



Key Facts About Florida Voting Demographics

How Changing Demographics and DAPA-Affected Voters Could Impact the 2016 Elections

By Charles Posner and Lizet Ocampo | December 11, 2015

The United States is undergoing a historic demographic shift. People of color are expected to make up a majority of the population by 2044, but the political implications are already being felt.¹ By 2016, demographic shifts will be influential in shaping electoral outcomes in many states, including Florida, as voters of color become an increasingly significant share of the electorate.

Moreover, DAPA-affected voters—U.S. citizens of voting age living with unauthorized family members who would be eligible for temporary relief from deportation under President Barack Obama’s Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, or DAPA, program—will comprise sizable and potentially decisive portions of key and emerging battleground state electorates across the country, including in Florida.

The electoral impacts of a changing electorate

In Florida, voters of color comprise a larger portion of the electorate each year

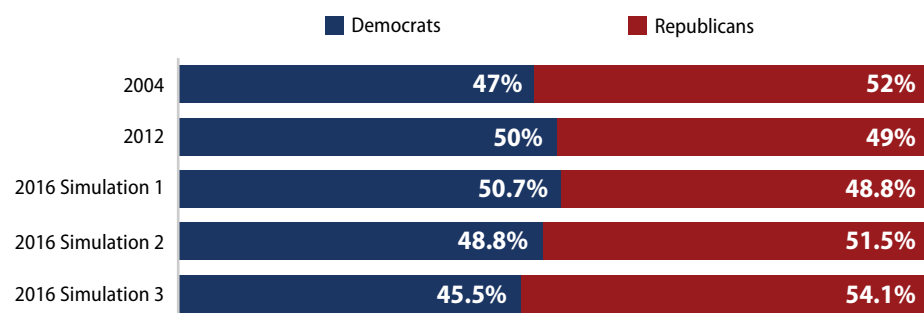
- The white electorate dropped from 81 percent of eligible voters in 1980 to 66.7 percent in 2012. It is projected to decrease further, to 64.5 percent by 2016.²
- In 1980, 4 percent of eligible voters in the state were Latino; in 2012, 16.6 percent were. By 2016, the Florida electorate’s share of Latino eligible voters is expected to have increased by another 1.6 percentage points, to 18.2 percent.³

Florida's changing demographics are making it lean more toward Democrats—but it is still a toss-up*

- In 2004, Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush had a 12-percentage-point advantage over Democratic candidate John Kerry among Latino voters, leading 56 percent to 44 percent.⁴ In 2012, Democratic candidate Barack Obama won 60 percent of Latino votes while Republican Mitt Romney received 39 percent, a 21-point margin.⁵
- If Democrats are able to hold onto 2012 levels of support from voters of color and turnout rates remain the same in 2016 (see Figure 1, 2016 Simulation 1), the Democratic margin of victory in Florida could yield a Democratic victory of 50.7 percent to Republicans' 48.8 percent in the presidential election.⁶
- If voters' party preferences reverted back to what they were in 2004 (see Figure 1, 2016 Simulation 2), when Republicans had higher levels of support from voters of color, Republicans would see the presidential race in Florida swing in their favor, winning by 51.5 percent to 48.8 percent.⁷
- If voters of color have party preferences of 2004, and white voters have party preferences of 2012 (see Figure 1, 2016 Simulation 3), Republicans will perform the strongest: The margin of victory for a Republican candidate would be nearly 9 percentage points.

FIGURE 1
Electoral impact of demographic changes in Florida

Democratic and Republican shares of votes in presidential elections



Source: Anna Chu and Charles Posner, "How the Rising Share of Latino Voters Will Impact the 2016 Elections" (Washington: Center for American Progress Action Fund, 2015), available at <https://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/immigration/report/2015/12/09/126852/how-the-rising-share-of-latino-voters-will-impact-the-2016-elections/>.

The political power of deferred action

In addition to the overall demographic shifts in Florida, DAPA-affected voters comprise a significant proportion of the state's electorate

- In 2016, Florida voters who are personally affected by DAPA will number more than 59,000. The projected number of Florida's DAPA-affected voters in 2016 is 80 percent of President Obama's 2012 margin of victory in the state.⁸

Full implementation of the deferred action initiatives would result in significant economic gains for Florida

- If DAPA; Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA; and DACA expansion were all implemented, Florida's gross domestic product would increase by \$9.4 billion; Florida residents' cumulative incomes would increase by \$6.2 billion; and more than 11,000 jobs would be created, all cumulatively over 10 years.⁹

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*** Correction, December 15, 2015:** *This fact sheet has been updated to clarify the effect of changing demographics on Florida's voting electorate.*

In 2016, there will be more than 59,000 DAPA-affected voters in Florida.

Endnotes

1 Ruy Teixeira, William H. Frey, and Rob Griffin, "States of Change: The Demographic Evolution of the American Electorate, 1974–2060" (Washington: Center for American Progress, Brookings Institution, and American Enterprise Institute, 2015), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/progressive-movement/report/2015/02/24/107261/states-of-change/>.

2 Rob Griffin, William H. Frey, and Ruy Teixeira, "Interactive: The Demographic Evolution of the American Electorate, 1980–2060," Center for American Progress, February 24, 2015, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/progressive-movement/news/2015/02/24/107166/interactive-the-demographic-evolution-of-the-american-electorate-1980-2060/>.

3 Ibid.

4 NBC News, "Exit Poll - Decision 2004 - Exit poll - president: Florida," available at <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/5297152> (last accessed December 2015).

5 Florida exit poll data from CNN, "America's Choice 2012 Election Center, President: Florida," available at <http://www.cnn.com/election/2012/results/state/FL/president/> (last accessed December 2015).

6 Anna Chu and Charles Posner, "How the Rising Share of Latino Voters Will Impact the 2016 Elections" (Washington: Center for American Progress Action Fund, 2015), available at <https://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/immigration/report/2015/12/09/126852/how-the-rising-share-of-latino-voters-will-impact-the-2016-elections/>.

7 Ibid.

8 Manuel Pastor, Tom Jawetz, and Lizet Ocampo, "DAPA Matters: The Growing Electorate Directly Affected by Executive Action on Immigration" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2015), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/report/2015/11/19/125787/dapa-matters/>.

9 Silva Mathema, "Interactive: State-by-State Analysis of the Economic Impact of DACA, DAPA, and DACA Expansion," Center for American Progress, June 15, 2015, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2015/06/15/114894/state-by-state-analysis-of-the-economic-impact-of-daca-dapa-and-daca-expansion/>.