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**NEW AMERICANS IN KANSAS:
The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians
in the Sunflower State**

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in Kansas. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 6.8% of the state's population, 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 4.1% 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 \$10 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of more than \$2.7 billion and employed more than 20,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is still recovering, Kansas 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 Kansas's population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Kansas's population rose from 2.5% in 1990,¹ to 5.0% in 2000,² to 6.8% in 2013,³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Kansas was home to 198,173 immigrants in 2013,⁴ which is larger than the total population of Salt Lake City, Utah.⁵
- **33.7% of immigrants (or 66,850 people) in Kansas were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2013**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **2.6% of the state's population** (or 75,000 people) in 2012, according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- **4.1% (or 59,888) of all registered voters** in Kansas 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 2012 Census Bureau data by American Immigration Council.⁸

1 in 8 Kansans are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Kansas's population** grew from 3.8% in 1990,⁹ to 7.0% in 2000,¹⁰ to 11.1% (or 322,424 people) in 2013.¹¹ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 1.2% in 1990,¹² to 1.7% in 2000,¹³ to 2.5% (or 73,219 people) in 2013,¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- **Latinos accounted for 2.6% (or 33,000) of Kansas voters** in the 2012 elections, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁵
- In Kansas, **87.9% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in 2009, according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In 2009, **91.9% of children in Asian families** in Kansas were U.S. citizens, as were **92% of children in Latino families**.¹⁷

Immigrant, Latino, and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add billions of dollars and thousands of jobs to Kansas's economy.

- **The 2014 purchasing power of Latinos totaled \$6.9 billion**—an increase of 887% since 1990. **Asian buying power in Kansas totaled \$3.2 billion**—an increase of 679% since 1990, according to the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia.¹⁸
- Immigration boosts housing values in communities. From 2000 to 2010, according to the Americas Society/Council of the Americas, the value added by immigration to the price of the average home was \$1,891 in Johnson County and \$825 in Sedgwick County.¹⁹
- Kansas's 4,833 **Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.4 billion and employed 12,676 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.²⁰ The state's 5,763 **Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.3 billion and employed 7,935 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²¹
- From 2006 to 2010, there were 7,378 new immigrant business owners in Kansas who had total net business income of \$351 million (5% of all net business income in the state), according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.²²
- In 2010, 5.3% of all business owners in Kansas were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.²³

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

- Immigrants comprised **8.6% of the state's workforce** in 2013 (or 128,535 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁴
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **3.5% of the state's workforce** (or 50,000 workers) in 2012, according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²⁵
- Latinos in Kansas paid **\$737 million in federal taxes and \$371 million in state/local taxes in 2013**, according to the Partnership for a New American Economy. In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$325 million in federal taxes and \$174 million in state/local taxes.²⁶

- o The federal tax contribution of Kansas's Latino population included over **\$563 million to Social Security and \$132 million to Medicare in 2013**. Foreign-born Latinos contributed over \$260 million to Social Security and \$61 million to Medicare that year.²⁷

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Kansas paid **\$58.9 million** in state and local taxes in 2010, including \$46.6 million in sales taxes, \$7.9 million in state income taxes, and \$4.4 million in property taxes, according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy.²⁸
- Were unauthorized immigrants in Kansas to have legal status, they would pay **\$69.2 million** in state and local taxes, including \$49.3 million in sales taxes, \$15.1 million in state income taxes, and \$4.8 million in property taxes.²⁹
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Kansas, **the state would lose \$1.8 billion in economic activity, \$807.2 million in gross state product, and approximately 11,879 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the Perryman Group.³⁰

Immigrants are important to Kansas's economy as students.

- Kansas's 10,631 **foreign students contributed \$238 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2013-2014 academic year, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators.³¹
- Foreign students contribute to Kansas's metropolitan areas. From 2008 to 2012, according to the Brookings Institution, 2,793 foreign students paid \$48.3 million in tuition and \$30.6 million in living costs in the Lawrence metropolitan area. In the Wichita metro area, 3,671 foreign students paid \$52.2 million in tuition and \$28.4 million in living costs.³²
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in Kansas. In 2009, "non-resident aliens" comprised 49% of master's degrees and 53.7% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the Partnership for a New American Economy.³³

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Kansas, **30.5% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2011 **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 23.9% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 26.2% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 43.5% of noncitizens.³⁴
- The number of immigrants in Kansas with a college degree **increased by 101%** between 2000 and 2011, according to data from the Migration Policy Institute.³⁵

- In Kansas, **83.4% of children with immigrant parents** were considered “English proficient” as of 2009, according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁶
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Kansas was 91.7%**, while for **Latino children it was 86.6%**, as of 2009.³⁷

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*, December 2003.

² Ibid.

³ 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jeffrey S. Passel, D’Vera Cohn, and Molly Rohal, *Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14: Decline in Those From Mexico Fuels Most State Decreases* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, November 18, 2014), p. 29.

⁸ Walter A. Ewing and Guillermo Cantor, *New Americans in the Voting Booth: The Growing Electoral Power of Immigrant Communities* (Washington, DC: American Immigration Council, October 2014), p. 27.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *The Hispanic Population: 2000*, May 2001.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, *The Asian Population: 2000*, February 2002.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹⁵ 2012 Current Population Survey, *Table 4b. Reported Voting and Registration, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2012*.

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 2014* (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2014), pp. 22, 24.

¹⁹ Jacob Vigdor, *Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market* (New York, NY: Americas Society/Council of the Americas, 2013).

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, *Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007*, June 2011.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Robert W. Fairlie, *Open for Business: How Immigrants are Driving Small Business Creation in the United States* (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2012), p. 32.

²³ David Dyssegaard Kallick, *Immigrant Small Business Owners: A Significant and Growing Part of the Economy* (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, 2012), p. 24.

²⁴ 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

²⁵ Jeffrey S. Passel, D’Vera Cohn, and Molly Rohal, *Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14: Decline in Those From Mexico Fuels Most State Decreases* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, November 18, 2014), p. 29.

²⁶ Partnership for a New American Economy, *The Power of the Purse: The Contributions of Hispanics to America’s Spending Power and Tax Revenues in 2013* (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2014).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Undocumented Immigrants’ State and Local Tax Contributions* (Washington, DC: July 2013).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, *The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2013-2014* (Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2014).

³² Neil Ruiz, *The Geography of Foreign Students in U.S. Higher Education: Origins and Destinations* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2014).

³³ Partnership for a New American Economy, *Help Wanted: The Role of Foreign Workers in the Innovation Economy* (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2013), p. 21.

³⁴ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, *Kansas: Language & Education*.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *The Urban Institute*, data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

³⁷ Ibid.