



AP Images

Florida's Republican Latinos Stand Behind Trump Amid Immigration Rhetoric

Democrats are making much ado about Trump's immigration rhetoric and its supposed ramifications for his candidacy among Latino voters. But the anticipated outrage among the important Latino Republican voting bloc of Florida has thus far failed to materialize.

As [Politico](#) reports, Trump's recent remark that illegal aliens are "poisoning the blood" of America may cause some discomfort among these Latin Republicans, but they are nevertheless letting it slide as they recognize the

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negative consequences of illegal immigration and shoot down Joe Biden's claim that Trump is channeling Adolf Hitler.

"I know he's not Hitler," Rep. Carlos Giménez (R-Fla.) told the outlet, although he added that "I don't agree with the rhetoric. While I support the president, I certainly don't support everything he says."

Ernesto Ackerman, a GOP committeeman in Florida who represents the advocacy group Independent Venezuelan American Citizens, said he doesn't think the comment will cost Trump support among Hispanics in the Sunshine State.

"We know that Trump is not a diplomatic politician," Ackerman told *Politico*. "He has his way of saying things that sound very rude and very aggressive, but that's the way he talks." Ackerman also gave his opinion that more diplomatic language would not change the fact "that people are coming here through open borders and we don't know who's coming."

One of the largest factors in statewide Florida elections is the large presence, especially in South Florida, of Latino communities made up of populations that escaped oppressive socialist regimes, such as Cubans and Venezuelans. This differentiates Florida's Latino demographic from that of states such as California, New Mexico, and Arizona — where the majority are economic migrants from Mexico and Central America.

Despite Trump's hawkish stances and rhetoric on immigration from Latin America, his aggressive style and perceived anti-socialism have endeared him to Florida Hispanics and made the Sunshine State less competitive — to Republicans' favor.

In 2016, Trump had only a 1.2-percent victory margin over Hillary Clinton, with Clinton winning Hispanic-heavy Miami-Dade County by a resounding 30 points. Four years later, Trump increased his statewide margin of victory to 3.4 points. While Biden won Miami-Dade, he did so by only 7 points.

Republican Hialeah Mayor Esteban Bovo, who attended the November rally in his town (which Trump held there rather than attend the simultaneously occurring GOP presidential debate), said that, by comparing Trump to Hitler, Democrats are merely creating a "political narrative" to distract from Biden's woes, such as the poor state of the economy.

"Perhaps the choice of words or the description might not be the one one would like to hear, but make no mistake: It does hurt us as a country when people are coming not to be part of the American dream but to take and to be reliant on public housing and health care and government handouts," said Bovo.

Politico also reported:

In contrast, Democrats have quickly moved to condemn Trump's comments, noting similarities to Hitler's autobiography "Mein Kampf." After Trump said he wouldn't be a dictator "except for Day One" by working to "close the border," Biden's campaign last week launched bilingual ads in battleground states that compared Trump to Venezuelan leftist leaders Nicolás Maduro and his predecessor Hugo Chávez. Those ads, however, did not air in Florida.

Instead, the Biden campaign aired two Spanish-language ads in South Florida during the Miami GOP debate and during a Trump interview on Univision. The ads were targeted to Cuban- and Venezuelan-Americans, highlighting "how President Biden has proven to be unafraid to stand up against dictators, and is fighting for freedom and opportunity."

In other words, Democrats have realized that, if they want to have any hope of winning South Florida Latinos, the key is not to attack Republicans from the left, but to try to depict themselves as defenders of liberty against the kind of authoritarianism from which the Cubans, Venezuelans, and other demographics fled.

However, it's bound to be a difficult effort when voters can easily look at Democratic policies and realize the

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party, now more than ever before, is pushing the same radical socialism that brought many a Latin American republic to ruin. While Democrats have gauged that moving to the left is gaining them support among certain demographics in certain regions, it is eroding their appeal in Florida — long considered a toss-up, must-win state in presidential elections.

“It’s very hard to believe as many people voted for him when he says they are all rapists and murderers. How people support that, I don’t understand, but it is what it is,” said Hendry County Democratic chair Keith Richter. Yet his confusion at the appeal of Trump reveals one of the weaknesses in Democrats’ strategy:

While Democrats’ racial-identity politics has arguably met with success within the black community in recent years (especially after the death of George Floyd), their attempt to do the same with Hispanics is not bearing the same kind of fruit. With Hispanic voters, especially those in Florida, ideological and economic concerns have more weight.

And because Trump so strongly embodies these ideological and economic values, Republican Latinos in Florida are willing to overlook the “mean words” that the Mainstream Media tells them they should care about.