

**MORE  
SPANISH-  
SURNAMED  
VOTERS  
PARTICIPATED  
IN THE 2016  
ELECTION  
THAN EVER IN  
THE 3RD  
LARGEST  
COUNTY IN  
THE NATION**



# About Presentation

The charts and tables in this presentation are based on raw data extracted from unofficial and official lists of registered voters and voters for presidential elections occurring between 2004 and 2016 in Harris County, Texas. A US Census Bureau Spanish-surname glossary was used to conduct the queries that extracted the data. The data was placed on an Excel worksheet and sorted and calculated.

It should be noted that the voter estimates produced by Spanish-surnamed analyses of a voter file vary depending on the number of surnames that are utilized to conduct a query. There are two lists commonly used to conduct voter research based on Spanish-surnames. One of the lists is called *The 639 Most Frequently Occurring Heavily Hispanic-surnames*. It comes from a paper titled “Building a Spanish Surname List for the 1990’s— A New Approach to an Old Problem.” The number of Spanish-surnamed voters it produces is extremely conservative and probably undercounts the Latino vote.

For these analyses, a more extensive US Census Bureau Spanish-surname list was employed. The list consists of over 12,000 Spanish-surnames. This list produces a higher count of Spanish-surnamed voters and possibly a more accurate estimate of the Latino vote.

Overall, the data in this presentation is sound. Still, any inaccuracy in the statistics presented is an error of the author and not of the Harris County Voter Registrar or the Harris County Election Office.

All raw data files used to create this presentation are public records.

Questions about the report can be addressed to [hectordeleon@hectordeleon.com](mailto:hectordeleon@hectordeleon.com).

