THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE AND THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN:

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN IMPACT ON

THE 1972 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Prepared by The League of United Latin
American Citizens and The Mexican-American
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This report was compiled by The League of United Latin American Citizens (Nationwide) and The Mexican-American Bar Association of California,* with the assistance of The Mexican-American Population Commission and Graciela Olivarez, Esq., Vice-Chairman [President's] Commission On Population and the American Future. Additional assistance was secured from legislators, the United States Census Bureau, and the American G.I. Forum.

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INTRODUCTION: 101 ELECTORAL VOTES

The President's Cabinet Committee on Opportunity for the Spanish Speaking stated that the number of Mexican-Americans in the United States is at least seven million (7,000,000). [Washington Star, November 6, 1970] The United States Census Bureau in its February, 1971, partial census estimated that 86% of all Mexican-Americans reside in the Southwest, with the vast majority concentrated in Texas and California.

In both Texas and California the number of Mexican-Americans exceeds the number of blacks. Moreover, the number of Mexican-Americans in California exceeds the number of blacks even in New York, the State with the largest number of blacks in the nation. (According to the 1970 Census there are 2,100,000 blacks in New York, and based on the Mexican-American Population Commission's Official Census Report, the Mexican-American population in California is 2,980,000.)

The Mexican-American, particularly in the Southwest, has been ignored as a political force until fairly recently. In 1970, Senator Yarborough was defeated in the primary partially because he failed to generate Mexican-American support. Senator Murphy's defeat in the 1970 general election was partially due to Mexican-American hostility to his grower-orientation and his alleged indifference to the plight of the farm worker.

This monograph is believed to be the first effort to analyze the significance of the Mexican-American vote on the Electoral College and its impact on Presidential Elections.

As set forth in Table I, it is the thesis of this monograph, based on an analysis of 1960 and 1968 Presidential Elections, that Mexican-Americans could hold the balance of power in four states with a total electoral vote of 101. These four states are: California (45 electoral votes), Texas (26 electoral votes), Illinois (26 electoral votes),and New Mexico (4 electoral votes). Some politicians have suggested that the impact of the Mexican-American vote in Texas, for example, could exceed Mayor Daley's impact on Illinois.

MEXICAN-AMERICANS HOLD THE BALANCE OF POWER IN 4 STATES

TABLE I

STATES	ELECTORAL VOTE	REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRATIC MARGIN OF VICTORY IN '60&'68(2) 1960	1968	# OF ELIGIBLE MEXICAN AMERICAN VOTERS IN '72 (4)	MEXICAN-AMERICAN MULTIPLE FACTOR (1)	TOTAL MEXICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION (3)
California	45	35 thousand(R)	223 thousand(R)	1,788,000	51	2,980,000
Illinois	26	9 " (D)	135 " (R)	166,000	18	275,000
New Mexico	4	2 " (D)	39 " (R)	177,000	88	295,000
Texas	26	46 " (D)	39 " (D)	1,357,000	35	2,250,000
Colorado (5)	7	71 " (R)	74 " (R)	145,000	2	243,000

1) The Mexican-American Multiple Factor relates to the number of times the potential Mexican-American vote is greater than the difference in election results in either the 1960 or 1968 Presidential Election, using the election with the closest result. Thus, if the Mexican-American vote is 100,000 and the difference in an election between the two top candidates is 20,000, the Multiple Factor is five $\left(\frac{100,000}{20,000} = 5\right)$. For example,

the Multiple Factor in Texas is 35. That is, the potential eligible Mexican-American voters are 35 times greater than the difference between the Republican and Democratic candidates' votes in 1968 $\left(\frac{1,357,000 \text{ Mexican-American votes}}{39,000 \text{ vote differential}} = 35\right)$.

2) Statistics on the differential are from the New York Times Encyclopedic Alamanac 1971, and the 1971 World Almanac (published by Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc.)

