



2016 PRIMARY ELECTION PROFILE

TEXAS



ELECTION DAY:
TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2016

ELECTORAL COLLEGE VOTES: 38

TOTAL POPULATION (2014):

26,956,958

LATINO POPULATION (2014):

10,408,238



In the last four presidential contests, Texans have generally supported the Republican candidate - in 2000 and 2004, the state handed decisive victories to its former governor, George W. Bush (R), who received 59% and 61% of the vote, respectively. In 2008 and 2012, the respective share of votes garnered by U.S. Senator John McCain (R) and Governor Mitt Romney (R) were somewhat smaller - 55% and 57%.

In contrast, exit poll data suggest that Latino partisan preferences in the presidential contests fluctuated significantly between 2004 and 2012. In 2004, these data indicate that the Latino vote was nearly evenly split between Senator John Kerry (D) and President Bush (50% to 49%). In 2012, the gap between the Republican and Democratic candidates appeared much larger, with 71% of Latinos supporting President Barack Obama (D) compared to 27% for Senator McCain.

Latinos played a particularly key role in Texas' 2008 Democratic presidential primary contest. In 2008, both parties changed their primary schedules, and a large cluster of elections took place near the start of the year. Because many major primaries or nominating caucuses had occurred by February 5 ("Super Duper Tuesday"), some political observers predicted that the presidential nominees for both parties would be determined by that date. However, in a remarkable turn of events, the Democratic race proved so competitive, that the early primaries did not decide it.

With its March 4 election, Texas became a key battleground for the Democratic nominees. Exit poll data suggest that the Latino vote was crucial to the victory of then-Senator Hillary Clinton (D) in Texas, which essentially allowed her to remain a viable candidate in the Democratic primary. Clinton's margin of victory among all Texas Democrats was relatively narrow. She received 50.9% of the vote compared with then-Senator Obama's 47.4%. The exit poll data indicate that Texas Latino Democrats favored Hillary Clinton over Obama by 66% to 32%. Former President Bill Clinton had called Texas a "must-win," and the victory for Hillary Clinton was her first after 11 straight losses to Obama. After the Texas win, Hillary Clinton said that "this campaign has turned a corner," and that support from Latino voters was essential to her comeback.

With Latinos comprising nearly one of every four Texas registered voters (23%), Latino voters are poised to play a key role in the 2016 primary and general elections.

CONGRESSIONAL RACES

In Texas' March 2016 primary election, Latinos are pursuing the nomination for several Congressional seats throughout the state. Four of Texas' five incumbent Latino members of the U.S. House of Representatives are seeking re-election, and none face serious opposition in their primaries: Democrats Joaquin Castro, Henry Cuellar, Filemon Vela, Jr., and Republican Bill Flores.

In the 15th Congressional District, incumbent Ruben Hinojosa is retiring, and there are crowded fields of contenders pursuing the nomination on both sides of the aisle. Latino Democratic candidates include small business owner Dolly Elizondo, attorney Vicente Gonzalez, Edinburg School Board member Juan 'Sonny' Palacios, Jr., former Hidalgo County Commissioner and Mercedes Mayor Joel Quintanilla, and veteran Ruben Ramirez. Latino Republican candidates include Edinburg School Board member Xavier Salinas and former Rio Grande City Mayor Ruben Villarreal.

In the 23rd Congressional District, former U.S. Rep. Pete Gallego is pursuing the Democratic nomination for a re-match against incumbent U.S. Rep. Will Hurd (R), who prevailed over Gallego in 2014. Political observers believe that the likely contest between Gallego and Hurd will be one of the most competitive races in the general election.

Latinos are also challenging incumbents in several Texas U.S. House primary races. In a race being closely watched by political observers, two Latino Democrats are attempting to unseat 29th Congressional District incumbent U.S. Rep. Gene Green: former Harris County Sheriff and Houston City Councilmember Adrian Garcia, and realtor Dominique Garcia. Julio Garza is also pursuing the Republican nomination for the seat, but in light of the fact that the 29th is a strong Democratic district, Garza will face a tough fight in the general election should he win the primary.

