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

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in Georgia. Nearly 1 in 10 Georgians are immigrants (foreign-born), and more than one-third of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. “New Americans”—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 7.3% 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 \$26.5 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$20.6 billion and employed nearly 110,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is in a slump, Georgia 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 Georgia’s population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Georgia’s population rose from 2.7% in [1990](#),¹ to 7.1% in [2000](#),² to 9.7% in [2010](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Georgia was home to 942,959 immigrants in [2010](#),⁴ which is more than the entire population of [Jacksonville, Florida](#).⁵
- **35% of immigrants (or 329,875 people) in Georgia were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2010](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **7.3% (or 337,544) of all registered voters** in Georgia 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](#).⁷

More than 1 in 10 Georgians are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Georgia’s population** grew from 1.7% in [1990](#),⁸ to 5.3% in [2000](#),⁹ to 8.8% (or 854,708 people) in [2010](#).¹⁰ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 1.1% in [1990](#),¹¹ to 2.1% in [2000](#),¹² to 3.3% (or 320,515 people) in [2010](#),¹³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos comprised 3.1% (or 128,000) of Georgia voters in the 2008 elections, and Asians 1.3% (or 53,000)** according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁴
- In Georgia, **84.5% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens in [2009](#)**, according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁵

- In [2009](#), **83.2% of children in Asian families** in Georgia were U.S. citizens, as were **86.7% of children in Latino families**.¹⁶

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

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Georgia's Latinos totaled \$17 billion**—an increase of 1,185.7% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$9.5 billion**—an increase of 750.4% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁷
- Georgia's 46,222 **Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$14.6 billion and employed 82,186 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁸ The state's 32,574 **Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$6 billion and employed 25,874 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.¹⁹

Immigrants are integral to Georgia's economy as workers.

- Immigrants comprised **13.1% of the state's workforce** in [2010](#) (or 629,909 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁰
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **7% of the state's workforce** (or 325,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²¹
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Georgia, **the state would lose \$21.3 billion in economic activity, \$9.5 billion in gross state product, and approximately 132,460 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²²

Unauthorized immigrants contribute to the state's economy.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Georgia paid **\$456.3 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²³ which includes:
 - \$85.7 million in state income taxes.
 - \$36.4 million in property taxes.
 - \$334.2 million in sales taxes.
- The average unauthorized family in Georgia **contributes between \$2,340 and \$2,470** in state and local sales, income, and property taxes, according to a [2006](#) study by the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute. An unauthorized family that does not pay income taxes would have a **sales and property tax contribution of \$1,800 to \$1,860**.²⁴

Immigrants are integral to Georgia's economy as students.

- Georgia's 14,707 **foreign students contributed \$383.9 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](#).²⁵

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Georgia, **39.1% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2009](#) had a **bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 22.9% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 13.5% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 40.2% of noncitizens.²⁶
- The number of immigrants in Georgia with a college degree **increased by 82%** between 2000 and 2009, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁷
- In Georgia, **86% of children with immigrant parents** were considered “English proficient” as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.²⁸
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Georgia was 88.6%**, while for **Latino children it was 82.6%**, as of [2009](#).²⁹

Endnotes

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

² Ibid.

³ 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ 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).

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, *The Hispanic Population: 2000*, May 2001.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *The Asian Population: 2000*, February 2002.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹⁴ 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](#).

¹⁵ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, *The Multicultural Economy 2010* (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2010).

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, *Hispanic-Owned Firms: 2002*, August 2006.

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007*, June, 2011.

²⁰ 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

²¹ 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.

²² 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).

²³ The Immigration Policy Center, *Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too* (Washington, DC: April 2011).

²⁴ Sarah Beth Coffey, *Undocumented Immigrants in Georgia: Tax Contributions and Fiscal Concerns* (Atlanta, GA: Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, 2006)

²⁵ 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).

²⁶ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Georgia: Language & Education](#).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

²⁹ Ibid.