Voter Demographics and Redistricting

Breaking down demographic data, the diversifying U.S. population, and what it means for the 2022 elections and beyond

Bloomberg Government

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Introduction

The United States is growing increasingly more diverse. According to **2020 Census data**, 57.8% of the population identify as "white, not Hispanic or Latino," as opposed to 63.7% in the **2010 Census**, and 69.1% in 2000. It's **estimated that by 2045**, fewer than 50% of the population will be non-Hispanic white.

Naturally, as the population becomes more diverse, so does the electorate. In this report, we use U.S. Census data and projections to analyze how the demographics of eligible voters and the population as a whole have evolved in recent years and will continue to change.

We also take a look at congressional districts by race, income level, and education level, and examine how congressional reapportionment and redistricting after the 2020 Census will impact elections in the U.S. House of Representatives for the next decade.

U.S. Population vs. Registered Voter Demographics

While the overall U.S. population is 57.8% non-Hispanic white, among those who reported being registered to vote in the 2020 election, non-Hispanic whites made up 70.3%.

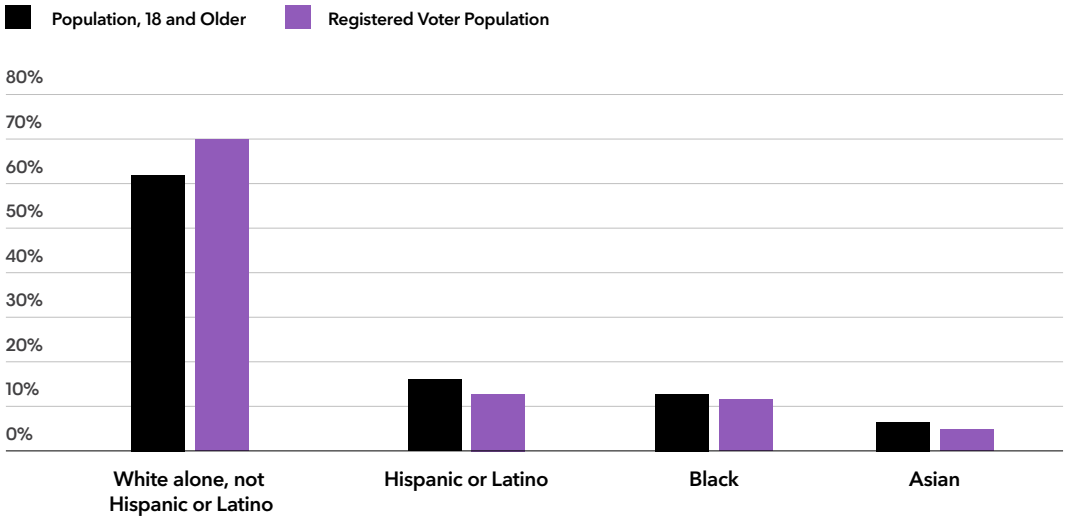
This difference is related to a number of factors, including:

1. **Citizenship**: 98.3% of non-Hispanic white adults were citizens at the time of the election vs. 72.1% of Hispanic/Latino adults, the next largest race or ethnicity demographic.
2. **Age**: The median age of the non-Hispanic white population is 44, according to Pew Research data, the oldest of any racial or ethnic group. Meanwhile the median age of the U.S. population overall is 38, and the median age of the Hispanic/Latino population, which has long been one of the youngest racial or ethnic groups in the U.S., is 30. This means that a larger portion of minority populations is under the age of 18. In fact, according to the 2020 Census, 52.7% of the U.S. population under 18 belongs to a minority group compared to 39.2% over 18.

Though 2020 was consistent with previous elections in that Hispanic/Latino voters had the lowest reported voting and registration rates, it did mark a historic milestone. For the first time, more than 50% of eligible Hispanic/Latino voters reported voting – 53.7%, to be exact.

According to researchers at the City University of New York:

> *"The surge in both registration and voting rates described here suggest that Latinos are poised to exert political influence in the U.S. commensurate with their share of the population. The midterm elections and the presidential election of 2024 may confirm that the often-called 'sleeping giant' of U.S. electoral politics is ready to emerge in full force."*

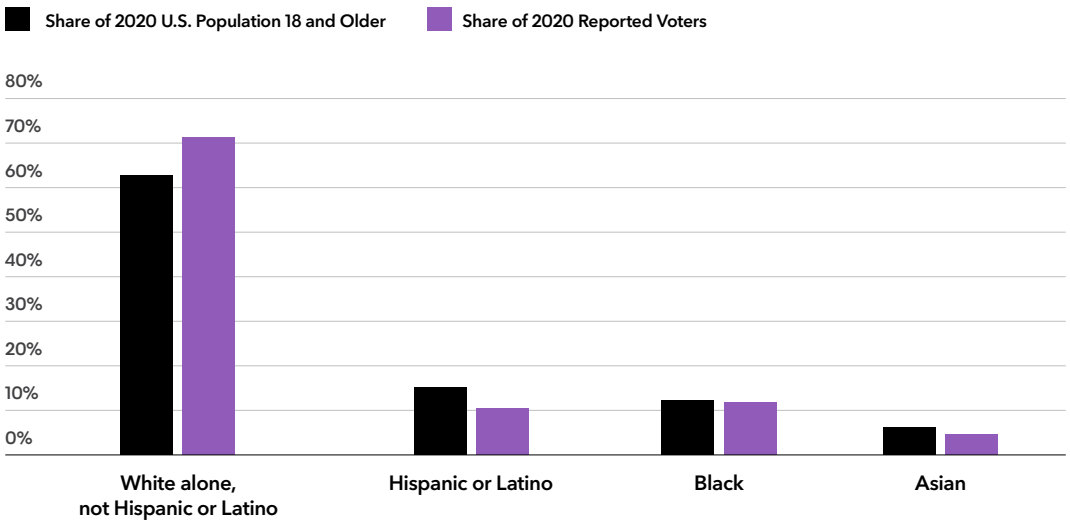


Source: U.S. Census data

Voter Turnout in Most Recent Elections

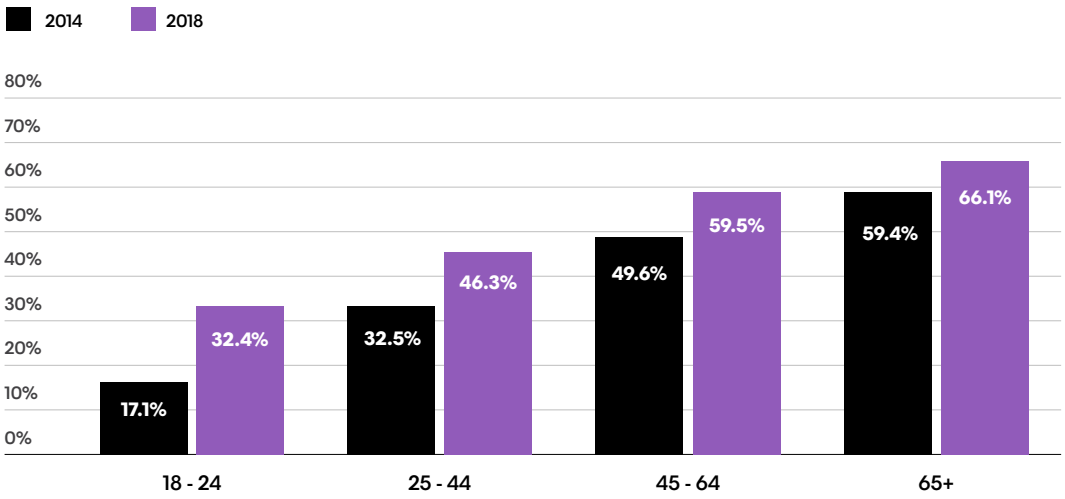
In terms of who participates in elections, the numbers are similarly disproportionate compared to the overall population. Among people who reported voting in the 2020 election, for example, 71% were white, 10.7% were Hispanic or Latino, 12.2% were Black, and 4.4% were Asian.

