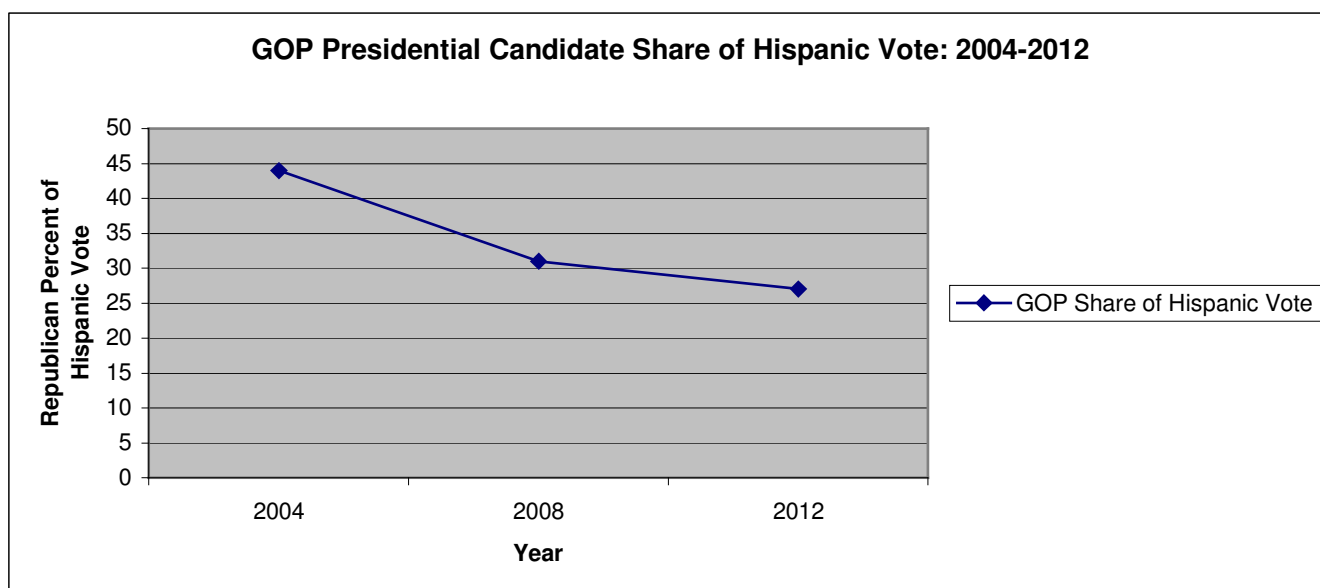


EXIT POLL DATA ON THE 2012 ELECTION

Many analysts believe the results of the 2012 presidential election will influence the course of U.S. immigration policy. In particular, analysts have focused on the recent decline in the percentage of the Hispanic vote garnered by Republican presidential candidates. “In 2004, George W. Bush – an immigration-friendly Republican who spoke semi-passable Spanish – won re-election with about 40% of the Hispanic vote. This year, immigration hardliner Mitt Romney got about 27% of the Hispanic vote, according to the main exit poll – four points fewer than John McCain in 2008,” wrote the *Wall Street Journal* in a post-election editorial.¹ According to CNN and the *New York Times*, George W. Bush received 44 percent of the Hispanic vote vs. 27 percent for Mitt Romney.



Source: CNN, *New York Times*, 2004, 2008 and 2012 exit polling data.

At the same time Hispanics have become more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate for president, the percentage of the electorate identified as Hispanic has risen, and is projected to rise further. According to exit poll data, 8 percent of the electorate was Hispanic in 2004, 9 percent in 2008, and 10 percent in 2012. (See Table 1.)

Table 1
Hispanic Percentage of U.S. Electorate

Year	Hispanic Percentage of U.S. Electorate
2004	8 percent
2008	9 percent
2012	10 percent

Source: CNN, *New York Times*, 2004, 2008 and 2012 exit polling data.

¹ “Estimados Republicanos,” Review & Outlook, *The Wall Street Journal*, November 7, 2012.

