

The History, Development, and Policy Influence of the California Latino Legislative Caucus

Prepared by the Center for Southern California Studies,
California State University, Northridge as part of the
Faculty Research Fellows Program for the Center for
California Studies, California State University, Sacramento.

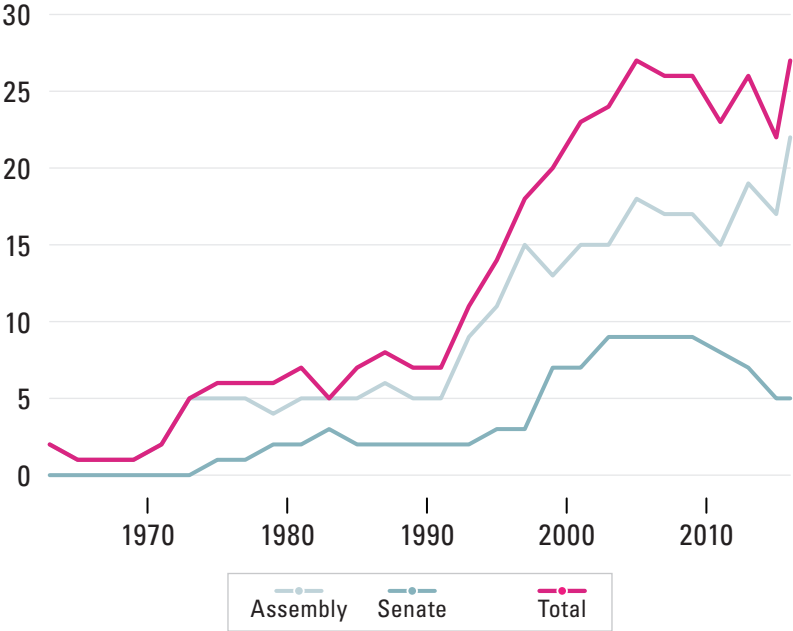
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2016
ELECTION
UPDATE

The 2016 national election gave control of the presidency and majority control of the Congress to the Republican Party and the election of Donald Trump, in particular, represented a significant shift towards the populist right. But, in California, voters not only gave an even larger victory to Hillary Clinton than Barack Obama was able to secure in 2012, voters gave Democrats larger, now veto-proof, majorities in the Assembly and Senate.

For the California Latino Legislative Caucus (CLLC), the 2016 election also led to significant gains in the Assembly. The CLLC gained a net of 5 Assembly seats, increasing the total number of Caucus members from 22 to 27, which matches the high-water mark for Caucus membership in the 2005-2006 cohort.

Figure 1.1 CLLC Membership Over Time
1963-2017

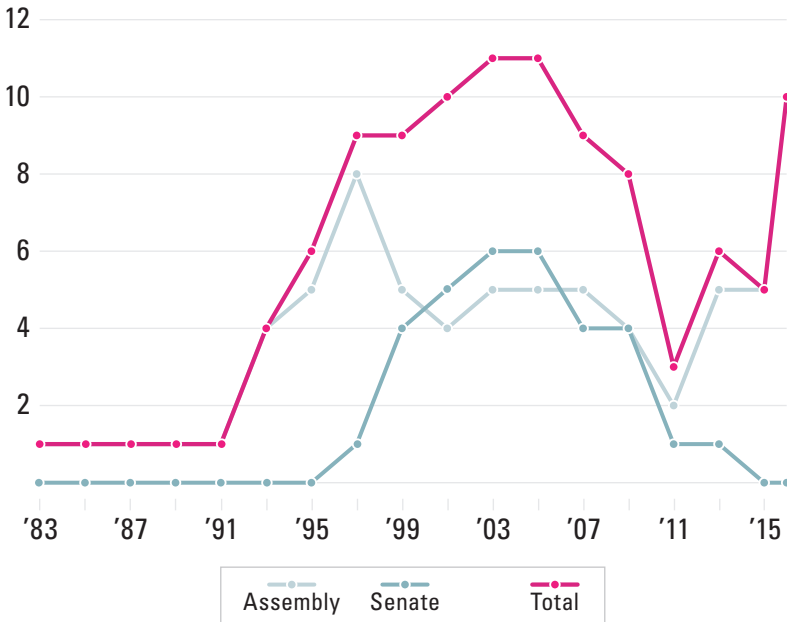


The net gain of 5 Assembly seats for the CLLC included the loss of Assembly District 27, where ASM Nora Campos unsuccessfully ran for the Senate and 6 seats the CLLC picked up:

