



## Hispanics to Outnumber Whites in Texas By 2022: What's the Political Significance?

While the influx of immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American nations has slowed, and there has been a slight decline in the birth rate of Hispanics, demographer Lloyd Potter is predicting that this group will eventually outnumber non-Hispanic whites in Texas.

“We had projected that the Latino population would exceed the [white population] by 2020 and that’s probably not going to happen,” Potter said, after reviewing data released Thursday from the U.S. Census Bureau. But he does expect such a demographic shift to take place by 2022, if present trends continue.



The Hispanic population in Texas is in excess of 11 million, and added 234,000 more Hispanic residents over the year.

Hispanics have tended to have more children than whites; indeed, whites have been having fewer and fewer babies over the past few decades. In the 1960s, Americans were urged to have fewer babies (anyone remember ZPG — zero population growth?) and the U.S. population, then of mostly European ancestry, complied. The Hispanic population, on the other hand, did not “get the memo.”

In addition to Hispanics, Texas has the largest population of African-Americans of any other state — almost four million.

Even if Hispanics outnumber whites in Texas in 2022, it will not mean an immediate shift of the state away from a “red” Republican state to a “purple” swing state, or even a “blue” Democrat state. Southern Methodist University political science professor Cal Jillson told *The Dallas Morning News*, “There’s a 20-year gulf between where we are now and when a Hispanic electorate will help create a [Democratic] majority.”

If the voting patterns of other American states continue as they are presently (not a sure thing, as seen with the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania flipping from Democrat to Republican in the last presidential election), should Hispanics make Texas a Democrat state like California, then Republicans can forget ever winning another presidential election again for decades — if ever.

Some, of course, dismiss such concerns, arguing that Hispanic immigrants, because of their work ethic and devotion to family, are “natural conservatives.” While many are indeed hard workers and family-oriented, the truth is that they tend, as their predecessors, to vote for the “party of government,” the party that provides more social programs. Sadly, the reality is that for the majority, government social-program availability trumps social conservatism when they enter the voting booth.

Other analysts counter that once these immigrants assimilate, and no longer have to depend upon such



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government programs, they tend to vote much more conservatively. This is no doubt possible, but by the time this happens (if it does), what will be the political situation then? Once a government program is implemented, it is almost impossible for it to be abolished.

The political situation today is far different from that which existed in early American history, and even from that which existed when the waves of European immigrants arrived in the late 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. The America today's immigrants encounter is far different, offering a cornucopia of government benefits, which discourages work and self-reliance and encourages dependence upon government and those politicians who provide such benefits. This creates a permanent "underclass" that provides a reliable voting bloc for those who stay in power by promising an ever-expanding welfare state. Immigrants of yesteryear did not expect to be taken care of by a paternalistic government (which did not exist at the time), much less given free cell phones (had they been available then). As Tom Woods wrote for the Foundation for Economic Education in his essay entitled "Liberty and Immigration," "The current crisis is indeed unique in American history."

What can believers in limited government do, with the possible prospect of Texas going the way of California? Certainly, more Hispanic candidates such as Senator Ted Cruz, who wins a larger percentage of the Hispanic vote in the Lone Star State than most other Republicans, can be beneficial in winning a larger percentage of the Hispanic population.

But the idea that conservatives could win the hearts and minds of immigrants simply by taking an open-borders stance is ludicrous. In 1984, Ronald Reagan won 44 percent of the Hispanic vote. He then signed off on an amnesty plan in 1986, but the percentage of the Hispanic vote has continued to drop, even with pro-immigration presidents such as the Bushes.

What happened in California, once a reliably Republican state, could very well provide the template for what will happen in Texas a generation from now.

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