Race/Ethnicity of 2020 Reported Voters Compared to U.S. Population



As we approach the 2022 midterm elections, we can look back to stats from the most recent midterms, in 2018, which produced record-breaking turnout. It drew the highest percentage of voters since 1914, according to data compiled by University of Florida political scientist Michael McDonald. At 53.4%, turnout was more than 11 percentage points higher than in the 2014 midterm election. This record turnout was largely driven by a marked increase in young voters.

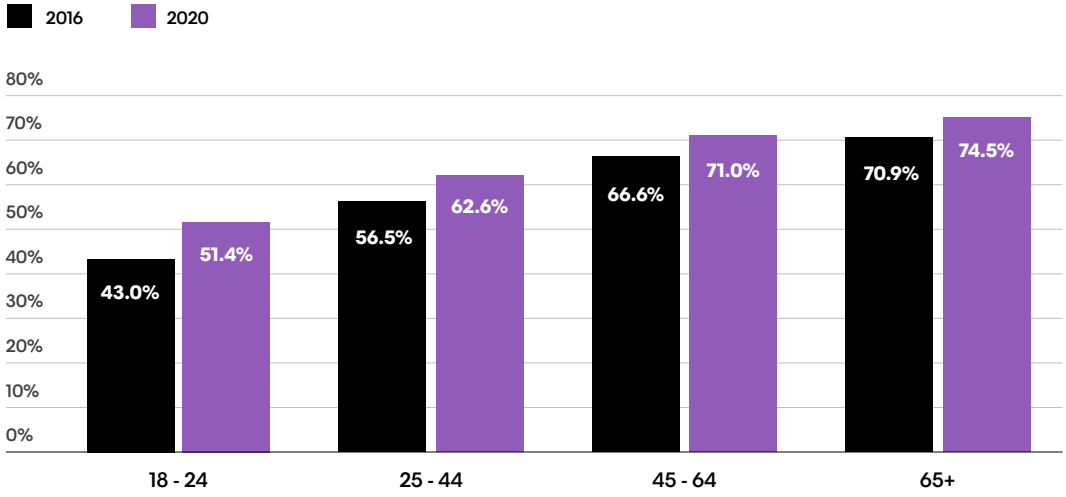
2014 vs. 2018 Midterm Election Turnout by Age



The 2020 presidential election drew a relatively high turnout – the highest since the 1992 presidential election – which was also largely driven by young voters.

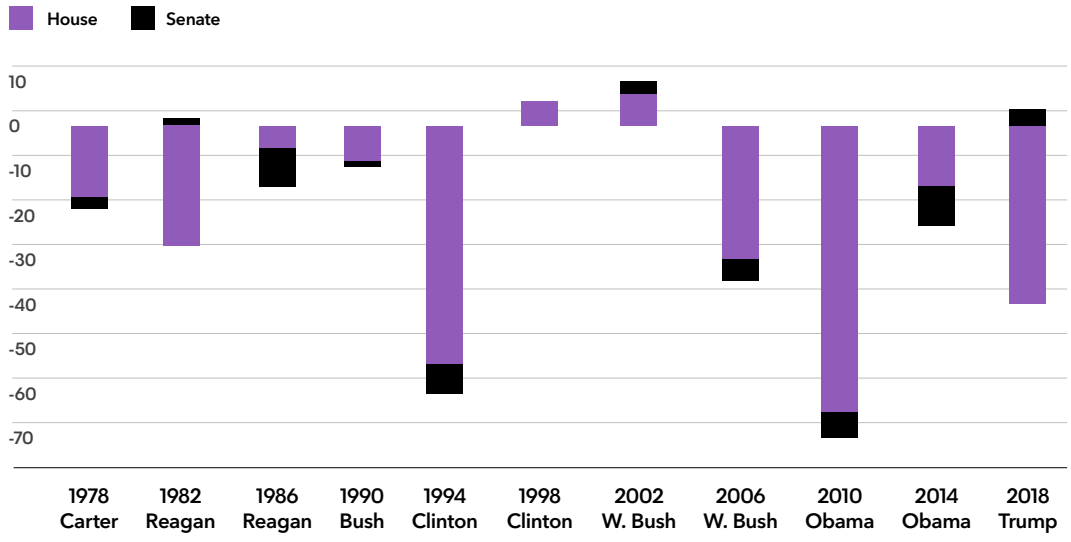
What does this mean for 2022? Young voter turnout will likely be pivotal.

2016 vs. 2020 Presidential Election Turnout by Age



In terms of outcomes, the sitting president's party typically fares poorly in midterm elections. Younger voters also tend to lean more Democratic than older voters. Precedent and any hit to the young voter turnout in 2022 could spell trouble for President Joe Biden and Democrats.

Midterm Elections: Seats Gained/Lost by President's Party



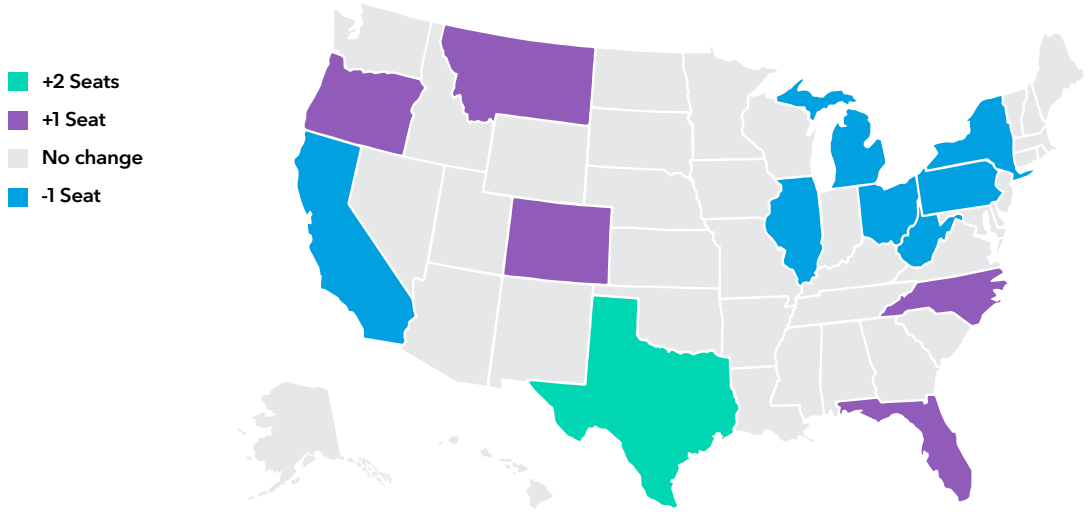
Source: The American Presidency Project, UC Santa Barbara

Impact of Redistricting

The 2020 Census also brought about the **once-a-decade redistricting process**. Redistricting will play a key role in election outcomes for the next decade as both parties attempt to redraw district lines in their favor and file lawsuits to challenge maps drawn by the other party.

