

Elections 2008: Identifying the Filipino Vote

Filipinos for Affirmative Action

2008 was a busy year for elections with a historic presidential contest sparking interest in politics, increased voter registration and voter engagement. Additionally, the growing foreign-born population rose to the occasion, and is poised to become a significant political force in California in the next 5 to 10 years. According to a recent report from Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrant and Refugees (GCIR) more than 2 of 3 foreign-born California residents (6.5 million) are either citizens or eligible to naturalize¹. GCIR emphasized that as new citizens and children of immigrants become voters, they become more active in community life.

The GCIR report reveals that over 90% of Asian children in California ages 12-17 have an immigrant parent, and asserts, "As a result, young Asian-American voters are likely to have interest in policies that address the challenges of the immigrant experience."

This presents an opportunity to organize immigrant communities into local, state and national efforts to defend the rights of immigrants and to mobilize immigrant communities into broader political campaigns to shape positive public policy.

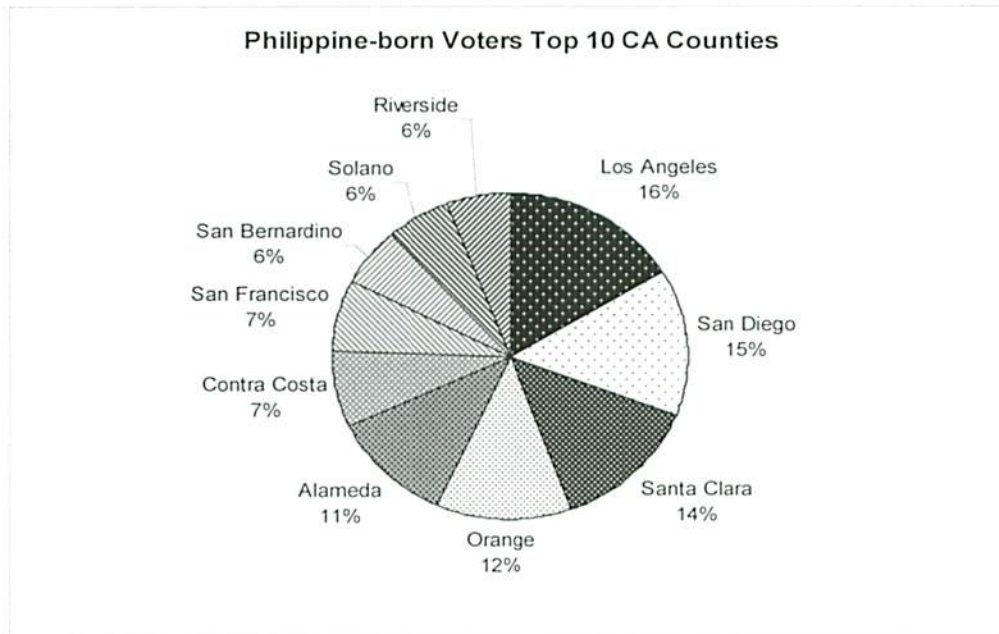


Union City youth and city officials show their support for Measure UU, a local measure to increase violence prevention services, at a "Rock the Vote" night at Paddy's Cafe.

¹ "Integration Potential of California's Immigrants and Their Children," GCIR, April 2008.

Opportunity: Increasing Filipino voter engagement and influence

Filipinos number over 1.1 million in California, are predominantly foreign-born and have the 2nd highest rate of naturalization after Mexicans. They have the potential to influence public policy through increased voter engagement.



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Top 10 Counties	Philippine-Born Voters	% of total Phil-born voters in CA
Los Angeles	30,133	13.20%
San Diego	26,867	11.77%
Santa Clara	25,249	11.06%
Orange	22,421	9.82%
Alameda	21,209	9.29%
Contra Costa	13,472	5.90%
San Francisco	12,760	5.59%
San Bernardino	11,050	4.84%
Solano	10,777	4.72%
Riverside	10,735	4.70%
CA total:	228,226	

