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### Title

Voting and Registration in California: The Future California Electorate

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### Authors

García Bedolla, Lisa  
Echaveste, María

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# VOTING AND REGISTRATION IN CALIFORNIA

## THE FUTURE CALIFORNIA ELECTORATE

*Research to Support the Future of California Elections*

Lisa García Bedolla  
María Echaveste

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University of California, Berkeley

Center for Latino Policy Research  
Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on  
Law and Social Policy

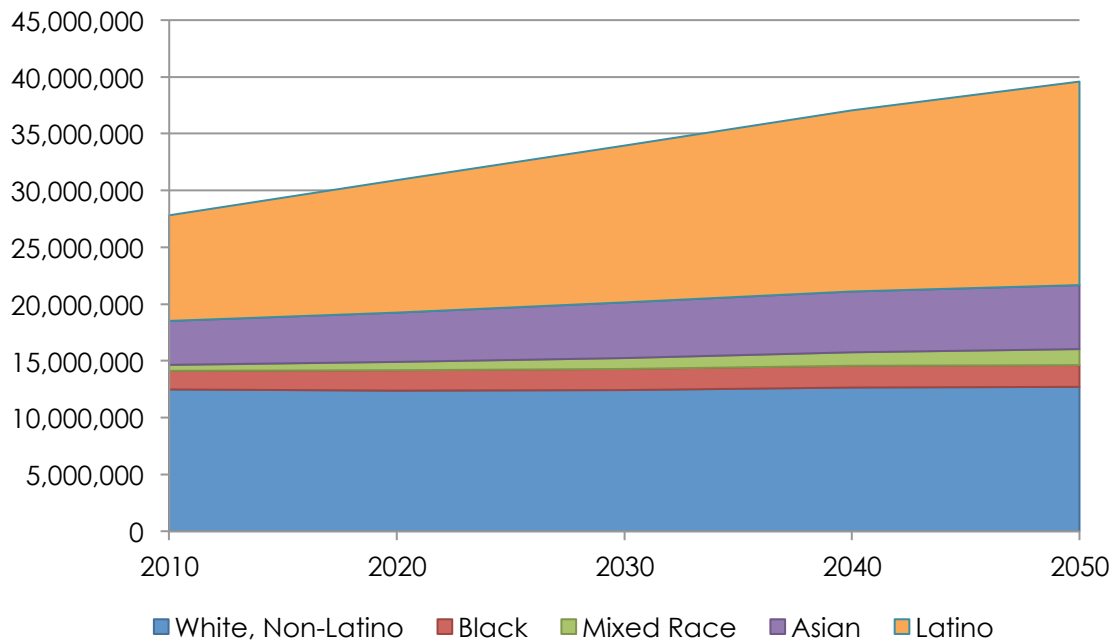
## Key Findings

- Population growth among those over age 18 in California between now and 2050 will be driven by Latinos and Asian Americans.
- 8,080,316 youth will enter the California electorate between 2015 and 2030.
- 70% of those newly voting eligible youth will be of color; 53% of the youth growth in the California electorate will be made up of Latinos.
- These youth are concentrated in southern California, the Central Valley, and the Salinas Valley.

