



## 2010 PRIMARY ELECTION PROFILES

# FLORIDA

## TUESDAY, AUGUST 24

TOTAL POPULATION (2008): 18,328,340

LATINO POPULATION (2008): 3,845,964

In the last three presidential elections, Florida has been a key battleground state with extremely competitive contests that have had a significant impact on the outcome of the presidential race. The Latino vote has played a pivotal role in each of these elections. In November 2000 and 2004, Latino support for President George W. Bush (R) helped him carry the state and garner the Electoral College votes needed for his victories. During the 2008 contest, the Latino vote was particularly critical in helping President Barack Obama (D) win Florida and reverse the Republican trend of the previous two presidential races. According to CNN exit poll data, in the 2008 election, White voters favored Senator John McCain (R-AZ) over Obama by 56%-42%. In contrast, Latino voters supported Obama over McCain by 57%-42%.

### Florida's Latino Population and Electorate

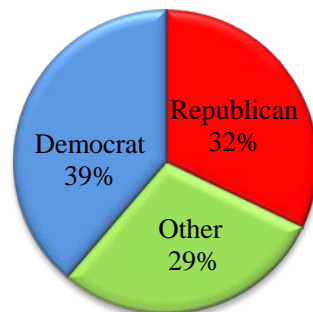
Florida's Latino population has undergone significant demographic and political changes over the last few decades. The state's Cuban-American population, which is concentrated in South Florida, has a tradition of strong Republican affiliation and still wields considerable political influence. In addition to the Latinos of South Florida, the Latinos in Central Florida have emerged as a key electorate. About 946,000 Latinos – or about 25% of the state's Latino population – live in the Orlando and Tampa metropolitan areas. This population includes a significant Puerto Rican population (40%) that tends to affiliate with the Democratic Party. Moreover, in both South and Central Florida, there are growing South American, Central American, Mexican and Dominican populations, as well as a new generation of Cuban Americans. Some of these voters are already affiliated with the Democrats; others are in the process of forming their political allegiances, and are open to appeals by either party.

### **Latino Population in South and Central Florida – 2008**

Latino Population Group	South Florida		Orlando and Tampa Metropolitan Areas	
	Number	Share of total	Number	Share of total
Cuban	887,178	42.3%	103,382	10.9%
Puerto Rican	193,688	9.2%	377,947	39.9%
South American	422,913	20.1%	117,871	12.5%
Mexican	121,885	5.8%	189,211	20.0%
Central American	290,000	13.8%	56,263	5.9%
Dominican	85,146	4.1%	43,423	4.6%
Other Latino	98,524	4.7%	57,986	6.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,099,334</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>946,083</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The demographic changes in Florida's Latino population are reflected in the partisan affiliation of the state's Latino registered voters, who comprise 13% of the state's electorate. According to January 2010 voter file data, Latino Democrats outnumber Latino Republicans, who are still a sizeable portion (32%) of the electorate. About 29% of Florida's Latino registered voters have some other or no partisan affiliation. Thus, candidates from both major political parties have opportunities to win the support of Florida's Latino electorate.

### **Party Affiliation of Florida Latino Registered Voters: January 2010**



### Latino Voters and Florida's Congressional and State Races

Latino voters are also poised to play a decisive role in Florida's November 2010 congressional and statewide races. In the contest for U.S. Senator, the two top frontrunners in November are likely to be former state Speaker of the House Marco Rubio (R) and Governor Charlie Crist (I), who left the Republican Party to run as an Independent. Political observers credit Rubio's growing popularity with Republican voters as a significant factor in Crist's decision to switch political affiliations.

During his campaign, Rubio has taken some controversial positions on issues that affect the Latino community. He supports excluding undocumented immigrants from the decennial Census count for the purposes of determining congressional apportionment. After the enactment of SB 1070, Arizona's anti-immigrant measure, Rubio issued a statement expressing concerns about the challenges the legislation would create for law enforcement officials who might "unreasonably single out people who are here legally, including many American citizens." Media reports say that Rubio later expressed support for the law after it was amended in a manner he believed addressed his concerns. Rubio has also called the U.S. Department of Justice lawsuit against SB 1070 "a waste of resources," and defended Arizona's right to enact measures like SB 1070 because of what he says is the federal government's inability to address the nation's immigration problems.

