



**Making More Voices Heard:  
Latino Media Access, Congressional Misrepresentation and  
Political Polarization on Immigration Reform**

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## **1. Introduction**

In 2011, public trust in the US government fell to an all time low, and it has remained near that historic low point ever since.<sup>1</sup> There are many forces driving the public's anger, but the impact of increasing political polarization in Washington---and in the electorate---cannot be understated. The byproduct of this polarization is a widening gulf between congressional representatives' beliefs and those of a large swath of their districts' residents. Nowhere is this more evident than in districts that have large Latino populations, but are represented by policy makers who support anti-immigrant positions. The NAID Center has been engaged in an ongoing study exploring whether increased access to information networks is the key to overcoming this polarization, and the political marginalization of Latinos that both grows from and reinforces it.<sup>2</sup> This report continues this effort with focus on the link between access to Spanish-language media and political participation. Specifically, we have found a strong correlation between increased access to Spanish-language media and greater levels of political engagement as well as more widespread access to the political process. This is especially true of congressional districts in which elected officials neither represent nor support the interests of their Latino constituents.

A close analysis of these districts reveals a number of telling trends in two major areas:

### **1) Latino Political Representation**

- Democrat and Republican lawmakers represent a relatively similar number of congressional districts that are contested and have large Latino populations (from this point on when we refer to either districts or congressional districts, we are referring to districts that match this definition.). Currently, Republicans represent sixteen of these districts while Democrats represent twelve.
- Prior to the 2014 election, both parties represented two contested districts in which a decisive majority of the population is Latino. Republicans now represent all four.
- In congressional districts that are represented by Republicans, smaller shares of Latinos are eligible to vote on average compared to districts represented by Democrats. The average share of Latinos who are eligible to vote is 45.5% in Republican held districts, and 46.7% in districts represented by Democrats.
- More strikingly, 92% of districts represented by Democrats have Latino populations in which more than 40% of the community is eligible to vote, while only 75% of republican districts meet this standard. The share of Latinos that are eligible to vote is over 45% in two-thirds of districts represented by Democrats. The same is true in only 56% of the

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<sup>1</sup> "Public Trust in Government: 1958-2014." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (November 2014): Accessed September 29th, 2015, <http://www.people-press.org/2014/11/13/public-trust-in-government/>

<sup>2</sup> Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda, "Beyond Trump and the Immigration Stalemate: How Big Media Corporation Limit Latino News Access and Support Anti-Immigrant Politicians who Misinform their Constituents," UCLA North American Integration and Development Center, Los Angeles, CA (July 2015): Accessed September 29th, 2015, [http://www.naid.ucla.edu/uploads/4/2/1/9/4219226/trump\\_absolute\\_final.pdf](http://www.naid.ucla.edu/uploads/4/2/1/9/4219226/trump_absolute_final.pdf)

districts that are represented by Republicans.

- In every district represented by a Republican, the number of Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) is equal to more than 3% of that district's turnout in the 2014 election. This is significant because we defined competitive districts as those in which neither party had more than a 3% advantage in the Cook Partisan Voter Index (see section 2).
- There are five republican held districts in which the LPR population is equal to 10% of that district's turnout in the 2014 election. In one of those districts, Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup>, the number of LPRs was equivalent to 34.3% of turnout in that years election. In 2014, the Republican challenger defeated the district's Democratic incumbent by only 2,422 votes.

## **2) Latino Media Access**

- There is a positive correlation between the Latino share of television subscriptions in a congressional district and the share of Latinos that are eligible to vote in that district.
- Prior to the 2014 elections, there were on average over 7,000 more Latino television subscriptions in congressional districts represented by Democrats than in those represented by Republicans---50,743 compared to 43,450.
- There is limited choice in Spanish-language news in some of the Republican held districts. In Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup> district, there were more than 75,500 households who subscribe to pay-tv but do not have access to Spanish-news on MundoMax and more than 37,800 households that do not have access to Spanish-language news on Estrella TV.
- In Colorado's 6<sup>th</sup> district, there were more than 36,000 households who subscribe to pay-tv but do not have access to Spanish-news on MundoMax and more than 23,300 households that do not have access to Spanish-language news on Estrella TV.
- Considering the number of Latino households that have limited choices in Spanish-language news, if increased choice leads to even marginal increases in naturalization or Latino turnout, it would likely swing elections in favor of pro-immigrant candidates.
- Mike Coffman, the Republican who represents Colorado's 6<sup>th</sup> district won election by only 7,001 votes in 2012. As noted above, Will Hurd, the Republican who represents Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup> district, won election by only 2,422 votes in 2014.
- Republicans representing the districts examined in this report overwhelmingly voted for anti-immigrant legislation. This includes Republican representatives whose districts are majority Latino. On the other hand, Democrats representing the districts we studied voted consistently for pro-immigrant legislation.

This data should be of particular interest to political operatives gearing up for the 2016 elections. It makes clear that in contested districts---in which a few thousands votes could be the difference

between victory and defeat---there are hundreds of thousands of potential Latino voters whose representative could not represent their interests less. In addition, this data highlights a specific subset of residents who have the ability to remake their districts into ones that consistently elect representatives who support progressive immigration policy. These residents are Latinos who are LPRs and who, because they have not pursued the naturalization process, are ineligible to vote.

Immigrant advocates, their allies, and progressive political operatives should mobilize their resources in order to encourage naturalization nationally. However, there should also be a specific focus on swing congressional districts in which there are Latino communities with low rates of voter eligibility. We believe that encouraging access to Spanish-language media, and to greater choice in Spanish-language news, presents a viable avenue for achieving this goal. A significant body of scholarship has shown that Spanish-Language media is instrumental in encouraging political engagement and naturalization. This is further supported by the positive correlation we found between the Latino share of pay-tv subscribers and the share of Latinos who are eligible to vote in these districts.

