



# Southwest Voter Registration Education Project

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## U.S. Latino Voter Registration Growth Slowed in 2012

18% growth rate lowest since 2000

(Los Angeles, Ca) Last week’s release of the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration in 2012 confirmed the worrisome trend of slowing Latino voter registration growth that SVREP most recently reported in July 2012 ([http://www.svrep.org/files/release\\_120711.pdf](http://www.svrep.org/files/release_120711.pdf)).

“Latino voter registration grew only at 18% in this presidential cycle reaching 13.697 million registered voters by Nov. 2012, comparing unfavorably to rates of Latino growth in recent elections of 24.7% during 2005-08 and 23.4% during 2001-04: 23.4%. The 2009-12 growth rate of Latino voter registration is also below the historic average of 21.0%,” commented Antonio Gonzalez, SVREP president.

### Latino Voter Registration, 1972-2012

Numbers in Thousands

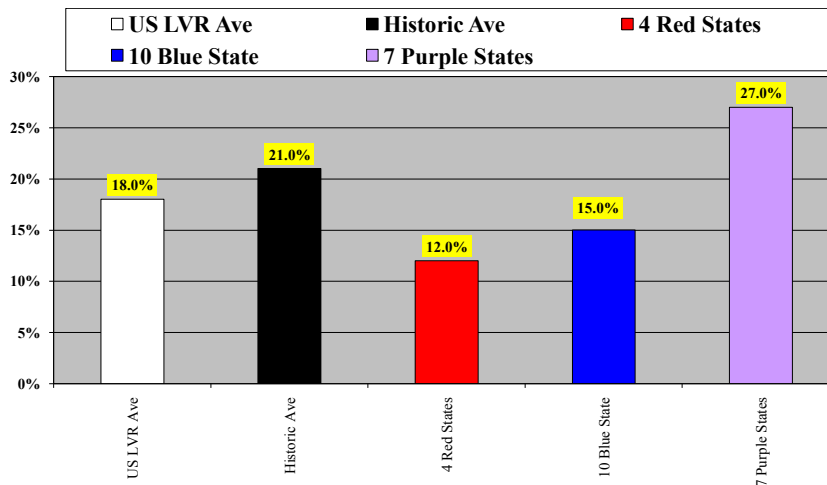
Year	LVR	# Ch	% Ch	Decade Ave
1972	2495	Na	Na	
1976	2494	-1	0.0%	
1980	2984	490	19.6%	9.8%
1984	3794	810	27.1%	
1988	4573	779	20.5%	23.8%
1992	5137	564	12.3%	
1996	6573	1436	28.0%	
2000	7546	973	14.8%	18.4%
2004	9308	1762	23.4%	
2008	11608	2300	24.7%	24.0%
2012	13697	2089	18.0%	

Source: US Census Bureau CPS Voting and Registration Series, 1972-2012

Two factors explain this decline. First, total Latino registration declined by 5% during 2009-10 instead of growing by its normal 5%.

“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) –which we believe is the result of residential dislocation and downward social mobility,” continued Gonzalez.

**21 States with at Least 100,000 Latino Registered Voters,  
Rate of VR Growth, 2008-2012**



Second, subsequent voter mobilization resources in 2011-12 were very focused in presidential swing states. That focus allowed “swing” states to experience significant Latino voter registration growth (27%), while non-swing states experienced resource scarcity and below average growth (15% and 12% respectively),” continued Gonzalez.

As a result divergent growth patterns were apparent at state levels in 2012. Essentially Latino registration was driven upward in purple states, but was under-resourced in red and blue states. The overall result was disappointing Latino registration growth, despite the fact that 10 million Latinos are still unregistered.” said Antonio Gonzalez, SVREP President.

A review of the CPS data showed the Latino vote fell far short of figures quoted by many pundits/advocates, the most noteworthy being Charles Cook’s claim that there were “About 4 million more Latinos are registered to vote this year than in 2008” (Cook Political Report Oct 22, 2012, <http://cookpolitical.com/story/4973>). In fact, the CPS study shows that only half that amount was added to the electorate during 2009-12 (2.089 million).

“SVREP calls for a new commitment on behalf of Latino leaders, especially those in the two major parties, to prioritize Latino empowerment over partisanship. Our community’s needs have to come first and that means we must mobilize resources into all of our states, not just swing states. Remember swing states only account for 17% of Latino voters, while non-swings account for 83% of our vote. If we had been able to resource the Latino vote across states we could have increased our vote by an additional 1-2 million voters,” said Lydia Camarillo, SVREP Vice President.