Election Results Reignite Conservatives’ Interest in Immigration Reform

Recognizing the inevitable, Speaker of the House John Boehner endorsed comprehensive immigration reform on Thursday noting “I think a comprehensive approach is long overdue, and I’m confident that the president, myself, others, can find the common ground to take care of this issue once and for all.”

Speaker Boehner is not alone, as conservative politicians and strategists acknowledge what has been evident for a long, long time—the failure to address immigration reform has broken out of its political box, becoming a litmus test for compassion among many key voting demographics—Latinos, women, young people. Columnist George Will attributed Mitt Romney’s defeat to his embrace of self-deportation, and many commentators firmly opposed immigration reform for years are finally getting religion on the subject. Fox News Commentator Sean Hannity said, after the election, that he has “evolved” on immigration and supports a “pathway to citizenship.”

What does it all mean?

Immigration reform has always been a matter of when, not if. America doesn’t run on hate, even though its political process can be derailed for years by highly organized pockets of voters with “anti-something” agendas. However, as George Will noted, “demography is destiny.” Opinions change as voters change, and the history of America reflects an ever more tolerant society—one where the battleground issues of one generation become the “of course” issues of the next. From religious freedom to civil rights to women’s rights to gay rights, the general public was often ready to recognize the moral imperative for equal, just, tolerant laws long before Congress could shift course. This was undermined with the addition of anti-immigrant voters who pushed stubbornness.
2012 ELECTION RESULTS

OBAMA 332

ROMNEY 206

[Map showing the results of the 2012 US presidential election with states colored in red and blue]
Throughout this election cycle, the issue of immigration has been an important issue for Hispanics. In the national exit poll, voters were asked about what should happen to unauthorized immigrants working in the U.S. According to the national exit poll, 77% of Hispanic voters said these immigrants should be offered a chance to apply for legal status while 18% said these immigrants should be deported. Among all voters, fewer than two-thirds (65%) said these immigrants should be offered a chance to apply for legal status while 28% say they should be deported.

PEW HISPANIC CENTER 11/07/2012
### NATIONWIDE

#### Full Results
- **Gender**
  - Men
  - Women
- **Nativity**
  - US Born
  - Naturalized
- **Latino Origin**
  - Mexican
  - Puerto Rican
  - Cuban
  - Dominican
  - Central American
  - South American
- **Language**
  - English
  - Spanish
- **Religion**
  - Catholic
  - Born Again
- **Age**
  - 18-30

### Obama Latino Outreach
- Truly cares about Latinos: 66%
- Does not care about Latinos: 3%
- Hostile toward Latinos: 23%

### Romney Latino Outreach
- Truly cares about Latinos: 14%
- Does not care about Latinos: 56%
- Hostile toward Latinos: 18%

### Deferred Action Impact on Vote
- More enthusiastic Obama: 58%
- Less enthusiastic Obama: 4%
- No impact: 32%

### Romney Immigration Positions Impact on Vote
- More enthusiastic Romney: 7%
- Less enthusiastic Romney: 27%
- No impact: 27%

### Know Undocumented Immigrants
- Yes: 60%
- No: 36%

### GOP Vote if CIR Support
- More likely vote GOP: 31%
- Less likely vote GOP: 11%
- No impact: 48%

### Spanish News Online
- Daily: 35%
- Weekly: 24%
- Monthly: 9%
- Rare/Never: 40%

### Spanish Television News
- Daily: 39%
- Weekly: 24%
- Monthly: 6%
- Rare/Never: 30%

### Spanish Radio News
- Daily: 28%
- Weekly: 28%
- Monthly: 8%
- Rare/Never: 40%
"We understand that we can't keep kicking this can down the road..."
“We cannot get so focused on one issue that we lose sight of what the motivation is for most women: it’s about security, it’s about being the sole breadwinner and figuring out how they get their kids to college, its about working two or three jobs so they can get a car so they can get their kid to daycare without struggling to figure out the bus routes,” McCaskill said
At around the time that Mitt Romney was winning the primary by attacking his opponents for being too soft on immigration, the largest state Republican Party in America was ridding its platform of its most restrictionist immigration language and calling for a program to allow unauthorized immigrants to stay in the U.S. legally and work.

What are they proposing? A border wall? That’s massive confiscation of private property. We oppose that in every other context. It’s a big-government, big-spending project. We oppose that in every other context. Arming the government with greater police powers? We oppose that in every other context. This is big-government liberalism, and for conservatives it just makes no sense.”

*Art Martinez de Vara*
NEW AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

12.9% of Americans are foreign born.
21.2% of Americans are Latino or Asian.

37% of immigrants in the US are eligible to vote.
10.2% of registered voters are New Americans.

The United States has 690,923 foreign students who contribute $18.8 billion to the state economy.

Asian-owned businesses in the US have sales and receipts of $506 billion.
Latino-owned businesses in the US have sales and receipts of $350.7 billion.

Immigrants are 15.8% of the US workforce. 5.2% of the workforce is unauthorized.

The purchasing power of the U.S. Latino population and Asian population, respectively, is $1 trillion and $543.7 billion.

4.5 million U.S. citizen children have at least one parent who is unauthorized.
82.2% of children with immigrant parents are English proficient.

DID YOU KNOW? The US would lose $551.6 billion in economic activity if unauthorized immigrants were removed.
Figure 1: Latino & Asian Buying Power, 2012 & 2017

Figure 2: Immigrant Share of Small Business Owners, by State, 2007

- California: 33%
- New York: 29%
- New Jersey: 28%
- Florida: 26%
- Hawaii: 23%

Figure 5: Upward Mobility Of Immigrants Over Time, 1990-2008

- Better Income (men)
- Homeownership
- U.S. Citizenship

Immigrants Strengthen our Economy

Mass Deportations = $2.5 Trillion LOSS

Immigration Reform = $1.5 Trillion ADDED to U.S. Economy

Labor Committee on Immigrants Worker Rights
2013 KEY MOMENTS

Release of Senate Principles
Obama Nevada Speech
“Leak” of White House Bill
Path to Citizenship Becomes the Norm
AFL-CIO /Chamber Agreement
RNC Calls For CIR
AP Drops “Illegal Immigrant”
A CONGRESS OF FIRSTS

The 113th Congress will be the most diverse in US History.
A look at some of the new faces of our federal government.
## Congressional Seats

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Immigration reforms are always controversial. But Congress was created to muster political will to answer such challenges. Today we didn’t, but tomorrow we will.

Ted Kennedy
2007
Immigration Reform

a matter of when, not if.

AmericanImmigrationCouncil.org

mgiovagnoli@immcouncil.org