## Introduction

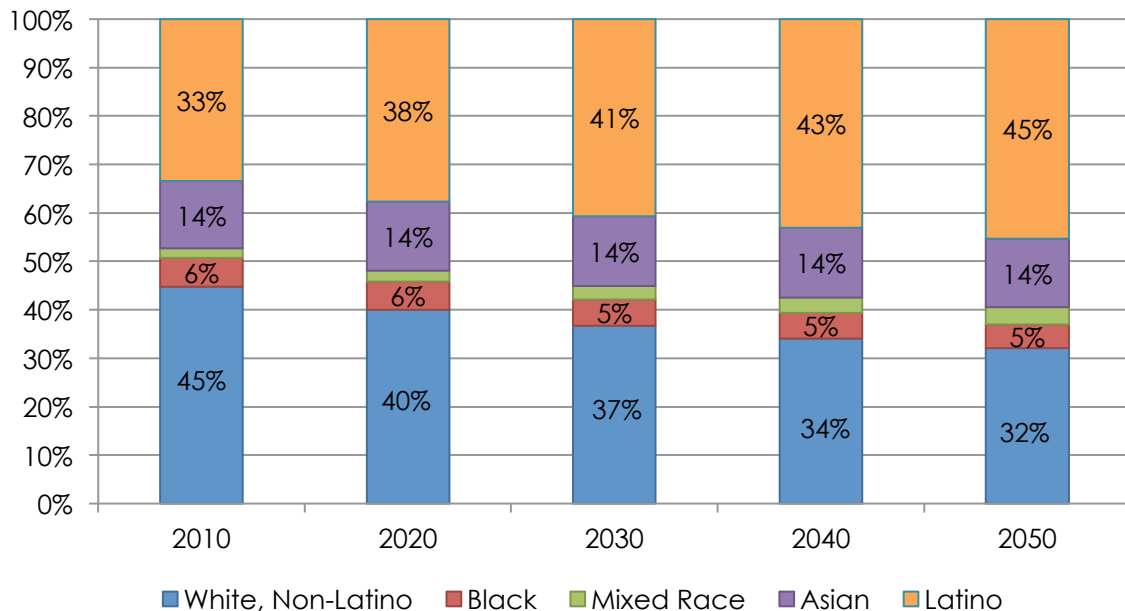
Between 2010 and 2050, the California population over the age of 18 is expected to increase by almost 12 million, or by about 42%. We see in Figures 1 and 2 that much of that increase will be driven by population growth within the Latino and Asian American communities.

Figure 1: Projected California Population Aged 18 and Over 2010-2050, by Ethnorace



Source: California State Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, Report P-3, "State and County Total Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity and Detailed Age."

Figure 2: Percentage of California's Projected 18 and Over Population, 2010-2050, by Ethnoracial Group



Source: California State Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, Report P-3, "State and County Total Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity and Detailed Age."

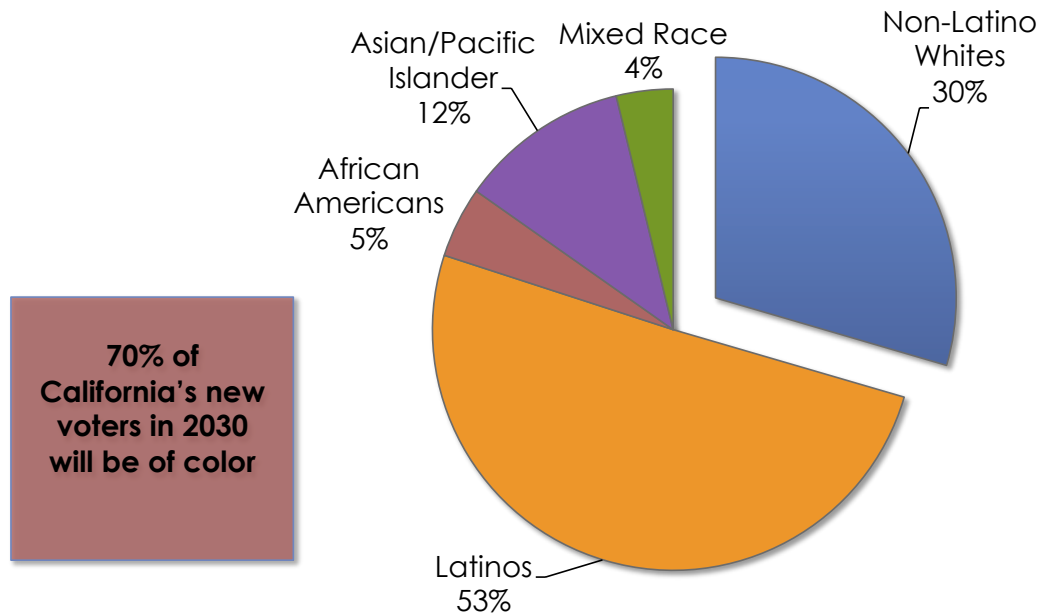
These demographic shifts have important implications for the future of the California electorate. According to the U.S. census, only 57% of Latino eligible voters and 58% of Asian Americans eligible voters were registered to vote in 2012.<sup>1</sup> This was in contrast to a 67% registration rate among non-Latino whites and 69% rate among African Americans.<sup>2</sup> A recent report by the Public Policy Institute of California showed that California's voter participation rates recently fell below the national average.<sup>3</sup> They attribute much of that drop to decreases in voter registration among California's eligible voters. Given the bulk of the growth in California's electorate will be among those groups with the lowest levels of voter registration, these demographic trends suggest a need for California to be more proactive in encouraging its eligible voters to register to vote.

