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# **2018 MIDTERM ELECTIONS & THE LATINO VOTE**

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**LATINO POLICY &  
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# INTRODUCTION

On November 6, 2018, voters went to the polls to vote in elections for U.S. Congress, statewide constitutional offices in thirty-six states, and down ballot races from state legislative seats to school board representatives. UCLA LPPI researchers analyzed election returns in real-time to assess how the country's fastest growing voting bloc impacted the outcome of major 2018 electoral contests. This report focuses on two things: 1) Latino Vote Choice and 2) Increase in Ballots Cast, as evidenced by changes in the number of ballots cast between the 2014 and 2018 midterm elections. This analysis evaluates elections in six U.S. States: Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, New Mexico, and Texas.

There are an estimated 27 million Latino eligible voters in the U.S., which includes 14 million registered voters. The 2018 Midterm Elections are an important indicator to understand the magnitude of the Latino electorate. In evaluating the impact of the Latino vote across a handful of states with large Latino populations, LPPI seeks to better understand their electoral participation and their preferred candidates of choice in hotly contested races during the 2018 Midterm Elections.

## CALIFORNIA

This analysis examines the precinct level returns for 6,064 precincts from the three largest counties in California: Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange County. These three counties combined make up 42% of the entire population in the state of California. First we examined the change in ballots cast in these 6,064 precincts, using the 2014 to 2018 midterm elections as points of comparison. On average, the number of ballots cast increased by 50% for the three counties.

Table I. displays the percent of Southern California precincts that fall into 3 different categories: 1) a decrease or no change in ballots cast, 2) a 1-100% increase in ballots cast, and 3) an increase of 100% or more in ballots cast from 2014 to 2018. We break this down into two groups, "Latino" precincts, where Latinos make up 55% or more of the registered voters, (N= 934), and "non-Latino" precincts where Latinos make up less than 25% of the registered voters in a precinct (N=3,561).

This analysis suggests that 75% of our "Latino precincts" experienced an increase in ballots cast of 0% to 100% or more from 2014 to 2018, compared to only 11% of our "non-Latino precincts." Further, only 10% of our "Latino precincts" experienced a decrease or no change in ballots cast, compared to 20% of "non-Latino precincts." Conversely, non-Latino precincts saw larger increases in the 200% plus range than Latino precincts. Here, Latino precincts in Southern California increased their electoral participation from 2014 to 2018 in ways that are distinct from their non-Latino peers (See Table II).

### I. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA % CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) FOR LATINO & NON-LATINO PRECINCTS (LOS ANGELES, ORANGE, & SAN DIEGO COUNTIES)

	Negative or 0	1-100%	200%+
Latino Precincts (Latino > 55%)	10%	75%	15%
Non-Latino Precincts (Latino < 25%)	20%	11%	69%

### II. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA % CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) BY % LATINO VOTERS IN PRECINCT (LOS ANGELES, ORANGE, & SAN DIEGO COUNTIES)