This study will first identify and map the demographics of contested congressional districts with large Latino populations. Our demographic analysis will focus on Latino enfranchisement and political engagement in districts represented by pro and anti-immigrant lawmakers. We will then discuss the relationship between naturalization and Spanish-language media, highlighting the Spanish-language media's ability to encourage and facilitate naturalization. We will conclude with an examination of the political and policy landscape in these districts. This section will begin with the immigration related voting record of both Republican and Democratic lawmakers. With those voting records in mind we will return to the question of naturalization and examine the potential impact of greater Latino enfranchisement on future elections.

## **2. Heavily Latino Swing Districts: Who Lives and Votes in Them?**

Understanding the impact that even a slight increase in naturalization would have on the 2016 elections requires identifying the congressional districts that are most likely to be impacted. We identified these districts by cross-referencing the Latino share of congressional districts' total population and the voting habits of those district's constituents. For the former metric we used Pew Research Center data,<sup>3</sup> and for the latter we used the 2014 Cook Political Report Partisan Voter Index (CPVI). The CPVI is a metric used to illustrate the partisan makeup of a congressional district and to draw comparisons between districts by, "[measuring] how each district performs at the presidential level compared to the nation as a whole."<sup>4</sup> We set our threshold for a significant Latino population at 10% of the total. We defined swing districts conservatively and set our threshold at +/- 3 in the CPVI. That is to say these districts were within 3 percentage points of the share of total votes received by each party's presidential nominee in the 2012 election.

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Hugo Lopez, Jens Manuel Krogstad, Eileen Patton, and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera. "Latino Voters and the 2014 Midterm Elections." Pew Research Centers Hispanic Trends Project, Washington, D.C. (October 2014): Accessed August 31<sup>st</sup> 2015, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2014/10/16/latino-voters-and-the-2014-midterm-elections/>

<sup>4</sup> David Wasserman, "Introducing the 2014 Cook Political Report Partisan Voter Index." The Cook Political Report, Washington, D.C. (April 2013): Accessed September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015, <http://cookpolitical.com/story/5604>.

**Table 1**

**Swing Congressional Districts in which Latino Share of Population is Above 10%**

State	Congressional District	Latino Share of Total Population	Congressional Representative	CPVI
CA	21	72.7%	David Valadao (R)	D+2
FL	27	72.0%	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R)	R+2
TX	23	68.9%	Will Hurd (R)	R+3
FL	26	68.5%	Carlos Curbelo (R)	R+1
CA	10	41.2%	Jeff Denham (R)	R+1
CA	25	37.9%	Steve Knight (R)	R+3
AZ	2	26.2%	Martha McSally (R)	R+3
NY	2	22.1%	Peter King (R)	R+1
CO	6	20.1%	Mike Coffman (R)	D+1
NV	3	16.6%	Joe Heck (R)	EVEN
NY	11	15.6%	Dan Donovan (R)	R+2
NJ	2	15.3%	Frank LoBiondo (R)	D+1
PA	15	14.0%	Charlie Dent (R)	R+2
NY	1	12.7%	Lee Zeldin (R)	R+2
VA	10	12.2%	Barbara Comstock (R)	R+2
WA	8	10.8%	Dave Reichert (R)	R+1
CA	36	46.5%	Raul Ruiz (D)	R+1
CA	3	28.4%	John Garamendi (D)	D+3
AZ	9	27.4%	Kyrsten Sinema (D)	R+1
FL	22	21.7%	Lois Frankel (D)	D+3
NY	4	18.8%	Kathleen Rice (D)	D+3
CT	5	16.6%	Elizabeth Esty (D)	D+3
CA	7	16.2%	Ami Bera (D)	EVEN
OR	5	15.9%	Kurt Schrader (D)	EVEN
NY	18	15.3%	Sean Patrick Maloney (D)	EVEN
FL	18	14.9%	Patrick Murphy (D)	R+3
CA	52	13.7%	Scott Peters (D)	D+2
NY	3	10.3%	Steve Israel (D)	EVEN

We identified twenty-eight congressional districts that met these criteria, of which Republicans represent sixteen (see Table 1). In the 2016 elections, a slight increase in Latino voting eligibility and voter turnout could lead to victory by Democratic candidates in any or all of these districts. Such an outcome would have major implications for the balance of power on Capitol Hill and this should encourage political operatives to focus their resources on these districts' Latino communities. The political importance of Congressional Districts with large Latino populations is further illuminated by the fact that in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress there were an additional eleven House seats held by Republicans who represent congressional districts that have a large Latino

populations and a CPVI of either R+4 or R+5.<sup>5</sup> When one considers that the Democrats would need to win thirty seats to reclaim the House majority, and twenty-seven Republican held seats are in swing districts with sizable Latino populations, the impetus for a renewed focus on Latino voters becomes clear. This is all the more true during a presidential election cycle that promises to feature a lively debate on the topic of immigration reform.