Table 2
2012 Hispanic Vote By State for Democratic Presidential Candidate

	Colorado	Florida	Nevada	North Carolina	Ohio	Virginia	Wisconsin
Percent of Hispanics Voting for Democratic Presidential Candidate in 2012	75%	60%	71%	65%	56%	64%	67%

Source: *New York Times*, November 8, 2012.

Table 2 provides state data on the Hispanic vote. The exit poll data for swing states show 75 percent of Hispanics in Colorado voted for Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama. In Nevada, the figure was 71 percent. In the close states of Virginia, Florida and Ohio, Hispanic voters supported the Democrat 64 percent, 60 percent and 56 percent respectively. In North Carolina and Wisconsin, the figures were 65 percent and 67 percent.²

IMPREMEDIA-LATINO DECISIONS POLL

In addition to the national exit poll, other data exist on the 2012 election. “The ImpreMedia-Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll of 5,600 Latino voters has indicated that the Economy/Jobs and Immigration were the most important issues to Latino voters in 2012,” notes Latino Decisions. “53% of Latino voters nationally who were surveyed during the final days of the campaign indicate that the Economy and Jobs was the most important issue facing the Latino community, with 35% of Latino voters indicating that Immigration was the most important issue. This is reflective of what we have found in our polls throughout the entire campaign season, as the economy and immigration have consistently been identified as the dominant issues among Latino voters.”³

Table 3
“What Are the Most Important Issues Facing the Latino Community That You Think Congress and the President Should Address?”

Economy	53 percent
Immigration	35 percent
Education	20 percent
Health Care	14 percent

Source: ImpreMedia-Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll of 5,600 Latino voters.

² Exit poll data from the *New York Times*, November 8, 2012, p. 1.

³ “Economy and Immigration Are Top Issues to Latino Voters in 2012,” Latino Decisions, November 6, 2012.

Exit Poll Data on the 2012 Election

Polling by ImpreMedia-Latino Decisions indicated an even wider margin of support for Barack Obama over Mitt Romney than the national exit poll data used by the national media. ImpreMedia-Latino Decisions polling showed 75 percent of Hispanics supporting Obama and 23 percent for Romney.⁴

Table 4

“Did Romney’s Immigration Policy Positions Make You Feel More Enthusiastic, Less Enthusiastic, or Did Not Change Feelings About Romney?”

Less Enthusiastic About Romney	57 percent
More Enthusiastic About Romney	7 percent
No Impact	27 percent

Source: ImpreMedia-Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll of 5,600 Latino voters.

“As we have been consistently reporting throughout the campaign, immigration policy was the key policy that likely explains the significant gap in vote choice for Latinos in 2012,” according to Latino Decisions. “Romney’s policy stance on immigration led nearly 60% of Latino voters to feel less enthusiastic about him, while President Obama benefited from a 58% increase in enthusiasm for his deferred action policy.”⁵

The deferred action policy allowed young people who came to the United States as minors to receive at least temporary relief from deportation. Writing about the policy back in June, the *Wall Street Journal’s* Jason Riley wrote, “The Republican presidential candidate is hoping that the White House decision to act without Congress is less popular than the new policy itself, but so far the polling suggest otherwise . . . Which is to say that Mr. Obama might have gotten away with an even more aggressive order and still won the support of most voters. Mr. Romney ought to keep this in mind as he goes about courting the Latino vote. The hard-line stance on illegal immigration that helped him win the GOP nomination could well become a political loser in November.”⁶

Table 5

“Did Deferred Action Policy Make You Feel More Enthusiastic, Less Enthusiastic, or Did Not Change Feelings About Obama?”

Less Enthusiastic About Obama	6 percent
More Enthusiastic About Obama	58 percent
No Impact	32 percent

Source: ImpreMedia-Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll of 5,600 Latino voters.

⁴ “Obama Wins 75% of Latino Vote, Marks Historic Latino Influence in Presidential Election,” Latino Decisions, November 7, 2012.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Jason L. Riley, “Romney’s Immigration Moment,” Political Diary, *Wall Street Journal*, June 22, 2012.