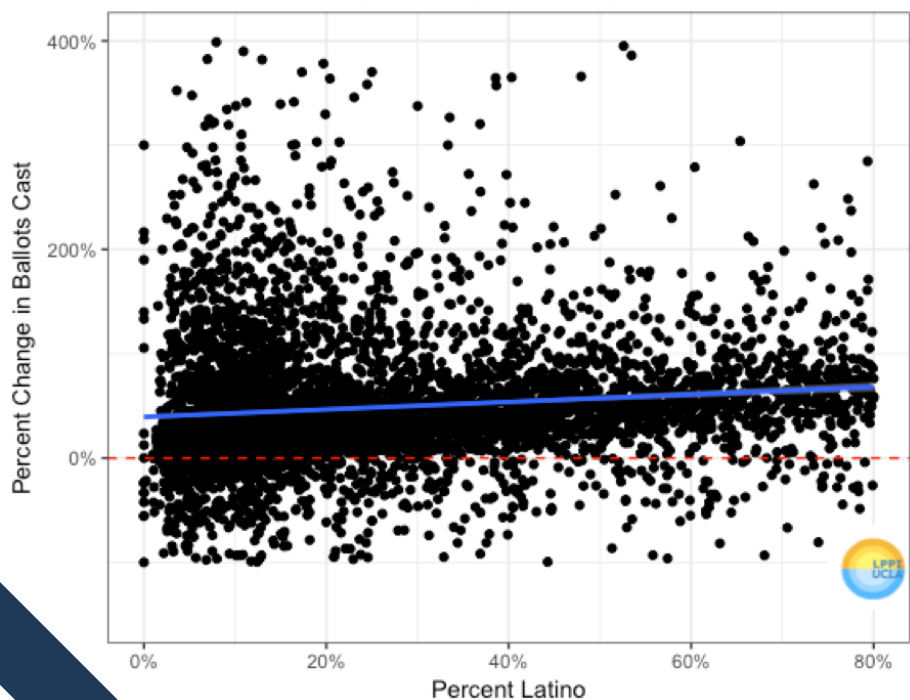


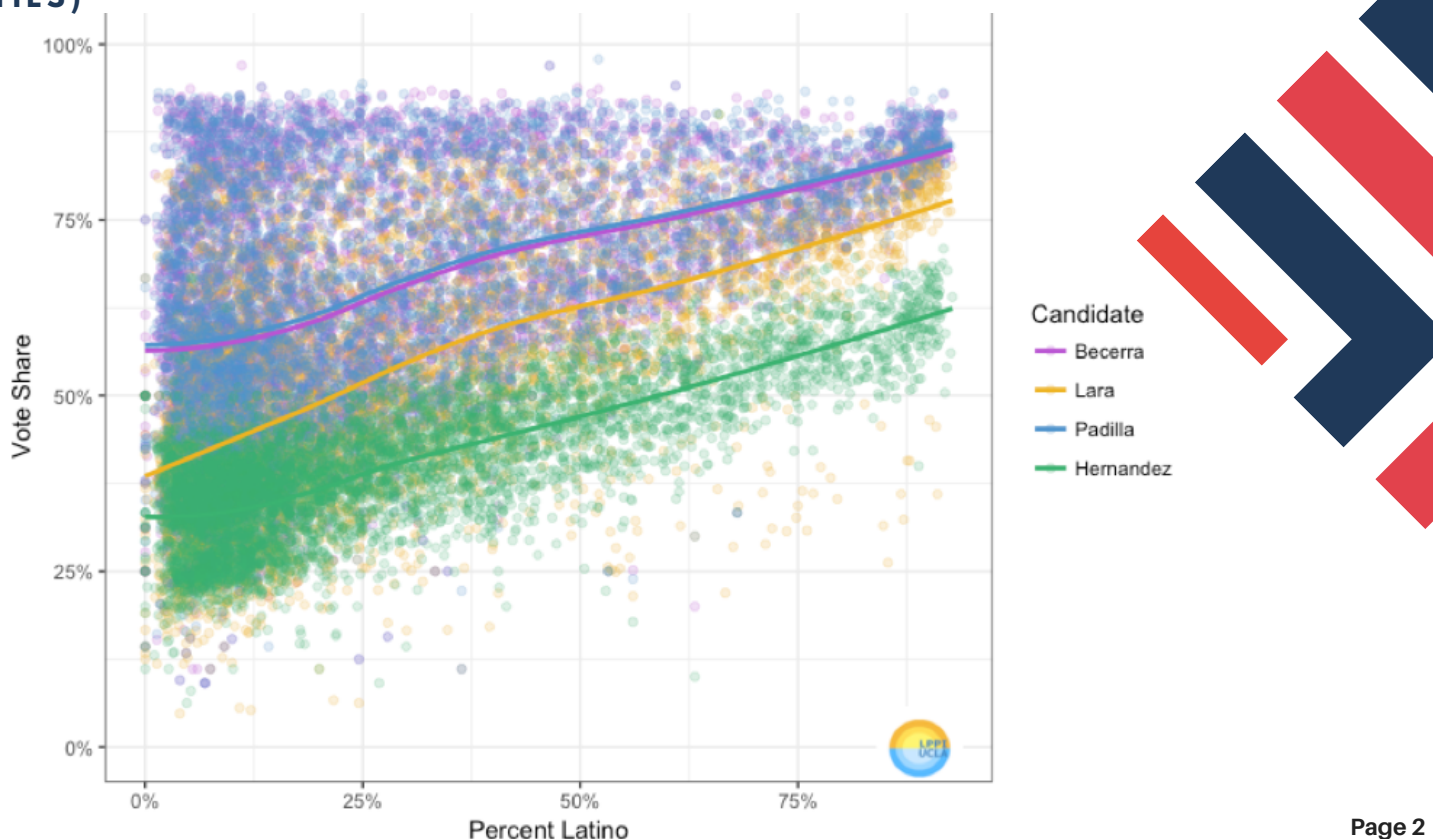
Table III. displays summary statistics for how well candidates in 6 statewide races performed in Latino and non-Latino precincts across Southern California. Latino precincts voted for candidates in these particular six races at higher numbers than non-Latino precincts by the following margins: Gavin Newsom (+19 percentage points), Kevin de León (+9 percentage points), Ed Hernandez (+21 percentage points), Alex Padilla (+21 percentage points), Xavier Becerra (+21 percentage points), and Ricardo Lara (+26 percentage points). In the Dem v. Dem race for Lt. Governor, Eleni Kounalakis won despite losing the majority share of Southern California Latino precincts, who preferred Ed Hernandez (+19 percentage points over Kounalakis). In the other Dem v. Dem statewide race, incumbent Diane Feinstein won by only slightly edging out her opponent Kevin de León (+2 percentage points) in Latino precincts, and outperforming him in non-Latino precincts.

