CORSAIR CAMPAIGNS

In a Swing State, Latinos Were the Swing Vote — the 2026 Georgia Hispanic Vote

TO: GALEO — Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials

FROM: Steen Kirby, Corsair Campaigns

DATE: November 12, 2026

RE: In a swing state, Latinos were the swing vote — the 2026 Georgia Hispanic vote

THE HEADLINE

In a swing state, Latinos were the swing vote. Georgia's Latino precincts beat the state's turnout retention, moved left against both the 2022 midterm and 2024 presidential baselines, and in the closest races supplied margins that met or exceeded the flip margins.

Headline findings

- **Turnout.** By the Secretary of State's voter-history data, roughly 198,000 Latinos voted in Georgia in 2026 — up 78% from 111,000 in the 2022 midterm (Fraga/Emory analysis of the SOS file; registration up ~210% in a decade). Precincts ≥30% Latino cast *more* Senate ballots than in 2022 (retention 117.7% vs. 106.1% statewide) and retained 81.8% of their 2024 presidential ballots vs. 79.5% statewide.
- **The move left.** In those precincts Ossoff took 73.3% of the two-party vote — +11.9 vs. Warnock 2022, +14.7 vs. Harris 2024, well ahead of the statewide swings (+8.5, +10.1); Bottoms's pocket gains (+17.3 vs. Abrams; +10.2 vs. Harris) likewise. Cross-check: NYT/Siena had Georgia Latinos 72% for Ossoff vs. 54% for Harris.
- **Seat impact.** HD-29 (Scott Soracco, Gainesville) flipped by 135 votes — its six ≥30% precincts netted +1,754, thirteen times the margin. HD-103 (Chris Luchey) flipped by 35, its ≥20% pockets netting +1,208. In three flips the pockets alone beat the entire margin; in two more they supplied half or more. The one county-level flip ran on the same fuel: Gwinnett Commission District 4 (Ben Culberson) drew about half its margin from its pockets. Honest limit: two flips (HD-99 — Michelle Kang; SD-42 — Eric Lee) have no pocket precincts at all.

THE THREE-CYCLE SPINE

Democratic two-party share (%), matched precincts; sets by Latino share of residents (2020 Census PL 94-171). Full detail: table-sets-spine-texture.csv.

Set	Abrams '22 Gov	Warnock '22 Sen	Harris '24 Pres	Bottoms '26 Gov	Ossoff '26 Sen	W→O	H→O	Ballots Sen '22→'26	Ballots Pres

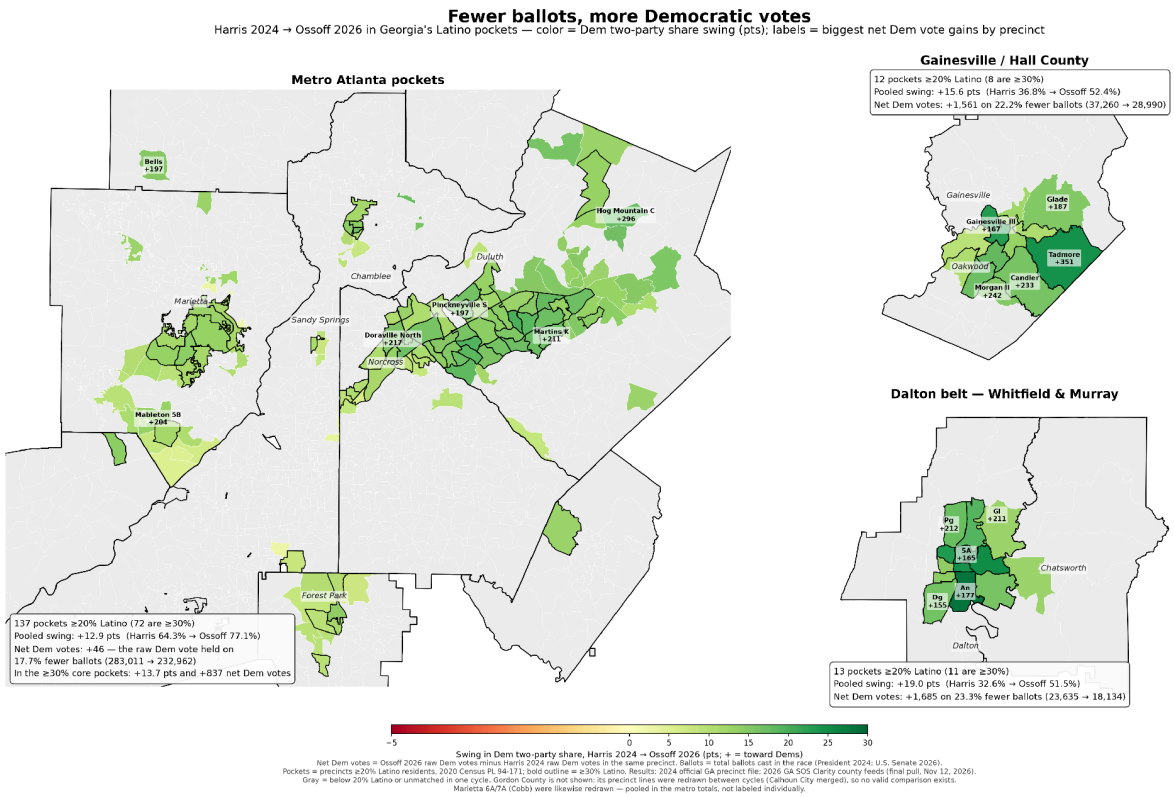
									'24→Sen '26
Statewide	46.2	50.5	48.9	54.3	59.0	+8.5	+10.1	106%	79.5%
≥30% Latino (112 precincts)	51.4	61.4	58.6	68.8	73.3	+11.9	+14.7	117.7%	81.8%
≥25% Latino (144)	—	—	—	—	70.5	+11.8	+14.1	119.2%	82.1%
≥40% Latino (62)	—	—	—	—	76.5	+10.9	+16.3	125.3%	81.6%
≥50% Latino (28)	—	—	—	—	77.4	+11.8	+17.4	128.8%	82.2%

At every depth, more Latino = bigger move, stronger retention. The pockets are younger and more immigrant than the state they swing: across the ≥30% set, 51.3% of Latino residents are foreign-born, 41.2% noncitizens, 35.3% under 18; median Hispanic household income ~$65,000; 53.7% of Spanish-speaking households limited-English; production (21.0%), service (23.1%) and natural-resources/construction (30.0%) occupations dominate.

The 2026 ticket ladder inside the pockets, on the net-votes map's matched panels (full detail: table-threeway-pockets.csv) — Democratic two-party share, swing vs. Harris 2024 in parentheses:

Geography (pocket precincts)	Jon Ossoff — Senate	Josh McLaurin — Lt. Gov.	Keisha Lance Bottoms — Governor
Metro Atlanta (137)	77.1 (+12.9)	74.3 (+10.0)	72.6 (+8.4)
Gainesville / Hall (12)	52.4 (+15.6)	48.7 (+12.0)	47.3 (+10.5)
Dalton belt (13)	51.5 (+19.0)	48.9 (+16.3)	46.6 (+14.0)
Statewide ≥30% (103)	73.4 (+14.7)	70.6 (+11.9)	68.9 (+10.2)

The ordering — Ossoff above McLaurin above Bottoms — is identical in all four geographies, and the Ossoff−Bottoms gap barely moves (+4.5 to +5.1): a structural top-of-ticket drop-off inside the pockets, not a regional quirk. And the ladder had a floor: in the Hall and Dalton-belt pockets Ossoff was the only Democrat who carried them — McLaurin (48.7, 48.9) and Bottoms (47.3, 46.6) swung double digits and still ran underwater — while in the metro pockets Ossoff was the only one whose raw Democratic vote held Harris's 2024 level (179,718 vs. 179,672).



Map: Harris 2024 → Ossoff 2026 swing and net Democratic votes gained in the pocket precincts — metro Atlanta, Gainesville and the Dalton belt. Fewer ballots than 2024; more Democratic votes.