Latinos involved in difficult primary challenges against incumbents include non-profit executive Maria Espinoza (R), who is facing U.S. Rep. John Culberson (R) in the 7th Congressional District; Ben Mendoza (D), who is facing U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D) in the 16th Congressional District; and community activist Carlos Quintanilla (D), who is facing U.S. Rep. Marc Veasey (D) in the 33rd Congressional District.

Several Latinos who are pursuing nominations to face incumbents in the general election will also face uphill battles if they win their primaries, because of the strong partisan leanings of their districts. These include veteran Reggie Gonzales (R), who hopes to take on U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D) in the 18th Congressional District; and former San Marcos Mayor Susan Narvaiz (R), who will likely face U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D) in the 35th Congressional District. In the 27th Congressional District, two Latinos are among the contenders for the Democratic nomination to face U.S. Rep. Blake Farenthold (R) in the general election: Special Deputy/Court Security Officer Raul "Roy" Barrera, and veteran and former judge Ray Madrigal.

STATEWIDE RACES

Incumbent Texas Railroad Commissioner David Porter (R) will not seek re-election. The crowded field of contenders for the Republican nomination in the primary includes Texas State Real Estate Commissioner Weston Martinez.

TEXAS' LATINO POPULATION: 2014

	POPULATION	SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATION
All Latinos	10,408,238	39%
Latino Adults	6,917,372	35%
Latino Voting-Age Citizens	4,820,430	28%

TEXAS' LATINO ELECTORATE *

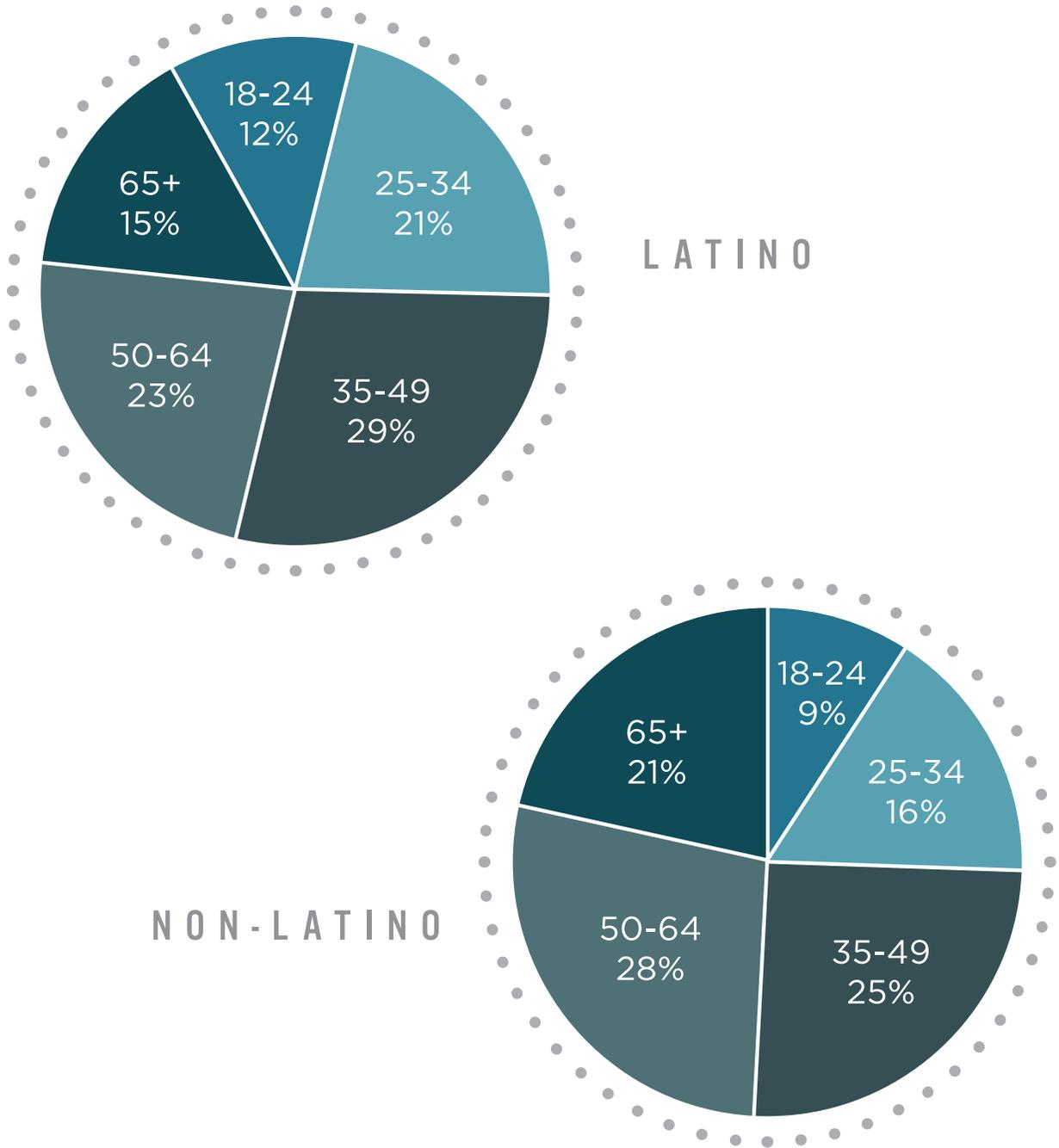
Nearly one of every four Texas registered voters (23%) is Latino.

