The Hispanic Vote in Florida 2020

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Florida: What Really Happened?

1. Shifts in Latino vote did not cost Biden Florida
   a. Florida Latinos voted majority for Biden
   b. If Biden had matched Clinton 2016 Latino vote share, Trump still would have won the state of Florida by 250,000 votes

2. Democrats must increase institutional support for Hispanic outreach directors, English and Spanish communications

3. Tune-out the national narrative, need community-based messaging and appeals by geography and ethnicity. And test it.

4. Reimagine Florida campaigns. Our fundamental understanding of what it takes to win Florida needs to be challenged.
But first, what did we hear?

We talked to dozens of stakeholders to share perspectives and answer questions with one goal in mind: what exactly happened this cycle in Florida?

**WHO:** Activists, party leaders, elected officials, organization leaders, and consultants

**WHY:** Tell us what worked, what didn’t work, weaknesses and areas for growth, opportunities we need to seize on

**TOPICS:** Messaging, organizing, infrastructure, data + analytics, outreach, and timing
But first, what did we hear?

1. **It all comes down to messaging:** Florida Democrats believe they lost the messaging war, but the ‘why’ is more interesting.

2. **What do we stand for?** Many felt Democrats failed to deliver a bold, clear message of what the party and our candidates stood for. Expressing the need to more strongly define ourselves in economic populist undertones that cross across social fault lines.

3. **“Lost” the culture war.** Others felt that Florida Democrats failed to meaningfully push back against Republican attacks and that we lost ourselves in a national narrative that didn’t meet Florida where they are.

4. **“Too little, too late”:** While paid media investments were unprecedented and earned media was strong, these efforts came too long, especially after years of Republican outreach and disinformation. There were specific nods to late money from billionaires.

5. **Meet people where they are, actually:** Democrats must think more creatively about creating constant presence across social media platforms where Hispanics get their information.

6. **Disinformation isn’t a campaign, it’s the Republican strategy:** Disinformation wasn’t addressed early on and we continue to see the scope and depth of the machine. Democrats need a unified, coordinated response, but people are unsure what that is.
But first, what did we hear?

- **We need to build Democratic infrastructure**: ensuring that the party, activists, and progressive groups regularly coordinate and plan together is the first step to ensuring everything from messaging to data to outreach is built in a well-oiled machine.

- **A year-round engagement strategy isn’t just welcome, but needed.** We cannot rely on campaigns to do all of the outreach because they are deliberately temporary machines. Our organizing structure needs to be holistic, year-round, and creative in how we reach Hispanics. Many felt that the pandemic limited interactions at a moment when Hispanics at home were bombarded with disinformation, but few felt it was the principal reason for losses.

- **A worldview shift is needed in how campaigns approach Florida**: 2020 isn’t a 2020 problem. Reality is, Democrats haven’t won statewide (Gov, Prez, Senate) since 2012. Many feel we need to reimagine how campaigns think of Florida. It’s not your typical bellwether. To win, we need to approach accordingly.
But first, what did we hear?

- **Long-term party growth is needed.** Voices across the spectrum echoed a clear concern and need: bolstering the state party. Consistent talent recruitment, staffing, outreach, and messaging efforts are needed. Many also pointed to institutional strength of Florida GOP. This means better fundraising.

- **We need to recruit.** While many pointed to improved efforts, it’s hard to understate Republicans large pool of Hispanic candidates across the state. These candidates immediately gain credibility through the party and can be trusted messengers. Our party needs to do the same.
Case Study: Pandemic Response & Economic Message

Hispanics in Florida were less likely to blame Republicans for the pandemic. In qualitative interviews we heard voters say that they were not really sure what Biden’s plan was aside from wearing masks and listening to experts.

- 39% of Hispanics in FL approved of Trump’s pandemic response.
- 51% of Hispanics in FL approved of DeSantis’ handling of the pandemic.

Hispanics were split on Florida’s re-opening

- 44% thought that the state was moving too fast and reopening too quickly
- 46% thought Florida was moving at the right pace

Univision Latino poll Florida. October 2020
Back to the data....Biden won the Hispanic vote

- In 2020 a clear majority of Florida Latinos voted for Biden; and among Puerto Ricans an estimated 69% voted for Biden.

- In Miami-Dade, there were definite shifts towards Trump in Latino enclaves; however, it is FALSE that shifts in the Latino vote lost Florida for Biden.

- In 2020, Biden lost the Miami Latino vote by roughly 85,000 votes, while Clinton had narrowly won the Miami Latino vote in 2016 by 24,000 votes, a net loss of about 109,000.

- Biden lost Florida by 371,686 votes in 2020, so even if Biden had matched Clinton performance with Miami Latinos from 2016, he still loses the state of Florida by over 250,000.

- Even within Miami, Trump gained about 205,000 votes over 2016. Latino enclaves accounted for just over half of those Trump gains, but the rest of Miami-Dade also witnessed growth in Trump vote in 2020 over 2016.
Central Florida Latinos supported Biden

Across 1,152 precincts analyzed in Central Florida, Biden won an estimated 65% of the Latino vote.
Trump made gains in very high-density Latino precincts in South Florida

Precincts over 80% Latino density showed clear separation and increased vote for Trump in 2020.