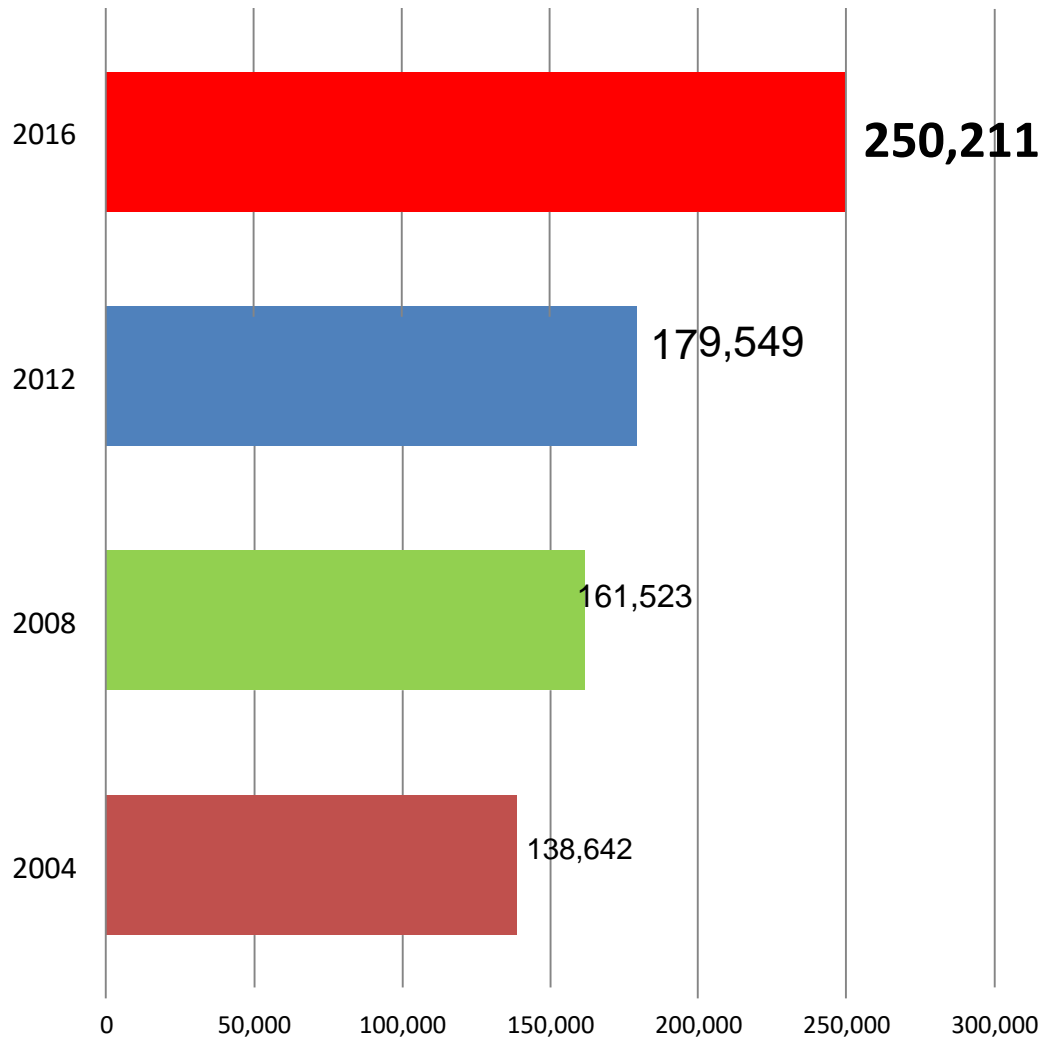
## Note

In some instances, the unavailability of the complete Date of Birth for some voters made it necessary to calculate the Age Group category by Birth Year. This impacted the calculation of raw vote totals but the impact on percentages was negligible.

**More Latinos voted in the 2016 Election than in any previous presidential election**

A Spanish-surname review of the list of voters in the third largest county in the United States indicates a significant increase in the Latino vote in the Nov. 2016 Election. Spanish-surnamed queries performed on voters records for the last four Presidential elections in Harris County, Texas using a US Census surname glossary, show that the Latino vote increased in both total numbers and overall voter percentages.

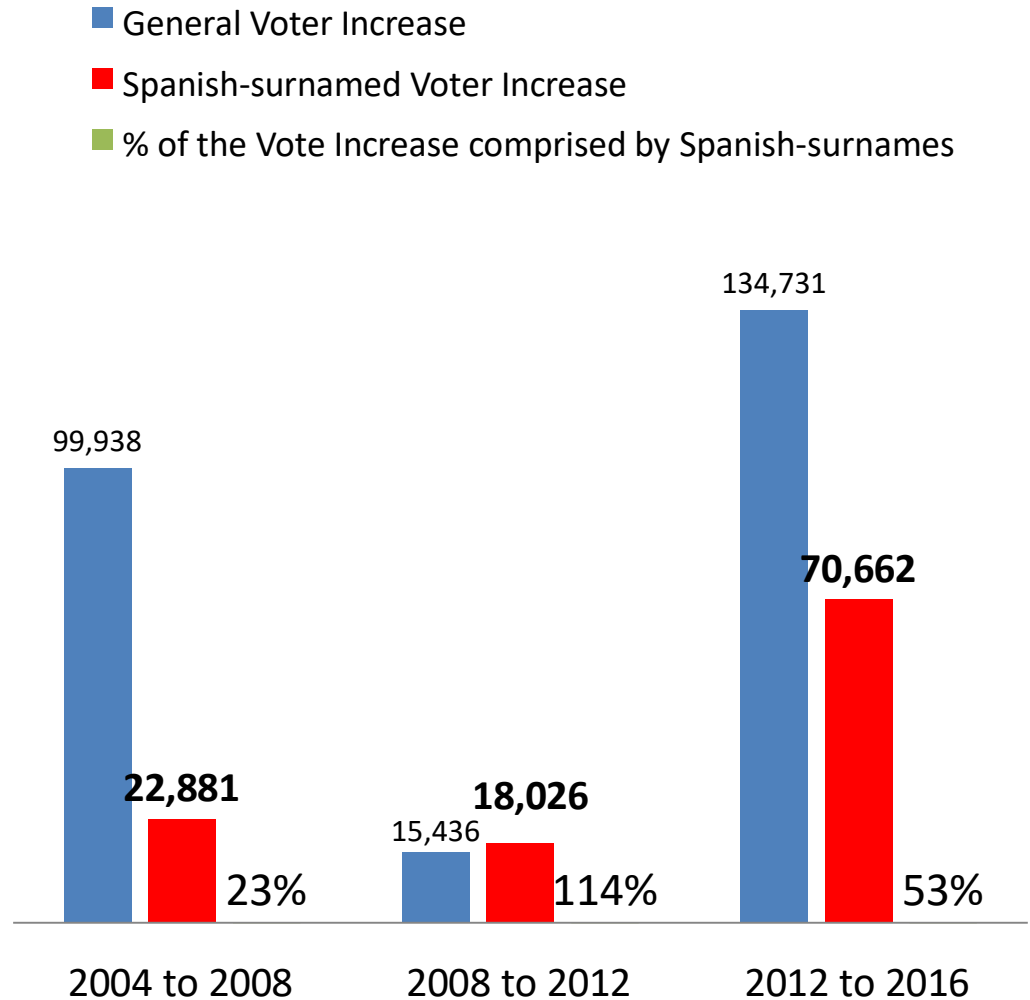
## Spanish-surnamed voters In Harris County, TX Presidential Elections