In contrast, Crist has stated he would not support a measure similar to SB 1070 proposed by Florida Attorney General and gubernatorial candidate Bill McCollum. Crist has cited concerns about racial profiling and the difficulty of enforcing the measure in a fair manner. The NALEO Educational Fund's June 2010 survey of Latino registered voters finds Rubio and Crist in a close contest, with each garnering about 35% of Latino support. The survey also revealed that immigration is the most important issue in determining whom Florida Latinos will vote for in the 2010 general election, which makes the immigration stance of federal and state candidates particularly salient during campaign season.

Latino voters will also play a key role in Florida's open gubernatorial race, which political observers believe will be a close contest. The top contender in the Democratic primary is Florida Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink, and the frontrunners in the Republican primary are McCollum and former health care executive Rick Scott. The NALEO Educational Fund survey (taken before McCollum proposed his anti-immigrant measure) asked respondents their preferences in matchups between Sink and the two Republican candidates. In the Sink-McCollum matchup, respondents favored Sink by 28%-22%. In the Sink-Scott matchup, respondents favored Sink by 33%-19%. In each matchup, about one-quarter of the respondents were undecided.

Another key 2010 contest is taking place in Florida's 25<sup>th</sup> congressional district, which is likely to pit Democrat Joe García against Florida State Representative David Rivera (R). U.S. Rep. Mario Díaz-Balart (R) chose not to run for re-election in the district, seeking instead to pursue the seat in the 21<sup>st</sup> district held by his brother Lincoln, who is retiring from Congress at the end of this term. García, who is former Executive Director of the Cuban American National Foundation and chair of the Miami-Dade County Democratic Party, ran a competitive but unsuccessful challenge against Mario Díaz-Balart in November 2008, and served in the Obama administration before announcing his current run for office.

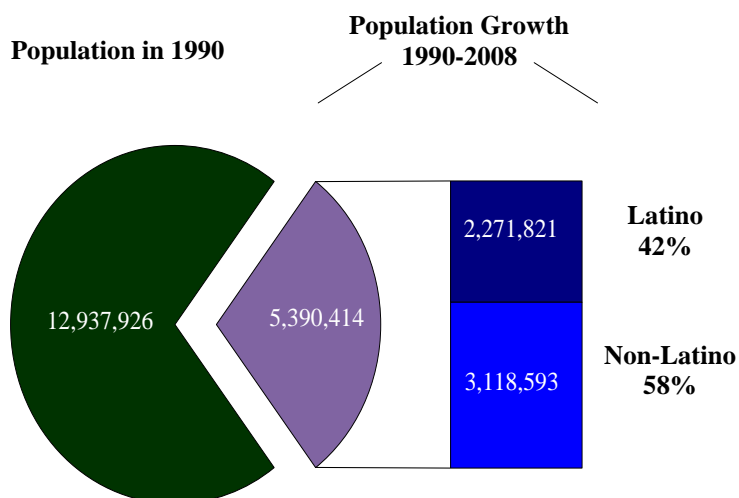
## THE LATINO POPULATION IN FLORIDA

A significant portion of all new Florida residents between 1990 and 2008 were Latino (42%, or 2.3 million of 5.4 million), and growth of the Latino community far exceeded that of non-Latinos. The Latino population increased by 144%, while the non-Latino population increased by 27%.

