

NRSC: ICYMI, The Atlantic: The battle for Latino voters in the Rust Belt

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Washington D.C. - Operación ¡Vamos! is focused on sharing the GOP's opportunity agenda for hardworking families and helping Republicans take back the majority this November. Hispanic voters care about real issues like the economy, school choice, and safe communities while Democrats care more about their radical agenda that's leaving working-class families behind. Republicans continue to show up for Hispanic communities across the country and the results are speaking for themselves.

The Atlantic: [The Battle for Latino Voters in the Rust Belt](#)

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And in April, the National Republican Senatorial Committee announced a seven-figure initiative—"Operación ¡Vamos!," or "Operation Let's Go!"—to court Latino voters in Wisconsin and eight other swing states.

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The Republican Party's Wisconsin outreach is part of a larger push to capitalize on former President Donald Trump's [10-point gain](#) among Latino voters from 2016 to 2020, and attract more of those voters to the GOP in the long run. If it comes to pass, the Latino "awakening" in Wisconsin could mean the defeat of Democratic Governor Tony Evers and the reelection of Republican Senator Ron Johnson, who are both expected to face [tight races](#) this fall. More broadly, Latino voters in Wisconsin represent the coming together of two of the most important themes in U.S. politics over the past decade: the fight over Rust Belt states that have gone from blue to purple, and the growing importance of the Latino vote. In Wisconsin,

these conversations are one and the same.

The Latino population in Wisconsin, like in just about everywhere else around the country, is on the rise. In the 2020 U.S. census, Latinos for the first time were Wisconsin's largest minority group, making up 7.1 percent of the population, up from 5.9 percent in 2010. The growth rate of the Latino population from 2010 to 2020 was nearly 10 times faster than that of the state's overall population. They live all over the state but many are concentrated in Milwaukee, where a population decline over the past decade has been mitigated by the growth of both the Latino and the Asian communities.

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Juan Arias, the Hispanic press secretary for the NRSC, disputes the notion that the GOP's efforts in Wisconsin are merely symbolic. He told me that Operación ¡Vamos! represents the nationalization of what Rick Scott did as governor of Florida. Long before becoming the chair of the NRSC and launching the Hispanic-outreach initiative, Scott built relationships with Hispanic voters in his state; in his 2018 Senate campaign, almost half of all of Florida's Latino voters cast their ballot for him. Arias said Republicans are hoping to build on a shift that's already under way—as demonstrated not only by Latinos' drift toward Trump in 2020 but also by the [NRSC's own surveys of Latino voters](#). In the months ahead, Arias said, the NRSC is also preparing to run radio and television ads in Spanish in battleground states.

I expect Republican Party initiatives such as the RNC community centers and Operación ¡Vamos! will have at least some effect in Milwaukee's Latino community, and possibly even Wisconsin's elections this year. But Democrats should recognize that these efforts are significant regardless, representing a real sense of disillusionment that many Latino voters feel with the Democratic Party. Democrats shouldn't assume that they will earn Latino support if their candidates support progressive immigration policies, or just show up to talk with Latino voters. They must also convince Latinos in Milwaukee and across the United States that Democratic policies on issues including education, the economy, and policing will measurably improve Latinos' lives.

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