## A REMARKABLE NUMBER

In the Nov. 2016 election in Harris County, the Spanish-surnamed vote grew by 70,662. The increase is calculable by subtracting the Spanish-surnamed vote total in 2012 from the total in 2016, 179,084 from 250,211. Considering that from 2004 to 2008 the increase was 22,881 and from 2008 to 2012, it was only 18,026, that is a remarkable number.

## Raw Vote Increase by Presidential Election Cycle



## 18 TO 39 YEAR OLDS SPUR GROWTH OF LATINO VOTE

In terms of age group, a comparison of the Nov. 2012 and 2016 Spanish-surnamed vote totals in Harris County shows that among Spanish-surnamed voters the largest increase in raw votes and percentage occurred in the 18 to 39-year-old age group.

The impact of the 18 to 39-year-old Spanish surnamed vote was significant. The raw vote increased by 35,000 and the percentage jumped from 36 to 44 percent. As a result, 18 to 39-year-old Spanish-surnamed voters cast about half of the estimated 70,000 votes that Latinos added to their vote total in 2016.

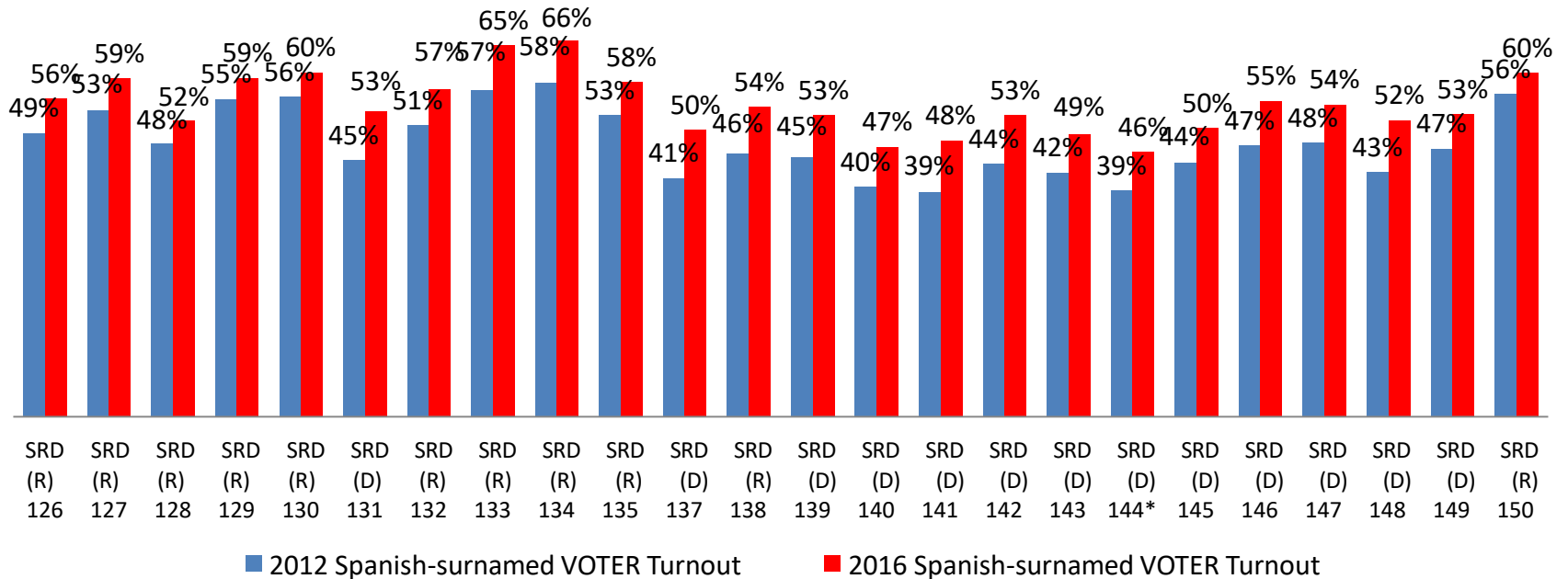
The growth of the Latino vote coincided with Spanish-surnamed voter registration increases. From 2012 to 2016 Spanish-surnamed registration went from approximately 386,000 to 469,000.

