UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

BREAKING DOWN THE LATINO GENDER GAP:

VIEWS ON IMMIGRATION, PRESIDENT TRUMP, AND DEMOCRACY BY AGE AND EDUCATION

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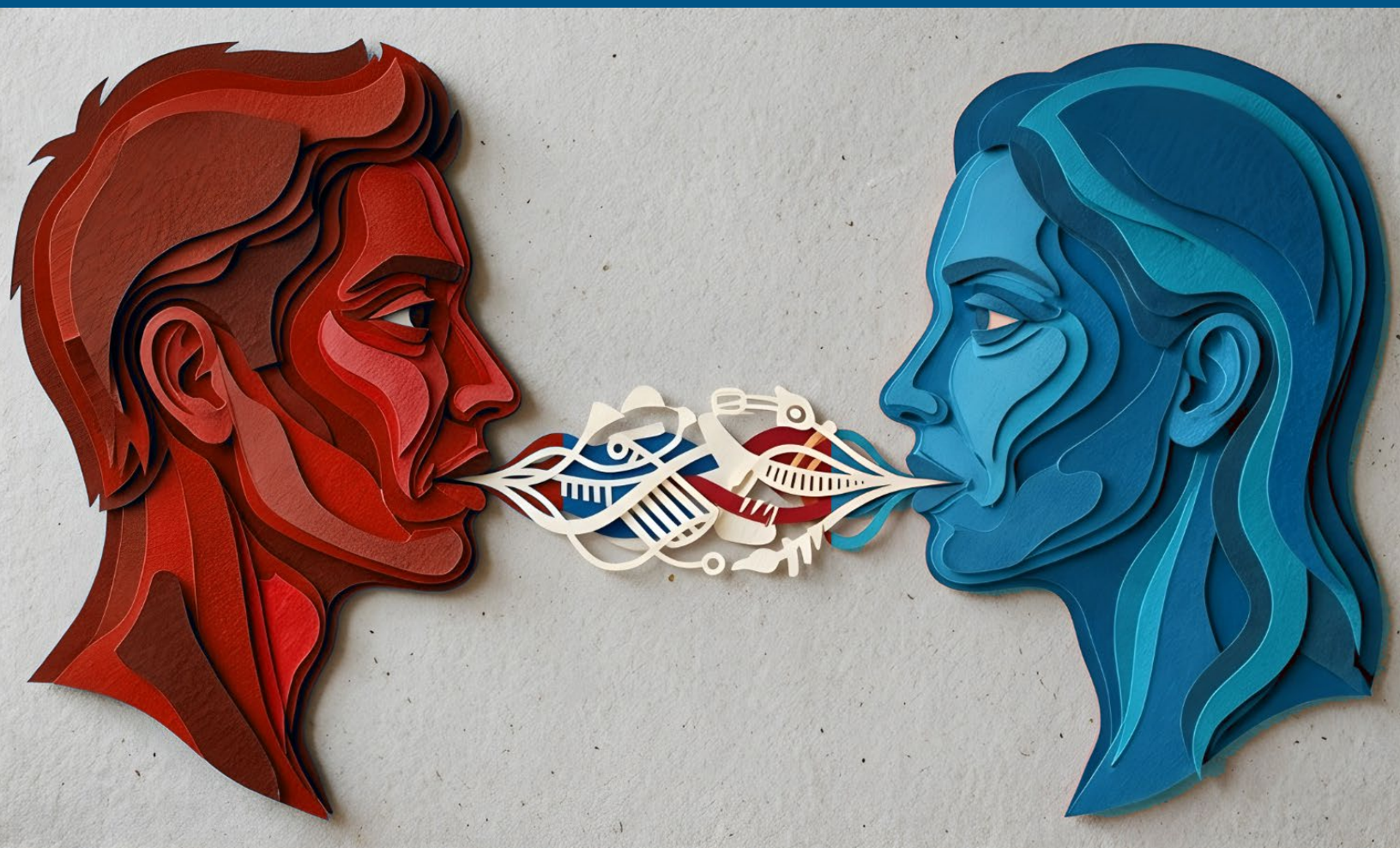


Latinas hold notably more progressive views than Latinos on immigration, the Trump agenda, and democracy — but this gender gap is especially pronounced among younger and non-college-educated Latino voters.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Latino voters are often discussed as a single political bloc, yet important differences exist within the electorate. While Latinas are generally more likely than Latinos to hold progressive views, disaggregating the Latino electorate by age and education reveals that the gender gap is not uniform.

Using data from the May 2026 UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies poll of 1,912 Latino registered voters in California, this report examines how Latinas and Latinos differ in their views on protecting immigrant communities, fighting the Trump agenda, and defending democracy and voting rights.

This report identifies three key findings:

1. **The Latino gender gap is largest among younger voters.** Across immigration, the Trump agenda, and democracy, younger Latinas consistently express more progressive views than younger Latino men. In many cases, the differences between young Latinas and Latinos are substantially larger than those observed among older voters.

2. **The Latino gender gap is also pronounced among voters without a bachelor's degree.** Latinas without a four-year degree are substantially more likely than similarly educated Latino men to prioritize immigrant protections, opposition to the Trump agenda, and the defense of democracy and voting rights.