**Table 2**

**Demographic Analysis of Congressional Districts**

State	Congressional District	Representative	Latino Share of Total Population	Share of Latino Population that is Eligible to Vote
CA	21	David Valadao (R)	72.7%	35.9%
FL	27	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R)	72.0%	51.2%
<b>TX</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Will Hurd (R)</b>	<b>68.9%</b>	<b>54.1%</b>
<b>FL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Carlos Curbelo (R)</b>	<b>68.5%</b>	<b>56.6%</b>
CA	10	Jeff Denham (R)	41.2%	43.8%
CA	25	Steve Knight (R)	37.9%	45.2%
<b>AZ</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Martha McSally (R)</b>	<b>26.2%</b>	<b>55.1%</b>
NY	2	Peter King (R)	22.1%	40.3%
CO	6	Mike Coffman (R)	20.1%	39.2%
NV	3	Joe Heck (R)	16.6%	51.3%
NY	11	Dan Donovan (R)	15.6%	53.2%
NJ	2	Frank LoBiondo (R)	15.3%	46.6%
PA	15	Charlie Dent (R)	14.0%	51.6%
<b>NY</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Lee Zeldin (R)</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>40.7%</b>
VA	10	Barbara Comstock (R)	12.2%	30.1%
WA	8	Dave Reichert (R)	10.8%	33.3%
CA	36	Raul Ruiz (D)	46.5%	41.4%
CA	3	John Garamendi (D)	28.4%	43.8%
AZ	9	Kyrsten Sinema (D)	27.4%	46.2%
FL	22	Lois Frankel (D)	21.7%	45.7%
NY	4	Kathleen Rice (D)	18.8%	41.8%
CT	5	Elizabeth Esty (D)	16.6%	51.5%
CA	7	Ami Bera (D)	16.2%	51.4%
OR	5	Kurt Schrader (D)	15.9%	31.7%
NY	18	Sean Patrick Maloney (D)	15.3%	49.0%
FL	18	Patrick Murphy (D)	14.9%	46.7%
CA	52	Scott Peters (D)	13.7%	63.4%
NY	3	Steve Israel (D)	10.3%	47.8%

A demographic analysis of these contested seats revealed relative partisan parity in the distribution of Latino concentrations across districts prior to the 2014 elections. The republican “wave” of that year somewhat eroded that parity, but it also highlighted congressional districts

<sup>5</sup> “Partisan Voting Index Districts of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.” Cook Political Report, Washington, D.C. (2013): Accessed September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015, <http://cookpolitical.com/file/2013-04-49.pdf>

that should receive increased attention from progressive immigration reform advocates and the democratic party's political operatives. The House seats that the republicans gained in 2014 are bolded in table 2.

We placed the districts controlled by each party into one of three categories---majority Latino, twenty percent to near-majority Latino, and less than twenty percent Latino---and found a clear pattern. Before the 2014 elections, both parties controlled two seats in swing districts in which Latinos are a decisive majority---California's 21<sup>st</sup> District and Florida's 27<sup>th</sup> for the Republicans, Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup> and Florida's 26<sup>th</sup> for the Democrats. Republicans gained control of both latter districts in 2014. Both parties had a similar number of seats in contested districts in which Latinos represent between twenty-percent and one-half of the population. The Republicans controlled four seats in this category prior to 2014---California's 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> districts, as well as New Yorks' 2<sup>nd</sup> and Colorado's 6<sup>th</sup>. The Democrats controlled five---California's 36<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> districts, Arizona's 9<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> districts and Florida's 22<sup>nd</sup>. The republicans gained control of Arizona's second district in 2014. The Republicans now also control seven swing districts in which the Latino share of the population is between ten and twenty percent, while Democrats control eight.

The distribution of Latino concentration between the districts each party represents may be similar, but the Latino population in Republican held districts has a greater level of political disenfranchisement. On average, the Latino share of the total population is much higher in the Republican held districts we examined---especially after 2014. Before that year's elections it was 29.2% in Republican held districts compared to 26.4% for districts represented by Democrats. The average is now 32.9% in Republican districts and 19.7% in Democratic districts. However, the average share of the Latino population that is eligible to vote is smaller in Republican districts---45.5% compared to 46.7% for the Democrats. More tellingly, the share of the Latino population that is eligible to vote is over 40% in all but one of the districts with a Democratic representative, but there are four Republican held districts in which this is not the case. The share of the Latino population that is eligible to vote is over two-thirds in democrat held districts, while this is true in only 56% of districts represented by Republicans.

### **3. Spanish-Language Media and Expanding Latino Enfranchisement**

The degree of difference between the Latino community's political enfranchisement in districts represented by Democrats and in districts represented by Republicans suggests that increased political participation would affect election outcomes. For proponents of progressive immigration reform, the question becomes how to include more Latinos in the political process. Accomplishing this goal requires differentiating between foreign-born Latinos who are ineligible to vote because they are undocumented immigrants and those who are ineligible to vote because they are Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs). This is an important distinction because the latter category has the option of applying for naturalization, and would gain the right to vote upon completion of that process. LPRs choose not to apply for citizenship for any number of reasons, but since they are choosing not to pursue the right to vote in US elections, one can assume some level of apathy towards American politics. Latino political enfranchisement is therefor linked with political engagement, and any effort to increase voter eligibility must also focus on

increasing interest in policy and politics. In this regard, the media, and specifically the Spanish-language media, has an important role to play.

Increased naturalization rates would have a profound impact on election results in the congressional districts we examined. Every single congressional district represented by a Republican has a Latino LPR population that is greater than three percent of the total voter turnout in 2014 (see table 3). This is significant because our threshold for determining a swing district was a CPVI that was +/- three percent. Therefore, even in the Republican held congressional district that are home to the fewest LPRs, full naturalization would add enough potential voters to swing an election. At the other end of the spectrum, the LPR population is equal to 34.3% of the turnout in California's 21<sup>st</sup> district. In this district it would take only a small increase in naturalizations to have an impact on future elections.

**Table 3**

**LPRs as share of Turnout**

State	Congressional District	Representative	Latino LPRs	Election Turnout in 2014	LPRs as Percentage of Turnout
FL	27	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R)*	56,813	276,440	20.6%
FL	26	Carlos Curbelo (R)	40,545	161,337	25.1%
CA	21	David Valadao (R)	27,264	79,377	34.3%
TX	23	Will Hurd (R)	16,401	115,429	14.2%
NY	2	Peter King (R)	13,157	139,272	9.4%
NY	11	Dan Donovan (R)†	12,608	106,817	11.8%
CO	6	Mike Coffman (R)	12,266	276,440	4.4%
CA	10	Jeff Denham (R)	11,732	125,705	9.3%
VA	10	Barbara Comstock (R)	11,578	222,910	5.2%
WA	8	Dave Reichert (R)**	10,890	198,744	5.5%
NY	1	Lee Zeldin (R)	9,072	172,757	5.3%
CA	25	Steve Knight (R)	8,640	114,072	7.6%
NJ	2	Frank LoBiondo (R)	7,798	177,148	4.4%
AZ	2	Martha McSally (R)	7,728	219,351	3.5%
NV	3	Joe Heck (R)	6,497	145,719	4.5%
PA	15	Charlie Dent (R)*	4,929	128,285	3.8%

