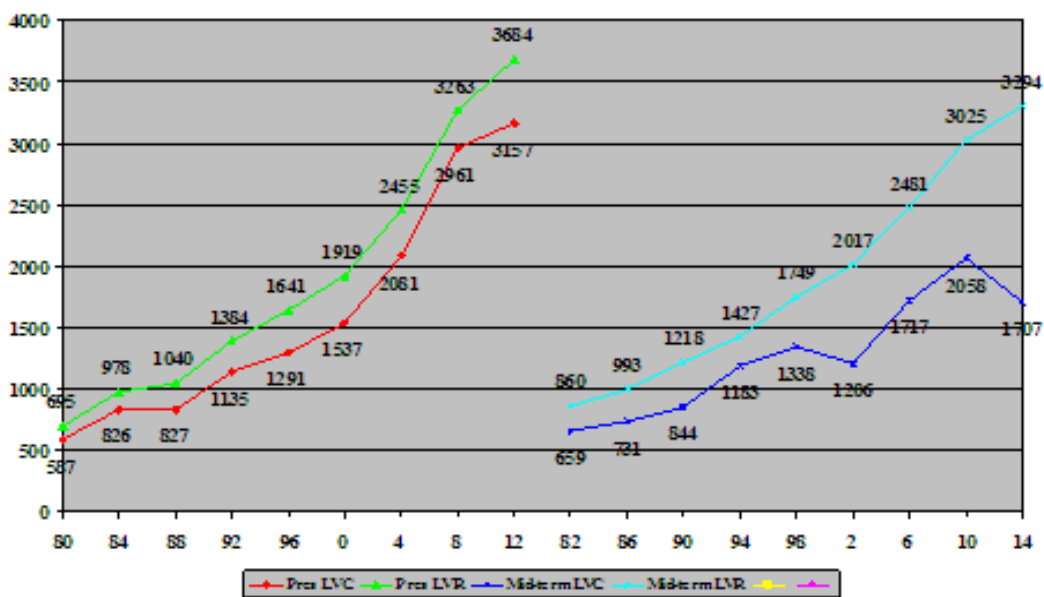
In other words, if in 2014 California Latinos had continued their 1998-2010 trend their voter turnout would have been 2.3 million, and the national Latino turnout rate in 2014 would have been 58% (roughly 7.4 million votes cast)—slightly below the 60% average over the last 4 mid-term cycles.

A. LATINO VOTES CAST 2010-2014 LATINO-FOCUSED STATES				
Numbers in Thousands				
State	2010 LVC	2014 LVC	LVC #Change	LVC%Ch
CA	2058	1707	-351	-17%
TX	1012	1092	80	8%
FL	863	892	29	3%
NY	516	502	-14	-3%
AZ	407	364	-43	-11%
NJ	177	274	97	55%
IL	241	218	-23	-10%
CO	144	218	74	51%
NM	183	179	-4	-2%
PA	79	119	40	51%
NV	68	97	29	43%
WA	77	85	8	10%
MI	68	82	14	21%
CT	56	68	12	21%
OR	35	62	27	77%
GA	46	62	16	35%
VA	48	60	12	25%
MD	55	58	3	5%
NC	80	53	-27	-34%
MA	48	53	5	10%
20 State Total	6261	6245	-16	0%
USA	6646	6775	129	2%

WCVI concludes that the 2014's disappointing national Latino turnout performance was therefore mostly not a national problem but mostly a California problem, due essentially to a non-competitive election state cycle that diminished interest in state elections across all California voter subgroups, Latinos included.

VI. Calif. Latino Voting and Registration, 1980-2014

Numbers in Thousands



Source: US Census Bureau Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2014

Comparing Latino Voter Registration from Presidential Election to Mid-Term Election 2012-14

