

Coding Immigration Appeals

In order to build a dictionary of immigration appeals and understand how pro-immigrant appeals differ from anti-immigrant appeals, I acquired a list of the most pro- and anti-immigrant U.S. Senators from NumbersUSA's website. NumbersUSA, a fervent anti-immigrant group, issues report cards grading sitting Congressmen on past votes, public statements, and actions regarding immigration. Those who receive an "A" are the most voraciously anti-immigrant and those who receive an "F" are the most pro-immigrant, given their lifetime political records.¹

I scraped all of the HTML from their official '.gov' websites and extracted text from each section on "immigration." If the page had no issues page or immigration-specific language, I removed it from my sample. I removed stop words and pooled the language into a single vector for pro-immigrant senators and another for anti-immigrant senators. Each of these were then parsed into bigrams. I then sorted the bigrams by frequency to look for patterns in the language that each group used when talking about immigration.

The bigrams from the senators' webpages were highly predictable. For instance, anti-immigrant senators, those who scored A+ with NumbersUSA, most frequently frame immigration as an issue of law and order and national security. Some of the most common bigrams from these Senators include: "illegal immigrants," "border security," "immigration laws," "illegal amnesty," "executive amnesty," and "national security." A lot of the language appears to be in response to President Obama's executive action on immigration in 2014. Pro-immigrant candidates spoke more to reforming the immigration system and providing a pathway

¹ Their report cards can be found at: <https://www.numbersusa.com/content/my/tools/grades/>.

to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. Some of their most common phrases included: “[comprehensive] immigration reform,” “undocumented immigrants,” “broken immigration,” “path citizenship,” and “economic opportunity” (all summarized in Table A1). I used these frames to guide my coding decisions. Some further examples of website text and codes can be found in Table A2.

Table A1: Common Bigrams

Pro-Immigrant	Anti-Immigrant
immigration reform	illegal immigrants
undocumented immigrants	border security
broken immigration	immigration laws
path citizenship	illegal amnesty
economic opportunity	executive amnesty

Note: Cells indicate common bigrams from pro- and anti-immigrant senator websites.

Table A2: Sample Web Text

Pro-Immigrant	Anti-Immigrant
“America is better and stronger because of immigrants. That’s why Mark believes comprehensive immigration reform should be a top priority—it will strengthen families, boost the economy, shrink the deficit, and create jobs. He also supports the DREAM Act because young people who know no other home than America should have the opportunity to fully contribute to our communities, economy, and national security and eventually be eligible for citizenship.”	“Our borders have been unsecured for so long our country will need to get ready for what’s going to happen next. Our enemies brag about their infiltration and I believe at some point they will attempt to harm American citizens. First the borders must be secured. Then those undocumented persons will have to either become citizens and pay taxes or prepare to leave our country after their work visa run out. Our military will need to train state and local law enforcement on how to protect our homeland.”
“He’ll fight in the Senate to pass comprehensive immigration reform that encourages individuals who were educated here to innovate here, cracks down on employers who hire undocumented workers, lays out a path to citizenship for the eleven million undocumented immigrants who are already here and	“If we cannot learn from our mistakes, we are doomed to repeat the past. Amnesty is one of those mistakes. We have been promised time and time again that our officials secure our borders, only to find those laws lost in the political red tape. As a nation, we cannot continue to simply welcome people with open wallets

allows the DREAM Act’s “DREAMers”—those individuals who were brought here at a young age—to earn citizenship by serving in the U.S. military or pursuing higher education.”	when they refuse to follow our citizenship laws. We were founded as a nation welcoming all people, and we should continue in that tradition. However, that does not mean continuous handouts to illegals when they sneak across our borders.”
“The current political debate has set a side one very important aspect of immigration, the human cost. Many families have been torn apart and the impact on children has been severe. Deportation of undocumented parents has left U.S. citizen children to be raised by neighbors or marginally older siblings, while others have been placed in the foster system. The thought of any close friend or neighbor having to face such a circumstance should invoke compassion and empathy, regardless of party affiliation.”	“I am not for amnesty. I believe that we must reform our Broken Immigration system. It is not modern, prohibits our economic opportunities, and allows many to receive benefits while undocumented. If we intend to deal with overstays and illegal entries, then we must have a logical plan to do so.”

Note: Cells indicate full immigration sample web appeal taken from pro-immigrant and anti-immigrant senator websites.

Table A3: Independent Variables

	2010	2012	2014
Competitive	0.222 (0.417)	0.213 (0.411)	0.142 (0.349)
Ahead	0.424 (0.495)	0.388 (0.489)	0.284 (0.452)
Behind	0.354 (0.479)	0.382 (0.487)	0.564 (0.497)
Latino Voters	0.061 (0.061)	0.074 (0.092)	0.051 (0.072)
Latino Pop Growth	0.590 (0.229)	0.774 (0.290)	0.974 (0.353)
Romney Vote	0.015 (0.209)	-0.007 (0.217)	0.071 (0.187)
Unemployment	7.501 (1.639)	7.295 (1.777)	7.186 (1.631)
GOP Nativism	(1.418) (0.086)	2.017 (0.246)	2.009 (0.118)
Incumbent	0.268 (0.444)	0.202 (0.403)	0.127 (0.334)

Note: Means and standard deviations (parentheses) of each independent variable by year.

