

# VOTING IN 2010: Ten Swing States

## NEVADA

Nevada is home to a great number of Latino voters, making it another state to watch especially closely for any kind of vote suppression activities. The state does little to reach out to language minority and naturalized citizen voters; the Secretary of State's office does not even have a voter registration form translated into Spanish on its website. Nevada has been the site of many election controversies, and with so many races in play, including that of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, it is a state voting rights advocates will be monitoring.

### POLITICAL OUTLOOK

- The US **Senate** race between Majority Leader Harry Reid (D) and Tea Party favorite Sharon Angle (R) is expected to be very close.
- The **gubernatorial** race also will be hotly contested, though former district judge Brian Sandoval (R) currently holds a healthy lead over Rory Reid (D), a Clark County commissioner.
- Nevada's 3<sup>rd</sup> **Congressional District** is also considered a toss-up.

### OBSTACLES TO VOTING

- **Registration** by mail ends 30 days prior to the election. In-person registration ends 21 days prior to the election. This disparity may impact certain groups of voters more than others, and both deadlines are so far out from the day of the election that some voters may not be able to participate.
- Nevada uses an "exact match" standard on **voter registration databases**, which may make it more difficult for some voters to cast a ballot.
- Nevada is another state where issues could arise around immigrant and Latino voters. There are 192,000 eligible Hispanic voters in Nevada. The Secretary of State has not taken any particularly proactive steps to reach out to these voters. Moreover, even in a state with such large numbers of Latinos, **Spanish language voter registration forms** are not available on the Secretary of State's website.
- The **voting rights restoration** process for citizens with a felony record is only applicable to certain criminal convictions. Those with more than one felony, or those convicted of Class A or Class B felonies under Nevada law, are not restored the right to vote automatically, even if pardoned by a judge
- Nevada has had experiences with **deceptive practices** causing confusion and impeding the vote, and its deceptive practices law is not as specific as it should be to combat these concerns.

### EXEMPLARY VOTING LAWS/ PROCEDURES

- Nevada has excellent voter identification laws, with requirements that go no further than the HAVA mandate that first-time voters who registered by mail must show certain types of ID prior to voting.
- A **provisional ballot** will be counted if the voter has cast the provisional ballot at a polling place that is located in the congressional district in which the voter resides.

ARIZONA

COLORADO

ILLINOIS

KENTUCKY

LOUISIANA

MICHIGAN

MISSOURI

NEVADA

NORTH CAROLINA

OHIO

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# WHAT THE STATE CHIEF ELECTIONS OFFICER CAN DO BEFORE THE ELECTION

- As the **database matching standards** are not prescribed by law, officials should instead use a “substantial match” standard which has proved highly effective in many other states and is less likely to create obstacles to legitimate, eligible voters being able to cast a ballot. At the very least, ensure that the matching standards are publicly known and understood, and assist voters and registration groups in avoiding problems caused by the current match standard.
- Establish a clear system for detecting misinformation campaigns and a plan for how the office will **respond** to them to ensure voters have the true information immediately.

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In advance of the mid-term elections, Common Cause and Dēmos will release a new report that finds election policies in 10 swing states could disenfranchise voters and impact election results. The report, “Voting in 2010: Ten Swing States,” looks at Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, and Ohio, summarizing each state’s practices, and providing a set of recommendations for improvement.

To view the full report, visit **[demos.org/swingstate](http://demos.org/swingstate)**  
or **[commoncause.org/swingstate](http://commoncause.org/swingstate)**.

### **Media and other inquiries:**

Tim Rusch, Dēmos, [trusch@demos.org](mailto:trusch@demos.org), 212.633.1407  
Mary Boyle, Common Cause, [mboyle@commoncause.org](mailto:mboyle@commoncause.org), 202.736.5716