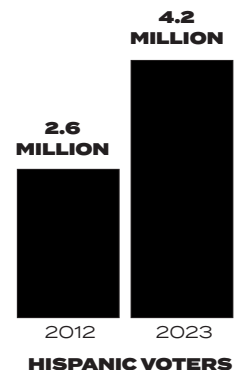


TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Matt Barreto
RE: US Senate – Texas Path to Victory
DATE: October 27, 2023

The future of Texas politics must be considered through the Hispanic-Latino community, and extensive research suggests a seasoned Hispanic candidate is best positioned to capitalize on these demographic changes and defeat Ted Cruz in 2024. Roland Gutierrez is that candidate.

As the Census has reported recently, Hispanics are now the largest racial or ethnic group in total population in the state of Texas. Indeed, the two additional congressional seats Texas was awarded in reapportionment was entirely because of Hispanic population growth over the previous decade. Hispanic voters have grown from 2.6 million in 2012 to 4.5 million today – nearly 2 million additional Hispanic voters in just over 10 years. With an estimated 6.2 million eligible voters expected in the 2024 election, Hispanics will comprise 31.5% of the Texas eligible electorate. What’s more, because a majority of Hispanics vote Democrat and a majority of Whites vote Republican, when examining just potential Democratic voters, there are an estimated 4 million eligible Hispanic voters, comprising 48.6 percent of the eligible Democratic electorate.

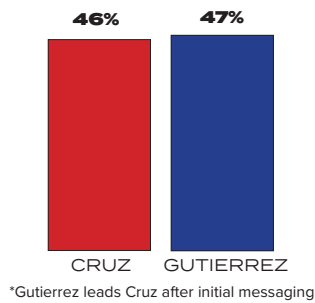
When narrowing to registered voters in Texas today, there are an estimated 4.5 million Latinos registered and about 2.9 million who are potential Democratic voters. **Latinos are an estimated 51% of all registered Democrats in Texas and cast about 32% of all Democratic primary votes in 2022 and 2020. With the mobilizing capacity of a strong Hispanic candidate, it is certain that the Latino share of the March 2024 electorate will grow, potentially to around 40% of all Democratic primary votes,** with Whites around 40% and Blacks at around 17%.



Despite its growth and prominence in the state, Texas Hispanics have not been able to elect their candidate of choice to the U.S. Senate in 25 years. [Republican Ted Cruz badly lost the Latino vote](#) to Beto O’Rourke in 2018, and his record over the past five years has continued to alienate the Cuban-American Senator with the largely Mexican-American Hispanic population in Texas. As compared to [UT polling from 2018](#), Cruz is viewed 5 points less favorable [today](#), making him even more vulnerable than in 2018, when he won by just 2.6 points.

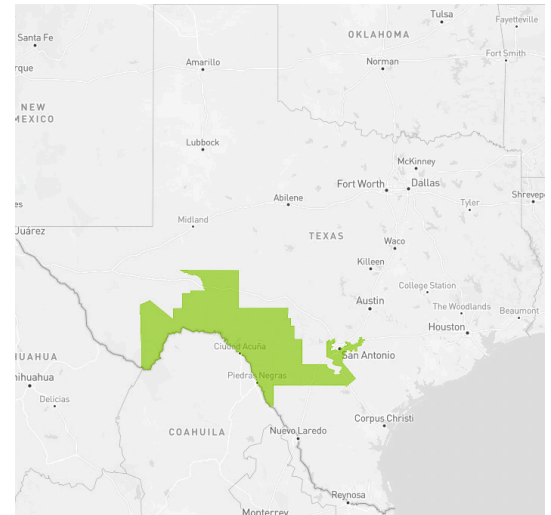
If the Democratic Party in Texas is to find a path to victory in statewide elections, it must do so through effective outreach, engagement, and mobilization of the more than six million Hispanics eligible to vote, and one of the most effective ways to do this is through the candidacy of more highly qualified Latinos for statewide office. As published research has concluded, “Latino turnout and support for high-quality co-ethnic candidates are evident.” If voters do not see themselves reflected in the officeholders in their state, it is no wonder they get turned off and lose interest in voting.

Thus, the 2024 Senate election presents a clear opportunity for Democrats to make inroads statewide through the candidacy of State Senator Roland Gutierrez.



In a recent [poll](#), Texans agree Roland Gutierrez can beat Ted Cruz. For Hispanic and South Texas voters, an area where Democratic performance has struggled in the recent 2020 election, a Hispanic candidate that understands immigration policy, represents a border district, is bilingual, and represents nearly one million people in South Texas is the

answer to maintaining a Democratic hold in a shifting region. In Texas, State Senators represent more constituents than members of Congress, nearly 200,000 larger in size than a House district. In particular, a candidate like Roland Gutierrez who is seasoned in flipping a red district is well positioned to perform well in a statewide race, especially among swing voters.



Extensive research and past elections have shown that Latino voters turn out to vote at higher rates when co-ethnic candidates are on the ballot. Election data over the last two decades documents a clear pattern of high political engagement among Hispanics when fellow Hispanics are on the ballot, and much lower rates for non-Hispanic candidates, who often fail to effectively connect with and engage Latino communities. It’s not just political scientists and pollsters who have found this pattern of strong support for Hispanic candidates among Hispanic voters, but both Republican and Democratic federal judges in Texas have found [clear evidence of Hispanic political cohesion](#), voting strongly as a unified bloc, for Hispanic-preferred candidates in the myriad of voting rights lawsuits across Texas for at least two decades. According to [published academic research](#) by Manzano and Sanchez, when high-quality and viable Latino candidates run for office, “Latino voter turnout spiked, and co-ethnic voting exceeded 75 percent.”

