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**NEW AMERICANS IN THE SILVER STATE:
The Economic and Political Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in Nevada**

There are few states where the growing political and economic clout of immigrants, Latinos, and Asians is as apparent as in Nevada. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up roughly one-in-five Nevadans, and 37% of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. Immigrants and the children of immigrants account for nearly 15% of all registered voters in the state. Latinos (both foreign-born and native-born) account for one quarter of all Nevadans and wield over \$14 billion in consumer purchasing power. At last count, the sales and receipts of businesses owned by Latinos and Asians totaled \$3.6 billion and employed more than 25,000 people. Immigrant, Latino, and Asian workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs are integral to Nevada's economy and tax base—and they are an electoral force with which every politician must reckon.

Nearly 15% of registered voters in Nevada are immigrants or the children of immigrants.

- **The foreign-born share** of Nevada's population rose from 8.7% in [1990](#),¹ to 15.8% in [2000](#),² to 18.9% in [2008](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Nevada was home to 490,717 immigrants in [2008](#),⁴ which is roughly equal to the total population of [Atlanta, Georgia](#).⁵
- **36.8% of immigrants in Nevada (or 180,554 people) were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2008](#)**—meaning that they are eligible to vote.⁶
- **14.8% (or 133,890) of all registered voters** in Nevada are “New Americans”—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of large-scale immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to an analysis of 2006 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁷

Latinos make up one quarter of all Nevadans—and they vote.

- The **Latino share of Nevada's population** grew from 10.4% in [1990](#),⁸ to 19.7% in [2000](#),⁹ to 25.7% (or 668,243 people) in [2008](#).¹⁰ The Asian share of the population grew from 2.9% in [1990](#),¹¹ to 4.5% in [2000](#),¹² to 6.0% (or 156,010 people) in [2008](#),¹³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos comprised 11.6% (or 119,000) of Nevada voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 3.4% (or 35,000)**, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁴ The numbers of Latino and Asian voters exceeded Barack Obama's margin of victory over John McCain ([120,909 votes](#)) in this electoral battleground state.¹⁵

- In Nevada, **nearly three-fifths (or 58%) of the children in immigrant families were U.S. citizens** in [2007](#),¹⁶ according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.

Immigrants are essential to Nevada's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised **24.1% of the state's workforce** in [2008](#) (or 333,302 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁷
- Latino immigrants in Nevada paid roughly **\$2.6 billion in federal taxes** and **\$1.6 billion in state and local taxes** (including \$500 million in sales taxes) in 2005. The money that Latino immigrants “earn and spend in Nevada accounts for about 25% of the State's Gross State Product,” and Latino immigrant “employment, income and spending results in the creation of 108,380 jobs in Nevada,” according to a [2007 report](#) from the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada.¹⁸
- Latino immigrants comprised about **16% of the state's entire workforce** in 2005, and an even higher share in select industries: 81% of the agricultural workforce, 47% of the construction and mining workforce, and 22% of the entertainment and tourist services workforce, according to a [2007 report](#) from the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada.¹⁹

Unauthorized immigrants are integral to Nevada's economy as workers and consumers.

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **12.2% of the state's workforce** in [2008](#) (or 170,000 workers), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²⁰
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Nevada, **the state would lose \$9.7 billion in economic activity, \$4.3 billion in gross state product, and approximately 45,533 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²¹

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

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Nevada's Latinos totaled \$14.3 billion**—an increase of 955.3% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$6.1 billion**—an increase of 980.7% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.²²
- Nevada's 9,741 **Latino-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$1.6 billion and employed 12,874 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available.²³ The state's 8,872 **Asian-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$2 billion and employed 12,713 people in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²⁴

Immigrants are important to Nevada's economy as students.

- Nevada's 3,006 **foreign students contributed \$70.5 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](#).²⁵

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Nevada, **27.3% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2008](#) **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 13.2% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 22.6% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 46.5% of noncitizens.²⁶
- The number of immigrants in Nevada with a college degree **increased by 136.7%** between 2000 and 2008, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁷
- In Nevada, **74.1% 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](#).²⁸

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 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 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 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 U.S. Electoral College, [2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals](#).

¹⁶ Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, [Children in Immigrant Families in Nevada](#) (Albany, NY: University of Albany, SUNY, September 2009).

¹⁷ 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹⁸ Robert Ginsberg, Ph.D., [Vital Beyond Belief: The Demographic and Economic Facts about Hispanic Immigrants in Nevada](#) (Las Vegas, NV: Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, 2007).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, [A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, April 14, 2009).

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).

²² Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [The Multicultural Economy 2009](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2009).

²³ U.S. Census Bureau, [Hispanic-Owned Firms: 2002](#), August 2006.

²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, [Asian-Owned Firms: 2002](#), August 2006.

²⁵ 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).

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

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.