The Republicans also picked up three of these house seats in 2014 by such a narrow margin that even a relatively small number of naturalizations would impact the 2016 elections. In Arizona's 2nd district, the Republican Martha McSally received 161 more votes than the incumbent



Democrat Ron Barber.<sup>6</sup> That district is home to more 7,700 Latino LPRs. In Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup> district, home to more than 16,000 Latino LPRs, Will Hurd defeated the Democratic incumbent Pete P. Gallego by a margin of only 2,422 votes.<sup>7</sup> More than 40,500 Latino LPRs live in Florida's 26<sup>th</sup> district. In 2014, Republican Carlos Curbelo won election in that district with 4,725 more votes than Democratic incumbent Joe Garcia.<sup>8</sup>

The media, and particularly Spanish-language media, can be very effective in encouraging LPRs to pursue naturalization. Both academic and government researchers have observed the influence of Spanish-language media on naturalization rates. In their article, *Groundswell Meets Groundwork: Building on the Mobilizations to Empower Immigrant Communities*, Tim Wang and Robert C. Winn write that, "Spanish-language television, radio, and newspaper outlets in eleven states actively promote citizenship and...Data from the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services indicate that such a program was highly effective".<sup>9</sup>

Our research supports this claim. We found a positive correlation between Hispanic television access and the share of Latinos that are eligible to vote. We also found that significantly more Latino households had access to television in the congressional districts were held by Democratic lawmakers prior to the 2014 elections. This dynamic changed with the Republican party's victories in two districts whose Latino populations are both nearly 70% of the total. However, this also means that Spanish-language media can have an outsized effect in both districts' 2016 elections. At the same time, stakeholders interested in encouraging political inclusion in the Latino community, and in enacting progressive immigration reform, should also push for increased access to Spanish-language media as it has to potential to help actualize both of these objectives.

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<sup>6</sup> Karen L. Haas, "Statistics of the Congressional Election November 4, 2014." Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington D.C. (March, 2015): Accessed September 2<sup>nd</sup>  
[http://clerk.house.gov/member\\_info/electionInfo/2014/114-statistics.pdf](http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/2014/114-statistics.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Haas, "Congressional Election."

<sup>8</sup> Haas, "Congressional Election."

<sup>9</sup> Ted Wang and Robert C. Winn, "Groundswell Meets Groundwork: Building on the Mobilizations to Empower Immigrant Communities," in *Rallying for Immigrant Rights: The Fight for Inclusion in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America*, ed. Irene Bloemraad and Kim Voss (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 55.

**Table 4**

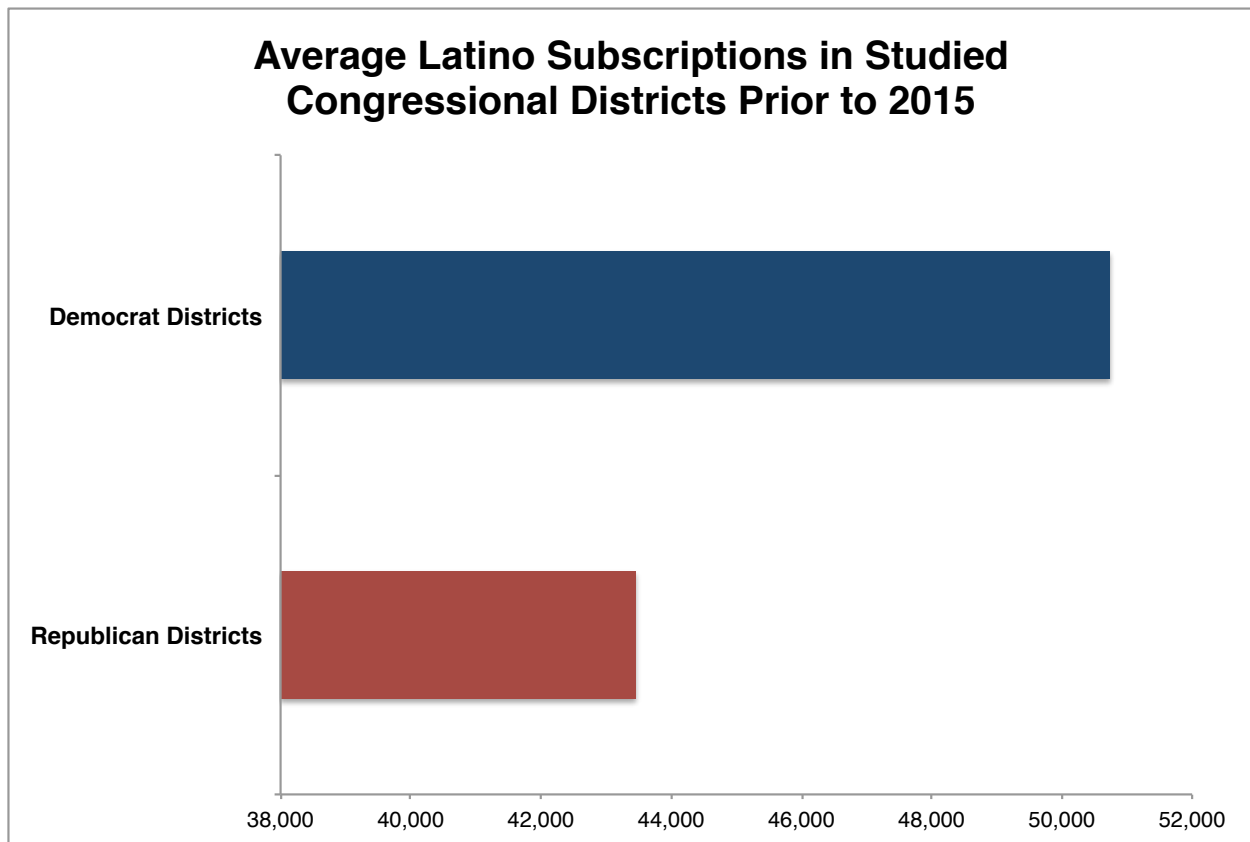
**Latino Voter Eligibility and TV Subscription Rates**