Not surprisingly, going into the Nov. 2016 election, 18 to 39-year-old Spanish-surnamed voters comprised 49 percent of the county's Spanish-surnamed registered voters.

<b>Estimated Registered Voters and Voter Turnout for Harris County Spanish Surnamed Electorate in the Nov-2012 and 2016 Election by age group</b>						
<b>Estimated Age</b>	<b>2012 Registered Voters</b>	<b>2012 Voters</b>	<b>2012 Voter Turnout</b>	<b>2016 Registered Voters</b>	<b>2016 Voters</b>	<b>2016 Voter Turnout</b>
<b>18-29</b>	97,699	35,194	<b>36%</b>	127,069	56,357	<b>44%</b>
<b>30-39</b>	87,449	36,498	<b>42%</b>	101,780	50,462	<b>50%</b>
<b>40-49</b>	74,729	36,958	<b>49%</b>	84,214	47,708	<b>57%</b>
<b>50-59</b>	63,322	34,797	<b>55%</b>	74,328	44,980	<b>61%</b>
<b>60-69</b>	37,370	22,521	<b>60%</b>	48,935	31,565	<b>65%</b>
<b>70-79</b>	16,272	9,631	<b>59%</b>	22,019	14,060	<b>64%</b>
<b>80-89</b>	6,877	3,313	<b>48%</b>	8,521	4,398	<b>52%</b>
<b>90+</b>	1,207	281	<b>23%</b>	1,830	448	<b>24%</b>
<b>Estimated Total</b>	<b>384,925</b>	<b>179,193</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>468,696</b>	<b>249,978</b>	<b>52%</b>
*Voters whose DOB was unknown were not calculated.						



## 2012 vs 2016 Spanish-surnamed Voter Turnout in Harris County, TX November General Election by State Representative District



### Turnout by SRD Suggest Education and Income Impact Voter Participation

The growth of Spanish-surnamed voters in Nov 2016 election is confirmed in the increases evident in the Latino registered voter turnout percentages in every State Representative District (SRD) within Harris County.

On the whole, in SRDs now held by Anglo or non-Hispanic White Republicans, the combined average turnout for Spanish-surnamed registered voters was 58 percent compared to 53 percent in 2012. In the five SRDs currently held by Latino Democrats, the combined average turnout for Spanish-surnamed registered voters was 49 percent, compared to 42 percent in 2012. In the six SRDs currently held by African American Democrats, the combined average turnout for Spanish-surnamed registered voters was 53 percent, compared to 47 percent in 2012. In the two SRDs currently held by Asian Democrats, the combined average turnout for Spanish-surnamed registered voters was 52 percent, compared to 44 percent in 2012.

Interestingly, at 66 percent, SRD 134 experienced the highest turnout for Spanish-surnamed registered voters. The lowest Spanish-surnamed registered voter turnout, 46 percent, was in SRD 144. The disparate turnout in these particular districts suggests that education and income have an impact on voter participation. In SRD 134, 73 percent of the population that is twenty-five year or older has a bachelor degree or higher and the annual income for 75 percent of its households is above fifty-thousand dollars. In SRD 144, six percent of the population that is twenty-five year or older has a bachelor degree or higher and the annual income for 62 percent of its households is below fifty-thousand. [Source: ACS 2010-2014 Estimates].

