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**The Democratic Party’s Problem is Voter Registration and Participation in Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Texas**

*A New Report from the Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies  
at The Graduate Center, CUNY Assesses these Issues*

**NEW YORK**, Dec. X, 2018—[The Graduate Center](#) of the City University of New York’s [Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies](#) (CLACLS) has released a [report](#) on the voter registration and participation rates in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, and Texas for the last Midterm Elections. The report highlights that if Democratic demographic constituencies – African Americans, Latinos, and young voters between 18 and 29 years of age – would have voted at even slightly higher rates, each Democratic candidate would have won by comfortable margins.

“The challenge facing the Democratic Party as it prepares for 2020 is graphically underlined by the results in these four states” said the report’s author [Laird W. Bergad](#), director of CLACLS and a distinguished professor at Lehman College and The Graduate Center. “Innovative registration and mobilization strategies are needed to get Democratic backers to the polls and this is especially acute among 18-29 year olds of all races.”

The report, titled [The 2018 Mid-Term Election: Estimated Voter Participation Rates by Race and Age in Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Texas](#) shows that in each of these state elections, Democratic-leaning constituencies voted at significantly lower rates than the principal Republican constituencies. For example, non-Hispanic whites were 66 percent of all voters in November 6, 2018 in Florida, compared to 13 percent African Americans. Latinos comprise 20% of the total electorate, but they were only 15 percent of the cast ballots. These rates are similar across all four states.

The challenge for the Democratic Party as it faces the critical 2020 election is clear. Can the party find innovative ways to register and mobilize the demographic constituencies which support Democratic candidates in nearly every key swing state that will determine the outcome of the next presidential election?

Key findings include:

- *Rates by race:* In **Arizona**, 35.3 percent of Latinos voted in the elections, compared to the 53.5 percent non-Hispanic whites who voted. Only 21.5 percent of African Americans and 18.3 percent of Asians voted in the elections. In **Florida**, Latinos had a voter participation rate of 41.1 percent; non-Hispanic whites had 58.6 percent; African Americans, 49.3 percent; and

Asians, 48.8 percent. In **Georgia**, Latinos had a voter participation rate of 56.1 percent, making it higher than the non-Hispanic whites (54.6 percent) and African Americans (50 percent). In **Texas**, non-Hispanic whites had a 49.9 percent voter participation rate, compared to 42.1 percent for African Americans, 40.4 percent Latinos and 36.4 percent Asians.

- *Rates by age:* In **Arizona**, voters between 18 and 29 years of age were only 8 percent of cast ballots, while those 50 years of age and older were 58 percent of all actual voters. In **Florida**, the rates were 10 percent and 68% respectively. In **Georgia**, these groups accounted for 14 percent and 52 percent of the total voters respectively. In **Texas**, the younger cohort was 15 percent of the total voters, while the older group accounted for 53 percent.

*What does this mean?* This study underlines the inescapable fact that comparatively lower voter participation rates among younger voters, African-Americans, and Latinos are the keys for understanding why it is that a President with a huge disapproval rating among the general public is able to influence, and even sway, elections in favor of Republican candidates in states with diversified populations.

Democratic constituencies by race/ethnicity, as has been repeated over and over again, vote at considerably lower rates. Especially striking are the low voting rates among younger voters who overwhelmingly vote Democratic irrespective of race when they go to the polls. Elections in all four states were dominated by voters 50 years of age and older who voted largely Republican; as well as by non-Hispanic whites who voted at rates which were much higher than their overall share of the electorate or even populations, in each state.

### **About The Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies**

The core mission of CLACLS is to actively support and advance the study of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the U.S. in the doctoral programs of the Graduate Center, and to provide opportunities for Latino students at the Ph.D. level. CLACLS's flagship program is the [Latino Data Project](#), established in 2003 by Laird W. Bergad founding and current CLACLS director. Professor Bergad is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Latin American, Puerto Rican, and Latino Studies at [Lehman College](#) and with the Ph.D. Program in History at the Graduate Center. The Latino Data Project conducts detailed quantitative research on the Latino population of the United States and New York City metropolitan region, analyzing raw data files produced by the U.S. Census Bureau and other government agencies.

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### **About The Graduate Center, CUNY**

The Graduate Center of The City University of New York (CUNY) is a leader in public graduate education devoted to enhancing the public good through pioneering research, serious learning, and reasoned debate. The Graduate Center offers ambitious students more than 40 doctoral and master's programs of the highest caliber, taught by top faculty from throughout CUNY — the nation's largest public urban university. Through its nearly 40 centers, institutes, and initiatives, including its Advanced Science Research Center (ASRC), The Graduate Center influences public policy and discourse and shapes innovation. The Graduate Center's extensive public programs make it a home for culture and conversation.

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