



The Tomás Rivera
POLICY INSTITUTE

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LATINO VOTERS IN 2004 TO TOP 6.7 MILLION
Are Latino Voters the Swing Vote?

February 26, 2004, Los Angeles – The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute at USC projects that 6.7 million Latino voters will participate in the 2004 presidential elections – an increase of over 700,000 from 2000. With analysts predicting a highly contested presidential race in several states, including California, Texas and Florida, Latino voters could hold the key to a 1% swing that would tip these electoral votes toward either party.

“As the U.S. Latino population surges, we are seeing increases in registration and voter turnout,” said Dr. Harry Pachon, president of TRPI. “Their impact on U.S. politics can be potentially felt as the majority of Latino voters live in the nine states that make up 207 of the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency.”

National Latino Vote	
Year	Turnout
1980	2,453,000
1984	3,092,000
1988	3,710,000
1992	4,238,000
1996	4,928,000
2000	5,934,000
2004	6,700,000 (forecast)

Nine states hold majority of Latino voters

Nine states – California, Texas, Florida, New York, Arizona, Illinois, New Mexico, New Jersey and Colorado – include 85% of the registered U.S. Latino voters. Two states with the largest electoral pay off, California and Texas, comprise over 50% of the total Latino registered voters in the United States.

The potential impact of a Latino voting bloc is particularly high in states with large concentrations of Latinos. For instance, in California, it takes a mere 3.6% of statewide Latino voters to cause a 1% statewide shift in vote for a presidential candidate. Similarly, in Florida only 4.4% of Latino voters are needed to create a 1% statewide shift in the vote.

If the election for President is close in these states, as many analysts are predicting, Latinos may very well hold the key to winning the states, and the bounty of 82 electoral votes - 55 in California and 27 in Florida.

Latino Voter Turnout in 2000 Presidential Election by State				
State	Total Votes Cast	Total Latino Votes Cast	Percent of Hispanic Vote to Have 1% Shift	Electoral Votes
U.S. Total	110,826,000	5,934,000	9.3%	538
Arizona	1,644,000	247,000	3.3%	10
California	11,489,000	1,597,000	3.6%	55
Colorado	1,633,000	158,000	5.17	9
Florida	6,006,000	678,000	4.4%	27
Illinois	5,030,000	218,000	11.5%	21
New Jersey	3,374,000	179,000	9.4%	15
New Mexico	647,000	191,000	1.7%	5
New York	7,004,000	502,000	7.0%	31
Texas	7,005,000	1,300,000	2.7%	34
9 State Total	43,832,000	5,070,000		207

Source: TRPI Analysis of U.S. Census data

Methodology

The projected number of voters nationwide is derived from a linear regression, $y=mx=b$, where Y is the total number of Latino voters in a Presidential election. Using known Y's from previous election years from U.S. Census Bureau data, we forecast the line's slope and project where the Y point for 2004 will lie. We take into account the error rate that previous estimates generated comparing predicted turnout to actual turnout. The estimates for 2004 are modified by the combined average error rate for the 1996 and 2000 predictions, to account for the observed undercount in these previous two elections, of about 4%.

Founded in 1985, the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) is a Los Angeles-based, objective research organization addressing issues affecting Latino communities around the United States.