

April 2013

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

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in Kansas. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 6.9% of the state's population, and one-third of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 3.7% 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 \$9.8 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of more than \$2.7 billion and employed more than 20,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is in a slump, Kansas 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 Kansas's population and electorate.*

- **The foreign-born share** of Kansas's population rose from 2.5% in [1990](#),<sup>1</sup> to 5.0% in [2000](#),<sup>2</sup> to 6.9% in [2011](#),<sup>3</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Kansas was home to 198,767 immigrants in [2011](#),<sup>4</sup> which is roughly the total population of Salt Lake City, Utah.<sup>5</sup>
- **33.9% of immigrants (or 67,411 people) in Kansas were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#)**<sup>6</sup>—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **2.4% of the state's population** (or 65,000 people) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.<sup>7</sup>
- **3.7% (or 49,673) of registered voters** in Kansas 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 8 Kansans are Latino or Asian.*

- The **Latino share of Kansas's population** grew from 3.8% in [1990](#),<sup>9</sup> to 7.0% in [2000](#),<sup>10</sup> to 10.7% (or 306,806 people) in [2011](#).<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 2.3% (or 67,235 people) in [2011](#),<sup>14</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- **Latinos accounted for 3.2%** (or 39,000) **of Kansas voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 1.5%** (19,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).<sup>15</sup>
- In Kansas, **87.9% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.<sup>16</sup>
- In [2009](#), **91.9% of children in Asian families** in Kansas were U.S. citizens, as were **92% of children in Latino families**.<sup>17</sup>

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

- **The 2012 purchasing power of Latinos totaled \$6.7 billion**—an increase of 663% since 1990. **Asian buying power in Kansas totaled \$3.1 billion**—an increase of 679% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.<sup>18</sup>
- Kansas's 4,833 [Asian-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of **\$1.4 billion and employed 12,676 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.<sup>19</sup> The state's 5,763 [Latino-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of **\$1.3 billion and employed 7,935 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.<sup>20</sup>

*Immigrants are integral to Kansas's economy as workers and taxpayers.*

- Immigrants comprised **8.6% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 130,162 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>21</sup>
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **3.3% of the state's workforce** (or 45,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.<sup>22</sup>
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Kansas, **the state would lose \$1.8 billion in economic activity, \$807.2 million in gross state product, and approximately 11,879 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).<sup>23</sup>

*Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.*

- Unauthorized immigrants in Kansas paid **\$57.3 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,<sup>24</sup> which includes:
  - \$10.3 million in state income taxes.
  - \$3.9 million in property taxes.
  - \$43.1 million in sales taxes.

### ***Immigrants are important to Kansas's economy as students.***

- Kansas's 9,277 **foreign students contributed \$204 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2011-2012 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).<sup>25</sup>

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

- In Kansas, **30.5% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011 had a bachelor's or higher degree](#), compared to 23.9% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 26.2% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 43.5% of noncitizens.<sup>26</sup>
- The number of immigrants in Kansas with a college degree **increased by 101%** between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.<sup>27</sup>
- In Kansas, **83.4% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.<sup>28</sup>
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Kansas was 91.7%**, while for **Latino children it was 86.6%**, as of [2009](#).<sup>29</sup>

### **Endnotes**

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

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</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. 24.

<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> 2011 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> 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Electoral College, [2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals](#).

<sup>16</sup> [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [The Multicultural Economy 2012](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007](#), June 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> 2011 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. 24.

<sup>23</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), p. 69.

<sup>24</sup> Immigration Policy Center, [Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

<sup>25</sup> NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2011-2012](#) (Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Kansas: Language & Education](#).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

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

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.