Precincts that were 60% to 80% Latino were more mixed around 50-50 split on vote choice in 2020.
Trump made gains across almost all of Miami-Dade

- Trump improved from 33.8 to 46.1, net increase of 12.3 points in Miami-Dade countywide
- Across 757 precincts, only 16 precincts registered no vote share gain for Trump. Thus his gains in Miami-Dade were noticeable in every stretch of the county
- At the same time, his growth was more pronounced in high-density Cuban-American enclaves
- We divide Miami-Dade into 3 equal categories of shift from 2016 to 2020
  - Mild Trump growth (0 to 8 points)
  - Moderate Trump growth (8 to 14 points)
  - Severe Trump growth (14 points or more)
- Not all heavily Latino neighborhoods in Miami experienced severe shifts towards Trump (e.g. Hialeah vs. Kendall)
Miami-Dade Change in Vote Trump 16 to 20

Precinct Classification - Trump gains from 2016
- Mild (0-8 point gain) 253 precincts (34%)
- Moderate (8-14 gain) 252 precincts (33%)
- Severe (14+ gain) 252 precincts (33%)

Countywide
- 253 (34%)
- 252 (33%)
- 757 (100%)
### Miami-Dade Change in Vote Trump 16 to 20

#### Precinct Classification - Trump gains from 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild (0-8 point gain)</td>
<td>253 (34%)</td>
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<td>Moderate (8-14 gain)</td>
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#### Countywide

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<tr>
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<th>Latino</th>
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<tr>
<td>253 (34%)</td>
<td>36 (9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>252 (33%)</td>
<td>129 (33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>252 (33%)</td>
<td>221 (57%)</td>
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<td>757 (100%)</td>
<td>386 (100%)</td>
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Miami-Dade Trump-Biden vote share 2020
Central Florida was much more reliable for Biden compared to 2016

- Trump was mostly stagnant in Orange County, from 35.4 to 37.9 from 2016 to 2020
- Across precincts 247 precincts, Trump experienced mild to no gain at all in 220 precincts
- Trump gained by over 8 points in only 27 precincts, however, these were more likely to be in majority-Hispanic areas of Orange County.
- Despite making some gains in vote share among Latinos in Central Florida, Latino voter turnout was up dramatically compared to 2016 and Biden still won Latinos here by 2-to-1 margin
  - Latino vote growth contributed to increases in net margin for Biden over Trump (compared to Clinton)
- I-4 Florida was a bright spot for Biden, he increased his net vote margin compared to Clinton
  - Orange County: Clinton +135k; Biden +150k
  - Hillsborough County: Clinton +41k; Biden +49k
Orange Co. Change in Vote Trump 16 to 20

Precinct Classification - Trump gains from 2016

Countywide

- 220 (89%)
- 25 (10%)
- 2 (1%)
- 247 (100%)
Orange Co. Change in Vote Trump 16 to 20

Precinct Classification - Trump gains from 2016

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>220 (89%)</td>
<td>20 (44%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25 (10%)</td>
<td>24 (53%)</td>
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<td>2 (1%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>247 (100%)</td>
<td>45 (100%)</td>
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Biden won strong 2-to-1 majorities in nearly every heavily Latino precinct in Orange County.
What does this data mean?

1. Data reveal what Latino analysts and consultants in Florida know well
   a. Among Hispanic voters, no set percent is guaranteed for either party;
   b. fluctuates from one election to the next;
   c. varies considerably by region, ethnicity, age
   d. has a large share of first-time voters and non-partisans;
   e. requires consistent and steady outreach

2. In 2020, data show clear areas of Hispanic shifts towards Trump in South Florida
3. Even in Miami, Hispanic shifts only explain about half of Trump gains
4. In Central Florida, a large Puerto Rican vote buoyed Biden - but Democrats can win more support here
What’s Next?

- We’ll be the first to admit: we don’t have the exact answers. But we have a sense of what it’s going to take:

- **Start a movement.** We need a platform for stakeholders to continue the conversations we’ve been having. Here is where we can start the hard work of messaging ideas, new outreach ideas, reimagining our Florida approach for campaigns, and more. We’ll coordinate the first one - let’s talk in the spring.

- **Put our ideas to test.** We need to do a lot more research - and it’s not going to be “Florida Hispanic data”. As we develop messaging ideas, it’s going to require significant investment in testing, micro-targeted focus groups, and more. This will inform everything from paid media to organizing models.

- **Reshape our perception of what it takes to win here.** Democratic campaigns and operatives can no longer operate under a parachute, late-investment approach. It didn’t work, not just this cycle, but in prior. This needs to be a message hammered in from top down.
What’s Next?

- **A bold, Florida-specific message to Hispanics.** Florida Democrats need to build a strong message centered around a clear, concise definition of what Democrats stand for. We recommend sticking to the basics: you and your family’s pocketbook. Stick to this message and stay above the national fray, even when it’s hard not to.
  - We think the best way to push back on disinformation starts with being easily and readily definable. A new administration is a good launching pad.

- **Reimagining Florida Hispanic organizing.** We started something new and exciting here, but it’s clear that there’s significant work to be done to bolster our efforts to match and reach the diversity of Florida’s Hispanic communities. This will require ongoing community presence, year-round organizing, and developing new ways to consistently reach Florida Hispanics and break through.

- **Disinformation is going to take time and coordinated action.** Just last week, we saw glimmers of just that. This machine is robust and well-coordinated; so should our response. The work begins with actions like these and a multi-pronged communications and lobbying effort.