

Memorandum

To: Interested Parties
From: Jan R. van Lohuizen
Date: 12/20/12
Re: The Hispanic vote

Since so much has been written and opined about the Hispanic vote, this might be a good time to pull a variety of different sources of data together to get some perspective. What triggered this is of course the news coverage of the presidential elections: as a percent of all votes cast votes cast by Hispanics increased by 2%, and the margin by which Hispanics voted was substantially more Democratic than in previous elections.

The Exit Polling

Specifically, based on the exit polling¹:

- ✓ The Hispanic share of total votes cast increased from 8% in 2008 to 10% in 2012.
- ✓ The margin by which Hispanics voted Democratic increased from 34% (Obama over McCain) to 44% (Obama over Romney).

The national exit polling also asked about the Senate vote. The numbers are depressing, but they did not get worse: in 2008 Hispanics voted Democratic in Senate races by a margin of 39% (68 to 29); in 2012 Hispanics voted Democratic in Senate races by a margin of 38% (68 to 30).

These findings come from the national exit polling results. However, a lot more data is to be culled from state exit polls². Here are some insights:

- ✓ Hispanic participation in the Presidential elections was highly variable: it increased in some states, declined in other states and was unchanged in the remaining states. Counting just the states where the Hispanic voted changed by 2% or more (counting changes of +1%, 0% and -1% as 'no change'), yields the following

Increased	No change	Declined
California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Nevada,	Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Mass,	Colorado, Connecticut, New Mexico

¹ Exit polling provides estimates within a certain tolerance, just like with regular polling. Keep in mind in reading the exit polling portion of this memo that in places (states with a relatively small Hispanic vote share) the margin of error can be quite large. Our source for the exit polling is the Fox News website.

² Exit polling in 31 of the states included the Hispanic demographic. In 14 of the states the exit polling displayed the crosstab of the Hispanic vote in the Presidential elections. The crosstab for the Senate vote was displayed 12 states. The states for which we have complete Hispanic vote data for the Presidential elections in both 2008 and 2012 is 9; we have Hispanic Senate vote data for both 08 and 12 in only 2 states.

New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin	Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont, Virginia, Washington	
---	---	--

What is interesting is that turnout declined in a couple of key swing states (CO, NW), and increased in some very large reliably Democratic states (CA, IL, NY); in fact the largest increases were in these three states (New York +7, Illinois +5, California +4); a little rough math shows that of the total increase in Hispanic voting roughly 1/2 came from these three states and roughly 1/5th came from California alone. Key swing states where the Hispanic vote shares increased by more than 1% were limited to Florida, Nevada and Wisconsin. In the most crucial state, Ohio, the Hispanic vote share declined by 1%.

- ✓ Hispanic voting for Romney varied considerably as well. His highest vote share from Hispanics was in Ohio (42%), followed by Florida (39%) and Michigan (34%). Other states with above average vote shares for Romney were Wisconsin, Virginia, North Carolina and New Mexico. The average vote share in the 7 key swing states for which the exit polling reported the Hispanic vote was 32%. The average Romney share of the Hispanic vote in the remaining states was 23%³.

Looking at the change since '08 the picture is also muddier. Nationally Romney got 5% fewer votes from Hispanics than McCain did. But Romney did make some gains compared to McCain as well. In California he got 8% more than McCain did, and in Nevada he got 5% more. His greatest losses were in Pennsylvania (-10) and Illinois (-5). He lost ground by smaller margins in Colorado (-4) and Florida (-3).

