



Political Maneuverings:

Analyzing Politicians' Responses to the Immigration Debate

In the 2014 Midterm Elections

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On November 20, 2014 President Obama announced his plans to issue an executive order on immigration policy before the nation. In his speech the President declared that the drastic measures were due to the Congressional gridlock over the issue of immigration. This decision was his response to the lack of Congressional action, stating “And to those members of Congress who question my authority to make our immigration system work better, or question the wisdom of me acting where Congress has failed, I have one answer: Pass a bill”.¹ Effectively, President Obama’s plan would give reprieve to the millions under threat of deportation and offer temporary legal status to some of the millions.² His decision comes after the Midterm Elections of 2014, where power in Congress has shifted to the Republican Party. At this announcement, Republicans immediately denounced the President’s plans. Speaker of the House, John Boehner called the executive action as comparable to the actions of a king.³ Republicans questioned the legality of the President’s action and framed it as exceeding his constitutional powers. This conflict is another example of the increasingly widening gap between the Republican and Democratic Parties.

The President’s recent statement shows the importance of the debate over immigration reform in American politics. Since 2001, concerns for security of the border and the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States have intensified the discussion on immigration policy. The general consensus among politicians and legislators is that the current system is broken and needs to be fixed. Politicians from both side of the aisle claim that reforming the

¹ President Obama’s speech on the executive action, White House,

² Ehrenfreund, Max. "The Washington Post." *washingtonpost.com*. Washington Post, 20 Nov. 2014. Web. 14 Dec. 2015.

³ Holland, Steven, and Roberta Rampton. "Obama Unveils U.S. Immigration Reform, Setting up Fight with Republicans." *Reuters* [Washington D.C] 21 Nov. 2014

immigration system and dealing with the large number of undocumented immigrants are actions that need to be taken. Yet they clearly disagree on how to accomplish this goal. A clear example of the contentiousness of immigration reform can be seen in the most recent attempt to overhaul the immigration system. The Senate Bill 744 was a bipartisan endeavor to introduce a compromise on the issue of border security and the creation of a path to citizenship. Though it passed the Senate, the bill was not considered in the House of Representative. The bill failed due to disputes between the Republican controlled House and the Democrat controlled Senate. President Obama's announcement for the use of executive order is another episode in the political drama concerning immigration. As one can see, the polarized climate of Congress has escalated the debate.

Policy concerning immigration is clearly another battleground for the Republican and Democratic Parties. Their stances on immigration, particularly the issue of whether to open a path to citizenship for the undocumented population and the level of security at the southern border, reflect an ideological battle between the two parties. It is also a method by which politicians signal their supporters. Furthermore, the question of immigration reform is increasingly becoming important to the public. According to a recent poll, most Americans believe that the issue of immigration is a pressing problem in the United States.⁴ A Pew Poll found that 75% of Americans believed that the immigration system needed major changes.⁵ The same poll also found that 73% of Americans want to have a method for undocumented immigrants to legally stay within the United States. Looking at various other polls, one can see that the concern over immigration is consistently ranked at the top of Americans' list of

⁴ Gallup Poll, 2014

⁵ Pew Research Poll, American Attitudes on Immigration, 2014

important issues. Polls put immigration in its top five national problems and priorities.⁶ Public opinion polls seem to suggest the rising importance of the immigration debate. This importance is clear to both parties and they are actively voicing their concerns and perspectives on the issue.

In the same way, the changing demographics of the United States have made the issue of immigration a hot topic for politicians. According to census data, by 2042 the United States will become a minority majority country. The New York Time states, “The census calculates that by 2042, Americans who identify themselves as Hispanic, black, Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander will together outnumber non-Hispanic whites. Four years ago, officials had projected the shift would come in 2050”.⁷ Hispanics make up about 25% of the minority population. This figure is expected to grow as much as 31% by 2060.⁸ The major changes in demographics are of obvious importance to the political establishment. Shift in population demographics translates directly to the electorate; the Hispanic population is on track to becoming a strong force in the electorate. Among Hispanics, the issue of immigration is by far the most important. Around 66% of registered Hispanic voters believe that passing new immigration laws is either extremely important or very important. Among Latino voters, 36% say that they would not vote for a candidate that disagrees with their stance on immigration reform.⁹ In this frame of mind, the growing electoral power of the Hispanic population in the United States is not to be ignored. It is little wonder that the debate over immigration has become such a focal point in American politics, since immigration reform is a strong factor in how the Hispanic electorate votes,

⁶ Polling Report, Most Important Problem Facing Country Poll, 2014

⁷ New York Times, Minority Majority Data, 2008

⁸ Pew Research Center, America is Changing, 2013

⁹ Pew Research Center, Hispanic Trends on Immigration Poll, 2014

This paper will look at how the immigration issue has affected the political maneuvering and positioning of candidates for congressional office. As examined above, immigration is an important part of the current American political climate. The conspicuousness of the immigration debate on the consciousness of the public and voters make it a crucial factor for politicians aspiring to gain congressional seats. In addition, the growing Latino electorate and its characteristic emphasis on immigration reform makes the issue a point to be addressed by both sides. One can come to better understand the mechanics and strategies of American elections and campaigns by using this single issue as a set of lenses.

In this paper I will attempt to unravel politician's strategic behavior in campaigns. How do politicians respond to important policy debates? What influences their positions on these issues? Using the recent 2014 Midterm Elections as a natural laboratory for an observational study, I will attempt to see what causes the issue of immigration to become salient in a politician's campaign and how politicians choose to position themselves. I will also analyze the electoral outcomes of their positioning, primarily whether the candidate won or not. In doing so, I hope to add to the literature on strategic politicians and the dynamics of congressional campaigns. The goal of the paper is to see whether there is a causal relationship between the factors of each candidate's constituency and the candidate's position on immigration. The paper will hope to show that candidates in the 2014 Midterm Elections are accommodating to the local ideology and are contextualizing their position on immigration reform, rather than simply toeing the party line or platform. This research is aimed at filling in the gaps within the literature by adding an additional dataset on the immigration stances of candidates in the 2014 Midterm elections and contributing to the discussion on strategic political behavior. Through this, the

paper may shed light on the nature of future campaign strategies by looking at the electoral success of various positioning tactics, contextualized within each district.

Part I. Literature Review:

The literature review of this project will be divided into historical and political considerations. It is important to first understand the processes and events that have built up the current immigration debate. In order to evaluate the responses of politicians, one must come to be familiar with the important discourse in the immigration history of the United States. For one it will give a baseline understanding of how the debate evolved over time as well as allow for a deeper look at the different perspective of the issue. In this way, it will be easier to follow politicians' line of reasoning for how the position themselves. The history will act as a framework for the research. The second part of the literature review will deal with the politics of congressional elections and candidate positioning. It will look at the work that has been done by scholars in the realm of political behavior and maneuvering. The two different points within the literature review will compliment and give a comprehensive introduction to the goals of this paper.

Debate over unauthorized immigration and the presence of undocumented immigrants in the United States have been a hot political issue for many years. Only recently has the debate become so heated and divisive. The recent recession has been largely the reason for the intensification of the debate, leading to many policies like mass deportations and stringent border security to be enacted. Professor David Gutierrez takes a broad look at the development of the current debate. Gutierrez focuses primarily at the main controversy of the immigration debate—that is the conflict between supporters of strict border enforcement and limited immigration, and supporters of open immigration and toleration of foreign presence. In particular, Gutierrez argues

that the economic need of the country for immigrant labor plays an important part in the debate. What it boils down to, as Gutierrez examines, is a battle between ideological nativists and the economic interests. Citing this as the main factor in the debate, Gutierrez points out that the “vexed questions of border enforcement and the presence of unlawful residents will continue as two of the most divisive issues in modern US politics” (Gutierrez, 3). Gutierrez paints a powerful picture of what the current debate involves by using a historical perspective. He points out the patterns of the immigration issue over a long period of time. What is important about this work to this paper is his framing of the debate. Indeed from my cursory examination of the dialogue of politicians concerning immigration, the main interests are either economical or ideological. Furthermore the issue historically and currently boils down to questions concerning border security and dealing with the undocumented population.

In delving deeper into the development of immigration policy, it is important to ground our understanding in the context of global migration. The current immigration peaks we experience today are historically part of a global migration trend. As Adam McKeown argues, our narrow focus on the recent migrations or more generally on Atlantic migration patterns (Western oriented migration), obscures the overall story of human movement. McKeown cites statistics and historical documentation of migrations in Asia and Africa to support his claim that migrations in other parts of the world were just as “comparable in size and timing” (McKeown, 160). In this sense, the current phenomenon of immigration to the United States is a part of a global system of migrations, shaped by similar forces of economic push and pull factors in the emerging capitalist world economy. This perspective is supported by June Mei’s work on the immigration patterns of Chinese workers to California. Mei’s work attempts to answer the questions of what class of Chinese people tend to move to the United States and for what reason.

Mei finds that the main classes of Chinese to go abroad were merchants and laborers. Due to the deterioration of the Chinese economy, because of civil unrest and Western imperialism, these two classes of people found themselves in a dire situation. Thus, these factors pushed them to seek their fortunes abroad though in different methods (Mei, 471). The literature suggests that the American immigration is not in any way exceptional or novel, but instead still involve social forces—industrialization, capitalism, and imperialism—that is just as important as it was in the past.