3. **College-educated Latinas and Latinos often hold similar political views.** Across the issues examined, gender differences narrow considerably among voters with a bachelor's degree. In several cases, Latina and Latino college graduates express nearly identical levels of concern about these three issues.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the Latino electorate requires greater disaggregation than is common in public and political discussions. Gender alone provides only a partial picture. Differences in views on immigration, the Trump agenda, and democracy become much clearer when age and educational attainment are taken into account, revealing substantial variation within the Latino electorate itself.

INTRODUCTION

As Californians and the nation prepare for the November 2026 midterm elections, many observers are asking about the nature of the Latino vote and its potential impact. This report, the second in a collaborative series between the Latino Policy and Politics Institute (LPPI) and the Institute of Governmental Studies at UC Berkeley, takes a deep dive into one of the most consistent and least understood nuances of this voter profile: the gender gap. While Latina and Latino voters share many of the same priorities, they are not identical voters, and where their views diverge, it is often on questions about immigration, democracy, and the effects of the Trump agenda.

In May 2026, the poll asked 8,578 registered voters in California about which issues were most top of mind as the state heads toward the November elections. And while Latino voters generally appeared similar to white, Asian, and sometimes Black voters on many issues, a clear and persistent gender gap stood out with respect to some key issues. Analyzing the data for the 1,912 Latinos in the poll, we find that Latinas are consistently more likely than Latinos to express the need to protect immigrant communities, fight the Trump agenda, and defend democracy. Political party matters here, of course: California Latinas are registered as Democrats at higher rates than Latino men (about 54% versus 42%) and as Republicans at lower rates (about 15% versus 25%), and Democrats and Republicans tend to see these issues differently. But voters' views on immigration or democracy can be part of what draws them to a party in the first place. As such, the comparisons below illustrate how other underlying factors, namely education, language, and age, may be shaping gender differences in political attitudes within the Latino electorate.

However, the gender gap does not run evenly through the Latino electorate. It is widest among younger voters and those without a four-year degree, while Latina and Latino college graduates tend to see these issues similarly. In other words, the divide between Latino men and women is not uniform; rather, it's concentrated among younger, working-class voters, where women hold sharply different views from the men around them.

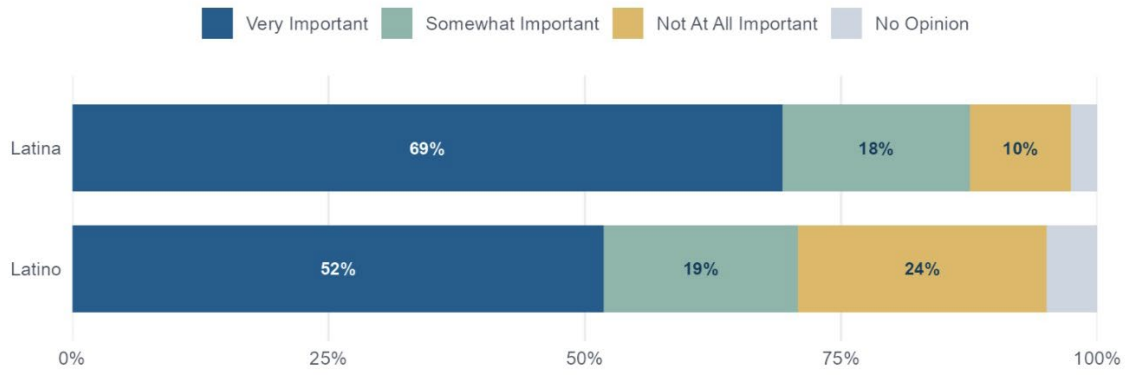
For journalists, researchers, advocacy organizations, and others seeking to understand Latino political behavior, gender alone therefore tells only part of the story. Attention to how gender intersects with age, education, and in some cases, language reveals important differences that broader accounts of "the Latino vote" can obscure.

FINDINGS

Latina Voters Express More Concern About Immigration

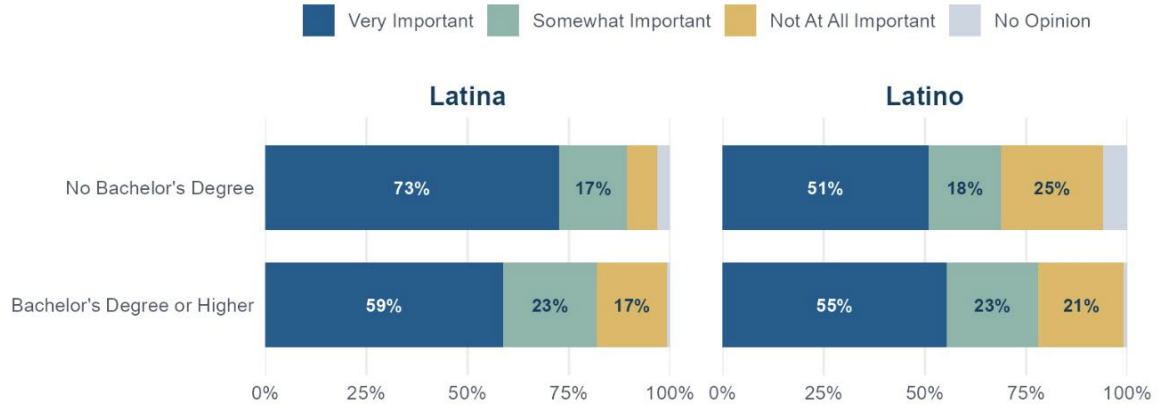
When asked "When considering the candidates running for Governor, how important do you think the following issue is - 'Protecting Immigrant communities,'" 17% more Latinas answered in the affirmative, compared to Latinos. Accordingly, more than twice as many Latinos as Latinas stated that protecting immigrants was "not important at all" (24% vs. 10%). Although considerably more Latino males were concerned about protecting immigrants than not, the quarter that were unconcerned represents a sizable chunk of the electorate, one which looks different from Latinas.