ORIGIN GROUPS: WHO THE POCKETS ARE

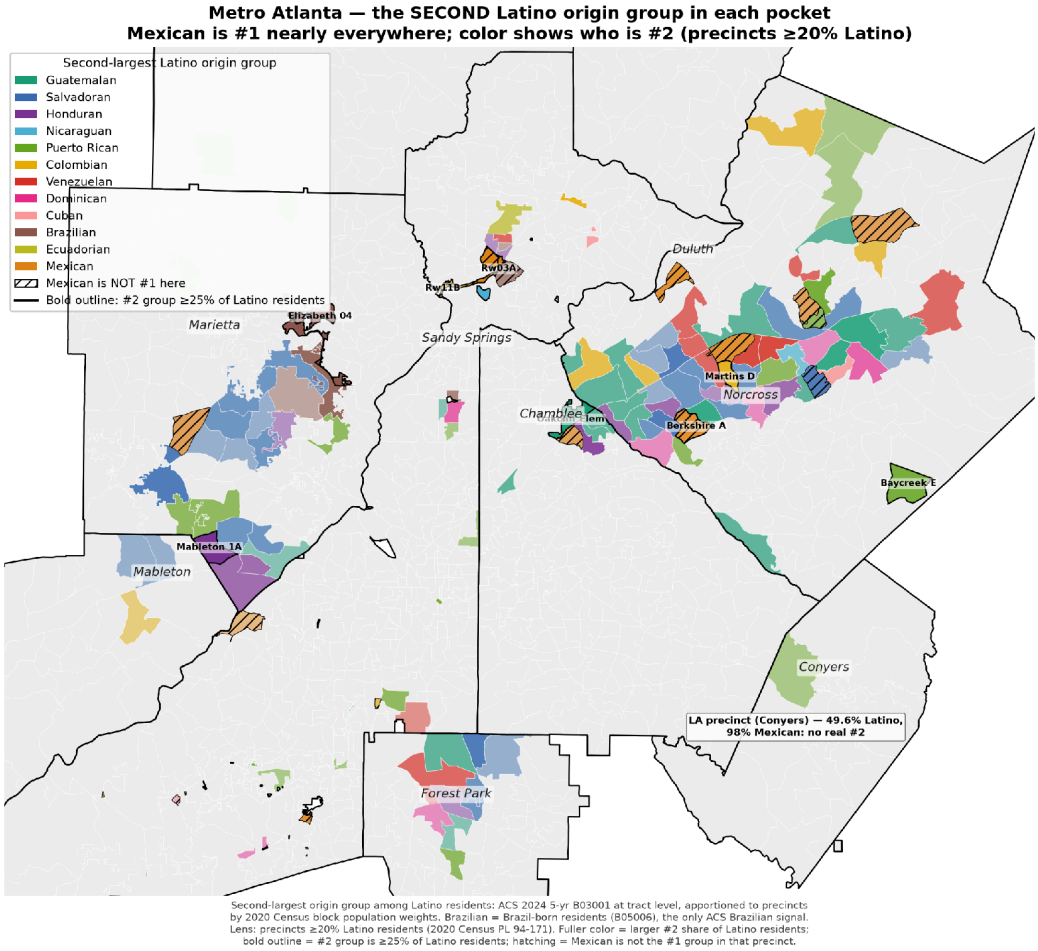
Origin shares: ACS 2024 5-year B03001, tract level, apportioned to precincts (methods). A plurality set = precincts ≥25% Latino where the group is the largest single origin. Ordered by Georgia footprint:

Origin group	GA population	Plurality precincts	Warnock '22	Harris '24	Bottoms '26	Ossoff '26	W→O	H→O	2024→26 retention	Third group (share)
Mexican	604,477 (50.2%)	129	58.9	56.2	65.8	70.3	+11.4	+14.1	82.1%	Salvadoran (median 7.5%)
Puerto Rican	126,566	none	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	is #3 in 40 pockets
Guatemalan	78,871	5	47.6	—	61.7	67.4	+19.8	+13.9	83.2%	varies (median 3.4%)
Salvadoran	55,786	1	—	—	—	70.8	+7.9	+13.4	80.4%	Venezuelan (13.9%)
Colombian	47,265	0 at ≥25%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	is #3 in 19 pockets
Cuban	41,946	none readable	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	is #3 in 16 pockets
Honduran	41,229	1	—	—	—	81.3	+6.3	+9.0	84.8%	Guatemalan (11.2%)

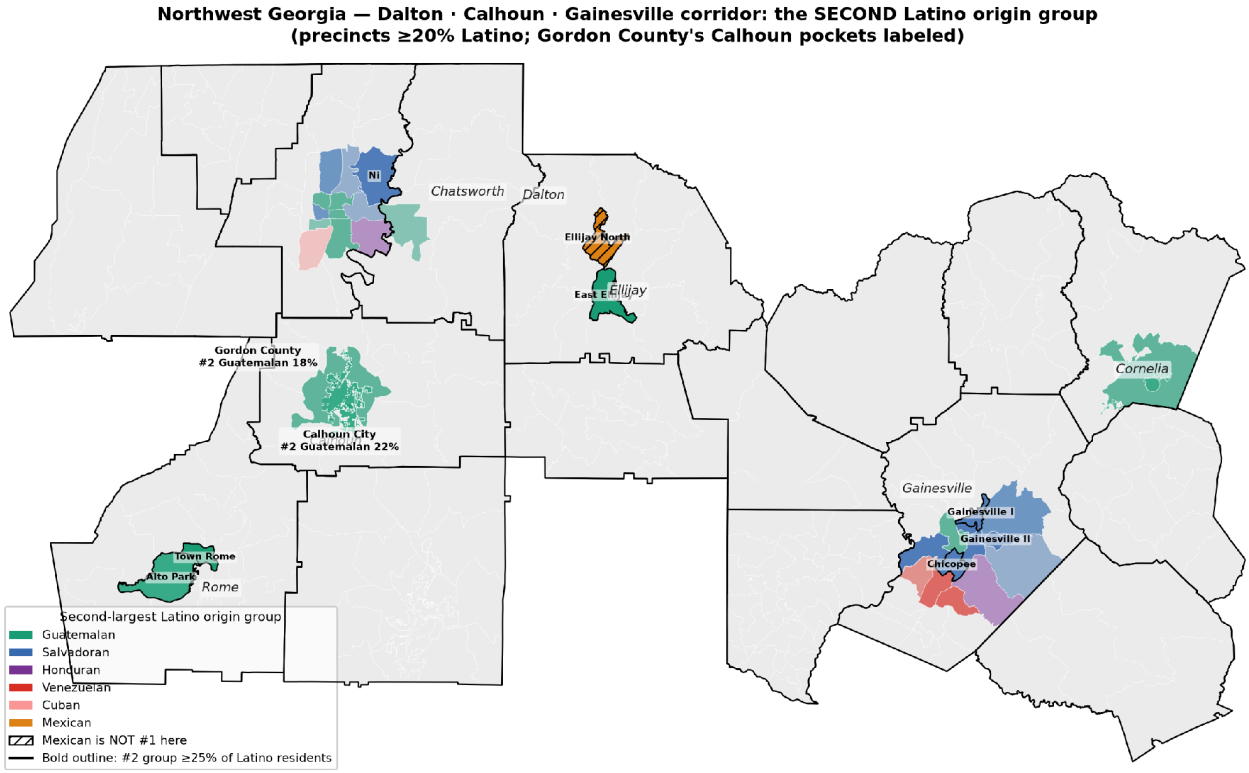
Venezuelan	36,923	3 (1 full spine)	—	—	—	87.9	—	+12.7	small-n	varies (median 18.0%)
Dominican	32,270	2 (1 full spine)	—	—	—	82.3	+10.3	+15.0	86.6%	varies (median 11.3%)
Central American bloc	187,571	11	56.6	59.5	67.7	73.0	+16.4	+13.5	84.0%	Salvadoran (median 11.2%)

The Mexican-origin electorate is the ballast: 129 of 144 pockets, +11.4 midterm-to-midterm, 122.5% retention vs. the 2022 Senate base. Central American communities moved furthest — the bloc (Guatemalan + Salvadoran + Honduran + Nicaraguan; full ACS subtotal incl. Costa Rican/Panamanian = 206,564) swung +16.4 (Senate) and +21.0 (Governor), the largest move of any set; the five Guatemalan-plurality precincts (Canton, Chamblee/Brockett, Ellijay, Gwinnett's Berkshire) swung +19.8 from the reddest 2022 start. Caveat: the bloc's ballots ran *below* its 2022 base (89.4% matched) — persuasion, not turnout growth.

Underneath the top two sits a third layer, and it is not a footnote. Puerto Ricans are its signature — the anchor community almost nowhere, third-largest in 40 pockets and top-three in nearly a third of all pockets. Colombians show the same shape concentrated in the Gwinnett stack: never the plurality anywhere, but third in 19 precincts at a median 8% of Latino residents — thick enough in precincts like the Goodwins to matter in any close Gwinnett race, and an outright pocket below the 25% lens (DeKalb's Valley Brook: 73.6% Colombian). In 34 precincts — nearly all metro — no community holds a majority: Berkshire P, 56% Latino, splits Mexican 28 / Guatemalan 25 / Salvadoran 17. In Dalton the third layer barely exists; the northwest is a two-community story. Venezuelan pockets are few and the most immigrant set measured (66.9% foreign-born, 58.5% noncitizen); the one with a full spine gave Ossoff 87.9%. Brazilian (21,261, Brazil-born, B05006), Peruvian (15,830), Nicaraguan (11,685), Ecuadorian (8,885): presence-sized, not yet pocket-sized. Guatemalan precincts are youngest (44.8% under 18), poorest (~$55,600), most limited-English (64.7%); the Dominican set is most citizen-heavy (20.9% noncitizen) and retained best. Maps: maps/map-origin-statewide.png, maps/map-origin-metro-atlanta.png.