### III. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA VOTE CHOICE BY % LATINO VOTERS IN PRECINCT (LOS ANGELES, ORANGE & SAN DIEGO COUNTIES)

	Latino Precincts (Latino >55%)		Non-Latino Precincts (Latino <25%)	
	Newsom (D)	Cox (R)	Newsom (D)	Cox (R)
<b>Governor</b>	76%	21%	57%	41%
<b>U.S. Senate</b>	Feinstein (D)	de León (D)	Feinstein (D)	de León (D)
	47%	45%	50%	36%
<b>Lieutenant Governor</b>	Hernandez (D)	Kounalakis (D)	Hernandez (D)	Kounalakis (D)
	55%	36%	34%	46%
<b>Secretary of State</b>	Padilla (D)	Meuser (R)	Padilla (D)	Meuser (R)
	79%	17%	58%	39%
<b>Attorney General</b>	Becerra (D)	Bailey (R)	Becerra (D)	Bailey (R)
	78%	18%	57%	40%
<b>Insurance Commissioner</b>	Lara (D)	Poizner (R)	Lara (D)	Poizner (R)
	69%	22%	43%	48%

Figure IV. displays the vote share for Latino candidates across multiple offices, by percent Latino in the precinct for the three combined Southern California precincts (LA County, Orange County, and San Diego County). We find that Becerra and Padilla had the highest support across all precincts, and the largest share of support in heavily Latino precincts. Becerra and Padilla were followed by Lara and Hernandez, whose support also increased as the percentage of Latino registered voters in a precinct increased.

### IV. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PRECINCT-LEVEL VOTE SHARE FOR LATINO CANDIDATES BY % LATINO VOTERS IN PRECINCT (LOS ANGELES, ORANGE & SAN DIEGO COUNTIES)



# ARIZONA

## V. ARIZONA %CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) BY % LATINO VOTERS IN PRECINCT (MARICOPA & PIMA COUNTIES)

This analysis focuses on precinct-level vote share for 547 precincts in Maricopa and Pima counties, the two largest counties in Arizona, which represent 75% of the total state population. Figure V. shows the average increase in the percent change in ballots cast from 2014 to 2018 for the two counties is 40%. The largest increases in ballots cast occur in precincts with more Latino voters, as indicated by the positive slope (blue line). In precincts with more than 60% Latino registered voters, the number of ballots cast increased by 57%. In precincts where Latinos make up less than 20% of the registered voter population, the number of ballots cast was only 36%.

