

HISPANAS ORGANIZED FOR POLITICAL EQUALITY
(HOPE)

PRESENTATION ON ZOOM

OCTOBER 17, 2025

TRANSCRIBED BY: MARY ANN SCANLAN, CSR



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1 MS. TORRES: Hello, everyone. Thank you
2 so much for joining us today for this very
3 important Zoom.

4 My name is Helen Iris Torres. I am the
5 proud CEO of HOPE, Hispanas Organized for
6 Political Equality.

7 At HOPE our mission is to advance
8 political and economic parity for Latinas to the
9 benefit of all communities. We believe that
10 every person deserves fair representation and an
11 equal voice in shaping the decisions that affect
12 our lives.

13 Redistricting is a critical part of
14 achieving that vision. It determines how our
15 communities are represented at every level of
16 government. It's one of HOPE's -- one of our
17 foundations of HOPE's broader civic engagement
18 work, ensuring Latinas and all Californians have
19 equitable access to political power.

20 While HOPE is a nonpartisan organization,
21 we recognize that redistricting has become an
22 increasingly partisan and at times contentious
23 issue. Across the country gerrymandering has
24 threatened fair representation, making it more
25 urgent now than ever for us to stay informed.

1 This November 4th, and for some of us who
2 have already received our ballot in the mail,
3 Californians will vote on Proposition 50, a
4 measure that would temporarily authorize the
5 state to adopt new congressional maps.

6 To be clear, once again, that HOPE has not
7 taken a position on Prop. 50. Our goal today is
8 to ensure that our communities are informed and
9 empowered, to understand what's on the ballot and
10 what this measure means, and how it could shape
11 representation in California.

12 We have a jampacked program for you
13 running until 1:15 p.m. So we encourage you to
14 stay on for the full discussion.

15 You'll hear from an incredible lineup of
16 speakers sharing their expertise and perspectives
17 as civil rights attorneys, demographers and civic
18 engagement leaders.

19 While we won't be doing a live Q&A, please
20 drop your question in the Q&A box. Our speakers
21 will be responding in the chat throughout the
22 session. We also ask you to please keep the
23 questions respectful and on topic.

24 With that, as our housekeeping is covered,
25 it's our -- it's my pleasure to introduce

1 Maria Morales, HOPE's statewide policy director,
2 who will guide us through today's conversation
3 and introduce our distinguished guests, our first
4 distinguished guest, Sonja Diaz.

5 Thank you, Maria.

6 MS. MORALES: Thank you, Helen.

7 And hi, everyone. Thank you so much for
8 joining us today.

9 I am excited to welcome to the virtual
10 stage Sonja Diaz to kick off our conversation.
11 Sonja Diaz is a civil rights attorney and policy
12 adviser, renowned for her pioneering work in
13 advancing equitable representation and
14 opportunities for Latinas.

15 As a cofounder of the Latina Futures 2050
16 Lab, she champions the vision where Latinas have
17 equal access to leadership roles, contributing to
18 a thriving society for all.

19 And prior to her groundbreaking work with
20 the Latinas Futures Lab, Sonja cofounded and
21 directed the UCLA Latina Policy and Politics
22 Institute, which is the first comprehensive think
23 tank within the University of California system
24 dedicated to addressing the policies of the
25 nation's second largest racial and ethnic group.

1 We're really excited to have you, Sonja.

2 Thank you so much for being here.

3 MS. DIAZ: Thanks so much for having me.

4 This is one of my favorite topics.

5 MS. MORALES: Well, we're really looking
6 for your expertise. I think we'll just get right
7 into it.

8 So maybe for the first question, for
9 someone who is unfamiliar with what redistricting
10 is, can you give us a rundown of what it actually
11 means, why it's so important?

12 MS. DIAZ: Yeah, absolutely.

13 Redistricting is the process of redrawing
14 electoral district boundaries. Electoral
15 district boundaries are your state-legislated
16 boundaries, your congressional districts for the
17 House of Representatives.

18 It typically occurs every ten years and it
19 reflects population changes that are captured in
20 the U.S. decennial census. So the last census
21 was 2020.

22 Redistricting determines how communities
23 are represented in Congress. So reapportionment
24 apportions the congressional seats in the House
25 of Representatives to states based on the census.

1 Now, the states within that -- and states
2 have different ways of doing redistricting --
3 they then allocate the mapping. And we hear a
4 lot about redistricting and maps. And so what
5 they look to is to draw the political boundaries
6 of a legislative district or a congressional
7 district.

8 Now, historically there have been many
9 practices that undermine the ability of Americans
10 to be able to elect their candidate of choice, in
11 addition to being able to cast a fair ballot that
12 is going to be counted.

13 And so in redistricting there's two things
14 that are very important, which is this idea of
15 crafting. So this is where, when these maps --
16 these political maps are drawn, what they're
17 doing in crafting is that they're splitting a
18 cohesive minority community, be it African
19 Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians,
20 Latinos, across many districts.

21 So maybe they live together and then that
22 one circle district can be five, four, three.
23 And so that's crafting. And that makes it so
24 that that particular group within that political
25 jurisdiction in that map cannot elect their

1 candidate of choice.

2 The other thing that we hear often is
3 packing, so this is consolidating. This is
4 putting like all the Latino voters or all the
5 African American voters into a single district,
6 even though they're spread out and dispersed over
7 several miles.

8 And, in fact, it limits their ability to
9 exercise their true political power, right?
10 Because now they're in one particular district
11 and they can only elect one candidate of choice.
12 Instead, maybe they could have been a, you know,
13 majority or opportunity district across others.

14 The last thing that I think is really
15 important, Maria, about redistricting is that
16 there was a Supreme Court case under the Warren
17 court. And more than Brown v. Board of
18 Education, Chief Justice Warren said that
19 Reynolds versus Sims, which was in 1964, was the
20 case that I think meant the most to him.

21 And this was a case that set the context
22 for redistricting, which is one person, one vote.
23 And so it required districts to have roughly
24 equal population.

25 Now, I mentioned the crafting. I

1 mentioned the packing. There's other legislation
2 and a statutory regime to try and make it so that
3 that isn't so.

4 One thing that still exists is Section 2
5 of the Voting Rights Act, and this is really so
6 that protected classes can elect their candidate
7 of choice.

8 This is particularly important for
9 minoritized groups, including Latinos and African
10 Americans. And this helps combat discriminatory
11 vote dilution.

12 Now, there's a lot of voting rights cases
13 that have happened over the last 15 years, and so
14 that has created some holes, if you will. I
15 wanted to say cracks, but I'll say some holes in
16 being able to ensure that there's fair maps.

17 MS. MORALES: I appreciate you breaking
18 that down, because the way you're saying it is
19 that there's statutory guidelines that determine
20 how these maps are supposed to come together,
21 like the actual drawing of the lines.

22 I guess now I'll take it to the larger
23 context, redistricting today, and we've seen this
24 kind of rise in -- I know Helen alluded to it --
25 this rise in partisan gerrymandering, right?

1 So if you can talk to that trend and the
2 larger national perspective on how California and
3 Texas compare in terms of the actual
4 redistricting process, and how do you see that
5 partisan redistricting impacting representation/

6 MS. DIAZ: Yeah. So, Maria, I mentioned
7 that it's one person, one vote. That typically
8 this happens after every census. The census does
9 not happen in 2025. It's once a year, 2010,
10 2000, 2020. The next one is 2030.

11 And here we are in 2025, where California
12 and Texas are both doing redistricting. There is
13 no new decennial census that they're basing this
14 off of, right? That happens once every ten
15 years.

16 But I think what's important here is that
17 California and Texas couldn't be more different.
18 In California, voters took politics out of the
19 process of redistricting and they created an
20 Independent Redistricting Commission, which has
21 now had two full cycles of redrawing the
22 congressional and the legislative map.

23 This is community driven. It's
24 transparent. Last time this happened it was over
25 Zoom. We were in COVID-19. And it really is

1 there to abide by the laws to make sure that
2 people have fair and equitable representation.

3 Now we're in a place right now and we're
4 talking about things because there is now a thing
5 on the ballot, Proposition 50, that would for
6 four years, between 2026 and 2030, pause that
7 Independent Redistricting Commission's map,
8 reintroduce new maps that the State Legislature
9 drew in public through its legislative sessions
10 this summer. And now it's going to the voters to
11 choose.

12 That ballot initiative then would cease,
13 and in 2030 would go through the same process
14 that I talked about, which is the census.

15 Texas, on the other hand, has always let
16 politicians draw the lines. And there is a
17 voting rights expert at Stanford Law School,
18 Pamela Karlan, and she said Texas has not had
19 their maps challenged in court since the 1970s.
20 So the 1970 census, 1980 census, 1990 census and
21 so forth, these maps have been challenged. The
22 same has occurred with Texas's 2020 map.