3) President Nixon's Cabinet Committee on Opportunity for the Spanish Speaking stated that there is a minimum of seven million Mexican-Americans in the United States. According to the partial Census Bureau statistics of February, 1971, 86% of all Mexican-Americans reside in the Southwest. In April, 1971, the Mexican-American Population Commission issued its Official Census Report showing that the Mexican-American population as of October, 1970, in California was 2,980,000 (overall Spanish-surnamed population in California was 3,140,000). The Mexican-American Population Commission included among its Commissioners the Vice-Chairman of the [President's] "Commission on Population and the American Future." Input into this monograph included information from the United States

bor Department, We The Mexican-Americans and the President's Vice-Chairman of the
mmission on Population and the American Future. Some statistics were secured from
ominent legislators who relied on such statistics as Labor Department work force
udies,   the February 1971 Census Bureau Report, and Spanish-surnamed statistics in
e public schools.

) As a result of the 18 year old vote, it is estimated that as much as 67% of the nation's
pulation will be potentially eligible to vote in 1972. Because Mexican-Americans have
nded in the past to vote at a lower rate than the general population and because the
mber of Mexican-Americans under 18 is somewhat larger than for the population as a whole,
e number of Mexican-Americans eligible to vote was reduced by 10% in order to provide
conservative estimate of potential voters. However, the 1970 Voting Rights Act's
imination of literacy requirements for voting and the increasing interest in voting
 the young Mexican-Americans, may offset this; and, thus the number of potential eligible
ters may be underestimated.

) Based upon past elections, the Mexican-American vote in Colorado, in the absence of other
ctors, is not likely to have any significant impact since it is less than twice the
fferential in either the '60 or '68 elections.

CALIFORNIA

According to the 1970 Census, California, with 45 electoral votes, has a population of 19,953,134 persons. The number of Mexican-Americans, according to the Mexican-American Population Commission Official Census Report, as of October, 1970, was 2,980,000 or 14.9% of California's overall population. This statistic on the Mexican-American population was believed to be a slight underestimate by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.

The Mexican-American Population Commission's Official Census Report shows that in the nation's most populous county, Los Angeles County, which has a population of approximately 7 million, Mexican-Americans constitute almost one in every five persons (18.2% of the county's residents). This Census Report projects, based on recent population growths, that the Mexican-American population of Los Angeles County will be 21.1% by 1975. (For example, California State Department of Education statistics show that as of October 1970, 23.7% of all kindergarten and first grade students in Los Angeles County Schools were Spanish surnamed.)

The number of potential eligible voters in 1972 is conservatively estimated to be 1,788,000 (see footnote 4, supra). Assuming a 50% turnout,[6] the number of Mexican-American voters would be 894,000 or 25 times greater than the difference between the Republican and Democratic presidential votes in the 1960 election $\left(\frac{894,000}{35,000} = 25 \right)$.

Thus, a shift of even 5% in the Mexican-American vote could affect the outcome.

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[6] The 50% Mexican-American figure is approximately 40% less than the Presidential turnout for Anglos; and even if the Mexican-American voter turnout is as low as 33% of eligible voters, the Mexican-American would have an impact on the elections in California, Texas, Illinois & New Mexico. For example, in California if there was only a 33% voter turnout, a shift of 7%, instead of 5%, would be necessary to affect a Presidential Election.

ILLINOIS

According to the 1970 Census, Illinois, with 26 electoral votes, has a population of 11,114,000 persons.

The number of potential eligible voters in 1972 is estimated to be 166,000. Assuming a 50% Mexican-American voter turnout, the number of Mexican-American voters (83,000) exceeds the vote difference in the 1960 election between the Republican and Democratic candidates by more than 9 times $\left(\frac{83,000}{9,000} = 9\right)$.

Thus, a shift of 11% in the Mexican-American vote could affect the direction of Illinois' 26 electoral votes.

NEW MEXICO

According to the 1970 Census, New Mexico, with 4 electoral votes, has a population of 1,016,000 persons. It has the only Mexican-American U.S. Senator and has the highest percentage of Mexican-Americans of any state (29%).

The number of potential eligible voters in 1972 is conservatively estimated to be 177,000. Assuming a 50% Mexican-American voter turnout, the number of Mexican-American voters (88,000) exceeds the vote difference in the 1960 election between the Republican and Democratic candidates by 44 times $\left(\frac{88,000}{2,000} = 44\right)$.

