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NEW AMERICANS IN THE CONSTITUTION STATE:
The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in Connecticut

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in Connecticut. Nearly one-in-eight Connecticuters are immigrants (foreign-born), and almost half of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 10.6% 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 nearly $16 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of $3.2 billion and employed nearly 22,000 people at last count. At a time of economic recession, Connecticut 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 Connecticut's population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Connecticut's population rose from 8.5% in 1990,[1] to 10.9% in 2000,[2] to 13.0% in 2008,[3] according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Connecticut was home to 454,002 immigrants in 2008,[4] which is nearly the total population of Sacramento, California.[5]

- **45.2% of immigrants (or 205,305 people) in Connecticut were naturalized U.S. citizens** in 2008[6]—meaning that they are eligible to vote.

- **10.6% (or 174,856) of registered voters** in Connecticut 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.[7]

Roughly one-in-six Connecticuters are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Connecticut's population** grew from 6.5% in 1990,[8] to 9.4% in 2000,[9] to 12.0% (or 420,150 people) in 2008.[10] The **Asian share of the population** grew from 1.5% in 1990,[11] to 2.4% in 2000,[12] to 3.5% (or 122,544 people) in 2008,[13] according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- **Latinos accounted for 5.5%** (or 89,000) **of Connecticut voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 1.3%** (21,000), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.[14]

- In Connecticut, **more than four-in-five (or 86% of) children in immigrant families were U.S. citizens** in 2007,[15] according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.

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

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Latinos in Connecticut totaled $9.9 billion**—an increase of 324.6% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled $6.0 billion**—an increase of 459.6% since 1990, according to the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia.[16]

- Connecticut's 9,408 **Latino-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of $1.3 billion and employed 8,762 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available.[17] The state's 7,170 **Asian-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of $1.9 billion and employed 13,139 people in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.[18]

Immigrants are essential to Connecticut's economy as workers.

- Immigrants comprised **16.1% of the state's workforce** in 2008 (or 309,552 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.[19]

Unauthorized immigrants are integral to Connecticut's economy as workers.

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **4.2% of the state's workforce** (or 80,000 workers) in 2008, according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.[20]

- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Connecticut, **the state would lose $5.6 billion in economic activity, $2.5 billion in gross state product, and approximately 24,119 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the Perryman Group.[21]

Immigrants are integral to Connecticut's economy as students.

- Connecticut's 9,153 **foreign students contributed $297.8 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2008-2009 academic year, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators.[22]

Immigrants excel educationally.

- The number of immigrants in Connecticut with a college degree **increased by 52.2%** between 2000 and 2008, according to data from the Migration Policy Institute.[23]

- In Connecticut, **85.0% 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.[24]

Endnotes

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, *The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*, December 2003.
[2] Ibid.
[3] 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
[4] Ibid.
[5] U.S. Census Bureau, *2008 Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties*, May 13, 2009.
[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 2008).
[8] U.S. Census Bureau, *The Hispanic Population: 2000*, May 2001.
[9] Ibid.
[10] 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
[11] U.S. Census Bureau, *The Asian Population: 2000*, February 2002.
[12] Ibid.
[13] 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
[14] U.S. Electoral College, 2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals.
[15] Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, *Children in Immigrant Families in Connecticut* (Albany, NY: University of Albany, SUNY, September 2009).
[16] Jeffrey M. Humphreys, *The Multicultural Economy 2009* (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2009).
[17] U.S. Census Bureau, *Hispanic-Owned Firms: 2002*, August 2006.
[18] U.S. Census Bureau, *Asian-Owned Firms: 2002*, August 2006.
[19] 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
[20] 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.
[21] 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.
[22] 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).
[23] Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, Connecticut: Language & Education.
[24] Ibid.