Additional Robustness Checks

Ballot Initiatives

Using Ballotpedia’s database of state ballot initiatives I found that only two states in the three years of my study, Oregon and Montana, had ballot initiatives on immigration, and therefore this could not be an important part of the story, at least in the years I am analyzing. It could be the case that candidates simply react to their opponents and variation in appeals is driven, in part, by simply responding to a few policy entrepreneurs. I find little evidence of this effect. In only 4 of 99 general election campaigns did both candidates go negative or positive. In only 5 primary campaigns did all candidates go negative or positive. I suspect that part of this lack of back-and-forth is driven in part by my selection of website text as my dependent variable. As noted, website campaigns tend to be crafted early in a campaign and tend to be quite stable, potentially masking at least rhetorical exchanges on issues that become salient during the heat of a senate race.

Latino Turnout

Finally, it could also be the case that Latinos in some states are more predisposed to turnout and vote than in other states, a fact that would be well known to campaign operatives in those states. I run a robustness check controlling for Latino propensity to mobilize in previous elections. To do this, I downloaded the CPS for 2008, 2010, and 2012, calculating a self-reported Latino turnout score for each state. Because the CPS doesn’t oversample Latino respondents, some of the samples were too small to calculate turnout scores. For these states, and for each year, I imputed a turnout score by as the average Latino turnout across all states in that census region (South, West, Northeast, North Central) for that year. I find that the turnout score has no independent effect in my models as shown in Table A4, below.

Table A4: Regression Results with Latino Turnout

	Anti-Immigrant (R)		Anti-Immigrant (R)	
Behind	0.844 (0.545)	0.833 (0.545)	-0.577 (0.639)	-0.583 (0.640)
Competitive	1.180 (0.822)	1.177 (0.821)	-0.710 (0.887)	-0.730 (0.892)
Latino Growth	0.016** (0.008)	0.016** (0.008)	-0.000 (0.009)	-0.000 (0.009)
Latino Voters	-0.224 (0.198)	-0.231 (0.199)	0.074** (0.032)	0.074** (0.032)
Romney Vote	1.263 (0.800)	1.192 (0.828)	-2.053 (1.277)	-2.077 (1.279)
Unemployment	0.178* (0.093)	0.177* (0.093)	0.228* (0.127)	0.226* (0.127)
Nativism	5.314*** (1.606)	5.375*** (1.623)	-0.765 (1.194)	-0.779 (1.201)
General Election	-0.374 (0.300)	-0.376 (0.300)	0.284 (0.387)	0.283 (0.387)
Incumbent	0.215 (0.431)	0.210 (0.431)	-0.572 (0.475)	-0.565 (0.477)
2012	5.180*** (1.140)	5.206*** (1.147)	-0.162 (0.723)	-0.120 (0.746)
2014	-5.683*** (1.111)	-5.747*** (1.131)	-0.105 (0.747)	-0.128 (0.757)
Latino Voters * Behind	-0.139 (0.143)	-0.137 (0.142)	0.020 (0.044)	0.020 (0.044)
Latino Voters * Competitive	-0.137 (0.294)	-0.135 (0.293)	0.151* (0.087)	0.153* (0.087)
Latino Voters^2	0.003 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)		

Latino Voters^2 * Behind	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)		
Latino Voters^2 * Competitive	0.012 (0.019)	0.012 (0.019)		
Latino Voters^2 * Latino Growth	-0.000 (0.0001)	-0.000 (0.0001)		
Latino Voters * Latino Growth	0.008 ^{***} (0.003)	0.008 ^{***} (0.003)		
Pct White Dems			-0.132 (1.241)	-0.152 (1.239)
Latino Turnout		-0.005 (0.014)		-0.006 (0.027)
Constant	10.29 ^{***} (2.721)	10.09 ^{***} (2.789)	3.37 ^{**} (1.635)	-3.00 (2.231)
Observations	344	344	272	272
Log Likelihood	-186.550	-186.495	-99.678	-99.649
Akaike Inf. Crit.	411.099	412.990	229.356	231.298

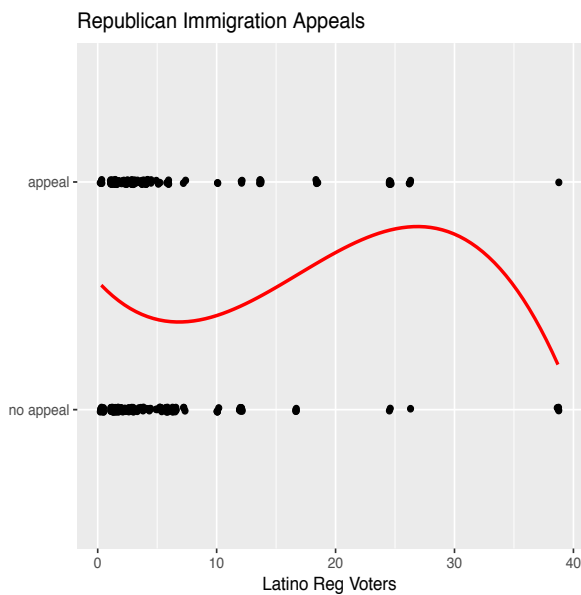
Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: Unstandardized logistic regression coefficients and standard errors in parentheses.

Non-Parametric Relationship Latino Voters and Anti-Immigrant Appeals

Figure A1: Republican Anti-Immigrant Appeals



Note: Jittered scatter of Republican anti-immigrant appeals with smoother.