## SRDs held by Latinos no longer adequate barometer to gauge Latino Voter turnout

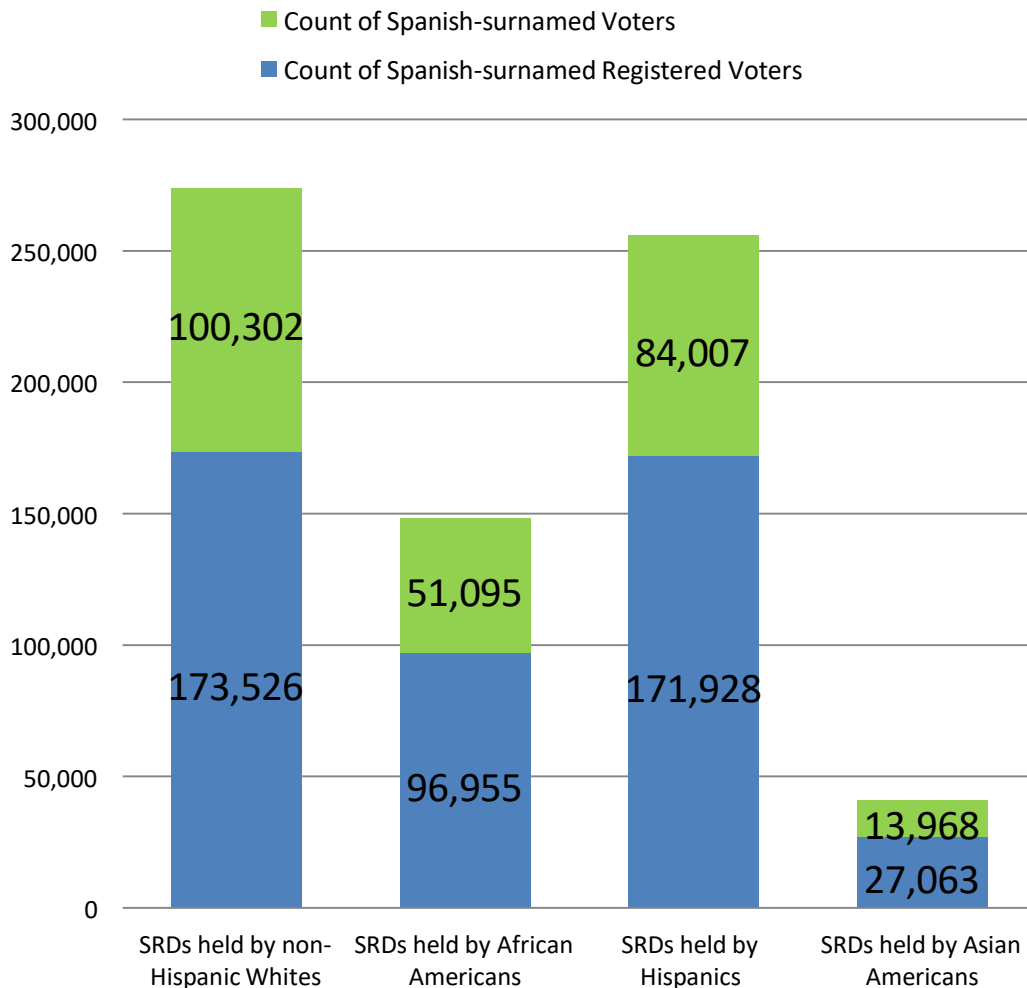
Spanish-surnamed analysis of the Nov. 2016 voter records shows that the Latino electorate is now scattered throughout Harris County.

Prior to the 2016 election, voter records show that 37 percent of the county's Spanish-surnamed registered voter population resided in State Representative Districts (SRDs) held by non-Hispanic White Republicans. These SRDs produced 40 percent of the county's Spanish-surnamed voters in the Nov. 2016 election. SRDs held by Latino Democrats had the same percent of Spanish-surnamed registered voters but produced less, 34 percent, Spanish-surnamed voters.

As it relates to other SRDs, 21 percent of the countywide Spanish-surnamed registered voter population resided in SRDs held by African-Americans Democrats. Those SRDs produced 20 percent of the county's 2016 Spanish-surnamed vote; 6 percent of the county's 2016 Spanish-surnamed registered voters resided in SRDs held by Asian-American Democrats. Those SRDs produced 6 percent of the county's Spanish-surnamed vote.