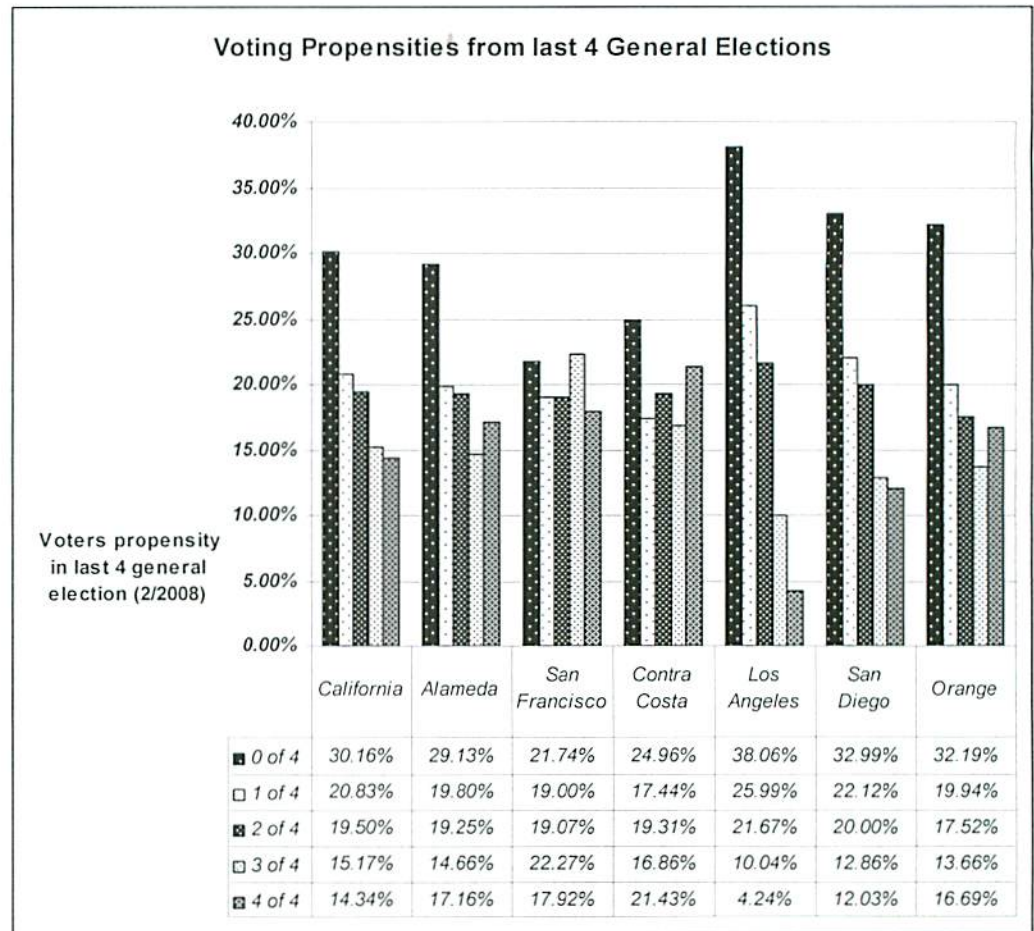
Over 30% of registered Philippine-born voters in California reside in 4 Bay Area counties: Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa & San Francisco.

Note: We believe that 228,000 is a conservative estimate of Filipino voters in California. The number is based on "place of birth" to identify "Filipino" registered voters. This count does not include US-born Filipinos. Nor does it include counties like San Mateo (which has a large Filipino community) because some counties do not collect "place of birth" data. When better methods for voter identification are developed, we will see the number of Filipino voters in California is significantly larger than 228,000.

² All voter data has been obtained from the VAN voter database in February 2008 (www.pepvan.com).

Challenge: While Filipinos are registered to vote in significant numbers, we have yet to maximize the use of that vote

More than **50%** of Philippine-born registered voters in California have voted **once or never** in the last 4 general elections prior to 2008. Less than 15 out of every 100 voters in our community have voted in all 4 prior general elections.



2008 and Beyond

FAA has sought to improve civic participation by helping our community organize at the local, state and federal levels, nurturing leadership among youth, immigrants and low-wage workers, and get-out-the-vote campaigns for major state and local elections.

In 2008, FAA:

- Conducted electoral campaigns in all 3 elections in 2008: February, June & November
- Mobilized to pass Local Measures: K and UU in Union City; OO in Oakland
- Worked on State Initiatives: Props 98/99, Prop 4, Prop 6, Prop 8
- Mailed and distributed over 20000 Tagalog/English voter guides in Alameda County
- Made over 3000 contacts with voters in Union City, Oakland and Alameda through our phone banks and precinct walks
- Engaged over 80 volunteers ranging from youth to seniors & bi-lingual speakers



Volunteers convene early on the weekends to precinct walk in Union City.

Selected City in Alameda County	Total Registered Voters by City	Philippine-born Registered Voters by city	Phil-born Electorate by city
Union City	26,567	3,529	13.28%
Hayward	59,202	3,616	6.11%
Newark	16,885	933	5.53%
San Lorenzo	11,805	641	5.43%
San Leandro	42,393	1,965	4.64%
Alameda	38,106	1,456	3.82%
Fremont	84,647	3,141	3.71%
Dublin	17,004	469	2.76%
Oakland	177,711	1,663	0.94%
Alameda County Total	681,347	19,270	2.83%

Sorted based on total # of Philippine-born Registered Voters by Selected City in Alameda County

The Filipino Civic Engagement Project (FilCEP)

In 2009, FAA will launch FilCEP to build a state-wide network of Filipino organizations in California that conduct voter mobilization, data collection and analysis, and engage Filipinos in the development of positive social policy. FilCEP has recently been funded by Zero Divide, and will connect what we are learning about the Filipino electorate with the power of technology to increase opportunities for political engagement. Our overarching goal is to increase the political influence of Filipinos in California. Our project goal is to increase voter participation and civic engagement of Filipinos in California through a state-wide network using technology-centered best practices.

Thank You to the following who supported our GOTV work in 2008:

- Mobilize the Immigrant Vote; APIAVote;
- California Voter Connect/Voter Activation Network;
- API Youth Promoting Advocacy and Leadership; Kids First 2 Coalition;
- Regional Alliance for Community Empowerment; Violence Prevention Coalition of Union City;
- Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance; Alliance for Justice; The California Alliance;
- The San Francisco Foundation; The Omnia Foundation;
- The Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund; Zero Divide;
- Plus all the dedicated volunteers.

To learn more about Filipinos for Affirmative Action, please join our on-line community at www.filipinos4action.org.

**To learn more about the FilCEP project, please contact us at
310 8th St. Ste. 306 Oakland, CA 94607 (510) 465-9876
Or at 31080 Union City Blvd. Ste. 104 Union City, CA 94587 (510) 487-8552**

Since 1973, Filipinos for Affirmative Action has provided services and advocated for immigrant and civil rights in the SF Bay Area. Our mission is to build a strong and empowered Filipino community by organizing constituents, developing leaders, providing services and advocating for policies that promote social and economic justice and equity.