Figure 1. Importance of 'Protecting Immigrant Communities,' by Gender



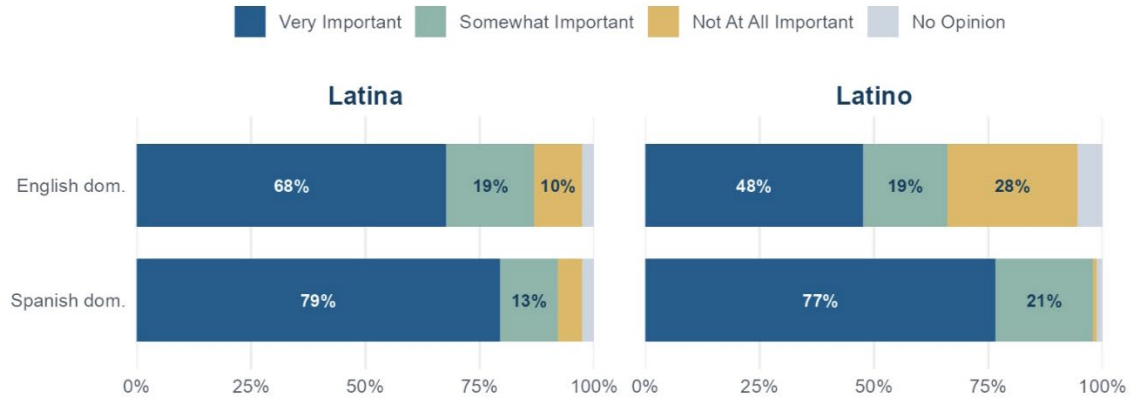
But what can help explain this gap? We find the first factor is education. While Latinas and Latinos with a college degree (bachelor's or higher) showed virtually no difference in their concern for immigrant communities, voters without a degree showed a large gap. Specifically, there was a 22-point difference on this issue between Latinas and Latinos without a bachelor's degree.

Figure 2. Importance of 'Protecting Immigrant Communities,' by Gender and Education



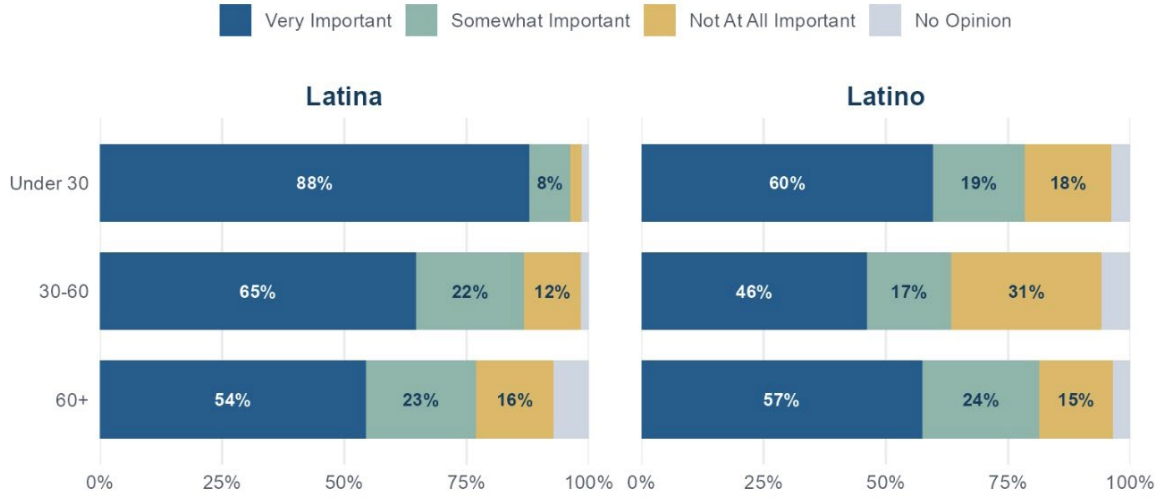
The second factor is language. While there was virtually no gender difference between Spanish-dominant voters on the issue, among English-dominant voters, Latina concern for immigrant communities was 20 points higher than that of Latino voters. Here again, there is a large gap in those responding negatively, with nearly three times as many English-dominant Latino voters compared to Latina ones stating that protecting immigrants was "not at all important" (28% vs. 10%).

