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

There are few states where the growing political and economic clout of immigrants, children of immigrants, and Latinos is as apparent as Florida. Immigrants (the foreign-born) account for nearly 1 in 5 Floridians, and close to half of them are U.S. citizens eligible to vote. Latinos comprised roughly 1 in 7 of the state's voters in the 2008 elections, while immigrants and their children were nearly 1 in 5 of the state's registered voters as of 2008. Immigrants not only contribute 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 \$123.8 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of nearly \$90 billion and employed more than 400,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is in a slump, Florida would be ill-advised to alienate a significant component of its tax base and business community.

*Immigrants and their children are a large and growing share of Florida's electorate.*

- **The foreign-born** share of Florida's population rose from 12.9% in [1990](#),<sup>1</sup> to 16.7% in [2000](#),<sup>2</sup> to 19.4% in [2010](#),<sup>3</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Florida was home to 3,658,043 immigrants in [2010](#),<sup>4</sup> which is nearly the total population of [Los Angeles, California](#).<sup>5</sup>
- **48.5% of immigrants (or 1,773,148 people) in Florida were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2010](#)**<sup>6</sup> (up from 42.9% in [1990](#)<sup>7</sup>)—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **18.8% (or 1,649,512) of registered voters** in Florida 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](#).<sup>8</sup>

*1 in 5 Floridians are Latino—and they vote.*

- The **Latino share of Florida's population** grew from 12.2% in [1990](#),<sup>9</sup> to 16.8% in [2000](#),<sup>10</sup> to 22.6% (or 4,258,592 people) in [2010](#).<sup>11</sup> The **Asian share of the population** grew from 1.2% in [1990](#),<sup>12</sup> to 1.7% in [2000](#),<sup>13</sup> to 2.4% (or 452,240 people) in [2010](#),<sup>14</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 15.4%** (or 1,227,000) of Florida voters in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 1.1%** (or 84,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).<sup>15</sup> The number of Latino and Asian voters far exceeded the margin of victory ([236,450 votes](#)) by which Barack Obama defeated John McCain in Florida.<sup>16</sup>

- In Florida, **86.1% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.<sup>17</sup>
- In [2009](#), **89.1% of children in Asian families** in Florida were U.S. citizens, as were **89.8% of children in Latino families**.<sup>18</sup>

*Immigrant workers and taxpayers are integral to Florida's economy.*

- Florida's **immigrant workers contribute an estimated \$20 billion** to the state in taxes each year, according to a [2007](#) study by Florida International University:<sup>19</sup>
  - \$10.5 billion in federal taxes
  - \$4.5 billion in state and local taxes
  - \$1.3 billion in property taxes
  - \$3.2 billion in sales taxes
- Unauthorized immigrants in Florida paid **\$806.8 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,<sup>20</sup> which includes:
  - \$69.5 million in property taxes
  - \$737.3 million in sales taxes
- Immigrants comprised **24.4% of the state's workforce** in [2010](#) (or 2,259,883 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>21</sup>
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **6.6% of the state's workforce** (or 600,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.<sup>22</sup>
- Immigrants accounted for **38% of total economic output in the Miami metropolitan area** and **13% of total economic output in the Tampa metropolitan area** as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).<sup>23</sup>
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Florida, **the state would lose \$43.9 billion in economic activity, \$19.5 billion in gross state product, and approximately 262,436 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).<sup>24</sup>

*Latino and Asian consumers and business owners are integral to Florida's economy.*

- **The 2010 purchasing power of Latinos in Florida totaled \$107 billion**—an increase of 441.9% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$16.8 billion**—an increase of 614.3% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.<sup>25</sup>
- Florida's 450,137 **Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$72.6 billion and employed 302,345 people** in 2007,<sup>26</sup> the last year for which data is available. The state's 64,931 **Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$17.3 billion and employed 104,650 people** in 2007,<sup>27</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.

### ***Immigrants are integral to Florida’s economy as students.***

- Florida’s 29,708 **foreign students contributed \$827 million** to the state’s economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2009-2010 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).<sup>28</sup>

### ***Naturalized citizens excel educationally.***

- In Florida, **26.3% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2009](#) had a bachelor’s or higher degree, compared to 20.9% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 20.5% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 30.3% of noncitizens.<sup>29</sup>
- The number of immigrants in Florida with a college degree **increased by 59.3%** between 2000 and 2009, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.<sup>30</sup>
- In Florida, **86.8% of children with immigrant parents** were considered “English proficient” as of [2009](#), according to the Urban Institute.<sup>31</sup>
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Florida was 90.8%**, while for **Latino children it was 85.7%**, as of [2009](#).<sup>32</sup>

### **Endnotes**

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

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [The Foreign-Born Population: 2000](#), December 2003

<sup>8</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 2010).

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

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

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

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

<sup>15</sup> 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](#).

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Electoral College, [2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals](#).

<sup>17</sup> [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Emily Eisenhauer, et al., [Immigrants in Florida: Characteristics and Contributions](#) (Miami, FL: Research Institute for Social and Economic Policy of the Center for Labor Research and Studies, Florida International University: May 21, 2007)

<sup>20</sup> The Immigration Policy Center, [Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

<sup>21</sup> 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, [Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 25.

<sup>23</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>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).

<sup>25</sup> Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [The Multicultural Economy 2009](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007](#), June, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>28</sup> NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [\*The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2009-2010 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis\*](#) (Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Florida: Language & Education](#).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.