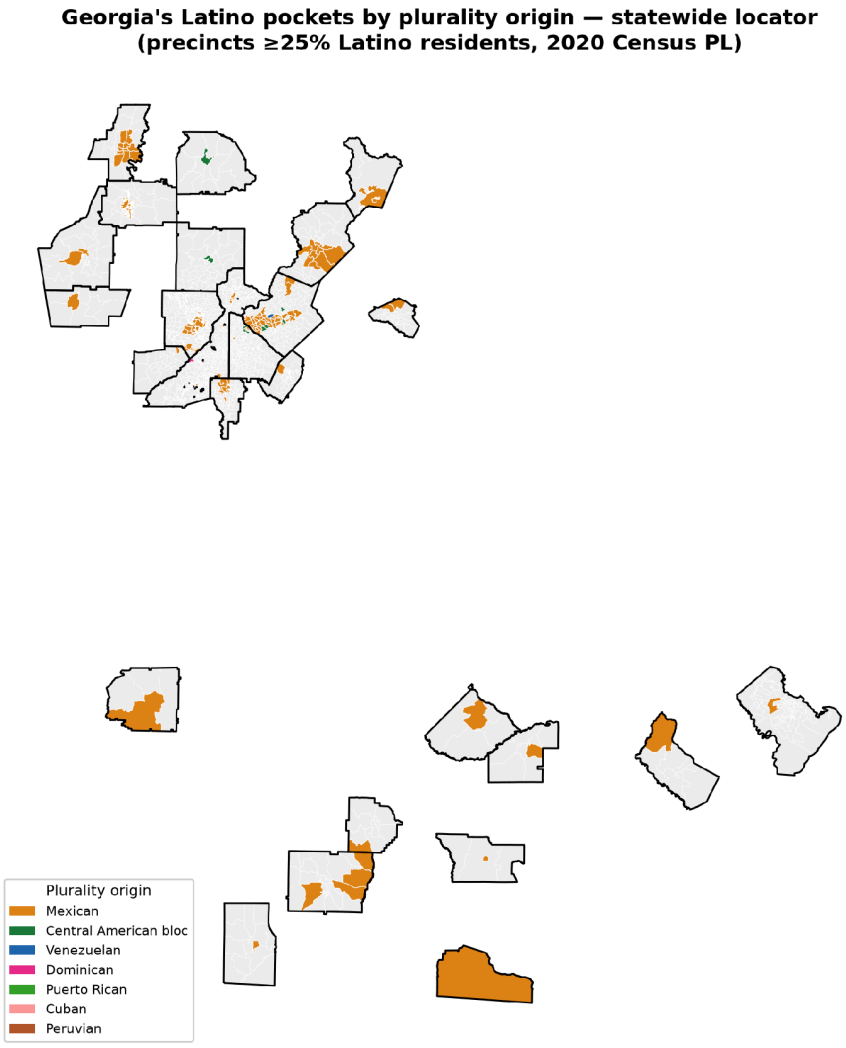


Map: Second-largest Latino origin group by precinct — metro Atlanta.

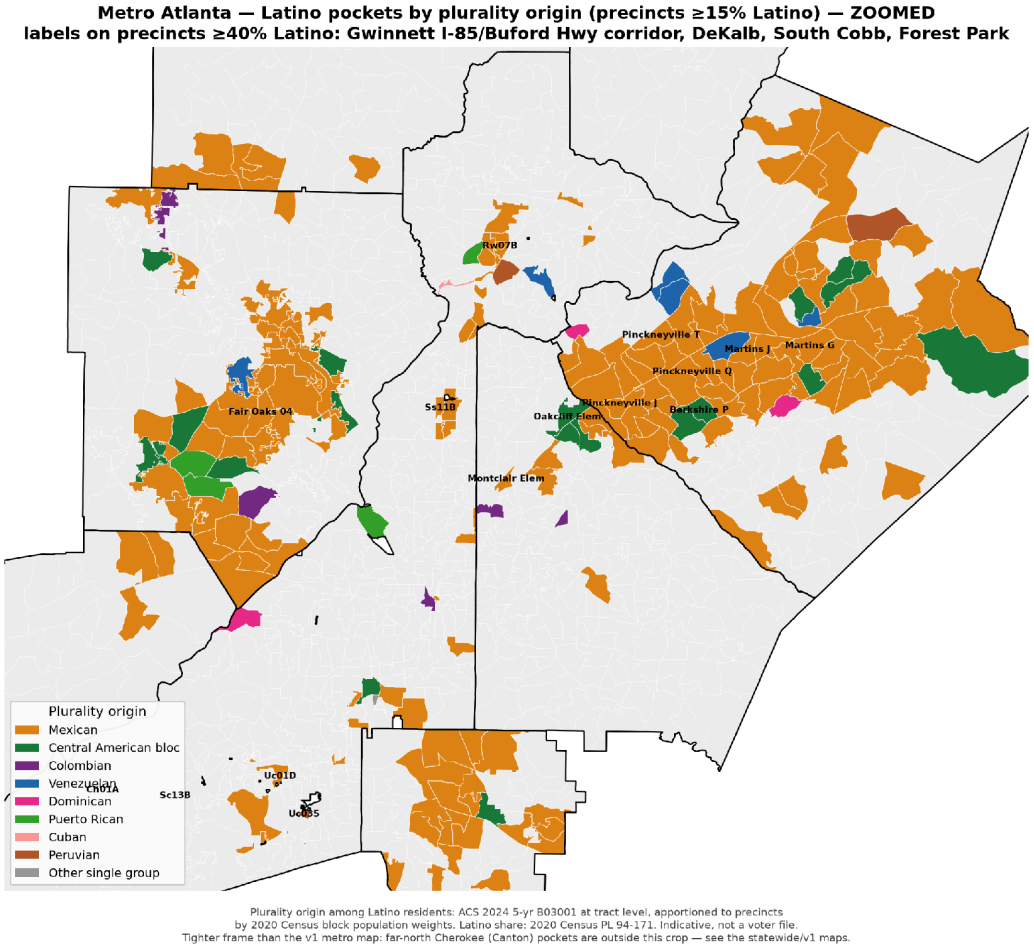


Second-largest origin group among Latino residents: ACS 2024 5-yr B03001 at tract level, apportioned to precincts by 2020 Census block population weights. Brazilian = Brazil-born residents (B05006), the only ACS Brazilian signal. Lens: precincts ≥20% Latino residents (2020 Census PL 94-171). Fuller color = larger #2 share of Latino residents; bold outline = #2 group is ≥25% of Latino residents; hatching = Mexican is not the #1 group in that precinct.

Map: Second-largest Latino origin group by precinct — northwest Georgia corridor.



Map: Largest Latino origin group by precinct — statewide (pocket precincts, 2020 Census PL).



Map: Largest Latino origin group by precinct — metro Atlanta (zoomed).

SEAT IMPACT: WHERE THE POCKETS WERE THE MARGIN

Pocket net = Dem−Rep votes over in-district pocket precincts (county-locality detail, Clarity, Nov 12); margins are the SOS state-feed totals. Full table: table-seat-impact.csv.

Seat (flip unless noted)	Margin	≥30% pockets: n / net	≥20% pockets: n / net	Verdict
HD-29 — Scott Soracco (Hall)	+135	6 / **+1,754**	8 / +135*	**Pockets were the margin (~13×)**
HD-48 — Adam Cleveland	+450	4 / **+979**	5 / +1,166	**Pockets netted more than the whole margin**
SD-45 — Scott Tippetts	+3,622	1 / +237	5 / +2,164	≥20% pockets = 60%
HD-103 — Chris Luchey	+35	1 / +190	3 / **+1,208**	**Pockets were the margin, many times over**
HD-105 — Farooq Mughal	+5,396	0	3 / +2,384	≥20% pockets = 44%

HD-53 — Beth Fuller	+718	0	1 / +360	≥20% pockets = half
SD-37 — Darcy Castro	+1,421	0	1 / +483	Northern Marietta band; ≈ a third
HD-44 — Danielle Bell	+1,128	0	1 / +316	Contributed (28%), not decisive
SD-48 — Laura Murvartian	+4,469	0	2 / +684	Flip ran through the suburbs
HD-99 — Michelle Kang	+3,964	0	0	**Not a pocket seat**
SD-42 — Eric Lee	+3,586	0	0	**Not a pocket seat**
HD-4 — Kasey Carpenter (R held)	−503	10 / +432	11 / −211	Won the ≥30% pockets, lost the seat
Gwinnett CCD4 — Ben Culberson (county commission flip)	+9,883	1 / +217	10 / **+4,891**	**Pockets ≈ half the margin**

In HD-29 the ≥20% lens captures the whole district, so its net equals the margin by construction; the ≥30% figure is the test that matters. Pocket nets are computed over the full district — every county the seat touches.

