



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 20, 2018

Florida's Scott Pandering to Hispanics

Florida Governor Rick Scott (Republican) is reaching out to Hispanics, [the Washington Post reports](#), hoping he can win reelection despite that albatross in the White House, Donald Trump.

He's even practicing his Spanish.

And the *Post* reports, the president, who doesn't much care for campaigning in Spanish, doesn't much care whether Scott wants to pander.



The question is whether Scott is wasting his time, given what voting patterns have shown for 30 years: Hispanics generally vote for Democrats.

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Trump Hammers Illegals, Scott Talks "Immigration Reform"

[According to](#) the *Post*, reconciling Trump's tough talk about illegals, and the efforts of those such as Scott to retail themselves as soft on immigration, is a trick job. But Scott, it appears, is up to it.

Aside from chatting up Hispanics voters in a foreign tongue, Scott — and other Republicans — are hat-dancing around Trump's position on immigration.

As Trump continues to hammer the threat of criminal undocumented immigrants, calling them "animals" who seek to "infest" the country, with support from some in Congress, Republicans are playing to win these more diverse parts of the country as well....

The result has been a remarkable bifurcation between the continued rhetoric of the Trump administration and local messaging of some Republican campaigns. It has also led to confusion about the policy focus of the party. At a recent rally in Tampa, for instance, Trump told the crowd that "we have to make sure that Rick Scott wins," even though Scott says he supports a stand-alone bill opposed by the president to give a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants brought to the country as minors.

And, the *Post* reports, the tactic is helping Republicans with Puerto Ricans.

How Hispanics Vote

Yet pandering to Hispanics on immigration probably won't help the GOP, as the vote count has shown time after time.

[Trump actually received](#) more Hispanic votes than Mitt Romney, another of the GOP's softies on immigration, while Clinton's share of the Hispanics vote dropped five percent from Obama's.

But other than that minor shift, the Hispanic vote for the GOP is remarkably consistent: 31 percent for McCain in 2008, 27 percent for Romney in 2012, and 28 percent for Trump in 2016.

In Florida, the Hispanic population is mostly Cuban, who vote, mostly, for Republicans. [While Clinton beat Trump](#) 62-35 among all Hispanics, Trump defeated Clinton in the Cuban population 54-41. He lost to Clinton 71-26 among all non-Cuban Hispanics.



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Writing in *City Journal*, [Heather Mac Donald explained](#) years ago that Hispanics don't particularly care about immigration policy, and to the degree they do, it doesn't affect their vote. So a GOP amnesty or shift toward open borders won't help shift the Hispanic vote.

A Hispanic backlash in California after Proposition 187 (the 1994 voter initiative that denied illegal aliens many publicly funded services) turned the state from red to blue, they claim; a similar rout awaits the party if it does not embrace liberal immigration policies.

But that probably isn't all she wrote. President Reagan's amnesty in 1986 "did not trigger a Latino surge into the Republican Party."

California's Hispanics leaned as strongly Democratic before Prop. 187 as after it. Hispanic voting patterns in California have held steady since 1988 — they vote approximately two-to-one for Democratic presidential candidates. California's shift from red to blue would have happened with or without Prop. 187, as defense-industry whites left the state, replaced by liberal high-tech professionals, and as the Hispanic portion of the electorate tripled from 7 percent to 21 percent.

Socially conservative Hispanics are not "Republicans waiting to emerge" who "just need to be invited into the party by an amnesty and not scared off by immigration enforcement," as Scott and his strategists would claim.

The majority of Hispanics vote their perceived economic interests, rather than their social values (evangelical Hispanics may be an exception to this rule). Blacks are equally conservative on gay rights and other favorite liberal crusades, and that doesn't affect their allegiance to the Democratic party.

Even Republican Hispanics, she explained, favor higher taxes and a bigger welfare state, while "the majority of Latinos — poor and poorly-educated — the more government services, the better.... Welfare use actually increases between the second and third generation of Mexican-Americans — to 31 percent of all third-generation Mexican-American households.

In 2001, the [Center for Immigration Studies explained likewise](#): "There is no indication that the Republican or Democratic positions on immigration policy explain the orientation of Latino voters. Rather, it seems that the core positions of the Republican Party are simply not as attractive to Latino voters as are those of the Democratic Party."

Photo of Rick Scott: [flgov](#)



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