



William C. Velásquez Institute

Memorandum

To: Concerned Parties

From: Antonio Gonzalez, President

Date: May 22, 2013

Re: Why the Latino Vote Underperformed in 2012, a Critical Analysis (Part 1)

Introduction

Upon the November 2012 re-election of Barack Obama to the Presidency, reports circulated that an unprecedentedly massive Latino vote overwhelmingly supported Obama and gave him victory. These same sources proclaimed that this turnout resulted from the greatest Latino ground game ever mounted which drove up Latino voter registration prior to the elections and mobilized an army of volunteers to deliver the Latino vote.

As a result, it was said, President Obama, and Democratic legislators owed Latinos prompt approval in 2013 of the much ballyhooed comprehensive immigration reform proposal (CIR). Moreover, it was also said the Republicans were in danger of becoming a permanent minority party because of having alienated Latino voters. The cure, according to this analysis, was for Republicans to also support CIR.

However, a report by the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey calls these premises into question to say the least. This two part report by WCVI will seek to separate fact from fiction.

CPS Data Contradicts Claims

The May release of the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), Voting and Registration Series in 2012 contradicted post-election reports by finding that only about 15% more Latinos voted in 2012 than in 2008. This total represents the weakest rate of increase in Latino votes cast since 1992.

Contrary to the claims of hyper mobilized Latino participation in the Nov. 2012 elections the data show Latino voter participation while continuing to grow apace consistent with historic patterns didn't come close to post-election pronouncements.

The CPS data shows contrary to reports that:

- Latino votes cast grew from about 9.745 million in 2008 to approximately 11.188 million, (not the announced 12.2 million);
- Latinos share of votes cast grew from 7.43% in 2008 to 8.4% in 2012 (not the announced 10%);

- Latino voter registration increased approximately 2.1 million from 11.608 million in 2008 to approximately 13.697 million in 2012 (not the announced increase of 4 million more than in 2008).

The Latino vote continued to grow apace, but was not hyper mobilized

According to CPS data, Latino voting in 2012 represented an average contemporary Latino presidential cycle performance with 1.443 million net new votes being cast compared to 2008. This modest growth in voter turnout ended an 8 year trend of Latino hyper mobilization in registration and voting from 2001-08. WCVI defines hyper mobilization as growth rates significantly above the historic average.

Latino votes cast growth rate fell to 14.3% in 2012, down from its historic presidential cycle rate of 21% and down from the hyper-mobilized rates of about 28% in both 2004 and 2008;

Growth and Rate of US Latino Votes Cast, 1980-2012

Numbers are in Thousands

| Year | Latino Votes Cast | Latino Votes Cast Change | % Latino VC Growth |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1980-2008 | | | 21.00% |
| 1992 | 4238 | 528 | 14.23% |
| 1996 | 4238 | 690 | 16.28% |
| 2000 | 5934 | 1006 | 20.41% |
| 2004 | 7587 | 1653 | 27.86% |
| 2008 | 9745 | 2158 | 28.44% |
| 2012 | 11188 | 1443 | 14.81% |

Source: US Census, CPS Studies, Voting and Registration Series, 1980-2012

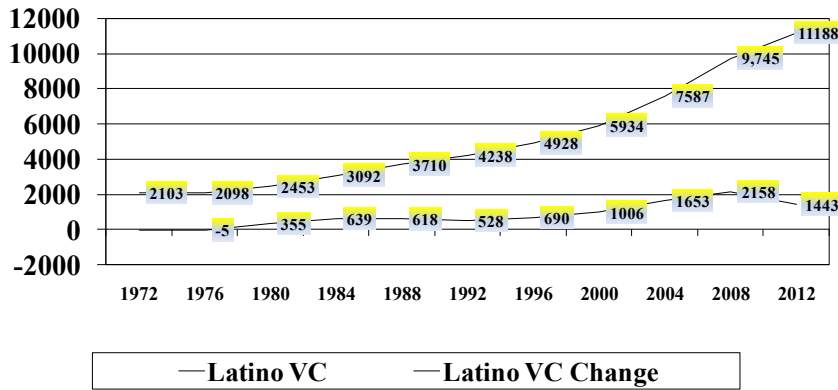
About 11.188 million Latinos votes were cast, highest to date, but far below the 12-13 million vote total widely touted (NALEO announced 12.2 million Latino votes cast).

