

## OVERVIEW:

Los Angeles County has the largest population of any California jurisdiction and is also home to a substantial proportion of the state’s Latino registered voters. According to the political data firm PDI, there are approximately 1.7 million Latino registered voters in the county. The June 5, 2018 California Primary Election provides an important frame to understand the vote preferences of Latino registered voters in Los Angeles County, and the state as a whole. Further, six of the Latino major-party candidates for statewide office, including the United States Senate race, were Los Angeles-based politicians (Table 1). LPPI compared the number of ballots cast between the June 2014 and June 2018 primaries, and the vote preference differences between Latino and non-Latino voters in Los Angeles County in the June 2018 election to highlight Latino vote trends.

## METHODOLOGY

For this analysis, we examined 3,612 precincts across Los Angeles County. To distinguish Latino vote choice, we identified precincts in Los Angeles County where Latinos make up 75 percent or more of the registered voters. There are approximately 325 precincts in Los Angeles County where Latinos make up 75 percent or more of the registered voters (“Latino precincts”). In the June 2018 primary election, approximately 53,721 ballots were cast in the Latino precincts. This analysis compares ballots cast in these 325 precincts to the vote in 1,765 precincts where Latinos make up less than 25 percent of the registered voters (“non-Latino precincts”). In the June 2018 election, there were approximately 474,609 ballots cast in the non-Latino precincts. These two groups of precincts, Latino and non-Latino, provide a comparison in evaluating the vote choice preferences for Latino voters compared to other voters in Los Angeles County.

Focusing on Latino support for Latino major-party candidates on the June 2018 ballot, LPPI assessed the vote preference for candidates in the following statewide races: Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Insurance Commissioner, and U.S. Senate. All six Latino major-party candidates reside in Los Angeles County and/or held public office representing the jurisdiction in the State Legislature or U.S. House of Representatives. LPPI’s analysis contracts Latino precinct support to non-Latino precinct support in each of the six respective races, and then compares the candidate’s Latino support to each other based on ballots cast.

**Table 1. Los Angeles Based Latino Major-Party Candidates in 2018 California Primary**

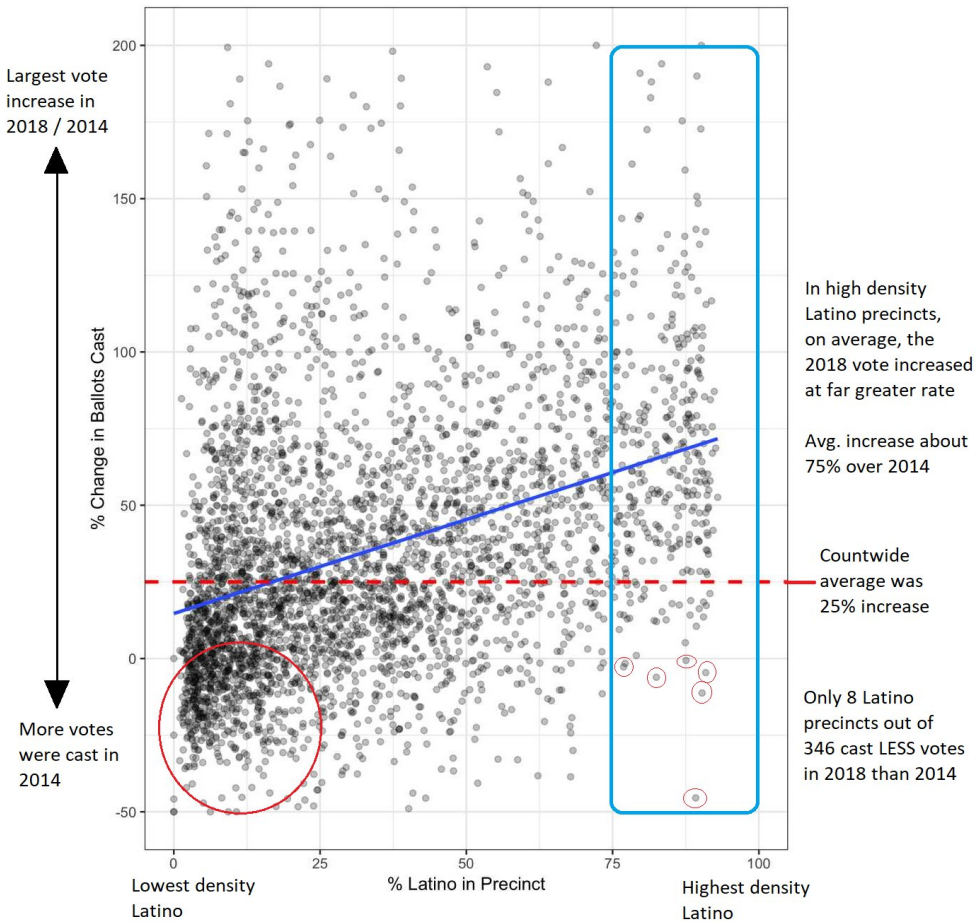
Office	Major-Party Latino Candidate
Governor	Antonio Villaraigosa
Lt. Governor	Dr. Ed Hernandez
Attorney General	Xavier Becerra
Secretary of State	Alex Padilla
Insurance Commissioner	Ricardo Lara
U.S. Senate	Kevin de León

