How Data Can Make the Native Vote a “Swing Vote”

Using Data to Empower, Mobilize, and Tell Our Story

Amber Ebarb, National Congress of American Indians
GOALS

- **Support** Native Vote coordinators
- **Help increase** the political participation of Native people
  - Education
  - Registration
  - Turnout
- **Create** a strong and permanent infrastructure for civic engagement
I am voting because...

Our Native Ways of LIVING are important to me and my family.
Importance of Representation

• Striving for political parity
  • This is in addition to government-to-government diplomacy
  • As dual citizens, Native people are often civically engaged with our tribe but sometimes not with the American political systems
Native People, Civically Engaged

• Civic Engagement: fulfilling your role as a citizen
  • This used to be knowing our protocol, hunting, fishing, ceremonies, living our values of respect for yourself/others/property, working together, discipline

• Standing up together is civic power, who we are.

A Better Future for Our Nations through Civic Engagement: A Continuum

- We are working to build strong tribal nations
- We engage through diplomacy and advocacy with other governments
- We’re engaging in direct action through marches and demonstrations
- We’re increasingly influencing non-tribal governments through our votes and candidates as dual citizens

**Goal:** Push the United States to live up to its promises
- Treaties and agreements with our tribes
- Ideals that all are created equal – promises that have never been met
Overcoming Barriers to Voting

• In Nevada, the Pyramid Lake and Walker River Paiutes won a lawsuit in late 2016 that charged that tribal citizens had to travel as many as 100 miles to vote. The suit forced officials to open new polling stations in tribal areas and spurred nine other tribes to request their own election sites.

• In Alaska, where native people make up 20%, officials recently rolled out election materials in the Yup’ik, Inupiaq and Gwich’in languages, following federal rulings that found the state had failed to provide materials equivalent to those used by English speakers.
How we’re doing with tribal representatives in Congress and state legislatures...

**Increase in American Indian and Alaska Native US Populations**

1990: 1.9 million
2000: 4.1 million
2010: 5.2 million

**Elected Representation in US Government**

- **2 Native US Representatives**
  - Actual: 0
  - Proportional: 2

If representation in Congress was proportional to the US Native population, we would have 2 Native Senators and 7 Native Members of the House.

Source: US Census
State Legislature Native Representation
Natives in States Legislatures, 2016 Elected

State House  |  State Senate  | House If proportionate  | Senate If proportionate

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
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<td>MT</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>
Natives in States Legislatures

- NM: 8 (House), 2 (Senate)
- NY: 1 (House), 1 (Senate)
- NC: 0 (House), 1 (Senate)
- ND: 6 (House), 3 (Senate)
- OK: 13 (House), 6 (Senate)
- OR: 1 (House), 2 (Senate)
- SD: 0 (House), 2 (Senate)
- TN: 0 (House), 1 (Senate)
- UT: 0 (House), 1 (Senate)
- WA: 2 (House), 3 (Senate)
- WI: 2 (House), 1 (Senate)
- WY: 0 (House), 1 (Senate)
Methodology:

- This analysis is based on data from Trahant Reports, who has crowdsourced Native state legislators. Link to the data: https://trahantreports.com/nativevote16-data-sets/.

- To calculate proportional representation, NCAI looked up the total number of legislators for the upper and lower chambers of each states’ legislature, the proportion of the American Indian/Alaska Native population for each state (based on Census Bureau data for the AI/AN alone or in combination with other races), and calculated the same proportion of the total number of seats to find how many Native people would need to be in a state’s legislature for proportional representation.
Natives Needed for Proportional Representation in State Legislatures
This is the highest share ever.

43%
The share of female nominees of a major party so far in 2018.

50.5%
In districts with no Dem. incumbent, women outnumber men, 51 to 50.

This is the highest share ever.
'16 Native Legislators vs '18 Native Candidates

2016 LEGISLATORS  
- Men: 37 (40%)
- Women: 25 (40%)

2018 CANDIDATES  
- Men: 51
- Women: 49 (49%)
If all the women candidates made it into the state legislatures, that would be a nearly 100% increase. If all the male candidates were successful, that would be a 38% increase. However, some of these candidates are running for the same seat.
Data Sources for Previous Slide

• 2016 data
  • https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1liut1FkfwaC5DKEZQ6sGtHDG06j1jgPMNnH2Yu-5tyl/edit#gid=0

• 2018 data
  • https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1sbC9E1WW-5BuFlqsOcs7LOU2Zq3N_trB37H6H32mdB0/edit
Sources and Methodology

The Cook Political Report

OUR ANALYSTS' LATEST

HOUSE OVERVIEW
Requires Subscription

2018 House Bottom Lines: Washington to Wyoming

This is the final in a series of race rundowns designed to give subscribers a quick snapshot of what's happening in each district in 2018. Throughout the cycle, watch for our detailed analysis of the...

