

July 2010

## **NEW AMERICANS IN THE SHOW ME STATE: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in Missouri**

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in Missouri. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 3.6% of the state's population, and 40% of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 3.1% of 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 \$7.5 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$2.6 billion and employed more than 20,000 people at last count. At a time of economic recession, Missouri 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 Missouri's population and electorate.*

- **The foreign-born share** of Missouri's population rose from 1.6% in [1990](#),<sup>1</sup> to 2.7% in [2000](#),<sup>2</sup> to 3.6% in [2008](#),<sup>3</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Missouri was home to 215,214 immigrants in [2008](#),<sup>4</sup> which is more than the total population of [Arlington, Virginia](#).<sup>5</sup>
- **40.5% of immigrants (or 87,108 people) in Missouri were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2008](#)**<sup>6</sup>—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **3.1% (or 98,271) of registered voters** in Missouri 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 2006 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).<sup>7</sup>

*Nearly 5% of Missourians are Latino or Asian.*

- **The Latino share of Missouri's population** grew from 1.2% in [1990](#),<sup>8</sup> to 2.1% in [2000](#),<sup>9</sup> to 3.2% (or 189,171 people) in [2008](#).<sup>10</sup> **The Asian share of the population** grew from 0.8% in [1990](#),<sup>11</sup> to 1.1% in [2000](#),<sup>12</sup> to 1.4% (or 82,762 people) in [2008](#),<sup>13</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 0.7% (or 20,000) of Missouri voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 0.5% (14,000)**, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).<sup>14</sup>
- In Missouri, **more than four-in-five (or 82% of) children in immigrant families were U.S. citizens** in [2007](#),<sup>15</sup> according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.

*Latino and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add billions of dollars and thousands of jobs to Missouri's economy.*

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Latinos in Missouri totaled \$4.3 billion**—an increase of 496.2% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$3.2 billion**—an increase of 400.1% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.<sup>16</sup>
- Missouri's 6,376 **Asian-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$1.9 billion and employed 15,170 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available.<sup>17</sup> The state's 3,652 **Latino-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$682.0 million and employed 5,507 people in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.<sup>18</sup>

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

- Immigrants comprised **4.3% of the state's workforce** in [2008](#) (or 134,569 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>19</sup>
- **Immigrants accounted for 5% of total economic output in the St. Louis metropolitan area** as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).<sup>20</sup> In fact, "immigrants contribute to the economy in direct relation to their share of the population. The economy of metro areas grows in tandem with the immigrant share of the labor force."<sup>21</sup>
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **0.8% of the state's workforce** (or 25,000 workers) in [2008](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.<sup>22</sup>
- Unauthorized immigrants **contribute between \$29 million to \$57 million in property, state income, and excise taxes** each year, according to a [2006](#) study by the Missouri Budget Project.<sup>23</sup>
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Missouri, **the state would lose \$2.3 billion in economic activity, \$1.0 billion in gross state product, and approximately 13,859 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).<sup>24</sup>

*Immigrants are integral to Missouri's economy as students.*

- Missouri's 11,285 **foreign students contributed \$270.9 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2008-2009 academic year, according to the [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).<sup>25</sup>

*Immigrants excel educationally.*

- In [2008](#), **33.3% of Missouri's foreign-born population** age 25 and older **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 24.6 percent of native-born persons.<sup>26</sup>
- The number of immigrants in Missouri with a college degree **increased by 36.7%** between 2000 and 2008, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.<sup>27</sup>
- In Missouri, **73.1% of all children** between the ages of 5 and 17 in families that spoke a language other than English at home also spoke English "very well" as of [2008](#).<sup>28</sup>

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [\*The Foreign-Born Population: 2000\*](#), December 2003.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> 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 2008).
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [\*The Hispanic Population: 2000\*](#), May 2001.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- <sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [\*The Asian Population: 2000\*](#), February 2002.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Electoral College, [\*2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals\*](#).
- <sup>15</sup> Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, [\*Children in Immigrant Families in Missouri\*](#) (Albany, NY: University of Albany, SUNY, September 2009).
- <sup>16</sup> Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [\*The Multicultural Economy 2009\*](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2009).
- <sup>17</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [\*Hispanic-Owned Firms: 2002\*](#), August 2006.
- <sup>18</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [\*Asian-Owned Firms: 2002\*](#), August 2006.
- <sup>19</sup> 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- <sup>20</sup> 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.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 1.
- <sup>22</sup> Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, [\*A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States\*](#) (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, April 14, 2009), p. 30.
- <sup>23</sup> Ruth Ehresman, [\*Undocumented Workers: Impact on Missouri's Economy\*](#) (St. Louis, MO: Missouri Budget Project, June 2006), p. 2.
- <sup>24</sup> 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.
- <sup>25</sup> NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [\*The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2008-2009 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis\*](#) (Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2009).
- <sup>26</sup> Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [\*Missouri: Language & Education\*](#).
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.