- Texas is the only state that gained two districts, while Colorado, Florida, Montana, North Carolina, and Oregon each won one additional seat.
- Seven states lost one seat: California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. California lost a seat for the first time ever.
- New York lost a seat after falling short by just 89 residents, though it was in danger of losing two districts.
- Sun Belt states benefited from booming Latino populations and from people moving from more liberal states, such as New York.

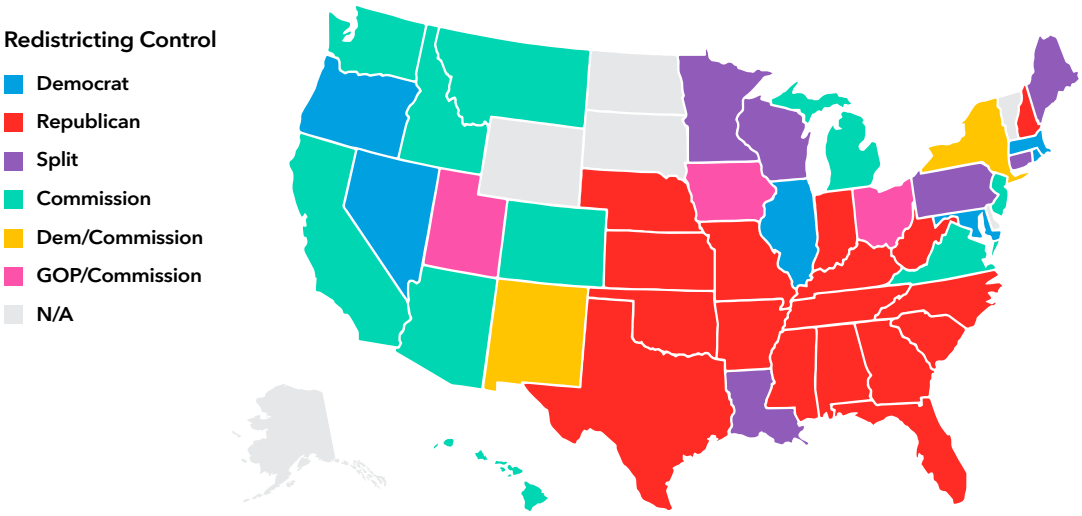
Congressional Seats Gained and Lost From the 2020 Census



Source: U.S. Census data

This time around, Republicans controlled the line-drawing in far more districts than Democrats. Republicans had final authority over district maps in 20 states, as opposed to Democrats' eight states.

Road Map to Redistricting 2021-2022



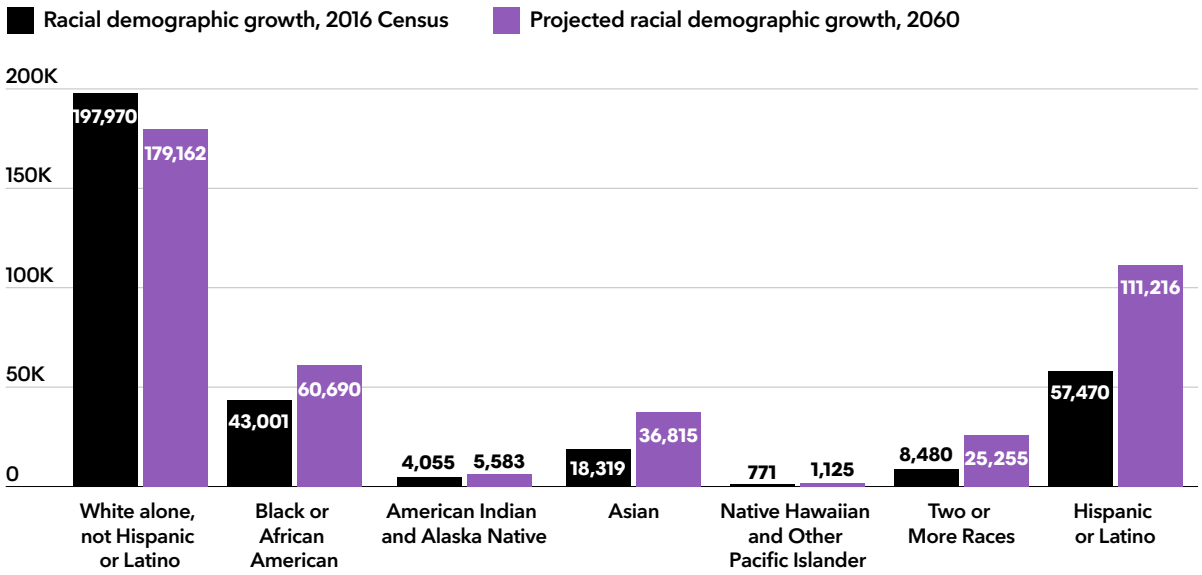
Source: Cook Political Report

How Demographics Are Projected to Change

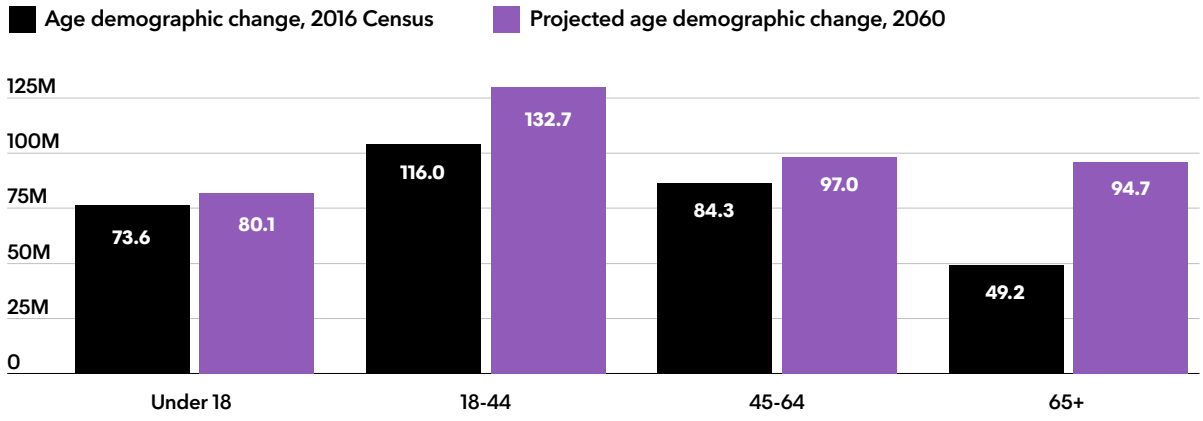
Multiracial, Asian, and Hispanic populations are the fastest growing racial and ethnic demographics in the country. This will have a significant effect on the electorate, which will become increasingly more diverse. Beginning in 2045, those who identify as white, non-Hispanic will no longer make up the majority of the U.S. population, according to Census projections.

