



# IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER

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...providing factual information about immigration and immigrants in America

## **ELECTION 2008: The Importance of Latinos and Immigrants to the Economies and Electorates of the “Super Tuesday” States**

During the presidential primaries, candidates and the media focused a great deal of attention on the debate over how immigrants impact state economies and the fiscal balance of state treasuries. At the same time, political pundits and pollsters speculated on the electoral influence of immigrants and Latinos at the voting booth. Below is a brief analysis of the impact that both Latinos and immigrants have on the economies and electorates of the “Super Tuesday” states.

***Latino Power at the Polls:*** On Super Tuesday (February 5), Latinos turned out in record numbers in states all across the nation. In the **California** primaries, for instance, the [New Democratic Network](#) (NDN) found that Latinos comprised 29 percent of Democratic voters and 13 percent of Republican voters. The Latino share of the state’s Democratic primary voters nearly *doubled* from 16 percent in 2004. In 2008, Latinos also accounted for 34 percent of Democratic primary voters in **New Mexico**, 18 percent in **Arizona**, 17 percent in **Illinois**, 12 percent in **New Jersey**, and 10 percent in **New York**.

According to the [National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials](#) (NALEO), Latinos constitute 14.2 percent of the electorate in **Arizona**, 17.3 percent in **California**, 5.3 percent in **Illinois**, 8.1 percent in **New Jersey**, 33.8 percent in **New Mexico**, and 8.7 percent in **New York**.

***Latinos and Asians as Consumers and Business Owners:*** Eight of the Super Tuesday states—**California, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Georgia**—are among the top 10 states in the nation in terms of *Latino purchasing power*. Latinos in these eight states commanded a combined \$443.1 billion in buying power in 2007. **Arkansas** ranked number one in growth of Latino purchasing power since 1990 (1,322 percent), followed by **Tennessee** (941 percent), **Georgia** (924 percent), and **Minnesota** (684 percent).

Five of the Super Tuesday states—**California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Massachusetts**—are also among the top 10 states in terms of *Asian buying power*. The purchasing power of Asians in these five states totaled \$255.4 billion in 2007. **Georgia** ranked number three in growth of Asian buying power since 1990 (624 percent), followed by **Arizona** (552 percent), **Minnesota** (524 percent), **Delaware** (515 percent), and **Tennessee** (493 percent).

According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the 24 Super Tuesday states were home to 851,250 Latino-owned businesses with sales and receipts of \$112 billion in 2002 (the last year for which data is available). There were also 734,227 Asian-owned businesses in these states, with sales and receipts of \$222 billion.

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***High Immigration and Healthy Economies:*** A [2008 study](#) by the conservative Americas Majority Foundation found that the 10 states with the highest percentage of immigrants—including Super Tuesday states **Arizona, California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York**—experienced the highest rates of growth in Gross State Product, personal income, disposable personal income, median household income, and median per capita income from 1999 to 2006.

***The Fiscal Contributions of Immigrants:*** Below is a snapshot of recent research on the fiscal impact of immigrants in a handful of Super Tuesday states:

- **Arizona:** A [2007 study](#) by the University of Arizona’s Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy concludes that “the total state tax revenue attributable to immigrant workers was an estimated \$2.4 billion—even balanced against estimated fiscal costs the net 2004 fiscal impact of immigrants in Arizona was positive by about \$940 million.”
- **Arkansas:** A [2007 study](#) by the Urban Institute finds that “...without immigrant labor, the output of the state’s manufacturing industry would likely be lowered by about \$1.4 billion—or about 8 percent of the industry’s \$16.2 billion total contribution to the gross state product in 2004.”
- **New York:** A [2007 study](#) by the Fiscal Policy Institute concludes that New York’s immigrants are responsible for \$229 billion in economic output in New York State or 22.4 percent of the total New York Gross State Product.
- **Georgia:** A [2006 study](#) by the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute estimates that an average undocumented family in Georgia contributes between \$2,340 and \$2,470 in state and local sales, income, and property taxes combined.

The Immigration Policy Center also has published a [survey of local- and state-level studies](#) that examine the costs and contributions of immigrants to America’s communities.