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

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for large and growing shares of the economy and population in the electoral swing state of Pennsylvania. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 5.9% of the state's population, and over half of them are naturalized U.S. citizens eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 4.5% of all registered voters in the state. Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) account for more than 8% of all Pennsylvanians and wield \$33 billion in consumer purchasing power. At last count, businesses owned by Latinos and Asians had sales and receipts of \$14.8 billion and employed more than 73,000 people. At a time when the economy is still recovering, Pennsylvania 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 Pennsylvania's population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Pennsylvania's population rose from 3.1% in [1990](#),¹ to 4.1% in [2000](#),² to 5.9% in [2011](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Pennsylvania was home to 756,410 immigrants in [2011](#),⁴ which is nearly the total population of [Columbus, Ohio](#).⁵
- **52.3% of immigrants (or 395,879 people) in Pennsylvania were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **1.3% of the state's population** in [2010](#) (or 160,000 people), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- **4.5% (or 290,283) of all registered voters** in Pennsylvania were "New Americans"—immigrants or the children of immigrants—according to an analysis of 2008 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁸

Roughly 1 in 12 Pennsylvanians are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Pennsylvania's population** grew from 2.0% in [1990](#),⁹ to 3.2% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 5.9% (or 751,430 people) in [2011](#).¹¹ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 1.1% in [1990](#),¹² to 1.8% in [2000](#),¹³ to 2.8% (or 358,168 people) in [2011](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos comprised 2.8% (or 161,000) of Pennsylvania voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians about one-half of one percent** (or 31,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵
- In Pennsylvania, **86.9% of children with immigrant parents** were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶

- In [2009](#), **87.6% of children in Asian families** in Pennsylvania were U.S. citizens, as were **95.2% of children in Latino families**.¹⁷

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

- The **2012 purchasing power of Pennsylvania's Latinos totaled \$16.1 billion**—an increase of 665% since 1990. **Asian buying power also totaled \$16.9 billion**—an increase of 648% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁸
- Pennsylvania's 31,313 [Asian-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of **\$11.6 billion and employed 58,506 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁹ The state's 22,777 [Latino-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of **\$3.2 billion and employed 15,362 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²⁰

Immigrants are essential to Pennsylvania's economy as workers.

- Immigrants comprised **7.1% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 457,910 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²¹
- Immigrants accounted for **nearly three-quarters of labor-force growth in Philadelphia** between 2000 and 2006, according to a report by the [Brookings Institution](#).²²
- Immigrants accounted for **10% of total economic output** in the Philadelphia metropolitan area and **4% of economic output** in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).²³
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **1.7% of the state's workforce** in [2010](#) (or 110,000 workers), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²⁴
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Pennsylvania, **the state would lose \$5.3 billion in economic activity, \$2.3 billion in gross state product, and approximately 27,718 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²⁵

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Pennsylvania paid **\$135 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²⁶ which includes:
 - \$34.9 million in state income taxes.
 - \$7 million in property taxes.
 - \$93.1 million in sales taxes.

Immigrants are integral to Pennsylvania's economy as students.

- Pennsylvania's 33,398 **foreign students contributed \$1.1 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](#).²⁷

Immigrants in Pennsylvania excel educationally.

- The number of immigrants in Pennsylvania with a college degree **increased by 58.9%** between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁸
- 35.1% of Pennsylvania's foreign-born population age 25 and older **had at least a bachelor's degree** in [2011](#), compared to 26.3% of native-born persons age 25 and older.²⁹
- In Pennsylvania, **88% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁰
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Pennsylvania was 88%**, while for **Latino children it was 87.5%**, as of [2009](#).³¹

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 & Associates and the Immigration Policy Center, [The New American Electorate: The Growing Political Power of Immigrants and Their Children](#) (Washington, DC: American Immigration Council, 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 2008 Current Population Survey, [Table 4b: Reported Voting and Registration of the Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2008](#).

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 Audrey Singer, et al., [Recent Immigration to Philadelphia: Regional Change in a Re-Emerging Gateway](#) (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, November 2008).

²³ 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.

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).

²⁶ The Immigration Policy Center, [*Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too*](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

²⁷ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2011-2012*](#) (Washington, DC: 2012).

²⁸ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Pennsylvania: Language & Education](#).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

³¹ Ibid.