# L.A. COUNTY: INCREASE IN BALLOTS CAST

Turnout varied across the county and initial estimates from the Los Angeles County Registrar suggests an estimated 25 percentage point increase in ballots cast from 824,000 in June 2014 to over 1,035,000 in June 2018. While official turnout numbers are not currently available, current data provides a critical foundation to assess turnout differences and voter preferences for important statewide contests (see sections below).

Figure 1.

**Change in votes cast in June 2018 compared to June 2014, Los Angeles County**  
(sorted by percent Latino vote within each precinct)



Source: Latino Policy & Politics Initiative, UCLA, Dr. Matt A. Barreto & Bryan Wilcox-Archuleta, June 9, 2018

Table 2.

**Percent Change in Ballots Cast June 2014 to June 2018 in Los Angeles County**  
(Breakdown by lowest and highest density Latino precincts)

% Latino in Precinct	Decrease in Ballots Cast	0%-50% Increase in Ballots Cast	> 50% Increase in Ballots Cast
Least Latino Precincts (< 25%)	28.4% (571)	43.2% (867)	20.8% (377)
Most Latino Precinct (> 75%)	2.3% (8)	31.2% (108)	66.5% (230)

LPPI compared the number of ballots cast in the June 2014 primary to the number of ballots cast in the June 2018 primary for the same exact precincts (Figure 1). Each point represents the % change in ballots cast between the two primary elections. Values above 0 mean that more ballots were cast in 2018 than in 2014. Values below 0 mean that more ballots were cast in 2014 than in 2018. LPPI's analysis suggests a positive relationship between the % change in ballots cast (y-axis) and % Latino registered voters within a precinct (x-axis). This is highlighted by the blue regression line, which increases as Latino density increases. In high density Latino precincts, the 2018 vote increased at a far greater rate than the countywide average. LPPI found that on average, most Latino precincts saw an increase in voter turnout between June 2014 and June 2018 (Table 2). Only 2.3 percent of Latino precincts with 75 percent or more registered Latino voters experienced a decrease in the number of ballots cast, compared to 28.4 percent for precincts with less than 25 percent of Latino voters. In 66.5 percent of the Latino precincts, there was an

estimated 50 percent increase in the number of ballots cast, compared to a 20.8 percent in the non-Latino precincts. This analysis suggests two things: 1) overall increase in voter turnout across Los Angeles County from '14 to '18, regardless of race/ethnicity; and 2) turnout for Latino voters was higher than the countywide average, especially in dense Latino precincts.