23 Now, I think what's really important about
24 both these states, one state has an Independent
25 Redistricting Commission. The other one did not

1 and has had multiple challenges, from Black civil
2 rights leaders, from Latino civil rights leaders,
3 and others, of vote dilution, of not following
4 the law.

5 And this has only been exacerbated after a
6 Supreme Court decision in 2013, which said,
7 Texas, even though you were under Section 5 of
8 the Voting Rights Act and every time you wanted
9 to make a little change, we have to approve it,
10 that's gone.

11 Texas has now really been able to continue
12 to do what they want with little to no federal
13 court oversight except for the right of action of
14 civil rights and other interested parties to sue
15 them.

16 So I said Texas and California couldn't be
17 more different. Here is the fact that remains
18 true about both of them. Latinos are the
19 plurality population in both California since
20 2014, and in Texas since two years ago.

21 Texas's apportionment of House seats in
22 U.S. Congress is based on the growth of the
23 Latino population. Now, the number of Latino
24 majority districts in the congressional map for
25 the Texas delegations did not increase over the

1 last ten years. And, in fact, the maps that are
2 now presently in Texas based on this 2025
3 redistricting is seeing an increase of five
4 Republican maps.

5 And so this is based on a partisan impetus
6 to redrawn the lines to essentially curtail
7 Democratic party win in 2026. Historically, the
8 party in opposition to the White House is able
9 that first kind of midterm election to win.

10 What is important is that this is not just
11 a partisan issue. This is a racially motivated
12 issue. This is around the ability of Latinos in
13 Texas and other protected classes to be able to
14 elect their candidate of choice.

15 That's why Texas's 2020 maps were
16 challenged. That is why Texas is pulling back
17 and changing those maps that they drew again.

18 And so I think that's really important
19 because that's not what California did with the
20 Independent Redistricting Commission, and that's
21 not the history of California as a large state,
22 right, akin to Texas and changing things.

23 So we're in a very historical moment.
24 This is unprecedented to do redistricting in the
25 middle of a decade. Now, it's being done for

1 partisan reasons.

2 MS. MORALES: That's a really powerful
3 statement that you made around moving it away
4 from this, you know, partisan framing and talking
5 more about the impacts that it's going to have
6 directly on communities.

7 And I know you've been doing a lot of
8 research on the impact of Latino voters,
9 especially in the 2024 election. And now, you
10 know, these new maps are coming out that in some
11 ways are -- in many ways are going to impact the
12 Latino political power and voting power.

13 So what challenges or opportunities do you
14 see both for Latinos in the voter turnout and
15 also what that looks like for 2026?

16 MS. DIAZ: Well, Maria, I really struggled
17 with the challenges and opportunities, right?
18 Because my sense is to give both equal weight or
19 to identify a parity in both the challenges and
20 the opportunities and, frankly, I can't.

21 There are some opportunities, but there
22 are a lot of challenges. And I think the
23 participants on this webinar and people that are
24 watching what's happening with our democracy, I
25 can't say it in plainer terms, the ability of

1 people to cast a ballot that will be counted and
2 elect their candidate of choice is -- has been
3 under siege going back to 2013 and before.

4 But particularly right now with this
5 unprecedented redistricting effort on the part of
6 the Republican party has really made it so that
7 the ability to have your Medicare, the ability to
8 have your SNAP benefits, the ability to be able
9 to elect a candidate of choice, or to cross over
10 in a coalition district if there's political kind
11 of congruence between Asian American and Latino
12 voters, say in a place like Orange county,
13 California, or Harris county, Texas.

14 All of these things are really up for
15 grabs right now. And unfortunately, we don't
16 have a federal court system that is able to
17 intervene on behalf of the civil rights regime
18 that was effected by the Warren court in the
19 1960s. That has been clear.

20 Now, in terms of the challenges and really
21 laying them in for the audience here, every
22 redistricting cycle is not just an election
23 cycle. This is generational. So a win in one
24 district of redistricting maps creates momentum
25 in a direction, right?

1 And so if Latinos are able to elect their
2 candidate of choice -- and that doesn't mean that
3 that candidate is Latino. It can be purple.
4 They can elect whoever they want. It's that they
5 together, under the law, are able to elect their
6 candidate of choice because they're not craft and
7 they're not packed by redistricting.

8 One would hope that they have substantive
9 policy gains. Maybe they're living in healthier
10 communities. Maybe they're able to afford an
11 increasingly unaffordable space. Maybe their kid
12 is able to have ethnic studies in their
13 classroom. You name it. Depending on the issues
14 that those voters care about.

15 And so the maps that are drawn really
16 curtail whether or not someone has that
17 substantive representation because that's the
18 start of whether or not they're able to actually
19 have a vote that counts, or they're just voting
20 and, you know, it's rigged against them.

21 Now, because this is generational -- and
22 Latino are a youthful demographic, right? Asian
23 Americans, Latinos fastest-growing demographic,
24 youngest demographic. These are electorates that
25 are more often than other voters, including and

1 especially non-Hispanic White voters, to be
2 persuadable voters, right? To be undecided on
3 some issues.

4 This is an opportunity for organizations
5 that care about the health, well-being and
6 quality of life in these communities to not just
7 react to redistricting, to be able to strategize,
8 identify these emerging growth zones, think about
9 coalitions, and also think about districts by
10 districting.

11 And so the future of these map cycles
12 really requires participation from everyday
13 people, including young people who are not
14 eligible to vote because they're under 18.

15 Now, to just kind of highlight it, what
16 are the challenges? Erosions of being able to
17 have a vote that matters, right? So your voting
18 power is being diminished.

19 For Latinos, in the space of rapid
20 population growth, there's unequal power. That
21 is the story of Texas. That is also the other --
22 the story of other states, that the growing Asian
23 American, Latino, Black populations and immigrant
24 populations that all of a sudden are trying to
25 erode that voting strength.

1 The other thing is partisan polarization.
2 We're in a country where there are diametrically
3 opposing ideas, and we're on the fight for what
4 the future may hold, especially for the
5 possibility of a multiracial, multiethnic
6 democracy.

7 So I said all of those challenges. What
8 are the opportunities? So the opportunities are.
9 is that when, you know, the federal courts are
10 weakened, when the federal government is
11 weakened, when Congress is weakened, states and
12 localities offer a new terrain, a new path
13 forward for reform.

14 California did this with the California
15 Voting Rights Act. Joaquin Avila, the Mexican-
16 American Legal Defense and Educational Fund,
17 along with legislators like Senator Richard
18 Polanco, passed the CBLA.

19 It's time to update that. It's time to
20 update that so that it actually matches the real
21 world 2025 circumstances that we're in. So that
22 Californians can elect their candidate of choice
23 if they are from a protected class.

24 There's other opportunities, too. There's
25 opportunities for everybody to talk about what

1 the community looks like and to engage in the
2 political process. So that even if you're not
3 living in a state like California and maybe
4 you're in Arizona, where there's a lot of
5 independent voters, in Nevada, where there's a
6 lot of independent voters, that there's
7 opportunities to be able to start to experiment
8 with this thing we call equal justice under the
9 law.

10 MS. MORALES: Sonja, I just want to say, I
11 am so grateful that you could join us. And I'm
12 really glad that we could take apart this
13 conversation with you breaking the issue down,
14 but also just underscoring why it's so important
15 to make our voice heard in this special election,
16 especially because the turnover has been so
17 quick.

18 So I think it segues us really well into
19 our next session, where we're going to be
20 breaking down the actual map. So hopefully that
21 your explanation made sense to some folks.

22 And so, with that, I wish we could have
23 some more time, but I'm really, really grateful.

24 And I do want to share with the attendees,
25 so please use the Q&A box feature if you want to

1 submit questions to Sonja directly. That way
2 she'll be, you know, monitoring and can reply to
3 them since we didn't have time in the open Q&A
4 portion.

5 But thank you so much, Sonja.

6 And with that, I'm going to welcome Helen
7 back onto the stage.

8 MS. TORRES: I agree with you, Maria, that
9 is a fantastic way to kick off.

10 Thank you again to Sonja.

11 Sonja, I think that you do have two
12 questions in the Q&A box, if you have a moment to
13 review those. I think one in particular is for
14 clarification.

15 So I'm excited to continue this
16 conversation with someone that we have known at
17 HOPE for almost 20 years. He has been a key
18 presenter at all our HOPE Leadership Institute
19 sessions, or the majority of them, and that's our
20 next speaker, Paul Mitchell.

21 He is one of California's leading experts
22 on redistricting and political data. He's been
23 directly involved in drafting the map that
24 California voters will be deciding on this
25 November.

1 Paul has worked closely with the State's
2 Independent Redistricting Commission in the past,
3 so he brings a unique perspective on both the
4 process and the specifics of Prop. 50, the
5 Prop. 50 maps.

