

Why Allegations of “Non-Citizen” Voting Are Dangerous to Democracy, Latino Voters, and the Latino Community

TOPLINES

There is no evidence non-citizen voting occurs. Disinformation about “voter fraud” is a longstanding voter suppression tactic. It is now being combined with anti-immigrant and racist language about “invasions” and schemes to “rig” elections that [lack any factual basis](#) but are aimed at suppressing the voting power and voice of Latinos.

- **Non-citizens [are not voting in federal or state elections](#).** Nor do they want to. To do so is a federal felony, as well as a crime under every state’s laws. Non-citizens know they could face deportation for trying to vote—and that their vote would be an official record that a felony has been committed.
 - Nor is there a scheme to “import” voters, which would not work given the laws we already have in place..
- **But disinformation about non-citizen or “migrant” voting is being used to justify new voting restrictions that do affect the ability of millions of unregistered but eligible voters—as well as registered voters of color—to exercise their right to vote.** These restrictions make it harder for voters of color to cast a ballot and create a threatening environment to keep them home and excluded from our democratic processes.
- **It’s not voters being “imported,” millions of new Latino voters are here: a supermajority of Latinos are citizens who are eligible to vote. It is expected that more than 17.5 million Latino voters will cast a ballot in this year’s election.** The facts:
 - 81% of Latinos in the US are citizens today.
 - Although half of Latino eligible voters remain unregistered to vote, Latino voters are already a deciding factor in battleground states.
 - Every year, around 1.8M Latinos become legally eligible to vote.
 - More than a million Latino citizens turn 18 every year.
 - Around 800K become citizens.
- **Policies to diminish access to the ballot—including ID laws and attacks on mail-in and early voting—are just the new “poll tax,” and are intended to keep the Latino electorate and other groups from having a voice, now and in the future.** It is not a coincidence that states and counties with growing Latino populations are also seeing an increase in voter restrictions: including in Arizona, Texas, Wisconsin and Florida.

THE FACTS: WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Latino voters are the fastest growing voting bloc in the country and increasingly are a deciding factor in elections. Disinformation narratives around Latino voters are a direct response to the Latino community's rapidly growing size and power, and a strategy deployed by bad actors to entrench power and dominance. Looking at the numbers:

- **Latinos are a growing electoral powerhouse.** In 2020, Latinos became the largest non-white racial or ethnic voting-age group of eligible voters. Latino voters are also now a deciding factor in key battleground states, although half of eligible Latino voters remain unregistered to vote. In 2020, Latinos became the largest non-white voting age population.
- In California and Texas, Latinos are now the largest racial/ethnic group.
- Latino voters are newer voters. An estimated 36.2 million Latinos are eligible to vote this year, up from 32.3 million in 2020. This represents 50% of the total growth in eligible voters during this time. In 2024, 38% of the Latino presidential electorate is new since the 2016 elections.
- Latino voters are younger voters. Due to a higher birth rate and demographic trends, much of this growth is driven by young Latino voters: in each of the next few years, over 1 million Latino citizens will turn 18 and this trend will continue after it peaks in 2025. 29% of Latinos are under 18, compared with 22% of the U.S. overall.
- Latino voters are working-class voters. Latinos will make the working-class majority minority by 2029 — growing from 21% in 2013 to 32% of the working-class in 2032. The rhetoric of both parties relies heavily on targeting working-class voters, and a recent study found that centering working people is the most effective way to communicate to Latino voters.
- Latino voters are shaping outcomes. Latinos are an increasingly significant voting population in districts with razor thin margins. In 2022, there were 36 congressional seats decided by five points or less, and Latino voters made up at least 15% of the voting age population in 18 of those districts, double the number of swing districts compared to 2020.

THE RISK OF HARM TO VOTERS AND DEMOCRACY

“Non-citizen” or “migrant” voter disinformation is a continuation of attempts to undermine our election processes that culminated in the failed January 6th insurrection. These and related attempts to interfere with our democratic processes reflect an underlying political fear that a fair fight cannot be won at the ballot box. Such disinformation, especially those that target specific communities and their fundamental rights, erodes our shared democratic values, institutions, and voter will, threatening democratic legitimacy — and our collective rights — over time.

- Disinformation about Latino voters and our election processes risk harm to our community. Threats to election officials and voters at the polls are especially increasing in places where Latinos are a growing and significant part of the eligible voting population, such as Arizona.
- The risks are real. Latinos could be wrongly perceived as non-citizen voters by poll-watchers and vigilante groups, could be asked for proof of citizenship even when no legal requirement is present, wrongfully removed from voter rolls in voter name purges, have their ballot questioned, be less likely to volunteer at the polls or be targeted for violence, intimidation and harassment on-line, in communities and on Election Day.
- There is a convergence of threats. Online platforms have weakened their policies against disinformation, both the courts and administrators of elections have been further politicized, key voting rights protections have been gutted by legal decisions and attempts to restore order by creating accountability for actual fraud are presented as proof the system is rigged (such as the appropriate prosecutions over false slates of electors). Systems that previously have assured a peaceful transfer of power remain under stress, especially after January 6.
- Racialized attempts at voter suppression go back centuries. Voting restrictions have been rooted in attacks on communities of color for a long time. For more than 60 years, Arizona law required voters to pass an English literacy test to register to vote, the authors of the 1909 law stated the intention plainly, “to block the ignorant Mexican vote.”
- Such disinformation also will be cited as a reason for additional legislative restrictions to voting rights, as happened after the Big Lie in 2020. And could be used to scapegoat the Latino community for a loss in the federal or a state election, raising the risks of violence, harassment and intimidation.

- American elections are generally secure, soundly administered and safe. Such disinformation is just a way to justify restricting access to the ballot box. Supporters know that it disproportionately disenfranchises voters of color as well as older and disabled voters:
 - Since 2020, when Latinos became the second largest voting bloc in the country, five states (Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, and Ohio) amended their state constitutions to “ensure non-citizens can’t vote in local state elections”—although they have no evidence that this is an issue.
 - Eleven states since the 2020 election have enacted laws to “identify non-citizens who have registered to vote and remove them”—although countless studies show that effective safeguards are in place.
 - The federal “Save Act” would create major barriers to registration for eligible voters, especially those who already face disproportionate barriers to participating in our democracy. It is a harmful political strategy justified by lies to suppress the vote of our communities.