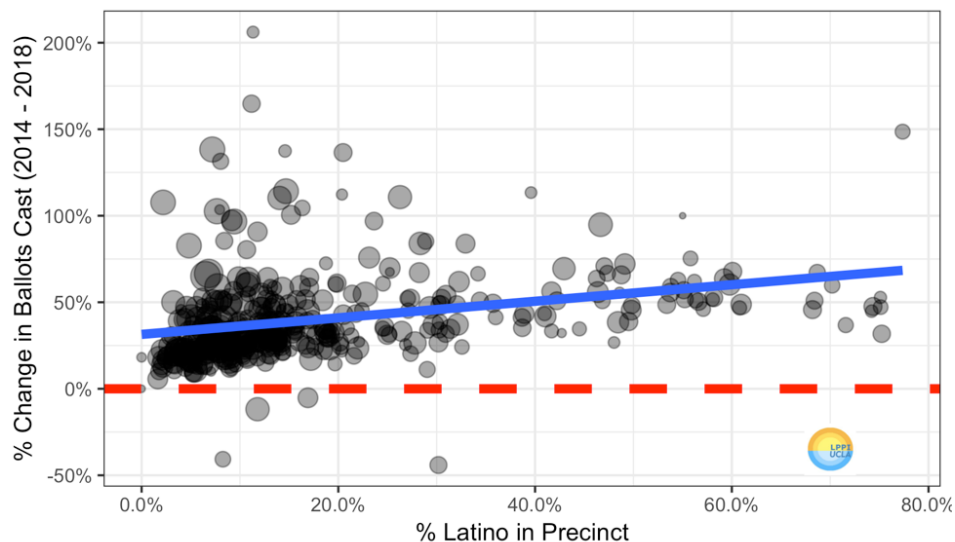


Table VI. shows the county-level change in ballots cast from 2014 to 2018 for Maricopa and Pima Counties. Here, Maricopa County experienced a 48.8% increase in the number of ballots cast from 2014 to 2018 and Pima County experienced a 23.7% increase in the number of ballots cast during the same time period. The Arizona gubernatorial race between Doug Ducey (R) and David Garcia (D) was not highly competitive, but Ducey's vote share decreased in those two counties, which include a critical share of the state's Latino citizen voting age population (CVAP).

## VI. ARIZONA %CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) & 2018 GUBERNATORIAL VOTE CHOICE

	% Latino CVAP	% Garcia (D)	% Ducey (R)	% Change in Ballots Cast
State of Arizona	14.7	41.4	56.5	41.9%
Maricopa	13.50	41.8	52.2	48.8%
Pima	20.1	49.5	48.4	23.7%