### The Bulk of Youth Entering the California Electorate Will Be of Color

Between 2015 and 2030, 9,126,698 of California's youth will turn 18. It is difficult to estimate what the citizenship rates will be among these youth, given possible changes within U.S. immigration policy and the fact that naturalization rates can vary depending on changes in citizenship application requirements, fees, rules, et cetera. But, making the conservative assumption that the citizenship rates within that youth population will be similar to those of

California youth currently, we see that 8,080,316 of these youth in 2030 will be citizens and therefore eligible to vote.<sup>4</sup> Figure 3 shows that, of those, 53% will be Latino, 30% Non-Latino white, 12% Asian American, 5% African American, and 4% will be of mixed race.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 3. Demographics of the New California Electorate, 2030



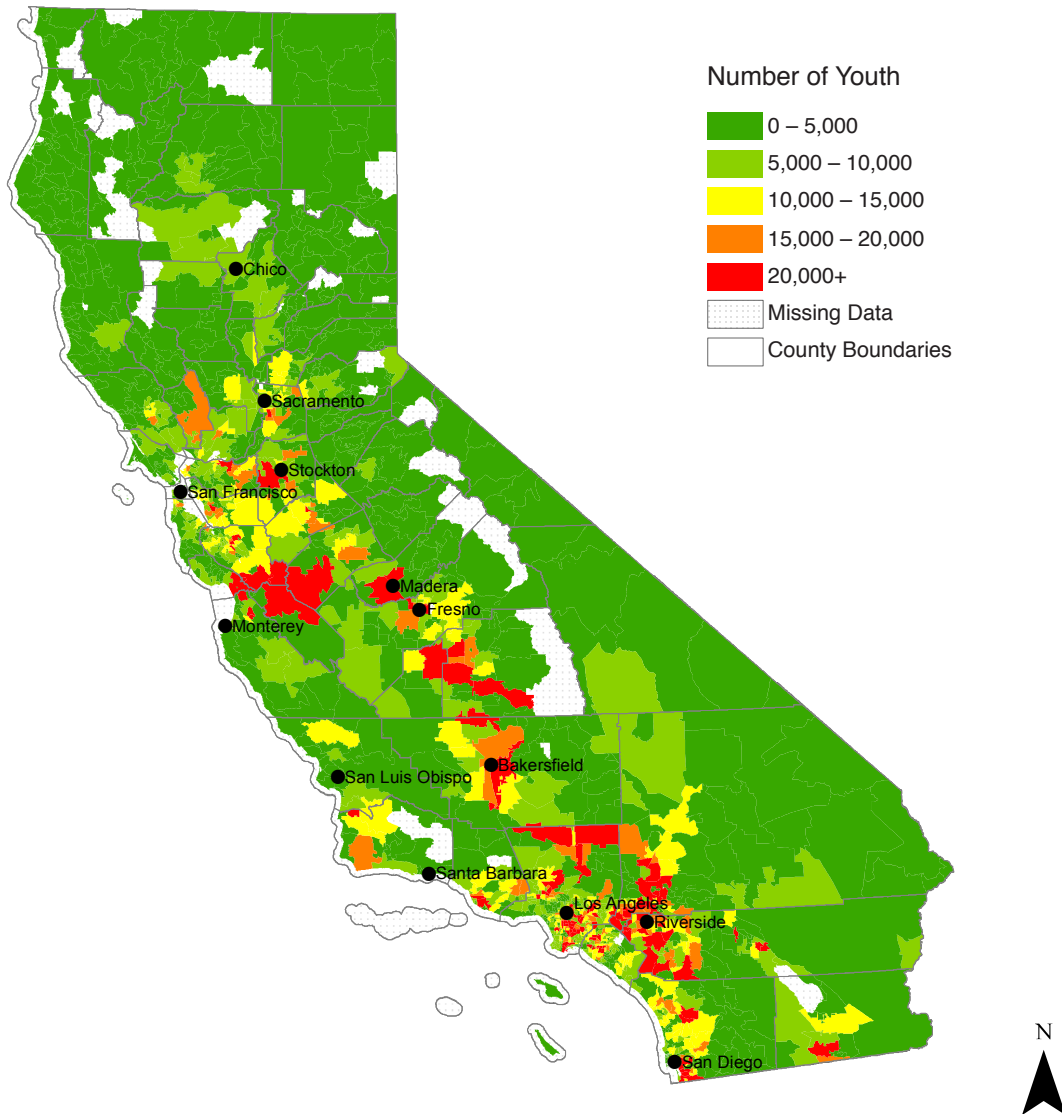
NOTE: "New California Electorate" refers to those youth turning 18 between 2015 and 2030, adjusted for citizenship. This does not reflect the demographics of the California electorate overall.