6 Paul, thank you so much for joining us
7 today.

8 MR. MITCHELL: Thanks for having me.

9 MS. TORRES: So, Paul, I thought we'd
10 start with one key question. You have been
11 directly involved in drawing the Prop. 50 maps.
12 Can you walk us through how you approached
13 developing these maps?

14 Specifically what factors, you know, that
15 you used, especially what you're required by law
16 as your guidelines? And where do you see -- and
17 where do you have more flexibility?

18 MR. MITCHELL: Sure. And thanks for
19 having me. It's always fun to come and speak
20 with you.

21 For folks who know me, a lot of people
22 know me through my work at Political Data. So if
23 they're tracking the election right now, then
24 they might be looking at early vote data that I'm
25 putting out. And if they've run for office, they

1 might use PDI.

2 But my other hat is that I'm the owner of
3 Redistricting Partners. We're a redistricting
4 firm that's done over a hundred local
5 redistrictings, all nonpartisan. We've done
6 nonpartisan redistricting with a number of
7 commissions, from Los Angeles to New York City to
8 New York state's redistricting, where we've
9 worked twice in New York state.

10 We've even helped stand up independent
11 redistricting commissions, like where we advised
12 the Ethics Commission in New Mexico on the
13 creation of their first Independent Redistricting
14 Commission. So I've been very tied to
15 nonpartisan and commission-based redistricting, a
16 real fan of it for a long time.

17 And when this first -- when I was first
18 approached about this, it wasn't even at first
19 like, well, how would I draw the maps? My first
20 reaction was like, there's no way that we can do
21 this. Voters love the Commission. And I support
22 the Commission's work. And why would voters give
23 the Legislature the authority to redraw lines?

24 And so a lot changed after Texas did what
25 they did to, you know, redo their maps responding

1 to President Trump. And the idea of this as
2 being a counterbalance to what Texas was doing
3 became a core kind of idea of this project. And
4 then a commitment that it goes back to the
5 Commission afterwards. That all of this is
6 temporary. So even before I started looking at
7 potential maps, that was what I was thinking
8 about.

9 Now, when I was first talked to by folks,
10 I won't call out any names of elected officials,
11 but I did have some elected officials call me and
12 say, well, if Texas is going to throw away the
13 VRA, we should just throw away the VRA. You
14 should just draw anything you can. Don't worry
15 about the VRA.

16 And I would be like, okay, thanks for
17 calling. But there was no way that I was going
18 to do that. Folks who work with me understand
19 that. And also, I just felt like that was going
20 to be the wrong strategy.

21 So the first real thing I took at -- to
22 answer your question, how did we start
23 approaching drawing maps, it was by utilizing the
24 State Fair Maps Act criteria and the
25 Redistricting Commission's criteria and the

1 Redistricting Commission's actual maps.

2 So one of my first rules of the process
3 was that we would follow the Commission process
4 and have a lot of respect for the Commission work
5 product.

6 We would also preserve communities of
7 interest. And I have worked, like I said, in so
8 many parts of this state, and my staff, that all
9 kind of came back on a volunteer basis to work on
10 this, had all worked in so many places that we
11 knew where those communities of interest were.
12 We've been active in the state redistricting
13 process.

14 And following the Voting Rights Act was
15 very important. Even though, as of today,
16 there's a Supreme Court hearing to potentially
17 dismantle it, we still were holding to it.

18 Now, when we really knew that this was
19 real, I sent a text to my little chat of all my
20 Redistricting Partners staff. And I said, guys,
21 this might happen. Who can get on -- we call it
22 the box. Who can get on the box and start
23 drawing? And this is what I want to draw.

24 And I started listing out this concept of
25 drawing a replacement Latino majority/minority

1 district in the middle of Los Angeles. That was
2 the number one thing that I first started
3 thinking about because it was something that I
4 worked with HOPE on in the last redistricting
5 process.

6 I'm going to read for a second -- I hate
7 doing this on a presentation, but I'm going to
8 read from a HOPE letter from November 24th, 2021,
9 where it said, HOPE is concerned about the
10 elimination of a majority/minority Latino
11 district within the area of Los Angeles gateway
12 cities.

13 The seat, which is called by the LA Times
14 the most Latino district in the country,
15 disappeared off the map despite the growing
16 Latino population throughout the state.

17 And that letter on page 2 illustrated what
18 HOPE wanted to see done in a coalition with a lot
19 of other partners in Los Angeles. And it said,
20 number one, create a gateway cities district
21 centered around Downey, as described in the
22 analysis, allowing for the creation of five
23 Latino majority/minority districts in an area
24 where there are currently four.

25 Secondly, take the district that was

1 called LB North, which is now the Robert Garcia
2 district, take that district to the south through
3 Seal Beach into Huntington Beach, making a
4 Latino-influenced district at 35 percent Latino
5 by voting age population.

6 That two bullet points was the first thing
7 we did in drawing the new map. We essentially
8 reversed the Redistricting Commission's decision
9 to eliminate a Latino district from LA, the old
10 Ed Roybal district, Lucille Roybal-Allard
11 district, the first Latino majority/minority
12 district in the country, the first Latino member
13 of Congress in the country.

14 We put that district back. Eliminated
15 the -- basically moving the 41st over there and
16 eliminating the Ken Calvert district in
17 Riverside, and then moving the districts around
18 in order to fill in.

19 Now, did that just come up in our head
20 like, hey, it's 2025, let's draw this? No. We
21 went back to maps the Commission was considering.
22 We went back to proposals from HOPE, Equality
23 California, a number of groups that were trying
24 to advocate for these changes in the end of the
25 last redistricting process.

1 So what we did, which you could only do in
2 California, was we took the Commission map. We
3 kept about 80 percent of it the same, but in
4 certain areas we made small, modest changes in
5 order to create a push back to what Texas was
6 doing, an opportunity for Democrats to pick up
7 five seats, and to counterbalance the five
8 Republican seats in Texas.

9 And in doing so, we were able to keep a
10 large number of communities of interest together.
11 We were able to reduce the numbers of cities that
12 were split. We were able to protect the Voting
13 Rights Act.

14 The Voting Rights Act analysis that we got
15 back said -- and, again, I'll read -- while both
16 the Commission map and the draft map are
17 compliant with Section 2, the empirical evidence
18 shows that the public submission map, which is
19 the Prop. 50 map, improves the opportunity for
20 Latino voters to elect candidates of choice in
21 two more districts than the existing plan.

22 And then PPIC just put out an analysis
23 last week that said that our plan maintained the
24 status quo in terms of the Voting Rights Act and
25 added one more Latino-influenced district.

1 So there's a good story to tell about what
2 these maps have done, and that how we did it
3 really was building off of the Commission work
4 product, keeping the same values that the
5 Commission and Californians have, doing modest
6 changes, and, you know, doing the minimum we had
7 to in order to achieve the political goal while
8 protecting communities of interest.

9 MS. TORRES: Thank you, Paul.

10 It's always good to hear my words being
11 read back to me --

12 MR. MITCHELL: Sorry.

13 MS. TORRES: -- from the flood of ideas
14 that --

15 MR. MITCHELL: I didn't warn you I was
16 doing that, so anybody knows that was not
17 planned.

18 MS. TORRES: That's okay.

19 MR. MITCHELL: She did not know I was
20 going to do that.

21 MS. TORRES: But I think you made your
22 point that the crafting of these maps, Prop. 50
23 maps, it wasn't just, you know, you and a couple
24 bad scientists coming together. It's really
25 truly individuals that are -- and building on the

1 current maps that are out there.

2 And, you know, there is no denying it.
3 You mentioned that two great sources, especially
4 PPIC, that, you know, is calling out that this
5 will potentially create a Latino -- an additional
6 Latino seat, or replace -- or bring back the
7 Latino seat that we lost in the past.

8 With that, and trying as much as we can to
9 keep it nonpartisan, from your perspective, what
10 should Latino voters pay the most attention to
11 when it comes to this -- to these Prop. 50 maps?

12 MR. MITCHELL: Well, I think that when we
13 get into 2026 election cycle, and presuming these
14 maps pass, I think it's about organizing. There
15 will be different districts in LA in particular.
16 So every district -- because there's this
17 replacement of the Roybal-Allard district in the
18 middle of the gateway cities portion of LA, that
19 essentially moved a bunch of districts going
20 through San Gabriel Valley, through the Inland
21 Empire, where those members of Congress had to
22 look at a map and say, wait, that's not my
23 district. My district got changed significantly.

24 So you're going to have a lot of members
25 of Congress that are going to be running in new

1 areas. And then in particularly the Robert
2 Garcia district that's going to now be Long
3 Beach, goes down into Huntington Beach, which has
4 been pretty antagonistic towards Democrats,
5 somewhat antagonistic towards minority groups,
6 and vehemently antagonistic against the LGBTQ
7 community.