### Florida's Latino Population: 2008

	Population	% of Total Population
Latinos	3,845,964	21%
Latino Adults	2,834,893	20%
Latino Adult U.S. Citizens	1,845,662	15%

### Florida Population Growth: 1990-2008



## THE LATINO ELECTORATE

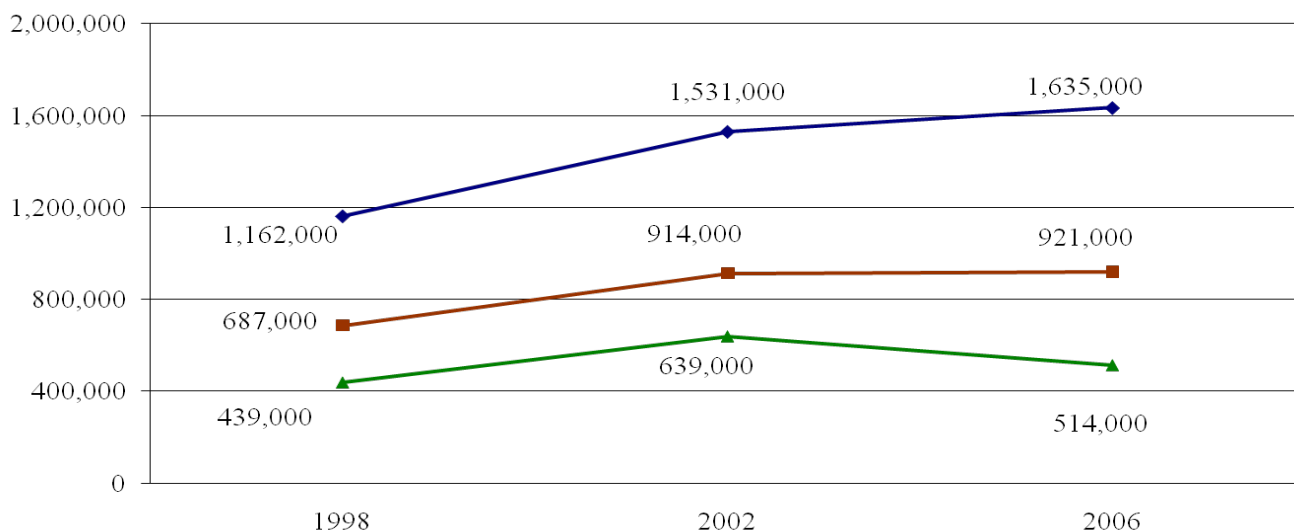
Latino voter turnout in midterm congressional elections increased by 46% between 1998 and 2002, and then decreased by 20% between 2002 and 2006. Latinos now comprise 13% – or one out of eight – of the state's registered voters.

### Florida's Electorate (2010)

Total Registered Voters	12,498,657
Latino Registered Voters	1,612,041
Latino Share of All Registered Voters	13%

### Florida Latino Registration and Voting in Past Presidential Elections

◆ Voting Age Citizens      ■ Registered Voters      ▲ Actual Voters



See "Sources" for information regarding the limitations of the foregoing data.

## LATINO ELECTED OFFICIALS IN FLORIDA

As of January 2010, 158 Latino elected officials served in Florida, three of whom serve in the U.S. Congress. Most officials (88%) serve at the local level, including county, municipal, school board, judicial and law enforcement, and special district officials.

## Latinos in Florida Elected Office: 1996-2010

	<u>1996</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2010</u>
Members Of Congress	2	2	3	4	3
Statewide Officials	0	0	0	0	0
State Legislators	12	15	16	17	16
Local Officials	58	75	72	110	139
Total	72	92	91	131	158

For more information about the NALEO Educational Fund's 2010 Election publications, please contact Rosalind Gold at [rgold@naleo.org](mailto:rgold@naleo.org) or (213) 747-7606, ext. 4420.

### Sources

NALEO Educational Fund, *2010 Survey of Latino Registered Voters in Four Key States*, June 2010. The survey was conducted June 14-21 and has an overall margin of error of +/-2.5%. It is available at: <http://www.naleo.org/latinovote.html>.

NALEO Educational Fund, *2010 National Directory of Latino Elected Officials*.

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2008), General Information and Detailed Tables. For the analysis of Latino population groups in South and Central Florida, "South Florida" includes Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties, and "Orlando and Tampa Metropolitan Areas" include Hillsborough, Lake, Marion, Osceola, Orange, Pinellas, Polk, Seminole, and Volusia counties.

U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), *Voting and Registration in the Elections of November: 1998-2006*. The CPS data used in these reports 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.

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990.

Voter Contact Service, *National Political DataBase*.