How has immigration policy changed over time? The literature points to various periods in American history in which major policy changes on immigration were shaped. Ronald Schultz's piece on naturalization gives a snapshot on how policy has changed. Schultz starts at the founding of the nation, around 1790, to help illustrate the dramatic shift in immigration policy. During the early period of American history, naturalization or the attainment of citizenship by a foreign born person was very easy. As long as persons fit the notion of what at that time was considered American (free white males) then they were eligible for citizenship. The lax naturalization procedure, as Shultz argues, was due to an effort by the United States to create a people who could expand and cultivate the frontiers of the new nation (Shultz, 155). In this instance, land and allegiance went hand in hand. Loyalty to the nation, as it was believed, came with the tilling and working of the land. This ease in procedure changed during the early twentieth century as the frontier closed and an influx of immigrants came in search of urban, industrial jobs. Schultz suggests that this large movement along with the disconnect with earlier notions of citizenship, one that was tied to the land, produced a new system of strict naturalization procedures that emphasized assimilation and civic education. Schultz provides the initial structure of the beginning stages of exclusionism and restriction. Other researchers such as

Erika Lee and Mae Ngai continue this strain of explanation by looking specifically at the exclusion movements in the United States. In all they suggest that a movement to control immigration and immigrants resulted from social tensions created by the dramatic population shift (Lee, 560). This gives insight on the current impulse to control immigration, which is a major force in the current debate. Moreover, it gives a historical context for the origins of the contemporary debate.

The historical literature gives a baseline understanding of the immigration issue in the United States. One can see that the evolution of the immigration debate as being artificially inflated or that the issue of immigration has been made to look more drastic than it really is. The movement or migration of people has naturally occurred throughout the history of the country. Only when attempts at controlling and defining who can and cannot enter do we start to see the preponderance of undocumented entry. This current body of work suggests that the contemporary immigration debate is the results of unintended policy choices, influenced by rising rhetoric and exclusionary attitude. In framing our study of congressional campaigns, it is important to view the immigration issue as a politically created phenomenon. Though various aspects of the history of the issue are examined, there is little work on understanding politicians as actors and strategic players. The historical literature tends to look at individual laws and the immigrant groups. My study hopes to contribute in filling in this gap by studying the strategic behavior of politicians in response to the immigration issue.

Political scientists have often noted and agreed that politicians are rational actors in that they make decisions based on information and strategic logic. They first work to identify a certain goal and then use available information to reach it. In the case of politicians, their primary goal is to get re-elected and so, in order to do that, they must act to satisfy their electors.

William Poundstone in his book *Gaming the Vote* analyzes the logic of politics and draws a connection between game theory and the actions of politicians (Poundstone, 1-58). Applying fundamental posits of game theory to real life cases, Poundstone illustrates the many different strategies and maneuvers that politicians take on in order to appeal to voters. He concludes that American politics and democracy, as a whole, is fundamentally a “game”. Taking this idea further, Dan Nimmo suggests that political campaigns are an expression of this game theory approach to elections. Looking at data across the years, political scientists like Nimmo have found that campaigns do very little to influence voting choices. Evidence suggests that the principal factor in determining votes is party loyalty, or whether the voter identifies as a Democrat or Republican. This identification predicts their votes consistently.

Yet Nimmo argues that this does not mean we ought to ignore the role of campaigns in political competition. Campaigns serve very important roles, particularly in convincing undecided voters, retaining and mobilizing its party base, and getting the nomination (Nimmo, 33-63). The complexities of running a campaign and the rise of technology have made political campaigning more important than ever. As Gary Jacobson notes, the way congressional campaigns are shaped and formed plays a pivotal role in Congressional elections. Looking at campaign money, organization, and message, Jacobson pieces together a clear image of how campaigns work to win elections and what campaigns think about in order to reach their goal of winning a plurality of the votes. The literature behind the politics of elections offers us a background into the strategic thinking of politicians.

In response to the ideas of strategic politicians and the influence of localized responsiveness of candidates, there is work that suggests candidates predominantly espouse national party ideology. In other words, the strategic maneuvering of ideological responses is

minor compared to the influence of the national party line. The policy views of the national party dominate even when candidates try to balance them with policy views of the local constituency. Professors Stephen Ansolabehere, James Snyder, and Charles Stewart III give evidence to this idea by looking at the ideological positioning of House candidates from 1874 to 1996. In their study, they found that throughout this period congressional candidates have espoused ideology that is associated with their national party. They found that there was little moderating or accommodations to fit the ideological stance of the constituency. According to the Median Voter Theorem, if there was a clear responsiveness to the constituency then both candidates ought to converge towards the center. In their work, there was evidence that “competing candidates in congressional elections almost never converge” (Ansolabehere et al., 163). Instead they suggest a more nuanced view of congressional competition where candidates respond to “sub constituencies”, like the primary electorate. Responsiveness in this sense is primarily laid in line with the overall party policy positions. Ansolabehere et al.’s analysis offers the idea that district-to-district pressures influence the ideological positioning of candidates, but that it is minor. Candidates are more likely to stick with their national party’s positions.

Similarly, Professor Barry Burden notes that candidates diverge from the center and move to their party lines during congressional elections. His theory suggests that three factors can explain why there is a divergence: importance of ideology in the primary election, cost of ideological movement to the candidate’s reputation, and lack of competition. Using mail survey data, Burden found that polarization and adherence to party ideology was variable and could be explained by these three factors (Burden, 216). His data suggests that candidates with firm reputations, facing weak competition in the general election, and fierce competition in the primary are more likely to stick to party lines. In all, the ideological positioning of the candidate

has a clear effect on their vote share. Burden's work takes into account local factors and conditions of the elections. From this view, one can see that politicians are actively positioning themselves in response to election factors. The shift in ideology towards polar opposites is a strategic response. This work offers support to Ansolabehere et al.'s work on the importance of primaries, although it attributes it to localized conditions.

My work hopes to continue the discussion of responsiveness and positioning by contextualizing it in a single policy issue. I want to see if certain policies, like immigration reform, are exempt from the trends and characteristics that these authors describe. Overall I hope to contribute another view to the debate, that due to significant changes in the nature of American politics in recent years, the need for localized responsiveness among candidates has become more important. I hope to suggest that politicians strategically change and move away from the party line in certain conditions, primarily demographic and ideological context of the constituencies.

Part II. Research Design

My research is focused on understanding politician's responses and political maneuverings on the issue of immigration reform. In this aspect, I am interested in when and why politicians bring up the issue of immigration in their campaigns. What do they say and how do they position themselves? Furthermore, I want to understand the electoral impacts of their decisions, namely their share of the vote. Utilizing the 2014 Midterm Elections as a natural laboratory for my research, I intend on leveraging the congressional campaigns in order to answer my questions. The elections give me the opportunity of conducting an observational study, in particular a comparison of congressional campaigns across the nation. This study would take into consideration the various differences in congressional district while comparing the range of positions politicians take on immigration reform. In the same way, one can isolate various variables in order to confidently assess whether there is a causal relationship between the respective independent and dependent variables of each question.

This paper will be using an original data set collected during the period before the 2014 Midterm Election Day. It contains roughly 898 entries for all congressional candidates in 50 states and the verbatim message of candidates' stances on immigration policy. The data are compiled from the official campaign websites of all candidates. The top two candidates within each district are recorded, except in cases where there is an open seat. In that case, all candidates are recorded where possible. Those candidates who do not have a website are noted in the data. Each website was manually visited and the expressed policy position of the candidate was copied in its original form. The data set also records whether the candidates mention the issue of immigration or not. Unfortunately due to time constraints, I will not be able to collect other

sources of candidates' position on immigration such as social media quotes or campaign speeches. In conjunction with this dataset, I will be using demographics data for all congressional districts compiled by Dr. Gary Jacobson. These two datasets will allow me to concretely assess the relationships between political behavior and immigration reform.

Conceptualization and Operationalization:

My research will be focused on answering four questions that will allow me to understand the nature of political behavior in campaigns. By using a single policy issue, in this case immigration reform, I will be able to see how politicians respond and maneuver. The questions I plan on answering in this research paper is as follows:

1. When does the issue of immigration become salient or important in a congressional campaign?
2. How does the politician position himself or herself on the issue? What factors possibly influenced the positions they take?
3. Did their positioning matter? What are the electoral impacts of their immigration position on the results of the election?

The issue of immigration reform is very nuanced and involves various aspects of policy. When one talks of immigration policy, there are many different aspects that are often times not expressed but nevertheless form important parts of American immigration policy. Along with controversial parts, such as border security and undocumented immigration, there are issues concerning high-skill immigration and worker programs. For the purpose of this research paper, I will focus exclusively on the issues that are predominantly mentioned in the statements of the candidates, particularly border security, legalization of undocumented immigrants, enforcement

policy, and entitlements. I focus on these four parts of the immigration debate in order to reflect the current discourse on immigration policy. In other words, politicians focus primarily on these issues.

Conceptually:

Saliency of the issue of Immigration Reform is defined as the whether congressional candidates mention their position on immigration in their official candidate websites. (How prominently do the mention it, whether it is in the first paragraph or not etc.)

Political positioning in relation to Immigration Reform is defined as the extent to which candidates support immigration reform.

Electoral impact of positioning is defined as whether the congressional candidates won or not.

Operationally:

The operational definition of saliency of the issue of immigration is defined as whether the individual official campaign website of congressional candidates across the nation explicitly mention immigration as one of their policy positions. If there is a mention of immigration on the candidate's website, then immigration is considered salient or important. This paper will not consider different levels of saliency. It will operate on the basic level of whether immigration is mentioned in the election.

Operationally, the political positioning of candidates on the issue of immigration reform is expressed as their level of support for immigration reform. This can be empirically measured by analyzing their stated positions on immigration reform. The data is collected from each candidate's website and recorded verbatim. Each candidate is then coded along a scale from most liberal to most conservative, based on what they state.

Electoral impact of political positioning can be empirically measured as whether the candidates lose or win their election. This measure in conjunction with the measure for political positioning on immigration reform can allow us to see whether taking a hardline on immigration will be beneficial or not and vice versa.

In addition to these various measures, I will be using descriptive data of each district in order to see what factors would result in the saliency of immigration in a campaign. Demographic factors such as race can give me an idea to why immigration became an important issue for candidates. Other factors such as ideological leaning and geographic location of the district can also point to an explanation.