State	Congressional District	Representative	Latino Share of Total Population	Latino Share of Total TV Subscribers*	Share of Latino Population that is Eligible to Vote
CA	21	David Valadao (R)	72.7%	43%	35.9%
FL	27	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R)	72.0%	50%	51.2%
TX	23	Will Hurd (R)	68.9%	49%	54.1%
FL	26	Carlos Curbelo (R)	68.5%	50%	56.6%
CA	10	Jeff Denham (R)	41.2%	18%	43.8%
CA	25	Steve Knight (R)	37.9%	32%	45.2%
AZ	2	Martha McSally (R)	26.2%	27%	55.1%
NY	2	Peter King (R)	22.1%	19%	40.3%
CO	6	Mike Coffman (R)	20.1%	13%	39.2%
NV	3	Joe Heck (R)	16.6%	21%	51.3%
NY	11	Dan Donovan (R)	15.6%	19%	53.2%
NJ	2	Frank LoBiondo (R)	15.3%	8%	46.6%
PA	15	Charlie Dent (R)	14.0%	7%	51.6%
NY	1	Lee Zeldin (R)	12.7%	19%	40.7%
VA	10	Barbara Comstock (R)	12.2%	10%	30.1%
WA	8	Dave Reichert (R)	10.8%	8%	33.3%
CA	36	Raul Ruiz (D)	46.5%	27%	41.4%
CA	3	John Garamendi (D)	28.4%	17%	43.8%
AZ	9	Kyrsten Sinema (D)	27.4%	19%	46.2%
FL	22	Lois Frankel (D)	21.7%	30%	45.7%
NY	4	Kathleen Rice (D)	18.8%	19%	41.8%
CT	5	Elizabeth Esty (D)	16.6%	11%	51.5%
CA	7	Ami Bera (D)	16.2%	18%	51.4%
OR	5	Kurt Schrader (D)	15.9%	8%	31.7%
NY	18	Sean Patrick Maloney (D)	15.3%	19%	49.0%
FL	18	Patrick Murphy (D)	14.9%	17%	46.7%
CA	52	Scott Peters (D)	13.7%	24%	63.4%
NY	3	Steve Israel (D)	10.3%	19%	47.8%

NAID Center analysis of proprietary media company data revealed that Latinos' access to television and their rates of political inclusion are positively correlated. The proprietary data listed total pay-tv subscriptions by media market---also known as Designated Media Area or DMA---as well as the number of subscriptions paid for by Hispanic consumers. The Daily Kos

maintains a database that distributes DMA populations into congressional districts.<sup>10</sup> Using these tools we were able to estimate the Latino share of pay-tv subscriptions in each congressional district and compare that with the share of the Latino population that is eligible to vote. We found that the two statistics had a positive correlation of .3692.

**Figure 1**



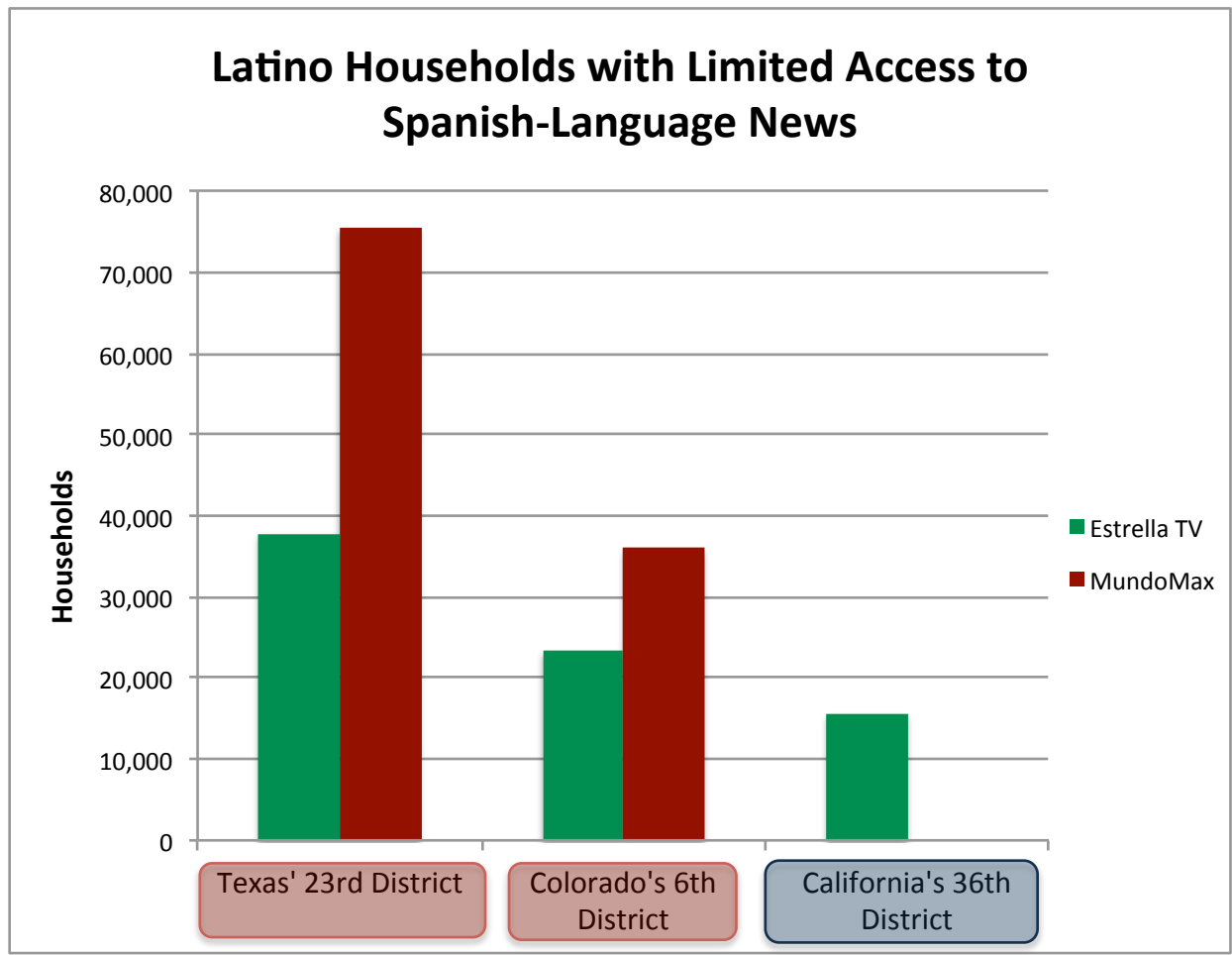
Our analysis of proprietary media data also revealed that, prior to the 2014 elections, there were on average significantly more Latino pay-tv subscriptions in congressional districts represented by Democratic lawmakers. We found that congressional districts represented by Democrats had an average of 50,743 Latino subscribers, while districts represented by Republicans had only 43,450. This changed after republican victories in Texas’ 23<sup>rd</sup> district and Florida’s 26<sup>th</sup>, both of which have a population that is just under 70% Latino and high Hispanic subscription rates. However, two things that did not change are the correlation between Latino television access and political inclusion as well as the correlation between Latino political inclusion and the election of democrats to the House of Representatives. As noted above, the republican representatives from