Figure 3. Importance of 'Protecting Immigrant Communities,' by Gender and Language



Lastly, age also mattered. Younger Latinas under 30 were more likely than any other age and gender group in our analysis to be concerned about protecting immigrant communities, at nearly 90%. Latinas between 30 and 60 years old, a life-stage when women are mainly in the workforce and/or raising families, were the second most concerned group, at 65%. And while the oldest set of Latinas in our analysis were the least concerned about immigrants across age groups (54%), they were still more likely to be concerned than not. Meanwhile, Latino voters did not seem to show the same differences across age groups. Among Latinos, the youngest and oldest voters expressed more concern, at 60% and 57% respectively, compared to voters between 30 and 60 years old, 46% of whom expressed concern.

Figure 4. Importance of 'Protecting Immigrant Communities,' by Gender and Age



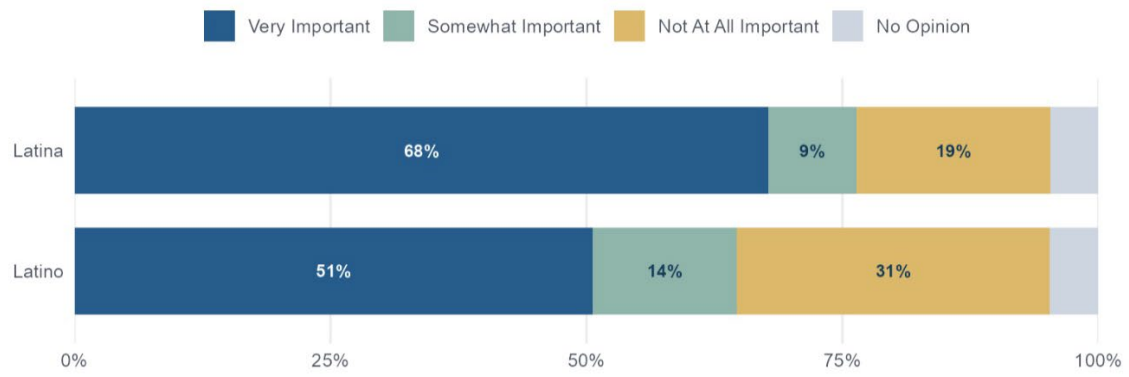
Overall, younger women, many without a college degree, appeared most likely to voice concern about protecting immigrants. Why might that be? We can only speculate, but a few possibilities are worth exploring. One is that working-class Latinas may, more than Latino men, hold jobs that bring them into regular contact with undocumented family members, friends, and neighbors. They might be more likely to work in child care, elder care, teaching, or social services, all roles that connect them to immigrant families through the rhythms of daily life.[1] Another potential explanation is that Latinas may be more active in churches, schools, and other institutions that build ties between documented and undocumented families, taking on volunteer and leadership roles, like running the PTA or leading a Spanish-language prayer group, that put them in touch with a wider range of families.[2]

Latino men, by contrast, may be pulled in a different direction. Some younger and working-class Latinos might work in fields like construction, where they might understand themselves as competing for jobs with undocumented workers. Others may have ties to the military or law enforcement that could shape their more conservative views on immigration.[3] And younger Latino males, compared to their Latina counterparts, may simply get their news from more conservative outlets. These are only hypotheses for now; further qualitative and demographic research would shed more light on these issues.

Latinas Are More Concerned About the Trump Agenda

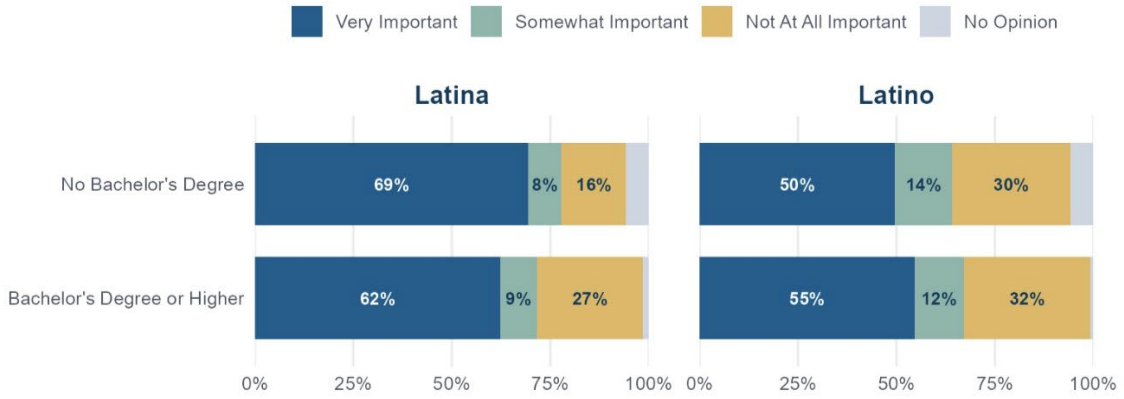
We also found important gender differences concerning the Trump agenda. When we asked Latino voters, "When considering the candidates running for Governor, how important was each of the following issues to you - Fighting the Trump Agenda?" Latinas were 17 points more likely than Latinos to indicate that this was a very important concern. While this issue is likely tied to voters' concerns about immigrant communities, it may also reflect broader concerns about federal actions affecting health care access, economic well-being, and environmental protection.