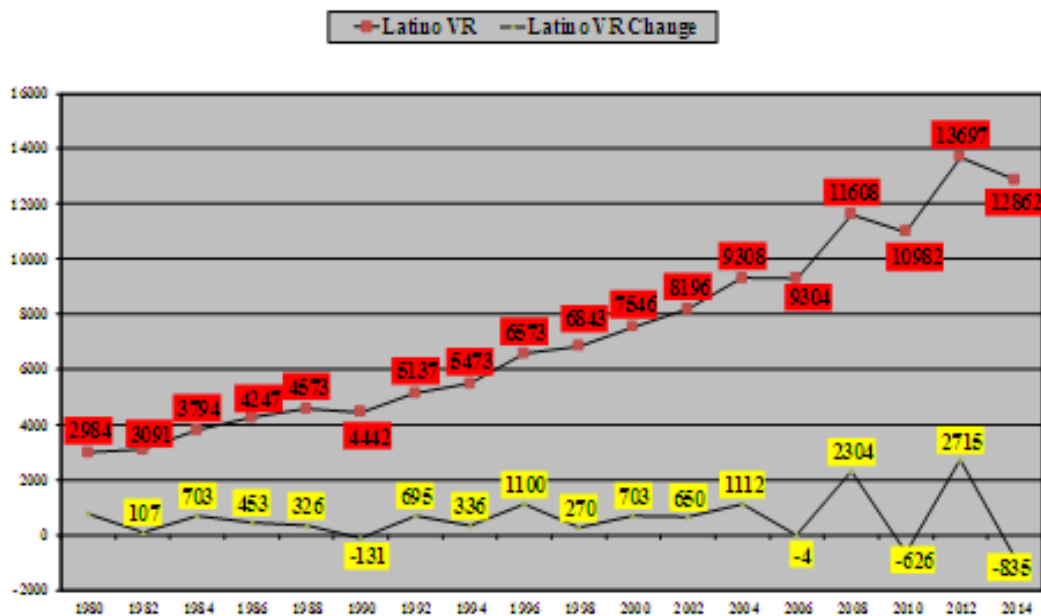
Finding 4 “More Ugly”: During 2012-14 Latino voter registration declined an unprecedented -835,000 voters or -6.1% (from 13.697 million Latino registered voters in 2012 to 12.862 million voters in 2014).

This massive “mid-term cycle” reduction in Latino voter registration represents the third mid-term reduction in a row and constitutes a “new normal” for Latino registration that is quite different from the patterns of 1978-2004 during which Latino voter registration grew consistently (in both Presidential and mid-term cycles) during 1978-1988 and 1990-2004.

Unfortunately, the new pattern in Latino registration is boom-bust i.e. “booms” in Presidential cycles followed by “busts” in mid-term cycles. And this boom-bust cycle is intensifying in consecutive electoral cycles with numerically “higher peaks and deeper valleys.”

VII. Latino Voter Registration, 1980-2014

Numbers in Thousands



Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2014

Underlying the significant 2012-14 national decline in Latino voter registration is comparatively high residential mobility (driven by significant unemployment/under employment especially among young adults) coupled with insufficient investment in grassroots voter registration activities during mid-term cycles.

Twelve (12) Latino-concentrated states experienced negative growth during 2012-14 collectively losing more than 1.1 million registered Latino voters. Texas (-15%), California (-11%) and Florida (-8%) led this march backwards losing over 900,000 Latino registered voters collectively! Georgia and Massachusetts “crashed” losing nearly a third of their voters each.

Conversely only eight (8) Latino-concentrated states showed positive growth during 2012-14 collectively adding only 354,000 registered Latino voters. Arizona (+33%) and Oregon (+54%) surged due to very specific state issues (resisting anti-immigrant state laws and policies) and elections (ballot measures legalizing marijuana). While Colorado (+13%) and Pennsylvania (+16%) grew the Latino vote, probably due to receiving continued significant donor interest/investment because they are “swing states”