Recent elections in Texas make a clear case for Hispanic candidates as serving to mobilize Hispanic voters. In 2018 Lina Hidalgo was the first Democrat to win County Judge in Harris County behind record-breaking Hispanic turnout in the 2018 election. In 2022 Rochelle Garza received overwhelming support from Hispanics to defeat Joe Jaworski in a close Democratic primary election even though Jaworski held a significant fundraising advantage over Garza, spending \$1.9 million in the 2022 primary and runoff to Rochelle Garza’s \$549K. After her runoff victory, [news analysis](#) explained Garza “was able to build a coalition of voters because Latino and female voters see themselves represented in her campaign.” While Garza came up short in November, Cruz is far more vulnerable in 2024, and mobilizing Hispanic voters will be critical to the Democrats’ efforts to unseat Cruz. According to an [August 2023 poll](#) from the University of

Texas/Texas Politics Project, 40% of Texans have a “very unfavorable” opinion of Cruz, the highest they have ever recorded in their regular polling, with Cruz’s overall unfavorable sitting at 47%. In a June 2018 pre-election poll, Cruz had 42% unfavorability. In contrast, only 22% of Texans have a “very favorable” opinion of Cruz today.

Recent polling suggests one of the top issues of concern for Hispanic Democrats is putting a stop to mass shootings and addressing gun safety policy. A [poll](#) by Univision found while cost of living was the top issue cited by 50%, **mass shootings and gun safety policy was the second most important issue to Hispanic Democrats at 36%**. As the [State Senator representing Uvalde](#), Roland Gutierrez drove continual coverage and investigations against the State and Department of Public Safety for the failed response to an active shooter at Robb Elementary that killed 19 students and two teachers. Roland Gutierrez was the driving force in exposing the failures of the Department of Public Safety, sued the State to release body camera footage of the response, and advocated side by side with victims and surviving families to advocate for gun safety reform. The Uvalde tragedy was a national story that dramatically changed the status quo in Texas.

While Hispanics are already a political force in 2024, the numbers for the future are staggering, and Democratic candidates in Texas will benefit from an aggressive outreach effort if they hope to convert future Hispanic voters into reliable Democratic votes. In the five years since the 2018 Cruz-Beto election, the [Texas Education Agency reports](#) that 876,549 Hispanics will have graduated high school in Texas, are over the age of 18 and ready to be wooed by political campaigns. And, in the next six years ahead an additional 875,000 young Hispanics are estimated to graduate high school in Texas and be ready to enter the electorate. That’s over 1.5 million new potential voters in just about 10 years’ time. But to activate potential voters into actual votes, candidates must resonate strongly with the Hispanic community and have a long history of engaging their communities, as Senator Gutierrez’s work surrounding Uvalde demonstrates. While past candidates such as Paul Sadler and David Alameel went on to win a majority of Hispanic votes in the general election against their Republican opponents, they did not create the same degree of enthusiasm and mobilization that Hispanic candidates for office can generate.

Recent elections in Texas provide empirical support for this theory. Congressional candidate Greg Casar in Travis County saw record high turnout in majority-Hispanic precincts in southeastern Austin in both March and November 2022. In 2018 Harris County saw a significant turnout increase in South Houston (89% Hispanic), which went from 18.6% turnout in 2014 to 35.8% turnout in 2018 when Hidalgo was running for a countywide seat. This represents a 92.5% increase in turnout, higher than the county-wide increase of 60.7% (which increased from 33% to 53%). In contrast, Hispanic turnout in Texas has long been lackluster in elections in which candidates do not connect as strongly with the Latino community or inspire their mobilization.

While pundits have been speaking about the growing potential of the Hispanic vote for a long time, 2024 has the hallmarks of a turning point, whereas previous elections were still somewhat out of reach for Democrats in statewide elections. First consider the general trends in Texas over consecutive Presidential cycles. In 2012 Obama lost to Romney by 16.6 points. In 2016 Clinton lost to Trump by 9.5 points. In 2020 Biden lost to Trump by 5.5 points. Each year, Texas has been getting closer and closer – the data are undeniable. In 2024 Texas has the demographic potential to become a both a U.S. Senate and presidential battleground state, but only if there are candidates who can inspire and engage the growing Hispanic electorate.

WHERE THE HISPANIC VOTE IS STRONGEST

To capitalize on the Hispanic electorate, a candidate needs to demonstrate strength in six key regions:

REGION	HISPANIC ELIGIBLE VOTERS	HISPANIC REGISTERED
Dallas-Ft. Worth	774,916	473,912
Harris-Ft. Bend	1,068,305	655,060
Rio Grande Valley	640,983	486,234
San Antonio	812,805	492,769
El Paso	449,347	295,714
Laredo-South Texas (Texas House Districts 80, 42, and 31)	267,372*	220,076**

*135,592 of which are in Webb County **78,951 of which are in District 42 (Laredo)

These six regions carry a combined 4,013,728 Hispanic eligible voters (of which 2,623,764 were registered as of the 2022 midterms) and would be dominant in deciding the Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate. Beyond the primary, voters in these high-density Hispanic communities will need to sustain the political engagement and mobilization from the primary to the November general election. Historically, strong Hispanic candidates of choice have been successful in mobilizing from primary to general.