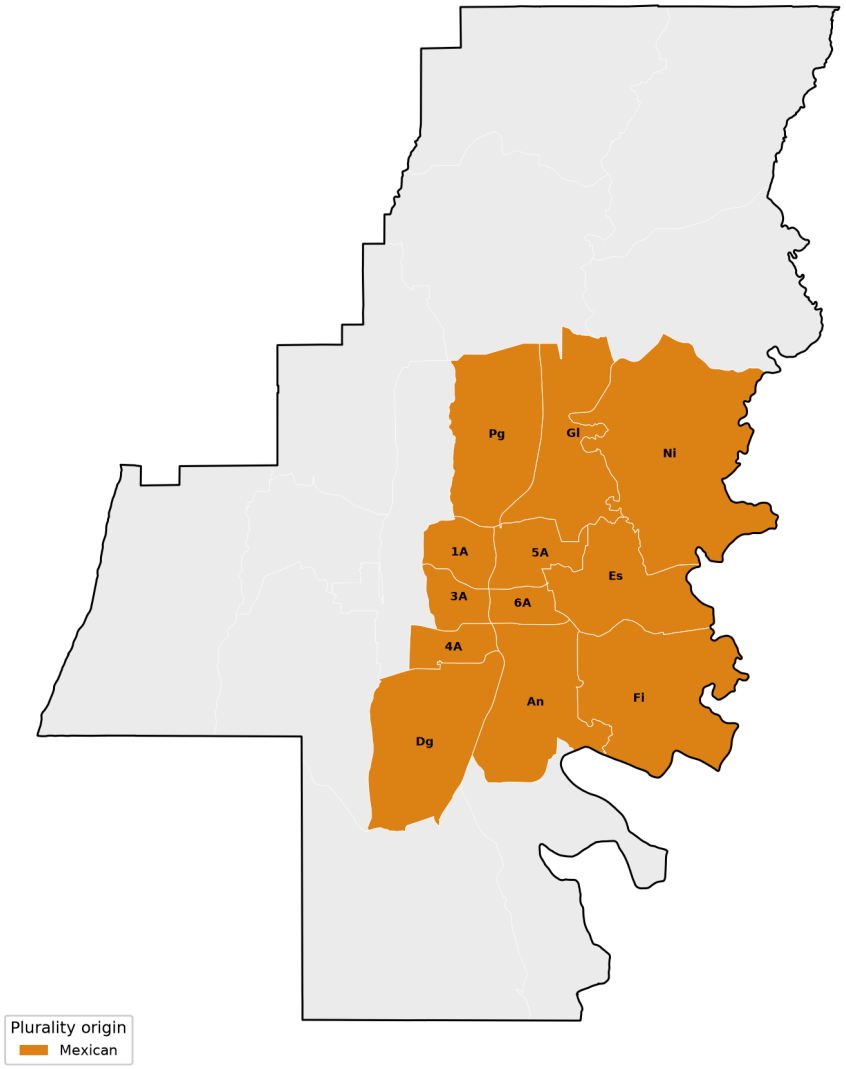
Three flips were dispositive — HD-29, HD-103 and HD-48, where ≥30% pockets alone beat the whole margin; two more drew half or better (SD-45, HD-53), HD-105 drew 44%, two drew nothing. A margin-of-victory constituency — not everywhere, but exactly where the map is closest.

The county flip: in Gwinnett's Commission District 4, Culberson beat incumbent Matthew Holtkamp 52,643 (55.2%) to 42,760. His ten ≥20% Latino precincts (2020 PL; one, Lawrenceville D, cast no ballots in the race) gave him 61.2% and netted +4,891 — 49.5% of the margin; on an ACS-resident lens, 14 precincts and +6,987 (71%). Sugar Hill D tied exactly, 1,308–1,308 — and the same Sugar Hill–Hog Mountain cluster that decided HD-103 (Luchey) still supplied half this flip.

CASE STUDY: DALTON / WHITFIELD COUNTY

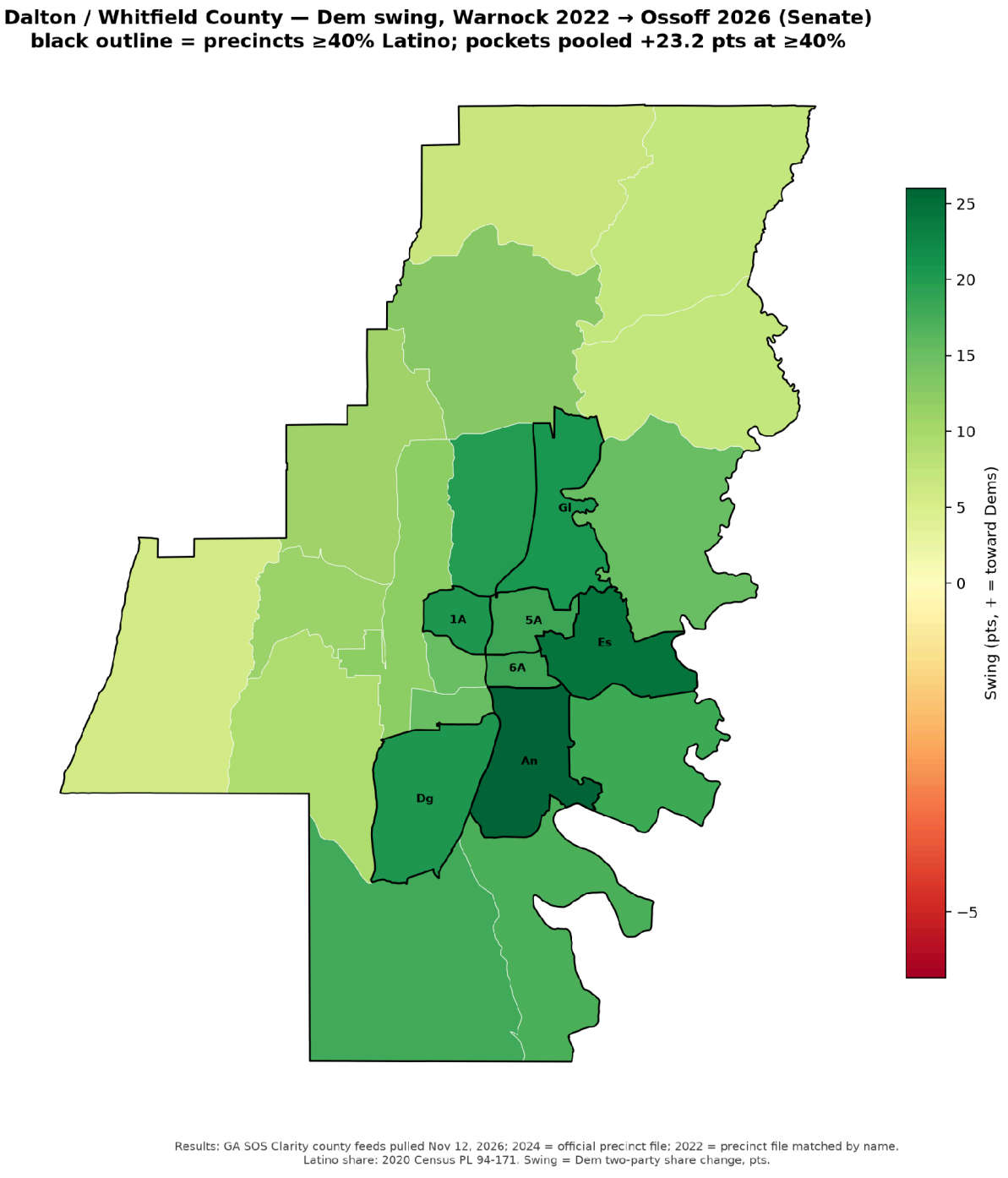
Dalton is a battleground now. Its eleven ≥30% precincts were Georgia's reddest big pocket set in 2022 (Abrams 29.9%, Warnock 35.1%) and moved furthest: Bottoms 51.4%, Ossoff 56.3% (+21.3; +23.2 in the ≥40% core) at 122% Senate retention; the AJC found Whitfield posted Georgia's largest county swing (31 points). The mix — 74.0% Mexican, 14.7% Central American (9.4% Guatemalan) — is a carpet-mill workforce: 44.8% of Latino workers in production. In HD-4 (Kasey Carpenter, R), challenger Quentin Postell won the ≥30% pockets (+432) while losing by 503; SD-54 (Chuck Payne, R, unopposed; 27.6% Latino) swung +14.8. Maps: maps/map-origin-dalton.png, maps/map-swing-dalton.png.

Dalton / Whitfield County — pockets by plurality origin (precincts ≥20% Latino)



Plurality origin among Latino residents: ACS 2024 5-yr B03001 at tract level, apportioned to precincts by 2020 Census block population weights. Latino share: 2020 Census PL 94-171. Indicative, not a voter file.

Map: Latino origin groups — Dalton / Whitfield County pockets.



Map: Harris 2024 → Ossoff 2026 swing — Dalton / Whitfield County pockets.