## VII. ARIZONA U.S. SENATE RACE VOTE SHARE BY % LATINO VOTERS IN PRECINCT (MARICOPA & PIMA COUNTIES)



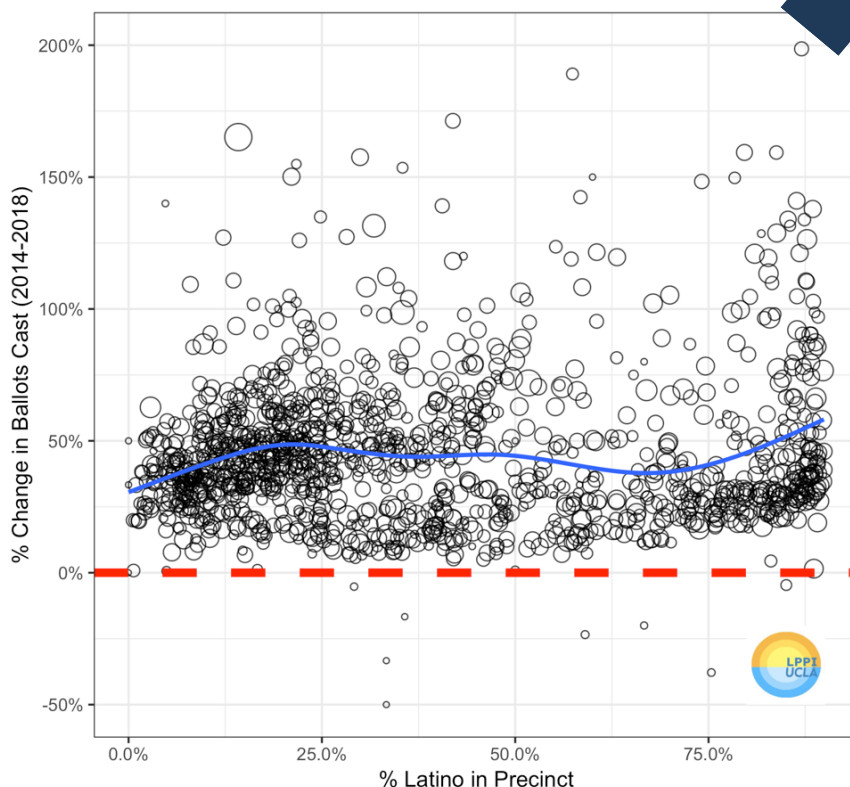
We also examined vote choice across the two counties for the U.S. Senate race between Kyrsten Sinema (D) and Martha McSally (R). Figure VII. shows a positive relationship between support for Sinema and the % Latino voters in a precinct and the opposite relationship for McSally. This suggests that Latino voters in Pima and Maricopa counties were instrumental in Sinema's successful U.S. Senate bid.

# FLORIDA

This analysis focuses on precinct-level vote share for 362 precincts in Broward and Miami-Dade counties, which are home almost 4.7 million Floridians. Figure VIII. shows that ballots cast in 2018 are higher than 2014 for the majority of precincts in Broward and in Miami-Dade counties. The average increase in ballots cast from 2014 to 2018 for the two counties is 45%. In precincts where Latinos make up less than 20% of the registered voter population, ballots cast only increased by 42%, compared to a 53% increase in precincts where Latinos were over 80% of the registered voter population.

Table IV. describes the county-level change in ballots cast from 2014 to 2018 for Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Here, Broward County experienced a 50.4% increase in the number of ballots from 2014 to 2018 and Miami-Dade County experienced a 51.9% increase in the number of ballots cast during the same time period.

## VIII. FLORIDA %CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) BY % LATINO VOTERS IN PRECINCT (BROWARD & MIAMI-DADE COUNTIES)



## IV. FLORIDA %CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018)

	Ballots Cast 2018	Ballots Cast 2014	% Change in Ballots Cast
<b>Broward</b>	<b>703,550</b>	<b>467,790</b>	<b>50.4</b>
<b>Miami-Dade</b>	<b>790,803</b>	<b>520,504</b>	<b>51.9</b>

# GEORGIA

At the time of publication, Georgia’s gubernatorial race between Brian Kemp (R) and Stacey Abrams (D) remains undecided. While Georgia does not have a large statewide Latino population, we identified particular county jurisdictions with the largest share of Latinos in Georgia to assess vote share and percent change in ballots cast. The three counties with the largest Latino population evaluated are: Gwinnett, Hall, and Whitfield. These counties all experienced an increase in ballots cast over 50% from 2014 to 2018, with Whitfield County as high as 74% (See Table X). All three of these counties’ percent change in ballots cast from 2014 to 2018 was higher than the statewide average of 52%.