# L.A. COUNTY: VOTE CHOICE FOR GOVERNOR

The Los Angeles Times, the region’s most popular daily newspaper, endorsed the former mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa (D) for California Governor after its editorial board met with all major-party candidates. It was speculated that if Villaraigosa came out of the top-two primary to appear on the November 2018 ballot, he would need strong support from Los Angeles County, especially among Latino voters. LPPI’s analysis suggests that Latino voters in Los Angeles County supported Villaraigosa at higher rates than the other gubernatorial candidates, including Gavin Newsom, John Chiang, and John Cox (Figure 2).

Figure 2.

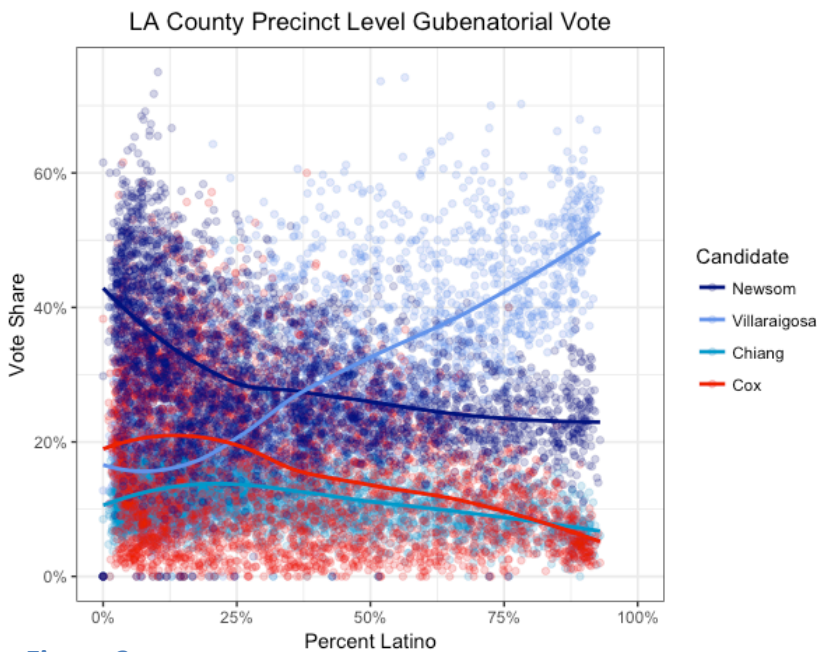
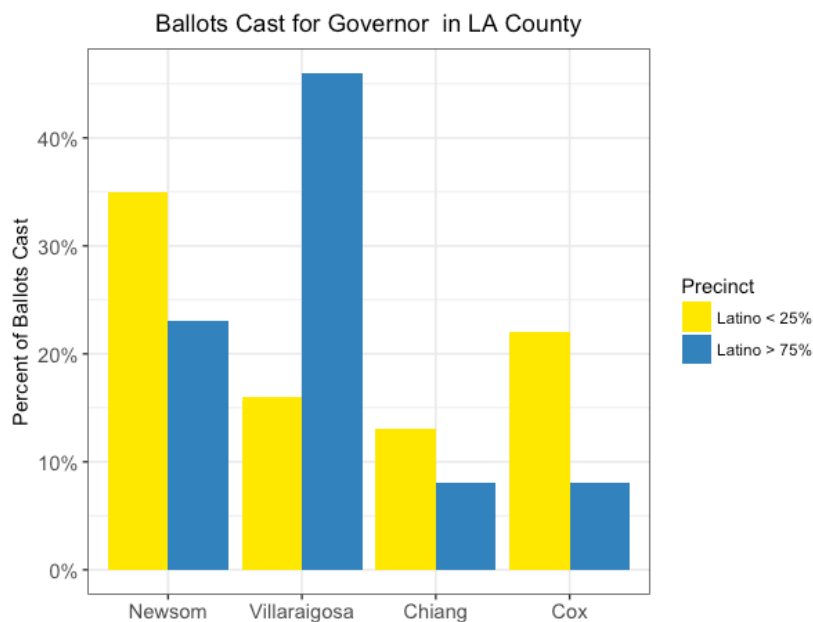


Figure 3.