Source: California State Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, Report P-3, "State and County Total Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity and Detailed Age." Adjustments for citizenship rates made by the authors using the 2008-12 American Community Survey.

## Youth Pipeline Concentrated in Southern California, the Central Valley, and the Salinas Valley

In order to see where these youth were located in the state, we mapped future eligible youth by zip code. Knowing where these youth are concentrated will help the state's electoral institutions and community organizations target their efforts to engage this portion of the electorate. We see in the map that the zip codes with more than 20,000 youth who will turn 18 by 2030 tend to be concentrated in Southern California, the Central Valley, and Salinas Valley.

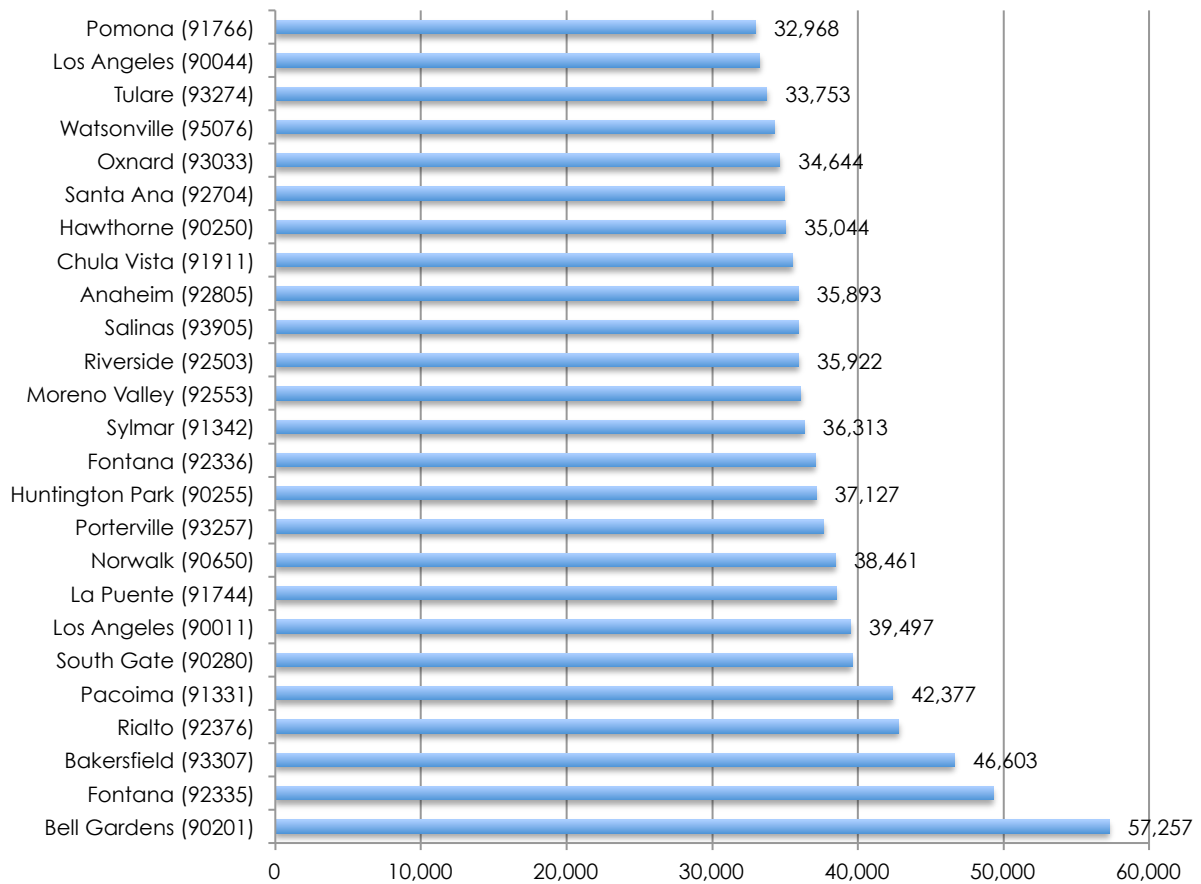
## Hotspots of Youth Entering Electorate 2012-2030 by Zip Code