The U.S. population is also aging. By 2034, adults aged 65+ are expected to outnumber children for the first time in history.

Changing Racial Demographics



Changing Age Demographics

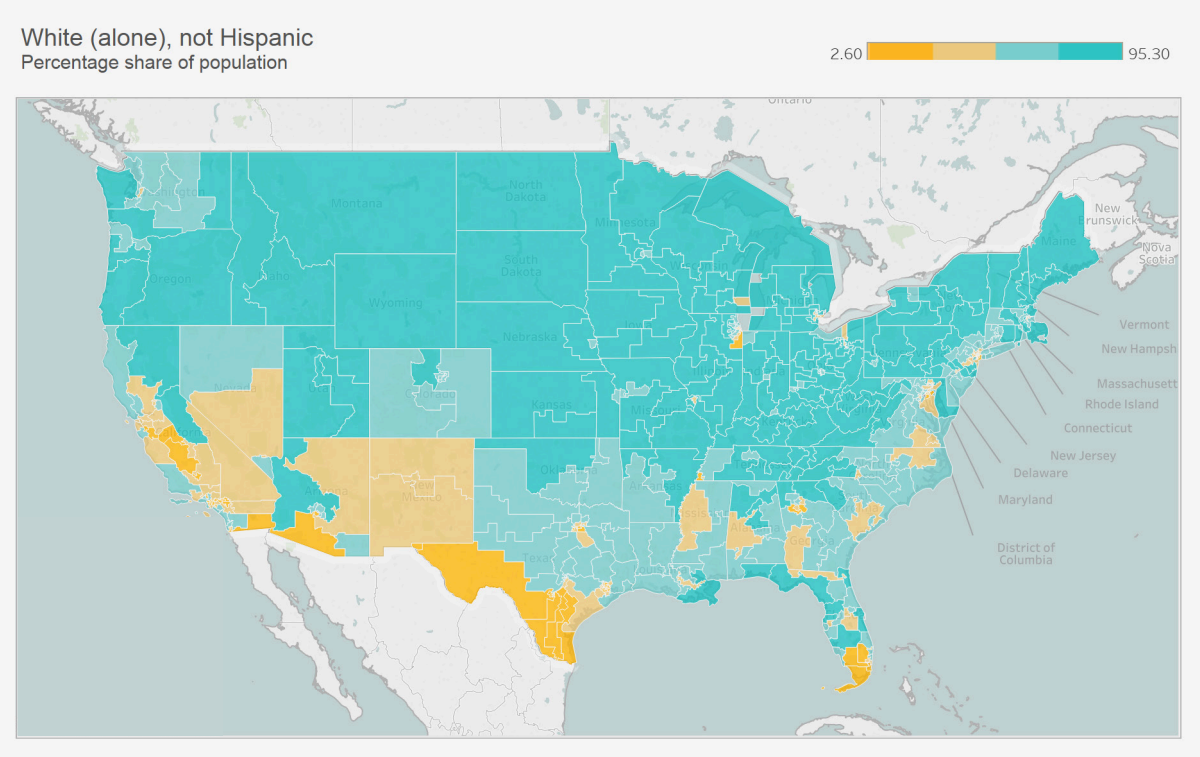


Congressional District Demographics

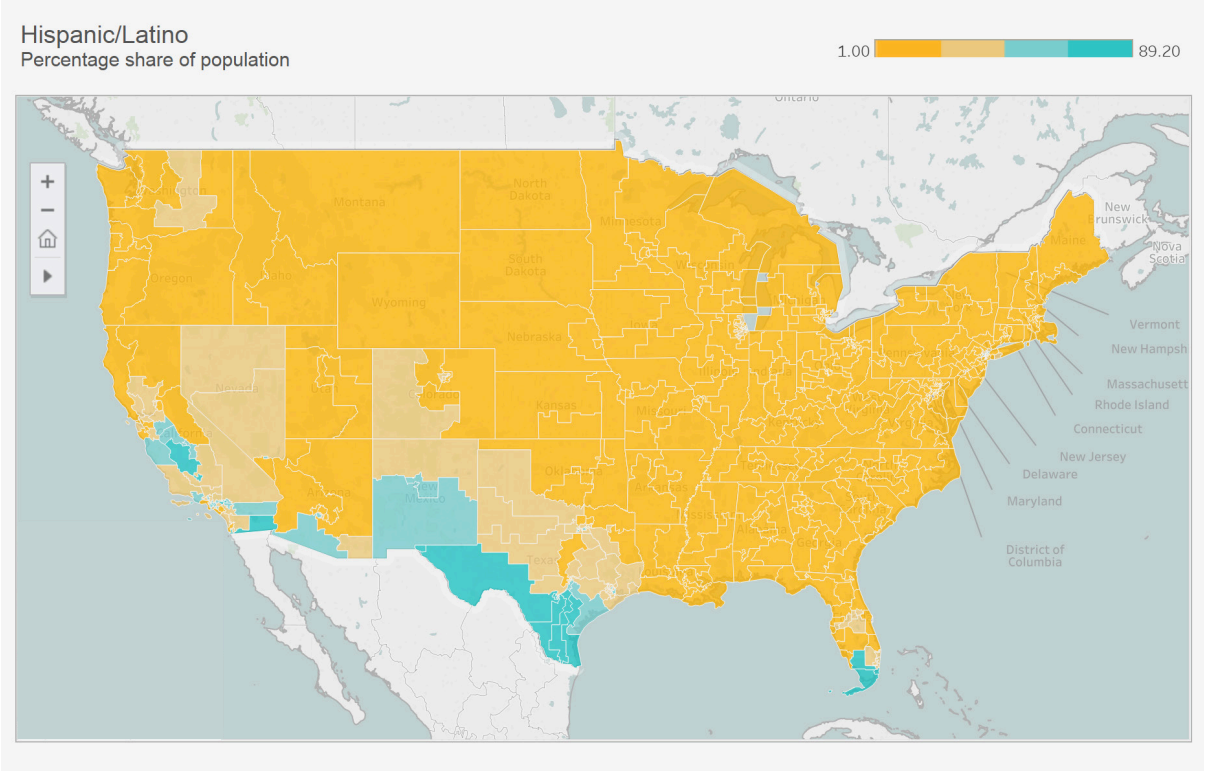
Taking a deeper dive from the country as a whole to the district level, the following sections, sourced from **American Community Survey (ACS) data**, illustrate congressional district demographics in terms of race, median income level, and education, and how they relate to party affiliation.