Table 6
Latino Voter Poll: Mitt Romney and the Latino Community

Romney Cares About the Latino Community	14 percent
Romney Doesn't Care Much About the Latino Community	56 percent
Romney is Hostile Toward Latinos	18 percent

Source: ImpreMedia-Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll of 5,600 Latino voters.

Table 7
Latino Voter Poll: Barack Obama and the Latino Community

Obama Cares About the Latino Community	66 percent
Obama Doesn't Care Much About the Latino Community	23 percent
Obama is Hostile Toward Latinos	3 percent

Source: ImpreMedia-Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll of 5,600 Latino voters.

APPENDIX

PARTY PLATFORMS ON IMMIGRATION

2012 REPUBLICAN PARTY PLATFORM

The Rule of Law: Legal Immigration

The greatest asset of the American economy is the American worker. Just as immigrant labor helped build our country in the past, today's legal immigrants are making vital contributions in every aspect of our national life. Their industry and commitment to American values strengthens our economy, enriches our culture, and enables us to better understand and more effectively compete with the rest of the world. Illegal immigration undermines those benefits and affects U.S. workers. In an age of terrorism, drug cartels, human trafficking, and criminal gangs, the presence of millions of unidentified persons in this country poses grave risks to the safety and the sovereignty of the United States. Our highest priority, therefore, is to secure the rule of law both at our borders and at ports of entry.

We recognize that for most of those seeking entry into this country, the lack of respect for the rule of law in their homelands has meant economic exploitation and political oppression by corrupt elites. In this country, the rule of law guarantees equal treatment to every individual, including more than one million immigrants to whom we grant permanent residence every year. That is why we oppose any form of amnesty for those who, by intentionally violating the law, disadvantage those who have obeyed it. Granting amnesty only rewards and encourages more law breaking. We support the mandatory use of the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (S.A.V.E.) program – an internet-based system that verifies the lawful presence of applicants – prior to the granting of any State or federal government entitlements or IRS refunds. We insist upon enforcement at the workplace through verification systems so that jobs can be available to all legal workers. Use of the E-verify program – an internet-based system that verifies the employment authorization and identity of employees – must be made mandatory nationwide. State enforcement efforts in the workplace must be welcomed, not attacked. When Americans need jobs, it is absolutely essential that we protect them from illegal labor in the workplace. In addition, it is why we demand tough penalties for those who practice identity theft, deal in fraudulent documents, and traffic in human beings. It is why we support Republican legislation to give the Department of Homeland Security long-term detention authority to keep dangerous but deportable aliens off our streets, expedite expulsion of criminal aliens, and make gang membership a deportable offense.

The current Administration's approach to immigration has undermined the rule of law at every turn. It has lessened work-site enforcement – and even allows the illegal aliens it does uncover to walk down the street to the next employer – and challenged legitimate State efforts to keep communities safe, suing them for trying to enforce the law when the federal government refuses to do so. It has created a backdoor amnesty program unrecognized in law, granting worker authorization to illegal aliens, and shown little regard for the life-and-death situations facing the men and women of the border patrol.

Perhaps worst of all, the current Administration has failed to enforce the legal means for workers or employers who want to operate within the law. In contrast, a Republican Administration and Congress will partner with local governments through cooperative enforcement agreements in Section 287g of the Immigration and Nationality Act to make communities safer for all and will consider, in light of both current needs and historic practice, the utility of a legal and reliable source of foreign labor where needed through a new guest worker program. We will create humane procedures to encourage illegal aliens to return home voluntarily, while enforcing the law against those who overstay their visas.

Exit Poll Data on the 2012 Election

State efforts to reduce illegal immigration must be encouraged, not attacked. The pending Department of Justice lawsuits against Arizona, Alabama, South Carolina, and Utah must be dismissed immediately. The double-layered fencing on the border that was enacted by Congress in 2006, but never completed, must finally be built. In order to restore the rule of law, federal funding should be denied to sanctuary cities that violate federal law and endanger their own citizens, and federal funding should be denied to universities that provide in-state tuition rates to illegal aliens, in open defiance of federal law.