Error:

In terms of systematic error, I will be trying to limit its preponderance by standardizing my data collection and coding scheme. The policy position for each candidate is copied verbatim without any adjustments. Positions are recorded when the candidate mentions the words “immigration” or variants of it, “illegal”, “border”, “security”, “comprehensive immigration reform”, “path to citizenship”, and similar words and phrases (mention the direction and emphasis, see Appendix for coding scheme). It is possible that their platform statement on their website does not completely reflect their actual positions. It does; however, give us a reliable look at how they position themselves. It would be even more reliable and diminish the chance of error if we have other sources of immigration positioning, but for the scope of this study I am limited to only the state positions on campaign websites. Coding of their positions is based on a standard set of rules and is evaluated for inter-coder reliability and construct validity. I randomly assigned 10 statements to two independent coders who coded and calculated the statement scores by relying on the index and coding guideline. The statement scores of the independent coders are

compared and assessed, showing that all the scores are almost perfectly correlated. In addition, I attempted to establish construct validity by comparing my statement scores of immigration positions with similar published scoring methods. Unfortunately, there is no dataset that has measured the immigration positions of candidates from the 2014 midterm elections. Instead I relied on the scoring cards from an immigration advocacy organization for sitting members of congress. The 2014 National Immigration Score Card (NISC) served as the standard¹⁰. It measures the voting history of incumbent candidates. A high score means that the candidate voted in accordance with liberal immigrant rights groups. After measuring my coding system against the NISC, I found that my statement scores were highly correlated with the NISC (correlation of about 0.6). This was an imperfect way for me to show construct validity, but overall there's evidence that my coding scheme is not arbitrary or random.

Part III. Hypotheses

Set A:

Based on my questions, I have a set of hypotheses that will help me understand the topic better. These hypotheses are crafted to explain the possible answers to my questions in such a way that can be tested with empirical data. My research will test the following hypotheses to help answer when the issue of immigration becomes salient in an election:

H1A: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates for the 2014 midterm elections, the issue of immigration becomes salient in a candidate's campaign when they are campaigning in districts with a large population of Latinos.

¹⁰ 2014 National Immigration Score Card (NISC)
http://www.immigrationscores.com/uploads/3/2/0/9/32095163/vote_key_english.pdf

H2A: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates for the 2014 midterm election, the issue of immigration becomes salient in candidate's campaign when they are campaigning in districts that are conservative.

Set B:

I will test the following hypotheses to determine how politicians position themselves on immigration reform:

H1B: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates, candidates are more likely to express a less conservative statement on immigration in districts that are highly liberal.

H2B: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates, candidates are more likely to express a less conservative statement on immigration in districts that have a high population of Latinos.

H3B: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates, candidates are more likely to express a more conservative statement on immigration in districts that are near the southern border.

Set C:

I will test the following hypotheses to determine the relationship between candidate's political positioning on immigration policy and the electoral impact of that decision:

H1C: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional elections, candidates who take a hardline stance are more likely to lose in districts that are more liberal.

H2C: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional elections, candidates who take a hardline stance are more likely to lose in districts that have high population of Latinos.

These hypotheses are indicated in order to test the causal relationship between the localized factors of the candidate's district and the candidate's stated positioning on immigration

and the outcome of their position strategy. Using regular regression and other statistical methods, I will attempt to see whether demographics and ideological/geographical spatiality of the constituency has an affect on whether the immigration issue is mentioned in the candidate's campaign. In the same way, I will attempt to see if they also have an influence on the direction and magnitude in sentiment/rhetoric of the candidate's stated position on the immigration issue while controlling for incumbents and party. The last set of hypotheses is aimed towards determining if there is a link between the local factors of the constituency and the ability of the candidate to win if he or she takes a hardline position on immigration. I suggest that electoral performance of a hardline position is influenced by the various demographic variables of the constituency. The overall causal story I hope to find is that candidates take into account the local conditions of their electorate and strategically place themselves in alignment with these factors when it comes to intense, hot button issues like immigration reform. The makeup of the candidate's electorate will have an influence on whether the issue is brought up and also possibly indicate the position he or she takes.

Part IV. Coding Scheme:

The collected statement on immigration for candidates in the 2014 midterm elections were initially read in order to identify the prevalent immigration themes being discussed by candidates during the campaign. This initial coding allows for a preliminary assessment of the data and helped to shape the overall coding scheme. In this first phase of coding, the coder sifts through raw data to identify the leading assertions of the statements. The categories and coding guidelines presented in the Appendix are a result of this initial cycle. Each statement collected from the candidates of the 2014 midterm elections presents the respective candidate's position on one or more of the following categories: 1) security concerns, 2) legalization of undocumented,

3) enforcement policies, and 4) entitlements. These four issues are the most prominent aspects of the immigration debate during the 2014 midterm elections.

The second cycle of coding assigns value points to each statement in order to identify the strength in the sentiment that is communicated by the candidate. Each statement is assigned a value along a scale of -1 to 1, with -1 being strongly liberal to 1 being strongly conservative. The definition and description of what it means to be strongly conservative or strongly liberal is defined in the coding scheme (see Appendix). These descriptions are used to guide the coders in their assessment of the statement. For example, if the statement mentions being “opposed to giving amnesty to illegals”, then it can be determined that the statement falls under the category of “legalization” in the coding scheme. To determine the strength of the sentiment, one must look at the use of language in the statement. According to the coding scheme, a candidate is conservative if he or she opposes legalization. This automatically places the statement’s score somewhere to the right of 0 in the scoring scale. The use of words such as “illegal” and “amnesty” also shows that the score of the statement is going to be further to the right of 0. Statements that use qualifiers or intensifiers in their language further guides the score assigned to the statement. A statement that says, “ I oppose amnesty” is not as strong in sentiment as one that says, “I *absolutely* oppose amnesty”. Though both are conservative statements, the second statement communicates a more assertive sentiment. In addition, there may be multiple categories mentioned in a statement. A candidate may touch upon more than one issue in his immigration platform. In this instance, a score is assigned to each category that was mentioned in the statement. The score of 0 is assigned to the category that was not mentioned. In general, the coder assigns a value I_n along the spectrum to each category, based on these guidelines I_n is the score given to the sentiment of that particular category. To illustrate, a candidate may be lenient

or open to legalization but tough on border security. In such a case, the candidate's category score for legalization would be less than 0, while his or her score on border security would be greater than 0. If the statement does not mention one of the categories, then the statement is assigned a 0 for that category. The overall statement score takes into account the different positions a candidate may take on an issue in immigration.

Each category will also be assigned a value x_n in order to reflect its importance relative to the other categories. From the initial exploratory coding of the data, it was found that the issue of security was the most mentioned topic during the 2014 Midterm Elections. The second most important issue pertained to legalization, followed by enforcement policies, and finally access to public goods or entitlement issues. In order to accurately highlight the hierarchy in importance or popularity, it is necessary to assigned values to each category. The overall statement score takes into account this weight, which allows it to better reflect the general attitude of immigration policy in the elections.

The statement score, indicating the direction and magnitude of sentiment will be calculated from the coding scheme. It is a simplistic approach in which the value assigned for each category will be summed. The strength of sentiment, I_n , is multiplied to the value of importance of the issue or category, x_n . Each statement will receive a score by summing the product from each of the category. The score of each statement can be expressed as:

$$\text{Statement Score } (S_n) = (x_1I_1 + x_2I_2 + x_3I_3 \dots x_nI_n) \text{ or } \sum x_nI_n$$

In other words, the statement score is a summation of the candidates' positions on the main issues of immigration during the elections. It serves to quantify the candidates' position on immigration that is communicated to voters during the elections. To illustrate the coding scheme,

examine the following statement collected during the 2014 midterm elections from incumbent candidate Kenneth Calvert of California, District 42:

“As most Americans know, our immigration policies are broken. The worst step we can take is to grant amnesty to people who entered our country illegally. I oppose amnesty because it sends a horrible message to those who entered our country legally and to those thinking about immigrating to America in the future.

I believe the best policy for addressing our illegal immigration problems is for Congress to make the E-Verify employment verification system, a program I created in 1996, mandatory for all employers. That is why I introduced H.R. 19, which would make E-Verify mandatory nationwide. In the middle of the worst economy most of us have ever seen, it is outrageous that Americans looking for work have to compete with illegal immigrants for jobs. By making E-Verify mandatory, Congress can turn off the job magnet that keeps illegal immigrants in our country.”

Calvert’s statement focuses on two issues of immigration in this statement, legalization and enforcement policy. In the statement he expresses his opposition to legalization, even to label it as the “worst step” the government can take to fix the system. Similarly, Calvert states his adherence to strict enforcement programs like E-Verify. He suggests that a nationwide implementation of the program will prevent “illegal immigrants” from stealing jobs from Americans. He makes no mention of border security or entitlements for undocumented immigrants. At a cursory glance, one can see that Calvert’s statement is generally very conservative. The sentiment that he conveys is a strong opposition to legalization and strong support for strict enforcement. Using our coding scheme and guide, incumbent candidate Kenneth Calvert is assigned the following scores:

Border Security	Legalization	Enforcement	Entitlements	<u>Overall Statement Score</u>
0	0.6	0.6	0	0.3

The overall statement score, as shown above, is computed with the following equation:

$$\text{Statement Score } (S_n) = (x_1I_1 + x_2I_2 + x_3I_3 \dots x_nI_n) \text{ or } \sum x_nI_n$$

$$(S_1) = (0.4(0) + 0.3(0.6) + 0.2(0.6) + 0.1(0))$$

It is important to note that there is a possibility of systematic error within the coding scheme. The assignment of values and scores to each statement hinges on the interpretation of the coder. In other words, the coder judges the statement of the candidate along a rubric in order to give it a value. Though the coding scheme follows a strict guideline of when and how to assign certain values, there is still a room for error within the coding. In order to limit the chances of systematic error, another person can code the collected data using the same guidelines that was used by the original coder. The two sets of coding can be compared to each other and analyzed to see whether the coding scheme is more or less the same. In this way, the coding scheme can be tested for reliability (Fryberg et al., 102). In this paper, instead of having another coder code the entire dataset, two independent coders coded ten randomly selected statements. The statements were compared and tested for reliability. Overall, the comparison of the scores in the dataset and the two sample independent scores align very closely.