- District 4** **Cecilia Aguiar-Curry**
- District 37** **Monique Limón**
- District 47** **Eloise Reyes**
- District 60** **Sabrina Cervantes**
- District 65** **Sharon Quirk-Silva**
- District 78** **Todd Gloria**

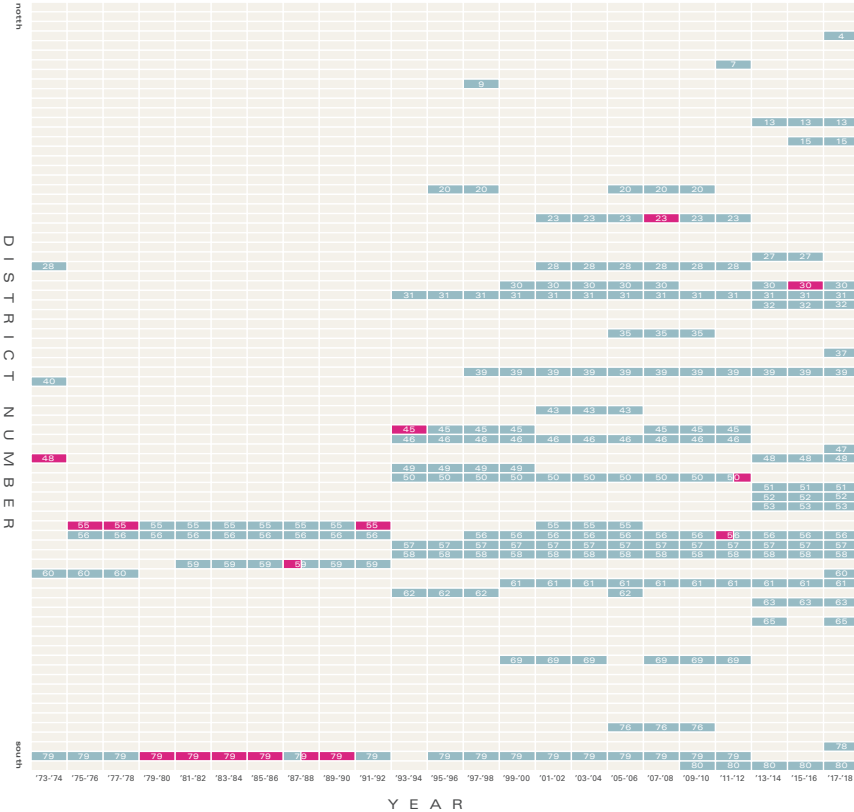
In addition, three other seats changed hands from one CLLC member to another with Anna Caballero, Raul Bocanegra, and Blanca Rubio joining the Caucus. So, there is a total of 9 new CLLC members (all in the Assembly) in the Caucus in 2017 and the number of Latina Caucus members rose from 5 to 10.

**Figure 2.2 CLLC Latina Members
1983–2017**



All 10 Latinas in the Caucus are in the Assembly. In the full report, we discussed a pattern of Latina membership that we described as an “echo effect” where rising numbers of Latina Assembly members preceded a rise in the number of Latinas in the Senate. We suspect that pattern may well continue but the change in term limits laws could also disrupt the link between Assembly and Senate membership in general.

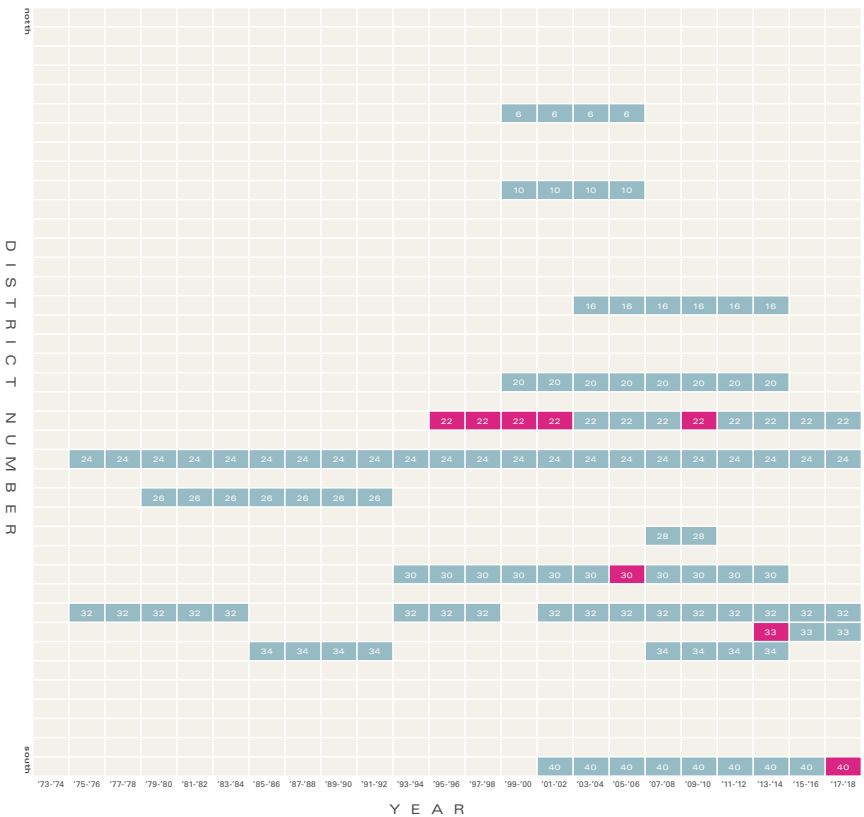
**Figure 2.3 CLLC Assembly Membership
BY DISTRICT
1973–2017**