8 And so you've got some places where he
9 needs to get support and get engaged folks to
10 support and do turnout there for Latinos to
11 protect a Latino member of Congress in a district
12 that is still a Latino-influenced district, but
13 is no longer a majority/minority district because
14 his district, most Latino portions go into the
15 replacement Roybal-Allard district. So that's
16 one big thing.

17 The other big things are the big things we
18 always talk about, which is trying to get Latinos
19 to vote earlier so that they're not scrambling to
20 try to get them out to the polls on election day.

21 Looking right now just at the Prop. 21
22 [sic] vote, Latinos are 28 percent of the
23 registered voters, but only about 13 percent of
24 the votes that have come in so far. So getting
25 Latinos to vote earlier.

1 Getting Latinos to, you know, make best
2 use of all the methods of voting, whether it's by
3 mail, drop box, or in person at a vote center,
4 and just really kind of focusing on that
5 engagement.

6 The Prop. 50 maps I think will be great
7 for the Latino community in two critical ways.
8 One is that they ensure that the Latino districts
9 that are the VRA seats are bolstered in order to
10 make them most effective, particularly in the
11 Central Valley.

12 And then, secondly, have to hazard a
13 guess, and I don't want to be too political or
14 partisan here, but I have to hazard a guess that
15 whoever gets elected in that gateway cities
16 district in Los Angeles, it's a majority/minority
17 district, is going to be a better representative
18 for the community than the representative being
19 elected from the Ken Calvert seat.

20 So I think there are opportunities
21 throughout the map where you might get somebody
22 better representing San Diego/Palm Springs area
23 in a new seat that is drawn under Prop. 50 than
24 you would under the existing Darrell Issa
25 district.

1 So I think there are opportunities there
2 in the substance of the maps and the outcomes of
3 the maps, and I think there's a lot of
4 opportunities in terms of kind of those VRA
5 concerns as well.

6 MS. TORRES: So, Paul, you know, I know I
7 only have a couple more minutes with you, but I
8 wanted to come back to just clarify.

9 You mentioned Prop. 21, but I think you
10 were mentioning -- did you mean to mention
11 Prop. 50 and what the voting count looks like
12 now? Because you're tracking that, right, how
13 much voters --

14 MR. MITCHELL: Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah. I
15 don't know.

16 MS. TORRES: Yeah.

17 MR. MITCHELL: Maybe I misspoke. Yeah.
18 So the Prop. 50 tracker, we have it up now, so
19 we're processing ballots that are -- the counties
20 are processing the ballots that are coming in.
21 And right now Latinos are 28 percent of the votes
22 that have been cast for Prop. 50. And, you know,
23 they're 28 percent of registered voters, and only
24 about 13 percent of the votes that have been cast
25 so far.

1 So, yeah, if I said 21, it might just be
2 because I was thinking about the --

3 MS. TORRES: So just so I'm clear.

4 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. Yeah.

5 MS. TORRES: Latinos make up 28 percent of
6 the voting population in California, and about --
7 we're tracking at 13, 16 percent of ballots --

8 MR. MITCHELL: Of the ballots that have
9 been returned.

10 MS. TORRES: And is that usually what you
11 see? Because Latinos seem to vote later; is that
12 correct?

13 MR. MITCHELL: So Latinos have
14 traditionally voted later. Also, when we talk
15 about Latinos on the voter file, we're talking
16 about younger voters. Because your average
17 Latino on the voter file is a lot younger than
18 the average White voter, as an example.

19 So in addition to Latinos voting more on
20 election day, you also have younger people less
21 responsive to their mail. They're not checking
22 their mail every day and mailing their ballot
23 back right away.

24 So those are things that can be worked on
25 in order to bring a fuller turnout from all these

1 communities, whether it's Latinos or young people
2 or renters, or different groups that kind of
3 socioeconomically are traditionally lower turnout
4 or later voters in the process.

5 MS. TORRES: And I'll just -- you know, I
6 think you already answered the question what this
7 map means for long-term political -- Latino
8 political power in the state, especially leading
9 to 2032, but if you wanted to add anything else
10 to that.

11 And then, Paul, you know, there's always
12 this conversation of the lack of investment made
13 by everyone that has to do with either political
14 parties or, you know, when it comes to
15 propositions in the Latino vote. Really, you
16 know, investing in getting the vote out.

17 Any thoughts around that, and as well as
18 any ending words around the Latino -- long-term
19 Latino power, political power?

20 MR. MITCHELL: Well, yeah, this is
21 definitely something we've talked about a lot.
22 And a lot of what HOPE does has been instrumental
23 in helping turn the tide on that, you know.

24 I'm sitting and talking with members of
25 Congress that were part of a HOPE class that I

1 spoke to ten years ago. It's literally happened.

2 I've met with people who are new elected
3 officials and they were people who saw me present
4 on voter data, you know, 15 years ago.

5 So a lot of what you're doing to create
6 that culture is incredibly important.

7 Also, pushing the political parties and
8 pushing consultants to recognize the importance
9 of the Latino vote. And not just to only target
10 the most very, very, very likely voters.

11 You know, even at PDI we've created voter
12 universes that are targeted to get those likely
13 voters, but also bring in some of the less likely
14 voters among the Latino, Asian and Black
15 communities in order to make what we call equity
16 universes. And those universes, we've encouraged
17 consultants to target those voters.

18 Because part of the challenge of these
19 campaigns is you have a campaign consultant who
20 says, well, I want to spend this, you know,
21 \$50,000 as efficiently as possible.

22 But then you also have the bigger need in
23 the long term that if that consultant is only
24 mailing to the most likely voters, all they're
25 doing is reinforcing the most likely voters to

1 vote.

2 They need to also be mailing to the less
3 likely voters, and texting and phoning and doing
4 digital and pushing to the less likely voters to
5 get them to turn out as well. Because if
6 somebody gets five mailers and somebody else gets
7 one mailer, the group that gets one mailer is
8 going to be lower turnout.

9 So we want to make sure that when we're
10 pushing candidates, to make sure they're talking
11 more inclusively to all voters. When we're
12 talking to consultants, when we're, you know,
13 talking about how money is spent in campaigns,
14 that it's being done in a more equitable way to
15 ensure that we're not creating a permanent lower
16 voting class in our total electorate.

17 So that's one thing that we've had
18 conversations about, and I've had conversations
19 with a lot of consultants about. Or, you know,
20 Mindy Romero, as an example, has done a lot of
21 work on trying to push this kind of argument
22 about turnout. So I think there's a lot of work
23 that still needs to be done, obviously.

24 MS. TORRES: Thank you, Paul. And always
25 a pleasure to hear from you. And may St. Paul

1 continue to be prosperous in his map making.

2 Thank you so much for your time.

3 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you very much and
4 take care.

5 MS. TORRES: Appreciate it.

6 MR. MITCHELL: Good-bye.

7 MS. TORRES: Now we're going to turn to
8 our third guest. Gosh, I just feel we have
9 incredible speakers lined up for you, and I hope
10 it's bringing a full -- we'll be bringing a full
11 picture of all that's at stake with the upcoming
12 special election.

13 So, once again, thank you, Paul, for
14 breaking down the Prop. 50 map for us.

15 To provide some balance, we now turn to a
16 different perspective. Joining us is Fabian
17 Valdez, Jr., who leads Redistricting Insights,
18 data-driven approach to redistricting as their
19 chief demographer, with expertise in predicting
20 models at GIF Mapping and Database Systems.

21 Fabian has led projects from supporting
22 mission-driven organizations and government
23 agencies to guiding nonprofits through
24 redistricting initiatives. His insights here
25 will help us understand the critiques and

1 alternative views of Prop. 50.

2 Thank you so much for joining us.

3 MR. VALDEZ: Thank you for having me. And
4 I don't get to say I've been around for 20 years
5 like Paul has with you, but I'm glad to be my
6 first time with HOPE and getting to speak to you
7 and looking forward on the conversation today.

8 MS. TORRES: Thank you so much.

9 Well, we always love making new friends,
10 and I think we've made a great new friend in you.
11 So thank you so much.

12 The first question I have for you is, some
13 argue that these maps either dilute or
14 concentrate regional voting power. What's your
15 view on how these maps impact voter
16 representation?

17 MR. VALDEZ: So that's a really good
18 question. When we're talking about, first, how
19 they dilute or concentrate regional voting power,
20 I want to be clear in what my take on that is.

21 So regional voting power is a lot of
22 things. It can be a county. It can be a city.
23 It can be rural versus urban. There can be a few
24 different ways you can look at regional voting
25 power.

1 In general, the way this has been going on
2 in the state of California is there has been a
3 number of places in the Central Valley, LA region
4 and then Orange county going down to San Diego
5 that Latinos have had a lot of voting power, so
6 to speak. They have large CVAP populations,
7 citizen voting age population, in some of these
8 districts. They also have large percentage of
9 the voting block in these districts.

10 And I would argue that in most of the
11 districts that we have in California, Latinos
12 have actually been electing their candidates of
13 choice and getting voter representation they
14 want.