Thus, a shift of only 3% in the Mexican-American vote could affect the outcome in New Mexico.

TEXAS

According to the 1970 Census, Texas, with 26 electoral votes, has a population of 11,196,000.

The number of potential eligible voters in 1972 is conservatively estimated to be 1,357,000. Assuming a 50% Mexican-American voter turnout, the number of Mexican-American voters (678,000) exceeds the vote difference in the 1968 Presidential Election between the Republican and Democratic candidates by 17 times $\left(\dfrac{678,000}{39,000} = 17 \right)$.

Thus, a shift of 6% in the Mexican-American vote could have altered the 1968 Presidential Election and a shift of 7% could have altered the 1960 election, which was decided by only 46,000 votes.

COLORADO

According to the 1970 Census, Colorado, with 7 electoral votes, has a population of 2,207,000.

The number of potential eligible voters in 1972 is 145,000. Assuming a 50% turnout (72,000), the Mexican-American vote is twice the differential between the Republican and Democratic candidates in both 1960 and 1968. It would therefore require a shift of 50% in the Mexican-American vote to affect the outcome in Colorado, based upon 1960 or 1968 patterns. This appears to be quite unlikely.

ARIZONA

According to the 1970 Census, Arizona, with 6 electoral votes, has a population of 1,772,000.

The Mexican-American population of Arizona is approximately 264,000, according to the Vice-Chairman of the [President's] Commission on Population and the American Future. It is conservatively estimated that the number of eligible potential Mexican-American voters is 159,000. Assuming 50% of the eligible voters actually vote, this would mean approximately 79,500 Mexican-American voters. This would generally not be sufficient to influence the outcome of any Presidential Election in Arizona.

MICHIGAN

According to the 1970 Census, Michigan, with 21 electoral votes, has a population of 8,875,000. According to the Vice-Chairman of the [President's] Commission on Population and the American Future, Michigan has an estimated 100,000 Mexican-Americans. It is conservatively estimated that there are approximately 66,000 potential eligible Mexican-American voters. Assuming 50% actually vote, the number of Mexican-American voters (33,000) is _not_ sufficient to influence the outcome in Michigan, according to 1960 and 1968 voting patterns. (In the 1960 election, for example, the difference between the two leading Presidential candidates was almost 67,000 votes.)

OTHER STATES

According to the 1970 publication We the Mexican-Americans
(published by the U.S. Department of Commerce/Bureau of the
Census, text by Graciela Olivarez, Esq.), there are Mexican-Americans
in all 50 states. However, based upon past voting patterns, the number
in the remaining states is unlikely, according to recent past election
patterns, to influence the outcome in any state to any significant
degree.

According to the February 1971 Census Report on Spanish-
surnamed individuals, there are almost 2 million Puerto Ricans residing
in the United States. Since Puerto Rican problems are often parallel
to those of the Mexican-American (Spanish language, rural backgrounds,
high unemployment, poor housing, police brutality, and migrancy), it
is possible that Puerto Rican voting patterns may run parallel to
those of Mexican-Americans. The primary impact of such a parallel
voting pattern would be on New York's 41 electoral votes. (The number
of Puerto Rican voters in New York State exceeds the differential
between the Republican and Democratic Presidential candidates in the
1968 election.)

CONCLUSION: "A MEXICAN-AMERICAN STRATEGY"

Mexican-Americans are the second largest identifiable minority in this nation and the second largest potential voting block. More than 5 million Mexican-Americans reside in Texas and California alone.

Based on 1960 and 1968 Presidential Election patterns, a shift of even 6% in the Mexican-American vote could affect the elections in California, Illinois, New Mexico, and Texas. These states have an aggregate of 101 electoral votes. This is sufficient to have altered either the 1960 or 1968 Presidential elections.

These statistics on the significance of the Mexican-American vote indicate that in 1972 the "Mexican-American Strategy" might become as important as the so-called Southern strategy allegedly was in 1968. Excluding Texas, the remaining ten Southern states'[7] total electoral vote (104 electoral votes) is virtually identical to the electoral vote in the four "Mexican-American Strategy" states.

[7] Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, & Virginia.

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AL ORTIZ - LULAC

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