

# Voces de la Frontera Action: Post midterm election statement— Building Latinx and multiracial youth voting power in WI

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Voces de la Frontera Action ran Wisconsin's largest Latinx and multiracial young voter engagement program contributing to the victory of Governor Evers' re-election and defeat of Trump endorsed Michels who ran on an aggressive anti-immigrant platform.

At the heart of the program is a relational voter network of family and friends known as *Voceros por el Voto* that was launched in 2018. This election, our Voceros (member volunteers) used their personal networks to reach more 28,000 Latinx and youth voters in communities with the highest concentration of Latinxs statewide. In combination with relational organizing, door-to-door canvassing, and phone banking, in Milwaukee, Racine, Brown County, Waukesha and Dane counties, VDFLA reached over 60,000 Latinxs and youth.

Some of the races that pundits wrote off were competitive because of Latinos who made up a greater proportion of the early vote than they did in 2018.

Many Latinx voters who are the foundation of our *Voceros por el Voto* network were first-time voters, either newly naturalized U.S. citizens or recently turned 18 year olds or vote infrequently.

One of those new voters and Voceras that motivated her family and friends to vote in the midterm elections is **Maria Gaona, a Latina Milwaukee voter, wife and mother of six. She reflected after the elections:** "There was a lot at stake in

this election. Education, immigration reform, and the economy were the top issues that motivated me to turn out this year. Our communities are diverse, and we deserve representatives who are going to serve and work for everyone, not just a select few.”

Another new voter is **Joaquin Soto, a newly naturalized U.S. citizen, former DACA (Deferred Action for Child Arrivals) recipient, and first time voter said:**

“I just became a U.S. citizen this year, this was my first time voting, but I’ve actually been waiting for this for 30 years now. My vote is dedicated to all the DREAMers out there, I myself am (formerly) DACAmented, I’m a U.S. citizen now, but I’m also a DREAMer. I know the struggle it is for all the DREAMers out there, especially right now with all the anxiety, but this vote goes out to you.”

With margins of victory at one percent or less in our state, the election results demonstrate that VDLFA’s grassroots community organizing was a critical deciding factor that led to a historic turnout of early voting for Latinxs and young voters in Wisconsin, even though we did not secure the victory we had hoped for Mandela Barnes in the U.S. Senate.

In response to the election results, **Christine Neumann-Ortiz, the Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera Action said:**

“On the state level, our base organized to defeat Michels who represented a grave threat to our families and communities and was a sharp contrast to Democrat Governor Evers who has been a champion for drivers’ licenses, instate tuition and immigration reform. However, we have consistently heard from Latinx voters and those that help mobilize the Latinx vote that they are disenchanted with the political system as a whole and want Democrats to prioritize and deliver on immigration.

In one of the most gerrymandered states in the country, the Latinx vote was critical in blocking even greater attacks on the freedom to vote which would have had consequences for decades for both the state and the country.”

Statewide Voces de la Frontera ran our Election Protection program with over 100 trained volunteers in five regions. Our efforts ensured that Latinx voters with limited English and new to the process could cast their vote, in the areas we organized and

experienced a strong showing in the city of Green Bay, Wisconsin, where now 1 in 5 residents identifies as Latinx.

VDLFA additionally succeeded in protecting the positions of our pro-immigrant and working class champions, Representative **Gwen Moore**, for Congressional District 4, Representative **Mark Pocan** for Congressional District 2, **Kristina Shelton** for Assembly District 90, and **Josh Kaul** for Attorney General. We also secured a progressive addition of **Jeff Smith** for Senate District 31.