<sup>10</sup>David Jarman, “Elections Congressional District/Media Market Relationships Database” distributed by Daily Kos Elections, Accessed August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IJiPZV5alZwrfxjEejWFqDm6SUGSMYa2RdobFX17jJE/edit#gid=1221557480>

both districts won by a very narrow margin, and considering the relatively high level of Hispanic media access, Spanish-language television has the potential to have an outsized impact in these districts in 2016. Democratic political operatives should take note and include a plan to better leverage media, and specifically Spanish-language media, in order to retake these districts in 2016.

Working to expand choice in Spanish-language media will help leverage this media in order to impact elections. Our research shows a positive correlation between the availability of Spanish-language media choices and the election of pro-immigrant candidates. In addition, our research has shown that the number of Latinos with limited Spanish-language media choices dwarfs the margin of victory in Republican held districts. Therefore, if increased choice leads to even marginal increases in naturalization or Latino turnout, it would likely swing the election in favor of pro-immigrant candidates. In order to illustrate this dynamic we will analyze the impact of choice in three districts—Texas’ 23<sup>rd</sup>, Colorado’s 6<sup>th</sup>, and California’s 36<sup>th</sup>. The first two are Republican held districts while a Democrat represents the latter.

**Figure 2**



Texas's 23<sup>rd</sup> District and Colorado's 6<sup>th</sup> are comprised of media markets with a distinct lack of choice in Spanish-Language news coverage, while Latino television subscribers in California's 36<sup>th</sup> have far more access to choice. Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup> district encompasses parts of four DMAs---El Paso, Odessa, San Angelo, and San Antonio. In three of these DMAs, Latino households represent more than forty percent of pay-tv subscribers, and in the El Paso media market they represent over 70 percent. Yet, in all four of these markets, many households lack access to two of the six Spanish-language networks that air news programming. These two networks are MundoMax (formerly MundoFox) and Estrella TV. In Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup> district, according to proprietary industry data examined by the NAID Center, more than 75,500 Latino households subscribe to pay-TV with a television-provider that does not carry MundoMax. More than 37,800 Latino households in the district subscribe to a pay-tv provider that does not carry Estrella TV. Colorado's 6<sup>th</sup> district is within the Denver DMA. Denver is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest Hispanic media market in the country, but MundoMax isn't available on any carrier. In the 6<sup>th</sup> district, more than 23,000 Latino pay-tv subscribers can't watch Estrella TV or its news broadcasts. That is equivalent to 68 percent of all Latino pay-tv subscribers in the district. In comparison, California's 36<sup>th</sup> district is entirely within the Palm Springs DMA, which is only the 48<sup>th</sup> largest Hispanic media market, yet MundoMax is carried on every pay-tv provider. Only a little over 15,600 Latino households with pay-tv subscriptions do not receive Estrella TV.

Among these districts, access to Spanish-language news seems to be a greater determinant of whether residents are represented by a pro-immigrant or anti-immigrant lawmaker than does CPVI. Colorado's 6<sup>th</sup> district leans towards the democrats with CPVI of R+1 while California's 36<sup>th</sup> leans towards the Republicans with a CPVI of D+1. Yet, Republican Mike Coffman represents the 6<sup>th</sup> district and Democrat Raul Ruiz represents the 36<sup>th</sup>. Increased access to choice in Spanish-language news could go a long way towards electing pro-immigrant representatives, which is especially notable in these districts since both Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup> and Colorado's 6<sup>th</sup> are represented by staunchly anti-immigrant lawmakers (see section 4).