While the National Election Pool/Edison Research reported Latinos cast 10% of all votes in November 2012, the CPS found that Latinos represented only 8.4% of votes cast (up from 7.4% in 2008).

This discrepancy is consistent with inaccuracies found in NEP/ER polling of Latinos historically. For example, in 2004 member network NBC publicly withdrew their support for the NEP/ER findings on how Latinos voted for President, citing substantial sampling errors on Latino voters that underrepresented Latino Democratic performance.

Latino Votes Cast in Presidential Elections, 1972-2012

Numbers in Thousands

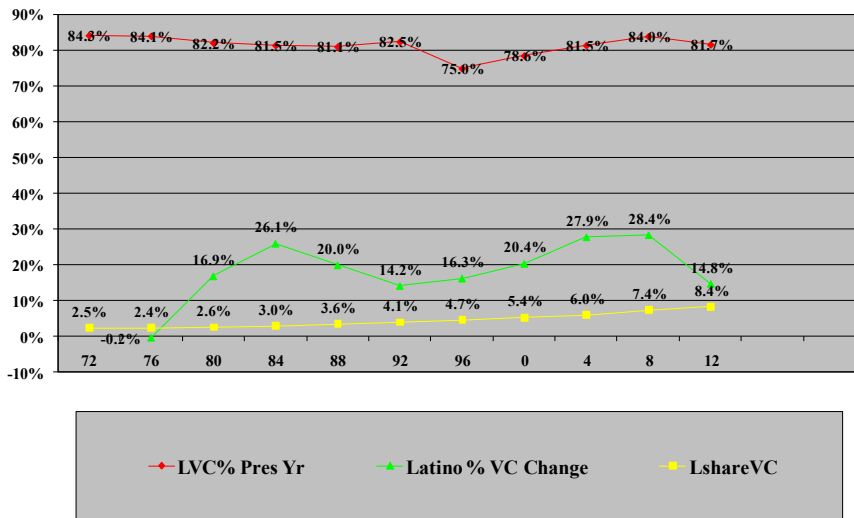


Further research on NEP/ER's sampling and methodology is necessary to definitively explain this significant discrepancy in Latino share of votes cast.

CPS also found that the Latino turnout rate was down compared to 2008

Latino Rates of Turnout, 1972-2012

Source: CPS Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2012



Latino Registration Slowed in 2012

Latino voter registration growth slowed compared to the 2004 and 2008 presidential cycles. Indeed, the Latino voter registration growth rate fell to 18% in 2012, down from its historic presidential cycle rate of 21.31% and down from the hyper-mobilization rates of 24.71% in 2008 and 23.35% in 2004.

Latino Voter Registration Presidential Cycles, 1980-2012

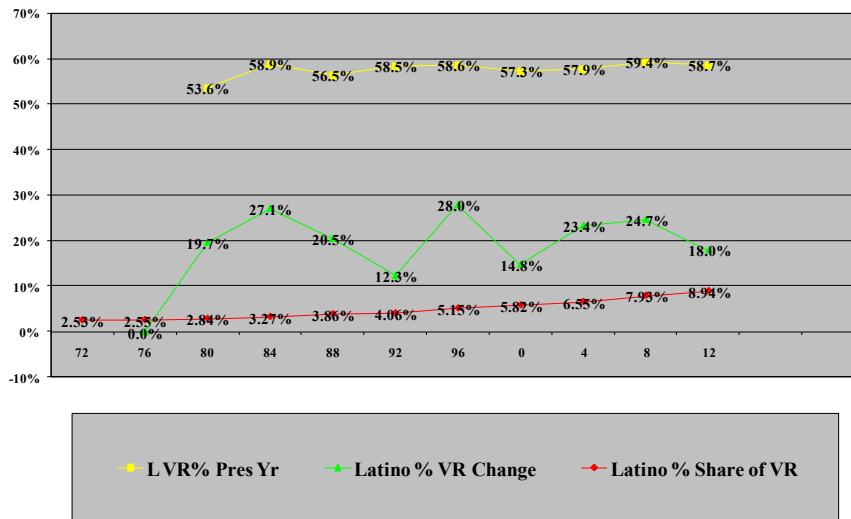
Numbers in thousands, Source: CPS 1980-2012