The movement of Spanish surnamed voters within Harris County may mean that SRDs held by Latinos are no longer an adequate barometer to gauge Latino voter turnout.

## 2016 Aggregate Spanish-Surnamed Electorate in Harris County, TX by State Representative Districts



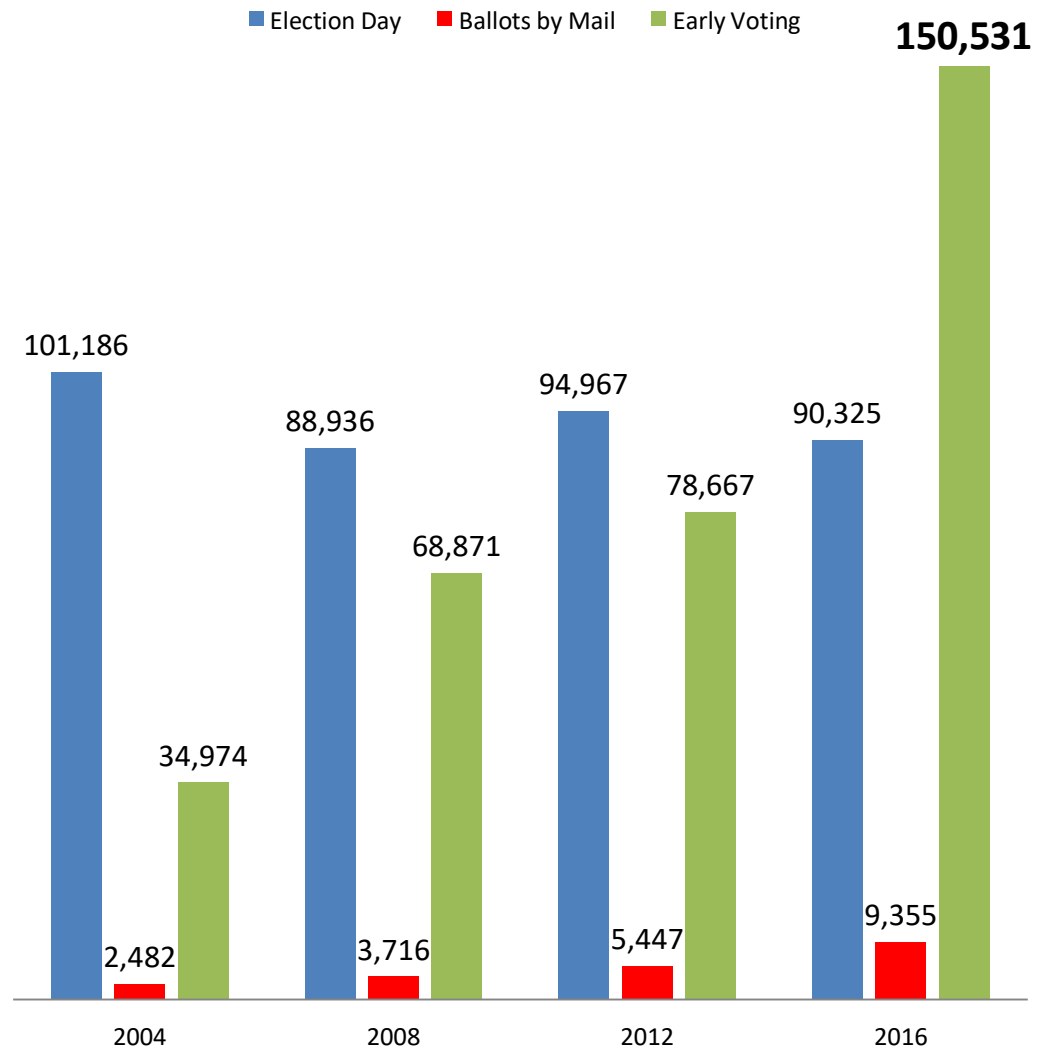


## Spanish-surnamed early voters drive Latino vote upward

In the Nov. 2016 election, driven by a near doubling of the number of Spanish-surnamed early voters, the estimated Latino voter turnout went from 47 to 53 percent in Harris County compared to 2012. The six-percent increase may seem dismal, but the improvement helped Spanish-surnamed voters account for more than half of the additional 134,731 general election votes cast in the 2016 election in Harris County.