While Villaraigosa received more support from Latino voters than any other gubernatorial candidate in Los Angeles County, there were differences in vote preference between Latino and non-Latino precincts (Figure 3). Gavin Newsom (D) received 35 percent of the vote in non-Latino precincts (under 25 percent Latino registered voters), but that number diminished to only 23 percent in Latino precincts (over 75 percent Latino registered voters). Villaraigosa received 46 percent of the vote in Latino precincts, but lagged behind in non-Latino precincts, garnering only 16 percent of the vote. John Chiang’s support was relatively flat across the county. John Cox (R), the second-place finisher in the top-two primary, did very well in non-Latino precincts. Cox received 21 percent of the vote in precincts where Latinos make up less than 25 percent of the population, compared to less than 10 percent of ballots cast in precincts where Latinos are 75 percent or more of the precinct’s registered voters. This analysis suggests that although Villaraigosa received the largest share of Latino votes of all gubernatorial candidates, Latino support of other candidates, especially Newsom, curtailed the number of votes necessary to be competitive for the November 2018 general election.

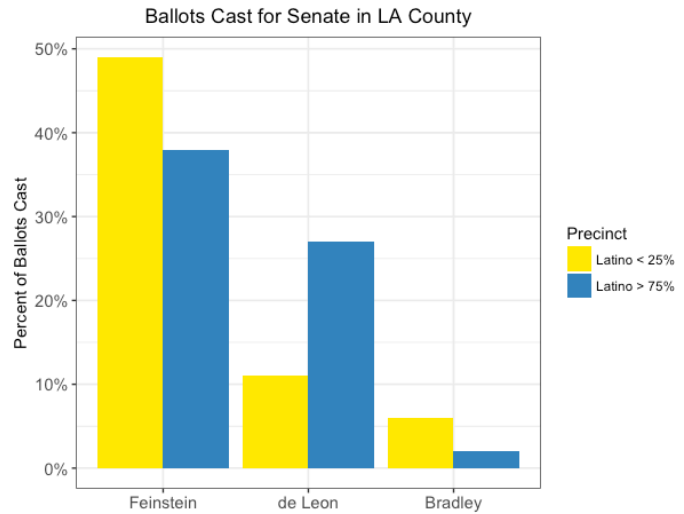
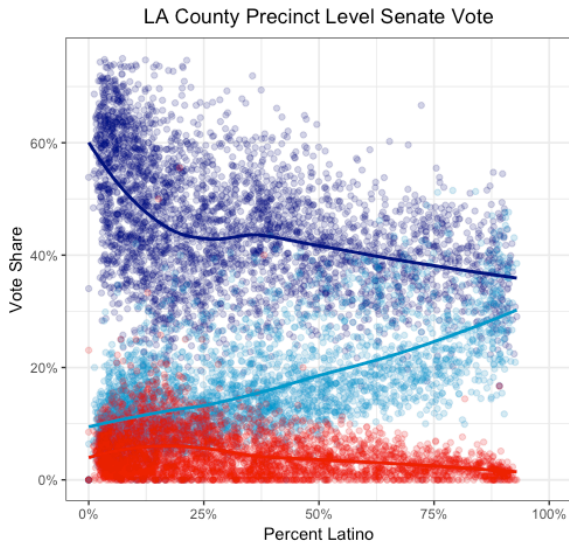


# L.A. COUNTY: VOTE CHOICE FOR U.S. SENATE

Examining the precinct level results across Los Angeles County, LPPI finds that while the incumbent candidate Diane Feinstein (D) received strong support across all districts, Kevin de León did particularly well in districts where Latinos make up more than 75 percent registered voters (Figure 4). Figure 4 displays the vote share each candidate received in Latino and non-Latino precincts. LPPI found a steady increase in de León’s vote share as the precinct’s percent of Latino registered voters increases. Figure 5 compares the vote preference between Latino and non-Latino precincts in the County. LPPI finds that the Latino precincts (<75% Latino registered voters) had the least amount of support for James Bradley (R) at only 2 percent of the vote, compared to de León’s 27 percent share of the ballots cast in these precincts.

Figure 4.

Figure 5.