## X. GEORGIA %CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) & 2018 GUBERNATORIAL VOTE CHOICE

	% Latino Citizen Voting Age Population	% Abrams (D)	% Kemp (R)	% Change in Ballots Cast
<b>State of Georgia</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>48.7</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>51.7</b>
<b>Gwinnett County</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>57.9</b>
<b>Hall County</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>53.9</b>
<b>Whitfield County</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>74.0</b>

To examine the voter breakdown in New Mexico we analyzed three counties with high Latino Citizen Voting Age populations: Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Santa Fe. The vote choice of the three counties illustrate higher votes cast for the Democratic candidate in the gubernatorial race, Michelle Lujan Grisham, than the statewide total. For example, Santa Fe county voted for Lujan Grisham by over 11 percentage points than the statewide average, followed by Bernalillo (5 percentage points higher), and Doña Ana (3.2 percentage points higher). Further, all three of the counties examined had higher percent changes in the number of ballots cast from 2014 to 2018 than the statewide average of 34.2 percent. Santa Fe experienced the highest increase in the percent of ballots cast from 2014 to 2018 at 103.9 percent.

## XI. NEW MEXICO % CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) & 2018 GUBERNATORIAL VOTE CHOICE

	% Latino Citizen Voting Age Population	% Lujan -Grisham (D)	% Pearce (R)	% Change in Ballots Cast
State of New Mexico	28.8	57.1	42.9	34.3
Bernalillo	29.9	62.1	38.0	39.6
Doña Ana	37.7	60.3	39.7	45.1
Santa Fe	31.0	78.6	21.4	103.9

## XII. NEW MEXICO % CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) & 2018 VOTE CHOICE (CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 2 & DOÑA ANA COUNTY)

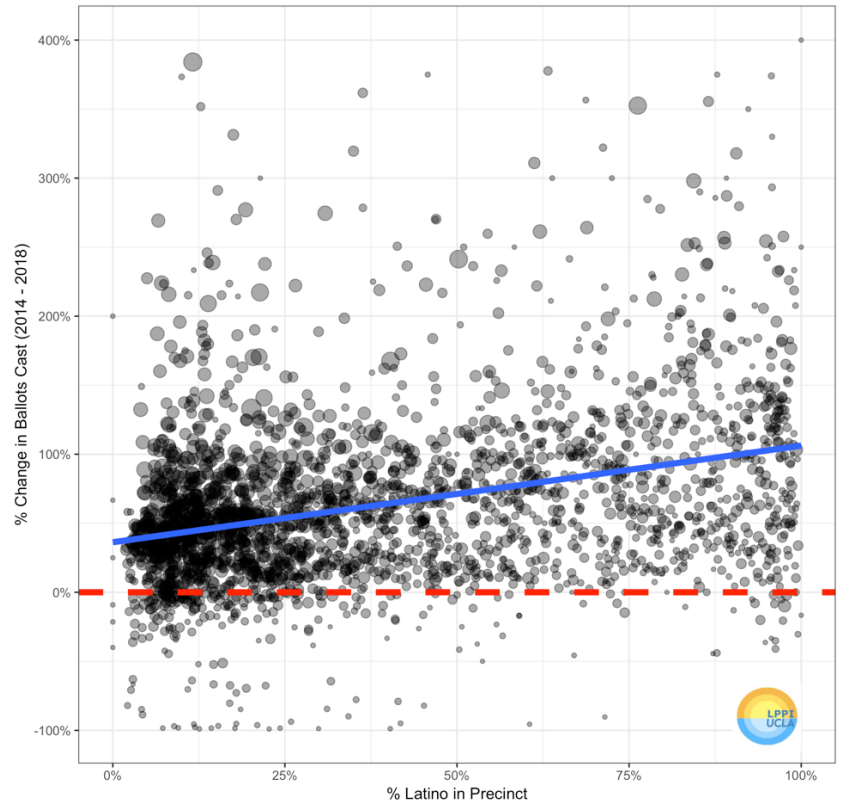
	% Torres Small (D)	% Herrell (R)	% Change Total Ballots Cast
New Mexico-2	50.90	49.10	33.72
Doña Ana	64.29	35.71	45.3