B. Latino Voter Registration in Top 20 States, 2012-14

Numbers in Thousands

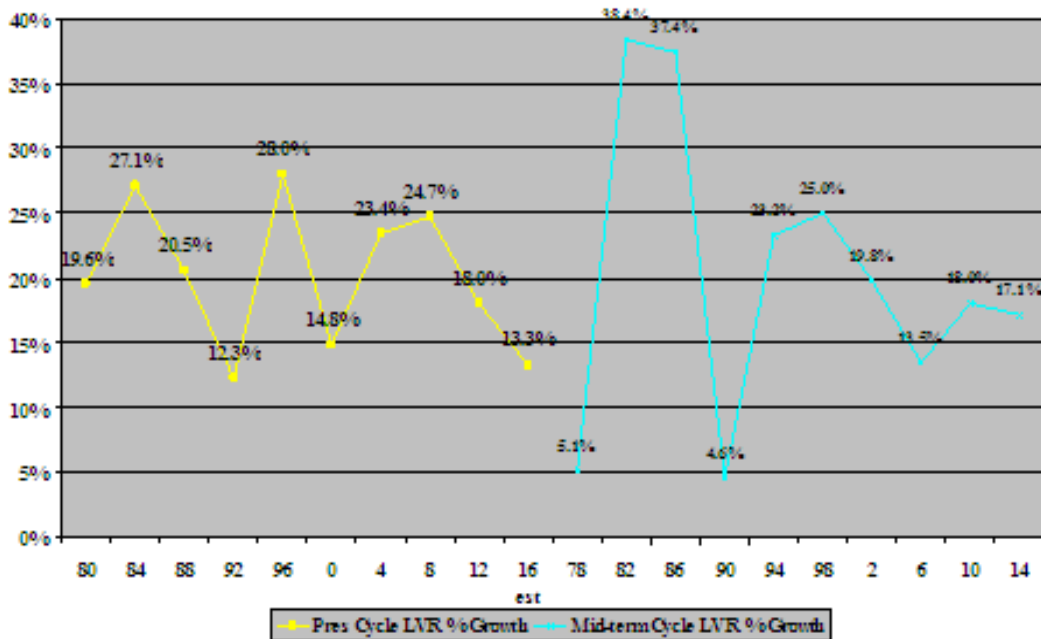
State	2012 LVR	2014 LVR	Ch	%Ch
AZ	516	687	171	33%
CO	284	321	37	13%
OR	69	106	37	54%
PA	225	260	35	16%
NY	963	995	32	3%
NJ	468	497	29	6%
NV	181	189	8	4%
MD	115	120	5	4%
VA	114	112	-2	-2%
WA	172	169	-3	-2%
IL	415	410	-5	-1%
NC	115	107	-8	-7%
CT	127	116	-11	-9%
MI	193	179	-14	-7%
GA	140	99	-41	-29%
NM	349	302	-47	-13%
MA	216	155	-61	-28%
FL	1622	1493	-129	-8%
CA	3684	3294	-390	-11%
TX	2652	2255	-397	-15%
20 State Total	12620	11866	-754	-6%
USA total	13697	12862	-835	-6%

Finding 5 “More Bad”: The Boom-Bust Cycle Hurts Latino Empowerment in States and Localities Especially in Mid-Term Cycles

As in 2010, the scale of the 2014’s decline in Latino voter registration should concern proponents of Latino mobilization for 2016. Looking back, 2010’s Latino vote contraction of -5% definitely limited 2012’s Latino voter growth. Projections then to raise the Latino vote to 15 million registered voters fell far short as a final total of only 13.7 million was the best that could be achieved. For a discussion of the 2012 Latino vote performance see http://wcv.org/press_room/press_releases/2013/130523_release.pdf

Therefore a target for the Latino voter registration of +13% above the 2012 total (or 2.6 million above the 2014 total of 12.9 million registered) to grow to 15.5 million registered voters is the best that can be achieved in 2016 given the current contours of the campaigns as well as a hard-headed estimate of available voter mobilization resources.

VIII. Latino Rates of Registration and Turnout Growth, 1978-2016



US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2014

Finding 6 “More Good”: Three States Unambiguously Trended Up in Latino Voter Turnout

Exceptions to the overall bad or ugly performance of the Latino vote in 2014 included several “stars”. Notably Colorado, Pennsylvania and New Jersey all experienced increases of Latino votes cast of over 50% in 2014 compared to 2010 and had more than 100,000 Latino registered voters and votes cast (rendering the CPS sample size and margin of error acceptable).

Common to these states were hot/competitive state elections for Governor (Colorado and Pennsylvania) and/or US Senate (Colorado and New Jersey). In both Colorado US Senate and Pennsylvania Governorship incumbents were defeated and in New Jersey the first African American US Senator was elected.

(Please review the data from “Table A” on page 6. A more complete treatment of important Latino state trends is forthcoming from WCVI.)