



## Univision's Jordan Fabian on "Why The GOP Should Deal With Immigration"

by Mahwish Khan on 11/14/2012

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Over the past week, there's been an avalanche of punditry and discussion about the new, post-election politics of immigration reform. Much of the focus has been on the Republican Party's serious problems on the issue, caused by chronic catering to its anti-immigrant nativist wing, led by the likes of Rep. Steve King (R-IA), Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Gov. Jan Brewer (R-AZ) and, of course, Kris Kobach.

Yesterday, Univision's Jordan Fabian, who follows immigration and politics closely, wrote a smart and succinct analysis titled, "Why the GOP Should Deal With Immigration." He takes apart a column by resident New York Times conservative, Ross Douthat, who opposes a "legislative pander" to Latinos. Fabian explains two key points: 1) immigration matters to Latinos and 2) reform is an economic issue.

Douthat is correct that comprehensive immigration reform — or "amnesty" as he calls it — will serve as a "Latino-winning electoral silver bullet is a fantasy." He's also right that Latinos are not single-issue immigration voters, and that the Republican Party needs to overhaul its economic message so that it addresses the economic anxieties of today and resonates beyond the GOP's white, older base.

But Douthat is quick to brush aside immigration reform by calling it pandering. It is increasingly clear that immigration status is one of the central anxieties for many Latinos who vote, despite the fact that they are U.S. citizens. Sixty percent of Latino voters say they know a friend, relative, or co-worker who is undocumented, and thus face the threat of deportation, according to an election eve

poll conducted by political opinion research firm Latino Decisions. The national exit poll shows that 74 percent of Latino voters backed a bill that would allow undocumented workers the chance to apply for legal status (aka “amnesty”).

Not to mention, immigration reform could also unleash the economic aspirations of the Latino community. Immigrants are twice as likely to start new businesses as native-born Americans, according to the 2011 Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity. But current policy prevents undocumented immigrants in the United States from participating freely and legally in, say, starting their own businesses, according to Alex Nowrasteh, immigration policy analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute.

While Douthat and some of the other anti-immigrant right-wingers continue to protest, momentum continues to build for reform. Elections matter — and will continue to matter. Did we mention that every month, 50,000 Americans of Latino descent turn 18 and become eligible to vote? And according to a new Washington Post/ABC News poll, “strong majorities of adults under age 30” support a path to citizenship. It’s pretty clear where the trend line is going.