Notes: (a) Data are presented for CA Zips. (b) A hot spot is defined as an area that is overperforming relative to state averages, whereas a cold spot reflects an underperforming area. In the legend, much higher than average = more than 1.5 standard deviations above the norm; higher than average = more than 1 standard deviations above the norm; average = at the mean level and under 1 standard deviation above or below the state average; lower than average = 1 to 1.5 standard deviations below the norm; and much lower than average = more than 1.5 standard deviations below the norm. Counts represent number of individuals in each geographical unit of analysis who are under 18 citizens (native born or naturalized foreign born) This map assumes that the maturing population is constant and does not account for mobility or mortality. Source: Counts of youth are based on data obtained from the 2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

Similarly, Figure 4 shows the top 25 zip codes in terms of soon-to-be voting eligible youth. Of those 25 zip codes, 18 are located in southern California (Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, or San Diego Counties), suggesting organizations and entities interested in reaching out to these youth should concentrate their efforts in these parts of the state.

Figure 4. Top 25 California Zip Codes for Youth Entering the Electorate between 2012 and 2030



## Conclusions

The number of new voters entering the California electorate over the next fifteen years exceeds the population of thirty-eight U.S. states. Given youth have lower registration and participation rates overall, and that Latino and Asian American youth have especially low rates, it is important that the state work proactively engage these new voters. We recommend that state electoral institutions:

- Make voter registration as automatic as possible. In an ideal world, any eligible voter that interacts with a government institution should be strongly encouraged to register to vote.
- Implement same day registration as quickly as possible.
- Work to improve the facility with which eligible voters can register online and partner with community organizations to disseminate and encourage eligible voters to take advantage of that registration opportunity.
- Engage in ongoing, aggressive voter education efforts to encourage voter registration, particularly in Latino and Asian American communities and in those communities that have the largest numbers of youth entering the electorate.

Only with these changes will we be able to ensure that the California electorate reflects the diverse experiences and policy needs of its population.



### ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census, 2012 Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement, Table 4b: Reported Voting and Registration by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2012. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2012/tables.html> [accessed 7 Feb 2015].

<sup>2</sup> We should note that this especially high registration rate among African American voters was likely a reflection of the fact that President Obama was on the ballot in 2012.

<sup>3</sup> McGhee, Eric, "California's Future: Political Landscape." (San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California, February 2015). Available at: <http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=1079> [accessed 7 Feb 2015].

<sup>4</sup> We calculated these citizenship rates using the 2008-12 American Community Survey. That survey reported non-citizenship rates for current youth in California of: 6.2% for Latinos, 8.3% for Non-Latino Whites, 10.7% for Asian Americans, 11.7% for Non-Latino Blacks, and 10.1% for those of mixed race. Given demographers predict U.S. citizenship to increase among California's foreign born population, these are very conservative estimates of the number of citizens within these populations. See John Pitkin and Dowell Myers, "Generational Projections of the California Population By Nativity and Year of Immigrant Arrival," (Los Angeles: Price School of Public Policy, PopDynamics Research Group, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> This chart does not include the 34,557 Native American California youth who will be turning 18 between 2015 and 2030. They are assumed to all be citizens and are included in the overall totals. The 31,828 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth who will be entering the electorate are included in the "Asian/Pacific Islander" category. That group's total was adjusted by a non-citizenship rate of 13%, for a total of 27,691 youth.