Part V. Data Analysis:

The data used in this paper is a collection of the immigration statements used by candidates on their campaign websites during the 2014 midterm elections. It is obvious that the Republican Party had a big win in the 2014 midterm elections. The data reveal that Republicans won 247 seats while the Democrats took 188 seats. Unsurprisingly, incumbent candidates won 86% of the seats. The data contain the following measurements:

Party Identification	1 = Republican, 0 = Democrat
Incumbent (whether the candidate is an incumbent or not)	1 = incumbent, 0 = not incumbent
Mention (whether the candidate mentioned immigration reform on their campaign website)	1 = mentioned, 0 = no mention
Contested (whether the election was contested)	1 = contested, 0 = not contested
Open Seat (whether it was an open election, i.e. no incumbent)	1 = open seat, 0 = no open seat
Statement Score (statescore, the assigned sentiment score of the statement)	-1 to 1, with -1 being most liberal and 1 being most conservative
Demographic (population percentages of the congressional district)	Population percent of each district for Whites, Latinos, Blacks, Asian, Native American etc.
Win (whether the candidate won or not)	Win = 1, 0 = Lost
Ideology (measurement of how liberal or conservative the district is)	Percent Obama vote in 2012 (higher the percent = more liberal)

Hypothesis Set A:

Question 1: When does the issue of immigration become salient or important in an election?

The data show that out of about 898 candidates in the 2014 midterm elections, about 45% of the candidates mentioned their position on immigration in their campaigns. On the other hand, about 55% did not acknowledge the issue of immigration. One can see that the issue of immigration is an important issue. A significant percent of the candidates felt that it was necessary to mention or at least acknowledge immigration in their campaigns. Yet it is important to note that more than half of the candidates did not venture to include immigration in their campaign elections. Why is this the case? The first set of hypotheses is an attempt to answer when the issue of immigration becomes salient in the candidates' campaigns. Overall, about 54% of Republican candidates mentioned immigration opposed to only about 37% Democrat candidates. The issue of immigration seems to be an important part of the Republican platform. Furthermore, about 60% of candidates from border state districts mention immigration during their campaigns compared to only 41% of candidates from non-border state districts. Similarly, in congressional districts where the Latino population makes up 25% or more of the population candidates mention immigration about 60% of the time. Immigration is only mentioned about 41% of the time in congressional districts that have a Latino population less than 25%. In general, incumbent candidates are more likely to mention immigration than non-incumbent candidates. These descriptive statistics reveal that certain characteristics of an election will lead to the issue of immigration being mentioned. The data suggests that party identification, district demographics, district geography, and political experience may influence whether a candidate will mention the issue of immigration in their campaign. As stated before, this paper will attempt

to tease out the variables that will predict if a candidate will mention immigration by testing the following hypotheses:

H1A: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates for the 2014 midterm elections, the issue of immigration becomes salient in a candidate's campaign when they are campaigning in districts with a large population of Latinos.

H2A: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates for the 2014 midterm election, the issue of immigration becomes salient in candidate's campaign when they are campaigning in districts that are conservative.

The hypotheses are tested by a logistic regression model, in which the dependent variable is whether the issue of immigration is mentioned. Since the dependent variable is binary (0 = no mention, 1 = mentioned), a logistic regression is the best method for evaluating the causal relationship. My hypotheses can be expressed in the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Logged odds (Mention)} \\ = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Latino}) + \beta_2(\text{Obama}) + \beta_3(\text{Contested}) + \beta_4(\text{Bordersate}) \\ + \beta_5(\text{Republican}) + \beta_6(\text{Incumbent}) \end{aligned}$$

The data show that the percentage of the Latino population, the percentage of Obama vote in the district during 2012, and whether the candidate is Republican are statistically significant. The *Latino* variable has a positive coefficient, meaning that the higher the percent Latino in the district, the higher the logit for the issue of immigration being mentioned by the candidate (see Table 1). Similarly, the *republican* variable also shows a positive coefficient. If a candidate is a Republican, he or she is more likely to mention immigration reform. Interestingly the data shows that the *obama* variable or percent Obama vote for 2012 has a negative coefficient; that is, a candidate in a more liberal district is less likely to mention immigration reform. The variable

borderstate seems to be statistically significant only at the p-value of 0.1 with a positive coefficient. A candidate in a border state district is somewhat more likely to mention immigration reform. Yet since it is not at the same level of significance as the other variables, one must be careful in drawing conclusions. On the hand, it seems that there is no statistically significant evidence that incumbency or whether the election is contested or not has an effect on the chances of immigration reform becoming salient in the elections. Aside from the direction of the dependent variable caused by the independent variables, it is difficult to interpret the regression coefficients of a logistic regression

Table 1: Logistic Regression of Set A

VARIABLES	(1) logit coeff	In a logistic regression model, the coefficients of the independent variables are expressed in terms of the
Latino	0.0159*** (0.00539)	logged odds of the dependent variable. That is to say, the regression coefficient in a logistic model will estimate the change in the logged odds for each unit change in the independent variables. There's no intuitive interpretation for logged odds. To better understand the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, one must translate the logistic regression results into a more intuitive explanation. One of the methods to interpret the logistic coefficient is to compute the marginal effects of the
Obama	-0.0108** (0.00455)	
Incumbent	0.187 (0.143)	
Republican	0.771*** (0.142)	
Contested	0.771 (0.507)	
Borderstate	0.410* (0.220)	
Constant	-1.204** (0.566)	
Observations	898	

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

model. Running the marginal effects of each significant predictor variable will give us a better interpretation of the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

In essence, the marginal effect of a predictor measures the effect of a unit change in the predictor on the probability of the dependent variable occurring, given that all other predictor variables are held at their means.

This interpretation gives a more intuitive and nuanced understanding of the model. Our model shows that the marginal effects of the variable *Latino* as:

```
Average marginal effects          Number of obs =      898
Model VCE      : OIM

Expression   : Pr(mention), predict()
dy/dx w.r.t. : Latino
```

	Delta-method				
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
Latino	.0036251	.0012077	3.00	0.003	.0012581 .0059922

It can be interpreted that if all other independent variables in the model are set at their mean values, a one percent increase in the population of Latinos corresponds to about a 0.4% probability increase of immigration being mentioned by the candidate. The data show that although a large population of Latinos would affect the probability of immigration being mentioned, it is a small percent increase. In the same way, the marginal effects of *Obama* variable produce an output of the following:

```
Average marginal effects          Number of obs =      898
Model VCE      : OIM

Expression   : Pr(mention), predict()
dy/dx w.r.t. : obama
```

	Delta-method				
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
obama	-.0024668	.001026	-2.40	0.016	-.0044777 -.0004558

district is low compared to the effect of whether the candidate is Republican or not. Similarly, my hypothesis that the issue of immigration is more likely to be mentioned in state districts that are conservative is supported by the data. The percent Obama vote in 2012 for each district acts as a proxy to ideology. It is assumed that the higher the percent Obama vote, the more liberal the district. In districts that are more liberal, immigration is less likely to be mentioned. The strength of this negative relationship is also weak: a one percent increase in the percent Obama vote only leads to a .02% decrease in the probability of immigration being mentioned, if all other independent variables are held constant at their means. The role of ideology seems to play an important part in whether politicians mention immigration or not. Further evidence for this can be seen in the variable *Republican*. According to the data there is an 18% increase in probability of immigration being mentioned if the candidate is a Republican. This points to immigration as being a strong platform in the Republican campaigns and, interestingly, a subject to be avoided in a Democratic campaign.

In districts with a substantial population of Latinos, candidates are inclined to mention immigration. This intuitively makes sense because immigration has historically been an important political issue for Latinos. The geographic location of the district seems to also have an effect, but not as significant as the other independent variables. Overall, the data show that candidates make a conscious decision to mention immigration depending on the demographic make up of the district and its ideological leanings. It must be noted that a candidate who is Republican is more likely to mention immigration. This suggests that party affiliation in conjunction with ideology may also influence the saliency of the immigration debate. Perhaps Republican candidates believe that expressing their position on immigration is a strategically

rewarding move. Indeed, Republican effort in Congress to influence immigration policy is one of the more politically acknowledged actions.

Analysis by Party:

According to our models, party seems to be a strong influence on whether immigration is mentioned in the campaign. Compared to the other variables in our model, *Republican* (whether the candidate is a Republican or not) is the strongest predictor. Perhaps party identification dictates behavior in a certain way. The following table shows the model separated by party (Democrat and Republican).

Table 2 Logistic Regressions by Party Identification (Set A)

VARIABLES	(1) Republican	(2) Democrat
Latino	0.00592 (0.00848)	0.0219*** (0.00828)
Obama	-0.0236*** (0.00770)	-0.000242 (0.00664)
Contested	0.691 (0.596)	0.835 (0.792)
Borderstate	0.482 (0.322)	0.311 (0.302)
Incumbent	-0.0310 (0.231)	-0.0221 (0.230)
Constant	0.515 (0.748)	-1.816** (0.858)
Observations	416	482

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

As one can see from the table, the saliency of whether immigration is mentioned in a campaign changes by party. For Republicans, the data suggest that the most significant predictor of immigration being mentioned is the local ideology of the district. In more liberal districts,

Republicans seem to mention immigration less, but the effect is still weak. If we set all other independent variables at their means, a one percent increase in the percent Obama vote would lead to a 0.5% probability decrease in the candidate mentioning immigration. On the other hand, the most significant variable for the Democrat's model is the percent of Latinos. The data suggest that Democrats are more likely to mention immigration reform in districts with a higher population of Latinos. This effect is also weak, where a one percent increase in the Latino population would correspond to a 0.47% increase in immigration being mentioned assuming that all other independent variables are held at the means.