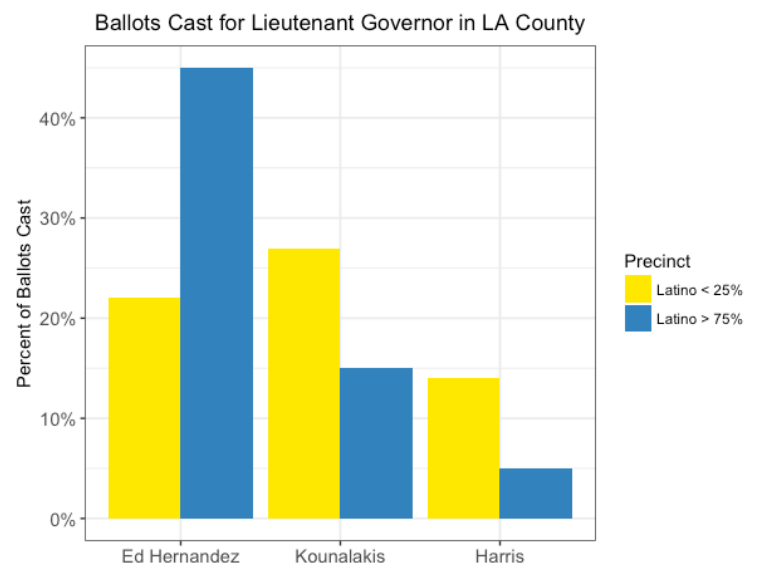
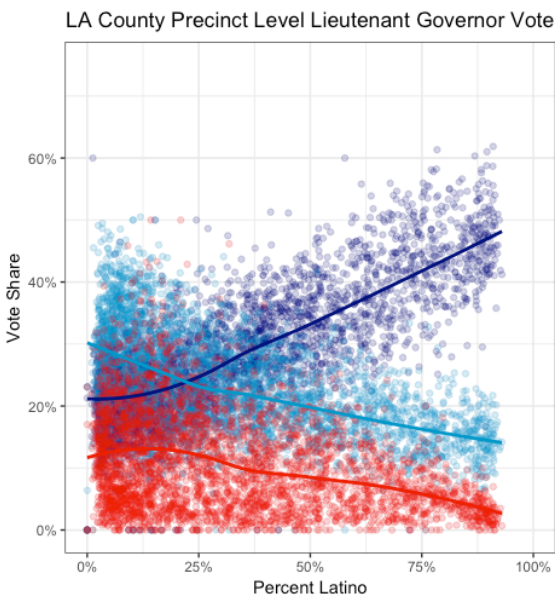


# L.A. COUNTY: VOTE CHOICE FOR LT. GOVERNOR

LPPI finds that the Latino candidate, Dr. Ed Hernandez (D), experienced a high-level of support across the County’s Latino precincts (Figure 6). Eleni Kounalakis (D) was able to garner a greater percentage of the vote in non-Latino precincts, but Hernandez strongly outperformed Kounalakis in Latino districts, 45 to 15 percent, respectively.(Figure 7). Ultimately, both advanced to the November ballot, ensuring a Democratic contest.

Figure 6.

Figure 7.



# L.A. COUNTY: VOTE CHOICE FOR A.G.

Sitting Attorney General Xavier Becerra, appointed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2016 to finish Senator Kamala Harris’ four-year term, had a very strong showing among all precincts in LA County (Figure 8). Becerra was able to secure 48 percent of the vote in non-Latino precincts, and won an overwhelming majority of the vote, 68 percent, in Latino precincts. Dave Jones (D) and Steve Bailey (R) received similar shares of the vote across the County’s Latino and non-Latino precincts (Figure 9).

Figure 8.