THE NORTHWEST BELT: DALTON, CHATSWORTH, CALHOUN, GAINESVILLE, CORNELIA

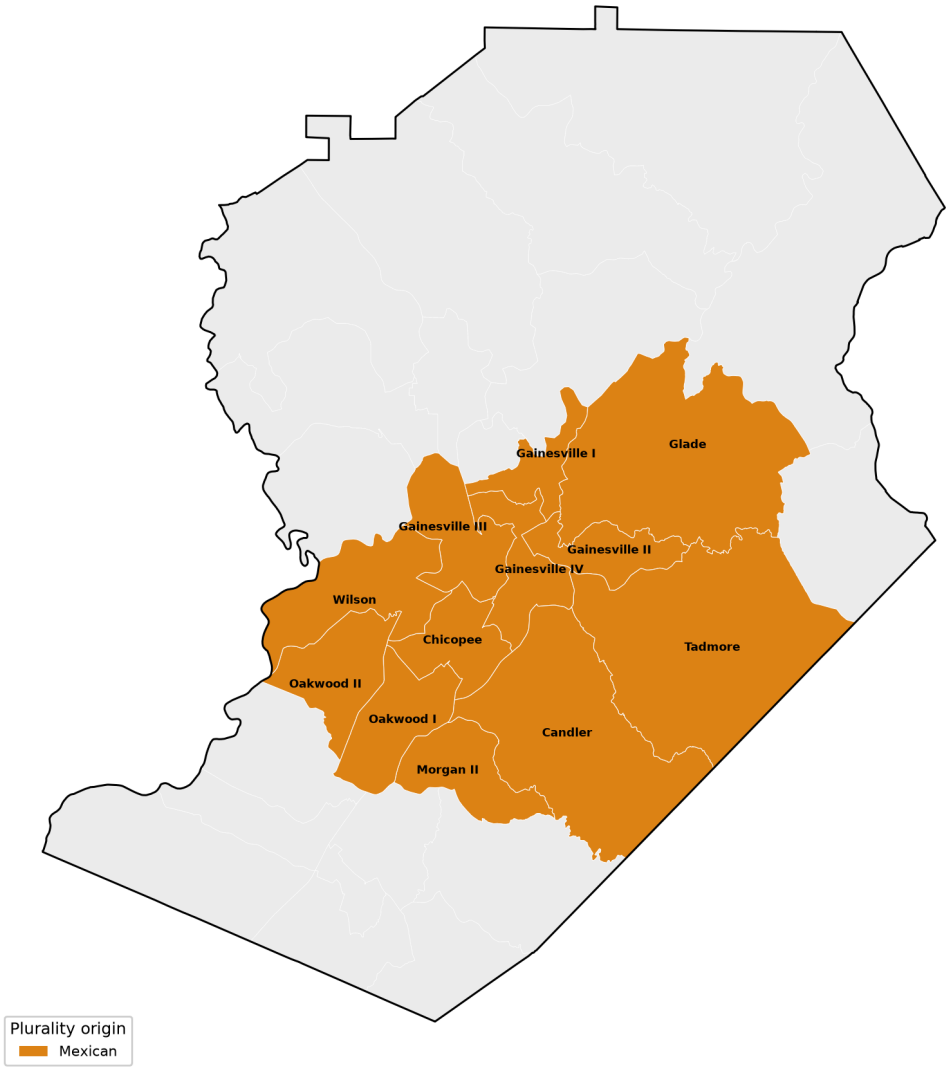
The two case studies are one carpet-and-poultry belt, wider than either. Murray (Chatsworth) extends it past the Whitfield line: four precincts ≥15% pooled Ossoff 27.4% off a deep-red base, each up 11–14 on Harris, on Dalton's stack (Mexican 72.5%; Guatemalan/Salvadoran splitting second). Calhoun / Gordon is the southern link — 15.6% Latino; county pooled Abrams 14.6 → Ossoff 29.6 (+11.3), its two ≥20% pockets (Calhoun City 25.9%, Gordon County precinct 20.2%, Guatemalan second in both) +14.7 to 39.3% on the matched pair. Nothing there was close — HD-5 (Matt Barton, R), HD-6 (Jason Ridley, R), SD-54 (Payne) unopposed or safe — so the west end is a trajectory story. Cornelia / Habersham (14.9%) closes the frame: two pockets ≥20% (28.5%, 20.7%),

Guatemalan second, Warnock 21.7 → Ossoff 29.0 on thin matching. Past Hall it stops: Banks, Jackson, Dawson, Lumpkin, White have no precinct at the 20% lens.

CASE STUDY: GAINESVILLE / HALL COUNTY

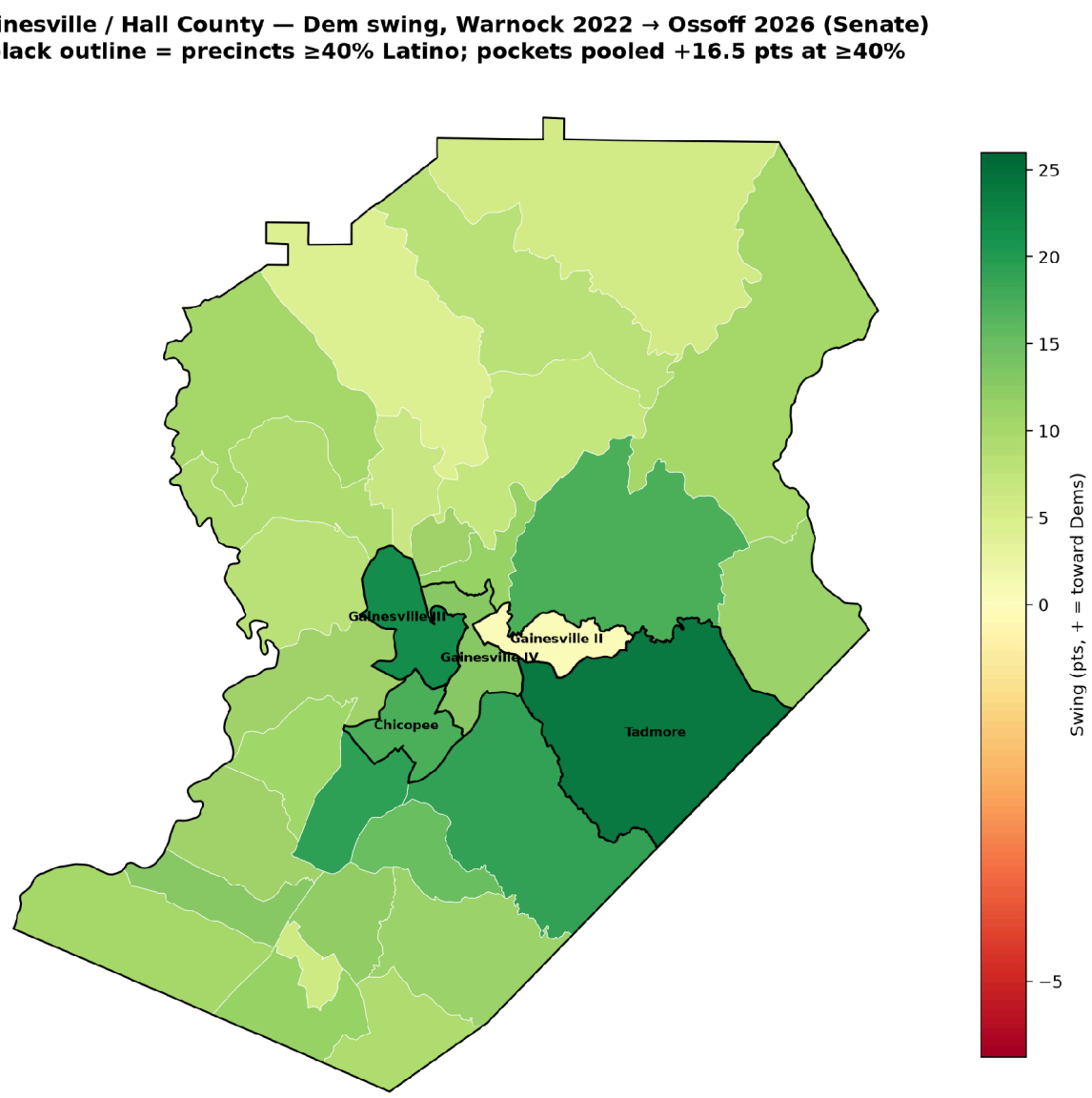
Gainesville woke up into the battleground it was. Its eight ≥30% pockets — 67.6% Mexican, an unusually Salvadoran 24.0% Central American (13.5% Salvadoran), 33.1% production (poultry) — moved Warnock 40.9% → Ossoff 58.2% (+17.3) at 122% Senate retention, and produced the cleanest seat result in the state: HD-29 (Scott Soracco) flipped by 135 while its six ≥30% pockets netted +1,754. SD-49 (Drew Echols, R; 27.2% Latino) stayed Republican but swung +11.6. Maps: maps/map-origin-gainesville.png, maps/map-swing-gainesville.png.

Gainesville / Hall County — pockets by plurality origin (precincts ≥20% Latino)



Plurality origin among Latino residents: ACS 2024 5-yr B03001 at tract level, apportioned to precincts by 2020 Census block population weights. Latino share: 2020 Census PL 94-171. Indicative, not a voter file.

Map: Latino origin groups — Gainesville / Hall County pockets.