We are grateful to the thousands of new immigrants, many of them not yet citizens, who are serving in the Armed Forces. Their patriotism should encourage us all to embrace the newcomers legally among us, assist their journey to full citizenship, and help their communities avoid isolation from the mainstream of society. To that end, while we encourage the retention and transmission of heritage tongues, we support English as the nation's official language, a unifying force essential for the educational and economic advancement of – not only immigrant communities – but also our nation as a whole.

2012 DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM

Strengthening the American Community

Immigration. Democrats are strongly committed to enacting comprehensive immigration reform that supports our economic goals and reflects our values as both a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. The story of the United States would not be possible without the generations of immigrants who have strengthened our country and contributed to our economy. Our prosperity depends on an immigration system that reflects our values and meets America's needs. But Americans know that today, our immigration system is badly broken—separating families, undermining honest employers and workers, burdening law enforcement, and leaving millions of people working and living in the shadows.

Democrats know there is broad consensus to repair that system and strengthen our economy, and that the country urgently needs comprehensive immigration reform that brings undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and requires them to get right with the law, learn English, and pay taxes in order to get on a path to earn citizenship. We need an immigration reform that creates a system for allocating visas that meets our economic needs, keeps families together, and enforces the law. But instead of promoting the national interest, Republicans have blocked immigration reform in Congress and used the issue as a political wedge.

Despite the obstacles, President Obama has made important progress in implementing immigration policies that reward hard work and demand personal responsibility. Today, the Southwest border is more secure than at any time in the past 20 years. Unlawful crossings are at a 40-year low, and the Border Patrol is better staffed than at any time in its history. We are continuing to work to hold employers accountable for whom they hire. The Department of Homeland Security is prioritizing the deportation of criminals who endanger our communities over the deportation of immigrants who do not pose a threat, such as children who came here through no fault of their own and are pursuing an education. President Obama's administration has streamlined the process of legal immigration for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, supporting family reunification as a priority, and has enhanced opportunities for English-language learning and immigrant integration. When states sought to interfere with federal immigration law by passing local measures targeting immigrants, this administration challenged them in court.

President Obama and the Democrats fought for the DREAM Act, legislation ensuring that young people who want to contribute fully to our society and serve our country are able to become legal residents and ultimately citizens. Although this bill has a long history of bipartisan support, Republicans decided to play politics with it rather than do the right thing. So the Obama administration provided temporary relief for youth who came to the United States

Exit Poll Data on the 2012 Election

as children, through no fault of their own, grew up as Americans and are poised to make a real contribution to our country.

"We congratulate President Barack Obama for giving hope to millions of aspiring citizens when he announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Immigrant youth—who grow up attending our schools, churches, and places of recreation—come to this nation with the same desires and ideals the forefathers had; liberty, justice, and the pursuit of happiness. In order to create immigration policies that reflect our nation's values, lawmakers must work together to protect the rights of all and create a road map that allows immigrants to become full-fledged citizens. With our dreams, work, and talent we can help make America a more just and prosperous country."—Gaby Pacheco, Listening to America hearing participant

These are not permanent fixes. Only Congress can provide a permanent, comprehensive solution. But these are steps in the right direction. President Obama and the Democratic Party stand for comprehensive immigration reform that intelligently prioritizes our country's security and economic needs, while Mitt Romney and the Republicans have opposed commonsense reforms and pandered to the far right.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN POLICY

Established in the Fall 2003, the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan public policy research organization based in Arlington, Virginia focusing on trade, immigration and related issues. The Advisory Board members include Columbia University economist Jagdish Bhagwati, former U.S. Senator and Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, Ohio University economist Richard Vedder, former INS Commissioner James Ziglar and other prominent individuals. Over the past 24 months, NFAP's research has been written about in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and other major media outlets. The organization's reports can be found at www.nfap.com.