- ✓ With regard to voting in Senate races there is too little data to make the comparisons to '08; in new Mexico the Hispanic vote share going to the Republican candidates was stable (30% in '08 and 32% in '12); in Virginia the Hispanic vote share for the Republican candidate increased by 10% (from 28% to 38%). As pointed out earlier the national exit polls showed that Hispanic voting in Senate races changed relatively little⁴. In the state exit polling in '08, in the 4 states where Hispanic voting was reported the average vote share of Republicans was 32%; in the 12 states reported in '12 the average Republican vote share among Hispanics was 28%. This is of course an apples to oranges comparison because both the states and the candidates were different, but it does not appear that dramatic shifting took place. On the other hand it is fair to say that in 2012 there was a considerable amount of variability in the Republican candidate's share of votes across states, ranging from a low of 10% in the New York Senate race and 21% in Pennsylvania to highs of 42% in Ohio and 38% in Virginia.

To summarize: Yes Hispanic voting increased substantially and is likely to continue to do so. However, it did not increase uniformly, and most of the increase did not occur in the key swing states. Additionally the Hispanic preferences in the Presidential elections were not distributed evenly: On average Romney did 9% better in the contested swing states than in uncontested races. If Hispanics shifted to the Democrats in 2012 Senate races then the size of the shift was relatively small.

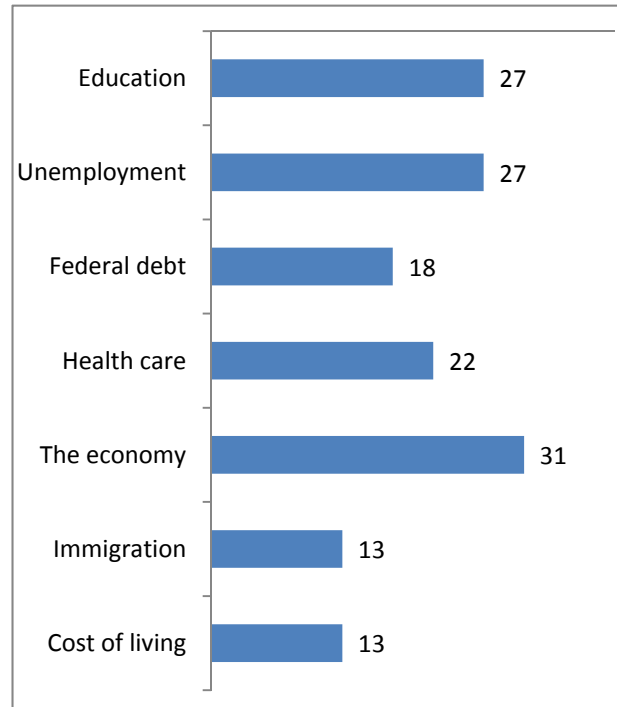
³ This is the average of the percentages across the states, I did not adjust for population size.

⁴ Earlier we mentioned the voting in Senate races reported nationally. The figures in this paragraph are based on state by state polling.

Issues

Most of the post-election coverage of Hispanic issues addressed the immigration issue, linking Romney's immigration position to his poor performance compared the McCain in '08 and even more so to Bush in '04. There is a lot that is right about this, but this also misses a lot. Specifically:

- ✓ In a survey of Texas Hispanics conducted in July, immigration ranked 5th in order of priority. This is not to say it is not an important issue in the Hispanic community, the point is simply that Hispanics attach importance to a lot of issues in addition to the immigration issue. Put differently, even if Republicans 'fixed' their 'immigration problem' it would not be sufficient to significantly increase the Republican vote share from Hispanics. Unless Republicans address issues like the economy, jobs and education few Hispanics will pay attention. As the chart indicates, even the federal debt is a higher priority to Hispanics than immigration is⁵.