The potential impact of increased choice in Spanish-language news in these districts is highlighted by a comparison of the number of Latino households that do not have access to choice in news and anti-immigrant lawmakers margin of victory in past elections. In 2014, Republican Will Hurd, who represents Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup> district, received only 2,422 more votes than Pete Gallego, his pro-immigrant opponent. In 2012, Mike Coffman defeated his democratic opponent by 7,001 votes. Because Colorado's 6<sup>th</sup> district enjoys considerably higher turnout than does Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup>, this margin of victory amounted to only 2%, which is the same margin of victory in terms of percentages as Will Hurd's 2014 effort. Mike Coffman rode the republican wave in 2014 to an easier win---the margin of victory was over 8%---but there tends to be higher Latino turnout in presidential election years. Yet even Coffman's 2014 victory was by less votes than there are Latino households that have limited access to Spanish-language news---24,620 votes compared to more than 36,000 households that do not have access to MundoMax and more than 23,300 households that do not have access to Estrella TV. Considering that these households most likely contain either multiple eligible voters or LPRs, it is likely that increased access would encourage a large enough increase in voter turnout and naturalization to swing the election. This is especially true considering that the 2016 election is a presidential cycle and is more likely to resemble 2012 than 2014. In Texas' 23<sup>rd</sup> district increased choice should have an even greater chance to swing the election considering the difference between

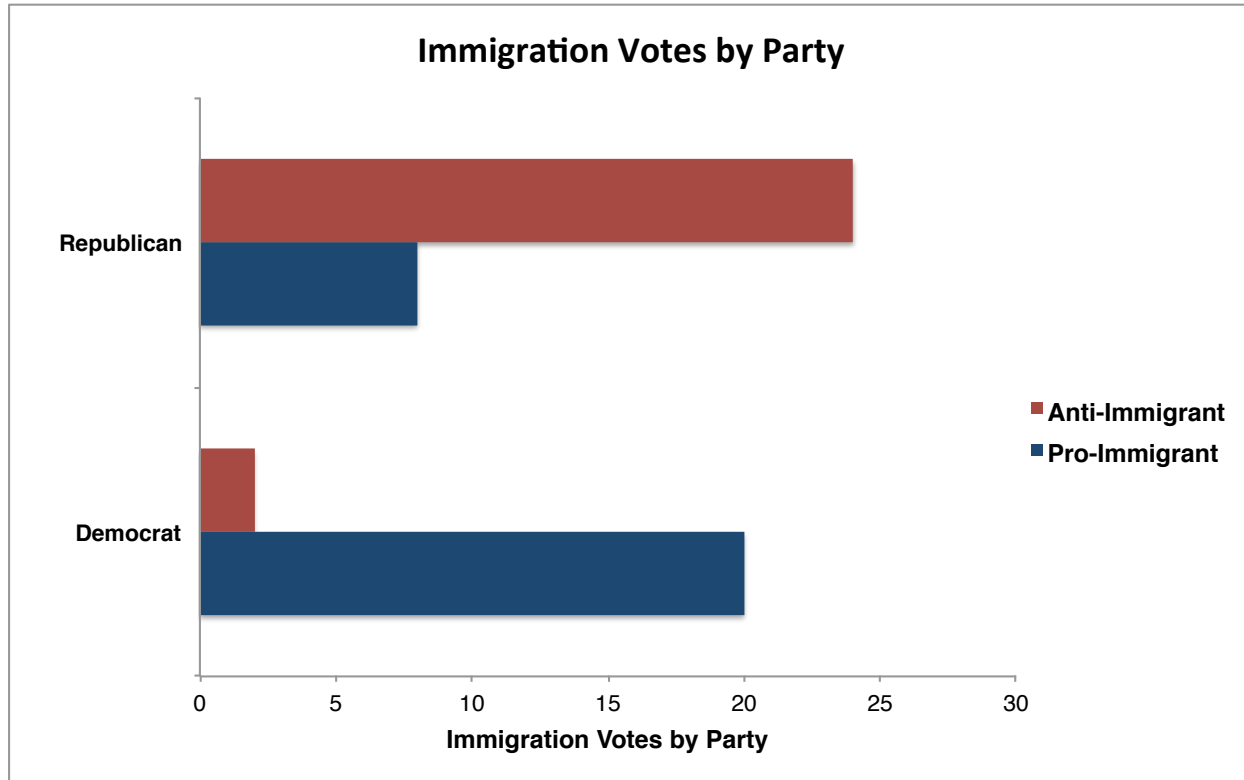
Hurd's slight margin of victory and the overwhelming number of households with limited choice in Spanish-language news---2,422 votes to more than 75,500 households that do not have access to MundoMax and 37,800 households that do not have access to Estrella TV.

More generally, the success or failure of a concerted effort to increase in tandem both access to Spanish-language media and the naturalization rate will have significant implications for the push towards progressive immigration reform. The districts discussed in this report will play a critical role in getting progressive comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) through the House. As discussed in the next section a number of representatives from these districts are already voting against the interest of immigrants and their districts' Latino populations. As things stand now, these representatives would almost certainly not vote for a progressive CIR bill. However, Spanish-language media has the potential to bring attention to these representatives anti-immigrant voting histories, and to put pressure on them to better align their votes with the interests of so many of their district's residents. If they do not, the attention from media outlets can be instrumental in increasing the voter turnout and voter eligibility among stakeholders in immigration reform. While not all of the Latino subscribers are going to be subscribing to a Spanish-language tier it is reasonable to assume that many are. Given that Spanish-language television networks' explicitly encourage naturalization, and the fact that their news coverage encourages greater interest in American politics and policy, these media outlets can be instrumental in holding anti-immigrant policymakers accountable both on the air and at the ballot box. For this reason, progressive political operatives and immigrant advocates should allocate greater time and resources to encouraging Latino media access in the future.

