

May 2013

**NEW AMERICANS IN TEXAS:
The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians
in the Lone Star State**

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in Texas. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up roughly 1 in 6 Texans, and one-third of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. “New Americans”—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for more than 1 in 10 registered voters in the state. Immigrants are not only integral to the state’s economy as workers, but also account for billions of dollars in tax revenue and consumer purchasing power. Moreover, Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) wield \$265 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$102.1 billion and employed more than 600,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is in a slump, Texas can ill-afford to alienate such a critical component of its labor force, tax base, and business community.

Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Texas’s population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Texas’s population rose from 9.0% in [1990](#),¹ to 13.9% in [2000](#),² to 16.4% in [2011](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Texas was home to 4,201,675 immigrants in [2011](#),⁴ which is more than the total population of [Los Angeles, California](#).⁵
- **33.2% of immigrants (or 1,393,937 people) in Texas were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **6.7% of the state’s population** (or 1.7 million people) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- **11.8% (or 1,194,544) of registered voters** in Texas were “New Americans”—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to an analysis of 2008 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁸

More than 1 in 4 Texans are Latino or Asian—and they vote.

- The **Latino share of Texas’s population** grew from 25.5% in [1990](#),⁹ to 32.0% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 38.1% (or 9,791,628 people) in [2011](#).¹¹ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 1.8% in [1990](#),¹² to 2.7% in [2000](#),¹³ to 3.9% (or 999,118 people) in [2011](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 20.1% (or 1,697,000) of Texas voters** in the 2008 elections, and Asians 1.4% (118,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵

- In Texas, **87.7% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In [2009](#), **86.2% of children in Asian families** in Texas were U.S. citizens, as were **93.2% of children in Latino families**.¹⁷

Latino and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add tens of billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of jobs to Texas's economy.

- **The 2012 purchasing power of Latinos in Texas totaled \$216.2 billion**—an increase of 560% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$48.8 billion**—an increase of 969% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁸
- Texas's 447,589 [Latino-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of **\$61.9 billion and employed 395,673 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁹ The state's 114,297 [Asian-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of **\$40.2 billion and employed 206,545 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²⁰

Immigrants are integral to Texas's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised **21% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 2,645,538 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²¹
- Immigrants accounted for **21% of total economic output** in the Houston metropolitan area and **16% of economic output** in the Dallas metropolitan area as of [2007](#), according to a study by the Fiscal Policy Institute.²²
- Unauthorized immigrants in Texas paid **\$1.6 billion** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²³ which includes:
 - \$177.8 million in property taxes.
 - \$1.4 billion in sales taxes.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **9% of the state's workforce** (or 1,100,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²⁴
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Texas, **the state would lose \$69.3 billion in economic activity, \$30.8 billion in gross state product, and approximately 403,174 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²⁵

Immigrants are integral to Texas's economy as students.

- Texas's 61,511 **foreign students contributed \$1.4 billion** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2011-2012 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).²⁶

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Texas, **28.9% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in **2011 had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 15.2% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 29.3% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 53.7% of noncitizens.²⁷
- The number of immigrants in Texas with a college degree **increased by 91.5%** between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁸
- In Texas, **75.2% of children with immigrant parents** were considered “English proficient” as of **2009**, to data from the Urban Institute.²⁹
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Texas was 85.7%**, while for **Latino children it was 80.7%**, as of **2009**.³⁰

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Foreign-Born Population: 2000](#), December 2003.

² Ibid.

³ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, [Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 24.

⁸ Rob Paral and Associates, [The New American Electorate: The Growing Political Power of Immigrants and Their Children](#) (Washington, DC: Immigration Policy Center, American Immigration Law Foundation, October 2010).

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Hispanic Population: 2000](#), May 2001.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, [The Asian Population: 2000](#), February 2002.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹⁵ U.S. Electoral College, [2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals](#).

¹⁶ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [The Multicultural Economy 2012](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2012).

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, [Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007](#), June 2011.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

²² David Dyssegaard Kallick, [Immigrants in the Economy: Contribution of Immigrant Workers to the Country's 25 Largest Metropolitan Areas](#) (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, December 2009), p. 11.

²³ The Immigration Policy Center, [Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

²⁴ Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, [Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 24.

²⁵ The Perryman Group, [An Essential Resource: An Analysis of the Economic Impact of Undocumented Workers on Business Activity in the US with Estimated Effects by State and by Industry](#) (Waco, TX: April 2008), p. 69.

²⁶ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2011-2012](#) (Washington, DC: 2012).

²⁷ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Texas: Language & Education](#).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

³⁰ Ibid.