If we look at party identification separately, one can see that the local ideological leanings and the population of Latinos continue to be a significant predictor of whether or not immigration is mentioned. Similar to the overall model (Table 1), the effects of the Latino and Obama variables are very weak. The main difference is that in the Republican model, the ideological leaning (percent Obama vote) of the district was the only significant variable. Conversely, the percent Latino population (Latino) was the only significant variable in the Democrat model. Republicans tend to not mention immigration in more liberal districts. Since Republicans tend to espouse more conservative rhetoric on immigration, it makes sense that they would avoid making such statements in liberal districts. It is better to leave the position unsaid. Similarly the Democrats' platform on immigration is more liberal and inclusive, making them more appealing to Latinos. Mentioning immigration in this case would be beneficial for Democrats. Interestingly, the data suggest that the Latino population would not have a significant affect on the chances of Republican candidates mentioning immigration. The data also suggest that the ideological leaning of the district or how liberal the district, did not significantly affect whether Democrats mention immigration. This seems counterintuitive since one would expect

Democrats to tout their positions in more liberal districts and Republicans to rein in their conservative statements in districts with large Latino populations. Still, one can see that the localized conditions of the election have some sway on the saliency of immigration reform in a candidate's campaign regardless of party identification. The only major difference is that the candidate's party identification seems to influence which district characteristic has the most significant effect. Candidates from both parties take into account some local conditions in their strategies, but not all.

Hypothesis Set B:

Question 2: How does the politician position himself or herself on the issue? What factors possibly influenced the positions they take?

The statement score of each candidate, as stated in the research design, measures the candidate's sentiment expressed through his or her statement on immigration. The score is computed through careful reading of the statement and ranges from -1 to 1, with -1 being most liberal, 0 being neutral, and 1 being most conservative. Overall, about 57% of candidates express a neutral position on the issue of immigration by either using neutral language or not mentioning the issue at all in their campaign website. The distribution of the statement score is seen in Figure 1. The distribution of the statement scores is positively skewed. The data show that skewness for the distribution is at 1.09 and a kurtosis of 3.85, meaning that the distribution is skewed positive and too peaked in the middle (the tails of the distribution are too thin).

If we only look at the distribution of the statement scores of candidates who mentioned immigration, we can see that the scores are skewed negatively (see Figure 3). In the first model, the causal relationship between the statement scores and the independent variables are being assessed through a robust regression estimate, where the standard errors do not assume

normality. It allows a bit more certainty in the model. This is done, since our dependent variable might have a problem with heteroskedsticity. Our tests seem to show that the errors of our model were not evenly distributed away from zero, meaning that we are making more mistakes in the regression for people with statement scores above zero than with those below zero. This is a problem since the standard linear model assumes that we make the same amount of errors across all observations of the dependent variable. Running a robust regression will rid the assumption that the errors are evenly distributed across the observations of the independent variable.

According to our tests for heteroskedsticity, once we drop observations that *do not mention* immigration, the distribution seems to not run into this problem. Since this is the case, the second model consisting of all those that did mention immigration relies on a standard linear regression.

The following hypotheses will be tested in order to understand what factors affect the positioning of politicians:

H1B: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates, candidates are more likely to express a less conservative statement on immigration in districts that are highly liberal.

H2B: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates, candidates are more likely to express a less conservative statement on immigration in districts that have a high population of Latinos.

H3B: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional candidates, candidates are more likely to express a more conservative statement on immigration in districts that are near the southern border.

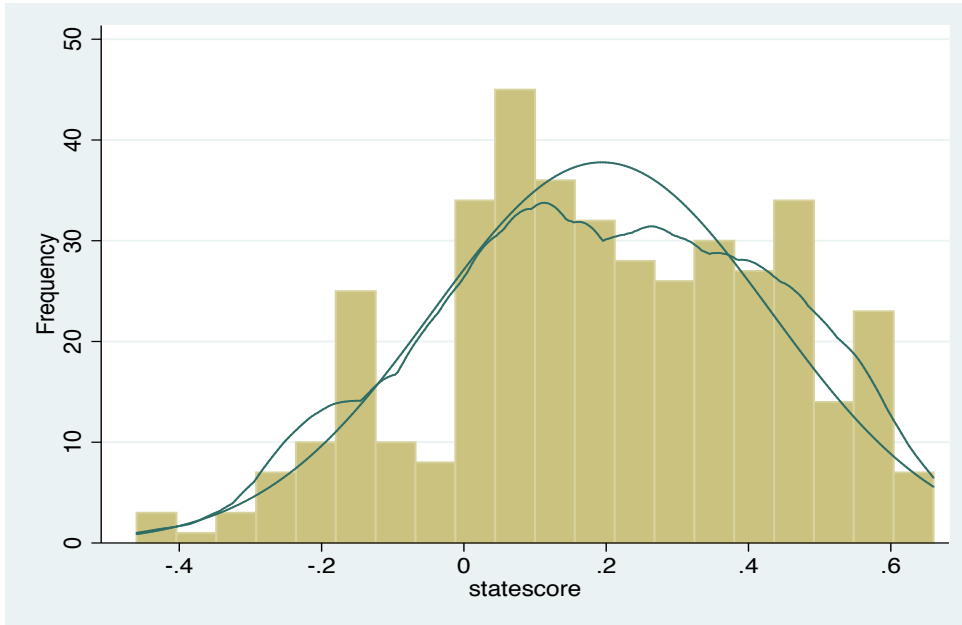


Figure 2: Distribution of Statement Scores for 2014 midterm elections (mentioned only)

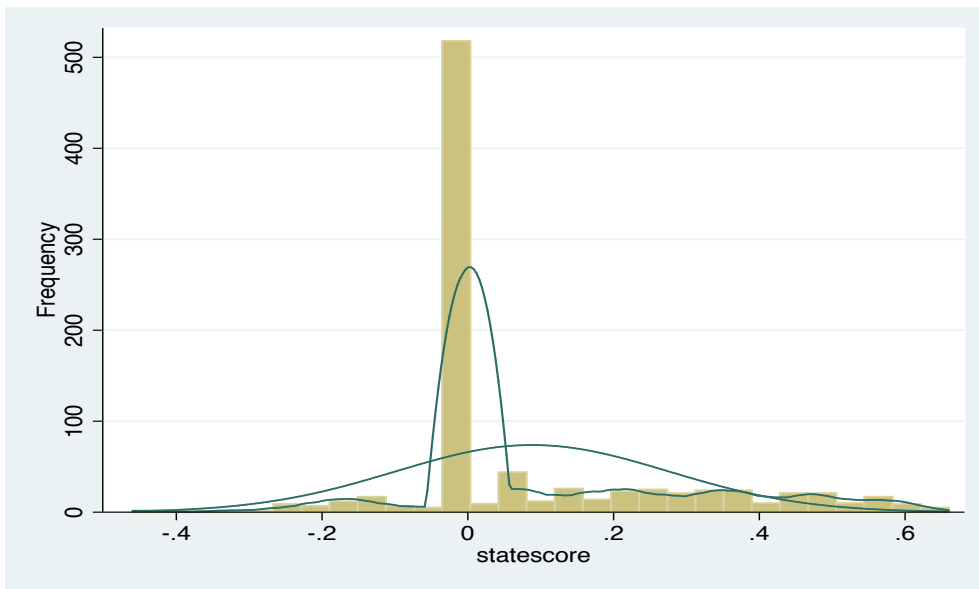


Table 3: Linear Regression of Set B (1) = All, (2)= Mentioned Only

VARIABLES	(1) statescore	(2) Statescore	
Latino	-0.000718* (0.000427)	-0.00159** (0005548)	The robust linear regression for all candidates, regardless of whether they mention immigration or not, suggests that the population of Latinos do not have a significant influence on the positioning of the candidate's statement. On the other hand, the model suggests that the ideology of the district (<i>Obama</i>), or how liberal the district is, has a negative influence on the statement score. In other words, more liberal districts lead to less conservative statements
Obama	-0.00127*** (0.000323)	-0.000656 (0.0005019)	
Borderstate	0.0308 (0.0188)	0.00856 (0.0218)	
Republican	0.176*** (0.0110)	0.308*** (0.0179)	
Contested	0.0390 (0.0322)	0.0277 (0.0702)	
Openseat	0.0520*** (0.0187)	0.0508* (0.0282)	
Incumbent	0.0427*** (0.0116)	0.0595*** (0.01846)	
Constant	0.0132 (0.0371)	0.0193 (0.0737)	
Observations	898	403	
R-squared	0.271	0.504	

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

from the candidate. On the whole, Republican candidates express conservative statements in regards to immigration. This is naturally unsurprising since the Republican national party line is conservative. The model also shows that the competitiveness of a race can also determine the sentiment on immigration. Candidates running in a district with an open seat seem to take on a more conservative stance towards immigration. Their statement score increases by 0.052, which is not a strong change. Similarly, incumbents seem to slightly take a conservative stance on immigration. If a candidate is an incumbent, the statement score increases by 0.0427. Yet the first model takes into account the statement scores of those that do not take a stance. By not mentioning immigration in their campaign website, it was assumed that the candidate held a neutral position. Hence, they were assigned a score of 0. Since a large number of candidates did not mention immigration, it skewed the distribution (see Figure 2).

The second model, which excluded those that did not mention immigration, gives us a look at candidates who decided to take a position on immigration. Substantively, the model is trying to see what position the candidates take once they decide to mention immigration reform. Naturally, this is different from the first model. This model shows that the percent population of Latinos does in fact have a significant influence on the position the candidate takes. There is a negative causal relationship between the population of Latino and the conservativeness of the candidate's statement. Yet this effect is quite weak: a one percent increase in the population of Latino leads to a 0.00159 decrease in the statement score. The second model also shows that Republican candidates are more conservative when they do mention immigration. The coefficient score shows a 0.308 increase in the statement score if the candidate is Republican. Likewise, incumbent candidates also seem to be more conservative in their statements. The ideology of the district seems to not have a significant effect. Once a candidate decides to make a statement about immigration, he or she seems to not be influenced by the ideological make up of the district. This is an interesting discovery, but also intuitive. A candidate has made up his or her mind to make a statement. They already know what ideological appeal that they will take, so it would not matter if the district were more liberal or not.