California's State Assembly districts are numbered 1st through 80th, roughly in north-to-south order.
■ Member Serving as CLLC Chair

The overall geographic distribution of members remains generally the same. The majority of CLLC members – 15 of 22 Assemblymembers and all 5 Senators – represent districts in Los Angeles County or south of Los Angeles.

Figure 2.4 CLLC Senate Membership
BY DISTRICT
1973-2017

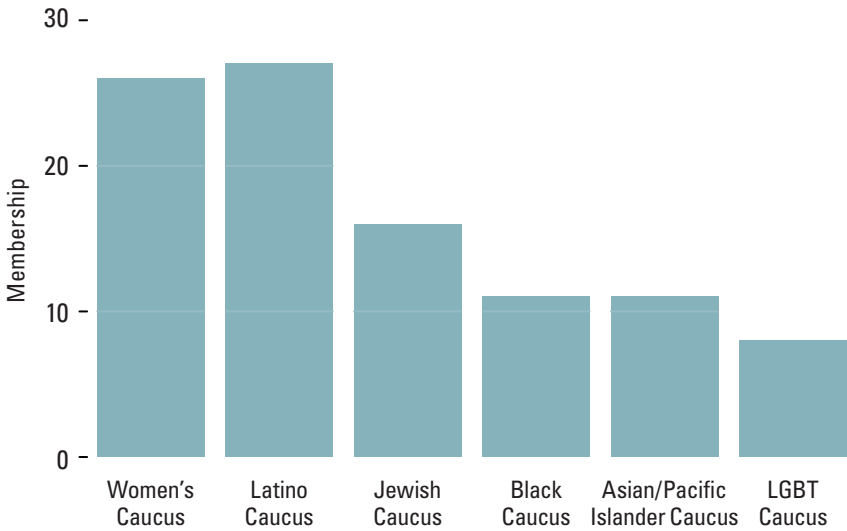


California's State Senate districts are numbered 1st through 40th, roughly in north-to-south order.

■ Member Serving as CLLC Chair

While the number of Latinas in the CLLC has doubled, the number of legislators in the California Legislative Women’s Caucus has declined. As a result, the CLLC’s membership is now the largest among all of the legislative caucuses representing under-represented groups.

**Figure A Membership Totals
in California Legislative Caucuses
from Under-Represented Groups
2017**



The 2016 election also brought at least one key policy victory with the overwhelming approval of Proposition 58 with the support of 73.5% of voters statewide. Proposition 58 repealed Proposition 227, which had been passed in 1998 and had effectively banned bilingual education in public schools. In addition to the policy impact, the approval and repeal of Proposition 227 in 2016 demonstrates in stark terms the emergence of Latino legislative and voting power over the last two decades. Proposition 227 passed with 60.9% of the statewide vote in 1998 and just 23.5% of the state's voters cast a ballot to keep the policy in place in 2016.

Another, more substantive, indicator of the Caucus's growing influence has been the legislative victories the Caucus secured just in recent months since the research for the report was completed. CLLC members played a major role in the enactment of SB 32 and AB 197, both very progressive measures to combat climate change and its negative effects. The main sponsor of AB 197 was Eduardo Garcia who championed the measure by highlighting the ways disadvantaged communities are affected by climate change. AB 1066, which granted farmworkers the right to overtime pay, was another legislative priority for the Caucus that was enacted late in the legislative session and the CLLC also was able to secure dramatically increased funding for naturalization support.

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