Congressional Districts by Race

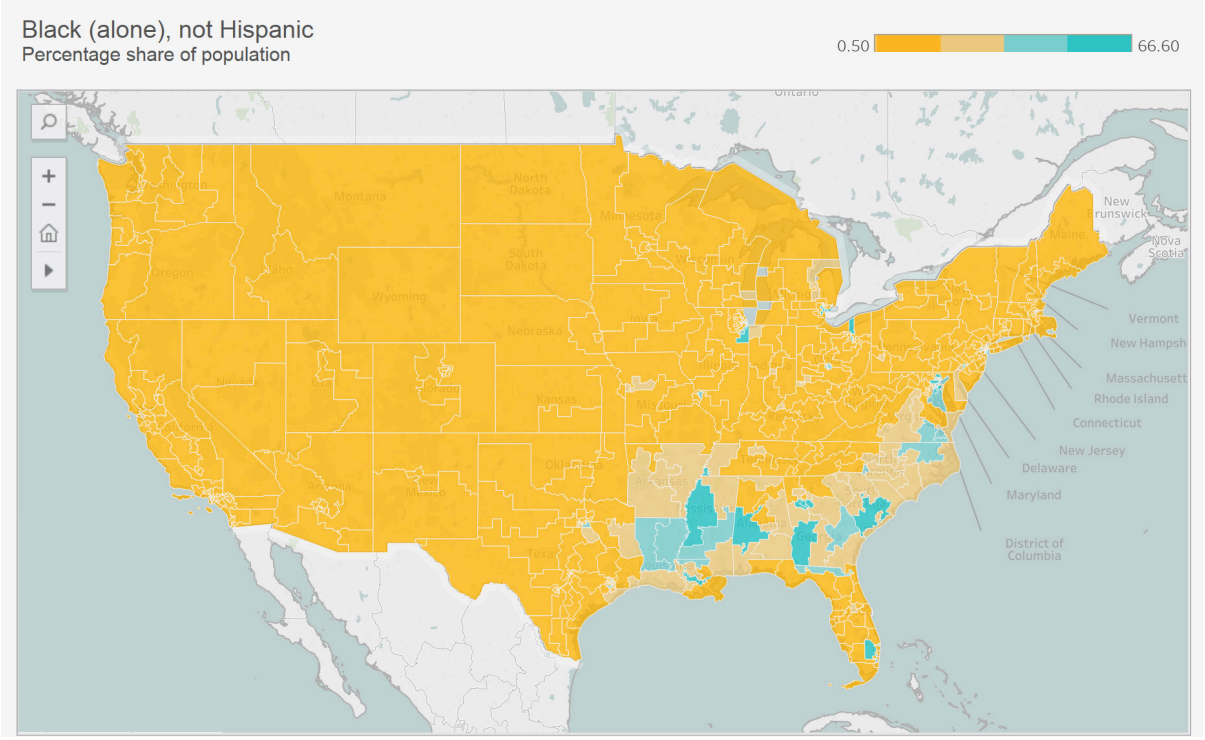
The degree of diversity in individual districts ranges from 2.6% white in New York's 15th district, located in the Bronx, to 95.3% white in southeast Kentucky's 5th district.

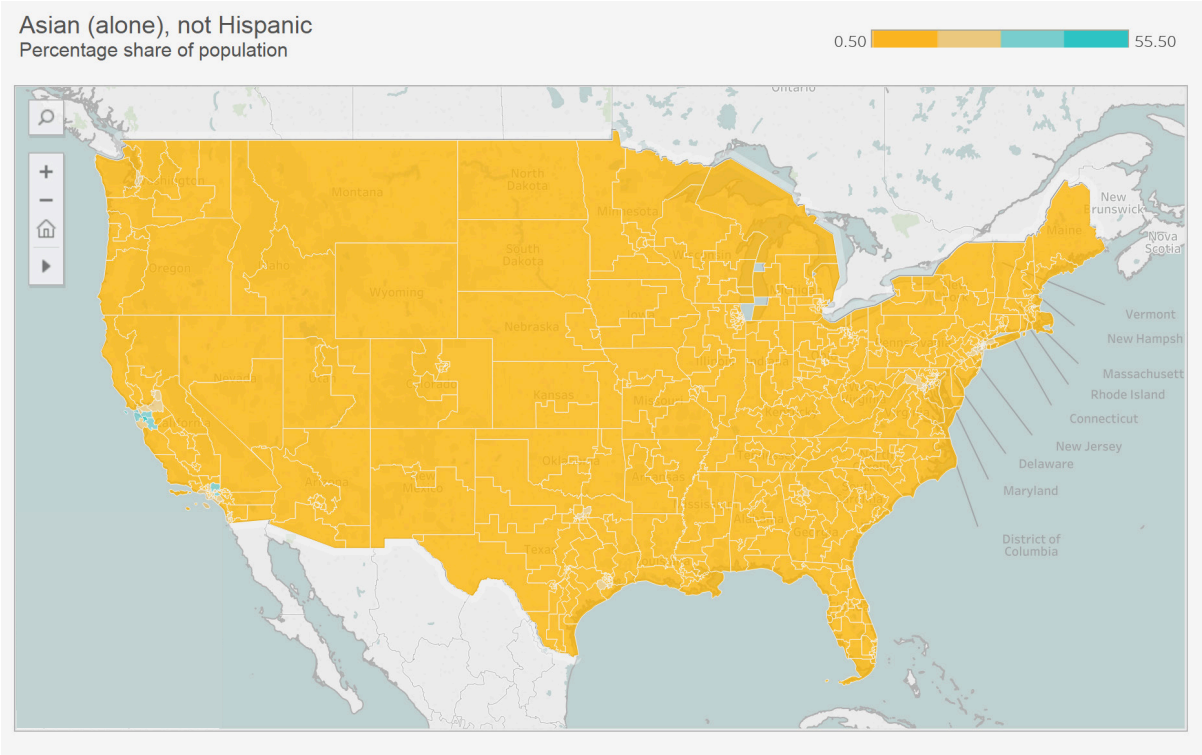


The most highly concentrated Hispanic/Latino communities, peaking at 89.2% in California's Los Angeles-area 40th district, are located in California, Florida, and southwestern states – Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico.



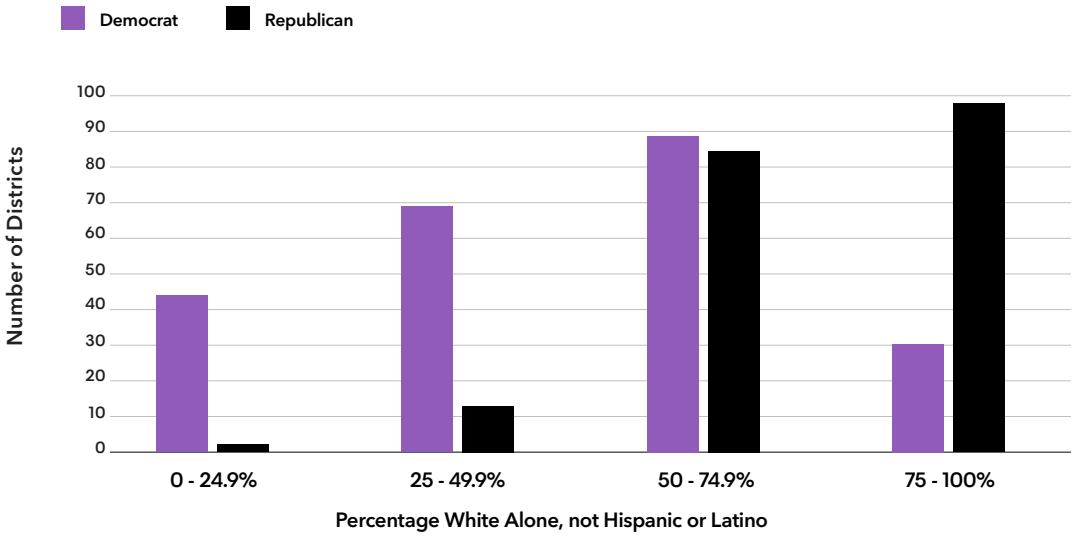
Meanwhile, areas with the highest concentrations of Black voters are largely clustered in the southeastern region of the country, with 66.6% in Mississippi's 2nd district, covering most of the western part of the state, being the highest percentage.