15 This is actually seen really well in a
16 couple of districts recently. CD 13, which is
17 the Josh Harder district, you can see the Latinos
18 there chose a candidate where they had a
19 Republican candidate. They weren't happy with
20 it. They moved on and chose a Democratic
21 candidate only recently.

22 CD 27, where you had Mike Garcia, who was
23 a Latino but was a Republican Latino, that the
24 Latinos in that area maybe didn't agree with,
25 they moved on and chose someone else for their

1 candidate, George Whiteside.

2 So they've actually been electing in a lot
3 of these places -- in terms of their power, they
4 have been electing who they would like, or
5 getting who they would like.

6 Now, how that affects with this -- these
7 new maps concentrating regional -- or diluting
8 regional voting power, we have a couple areas
9 where it's maybe been somewhat of a problem.

10 For instance, in a lot of the parts in the
11 Central Valley we have, you know, very rural
12 agricultural Latino populations. A lot of them
13 are farmwork, or at least dealing with the
14 farmwork communities. And now they've drawn a
15 new map which takes urban Latinos in Stockton
16 amongst these rural Latinos and agricultural
17 Latinos.

18 Now, the Hispanic people in general,
19 everybody knows we're not monolithic. We all
20 like speak Spanish and we all have, you know, a
21 general kind of understanding of that. But you
22 have a lot of different countries in South and
23 Central America. You have a lot of different
24 groups of people. And treating them
25 monolithically sometimes isn't necessarily the

1 best way to allow for representation.

2 So when you have a place like Stockton and
3 urban Latinos being lumped in with all the rural
4 agricultural Hispanic people and Latinos in the
5 rest of the Central Valley, you're kind of not
6 only diluting the power of rural representation,
7 but you're also in a way packing. That was
8 mentioned earlier in the presentation.

9 You're packing these Latinos into one
10 district just to say now we have a district,
11 CD 13, which has more Democrat voters and so it
12 will be safer for a Democrat candidate, rather
13 than allowing the Latinos in that district to
14 really elect the candidate they would like.

15 What it comes down to is -- and we've seen
16 this a lot, especially in the last couple of
17 elections. Even though Latinos might have a
18 shared language and in some places a lot of
19 shared culture, there's not always a shared
20 ideology. There's actually a lot of Hispanic
21 voters who are voting one way and a lot of
22 Hispanic voters who are voting another way.

23 And so there's this idea that, well, if we
24 put them all together, that's going to give them
25 better representation. Well, in some cases, you

1 may not necessarily want as a Hispanic Democrat
2 voter to be in a district with a bunch of
3 Hispanic Republican voters, because you may not
4 have the ability to elect a Democratic candidate.
5 Or vice versa, if you're a Republican Hispanic
6 voter, you may not want to be in a Democratic
7 district.

8 Just because you're getting what the
9 Hispanic Democrats want doesn't mean that you're
10 getting what a Hispanic Republican wants, but you
11 might be.

12 In general -- sorry. In general, my point
13 on it is, you know, treating us monolithically is
14 a bit reductive and it kind of ignores how
15 diverse and broad of a community the Latino and
16 Hispanic people, especially in California, can
17 be.

18 MS. TORRES: And would you say that's your
19 concern about these maps is that it -- or one of
20 the main concerns, that it's looking at Latinos
21 as a monolithic voting block?

22 MR. VALDEZ: Yeah. It's definitely
23 something I have struggled with myself as a
24 Latino in California. And I sit a lot more on
25 the fence in the middle, and maybe middle and to

1 the right sometimes than a lot of other Latinos I
2 know.

3 It's been a struggle for me to look at,
4 you know, balancing representation and saying,
5 well, are we getting what we deserve in terms of
6 where a majority -- not like we're -- we're
7 plurality in the state. Are we getting the
8 number of representatives and the kind of
9 representation we need versus do we agree on what
10 that representation is?

11 I've had many conversations with Latinos
12 across the state in different areas who, you
13 know, have very different opinions on what's
14 going on in their communities and, you know, how
15 the current administration is affecting them, and
16 what they like and don't like.

17 And to say that, oh, everyone is the same
18 because you have -- you know, your last name has
19 an E-Z or an E-S ending, it's like, well, I mean,
20 maybe that's not exactly how they should treat
21 us.

22 I mean, for instance, in the Asian
23 community -- and anybody who works in politics
24 can speak to this. In the Asian community, we
25 treat the Vietnamese very different from Chinese.

1 We treat Korean different from Japanese. But we
2 don't really do that in the Hispanic community.

3 MS. TORRES: Thank you for that.

4 Fabian, how do you think these maps impact
5 competitiveness, particularly in regions -- and I
6 think that you started answering this question --
7 particularly in regions where Latino voters make
8 up a decisive voting block?

9 MR. VALDEZ: Yeah. So to be clear, these
10 maps were drawn specifically to enable more
11 Democratic representation, Democratic elected
12 officials. So, I mean, that's the understanding
13 of that. In general, the goal is to kind of
14 reduce competitiveness as a goal, and that's --
15 plainly stated. That's not obfuscated in any
16 way. That is the goal of these maps.

17 But how does it affect the ones maybe
18 where Latinos have the higher voting block, or
19 have more people living in them? So there's a
20 couple places I'd like to look at that you can
21 see a better example of this.

22 Specifically, you have districts like
23 district -- current district -- I'm talking about
24 the current districts. Current District 9, which
25 is at San Joaquin area.

1 You have current District 13, which kind
2 of runs from the Central -- down the Central
3 Valley through Stanislaus and down into Madera.

4 You have District 22, which is the current
5 Valadao district, which kind of runs through that
6 Kingstown and Fresno county area.

7 And then you also have District 27, which
8 is a district in northern LA county that kind of
9 runs from the Lancaster/Palmdale area.

10 In all of those districts, Hispanic voting
11 block -- and when I say voting block, I mean
12 that's different than the CVAP. The voting block
13 of Hispanics is pretty high, over 30, 40, in some
14 places 60 percent. So we have large Hispanic
15 voting populations.

16 And these are all competitive districts.
17 And what I mean by competitive is I mean these
18 districts can swing Republican or Democrat, and
19 they have in the last few elections.

20 So we have Democrat candidates sometimes.
21 We have Republican candidates. Either could win
22 in either of these district -- any of these
23 districts. Latinos are able to choose who they
24 want as their representative in these districts.
25 And that all these districts being able to choose

1 as a Hispanic or Latino voter, it gives you the
2 representation that you're looking for.

3 In all those districts I just mentioned,
4 they have reduced the competitiveness. So in
5 every single one of those districts, they've
6 added Democrats to the district in a way that
7 then makes those districts less competitive.

8 Now, why might that matter if you're still
9 getting representation? Well, again, this comes
10 down to, what is that representation? When you
11 talk about who you want voting -- who you want on
12 your -- in your election, District 22 is a good
13 example, Valadao.

14 Valadao is a Republican who won in a
15 majority Hispanic voting district. It's roughly
16 63 percent Hispanic voters. And to say to those
17 Hispanic voters in '22, well, you elected a
18 Republican you like, but we don't believe who you
19 elected is who is best for you.

20 Instead, we're going to draw a district
21 where Valadao is, frankly, unelectable, and we're
22 going to make sure a different representation
23 comes in that is Democratic. Well, that's a
24 little insulting to the Hispanic voters who voted
25 for Valadao in that region.

1 And, again, 63 percent Hispanic voting. I
2 guarantee you 63 percent of all of the voters are
3 Hispanic. I guarantee you all of them did not
4 vote against Valadao. That means he had to win
5 Hispanic voters over. That means the Hispanic
6 voters, Latinos voters who voted for him.

7 And now to say, oh, well, we're going to
8 remove that decision from you, this goes back to
9 the problem we had in 2008 where -- and before we
10 had this whole Prop. 10 and we had these, you
11 know, competitive -- sorry, Commission-driven
12 maps. It goes back to the problem of politicians
13 drawing what they think are best for voters
14 rather than the voters saying what we think is
15 best for us.

16 MS. TORRES: Since you brought up the
17 Valadao seat, which I find always a very
18 interesting seat in our California politics, once
19 again, a swing vote seat.

20 MR. VALDEZ: Uh-huh.

21 MS. TORRES: There was a time that he
22 wasn't voted in and then it went back to him,
23 right?

24 MR. VALDEZ: Uh-huh.

25 MS. TORRES: What I find curious about

1 that is you mentioned a majority voting Latino
2 district. What was the voter turnout, though?
3 Because, unfortunately, I always hear -- not only
4 hear, but experience that the voter turnout for
5 Latinos aren't as high in some of these Central
6 Valley seats.