Figure 5. Importance of 'the Trump Agenda,' by Gender



Here again, education, language, and age help to shape this gender gap. While there is a relatively modest 7-point difference between Latinos and Latinas with bachelor's degrees, among those without, Latinas display much more concern about Trump policies than do Latinos (69% vs. 50%). Notably, on this question there is also little difference across education categories, as Latinas with or without degrees do not differ substantially in their concern about the Trump agenda. Indeed, the gender gap among non-degree holders is driving much of the difference.

Figure 6. Importance of 'the Trump Agenda,' by Gender and Education



With respect to language, the gender gap again emerges among English-dominant voters rather than Spanish-dominant ones. Within this category, Latina voters were 20 points more likely to state it was very important to fight the Trump agenda compared to Latinos (68% vs. 48%).

Figure 7. Importance of 'the Trump Agenda,' by Gender and Language

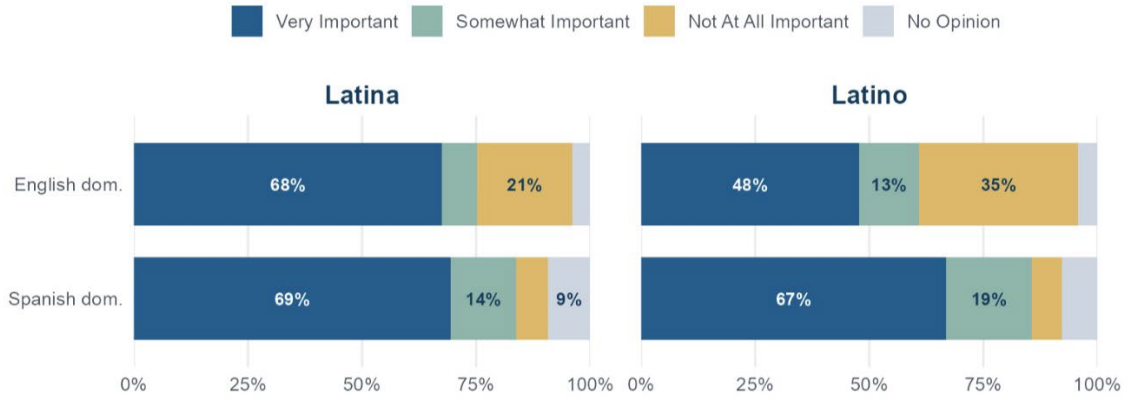
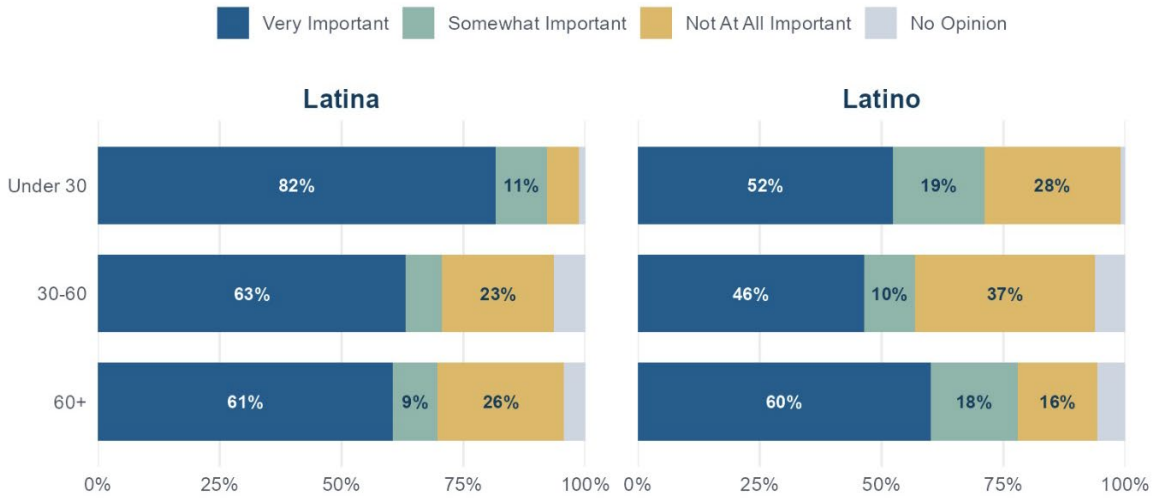


