

Immigration Policy Center (IPC)

...providing factual information about immigration and immigrants in the United States.

PRESS RELEASE

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Politics and Power: Immigration, Latino Voters, and the Texas Primary Anti-Immigrant Politics Failing as Texas Latino and Immigrant Voters' Influence Growing

Texas is one of the three delegate-rich states remaining to vote in the presidential primaries. On March 4, all eyes will be on Texas—in part, to see the impact of the large Latino electorate in this important primary. Record-breaking turnout of Latino primary voters in states as disparate as California, Connecticut and Missouri portend an important role for Latinos voting in the upcoming Texas primary where they constitute 22.4 percent of the registered voters in Texas. Read on to learn more about the influence of Latinos and immigrants in the Lone Star state.

Anti-immigrant Strategy Goes Thud: While Democratic candidates Sens. Clinton and Obama are stepping up their courtship of the Latino vote in Texas, Republican candidate Sen. McCain has all but sewn up the nomination. Analysis of the Republican candidates and their positions on immigration is well captured in a recent [Washington Post editorial](#) headline: “Nativism’s Electoral Flop, Bashers of Illegal Immigration are Failing at the Polls.” As the editorial suggests, Republican primary voters aren’t lured by the shrill alarms sounded by anti-immigrant candidates. Bumper sticker slogans with no solutions, offered by Republican candidates like Tom Tancredo and Mitt Romney, have fallen on deaf ears.

Texas Latinos as Business Owners and Buyers: The [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia estimates that Hispanic consumers in Texas accounted for \$153.7 billion in purchasing power in 2007—amounting to nearly 20 percent of the state’s total buying power. According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), there were 319,340 Hispanic-owned businesses in Texas in 2002, which accounted for 18 percent of all businesses in the state.

Immigrants and Texas’ Economic Health: A [2008 study](#) by the conservative Americas Majority Foundation found that the 10 states with the highest percentage of immigrants, including Texas, experienced the highest Gross State Product. The study found that a large immigrant population and recent increases in immigrant population are associated with elevated levels and growth rates in Gross State Product, personal income, per capita personal income, disposable income, per capita disposable income, median household income, and median per capita income.

Undocumented Immigrants’ Contributions to Texas Are Significant: A [2006 study](#) by the Texas State Comptroller found that “the absence of the estimated 1.4 million undocumented immigrants in Texas in fiscal 2005 would have been a loss to our Gross State Product of \$17.7 billion. Undocumented immigrants produced \$1.58 billion in state revenues, which exceeded the \$1.16 billion in state services they received.”

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