| Year | Latino Voter Registration | Latino VR # Change | Ave Latino VR Growth |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1980-88 | | | 22.44% |
| 1992 | 5137 | 564 | 12.33% |
| 1996 | 6573 | 1436 | 27.95% |
| 2000 | 7546 | 973 | 14.80% |
| 2004 | 9308 | 1762 | 23.35% |
| 2008 | 11608 | 2300 | 24.71% |
| 2012 | 13697 | 2089 | 18.00% |
| 1980-2008 | | | 21.31% |

Moreover the Latino percent of registered also fell compared to 2008 from 59.4% to 58.7%.

Latino Rates of Registration, 1972-2012

Source: CPS Studies 1972-2012



Though Latino registration grew by 2.1 million, it was far below reports widely circulated in the media. For example, Cook Political Report's Charles Cook wrote on October 22, 2012 that Latino voter registration had increased by about four million over 2008's total.

Why did the Latino Vote Underperform?

Why then, did Latinos merely vote at rates consistent with historic patterns? Why didn't the Latino vote hyper mobilize as claimed by many in the 2012 cycle (and as they did in 2004 and 2008 cycles)?

At least two objective factors and one failed narrative help explain this average performance.

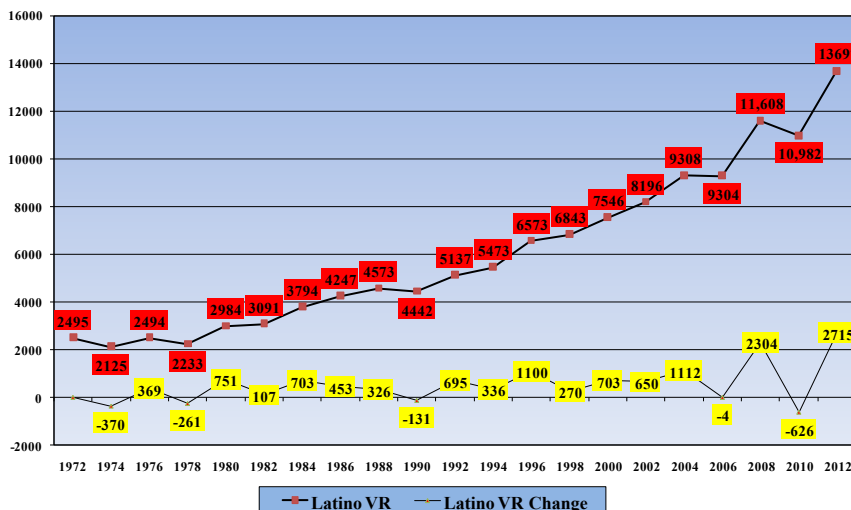
First, total Latino registration declined by 5% during 2009-10 instead of growing by its normal 5% in the off-year cycle, blunting the overall four-year cycle growth.

According to CPS, for the first time since the 1970's Latino voter registration declined in absolute numbers in consecutive off-year election cycles (2005-06 and 2009-10 respectively). Many analysts including Pew Hispanic Center and WCVI theorized this Latino vote registration contraction could be the results of residential dislocation and downward social mobility from the cataclysmic job-loss and mortgage foreclosure crises that continues today. More research is necessary to better understand these consecutive off-year Latino voter registration declines.

The 5% decline (instead of the normal 5% growth) in Latino voter registration in 2009-10 meant it was likely that the Latino voter universe would be smaller than anticipated by 2012. A smaller than projected number of Latino registered voters put an objective ceiling on Latino voter turnout, unless of course, additional resources were deployed across states in 2011-12 by interested donors to counteract the 2009-10 contraction of the Latino vote. Such resources were not made available.