Figure 8. Distribution of Issue Importance by Gender and Age, Trump Agenda



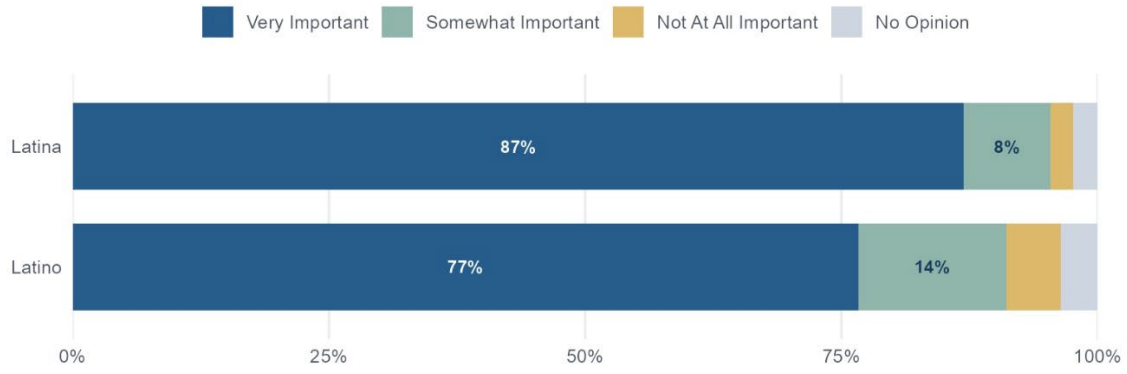
Last, younger Latinas were once again the most progressive, and hence the most concerned about the Trump agenda, of any age and gender group. Among Latina voters, those under 30 expressed upwards of 20 points more concern than older Latinas. And within this under-30 group, Latinas were 30 points more likely than Latino men to say it was important that California fight the Trump agenda. Notably, among Latino voters, the oldest (over 60) were more likely to express concern about Trump than those between 30 and 60, though still at a lower rate than the youngest Latina voters.

Taken together, with respect to fighting the Trump agenda, many patterns mirrored those found in response to the immigration query. All in all, it was often the younger, working-class Latina voter who was most likely to want to see California continue to fight Trump.

Latinas Are More Concerned About Democracy and Voting Rights

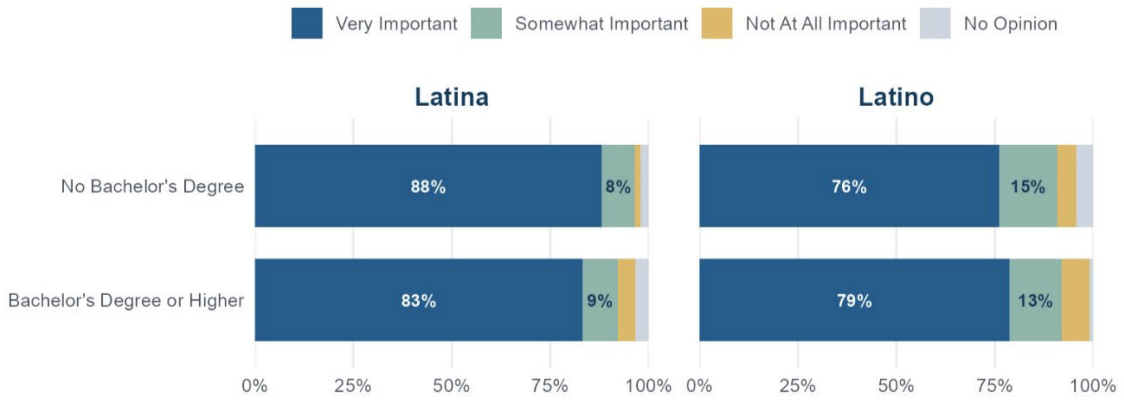
Finally, gender differences extend to views about democracy itself. When asked, "When considering the candidates running for Governor, how important was each of the following issues to you - Defending Democracy and Protecting Voting Rights?" Latinas were 10 points more likely than Latinos to rate the issue as very important.

Figure 9. Importance of 'Defending Democracy and Protecting Voting Rights,' by Gender



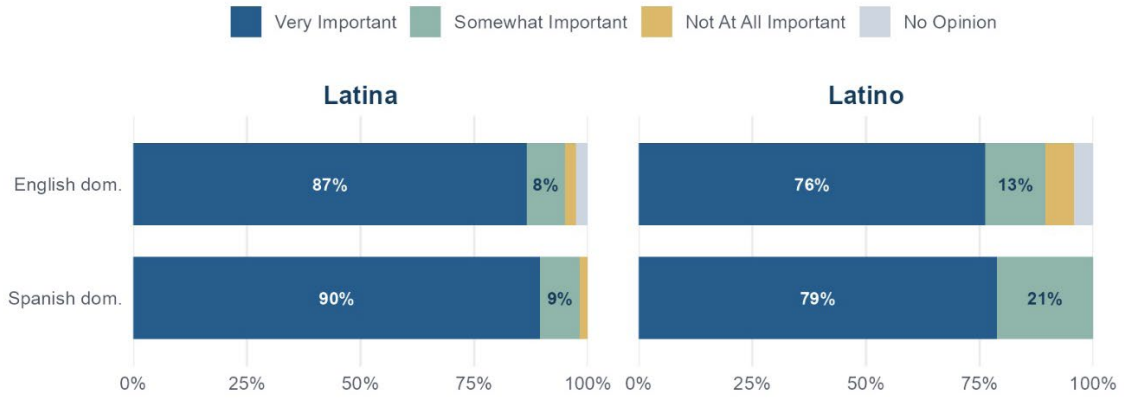
While the gender gap in views about democracy is smaller than for other issues overall, that summary masks an important pattern: The gap appears only among voters without a college degree. Among non-degree holders, Latinas were 12 points more likely than Latinos to rate the issue as very important. By contrast, Latinos and Latinas with bachelor's degrees differed little (79% vs. 83%). And within each gender, education mattered little—Latinas with and without degrees held similar views, as did Latinos. In other words, the overall gender gap on democracy is modest not because men and women consistently agree, but because they diverge only among voters without a college degree.