Finally, the most highly concentrated Asian communities are largely located in California, reaching 55.5% in the San Francisco Bay Area's 17th district, as well as Hawaii and Queens in New York City.

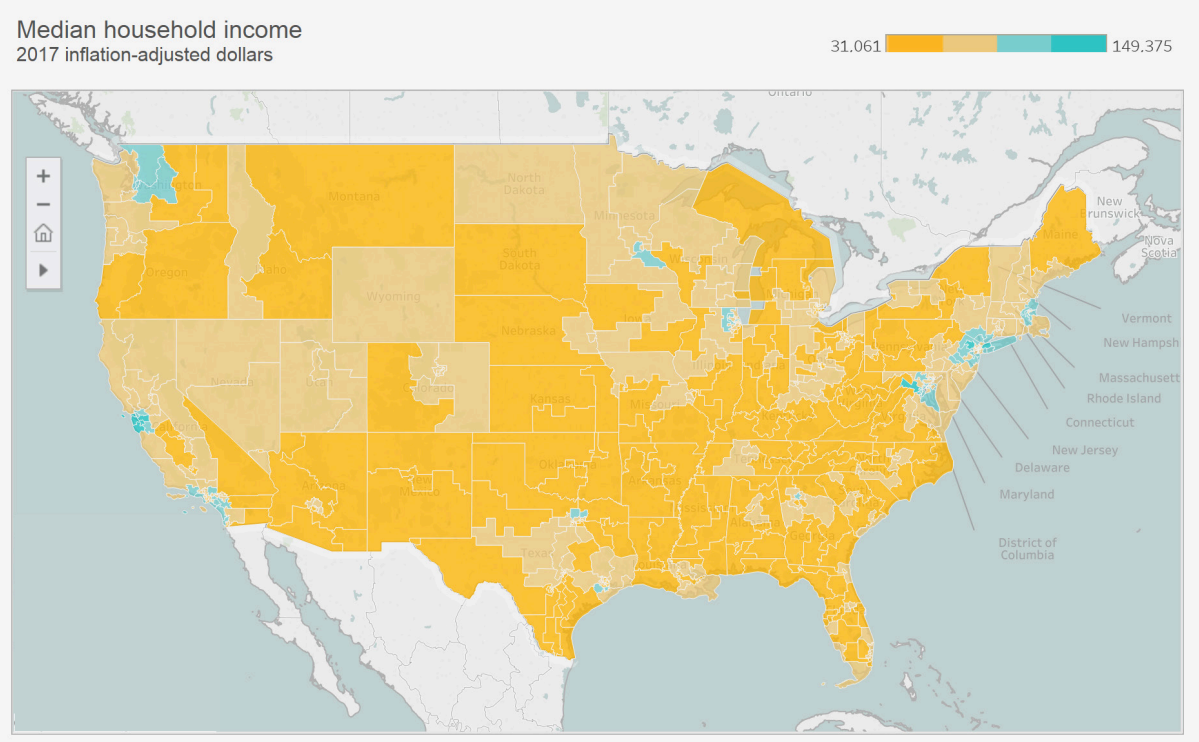
In terms of political party, the overall trend is that a higher concentration of minority voters correlates with Democratic members of Congress, while whiter districts are more likely to have a Republican member of Congress.



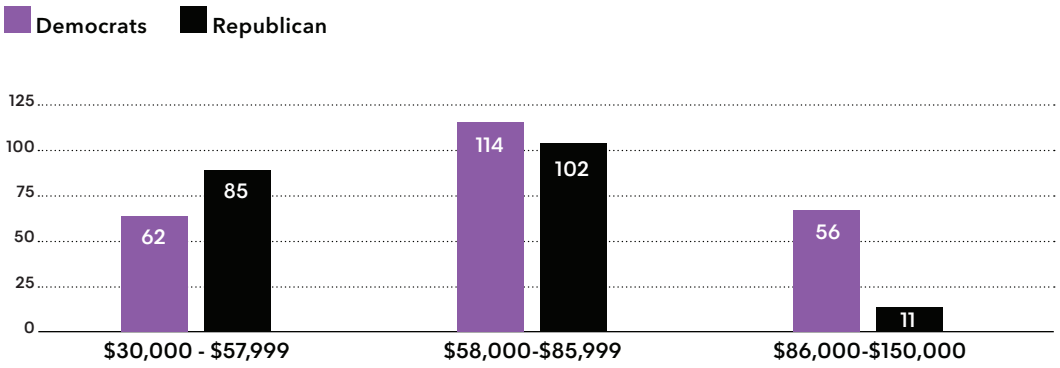
Congressional Districts by Income

Though income levels vary throughout the country, five out of the 10 wealthiest districts are located in California. The San Francisco Bay Area's 18th district has the highest median income at $149,375, while New York's 15th, located in the Bronx, has the lowest median income, $31,061. New York's 15th, as previously noted, also has the distinction of being the least white congressional district.

Districts with a lower median income are more likely to have a Republican in the House, while more of the wealthier districts elected a Democrat to their congressional seats.

