

Latinos

Latino voters are one of the fastest growing segments of the American electorate, particularly in the West. Between 2000 and 2010, Latinos made up more than half of U.S. population growth. This critical portion of the electorate shares the Western ethos of the outdoors and conservation, with a conservation-minded agenda for Congress and a high propensity to use public lands and value them for protecting natural areas and wildlife.

Latino voters – along with other voters in the West – have a clear agenda for the next Congress.

Eight-in-ten support future presidents maintaining the prerogative under the Antiquities Act to establish national monuments as other presidents have. Another three-quarters support continued funding of the Land and Water Conservation fund through oil and gas fees, while seven-in-ten support continued taxpayer support for renewable energy. Six-in-ten oppose selling off public lands to reduce the deficit.

Congressional Actions Ranked By Support

	Support	Oppose
Future Presidents continuing to protect existing public lands as national monuments	86%	4%
Continue to use some of the money from fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore for conservation of natural areas and clean water, and to ensure access to outdoor recreation	74%	10%
Continue taxpayer support for solar and wind energy production	73%	14%
Sell significant holdings of public lands like national forests to reduce the budget deficit	23%	61%

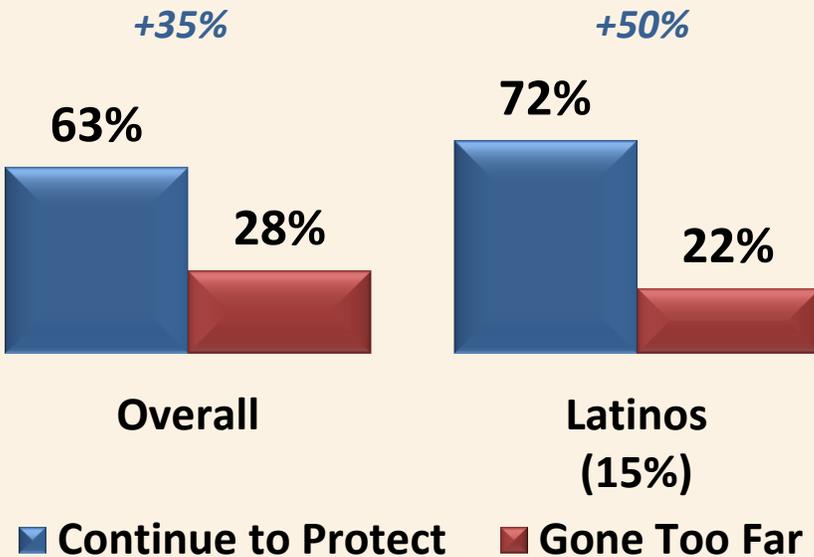
Latinos in the West are highly likely to visit public lands in their states, and they want to be sure these lands are protected for wildlife and for future generations.

Fully 93% say they have visited public lands managed by U.S. agencies in the last year. Their top priorities for these public lands are conserving natural areas for future generations (91% very important), and protecting wildlife habitat (84%). Latinos place a high priority on making sure rangers have adequate resources to meet these needs (79%).

Even more than others in the West, Latino voters reject the idea that conservation has gone too far.

Priorities for Public Lands Ranked By Very Important	Very Important	Total Important
Protecting and conserving natural areas for future generations	91%	97%
Protecting and conserving wildlife habitat	84%	96%
Making sure that rangers have the resources they need to take care of public lands and provide services to visitors	79%	96%
Ensuring access for recreational activities such as hiking, biking, hunting and fishing	71%	94%
Making sure resources such as oil and gas, minerals or coal are available for development and mining	50%	77%
Making them available for livestock grazing	48%	82%

When given a choice, Latinos are far more likely to take the view that we ought to continue to protect natural areas and wildlife habitat from poorly planned development and industrial activities that can pollute our air and water (72%) than that we have gone too far imposing unnecessary restrictions on land use that holds back our economy and cost us jobs (22%).



Although Latinos are less likely than other Westerners to have ever lived outside of their current state, the same factors keep them in the West, including the clean environment and outdoor lifestyle. The ability to live near and recreate on public lands matches the cost of living as a draw for Latino voters.

Reasons for Living in West Ranked By Significant Factor	Significant Factor	Total Factor
Clean air, clean water and environment	62%	87%
Healthy, outdoor lifestyle	60%	89%
Cost of living	50%	79%
Ability to live near, recreate on and enjoy public lands like national parks and forests	48%	77%
Economic opportunities	47%	78%
Level of traffic congestion	42%	78%
Quality of health care and hospitals	40%	70%
Amount of taxes	38%	67%
Quality of public schools	37%	66%
Hunting and fishing opportunities	34%	55%
Opportunities to open my own business	27%	49%



Latinos also express more worry than the electorate overall about threats to the clean environment they so love.

Not surprisingly, given their concentration in Arizona and New Mexico, low levels of water in rivers is a big concern for Latino voters, with 66% calling it an extremely or very serious problem. However, Latinos also worry about pollution of rivers, lakes and streams at a much higher rate than other voters, and express high levels of concern about habitat loss as well as children not having enough time outdoors.

State Issues (Extremely/Very Serious)	Overall	Latinos
Low levels of water in rivers	53%	66%
Inadequate water supplies	50%	60%
Unemployment	46%	70%
Our dependence on foreign oil	46%	58%
Pollution of rivers, lakes and streams	43%	59%
Children not spending enough time in the outdoors	39%	56%
Our dependence on oil	34%	40%
Lack of resources to properly maintain and take care of national parks, forests and other public lands	33%	39%
Air pollution and smog	33%	31%
Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife	31%	44%