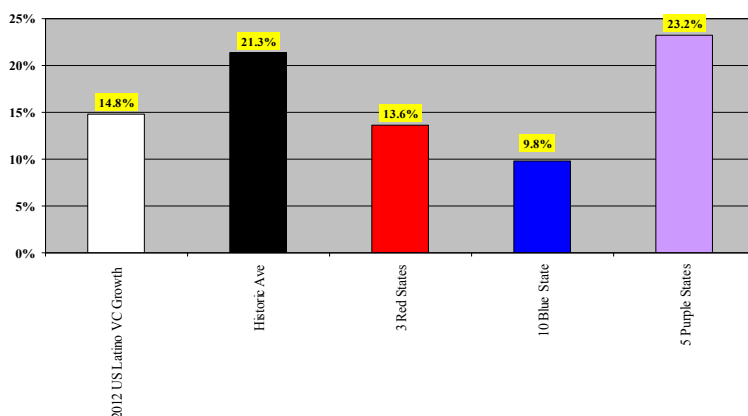
Latino Voter Registration, National Elections, 1972-2012

Numbers in Thousands



Second, according to many Latino vote advocates, donors rigorously focused subsequent Latino voter mobilization resources in 2011-12 in presidential swing (or purple) states. This meant that states representing only about one fifth of Latino voters received a vast majority of the resources.

**18 States with at Least 100,000 Latino Votes Cast,
Rate of VC Growth, 2008-2012**



Such resource drove significant growth in Latino vote casts (23.4%) in purple states, while non-swing states (blue or red states) experienced resource scarcity and below average growth (13.8% and 9.8% respectively).

The overall result was a disappointing growth rate in Latino votes cast of only 14.3% compared to 2008, as well as a modest overall decline in the rate of Latino turnout.

Indeed, WCVI’s review of the 18 states with at least 100,000 Latino votes cast in 2012 revealed that only five states (Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Massachusetts, and Colorado) increased their rate of Latino turnout in 2012 compared to 2008, the other 13 showed declines in their Latino turnout rate.

That four southwestern states and Massachusetts, among 18 states with large Latino voter concentrations, improved their rate of Latino turnout in 2012 may reflect state-specific competitive races, including those due to opportunities for Latino-supported candidate opportunities that resulted from state redistricting processes.

Finally, it appears the highly publicized, well financed effort by a Latino/immigrant rights consortium to foist the narrative that “Latino grassroots sentiment for immigration reform would hyper mobilize Latino voting across the nation” fell short. This strategy was used extensively by partisan and nonpartisan sectors alike and is well documented in the media. While more research is required to parse what exactly motivated Latino voting and non-voting, it is self-evident that the “immigrant rights” narrative did not motivate record (or even hyper mobilized) Latino rates of turnout in non-swing states, and perhaps not even in swing states.

**Latino Voter Registration and Turnout in 18 States
with at least 100,000 Votes Cast in 2012**

| State | 2008 LVC | 2008 LVR | % VC | 2012 LVC | 2012 LVR | %VC | % LVC Diff | Type State |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|-------------|-------------|-------|---------------|---------------|
| GA | 128 | 150 | 85.3% | 114 | 140 | 81.4% | -3.9% | Red |
| TX | 1697 | 2441 | 69.5% | 1890 | 2652 | 71.3% | 1.7% | Red |
| AZ | 291 | 410 | 71.0% | 400 | 516 | 77.5% | 6.5% | Red |
| 3 | 2116 | 3001 | 70.5% | 2404 | 3308 | 72.7% | 2.2% | |
| VA | 74 | 74 | 100.0% | 103 | 114 | 90.4% | -9.6% | Purple |
| NV | 119 | 131 | 90.8% | 157 | 181 | 86.7% | -4.1% | Purple |
| FL | 1227 | 1380 | 88.9% | 1399 | 1622 | 86.3% | -2.7% | Purple |
| MI | 70 | 85 | 82.4% | 158 | 193 | 81.9% | -0.5% | Purple |
| CO | 195 | 225 | 86.7% | 259 | 284 | 91.2% | 4.5% | Purple |
| 5 | 1685 | 1895 | 88.9% | 2076 | 2394 | 86.7% | -2.2% | |
| WA | 148 | 160 | 92.5% | 139 | 172 | 80.8% | -11.7% | Blue |
| Ill | 314 | 385 | 81.6% | 295 | 415 | 71.1% | -10.5% | Blue |
| MD | 91 | 93 | 97.8% | 103 | 115 | 89.6% | -8.3% | Blue |
| CA | 2961 | 3263 | 90.7% | 3157 | 3684 | 85.7% | -5.0% | Blue |
| CT | 89 | 104 | 85.6% | 103 | 127 | 81.1% | -4.5% | Blue |
| NY | 743 | 836 | 88.9% | 835 | 983 | 84.9% | -3.9% | Blue |
| PA | 161 | 189 | 85.2% | 184 | 225 | 81.8% | -3.4% | Blue |
| NJ | 337 | 388 | 86.9% | 395 | 468 | 84.4% | -2.5% | Blue |
| NM | 289 | 346 | 83.5% | 306 | 349 | 87.7% | 4.2% | Blue |
| MA | 77 | 103 | 74.8% | 202 | 216 | 93.5% | 18.8% | Blue |
| 10 | 5210 | 5867 | 88.8% | 5719 | 6754 | 84.7% | -4.1% | |
| 18 State Total | 9011 | 10763 | 83.7% | 10199 | 12456 | 81.9% | -1.8% | |
| US Total | 9745 | 11608 | 84.0% | 11188 | 13697 | 81.7% | -2.3% | |
| 18 State Share | 92.5% | 92.7% | | 91.2% | 90.9% | | | |