- ✓ Hispanics support most immigration policies proposed by Republicans, but with some vital exceptions, including deportation of illegals, path to citizenship and in-state college tuition rates. Specifically, border security is a high priority to Hispanics. In our survey of Texas Hispanics last July 76% supported increasing border patrols.
 - Tone and communications is very important in this arena. Harsh Republican rhetoric offends all Hispanics. We conducted an experiment two years ago, in which we presented the key components of the Arizona legislation and found that many Hispanics support the parts. But when the whole was presented as 'the Arizona law' Hispanics strongly objected.
- ✓ Hispanics are conservative on a number of issues. A number of polls have shown that Hispanics care more about conservative leaning issues like spending and taxes than about immigration. In focus groups which we

⁵ Resurgent Republic conducted post election interviews with 400 Hispanics in Colorado, Florida, Nevada and New Mexico each and using a different approach found the same thing. Instead of picking their top priorities from a list respondents were asked to rate the priority of each issue individually. Of 6 issues 'immigration' ranked last in each of the 4 states. In Florida for instance 40% picked immigration as extremely important, compared to 'economy and jobs' 78% and 'education' (70%).

conducted with Hispanics in San Antonio earlier this month a lot of time was spent discussing welfare abuse and the cost of sending a kid to college⁶.

- ✓ Republicans have a very significant image problem among Hispanics⁷. It is the same problem as we have with other groups: we are seen as the party of the rich which does not care about the middle class or lower income families. In the focus groups just mentioned this was the principal topic of conversation when we enquired about Hispanics' views of the Republican Party and why they had voted against Romney. In addition:
 - Republicans are the party of white people, they do not care about Hispanics, and many Republicans are anti-immigrant.
 - Republicans 'don't get it', they are out of touch and don't understand what Hispanics have to deal with in their daily lives.
 - Republicans are too conservative and only say 'no', they don't contribute solutions.
- ✓ It is not necessarily about issues, it is about showing up. In the groups we just mentioned respondents made it very clear that they hardly ever hear from Republicans or see Republicans in their community. They see Democrats all the time. Also, Hispanics have historically thought of themselves as Democrats. When people show up to register Hispanics they represent the Democratic Party, not the Republican Party. When we asked group participants what their advice to Republicans would be it included: being more visible in the Hispanic community and integrating the party, showing more Hispanic faces.

To Summarize: Immigration is important, but passing immigration reform is not enough; Republicans need to address other issues as well, including the economy and education. On a bigger scale, issues are not enough; unless Republicans fix their image problem and start showing up, become more visible in the Hispanic community, we won't significantly increase our vote share. If we do, there lots of conservative issues Republicans will find common ground with among Hispanic voters.

Tidbits:

Finally here are some points drawn from a variety of data sources related to practical campaigning. In no particular order:

- ✓ Most Hispanics prefer English language media sources over Spanish language sources. Most Hispanics prefer to discuss politics in English rather than Spanish.
- ✓ This is not to say that Hispanics don't want to see Spanish faces and hear Spanish sounding voices. In fact in one ad test one of the spokespersons was panned by the audience because he did not sound Spanish enough; the audience wanted to see spokespersons who had a stronger Hispanic intonation and a recognizable / typical Hispanic life story.
- ✓ Not all Hispanics are the same, some are more likely to vote Republican than others. National differences have been well documented. In addition education and income are important predictors.

⁶ Some commentators point to the abortion issue arguing that as Catholics Hispanics are social conservatives. There is some evidence that Pentecostal Hispanics vote Republican on social conservative grounds, but there is no evidence that the majority of Catholic Hispanics do so.

⁷ Resurgent Republic reports that majorities of Hispanics believe 'the Republican Party does not respect the values and concerns of the Hispanic community'

- ✓ Hispanics consider themselves moderates. As a group they are to the left of the country as a whole because few Hispanics think of themselves as conservatives, while the majority of Hispanics feels they are moderates.
- ✓ One area of common ground is small business. Many Hispanics are small business persons and Hispanics as a whole recognize that that is the case. In advertising testing we got a good positive response to Hispanic small business persons as spokespersons.
- ✓ Hispanic surnamed Republican candidates do matter. In a precinct analysis of the 2008 and 2010 elections in Texas we found that Hispanic Republicans in Supreme Court races received a vote share that was 8% larger than non-Hispanic Republicans. Abel Maldonado in his 2012 race for Congress outpolled Romney among Hispanics by 10%.