7 MR. VALDEZ: Well, in general, that is
8 actually a statement that can be made across the
9 state.

10 MS. TORRES: Across the board.

11 MR. VALDEZ: Yeah. Across the state,
12 Hispanic, Black and Asian voters tend to vote at
13 lower numbers than White voters. That is
14 absolutely true.

15 You can say that -- I don't know what the
16 exact numbers are. I'd have to look up '22 to
17 know exactly what the voter turnout of Hispanic
18 voters was in that district.

19 But in general, I would say it's probably
20 pretty safe to say that of those Latinos in the
21 state, they probably turn out a slightly lower
22 level.

23 Paul mentioned that currently it's 28
24 percent and then 13 percent have voted so far.
25 Yeah, Latinos tend to hold their votes to later.

1 But in general, they will show up at a little bit
2 of a lower rate in the election.

3 So when you ask the question what
4 percentage of those voters voted, I don't have
5 the answer right away. However, what I can say
6 is, even if you were to say, well, a lower number
7 of Hispanic voters voted there, that's how
8 Valadao got in.

9 So you're saying, first of all, the choice
10 not to vote is a choice. If a Latino decides
11 they don't want to vote because they don't want
12 to -- they don't like either candidate, that is a
13 choice in themselves.

14 You're also saying that the Latino that
15 did vote for Valadao -- and I guarantee you there
16 are a lot of them, because you cannot win that
17 district without getting Hispanic vote. Even if
18 they're voting at lower levels, you cannot win
19 that district. The Hispanic voters that did vote
20 for Valadao, their vote didn't matter as much as
21 the ones that didn't vote.

22 So it's more about, hey, what are we being
23 able to do, what are we -- what are we being able
24 to look at in terms of how Hispanics are
25 positioning themselves for representation? Who

1 are they allowed to vote for versus what you're
2 choosing for them to vote for.

3 Actually, Paul just let me know 48 --

4 MS. TORRES: I saw that.

5 MR. VALDEZ: -- 48 percent. So 48 percent
6 Hispanic voter turnout.

7 MS. TORRES: I love being with you and
8 Paul.

9 MR. VALDEZ: Yeah.

10 MS. TORRES: I know we could always get
11 good data when we have you and Paul together.

12 MR. VALDEZ: Yeah.

13 MS. TORRES: That's fantastic.

14 I guess the bigger point, and this is the
15 point that I was trying to make with Paul, too,
16 is like this underspent, quite frankly, of
17 resources in getting the Latino vote, period.
18 You know, really investing in the Latino vote.

19 And, you know, you go from a district that
20 was a little over 60 percent of Latino voters to
21 only getting about 48 percent of that voter
22 turnout.

23 To me, the conversation always is, who is
24 truly investing in the Latino vote? You know,
25 who is truly educating and making the efforts to

1 garner our vote to ensure that our voices are
2 being heard? So I just always -- I always come
3 back to that, right?

4 MR. VALDEZ: Yeah. I would argue it's
5 HOPE. HOPE is part of the -- part of the --

6 MS. TORRES: We are.

7 MR. VALDEZ: -- part of the good people.

8 MS. TORRES: We're trying to make sure
9 everyone's --

10 MR. VALDEZ: Part of the process.

11 MS. TORRES: And we all have to be
12 hopeful, right?

13 MR. VALDEZ: Yeah.

14 MS. TORRES: We only have a little bit
15 more time together, and I wanted to make sure I
16 asked you the same question I asked Paul to wrap
17 things up, and that was, how do you see these
18 maps influence the long-term political power of
19 Latinos in California? And not just in this next
20 election cycle, but, you know, the decade leading
21 up to or close to, you know, five to six years,
22 leading up to 2030, 2032?

23 MR. VALDEZ: Yeah. That's a great
24 question, too.

25 I looked at this a little more

1 holistically in terms of what these maps mean.
2 Now, these new maps or the current maps, whatever
3 maps they're using, if they pass or it doesn't,
4 these maps will stay in place until 2032. 2032
5 is when we will see maps -- the new Commission
6 gets starting the process in 2030 for new maps in
7 2032. So this will be for the next three
8 election cycles.

9 And then looking beyond that, what are
10 the -- what is the opportunities or what is the
11 potential problems for Latinos?

12 In general, there's going to be -- as Paul
13 said, there is a new Hispanic majority district
14 in LA. But what does that mean? Well, to draw
15 that district, you actually have to break up some
16 areas.

17 We talked a lot about the gateway cities.
18 And yes, the gateway cities are kind of made into
19 this new district. But in doing that, they also
20 split cities, like Pico Rivera and Norwalk, which
21 are also gateway cities. And splitting them
22 isn't necessarily helping the Latinos in those
23 communities.

24 For instance, the new 41 splits Norwalk in
25 favor of grabbing people in Brea. Well, they

1 could have kept Norwalk together and left Brea in
2 a different district.

3 These are the kind of considerations when
4 you're drawing these maps in order to draw them
5 just for political purposes, you end up losing
6 some of the idea of, well, how can we help these
7 communities stay together?

8 And it's not just Pico Rivera and Norwalk.
9 Pomona gets split, another heavy Hispanic
10 community. Santa Ana gets split up. Norwalk. I
11 talked about Nueva, which is a smaller community
12 in Inland Empire.

13 You have -- in the north you have Stockton
14 being split up. You have Porterville. You have
15 Madera. These are all Latino majority cities
16 which are now cut up. And again, they're cut up
17 to favor Democratic representation and Democrats,
18 which I understand the purpose.

19 But to do that, they have to split them
20 and say, well, some Latinos we need with
21 Republicans over here, and some Latinos we need
22 with Democrats over here in order to make sure we
23 have enough Democrats being elected. And that
24 just isn't good for, you know, Latino communities
25 in general.

1 And what that means for longer term is
2 weaker -- potential weaker coalition power. When
3 you are splitting these groups up and you're
4 putting places like Coalinga and Avenal into
5 San Jose, and you're saying, well, Latinos in
6 Coalinga and Avenal, you're now going to be
7 represented by someone in San Jose, that starts
8 to -- I mean, everyone knows politics starts at
9 the lowest level.

10 And so when these people are being shunted
11 up all the way to another area, maybe that's
12 harder to organize the Latino community all the
13 way from Coalinga and all the way to San Jose.
14 It's harder to build local incumbency.

15 It's harder to secure that responsive
16 representation and say, hey, you know, we have
17 this bench, you know, the bench candidates of
18 people who ran for city council and ran for
19 district elections, and now they're moving up
20 through to Congress.

21 Well, they're never going to have that
22 opportunity because the lines have been drawn in
23 such a way that to kind of break some of that
24 coalition up and split it into different places.

25 And what that means long term is

1 potentially diminished policy wins, you know,
2 when you're unable to get what you need in your
3 local community, you're unable to move it up to
4 the next level. Then potentially it's going to
5 work out not in your favor in the long term.

6 I think also, in general, how this affects
7 long-term political power for Latinos is my whole
8 problem with the monolithic -- how we're treating
9 monolithically. When you treat Latinos
10 monolithically, they will -- look, you have power
11 now. Well, we can still disagree with each
12 other.

13 And, you know, saying that to a rural
14 Hispanic farmer that you are now in a district
15 with a bunch of urban Latinos and Hispanic people
16 who are going to decide your district for you,
17 how does that increase your political power as a
18 rural Hispanic farmer? If anything, it reduces
19 or completely eliminates it, because you don't
20 get that choice anymore. It's only what the
21 other people decide for you.

22 MS. TORRES: Fabian, thank you so much for
23 joining us. And I feel like we've made a new
24 friend, so --

25 MR. VALDEZ: I'm happy to talk any time.

1 MS. TORRES: -- welcome to the family.

2 MR. VALDEZ: Thank you very much.

3 MS. TORRES: We really appreciate your
4 insights.

5 MR. VALDEZ: And all of you, thank you for
6 having me. And I would love to come back any
7 time and have another conversation.

8 MS. TORRES: Wonderful. We'll make sure
9 that happens.

10 Now we're going to transition over to
11 Maria Morales again, our HOPE policy director, as
12 she brings in our final great speaker.

13 And thank you everyone for listening and
14 continuing the conversation.

15 MS. MORALES: Thank you, Helen, for
16 moderating those segments.

17 And thank you so much, Paul and Fabian,
18 for the really in-depth breakdown of the map. I
19 feel like I learned a lot, so thank you.

20 It's a pleasure to introduce our final
21 speaker, which is Christian Arana from the Latino
22 Community Foundation. I think Christian will be
23 able to ground this conversation in community
24 voice.

25 He is the vice president of Civic Power

1 and Policy at the Latino Community Foundation,
2 where he leads the Foundation's efforts to
3 advance policy solutions that will improve the
4 lives and political power of California's
5 Latinos.

6 Christian will share polling data insights
7 on how Latino voters are engaging with Prop. 50.

8 So thank you for all you do, Christian,
9 and thank you so much for joining us today.

10 MR. LARA: Yeah. Well, thank you so much,
11 Maria and Helen, and honestly, the entire HOPE
12 team. I was telling them that in preparation for
13 this, that it's real kudos to HOPE and the
14 organization for putting this on.