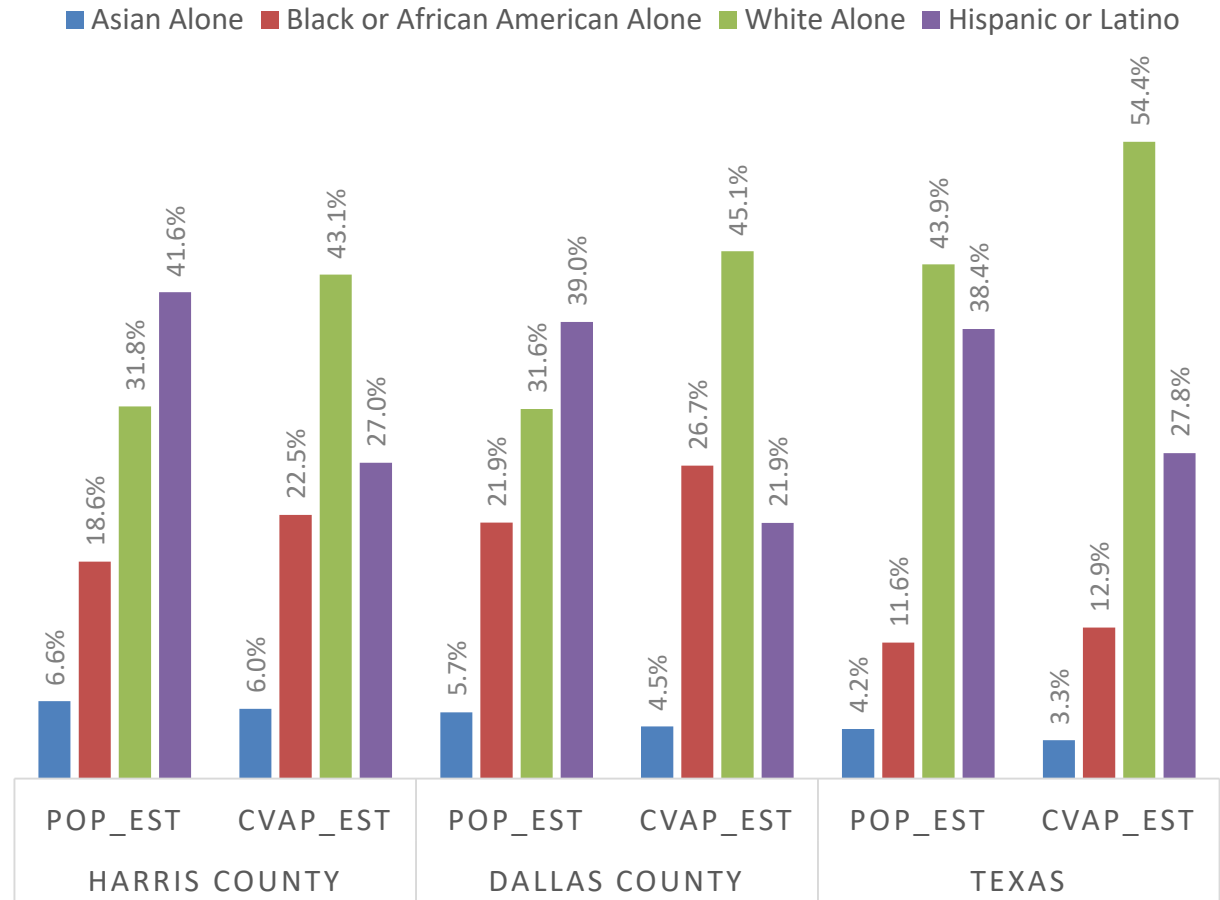
In short, the Latino voter turnout must be viewed in a context that is more than superficial.

### 2004-2016 Harris County, TX Presidential Elections: Spanish-surnamed Voters



Gauging the Latino vote is always a difficult proposition, regardless of the methodology employed. Still, the Spanish-surnamed queries conducted on the actual voter rolls provide data that show Latino voter participation reached unprecedented levels in the Nov. 2016 election in Harris County, an achievement that more than likely was replicated across Texas and the nation. Any report that says otherwise and/or does not base turnout on the Latino citizen voting age population (CVAP) should be questioned.

## AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY: POPULATION AND CVAP ESTIMATES 2011-2015



**ABOUT AUTHOR:** Hector de Leon has spent his professional life carrying out educational initiatives with the objective of enhancing voter participation and an understanding of the electoral process via private and public organizations.

Since May 2004, Hector has worked for Harris County. He was appointed Director of Communications and Voter Outreach of the office of the Harris County Clerk in 2007. In this capacity, he helps provide the citizenry of the third largest county in the nation the information needed to access the voting process, with a special focus on limited English proficient voters covered by the language provision of the 1975 Voting Rights Act and voters of African American ancestry.

Prior to joining the Harris County Clerk's Office, Hector worked for the NALEO Educational Fund from March 1993 to April 2004. He began as the volunteer recruitment coordinator and ascended to Regional Director in 1994 after Leonel Castillo, former City of Houston Controller and Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service under President Jimmy Carter, vacated the position. While with the NALEO Ed. Fund, Hector partnered with community-based groups creating an ad hoc network that worked to conduct citizenship classes, administer the U.S citizenship exam and provide assistance with the completion of naturalization application process to thousands of legal residents via the NALEO U.S. Citizenship Workshop model. The groups included The Metropolitan Organization (TMO), The Ft. Bend-Interfaith Council, Houston Community College Southeast, Centro Hispano Educativo, The Harris County Department of Education and parishes within the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, as well as local elected and non-elected leaders. In 1994, understanding that citizenship and voting go hand-in-hand, Héctor incorporated an annual voter education and voter mobilization campaign to NALEO's programmatic activities during election cycles, with the help of the local affiliates of the two major Spanish-language television networks. The campaign consisted of educational Public Service Announcements which focused on increasing awareness among Latinos about the voter registration deadline, Voting by Mail, Early Voting and Election Day. The PSAs were supplemented with voter registration activities and an effort to teach Latinos how to use the voting equipment. The effort concluded with an Election Day voter information hotline and election analysis for Spanish language television news. By 2004, the NALEO Educational Fund's national civic education activities mirrored the Houston NALEO office voter education and mobilization efforts. At the time Hector joined NALEO, the organization was known as "the nation's foremost advocate of increased access to U.S. citizenship information and assistance." By the time he left, his contributions had helped the NALEO Ed. Fund evolve into "the nation's leading nonprofit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service."

Hector began his civic engagement journey as a participant in the political action committee (PAC) Latinos Unidos from 1990 to 1994. Latinos Unidos was created by a group of Houston Latino leaders, including former Houston City Councilmember Ben T. Reyes, with the goal of increasing the participation of Latinos in the American political process. The PAC was chaired by Leonel J. Castillo. As one of the main volunteers of Latinos Unidos, Héctor was responsible for helping organize a weekly Saturday morning meeting, finding a guest speaker and coordinating a voter registration block walk. He also organized monthly voter registration efforts at U.S. Naturalization ceremonies distributing voter registration applications to thousands of new citizens every third Friday of the month; an activity he continued until 2004. In addition, he helped coordinate voter mobilization activities and voter advocacy efforts. Hector became director of the Latinos Unidos PAC laboring in the corner of Houston Councilmember Reyes' district office in the heart of the Magnolia Park neighborhood which is near the Houston Ship Channel. Under Hector's guidance, the group established an independent office and began offering U.S citizenship classes in an underserved Latino community in North Houston. Hector served as the Government and History instructor for legal residents seeking to naturalize. The Latinos Unidos meetings continued throughout the 1990s, but the PAC's regular grass-roots activities ceased after Hector joined the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund Texas office based in Houston.

Hector's work ethic and leadership helped established the NALEO Educational Fund as the preeminent non-profit civic education organization in Southeast Texas. Hector was born in Monterrey and raised [in the ejido of Albercones] in the municipality of Doctor Arroyo, in the state of Nuevo Leon, where his mother was a rural teacher for over 20 years. He is a naturalized American citizen of Mexican origin whose ancestors are native to the Americas.

Placing Context to the American Latino Experience