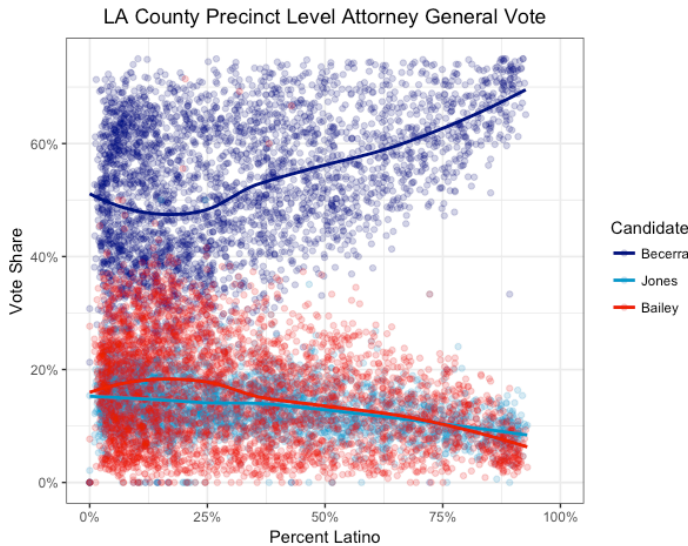
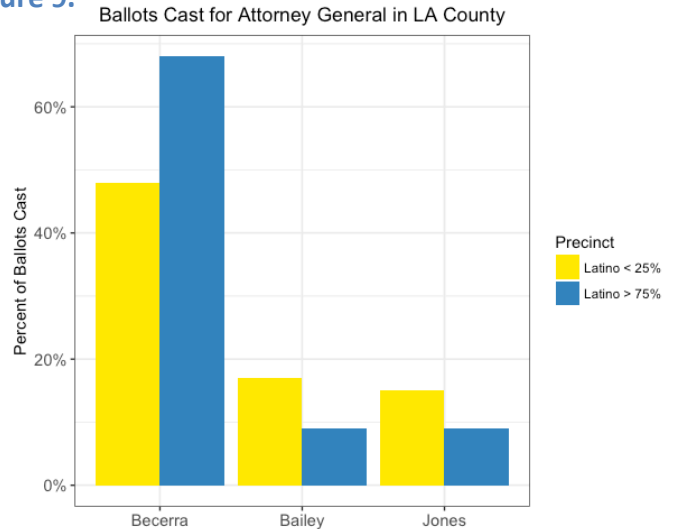


Figure 9.



# L.A. COUNTY & OTHER STATEWIDE RACES

The June 2018 California primary saw a 500 percent increase in the number of Latino major-party candidates on the California ballot, compared to the number of Latino major-party candidates in the June 2014 primary. The table below provides data on how Los Angeles County precincts with 75 percent or more Latino registered voters compared to precincts with less than 25 percent Latino registered voters on the following statewide races: Secretary of State, Treasurer, Insurance Commissioner, and Superintendent of Public Instruction (Table 3). Among the six Latino major-party candidates evaluated in this analysis, Alex Padilla (D) received the highest percentage of ballots cast from the County’s Latino precincts at 69 percent, followed by Xavier Becerra (68 percent), Ricardo Lara (66 percent), Antonio Villaraigosa (46 percent), Ed Hernandez (45 percent), Kevin de León (27 percent).

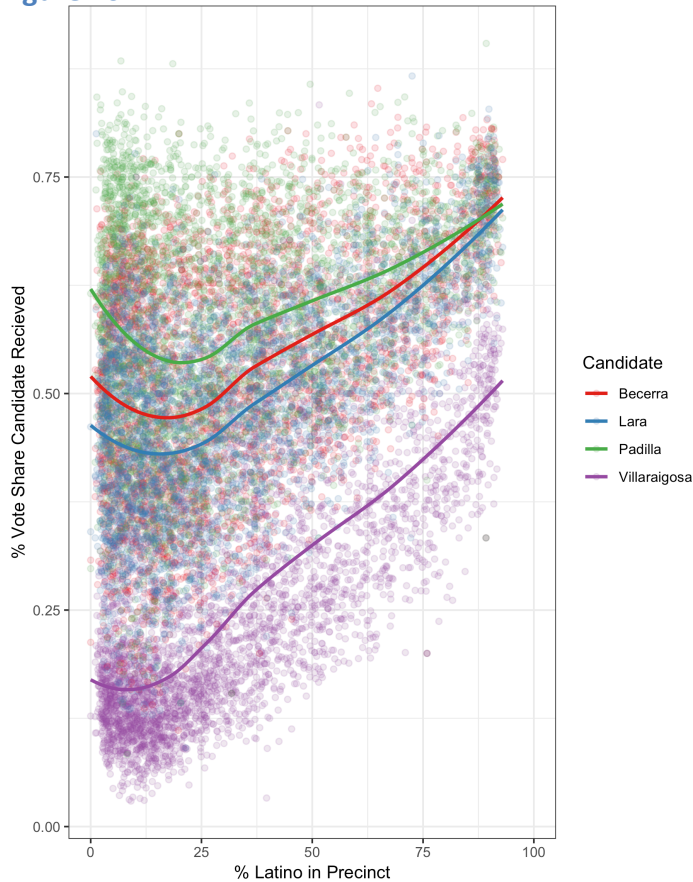
Table 3. Latino Vote Choice in Los Angeles County (June 2018 Primary Election)