The first model shows that hypothesis H1B has some support when candidates who decline to mention their positions. In this case, it seems that the ideological make up of the district has a significant effect on the statement score (position the candidate takes). The data shows that the more liberal the district, the smaller the score. This translates to the statement being less conservative in sentiment. It would make sense, since candidates would only mention immigration in liberal districts if they had a liberal statement on immigration. Those that do not have a statement that caters to the district would not mention it. So it would make sense that

ideology would be influential if we included candidates who declined to mention immigration.

Hypothesis 2B also seems to be slightly supported by the data: the higher the Latino population, the lower the statement scores or in other words the statement becomes less conservative in sentiment. The problem is that the Latino population variable stops becoming significant if we hold the p-value at the standard level of 0.05. From this view, Hypothesis 2B is rejected.

Unexpectedly, the geographic location of the district seems to have no significant effect on the statement scores. One would expect that candidates would exploit the proximity to the southern border to garner conservative support for their elections. But it may be that the large populations of Latinos, who tend to live closer to the southern border, offset the influence of this predictor. In this way, my Hypothesis 3B is not supported by the model.

Once we exclude all those that do not mention immigration, the causal relationship changes. If a candidate does decide to make a statement, then substantively we are looking at how the predictors affect those that decide to take a position. This model shows that the ideological position of the district seems to not have a significant effect, meaning that we cannot be certain that the increase in percent Obama vote leads to a decrease in conservative sentiment in the statement. Hypothesis 1B cannot be confidently supported. The data suggests that once candidates decide to mention immigration in their campaigns, the population percent of Latinos have a significant effect on their position. In a larger population of Latinos, the candidate's position takes on a less conservative statement. However, it must be noted that the strength in the effect is very weak at -0.0015. Hypothesis 2B is supported in the sense that the data shows a negative relationship between the percent population of Latino and the level of conservative sentiment in the statement. Regardless, it must be stated that the effect is negligible. The last hypothesis (3B) concerning whether the location of the district in a southern border state had an

effect on the conservative sentiment is not supported by the data. The regression model shows a weak positive sentiment but it is not significant.

Analysis by Party

Once more, party identification is a strong driver of the statement scores. The sentiment of the candidate's statement on immigration largely depends on their party identification. As shown in the previous models, Republicans tend to be more conservative on immigration. This is instinctive, since Republicans generally tend to take a hardline stance on immigration. To better understand how politicians strategize, one must analyze party identification separately. Table 4 shows the same model separated by party (Republican and Democrat).

Table 4: Linear Regression by Party Identification (Set B)

VARIABLES	(1) Republican	(2) Democrat
Latino	-0.00188*** (0.000670)	0.000450 (0.000513)
Obama	-0.00212*** (0.000752)	-0.000253 (0.000301)
Borderstate	0.101*** (0.0291)	-0.0410* (0.0215)
Contested	0.0557 (0.0564)	0.0246 (0.0259)
Openseat	0.0851** (0.0360)	0.00581 (0.0164)
Incumbent	0.0355 (0.0256)	0.0120 (0.0110)
Constant	0.217*** (0.0781)	-0.0112 (0.0287)
Observations	416	482
R-squared	0.084	0.020

Standard errors in parentheses

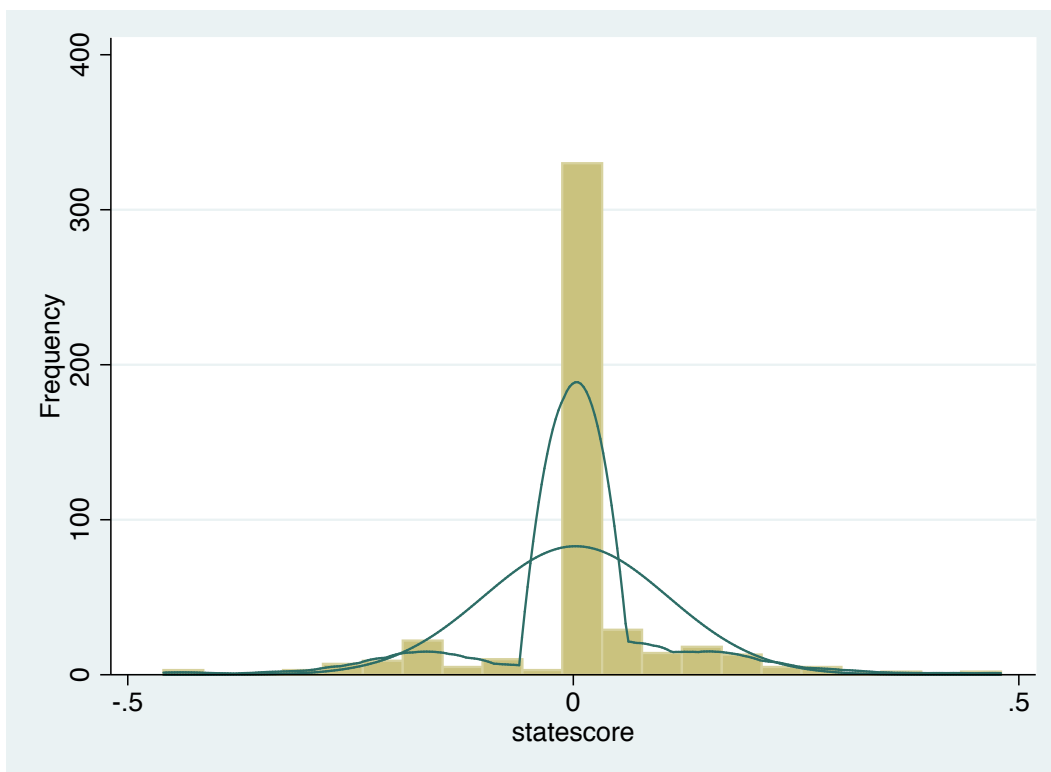
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The data show that Republicans tend to be less conservative in their statements on immigration in liberal districts and districts with large population of Latinos. Their statements are more conservative in districts along the southern border and districts that have an open seat. The higher the percent population of Latino (Latino) and the higher the percent Obama vote (Obama) lead to a decrease in the statement score, which means a less conservative statement. Yet the model shows that these effects are weak, at -0.0012 (Latino) and -0.0021 (Obama). However, the effects of being in a border state or an open seat are stronger, at 0.10 (Borderstate) and 0.085 (Openseat). The model suggests that Republicans strategically choose their positions on immigration based, in some parts, on the localized characteristic of the district. Obviously in more liberal and highly Latino populated districts, it is better to be less conservative. The best rational strategy would be to adopt a slightly less conservative position. In border state districts, one would also expect more conservative statements since the candidates can incite fears of undocumented immigration and channel it into support for their campaigns. One can evidently see this in the immigration statements by Republicans in border state districts. Furthermore, taking a hard line sentiment in an open seat is also an intuitively good strategy. It allows the candidate to distinguish his or herself from the competition. In all, the data seem to offer a good look into how Republicans position themselves on immigration.

The Democrat model, on the other hand, shows that local demographics and district characteristics do not have significant effects on Democrats' positions. According to the data, only *Borderstate* seem to remotely have a significant effect at a 0.1 p-value. The other independent variables are not statistically significant enough to reject the null hypothesis. Overall, this might be due to the fact that most Democrats seem to adopt a neutral position on immigration in the elections. They mostly do not mention immigration in their campaigns. This

might have caused the model to be weak. If we look at the distribution of statement score for Democrats, one can see that the majority of the scores are peaked at zero. This would mean that the data is skewed. This would cause the model to be off, since a regression model assumes normal distribution. After running a robust regression, the output offers the same results as Table 4. The only difference is that the p-value for *Borderstate* is now at 0.05.

Figure 3: Distribution of Statement Scores for 2014 Midterm Elections (Democrats Only)



Hypothesis Set C:

Question 3: What are the electoral impacts of the candidates' position? Does their immigration position affect their chances of winning?

The Republicans took the majority of seats in the House of Representatives during the 2014 Midterm Elections. Overall, incumbents won 95% of the time. One can see that candidates

take into consideration, at some level, the localized conditions of their district when they take a position on immigration. Does this translate to electoral victory? Do candidates who take a conservative stance more likely to win? The following hypotheses is aimed at understanding the causal relationship between winning and the immigration position that the candidate adopts:

H1C: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional elections, candidates who take a hardline stance are more likely to lose in districts that are more liberal.

H2C: If all else equal and in a comparison of congressional elections, candidates who take a hardline stance are more likely to lose in districts that have high population of Latinos.

To test these hypotheses, two models will be used to analyze the causal relationship between winning and the interaction of the immigration statement and the local factors of the district. The first model will look at candidates' positions across all elections. Essentially it will look at the statement score absolutely. The second model will look at the position of the candidates in relation to each other in the district. It will allow us to see how the difference in the positions of the two candidates running against each other, drives the candidates' ability to win in an election.

The first model shows that the interaction of the stance the person takes and the ideological position of the immigration statement (*stance_obama*) seems to be not significant. The more conservative you are on immigration in a more liberal district does not seem to limit your chances of winning the election. However it shows that if you take a more conservative position in a district with a high percent of Latinos (*stance_latino*), your chances of winning are diminished. Still, the strength of the effect is weak. More importantly the model shows that if you take a more conservative stance, you are more likely to win the election. The high coefficient of the model shows that a conservative stance has a strong effect in the chances of

winning. Obviously, incumbents are more likely to win regardless of positioning. Since this model looks at the position of the candidates across all districts, we must take into consideration the possibility that the positions of candidates may vary across the districts in a way that drives our effects. So in order to be more precise, one must look at the difference in statements between candidates who are running against each other.