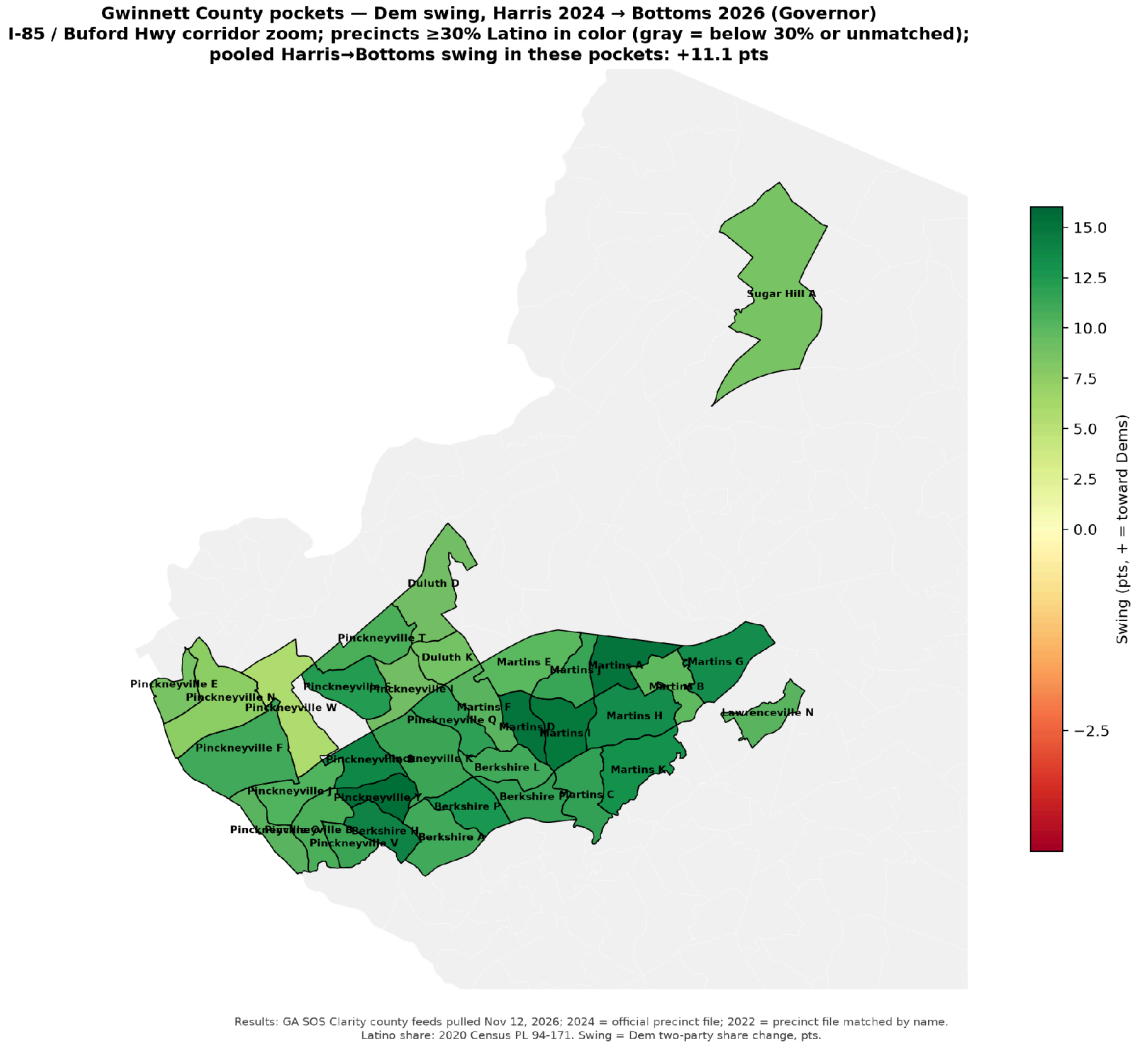
Map: Harris 2024 → Ossoff 2026 swing — Gainesville / Hall County pockets.

CASE STUDY: ATHENS / CLARKE COUNTY

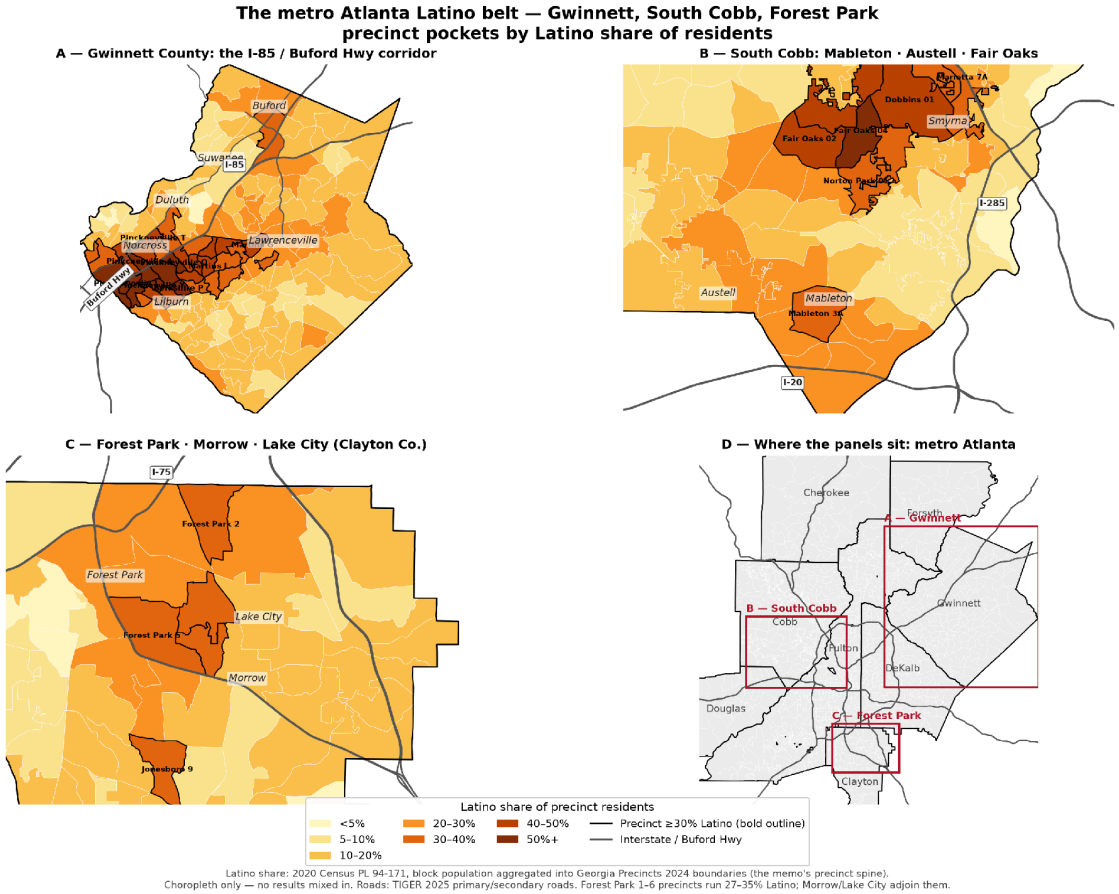
The scan's one genuine miss — and it voted like a metro pocket system. Five precincts ≥15% Latino (pooled 23.7%; county 11.1%, 14,336 residents) pooled Ossoff 84.9% and Bottoms 81.4%: 2A (36.4%) hit 84.3, 5D (32.1%) 82.6. The mix is the classic stack — Mexican 73.6%, Guatemalan second (8.6%) — in service-and-campus labor. HD-122 (Spencer Frye, D) and SD-47 (Frank Ginn, R, unopposed) hold most of it; 5A sits in HD-120 (Gary "Ward" Black Jr., R) and still voted 86.9% for Ossoff.

Metro Atlanta's pockets added margin instead. Gwinnett's ≥30% set (36 precincts; the state's most diverse — 49.8% Mexican, 23.5% Central American, 6.8% Venezuelan, 4.4% Colombian) dipped for Harris (64.0%), then

posted the biggest presidential-cycle rebound (Ossoff 79.3%, +15.4; map: maps/map-swing-gwinnett.png). South Cobb's ≥20% band (22 precincts, Mableton/Austell) was the steadiest set measured — Warnock 73.0, Harris 73.1, Ossoff 84.0, best presidential retention (84.7%) — but pads safe Democratic districts; SD-37's (Darcy Castro) pockets are the northern Marietta band instead.



Map: Harris 2024 → Ossoff 2026 swing — Gwinnett County pockets.



Map: The metro Latino belt — Gwinnett, South Cobb, and the Forest Park / Morrow / Lake City pockets.

Forsyth is the suburban-growth version: four precincts ≥15% (pooled 21.0% Latino; county 10.0%, 25,226 residents) pooled Ossoff 48.1% and Bottoms 41.4% — ~5 ahead of Bottoms's county share, ~15 ahead of Harris in the same precincts. The most origin-diverse new find: Mexican only 50.8%, Colombian 10.6%, Honduran 10.3% — Brandywine is barely Mexican-plurality. All inside safe Republican seats (HD-24, Carter Barrett, R): a growth story, not a flip story. Yet.

The rest of the map, in one pass: Douglas / Lithia Springs extends the South Cobb story west on I-20 — First Baptist (31.6%) went Harris 56.5 → Ossoff 71.0 (HD-66, Kimberly Alexander, D). Fayette's Shakerag East pair (20.6%, Colombian second at 23%) pooled Ossoff 68.0 (HD-68, Timoria McQueen Saba, D). Augusta's two pockets (24.9%, 17.7%) pooled Ossoff 91.2 — majority-Black precincts, and the state's most Puerto Rican mix (36.3%; Precinct 402 is PR-plurality) (HD-132, Brian Prince, D). Grovetown's library precinct (16.6%) moved 56.8 → 70.6 on the Fort Eisenhower edge (HD-125, Gary Richardson, R). Bartow's pair pooled Ossoff 42.7 (+13); Allatoona sits in flipped SD-37 (Castro). Winder's Precinct 16 (15.8%) flipped its own vote, 37.0 → 54.2 (HD-104, Chuck Efstration, R). Carroll's Catherine Hardy (24.4%) is the most Central American precinct in the state (Guatemalan 34 / Honduran 29 / Mexican 26); its 2026 results don't match the spine (HD-72, David Huddleston, R). Coweta's Central (15.8%) went 70.0 in a contested seat (HD-70, Melissa Stuckey, R, by 1,300). Stockbridge Central (17.3%) and Fort Valley #2 (22.1%, Cuban second 26%) are presence without a readable behavior line (HD-78, Demetrius Douglas, D; HD-150, Patty Bentley Stinson, D).