Figure 10. Importance of 'Defending Democracy and Protecting Voting Rights,' by Gender and Education



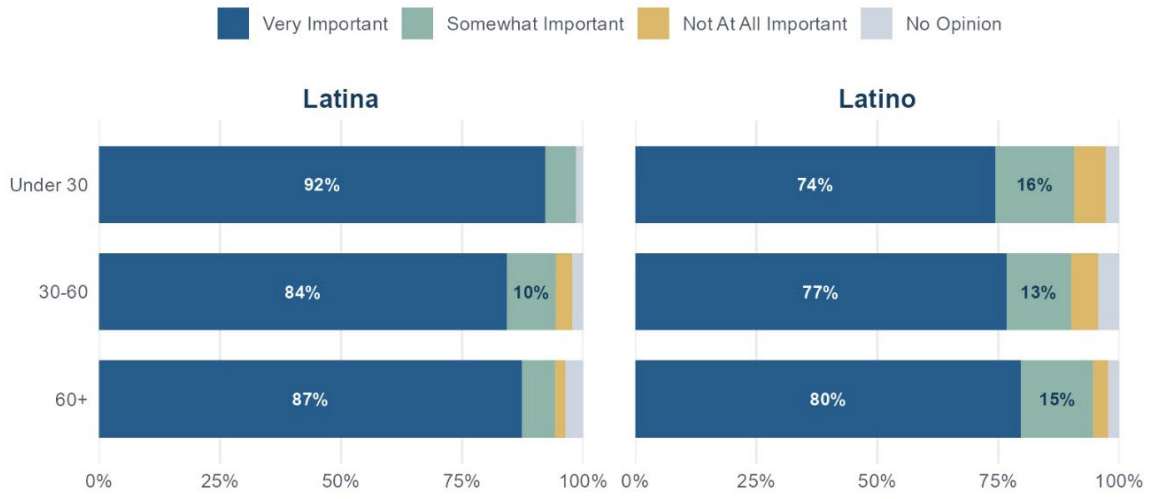
The language patterns showed more variation, including a noteworthy difference between Spanish-dominant Latino and Latina voters. Spanish-dominant Latinas were 11 points more likely than Latinos to rate the issue as very important. English-dominant Latino voters also showed the same pattern, revealing an 11-point difference between men and women (76% vs. 87%).

Figure 11. Importance of 'Defending Democracy and Protecting Voting Rights,' by Gender and Language



Lastly, familiar patterns by age emerged regarding the issue of democracy. Younger Latina voters under 30 were nearly 20 points more likely than their younger male counterparts to be concerned about defending democracy and protecting voting rights (92% vs. 74%). And within each gender group, age seemed to matter less, with voters largely resembling one another on the issue across age categories.

Figure 12. Importance of 'Defending Democracy and Protecting Voting Rights,' by Gender and Age



CONCLUSION

Taken together, this report shows that much of the Latino gender gap in voting differences exists in the younger and non-college-degree Latino voter groups. Here, young Latina women are more likely to hold the most progressive views and have considerably different attitudes compared to their male counterparts. Once again, it may be that Latinas in this age and education group are more likely to be in occupations that place them in contact with immigrant communities, such as child care, social services, or service work, inspiring their views on Trump and democracy. It may also be that younger Latino men get their news and information from sources that differ dramatically from those of younger Latinas, or that their education and labor market experiences place them in positions where they are less likely to form progressive views. At this point, these are hypotheses whose exploration would help explain current data trends.

As the nation and state head toward elections in November, accounts of Latino voters that do not distinguish the views of Latinas from those of Latino men will miss much of what is happening inside this electorate.

APPENDIX

The findings in this report are based on a poll completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was conducted online in English and Spanish from May 19 to 24, 2026, among 8,578 registered voters in California. Data collection was completed by distributing email and text message invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. Each email or text invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the University and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey questionnaire was hosted. Reminders were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt-out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further invitations.

Samples of the state's registered voters were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of registered voter lists in California, and were derived from information contained on the state's voter registration rolls, which is a public document. The samples were stratified by age and gender to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents. A separate random sample of Spanish speakers was drawn from the pool of registered voters who requested that their official voting materials be sent to them in Spanish to enable the survey to assess voter opinions among the state's Spanish-speaking voters.

To protect the anonymity of respondents, the personally identifiable information listed on each voter's voting record was purged from the data file and replaced with a unique, anonymous identification number during data processing. Finally, after data collection, post-stratification weights were applied to the data file to align the sample with the population characteristics of registered voters both statewide and within major regions of the state.