* as of October 2015

Total Registered Voters	13,800,393
Latino Registered Voters	3,241,019
Latino Share of Registered Voters	23%

AGE

Texas' Latino registered voters tend to be younger than non-Latinos, with 18-24 year olds comprising 12% of registered Latinos, compared to 9% of non-Latinos. Similarly, 21% of Latino registered voters are 25-34 year olds, compared to 16% of non-Latinos. In contrast, nearly half (49%) of non-Latino registered voters are 50 and older, compared to 38% of Latinos.



Totals may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

VOTER TURNOUT

Latino voter turnout in Texas Presidential elections grew from 1,060,000 in 1996 to 1,890,000 in 2012, an increase of 78%.



LATINOS IN TEXAS ELECTED OFFICE

In 2015, 2,536 Latinos served in elected office in Texas, with 98% serving at the local level, including county, municipal, school board, judicial and law enforcement, and special district officials.

LATINOS IN TEXAS ELECTED OFFICE: 1996 - 2015

	1996	2003	2007	2013	2015
U.S. Senators	0	0	0	1	1
U.S. Representatives	5	6	6	6	5
State Officials	1	1	1	0	1
State Legislators	33	37	36	40	42
Local Officials	1,650	1,923	2,127	2,477	2,487
TOTAL	1,689	1,967	2,170	2,524	2,536



For more information about the NALEO Educational Fund's Election 2016 publications, please contact Rosalind Gold at rgold@naleo.org or (213) 747-7606, ext. 4420.

SOURCES

NALEO Educational Fund, *2015 National Directory of Latino Elected Officials*.

This report uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey (ACS), 1-year estimates. The ACS is conducted every year and is an on-going survey of a sample of the population which produces estimates of various population characteristics.

U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), *Voting and Registration in the Elections of November: 1996-2012*. The CPS data used in this report and the survey from which they are derived are subject to certain limitations. First, actual voter turnout and registration may be overestimated by the CPS, because individuals may tend to over-report electoral participation. Additionally, the CPS is a national survey, and estimates derived for smaller sub-groups within the national population may be based on relatively small sample sizes. Consequently, the margin of error associated with estimates of voting and registration for these sub-groups is greater than the margin associated with the national population or larger population sub-groups.

NGP Voter Activation Network (VAN) voter file data, October 2015. VAN data are subject to certain limitations relating to the collection, entry, maintenance and analysis of voter file records.

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