Source: CPS, 1972-2012

Did the Latino Vote Elect President Obama?

Another important claim for many regarding the Latino vote in 2012 was that Latinos provided the decisive vote to re-elect President Obama.

First, at the level of the national popular vote it appears that virtually 100% of the net increase in Latino votes of 1.4 million accrued to Mr. Obama. According to NEP/ER and CPS data Obama received a larger percentage (+4%) of a larger Latino voter universe (+14.3%) in 2012 compared to 2008.

Though doubts abound regarding the accuracy of NEP/ER polling as regards Latinos, it should be noted that independent Latino survey research, notably that of *Latino Decisions*, generally agrees with NEP/ER results on the issue of how Latinos voted for President.

Importantly, President Obama benefited from a larger victory margin among Latino voters at the same time that his national margin of victory declined precipitously from 2008. While Mr. Obama received about 4.5 million fewer votes in 2012 than in 2008, he received 1.4 million more Latino votes, while Republican opponent Mitt Romney received approximately the same number of Latino votes as Senator John McCain did in 2008.

Latino Vote for Presidential Candidates in 2012

| Year | % Latino Vote for Obama | US Latino Vote (in thousands) | Latino Obama Votes (in thousands) | Latino Votes for McCain/Romney (in thousands) |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 2008 | 67% | 9745 | 6529 | 3021 |
| 2012 | 71% | 11188 | 7943 | 3021 |
| Diff | 4% | 1443 | 1414 | 0 |

Source: CPS Voting and Registration Series 2012, 2012 National Election Pool/Edison Research

Stated differently, President Obama's margin of victory among Latinos was over 4.9 million votes, virtually matching his national margin of victory of nearly 5 million votes. Therefore, Latinos have a modest claim (African Americans who gave the President a 15 million margin of victory have a much greater claim) to being decisive in giving Mr. Obama a popular vote victory.

This performance compares favorably to Latino voting in 2008 when Mr. Obama's margin was so overriding that Latinos had little claim, despite their historic voting performance, to being the decisive popular vote.

Latinos and Obama's Popular Vote in 2012

| Year | Latino Margin for Obama (in thousands) | Obama Victory National Margin (in thousands) | Latino Share of Obamas Victory Margin |
|------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 2008 | 3508 | 9,550 | 36.7% |
| 2012 | 4923 | 4,978 | 98.9% |
| Diff | 1415 | (4,572) | |

Source: CPS Voting and Registration Series 2012, 2012 National Election Pool/Edison Research

Second, and more importantly, the US does not elect its Presidents by popular vote, but by electors apportioned by the states based on state election results.

By that measure President Obama won the Electoral College 332 to 206 or with nearly 62% of the electors, compared to winning about 51% of the popular vote.