15 As I'll explain in a bit, you know,
16 there's a lot of work to be done to ensure that
17 our community is prepared and well-educated about
18 what exactly is going on.

19 So as Maria mentioned, the Latino
20 Community Foundation -- and then, actually, just
21 for more context, we are the nation's largest
22 Latino serving Foundation. You know,
23 historically we've been a California-focused
24 foundation, but under the leadership of our new
25 CEO, Julian Castro, it started to expand

1 nationally, right, just to see how we replicate
2 along the work that we have done here in
3 California and take it to other parts of the
4 country.

5 Critical to this work that we have done
6 over the last couple years is to commission
7 public opinion polling of the community. I think
8 too often in American politics conversations
9 around our voters, right, in our community are
10 based on very scant evidence or data or polling.

11 And so we want to make sure that we're
12 always portraying an accurate narrative about
13 what our community is thinking, what are the key
14 issues that we're thinking about, and so on and
15 so forth, right?

16 MS. MORALES: Yes.

17 MR. LARA: So as Paul and Fabian and Sonja
18 were talking about, you know, I think towards the
19 middle of the summer, we knew we were barreling
20 towards a special election on redistricting, and
21 so we wanted to take it upon ourselves to
22 commission to both, right? To ensure that we're
23 capturing Latino attitudes and sentiments around
24 this issue.

25 And so just to share a couple of key

1 highlights about what we found in our polls, so
2 just for additional context.

3 There's 1200 registered Latino voters
4 across the state of California. And I think one
5 of the biggest findings that we found were that
6 Latinos generally are in support of this idea of
7 temporarily redrawing these congressional
8 districts, right?

9 We asked the question specifically
10 about -- as it was moving through the Legislature
11 and the Governor was going to sign it, that 54
12 percent were generally supportive of this idea.

13 As to the proposition itself, you know,
14 whether or not Latinos would want to actually
15 have our state temporarily redraw the districts,
16 46 percent were in support, 20 percent were just
17 a flat out no, and 29 percent of Latinos are
18 undecided.

19 And when you look at other public opinion
20 polling that has been done on this issue so far,
21 it's kind of been around that area, where Latinos
22 are the voting blocks that tend to be the most
23 undecided on this, right?

24 I guess I'll just share some other key
25 data points before we go into some of your other

1 questions, Maria.

2 MS. MORALES: Yes.

3 MR. LARA: And I know we -- some of the
4 other presenters talked about this as well.

5 You know, when I think about this 29
6 percent number, 29 percent undecided, I was like,
7 well, like, you know, it seems like all this is
8 on TV. It's constantly in the news, you know.
9 But we can't take for granted that your everyday
10 Latino out there is paying attention to this
11 stuff.

12 And so one of the questions we asked in
13 this poll is asking our community whether or not
14 they've actually been contacted so far. And what
15 we found was something remarkable.

16 MS. TORRES: Interesting.

17 MR. LARA: Yeah. Fifty-four percent of
18 Latinos said they have not been contacted at all.
19 At all. Not a single piece of mailer. Not a
20 phone call. Not a text message. Not someone
21 knocking on your door.

22 And so, you know, I always like to say
23 over the years is that, how can you ask anybody
24 in their right mind to vote for someone or
25 something that they have never met?

1 And so, you know -- and I know some of the
2 questions beforehand have spoken to this, about
3 how our community is observing of that kind of --
4 that respect in treatment and attention and
5 outreach, right?

6 One other thing I'll share, too, is that,
7 you know, as we dug in deeper around like, you
8 know, attitudes around this issue, you know, if
9 we were -- if the state were to temporarily
10 redraw these maps, right, because that's the
11 question before us on November 4th, you know,
12 85 percent of Latinos said that it's super
13 important that these maps actually create fair
14 opportunities for us to actually --

15 MS. TORRES: Uh-huh.

16 MR. LARA: -- (inaudible) in Congress,
17 right? You know, if this does pass, like it's
18 likely that Democrats will have a much better
19 chance of picking up five additional seats,
20 right?

21 But who runs in those seats, if these maps
22 do pass in 2026, is also going to matter. And
23 our community is flat out saying to us that like,
24 hey, if this is going to happen, we want to
25 ensure that our community has those opportunities

1 to ensure that we have the representation that we
2 want.

3 So -- and Maria, I know we're pressed for
4 time, so you let me know when to be quiet.
5 But --

6 MS. TORRES: No, no, no. Well, I mean, I
7 appreciate you -- the first question was on your
8 poll findings, so you already met that, and I
9 appreciate that.

10 I guess I was wondering if you can respond
11 to this like larger theme that we saw in this
12 conversation around Latinos as a monolith, or if
13 there's like assumptions being made about Latinos
14 as it relates to the special election?
15 Especially that finding that you said, 54 percent
16 of folks haven't even been contacted, right?

17 Like what are gaps in -- or opportunities
18 that you're seeing that like both sides of this
19 pro and con topic you should be considering if
20 they want to accrue that Latino vote?

21 MR. LARA: Yeah. So, I mean, it's
22 interesting because -- I mean, I think Sonja
23 mentioned this. I mean, we do this every decade,
24 this process of redistricting. And so literally
25 this just feels like it just came out of nowhere,

1 right?

2 Obviously, California leaders have decided
3 to put this on the ballot to respond to what
4 Texas and other states are doing around this
5 issue.

6 But in the poll, you know, we also asked
7 another question about, you know, how much have
8 Latinos heard about all of this? And, you know,
9 44 percent like actually heard very little about
10 what's happening in Texas and why California is
11 (inaudible).

12 MS. MORALES: Uh-huh.

13 MR. LARA: Another remarkable data point
14 that you'll find in this poll is that 57 percent
15 of Hispanic and Latino voters across the state of
16 California have no idea, literally no idea on how
17 this is going to affect their community.

18 Just to give you a really good example, my
19 mom, right, my mom called me when all this
20 happened. And so, you know, there are now like
21 tools where you can see like whether or not if
22 your neighborhood is actually going to be moved
23 into a new district should the map pass.

24 MS. MORALES: Uh-hmm.

25 MR. LARA: You know, my mom is currently

1 represented by Latinos. But under the new map
2 proposed, like she would not, right?

3 And so, you know, those are just some of
4 the things that -- you know, pieces of
5 information that people should have, right? And
6 whether or not that matters to you, you know,
7 people should make their own votes on that.

8 But, you know, I think this is a critical
9 time to ensure that people are getting that
10 information. Like are you going to be in a new
11 district? Is your district going to stay the
12 same? How would it affect your representation?

13 I know in prep calls that you've had
14 before -- you know, I think this is also another
15 critical opportunity to provide like just very
16 basic voter education. Like what does a member
17 of Congress do, right?

18 MS. MORALES: Yeah.

19 MR. LARA: They can reopen the government.
20 They can, you know, fight on issues like
21 immigration and in healthcare. It's also
22 constituent services.

23 You know, I had -- I know I made a joke
24 with you and Helen beforehand. How many of my
25 friends that I know that had to get a last-minute

1 passport appointment to go on vacation? You
2 know, your member of Congress actually is there
3 to help you get that appointment, or make sure
4 you get your passport on time. And it matters
5 the type of constituent services that you get,
6 right?

7 MS. MORALES: Yes.

8 MR. LARA: And so to answer your question,
9 you know, this is a really critical time for
10 voter education, right? Because this doesn't
11 really happen, right? You know, there's
12 presidential elections. There's midterm
13 elections.

14 You know, the last time we had kind of
15 like a snap election was Governor Newsom's 2021
16 recall election. And even then, it was the same
17 barriers. It's like, what is this? What's going
18 on? Why does it matter to me? Why should I turn
19 out to vote?

20 You know, and for us at our Foundation,
21 you know, whether you're voting for your local
22 school board race or something like this that has
23 national implications, like your voice is super
24 critical on whatever it is that you're voting on.

25 MS. MORALES: Yeah. And I wonder --

1 because in your research and in that poll, do you
2 have any findings that show like what is actually
3 resonating with Latinos?

4 I know that there's been this really big
5 push for digital media in the special election,
6 which I think has been almost like a preview of
7 what's going to come for the midterms, for the
8 2028 election.

9 So -- and, you know, we also heard from
10 some of our other speakers that Latinos tend to,
11 you know, vote in person or vote a little bit
12 later.

13 Is there anything that you saw in your
14 poll that you think is interesting as far as like
15 what strategies would actually resonate with the
16 communities?

17 MR. LARA: Yes. Actually, just taking a
18 step back from that, we did ask a question in the
19 poll around whether or not Latinos are concerned
20 about the President sending in federal officials
21 to monitor polling places and vote setups for
22 this election.