The open Congressional District seat, New Mexico-2, was a hotly contested race between Xochitl Torres-Small (D) and Yvette Herrell (R). Torres-Small won by 2,726 votes, representing about one percent difference in total votes. Table XII shows that both New Mexico-2 and Doña Ana experienced increases in the number of ballots cast from 2014 to 2018. There was also a change in the number of Democratic ballots cast in both jurisdictions, with the magnitude and direction favoring more Democratic ballots over the district's historically Republican voting history. Here, Doña Ana, with a Latino CVAP of 37.7%, favored Torres Small by over 13 percentage points than the district as a whole.

## XIII. TEXAS %CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) BY % LATINO VOTERS IN PRECINCT

Democrats had one of their strongest showings in the state of Texas in recent history. To examine the voter breakdown in Texas we analyzed the precinct level returns for the following six counties: Denton, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Hidalgo, Travis (N= 2,518 precincts), which represent 36% of all Texans and an estimated 11 million voters. Figure XIII suggests a positive relationship between the percent of Latino voters in the precinct and the percent change in ballots cast from 2014 to 2018. This means that precincts with more Latino voters had higher % change in ballots cast than precincts with fewer Latino voters.

To get a better sense of this relationship, we split the results up and looked at three different type of precincts: 1) precincts with less than a 10% increase in ballots cast from 2014 to 2018, 2), precincts with a 10% to 80% increase in ballots cast, and 3) precincts with an 80% or greater increase in ballots cast. We then separated these three types of precincts into "non-Latino" precincts (N=888), those with 20% or fewer Latino registered voters and "Latino precincts" (N=385), those with 80% or more Latino registered voters (See Table XIV). Only 17.2% of the non-Latino precincts experienced this level of increase in ballots cast from 2014 to 2018, compared to 54.3% of Latino precincts.



## XIV. TEXAS % CHANGE IN BALLOTS CAST (2014 V. 2018) BY % LATINO VOTERS IN PRECINCT

	< 10% Change	10-80% Change	Over 80% Change
<b>Latino Precincts (Latino &gt; 80%)</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>54.3%</b>
<b>Non-Latino (Latino &lt; 25%)</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>62.2%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>

## XV. TEXAS U.S. SENATE RACE VOTE SHARE BY % LATINO VOTERS IN PRECINCT



We also examined vote choice across the 6 counties for the U.S. Senate race between Beto O'Rourke (D) and incumbent Ted Cruz (R) (See Figure XV). Precincts with higher percentages of Latino voters preferred O'Rourke over Cruz, as indicated by the positive slope of the Blue line (average support for O'Rourke) and the negative slope of the red line (average support for Cruz). To get a better sense of how Latinos voted in Texas, we used a statistical technique called Ecological Inference, which estimates a racial/ethnic group's level of support for a candidate. Using this method, we estimate that O'Rourke received about 80% of the Latino vote in these 6 counties, compared to Cruz's 20% Latino vote support. One of the benefits of this method is that it does not rely on survey data or self-reported information. Instead, it only uses the official vote returns and census data. We have posted these data to an online repository here so others can replicate our analyses. [https://github.com/b-w-a/2018\\_latino\\_vote](https://github.com/b-w-a/2018_latino_vote)



# LATINO POLICY & POLITICS INITIATIVE



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UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative (LPPI) is a comprehensive think tank that addresses the most critical domestic policy challenges facing Latinos and other communities of color in states and localities across the U.S. LPPI leverages UCLA's cross-disciplinary strengths to create an enterprise-wide home for Latino social policy with expertise in over a dozen issue areas including civil rights, criminal justice, educational equity, health access, and voting and civic participation. LPPI fosters innovative research, leverages policy-relevant expertise, drives civic engagement, and nurtures a leadership pipeline to propel viable policy reforms that expand opportunity for all Americans. Learn more at: [latino.ucla.edu](http://latino.ucla.edu).

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