And the negative space is verified, not assumed: at the 15% lens the map is complete — Columbus (top precinct 11.1% Latino), Macon (10.2%), Albany (11.7%), Valdosta (10.6%), Americus / Sumter (8.9%) have no pocket precincts at all.

DISTRICTS: THE SIGNIFICANT-LATINO MAP

Latino share of residents, ACS 2024 (B03002); House shows the ≥20% tier (20 districts), Senate the top of the ≥10% tier (22). Full table: district_table.csv.

District	Latino %	2026 result	Flipped?	District W→O
HD-98	60.0	Marvin Lim (D) held, unopposed (8,176 votes)	No	+6.8
HD-4	52.3	Kasey Carpenter (R) held by 503	No	+21.1
HD-29	46.4	Scott Soracco (D), +135	**Yes**	+14.8
HD-109	42.9	Juan Estrada (D) held, unopposed (10,666 votes)	No	+5.7
HD-96	40.7	Arlene Beckles (D) held, unopposed (12,167 votes)	No	+10.8
HD-105	20.3	Farooq Mughal (D), +5,396	**Yes**	—
SD-5	46.0	Sheikh Rahman (D) held, unopposed (35,109 votes)	No	+7.6
SD-54	27.6	Chuck Payne (R) held	No	+14.8
SD-49	27.2	Drew Echols (R) held	No	+11.6
SD-45	16.9	Scott Tippetts (D), +3,622	**Yes**	+13.1
SD-37	10.1	Darcy Castro (D), +1,421	**Yes**	—

As a class, significant-Latino districts out-swung the state: House ≥10% +9.8 (Warnock→Ossoff) vs. +8.5 statewide; ≥20% House tier +11.2; Senate ≥10% +9.7. Of 14 House flips, two sit in ≥20% districts (HD-29, HD-105), four more in the 10–20% band; of four Senate flips, SD-45 (16.9%) and SD-37 (10.1%) lead on Latino share. The three most-Latino R-held districts — HD-4 (Carpenter), SD-54 (Payne), SD-49 (Echols) — all moved double digits without flipping: the 2028 target list is writing itself.

GENERATION: THE SECOND GENERATION MOVED MOST

Statewide, Georgia's 1.2 million Latinos are 39.1% foreign-born, 27.6% noncitizen, 33.8% under 18 — the coming electorate exceeds the current one. Split the 144 pockets by immigrant share: first-generation-heavy precincts (68; 58.2% foreign-born) were already most Democratic in 2022 (Warnock 65.2%), moving +9.5 to Ossoff 74.7% at 123.2% Senate retention. Second-generation-heavy precincts (76; 42.9% foreign-born, 38.0% under 18) started redder (53.6%) and moved *more* — +13.1 to 66.7%, with stronger presidential retention (83.2% vs. 80.9%). The hypothesis held: the US-born second generation is the faster-moving, faster-growing part.

COLLEGES: THE ELECTORATE IN FORMATION

Institution	Location	Hispanic share	Basis
Dalton State College	Dalton	**40%**	Fall 2025 institutional (2,209 students); IPEDS 2024: 37.6% of 5,135
Georgia Gwinnett College	Lawrenceville	30%	Fall 2026 Fast Facts (3,829 of 12,561)
Univ. of North Georgia — Gainesville	Gainesville	29.8%	Fall 2025 Quick Facts (campus 7,500+)
Kennesaw State University	Kennesaw	15.8%	IPEDS 2024 (of 47,764)
Georgia State University	Atlanta	13.2%	IPEDS 2024 (of 34,944)
Clayton State University	Morrow	11.6%	IPEDS 2024 (of ~6,163)

The three most Hispanic campuses sit inside the three most interesting Latino electorates — Dalton State (Georgia's first HSI, designated 2018), UNG-Gainesville, Georgia Gwinnett: the second-generation electorate in formation.

THE INVESTMENT GAP

The lag was not at the top of the ticket. Ossoff's Senate race and Bottoms's governor race had real campaigns, national attention and their own money ecosystems — nobody is claiming nobody invested in *them*. The lag is down-ballot, in the State House, State Senate and county races where the pockets supplied the margins. In Georgia's FCC broadcast political files for everything below the top of the ticket — $9,150,933 in orders filed from September 1, 2026, excluding Governor, U.S. Senate and federal House races, a swept universe dominated by the statewide constitutional races — Spanish-language broadcast totaled **$1,808, or 0.02%**, including $0 of the $7.74 million in the statewide bucket. In the legislative races this memo is about, the entire Spanish-language broadcast footprint was three token buys: $1,550 in HD-105 (Farooq Mughal), $250 in SD-7 (Ruwa Romman), $8 in HD-99 (Michelle Kang). The flipped seats were won in races where essentially no Spanish-language media was bought for the candidates who needed the pocket margins. Infrastructure compounds it: outside Atlanta, Telemundo affiliates are low-power stations with no FCC online political file; Gainesville's Spanish-language radio file was empty for 2026. The one exception should be credited, and it came from outside the campaigns entirely: Georgia Conservation Voters' Education Fund put a documented **$17,455 of Spanish-language radio on Atlanta's WBZY (Z105.7) — 81 spots across the final three weeks**, the Spanish leg of an eight-station iHeart GOTV buy, while GCV's Action Fund ran $1.69 million in independent expenditures, overwhelmingly digital and mail behind the Public Service Commission races. Those radio orders were non-candidate issue/GOTV filings, outside the $1,808 candidate figure by classification, not by oversight — and that is the point in miniature: the one Spanish-language radio program of any scale in Georgia this cycle was a conservation group's civic-engagement buy, not a campaign's. (Practitioner reporting adds Spanish-language digital from GCV as well; the public record documents the radio.) The community voted anyway. For 2027–28 the gap is both opportunity and risk: eventually, someone else spends into it.

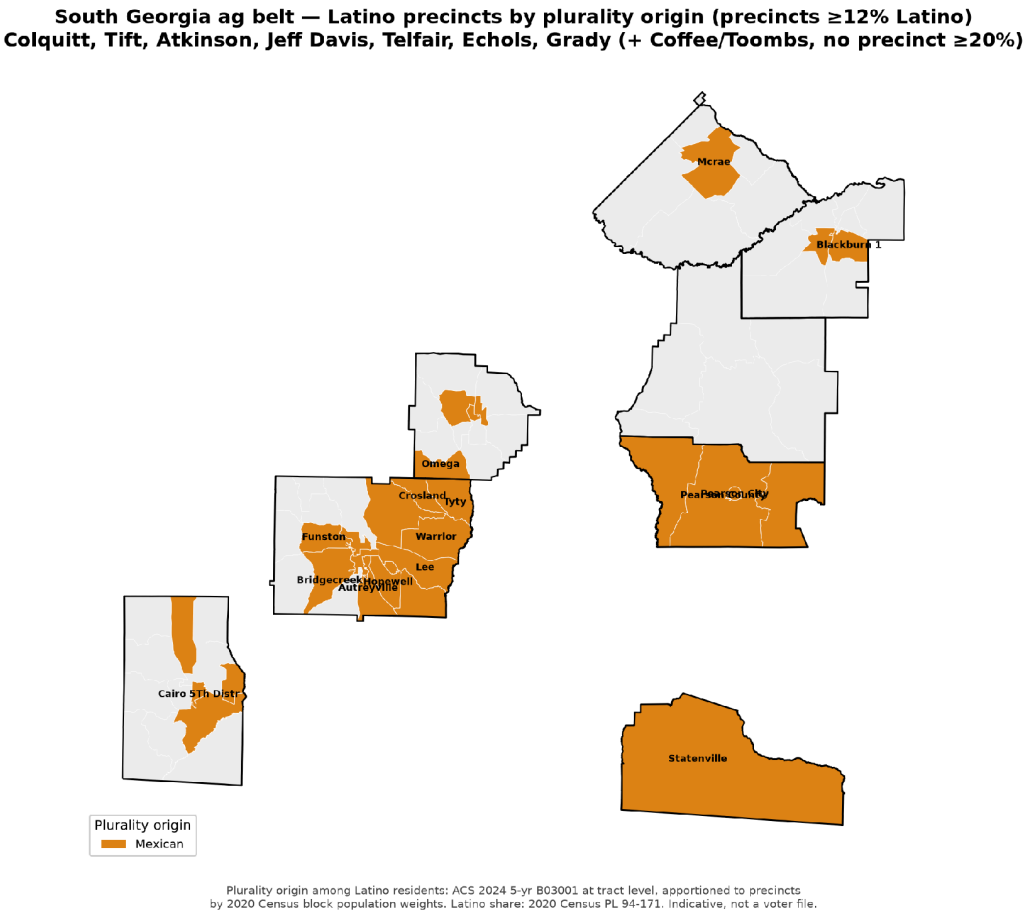
THE AG BELT: PRESENCE AHEAD OF ELECTORATE

South Georgia's farmworker pockets are the quieter, honest version of the story. Fifteen precincts ≥20% Latino (Atkinson, Colquitt, Echols, Grady, Jeff Davis, Telfair, Tift) moved at the statewide pocket pace from a far lower base — Warnock 21.4% → Harris 22.2% → Bottoms 29.1% → Ossoff 32.7% (+11.3) — at 104.6% Senate and

79.3% presidential retention. Mix: 73.9% Mexican, 13.7% Guatemalan; the work is the fields (41.2% natural-resources/construction/maintenance); income the state's lowest (~$54,700); 41.8% of Latino residents noncitizens, 37.8% under 18 — presence far ahead of electorate (Coffee 12.6%, Toombs 11.3%: no precinct ≥20% at all). In counties decided by hundreds of votes this is a naturalization play: the swing matches the metro pace; only the eligible base is missing. Map: maps/map-origin-agbelt.png.