HOUSE CHARTS
Requires Subscription

House At-A-Glance

This list of potential candidates for the 2018 elections is highly speculative and contains names that have been mentioned as either publicly or privately considering candidacies, or worthy of...

NATIONAL RACES

Senate Races

SEATS UP IN 2018 (ROLL-OVER FOR DETAILS)
Democrats: 26 Held Seats | Republicans: 9 Held Seats

CHARTS

GOVERNORS  SENATE  HOUSE
Note on Native Vote Data

• NCAI is an non partisan organization. We are highlighting these races because it is somewhat easier to make our issues salient to candidates in tight contests. Our goal is to encourage engagement with candidates so they know the importance of treaty promises, the challenges we are facing with health care and our educational systems. Where we can be the deciding vote, candidates pay even more close attention to our needs.
## Competitive Senate Races

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOSS UP</th>
<th>LEAN D</th>
<th>LIKELY D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tossup</td>
<td>AIAN %</td>
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<tr>
<td>ND-Heitkamp</td>
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<td>MN-Smith</td>
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<td>MO-McCaskill</td>
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<td>OH-Brown</td>
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<td>NV-Heller</td>
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### Tossup Races

2 Tossup Races with Natives over 5% of pop.

### Competitive races

3 Competitive races
Native Vote Could Impact Close Races

Close Senate Races

Political Rating
- Potentially Competitive
- Competitive
- Toss Up

Link to interactive map: https://arcg.is/1qjXXT
Competitive House Races

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<td>3 Dem • 6 Rep</td>
<td>10 Dem • 2 Rep</td>
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<th>Seat</th>
<th>AIAN %</th>
<th>Competitive</th>
<th>Seat</th>
<th>AIAN %</th>
<th>Potentially Competitive</th>
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<td>NV-04</td>
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Overall, 32 competitive congressional races with Native voting age populations over 1.5%.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tossup</th>
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<th>AIAN %</th>
<th>Competitive</th>
<th>Seat</th>
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Link to interactive map: https://arcg.is/1b9Xrb
Political Threats

• There is a congressional candidate calling for ending tribal reservations

• At least eight people associated with white nationalists groups are running for office this year, according to the report, and some reportedly support forcibly removing minorities from certain areas.

• “It’s hard for erstwhile hegemony to feel happy about their fall.”
Arizona Native American Voter Analysis

Eligible Voters (CVAP)
• 209,000

Registered
• 106,061

Voter Turnout
• 2016: 55,465 (40% EV/AV)
• 2014: 36,690 (40% EV/AV)
**Percent of Eligible Native Voters**

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Registered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voted in 2016</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voted in 2014</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
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**Strategies: Data for Native Vote**

**Partnerships**

Find voter file data experts (state tables, such as State Voices or others)

Ensure they understand tribal issues and concerns

Analyze registration and turnout data

Conduct voter identification + persuasion, early GOTV, Election Day GOTV
Percent Alaska Native

Use data to tell your story.

Where Alaska Native people live by tract.

Source: NCAI, Census
### 2010 Senate Election

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Write in &gt; 55%</th>
<th>Write in &gt; 50%</th>
<th>Miller &lt; 50%</th>
<th>Miller &gt; 50%</th>
<th>Miller &gt; 55%</th>
<th>McAdams &lt; 50%</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Miller</th>
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<td>90,839</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
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Source: NCAI, Census Tigerline files, Alaska Division of Elections
Top 10 States with the Highest Populations of Voting-Age Natives

The power of the Native Vote has been significant in state races and important national races.

In 2006, Senator John Tester (D-MT) won his election by 3,562 votes, over 17,000 voters cast ballots on Indian reservations.

With endorsements from 12 tribes, Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) was narrowly elected in 2000, creating a 50-50 tie in the US Senate.

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) credits her victory in the 2010 election to the significant power of the Alaska Native vote. With over 100,000 write-in votes, she was only the 2nd successful US Senate write-in candidate.
This is not a partisan problem. Both parties have misunderstood tribal sovereignty. We at NCAI are non-partisan and steer clear of partisan statements but we do call for good policy, no matter the party.

However, it is critical that policy makers see the importance of the native vote. With a well-functioning democracy, we should see better policy wins.

All data has value, especially accurate data about people. Look at how data on people owned by Facebook is used in by businesses and to sell you things. Tribal data is also valuable.

Matching tribal lists with the voter file could be powerful.
Ah, how do I get one of those pins?

When I register to vote at SCF in the lobby when I got a flu shot.
Resources

2018 Native Vote Analysis Report

Native Vote Toolkit
WWW.NATIVEVOTE.ORG

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