The sampling error associated with the survey results is difficult to calculate precisely because of sample stratification and post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that findings from the overall registered voter sample have a sampling error of about +/- 2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Latino Voter Sample

The May 2026 Berkeley IGS Poll had an overall Latino sample of 1,912, with 1,001 Latinas and 895 Latinos. The weighted subsamples in our analyses are as follows: Latinas (N = 1,169), Latinos (N = 1,003), Latinas with a bachelor's degree (N = 298), Latinas without a bachelor's degree (N = 866), Latinos with a bachelor's degree (N = 204), Latinos without a bachelor's degree (N = 799), English-dominant Latinas (N = 1,014), English-dominant Latinos (N = 849), Spanish-dominant Latinas (N = 155), Spanish-dominant Latinos (N = 154), Latinas under 30 (N = 337), Latinas ages 30-59 (N = 641), Latinas ages 60 and over (N = 192), Latinos under 30 (N = 278), Latinos ages 30-59 (N = 532), and Latinos ages 60 and over (N = 193).

Question wording

"When considering the Candidates Running for Governor, how important was each of the following issues to you - Protecting Immigrant Communities?"
"When considering the Candidates Running for Governor, how important was each of the following issues to you - Fighting the Trump Agenda?"
"When considering the Candidates Running for Governor, how important was each of the following issues to you - Defending Democracy and Protecting Voting Rights?"

NOTES

1. Thorman, Tess, Jenny Duan, and Sarah Bohn. 2024. "California's Workforce Is Diverse, but Many Occupations Are Not." *Public Policy Institute of California*. Retrieved on September 5, 2025.

2. Ochoa, Gilda Laura. 2004. Becoming Neighbors in a Mexican American Community: Power, Conflict, and Solidarity. By Gilda L. Ochoa. Austin: University of Texas Press

3. Donato, Katharine M., and Samantha L. Perez. 2016. "A Different Hue of the Gender Gap: Latino Immigrants and Political Conservatism in the United States." RSF:The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences 2 (3): 98–124.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Cristina Mora is Chancellor's Professor of Sociology and Co-Director of the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Her research examines immigration attitudes, racial classification, and political behavior in the United States, and has helped shape scholarly and public understanding of how race and ethnicity are constructed in American life. Her first book, *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American*, offers the first historical account of the emergence of the Hispanic/Latino category in the United States and has become a foundational text in the field. Her most recent book, *Normalizing Inequality: How Californians Make Sense of the Growing Divide*, explores how residents of the nation's most diverse state reconcile rising income inequality with growing racial diversity.

Mora's scholarship has earned numerous honors from the American Sociological Association, and her work has been featured in national media outlets including The Atlantic, The New Yorker, NPR, and Latino USA. In 2021 and 2022, she received the UC Berkeley Graduate Mentoring Award and the Chancellor's Award for Advancing Excellence and Equity, and she led UC Berkeley's first social-science cluster hire focused on "Latinos and Democracy." In 2023, she was awarded the nation's first Latino Social Science Pipeline award from the U.S. Department of Education to expand research opportunities in Latino social science at Berkeley. In 2025, the California State Assembly issued an official commendation recognizing her research contributions to understanding inequality in California.

Nicholas Vargas is an Associate Professor of Chicanx/Latinx Studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies. He currently co-leads the Latinxs and Democracy Cluster and serves as Faculty Co-Director of the UCB Latino Social Science Pipeline Initiative (LSSPI), both of which aim to advance Latinx social science scholarship and strengthen academic pipelines. Vargas' research is situated primarily in the social sciences with foci on ethnoracial classification, identification, and stratification. Most of his scholarship draws from nationally representative data and explores questions of ethnoracial boundaries, patterns of label use, racial ideology adherence, contested racial identity, and Latina/o/x experiences in higher education with particular attention paid to various organizational and individual markers of racialization. Methodologically, his core aim is to think critically about the utility of race data for identifying and rectifying societal, systemic, and structural racisms. Vargas serves on the National Advisory Committee of the U.S. Census Bureau, and as Deputy Editor of the journal Sociology of Race and Ethnicity. Prior to UCB, Vargas was Coordinator of Latino Studies at the University of Florida's (UF) Center for Latin American Studies, Associate Professor of Sociology at UF, and Assistant Professor in the School of Economic, Political, and Policy Sciences at the University of Texas at Dallas.

Guadalupe Garcia Lopez (he/him) is a first-generation transfer student majoring in Political Science with a specialization in Empirical Analysis and Quantitative Methods, and minoring in Data Science. At UC Berkeley, he is a Regents' and Chancellor's Scholar and a Yardi Scholar, dedicated to merging his interests in policy and technology to drive social change and create a more equitable society. Growing up in a mixed-status family, Guadalupe witnessed the constant struggles of his undocumented community. This experience shaped his passion for addressing systemic inequities affecting his family and others like them. He is committed to using the power of data to tackle complex social issues by analyzing the impacts of specific policies and developing innovative solutions that advance equity and justice, with the ultimate goal of empowering marginalized voices and building a more inclusive society.

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