It appears that the Latino vote was decisive in Colorado, Nevada, and Florida among swing states, providing a total of 44 electoral votes. Decisiveness is defined by WCVI as providing the margin of

victory, which is seen in the table below in states where both the Latino vote share and the Latino effect (Latino margin for Obama times Latino share of votes cast) was bigger than the Obama margin of victory.

Since Mr. Obama’s margin was 126 electoral votes, Latinos were at best a junior (albeit growing) partner in the Presidents coalition.

By comparison, WCVI’s analysis in 2008 showed that Latinos were decisive in delivering 3 states to Mr. Obama: New Mexico, Nevada, and Indiana for a total of 21 electoral votes, showing the growing importance of the Latino vote between 2008 and 2012.

Swing States that Latinos Delivered for Obama

| Battleground State | Obama Margin of Victory % | Latino Share of VC | Latino Obama Margin of Victory | Latino Effect | Electoral Votes |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Florida | 0.88 | 17.30% | 21 | 3.633 | 29 |
| Nevada | 6.68 | 15.00% | 45 | 6.75 | 6 |
| Colorado | 5.36 | 10.40% | 52 | 5.408 | 9 |
| Michigan | 9.50 | 3.30% | | | |
| Virginia | 3.88 | 2.70% | | | |
| New Hampshire | 5.58 | 2.20% | | | |
| North Carolina | (2.04) | 2.10% | | | |
| Iowa | 7.69 | 1.90% | | | |
| Ohio | 2.98 | 1.80% | | | |
| Total | | | | | 44 |

Source: NEP/ER 2012, CPS 2012

Conclusion: Exaggerating the Latino Vote May Be Self Defeating

According to the CPS report Latino registration and voting rose to new highs in 2012, as they have in every presidential cycle since 1980. However it did not come close to matching the levels announced as fact in the immediate prelude to and aftermath of the Nov. 2012 Presidential elections. Latino voters in 2012 were not hyper mobilized as they had been in 2004 and 2008.

The definitive Census CPS report should serve as a cautionary tale to self-described “experts.”

The end of the Latino hyper mobilized trend in 2012 was predictable given the Latino vote contraction in 2009-10 and the donor obsession with robustly funding efforts only in a few battleground states.

The silver lining in 2012 is how Latinos were able to improve participation in a handful of non-battleground states (Arizona, Texas, New Mexico and MA). More research will be forthcoming on this anomaly, and Latino advocates should definitely pursue a dialog with donors as well as the two parties to pressure them to broaden their narrow gauge attitudes towards the Latino vote.

Perhaps these multiple, statistically significant gaffs can all be chalked up to well-intentioned errors from professional entities (like NEP/ER and Cook Political Report) who are inexperienced in understanding the modalities of Latino voting behavior and trends.

But it's also likely that exaggerating the Latino vote in 2012 was a preconceived plan.

But, alas, facts are hard things to hide.

Hopefully, as the truth gets out and a properly calibrated understanding of the growing importance of the Latino vote is absorbed by all, the baby will not get thrown out with the bathwater as, for example, policy makers learn they were spun vis-à-vis the Latino vote in 2012.

Four Exaggerations about the 2012 Latino Vote

| 2012 Claim | Claimant | CPS 2012 Data | Verified by CPS | Discrepancy |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| At least 12.2 million Latinos voted in 2012 | NALEO | 11.188 million Latinos voted in 2012 | NO | Claim was exaggerated by at least 1 million Latino votes cast |
| Latinos were 10 % of votes cast | NEP/ER/Edison Research | Latinos were 8.4% of votes cast | NO | Claim was exaggerated by 1.6% or approximately 2 million Latino votes cast |
| At least 4 million more Latinos were registered to vote in 2012 than in 2008 | Cook Political Report | 13.697 million Latinos were registered to vote in 2012 | NO | Claim was exaggerated by approximately 2 million Latino registered voters |
| Massive Latino voting with 71% support for Obama gave him the victory | Americas Voice, NCLR, SEIU, et al | Latino voting gave Mr. Obama 3 swing states totaling 44 electoral votes | NO | Latino voting would have had to give Mr. Obama 20 more electoral votes for the claim to be true |