The fifteen are the core, not the whole map: single rural pockets scatter statewide on the same logic, most in HD-157 (Bradley Anderson, R) / SD-19 (David Sikes, R) country — Blackburn 1, Jeff Davis (40.1%, the pooled set's highest share; Ossoff 35.5), McRae, Telfair (30.4%; 43.7), Statenville, Echols (29.5%; 16.7 — deepest-red pocket measured, still +7.8 on Harris), Cairo 5th District, Grady (27.9%; restored from the SOS feed, 52.6% for Ossoff), Cedartown, Polk (29.8%, 4,191 Latino residents; 45.3), Folkston, Charlton (23.5%; 36.6), Beards Creek, Long (34.9%; presence only — it reports under no precinct name of its own), 5A, Appling (17.7%; 21.4), Shiloh, Tattnall (15.5%; 47.0, +19.7 on Harris), Golden Hill, Banks (16.8%; 19.8, doubled on a small base). One precinct deep each; the direction is the same everywhere.

The rural citizenship gap is real but not unique: only ~41% of Latino adults in the ag-belt pockets are citizens — joint-lowest with Gwinnett's pockets (40.5%), below the ≥30% set (42.9%). The northwest belt's settled workforce is the most citizen-heavy (51.8%). The gap is an immigrant-core condition, farm belt or Buford Highway — why the naturalization play matters in both.



Map: Latino origin groups — South Georgia ag-belt pockets.

SERVICE CLUSTERS: THE GROUND TRUTH AGREES

A supermercado anchors a service cluster — envíos, notarios, tax preparers, clinics, phone stores, restaurants, churches — where daily life is administered: a reliable pocket signal and a natural contact geography. Against business listings (25 anchors, table-business-anchors.csv), the clusters sit where the census says they should: Dalton's E. Morris/E. Walnut corridor (Talpa flagship, opened September 2025) runs through the ≥40% pocket core; Gainesville's Atlanta Hwy/Central Ave. stores match its pockets; Buford Hwy (Plaza Fiesta, Santa Fe Mall, Centro Norcross) matches Gwinnett's; Mableton Parkway matches South Cobb's ≥20% band; Moultrie and Tifton sustain small ag-belt clusters. Nowhere did heavy commercial presence appear without a census pocket behind it.

The housing stock is the ground game. Statewide, **45.5% of Latino households rent**; in the 112 pockets the renter share is **63.1%** — 65.8% in the Gwinnett pockets — and **30.5% of pocket housing units sit in buildings of five or more units** (35.8% in Gwinnett). The belt's pockets are closer to even (48.8% renter), and the ag belt's are a different housing world: 47.0% renter, almost no apartment stock (4.3%), and **31.1% of units mobile homes**. The renter-heavy pockets are the electorate's blue core — the pockets where most Latino households rent backed Ossoff at **77.6%**, against 64.6% in the owner-heavy pockets — while the owner-heavy pockets, starting lower, swung even harder (+16.5 against +8.9). One map, two operations: apartment-complex doors in the metro pockets, where density makes a canvass cheap per voter reached, and the belt's homeowner precincts, where the 2026 movement actually was. Gwinnett's precincts say it from the other side: the county's transit-served precincts (≥10 Ride Gwinnett stops) out-swung its homeowner precincts (≥80% single-family, ≤20% renter) in **all four statewide races** — Senate +14.3 against +12.2, Governor +9.8 against +6.8.

The infrastructure already runs where the pockets are. MARTA's Route 39 bus works the Buford Highway corridor between the Doraville and Lindbergh stations, under the Gold Line's Chamblee and Doraville stops; Ride Gwinnett's nine fixed routes and three microtransit zones cover the Gwinnett pockets and connect at Doraville; CobbLinc's South Cobb Drive route and its South Cobb microtransit serve the Marietta–South Cobb pockets. The community's institutions sit on the same map: the Latin American Association's headquarters on Buford Highway, its Gwinnett center on Jimmy Carter Boulevard in Norcross and its outreach centers in Dalton; and the Latino Community Fund Georgia, the state's Latino philanthropic intermediary, whose published reporting counts programs in 38+ counties and 300,000+ Latino voter engagements a year.

SIDEBAR: NATIONAL ECHOES

The Georgia pattern was not Georgia's alone. Figures as published; single-source items flagged.

- **Texas.** The statewide sweep ran through Latino Texas: UnidosUS/BSP Research (3,014 Hispanic voters polled) had Talarico carrying Latinos 65–31 (74–24 in the Rio Grande Valley), Hinojosa 63–33; Hidalgo County (90% Latino), carried by Trump in 2024, went 71% for Hinojosa. LULAC put Texas Latino ballots near 1.6 million vs. ~900,000 in 2022 (*single-source*).
- **California.** In majority-Latino CA-22, Randy Villegas defeated incumbent David Valadao (AP call) on a farmworker-and-affordability campaign amid reported ICE-raid backlash.
- **New Jersey (2025).** Sherrill's 57–43 win carried a 68–31 Latino margin (NBC exit poll); Hudson County, the state's most Hispanic, beat Harris's margin by 21.6 points (DCCC analysis); Trump-carried Passaic flipped back by 15.
- **New York.** Hochul's ~60–40 re-election came with shifts vs. 2024 of +21 (Bronx), +20 (Queens), +15 (Brooklyn) — advocacy-summarized, treat as indicative. Nationally, UnidosUS had Democrats winning 67% of the Latino House vote, +11 vs. 2024.

WHAT IT MEANS

Georgia's Latino electorate is no longer a turnout story waiting to happen; in 2026 it was a margin story that already happened — and 2028 is when it gets cashed. Georgia will be a swing state for president again, decided at the margin, and the midterm evidence says this constituency is now one a presidential campaign plans around: 198,000 Latino ballots in a *midterm*, up 78% on 2022; pocket precincts swinging past their own presidential-year marks; named flips — HD-29 (Soracco), HD-103 (Luchey), HD-48 (Cleveland), a Gwinnett commission seat (Culberson) — supplied outright by pocket margins. A presidential electorate will only be bigger. The courtship writes itself from this memo's own pages: real Spanish-language investment where the down-ballot market left 0.02% on the table; physical presence in the pockets and the service clusters that anchor them, from Buford Highway to Dalton, Gainesville and Athens; and fluency in the texture — Mexican ballast, fast-moving Central American communities, a Puerto Rican third layer everywhere, a Colombian constituency in the Gwinnett stack, a second generation moving faster than the first, an ag belt that is a naturalization play. The campaigns that learn this map first will own it. The ones that treat Georgia's Latinos as a translation line in an ad buy will find out what the 2026 down-ballot already proved: this vote is organized enough to decide races, and it is waiting to be courted like it matters — because in Georgia, it does.

Methods and caveats. *Precinct ecology: precinct composition is not individual voters — a 40% Latino precinct casts ballots from all its residents. These are geographic reads, cross-checked against voter-file counts (SOS/Fraga) and exit polling (NYT/Siena).* Sets use Latino share of residents from the 2020 Census (PL 94-171) on Georgia Precincts 2024 geography. Origins: ACS 2024 5-year B03001 — labels verified against the Census Bureau's 2024 variable definitions, which reordered the South America block — tract level, apportioned to precincts by 2020 block-population weights (1,588 precincts). Adult-citizen shares: ACS 2024 B05003I on the same apportionment. Housing: ACS 2024 B25003I (tenure by Latino householder) and B25024 (units in structure) on the same apportionment; renter/owner pocket split at a 50% Latino renter share. Results: official precinct files (2024) and Clarity county-locality feeds pulled Nov 12, 2026 (2026; also seat detail). 2022 joined by precinct name within county — of the ≥30% set, 110 matched Harris, 106 Warnock, 104 the 2026 races, 71 Abrams (the 2022 Governor file omits Gwinnett) — never blended across geographies. Two restorations for this edition: Chatham County's precincts, which failed the original name-join entirely, were rebuilt from the SOS feed on precinct codes, and Grady County's Cairo 5th District was restored the same way; one large plurality precinct, Calhoun City (Gordon County), has no separately reported 2026 precinct result in the SOS feed and is excluded from its sets. District Latino shares: ACS 2024 B03002. One Stewart County precinct's 41.1% Latino share reflects detention-center group quarters, not a resident community. FCC sweep: broadcast orders filed Sept 1–Nov 2026 in swept markets, excluding Governor/U.S. Senate/federal House; cable fully swept in Atlanta only (outstate cable unexamined, not zero). Business data: named listings inventoried Nov 2026; a systematic OpenStreetMap/Overpass point-count failed on server capacity, so the business layer is an anchor inventory — indicative, not a census of stores. Colleges: IPEDS and institutional fact books as published. Turnout series: GA SOS voter history via GALEO's announcement and Fraga's analysis (Nov 11, 2026); the 2026 Latino ballot count is as of Nov 5 and may tick up.