	Precincts > 75% Latino			Precincts < 25% Latino		
	Padilla (D)	Major (D)	Meuser (R)	Padilla (D)	Major (D)	Meuser (R)
<b>Secretary of State</b>	69%	5%	9%	55%	4%	24%
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ma (D)	Viswanathan (D)	<b>Guerrero</b> (R)	Ma (D)	Viswanathan (R)	<b>Guerrero</b> (R)
	44%	18%	15%	44%	13%	15%
<b>Insurance Commissioner</b>	<b>Lara</b> (D)	Mahmood (D)	Poizner (NP)	<b>Lara</b> (D)	Mahmood (D)	Poizner (NP)
	66%	7%	11%	44%	11%	29%
<b>Superintendent of Public Instruction (nonpartisan)</b>	Ploski	<b>Thurmond</b>	Tuck	Ploski	<b>Thurmond</b>	Tuck
	30%	26%	23%	10%	35%	29%

# L.A. COUNTY: VILLARAIGOSA ANALYSIS

Lastly, LPPI compared voter preference in Los Angeles County for the three most successful Latino candidates (Xavier Becerra, Ricardo Lara, and Alex Padilla) against the support for gubernatorial candidate Villaraigosa. As we mentioned above, Villaraigosa did better than the competition in precincts with 75 percent or more Latino registered voters but was unable to garner enough support to advance to the general election. We think Villaraigosa would have had to do much better across Los Angeles County to have had a chance, including better numbers in dense Latino precincts.

Figure 10.



Another way to look at this is to compare the gap directly. Figure 11 shows how much better Alex Padilla, Xavier Becerra, and Ricardo Lara performed across the county, compared to Villaraigosa. These three Latino candidates did considerably better in the heavily Latino precincts than Villaraigosa. In the figure, we plot the % of the vote share by each individual candidate minus the % for Villaraigosa on (y-axis) against the % Latino in the precinct (x-axis). If a point is above the **dashed line** (0), the candidate did better than Villaraigosa. If the point is below the dashed line, Villaraigosa did better than the candidate. Examining the chart, we see that all three Latino statewide candidates did significantly better than Villaraigosa. Even in the dense Latino precincts, Becerra (red line), Lara (blue line), and Padilla (green line) did significantly better than Villaraigosa. If Villaraigosa had any chance at statewide success, he would have had to match the support garnered by the other successful Latino candidates on the June ballot, especially in LA County.

In Figure 10, we compare the vote share for the four statewide Latino candidates in LA County. LPPI's analysis suggests that voter support for all of these Latino candidates increased as the number of Latinos in the precinct increase. This is indicated by the upward slope of each candidate's lines. Further, LPPI's examination indicates that Villaraigosa underperformed compared to Padilla, Becerra, and Lara across the county. Villaraigosa did well in dense Latino areas, garnering nearly 50 percent of the vote on average. In comparison, Lara, Padilla, and Becerra, however, each garnered over 65 percent of the vote share in these dense Latino precincts.

Figure