#### **4. Leveraging Media and Naturalization to Push for CIR**

The urgent need for expanding Latino enfranchisement is highlighted by the disconnect between Republican representatives' voting history and the interests and values of a large swath of their district's residents. The NAID Center examined the voting record of the congressmen and women who represent the districts analyzed in this study and found a consistent pattern of anti-immigrant voting by Republican representatives. This pattern held even in districts in which Republican lawmakers represent a population that is majority Latino. On the other hand, the Democrats voted consistently, albeit with a few notable exceptions, for pro-immigrant legislation. Increased naturalization and greater access to Spanish-language media in these, would put pressure on both Republicans and Democrats to better represent the interests of the Latino populations in their districts, and would result in the election defeats of those representatives who refuse to do so.

**Figure 3**



The NAID Center’s analysis of representatives’ immigration-related voting records was conducted within a few important parameters. First, we chose only votes that occurred after congressional redistricting was completed in mid-2012. We examined the representatives’ votes on a number of immigration related measures but chose to focus on two that reached the floor of the House in 2015 and were therefor voted on by the lawmakers who were elected in the 2014 elections. The first vote was on an amendment to the appropriations bill that allocates funding for the Department of Homeland Security. The amendment, H.Amdt.6 to H.R. 240, would have prevented DHS from using those funds to carry out President Obama’s executive actions on immigration.<sup>11</sup> The second vote was on H.R. 3009, also known as the “Enforce the Law for Sanctuary Cities Act.”<sup>12</sup> This act would cut off federal funding to so-called sanctuary cities--- progressive cities that have implemented a variety of policies aimed at better integrating unauthorized immigrants and that do not cooperate with certain controversial DHS programs.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> “House Vote #29 in 2015,” GovTrack, accessed September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/114-2015/h29>

<sup>12</sup> “House Vote #466 in 2015,” GovTrack, accessed September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/114-2015/h466>

<sup>13</sup> Mike DeBonis, “House votes to strip federal funding from ‘sanctuary cities,’” *Washington Post* July 23rd, 2015, accessed September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/house-prepares-to-take-aim-at-sanctuary-city-policies/2015/07/23/24afa5c0-30c7-11e5-97ae-30a30cca95d7\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/house-prepares-to-take-aim-at-sanctuary-city-policies/2015/07/23/24afa5c0-30c7-11e5-97ae-30a30cca95d7_story.html)

**Table 5**

**Representative Voting Records on Immigration**

State	Congressional District	Representative	H.Amdt.6 Cutting Funding for DACA and DAPA	H.R. 3009: Cutting Funding for Sanctuary Cities
CA	21	David Valadao (R)	No	Yes
FL	27	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R)	No	Yes
TX	23	Will Hurd (R)	Yes	Yes
FL	26	Carlos Curbelo (R)	No	No
CA	10	Jeff Denham (R)	No	Yes
CA	25	Steve Knight R	Yes	Yes
AZ	2	Martha McSally R	Yes	Yes
NY	2	Peter King (R)	Yes	No
CO	6	Mike Coffman (R)	Yes	Yes
NV	3	Joe Heck (R)	Yes	Yes
NY	11	Dan Donovan (R)	Yes	No
NJ	2	Frank LoBiondo (R)	Yes	Yes
PA	15	Charlie Dent (R)	Yes	Yes
NY	1	Lee Zeldin (R)	Yes	Yes
VA	10	Barbara Comstock (R)	Yes	Yes
WA	8	Dave Reichert (R)	Yes	No
CA	36	Raul Ruiz (D)	No	No
CA	3	John Garamendi (D)	No Vote	No
AZ	9	Kyrsten Sinema (D)	No	Yes
FL	22	Lois Frankel (D)	No	No
NY	4	Kathleen Rice (D)	No	No
CT	5	Elizabeth Esty (D)	No	No
CA	7	Ami Bera (D)	No	Yes
OR	5	Kurt Schrader (D)	No	No
NY	18	Sean Patrick Maloney (D)	No	No
FL	18	Patrick Murphy (D)	No	No
CA	52	Scott Peters (D)	No	No
NY	3	Steve Israel (D)	No	No Vote

Republican representatives overwhelmingly voted for these two anti-immigrant bills. Of the four Republicans who represent majority Latino districts, only one---Carlos Curbelo---voted against both bills. Two of other three, David Valadao and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, voted against defunding DACA and DAPA, but for defunding sanctuary cities. Will Hurd, the fourth representative, voted for both bills. The rest of the Republican representatives voted for both bills by a collective



18 to 4 count. This is despite the fact that they all represent congressional districts with significant Latino populations. In comparison, the democratic representatives collectively voted against both bills 18 to 2, with one representative not voting on each.

## **5. Conclusion**

The 2016 elections will present a unique opportunity for the Latino community to demonstrate its ascendant political clout. The anti-immigrant rhetoric of nearly the entire field of GOP presidential hopefuls brought the discussion of immigration reform back to the forefront of the political discourse. However, any such reform must begin in a Congress that has recently been defined by its inaction. The 2016 House of Representatives elections will present a key opportunity where a renewed push for immigration reform must begin. The majority of the Republican held districts examined in this report are critical to the success of that effort. The impact of pro-immigrant candidates retaking these districts will be twofold. First, it will demonstrate that policy makers voting against the interests of large swaths of their constituency will not be tolerated, and second, it will provide a clear mandate for pursuing comprehensive immigration reform.

Spanish-language media has the potential to sway these elections. In particular, Spanish-language news both heightens political interest and can encourage greater involvement. The combination of increased Latino naturalization and increased Latino turnout would have a dramatic impact on the political landscape of the districts discussed in this report. Greater access to Spanish-language news generally, and specifically to choice in Spanish-language news, is the key to pro-immigrant candidates reaping these political rewards. Therefore, the array of groups advocating comprehensive immigration reform have a vested interest in encouraging increased access, especially in contested congressional districts. So to do democratic political operatives interested in retaking these swing states. Both groups should focus their attention on the removing the obstacles that prevent so many Latino households from accessing Spanish-language news. The elections are drawing close, and it is time to have a frank discussion about increasing media access, because from this access flows increased political engagement, increased political clout, and ultimately long awaited reform to our broken immigration system.

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