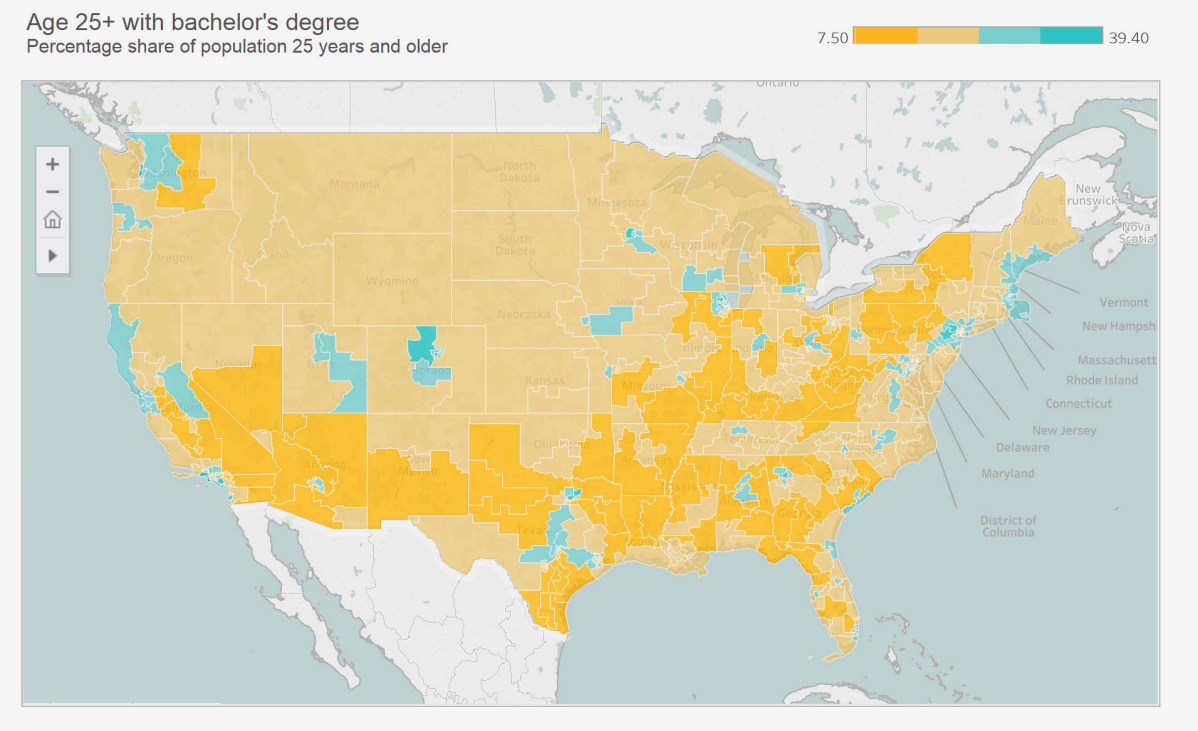


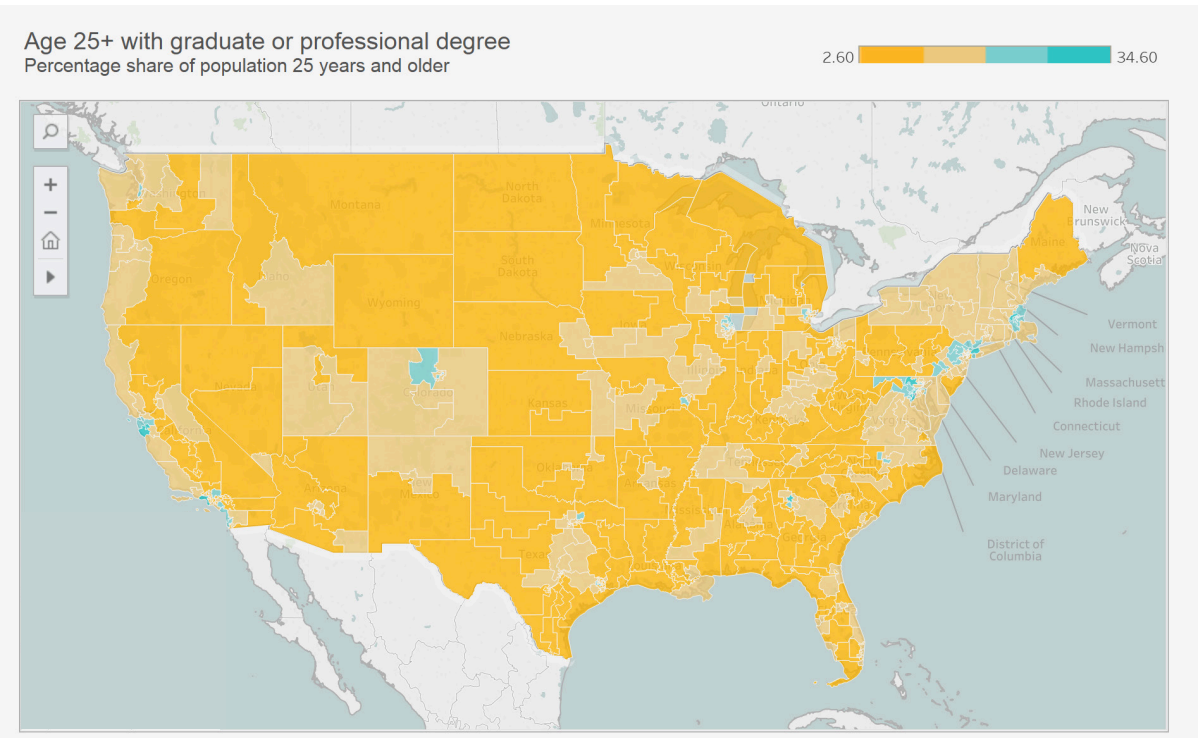
U.S. Congressional Districts by Median Household Income and Political Party



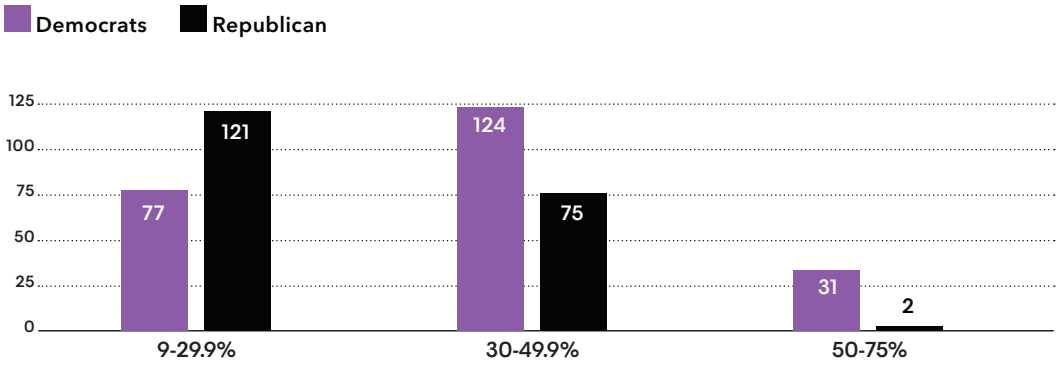
Congressional Districts by Education

The percentage of people aged 25+ with a bachelor's degree or higher ranges between 10.1% in California's Los Angeles-area 40th district to 72.6% in New York City's 12th district. Districts with a lower percentage of bachelor's and graduate degrees are more likely to have a Republican representative, while those at the higher end of the range more often have a Democrat in the seat.





U.S. Congressional Districts by Percentage of Population With Bachelor's Degree or Higher



Hispanic Democrats Warn Party to Learn From South Texas Loss

By Emily Wilkins
Bloomberg Government

Hispanic Democrats in Congress are warning that a lack of investment in outreach to Hispanic voters will cost the party more seats after Republicans flipped a Texas border district in a June 14 special election.

Republican activist Mayra Flores defeated Democrat Dan Sanchez in a district that was open after Democrat Filemon Vela resigned from Congress in March.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has assured lawmakers they'll reclaim the seat in November when candidates run in a reconfigured district that's more Democratic. But Texas lawmakers such as Rep. Sylvia Garcia (D) say without major investment in resources, money, and ground game, the party will lose similar seats in the region.

"Texas has just been forgotten by the Democratic Party for a very long time," Garcia said. "If we expect to keep those seats, we better work out and own that ground, or else we are going to lose them."

Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) said Republicans have done "a good bit of work" along Texas' southern border during the last several years. He said the loss should serve as "a reminder for state and national Democrats that we have to invest in the south of Texas the way we invest in the suburbs of Ohio and Pennsylvania."

The DCCC is planning to put more muscle into the district in November's general election, said spokeswoman Monica Robinson. Democrats will be backing Rep. Vicente Gonzalez, who is moving from the 15th to the reconfigured 34th.