Table 5: Logistic Regression Model 1, Absolute position of all candidates

VARIABLES	Win
statescore	8.133*** (2.549)
stance_obama	-0.0668 (0.0477)
stance_latino	-0.0969** (0.0390)
mention	-0.0660 (0.285)
obama	0.0137** (0.00610)
Incumbent	5.209*** (0.356)
Constant	-3.062*** (0.392)
Observations	898

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The second model measures the relative positions (scorediff) and its interaction with our variables of interest (statescore_obama2 and statescore_latino2). Essentially, the model is trying to see how the distance in the position of the statement between contenders affects the candidates' chances of winning. Surprisingly, the model shows that the interaction effects of the statement position and the characteristic of the district, like ideological leaning and Latino population, seem to not be a significant factor in winning. In the same way, the difference in the

positioning between the two candidates (scorediff) seems to have no significant effect. The main driver of whether the candidate wins or not is the incumbency variable. Once we run the model on the difference in positioning between candidates, we see that mentioning immigration can lead to more chances of win. By interpreting the coefficient in the regression, one can see that mentioning the issue of immigration in a race would have a 5% increase in the probability of winning if we hold all independent variables at their average. Although the difference in the statement positions of the candidates in a race might not be a significant driver, it seems that mentioning immigration might give a candidate the edge over their opponent.

Table 6: Logistic Regression Model 2, Relative position of all candidates

VARIABLES	Win
scorediff	-0.760 (0.911)
mention	0.624** (0.244)
statescore_obama2	0.0291 (0.0201)
statescore_latino2	-0.0146 (0.0168)
Incumbent	5.169*** (0.347)
obama	0.000492 (0.00579)
Constant	-2.407*** (0.357)
Observations	898

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The two models show us interesting results. If we look at the statement positions from an absolute view by disregarding the relative position of candidates' statements between their opponents, then once can see that a conservative position in a liberal district will lower the chances of win. This effect, however, is nominal. Both models show that interaction of positioning and the ideology of the district seems to not have a significant effect on winning. The incumbency factor seems to be the main driver of winning in both models. Once we focus our model on measuring the relative positions of the candidates to each other, both interaction effects become not significant. In other words, the relative distances of the immigration statement score conditional on the percent of Latino voters and the partisanship of the district are not significant drivers of electoral success. The results of the two models lead me to lose confidence in both my hypotheses. The data appear to offer weak support for my hypotheses that candidates are likely to lose if they take a conservative stance in liberal districts that have a high population of Latinos. Regardless, it may be important to note that there are many other different factors that may affect a candidate's chance of winning. My models might not have included these factors and thereby limited its explanatory power. This may explain the results that I received.

Future Course:

It must be noted that the study needs to be expanded to get a better understanding of how politicians maneuver on the issue of immigration. For future work, I would like to expand the data set to include different sources of statements on immigration. Relying only on campaign website statements give us a narrow view of the overall position of the candidates. It would also be interesting to add a temporal dimension to the study by looking at immigration stances in the past. In the future I hope to exploit the Wayback Machine as a source of getting data from the past. It is essentially an archive of past Internet websites that researchers can access. More data

would help give a better understanding of the research question and may even change the conclusions reached here. Furthermore, I would like to use more sophisticated techniques that I currently do not employ. One of the goals of this research project was to create an automatic content analysis program that could help me score the immigration positions of the candidates. Professors Justin Grimmer and Brandon Stewart discuss at length about the ability of automated methods to substantially reduce the cost of analyzing large collection of text. They present the use of automatic text analysis programs as an additional tool to political analysis. It is a tool to augment careful and close manual reading of the texts but to replace them. Grimmer and Stewart state, “We emphasize that the complexity of language implies that automated content analysis methods will never replace careful and close reading of texts. Rather, the methods that we profile here are best thought as amplifying and augmenting careful reading and thoughtful analysis” (Grimmer et al., 2-3). The methods and principles presented in Grimmer’s and Stewart’s paper serve as the guide to my effort to create a program to score the immigration positions of candidates in the 2014 midterm elections.

Using a “supervise learning” method, I worked to create an algorithm that could automatically assign statement scores to the data. This method depends upon human hand coding of a portion of the statements. The human hand coding is then used to train the program to automatically classify the remaining statements. In other words, the program uses characteristics of the statement, words and phrasing, to classify the statement into a value along the scale. The characteristics that the program uses are based on the human hand coding set. The output from the automatic text analysis can be compared with the hand coding to ensure that it is validated or similar to each other. Automatic text analysis can eliminate error introduced by the human hand coding of a large number of texts, as long as the coding used for the training set is reliable.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints the program was not completed. Given more time and training, I hope to apply this technique to the paper in the future.

Conclusions:

The aim of the paper was to unravel politician's strategic behavior in campaigns by using the issue of immigration policy as lenses. Overall, I wanted to understand how the debate on immigration has affected political maneuvering and positioning of candidates for congressional office. When does the issue of immigration become salient in a campaign and why? From our research it seems that local factors, particularly the percent population of Latinos and the partisanship of the district, has an affect on whether the candidates mention immigration. The chances of immigration being mentioned increases as the population of Latinos increases. This is intuitive since immigration is an important issue for Latinos. Dominant discourse on the subject seems to narrowly focus on the southern border, particularly undocumented crossings from Mexico and Latin America. As a result, immigration has proven to be one of the most important issues for Latino groups and voters. Similarly, a large population of Latino can be seen as evidence of "illegal" immigration for conservative or reactionary candidates. It can be manipulated or exploited as a signal to voters who are worried about the large population of immigrants in their districts. Regardless, it can be reasonable to say that mentioning immigration in a district with a large Latino population might not hurt the candidate's chances of winning. On the other hand, the chances of immigration being mentioned decreases in more liberal districts. This may be due to the fact that both Republicans and Democrats appear to be avoiding immigration in more liberal districts. The data show that Democrats tend to not mention their position on immigration in more liberal districts. Democrats in general, seem to be avoiding the issue of immigration altogether in the elections. About 64% of Democrats declined to mention

the issue in their campaigns. Could it be that Democrats are embarrassed at their inability to deliver on meaningful immigration reforms? One of the president's major promises during his campaign was to resolve the immigration problem. Yet through almost eight years, it continues to be at an impasse. It may be possible that Democrats are distancing themselves from this failure. Conversely, data shows that Republicans seem to have embraced the issue of immigration into their campaign platforms. Immigration is mentioned by about 55% of the Republican candidates. Touting rhetoric concerning "fairness" and "rule of law", the Republican position on immigration seems to be attractive to most American. Indeed, my model shows that Republicans are more likely to mention the issue of immigration in their campaigns.

My data show that the actual positions that candidate takes depends little on the local context and more on the partisanship of the candidate. Overall one can see that most candidates tend to take a neutral position. Those that do mention immigration usually take a conservative stance. The median statement score of those who mention immigration is 0.2, which is slightly conservative. If we measure all candidate positions, including those that do not mention, candidates tend to lessen conservative statements on immigration in more liberal districts. Moderating their position in a liberal district is a good strategy to take in order to win votes. Though the model indicates that the ideological make up of the district is a significant predictor, one can see that the effect is weak. For each increase in the percent Obama vote or liberal measure, there's a 0.00127 decrease in the statement score. More importantly, the model also seems to point at the characteristics of the election as a possible influence on the sentiment of the statement. Incumbents take a more conservative stance on immigration according to the model. This may be that the incumbent candidate is depending on his or her incumbency advantage to win and so is freer to position on immigration. They may feel safer in the election and so could

take any stance. It may be that the trend in congressional politics is moving towards more conservative policies. The various bills being proposed emphasize stricter control on immigration, increased enforcement, and stronger security on the border. In general, the various bills being proposed tend to be more conservative. The incumbent candidate may be relying on their records in congress and consequently reflect a more conservative view. In open seats, the model shows candidates taking more conservative stances. This may be due to candidates trying to stand out and distinguish themselves from their opponents. It could be seen that the various localized context of the district have measurable effects on the position the candidate takes on immigration but that the effects are weak. The main driving factor seems to be the partisan leaning of the candidate. Republican candidates take more conservative stances.

So does the candidate's position on immigration affect their chances of winning? The analysis of my data proves to be inconclusive. If we look at all candidate positions absolutely, then one can see that more conservative scores lead to a better chance of winning. There's a positive significant causal relationship between the statement score and electoral success. The model also shows that if a candidate takes a conservative position in a district with a high population of Latinos then he or she has a lower chance of winning. Yet once again the effect is weak. In measuring the difference of position between candidates, the model shows that neither interaction of the statement position with the Latino population variable and the district partisanship level were significant. The differences in the results from the two models show that we cannot draw a clear conclusion about the causal relationship of winning, except that the incumbency status of the candidate strongly predicts success in an election.

At the conclusion of this study, it can be seen that candidates tend to stick to the party position and accommodate very little to the local conditions. Overall the data show that

Ansola et al.'s assertion that national party lines dominate policy positions of candidates seem to be true in the case of the immigration debate. Through all the analysis on the data, one can see with some certainty that the partisanship of the candidate predicts whether he or she will mention immigration and the position that he or she will take. It is important to note; however, that the data also suggests that candidates are influenced by the ideological leaning and population demographics of the district.

This can clearly be illustrated in the case of Jim Bryan, the Democratic candidate for Florida's 1st District. As a Democrat, Bryan ought to be supportive of comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship, access to education by undocumented students, and similar liberal positions. Yet he expressed a conservative position on immigration, emphasizing stricter border security and warning that illegal immigration would have detrimental effects on immigration. In his statement on border security, Bryan warns that "Islamic Jihadists, agents of drug cartels, gang members, and other with criminal or anti-American agendas" will enter the country unless the government implements stronger security.¹¹ His rhetoric on immigration is on the whole quite conservative. Bryan's contradiction to party line on immigration can be explained by the fact that the district he is running in is predominantly white and conservative. Florida District 1 has a 75% White population compared to a 5% Latino population. Its percent Obama vote in 2012 is only 30%. Here we can see that Bryan has left the party line on immigration in order to cater to his district. This case is an example of strategic positioning, where the candidate takes into account the local factors of the election.