23 I will be the first to tell you that the
24 results concern me a lot. Sixty-six percent of
25 registered Latino voters are concerned that these

1 people are going to be just lingering around
2 polling places. These are American citizens --

3 MS. MORALES: Yeah.

4 MR. LARA: -- right? And so --

5 MS. MORALES: Uh-huh.

6 MR. LARA: -- I know recently the Attorney
7 General of California and the California
8 Secretary of State held a press conference, you
9 know, reminding people of what their -- what
10 their voting rights are.

11 And I think that work is going to be more
12 important than ever. So, you know, if you're
13 that person in your family, encouraging your
14 folks to vote. You know, also make sure to know
15 like what their -- what their rights are, right?
16 Because whether you want to vote by mail or vote
17 in person, like, you know, that is your choice
18 and it's your right to do all that.

19 As to your other part of your question, I
20 think in this environment that we're in, you
21 know, especially for us that deals here in
22 California, like issues like immigration, issues
23 like the economy, when you look at what either
24 side of the campaigns are doing right now,
25 they're speaking to a lot of this, you know.

1 MS. MORALES: Uh-huh.

2 MR. LARA: So on the yes side, I know I've
3 seen ads run immigration. On the no side,
4 they've been talking about affordability and, you
5 know, whether or not -- which party can better
6 handle these issues.

7 But I think, just to return to the
8 original point, you know, ads and mailers, you
9 know, they're very cost-effective ways to reach
10 our community.

11 But I have always been a big advocate that
12 nothing will ever substitute the importance of
13 face-to-face interaction. Just straight up, you
14 know.

15 MS. MORALES: Yeah.

16 MR. LARA: I understand in American
17 politics like you got to reach as many people as
18 possible to win the campaign, right? I'm more
19 interested in this in terms of democracy.

20 I think too often we see in the data, the
21 voter turnout data, that Latinos consistently are
22 the ones that are -- have the biggest gap in
23 terms of voter registration and voter turnout.

24 And really, what is it going to take to
25 ensure that, you know, whether you're a candidate

1 or a campaign, or whoever -- whatever your
2 position is on American politics, like what would
3 it take for you to realize that there are nearly
4 nine million eligible Latino voters in the state
5 of California?

6 There are more voters here -- Latino
7 voters in our state than there are people in the
8 state of Arizona. We are such a powerful voting
9 block.

10 And if these polling numbers that I see so
11 far that, you know, the yes side probably has
12 like what, 55 percent support or so? Obviously
13 we won't know what the result is until election
14 night. But, you know, it's kind of hovering
15 around the margin of error, right?

16 This is a turnout game, and so -- and
17 knowing that there are nine million -- almost
18 nine million eligible Latino voters, like we can
19 be the decision-makers on this. Not just for
20 ourselves here in California, but for the entire
21 nation.

22 MS. MORALES: Yeah. And I think that's a
23 really powerful statement to make, just
24 exercising the power of our vote.

25 And I want to be mindful of time, but I do

1 want to ask you one last question, and also an
2 opportunity to make any final statements.

3 But this larger question about Latino
4 political power long term, right, with what
5 happens with Prop. 50 and after, what do you
6 think that looks like for our communities?
7 What's at stake?

8 MR. LARA: Yeah. No. I've said as it
9 relates to this conversation that we have to
10 treat this election as a down payment for next
11 year's midterm election.

12 You know, when people dig into the maps
13 that were drawn by Paul and his team, you realize
14 a lot of these districts have become a little bit
15 more competitive because of Latino voters.

16 So I know like the Santa Rosa area was
17 drawn into a new district. South Sacramento.
18 You know, these are communities that are built
19 with our Latino community members.

20 And so, you know, I often like to joke
21 that, you know, these people might be the most
22 important people in our country right now and
23 they don't even know about it.

24 MS. MORALES: Uh-huh.

25 MR. LARA: And so, you know, what are we

1 going to do to engage these folks and these
2 communities to understand that, you know, their
3 voice and their votes have always mattered, but
4 especially even more so now just given what
5 the --

6 MS. MORALES: Yes.

7 MR. LARA: -- (inaudible) for 2026.

8 And then moving ahead, you know, even long
9 beyond this very contentious political moment
10 that we're living in right now, there's always
11 going to be another election. Always, you know,
12 more debates around healthcare, immigration.

13 You know, this is my return to the point
14 like, you know, whether you're a school board
15 member or a member of Congress, like these people
16 have such important responsibilities and
17 decisions that they make over every single day.
18 And so it's all of our responsibility to
19 understand what they are, right?

20 You know, that's why I work in this role
21 now in philanthropy. Like, you know, we're
22 helping to move money to organizations that do
23 this work. You know, we've been long-time
24 supporters of HOPE.

25 You know, because our -- you can't expect

1 to merely -- just to independently want to, you
2 know, Google or find this information.

3 Obviously, we want them to do that. But, you
4 know, it's all of our civic responsibility to
5 help them connect the dots, right? Because I
6 think once people understand their power --

7 MS. MORALES: Uh-huh.

8 MR. LARA: -- they're sure as hell going
9 to wield it. And I'm hopeful that we're going to
10 see that in this election and in elections to
11 come.

12 MS. MORALES: Yeah. Thank you so much,
13 Christian, for lending us your expertise, and for
14 staying on. I know it's not always great being
15 the last speaker, but I feel like we ended on a
16 really powerful note. So I'm just really
17 grateful for you and your time.

18 MR. LARA: Thank you.

19 MS. MORALES: I also know there's a lot of
20 questions in the Q&A box, so I want to make sure
21 that you have time to answer some of those. And
22 also, so that we can include the link in the chat
23 to the polls. But thank you so much.

24 With that, I'm going to hand it over to
25 Helen so that she can close us out.

1 MS. TORRES: Thank you so much, Maria.

2 We really appreciate you, Christian, and
3 everything the Latino Community -- oh, just
4 realized my camera is not coming on. There we
5 go.

6 I was just saying a big thank you to all
7 our speakers and to all of you who stuck through
8 this Zoom. It was an hour and 15 minutes, I
9 think, of incredible information. Obviously, we
10 can't cover everything.

11 There were some good questions on the Q&A
12 box, so I hope some of our speakers can go on
13 there and answer those so that we can have an
14 informed electorate, which is really important.

15 So as I close, I not only want to extend a
16 heartfelt thank you to all our speakers, but also
17 to all of you.

18 And please get out to vote this
19 November 4th. Or like I already have, already
20 voted. There is no reason to wait. You should
21 have already received your ballot.

22 If you haven't, please contact your local
23 county's voter registrar to ensure that you do
24 get your ballot, or make sure that you can vote
25 on November 4th by knowing where your polling

1 place is.

2 The perspectives shared today are a
3 starting point, not the end of this important
4 conversation. Redistricting is complex. It
5 impacts every level of our government, from
6 school boards to Congress.

7 We encourage you to keep learning, explore
8 multiple sources of information. HOPE will be
9 putting together a HOPE voting resource guide
10 that will list a variety of ways in which you
11 should be looking out for your ballot. Making
12 sure you know the deadlines. And, of course, to
13 get out to vote before November 4th or right on
14 November 4th. Which includes, you know, as I
15 mentioned, additional materials and links to the
16 California Attorney General's Office for voter
17 education.

18 I also wanted to reiterate that HOPE is a
19 nonpartisan organization. Our goal is to tell
20 you -- not to tell you how to vote, but -- I only
21 leave that for my husband and my twin boys. I
22 tell them how to vote. Otherwise, we don't tell
23 you how to vote.

24 We just want you to keep informed, and
25 well-informed at that. And that you get out

1 there and use the information, the tools to
2 mobilize our community. Their voices are
3 critical during this time.

4 And before we go, a quick critical
5 reminder about voting this year. By now you
6 should have received, as I mentioned, the ballot
7 in the mail. It's essential for Californians to
8 vote as early as possible.

9 Due to the recent changes in the U.S.
10 Postal Service operations, mail delivery times
11 may vary. So if you're voting by mail, make sure
12 you vote early and that your vote will get
13 counted. And that you place it in a U.S. voting
14 mailbox or a post office on election day.

15 It may not be counted if it's not
16 postmarked by November 4th. So, please, if
17 you're voting by mail, vote early so your vote
18 will count.

19 If you're going to a polling place, make
20 sure you're well-informed about where your
21 polling location is.

22 So, once again, a big thank you to all our
23 speakers, and thank you for joining us on this
24 Zoom. Have a great day, and don't forget to
25 vote. (Recording ended.)

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, MARY ANN SCANLAN, hereby certify that
I transcribed the Hispanas Organized for
Political Equality (HOPE) Zoom presentation
held on October 17, 2025, as completely and
correctly to the best of my ability.

I further state that pages 1 through 75,
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proceedings specified.

Dated: October 29, 2025



Mary Ann Scanlan, CSR

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