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas) said she'd paid about half of her required dues to the DCCC to assist the party in keeping the House, including contributing to the most vulnerable Democrats known as "Frontliners." Escobar said she'll now "hang on" to the other half of her dues to spend in her own district.

"Especially in Texas, and especially in communities of color, it's very important that we make investments," she said. "We need a long-term strategy of investment not just in Frontline seats, but in areas where we have seen an erosion of support for the Democratic Party."

Meeting with Maloney

Escobar said she and other Texas Latinos are scheduled to meet with DCCC Chair Sean Patrick Maloney (N.Y.) next week to better understand the party's strategy.

"It needs to be responsive to the different districts because each Latino district is so different," she said, noting her district in El Paso has key differences from districts farther south along the border.

Maloney, in a statement, said Flores shouldn't get too comfortable in Washington. President Joe Biden would've carried the new 34th by 16 percentage points, which may be why Democrats didn't invest as much as Republicans in the race.

"She'll barely have enough time to set up her desk before South Texans send her packing again," Maloney said. "It's all eyes on November now as we gear up to send Vicente Gonzalez back to Congress this fall."

Several Hispanic lawmakers said they didn't necessarily see the outcome of Tuesday's

special election as a rejection of the Democratic Party by Hispanic voters. The issue is a lack of engagement, said Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), noting that Republicans vastly outspent Democrats in Tuesday's race.

"I don't think we can make any sort of broader kind of tea leaf assessment about anything, about ideology, about party, about anything, if we're not down there on the ground," she said.

Rep. Nanette Barragán (D-Calif.), vice chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, said Democrats need to better translate their legislative wins, including turning the acronyms and jargon of Washington into Spanish that reflects the dialects of various communities.

"We have to be able to speak in the language of our communities. That's where we fall short," she said. "And we don't have a lot of time to correct that."

A Growing Population

On a national level, the 2020 Census underscored notable gains in the Hispanic population. Whether that translates into more political power may depend on other factors, including the impact of the redistricting process that has taken place in recent months.

"Good data alone does not representative districts make because we know that too often politics tries to trump math," Clarissa Martinez, deputy vice president at UnidosUS, a Latino civil rights and advocacy organization, said during a news conference in August 2021, after the release of detailed census data. "But our nation is in a moment of reckoning with who we are."

According to the Census Bureau, much of the national population growth since 2010 was driven by Hispanics, who rose to 18.7% of the U.S. population of 331.4 million. The Hispanic population increased by 11.6 million and accounted for 51% of the overall population growth of 22.7 million during the decade.

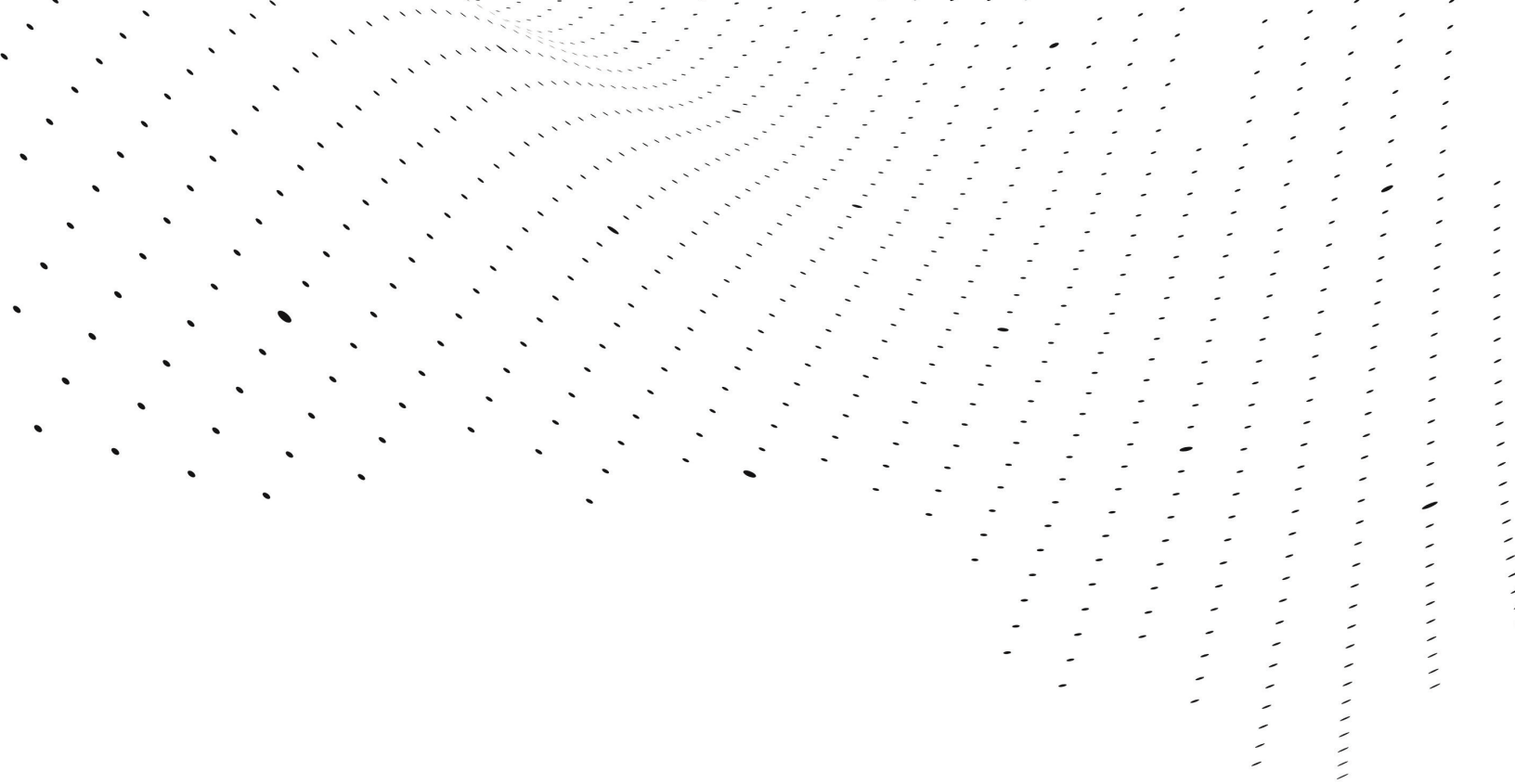
Census data also showed large gains over 2010 among Asian-Americans and people who identified as two or more races. The Black population grew more slowly, while the number of non-Hispanic whites shrank for the first time and was 57.8% of the population in 2020. Hispanics may be of any race. The bureau urged caution in comparing race and ethnicity data between 2010 and 2020 because of changes to question format.

States to watch include Texas, which is gaining two House districts after it increased its population by 4 million since 2010 and by 2 million among Hispanics. The census showed there were about as many Hispanics in Texas – 11.4 million, or 39% of the statewide population – as non-Hispanic whites (11.6 million). People of color overall accounted for more than 95% of Texas' population growth.

In Colorado, Hispanics rose to 22% of the population and helped the state gain an eighth House district that will be drawn by a commission.

The House includes 55 members who are Black, 44 who are Hispanic, and 16 who are Asian-American and Pacific Islander, according to the Congressional Research Service. Some House members belong to more than one group.

Additional reporting by Senior Reporter Greg Giroux



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