In conclusion, I suggest a nuanced view of the causal relationship between immigration positioning and the strategic politician. The dominating driver of positions on immigration,

¹¹ See data "2014 Midterm Election Immigration Statements (2014 MEIS)"

including whether it is mentioned in the campaign, seems to be partisanship. As the literature shows, candidates take position according to the national party line. One can see that Democrats tend to be more neutral and liberal on immigration reform, while Republicans are more vocal and conservative on the issue. In addition, the data suggest that candidates also take into account the conditions of the district they are campaigning in. The strength of the effects, as shown in our models, is weak but there seems to be a relationship that we can confidently say is not attributed to randomness. Evidence from the data suggests that candidates mention immigration in districts with a large population of Latinos and that they generally moderate their positions once they decide to mention the issue. Immigration is mentioned less and positions on immigration are less conservative in liberal leaning districts. There is also some evidence that the competitiveness of the elections might influence the sentiment of the immigration position. The picture that the data show is that candidates on the whole depend on the party line to dictate the stances they take on immigration policy, but that they also seem to adjust to local conditions when needed. The general literature on policy positioning and strategic politicians seem to hold up when one looks specifically at immigration reform.

Appendix: Coding Scheme

Categories:

Legalization	<p>The statement expresses the candidate's view on whether to offer legal status to the undocumented immigrant population. This statement shows a clear impression of the candidate's position on whether they support creating a path to citizenship for the undocumented.</p> <p>Question statement answered: Is the legalization of undocumented immigrants a good solution to the immigration problem? Should there be a path to citizenship for the undocumented?</p>
-1	<p>Statement expresses overwhelming support for offering legal status to the undocumented population. Candidate indicates a strong support or priority in opening a path to citizenship for the undocumented. Candidate uses words like "provisional legal status", "path to citizenship", "permanent residency", "undocumented" etc.</p>
-0.5	<p>Statement expresses support for legal status to the undocumented population. Candidate does not use strong language or indicate legalization as a priority. Overall, the sentiment of statement explicitly shows support for legalization.</p>
0	<p>There is no mention in the statement of legalization</p>
0.5	<p>Statement expresses no support for legal status. Candidate indicates their opposition to allowing undocumented population to stay legally in the United States. Indicates legalization as a form of "amnesty". Though statement explicitly indicates candidate's opposition to legalization, there is no use of strong language or expression of dogmatic resistance to legalization.</p>
1	<p>Statement expresses strong opposition to providing legal status to undocumented population. Candidate indicates their position by using strong language like "illegal", "amnesty" etc. Statement explicitly indicates unwavering opposition, evoking uncompromising stance to legalization.</p>

Security	<p>The statement expresses the candidates view on security along American borders, particularly the southern border. This statement discusses the position of the candidate in regards to securing borders. The statement explicitly discusses whether the candidate believes there should be increased in border patrol guards, employment of border protection technology (electronic monitoring etc.), expanded fencing, and an overall increase in the presence of security measures.</p> <p>Type of question statement answered: Is a fence along the U.S. Mexico Border a good solution to illegal immigration? Should the US Military patrol borders?</p>
-1	<p>Statement expresses the candidate’s displeasure of the increased militarization at the southern border. The statement suggests that the candidate prefers an open and porous border in the south. From the statement one can see that the candidate believes a deeply militarized border is a waste of taxpayer money and is not useful in solving the immigration crisis.</p>
-0.5	<p>Statement expresses the candidate’s opposition to increased security at the southern border. The candidate shows a clear stance against further increased funding or expansion of the security apparatus at the border. Yet the statement shows lack of total opposition, and a willingness to still “secure” borders.</p>
0	<p>There is no mention in the statement of security or borders</p>
0.5	<p>The statement shows the candidates support for increased security at the border. The candidate explicitly urges for expansion of security measures and increased in personnel. The statement mentions the security concerns associated with the border and connects it to criminal activity and possibly threatening to national security. Yet the statement is not profuse about security as being the most major part of immigration reform. It is not extreme or narrowly focused on security.</p>
1	<p>The statement shows security as being the main concern of the candidate. Candidates draw dramatic connection with securing the border as the main solution to immigration problems. Candidate urges increased militarization of the border, using the National Guards to patrol border, and sanctioning civilian “militia-men”. Statement uses controversial rhetoric and/or inflammatory language. Statement connects criminality with those crossing.</p>

Enforcement (deportation)	<p>The statement expresses the candidate’s position on enforcing immigration laws and on deporting or removing those that enter the United States without documentation. The statement explicitly shows whether the candidate supports mass deportation programs and increased sanctions for stopping employers from hiring undocumented immigrants.</p> <p>Type of question statement answered: Is deportation a good solution to illegal immigration? Should parents of US minor be deported? Should E-Verify, the Federal Government's Electronic Employment Verification System, Be Mandatory for All Employers?</p>
-1	<p>The statement clearly expresses the candidate’s opposition to mass deportation. The statement shows that the candidate does not believe in enforcing immigration laws by deporting the undocumented population will solve the immigration problem. The candidate is aware of the economic forces the pull undocumented laborers to the US and sees deportation as an unviable policy practice.</p>
-0.5	<p>The statement clearly expressed the candidate’s opposition to mass deportation but signals some reluctance to engage the issue. Candidate explicitly takes a stance against mass deportations but takes more of a middle road. The statement is not forceful in its position.</p>
0	<p>Statement does not mention enforcement or deportation</p>
0.5	<p>The statement clearly expresses support for deportation. The candidate mentions “enforcement” of immigration laws, like deportation as being important. Though candidate is in favor of deportation tactics, it can be clearly determined from the statement that they believe it will not entirely solve the immigration problem. The statement shows that the candidate is against the hiring of undocumented immigrants and supports a system of verification for immigrant employment. Their statement on enforcement is mild.</p>
1	<p>The statement clearly expresses a strong support for deportation of immigrants who enter the US illegally. The candidate in this statement takes a hardline against undocumented immigrants and insists they are removed for breaking the law. The statement invokes arguments concerning “legality” and “fairness” as justification for deportation. The statement contains uncompromising language.</p>

Entitlements	<p>The statement expresses the candidate’s position on whether undocumented immigrants should be given similar rights protected under the Constitution and access to public goods, such as public education and welfare programs. The statement shows the candidate’s support or opposition to undocumented immigrants’ access to governmental services and benefits.</p> <p>Type of questions the statement answers: Should immigrants in the United States illegally have Constitutional Rights and Protections when on American soil? Should Immigrants in the United States Illegally Have Access to Social Services Such as Health Care and Public Education? Should Immigrants in the United States Illegally Be Allowed to Obtain a Driver's License?</p>
-1	<p>The statement expresses support for undocumented immigrants access to public goods. The candidate professes support for allowing undocumented immigrants access to public education, welfare programs, and other social benefits. The statement expresses support for legislation or policies that allow undocumented citizens the ability to access public goods(like CA Dream Act). Candidate insists on giving basic rights to all, regardless of legal status. Statement clearly expresses overwhelming or enthusiastic support for expanding undocumented immigrants access to public goods.</p>
-0.5	<p>The statement expresses support for allowing undocumented immigrants access to public goods. Statement clearly indicates candidate’s position to open up more access for immigrants to government-sponsored goods (like public education). Candidate expresses support for the protection of basic rights of undocumented immigrants. Yet these statements are more controlled in tone and are limited in what they considered should be open to undocumented immigrants.</p>
0	<p>There is no mention in the statement of access to public goods</p>
0.5	<p>The statement expresses opposition to allowing undocumented citizens access to certain public goods. The candidate believes that social welfare programs should be restricted to only US citizens and “legal immigrants”. Since they are in the US illegally, the statement indicates that undocumented immigrants have no right to public goods like social security, healthcare, and education.</p>
1	<p>The statement expresses dogmatic opposition to allowing undocumented citizens access to public benefits. Candidate’s statement express outrage and discontentment over the ability of undocumented to receive public assistance. Statement indicate the undocumented as “sucking the welfare system dry” etc. They are portrayed as free riders.</p>

The coder will use the guidelines indicated above to classify and assign value to each statement in the dataset. The categories and coding guidelines are a result of preliminary coding, in which the coder sifts through raw data to identify the leading assertions of the statements. The four categories: 1) legalization, 2) security concerns, 3) enforcement (deportation), and 4) entitlements are the most prominent assertions presented in the statements gathered from the 2014 Midterm Elections. Each statement presents the candidate's position on one or more of these issues.

The second cycle of coding assigns value points to each statement in order to identify the strength in the sentiment that is communicated by the statement. Each statement is assigned a value along a scale of -1 to 1, with -1 being strongly liberal to 1 being strongly conservative. The description of what it means to be strongly conservative or strongly liberal is defined in the coding scheme. These descriptions are to guide the coder in their assessment of the statement. The coder assigns a value I_n along the spectrum to each category, based on these guidelines. If the statement does not mention one of the categories, then the statement is assigned a 0 for that category.

Each category will also be assigned a value x_n , in order to reflect its importance relative to the other categories. From the initial coding exploratory coding of the data, it was found that the issue of security was the most important topic during the 2014 Midterm Elections. The second issue pertained to legalization, followed by enforcement policies, and finally access to public goods or entitlement issues. In order to accurately highlight the hierarchy in importance, it is necessary to assigned values to each category.

The statement score, indicating the direction and magnitude of sentiment will be calculated from the coding scheme. It is a simplistic approach in which the value assigned for each category will be summed. The strength of sentiment, I_n , is multiplied to the value of importance of the issue or category, x_n . Each statement will receive a score by summing the product from each of the category. The score of each statement can be expressed as:

$$\text{Statement Score } (S_n) = (x_1I_1 + x_2I_2 + x_3I_3 \dots x_nI_n) \text{ or } \sum x_nI_n$$

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