

# NATIONWIDE GROWTH IN THE LATINO POPULATION IS A BOON FOR THE COUNTRY

Latinos\* have been part of the American fabric since the birth of the country and will play an essential role in the progress of the nation.† Newly released 2010 Census national data show that in the past decade, the Latino population has grown remarkably in most regions of the country and is characterized in large part by its youthfulness. Given the aging of our overall population and the growing number of baby boomers approaching retirement, the increase in the Latino population is good news. The expansion of this vibrant population in major cities, suburbs, and rural areas is a boon, as Hispanics increasingly contribute in essential ways to the economic, social, and political life of the country and to its future well-being.

Currently, one in four American children is Latino, nearly three in four Hispanics are U.S. citizens, and more than nine in ten Latino children are U.S. citizens. Latino workers are fueling U.S. industries that are key to the nation's economic growth: more than one in five American agricultural, construction, and food manufacturing workers are Hispanic. Through hard work and entrepreneurship, social and civic contributions, and a determination to see their children become productive Americans, Latinos are strengthening communities throughout the country.

- 1. Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population in the United States grew from 35.3 million to 50.5 million, accounting for more than half of the overall national growth rate during that period.**
  - The growth rate for the Latino population was 43%, compared to 5% for all non-Hispanics, 6% for non-Hispanic Whites, 12% for non-Hispanic Blacks, and 43% for Asians.<sup>1</sup>
  - One out of every six people in America is Latino, with Latinos currently representing 16% of the overall American population; 23% of American children under age 18 are Hispanic.<sup>2</sup>
  - The highest rates of growth in the Latino population can be seen in children and youth under the age of 18; the growth rate for Latinos under age 18 was 39%, while the rate of change in the same period for non-Hispanic youth decreased by 5%.<sup>3</sup>
- 2. The Latino population has grown in most areas of the country and has been particularly strong in the Southeast and West. In several states, the Hispanic population has more than doubled (see Map 1).<sup>4</sup>**
  - The states with the highest numbers of Hispanics are California, Texas, Florida, New York, Arizona, Illinois, New Jersey, Colorado, New Mexico, and Georgia.
  - The states with highest percentage of Latinos are New Mexico (46%), Texas (38%), California (38%), Arizona (30%), Nevada (27%), Florida (23%), and Colorado (21%) (see Table 1).
  - Between 2000 and 2010, the Latino population more than doubled in South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, North Carolina, Maryland, Mississippi, and South Dakota (see Table 2).

\* The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race. These data do not include the 3.7 million residents of Puerto Rico.

† This fact sheet was prepared by Patricia Foxen, Associate Director of Research, National Council of La Raza (NCLR), and Sara Benitez, Research Analyst, NCLR. Clarissa Martínez De Castro, Director of Immigration and National Campaigns, provided substantial oversight and input. Kari Nye, Senior Development Editor, and Kelly Isaac, Production Assistant and Graphic Designer, prepared this document for publication.

MAP 1.

Percent Growth in Latino Population, 2000–2010

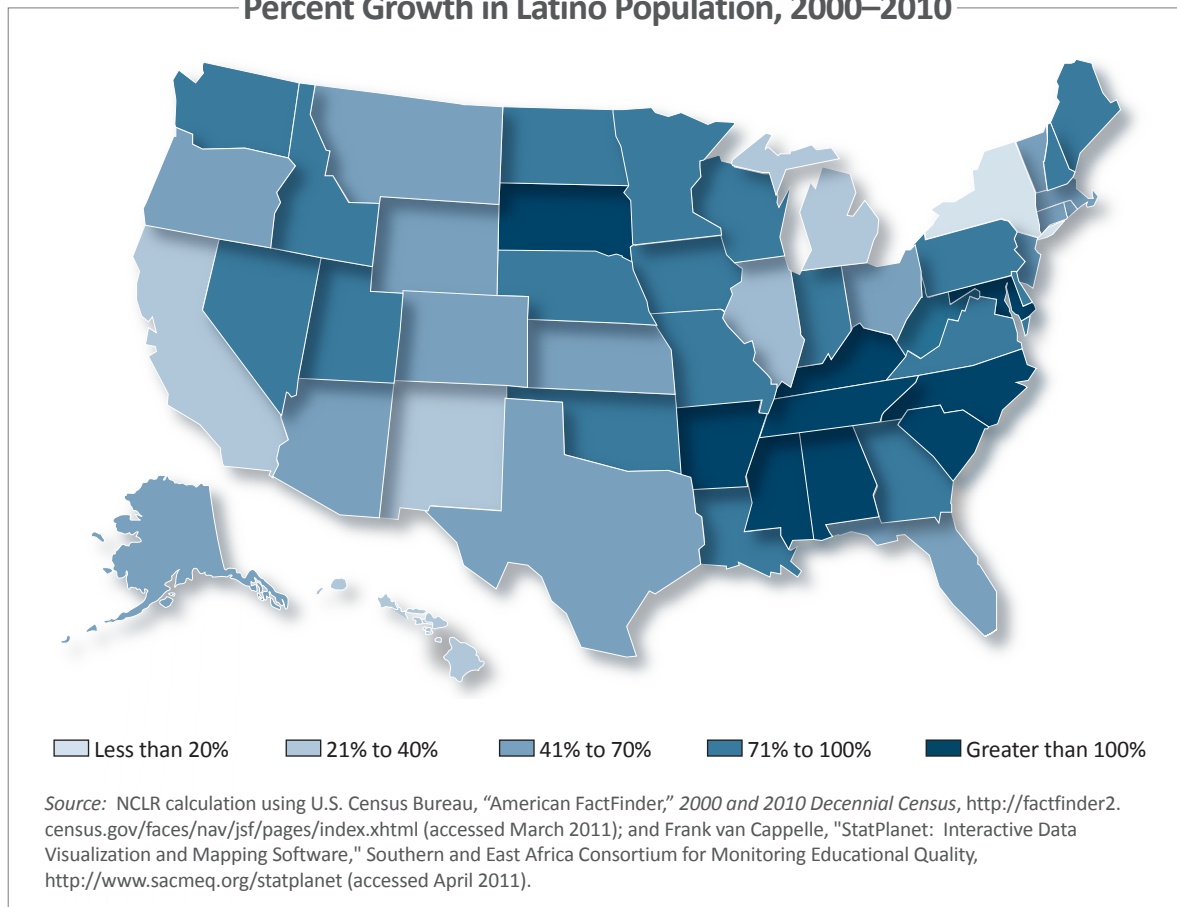


TABLE 1.

Ten States with the Largest Proportions of Latinos, 2010				
State	Total Population, 2010	Hispanic Population, 2010	Percent of Population That Is Hispanic, 2010	Percent Growth in Hispanic Population, 2000–2010
New Mexico	2,059,179	953,403	46%	25%
Texas	25,145,561	9,460,921	38%	42%
California	37,253,956	14,013,719	38%	28%
Arizona	6,392,017	1,895,149	30%	46%
Nevada	2,700,551	716,501	27%	82%
Florida	18,801,310	4,223,806	22%	57%
Colorado	5,029,196	1,038,687	21%	41%
New Jersey	8,791,894	1,555,144	18%	39%
New York	19,378,102	3,416,922	18%	19%
Illinois	12,830,632	2,027,578	16%	32%

Source: NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "American FactFinder," 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> (accessed March 2011).

TABLE 2.

Ten States with the Largest Growth in the Latino Population, 2000–2010				
State	Total Population, 2010	Hispanic Population, 2010	Percent of Population That Is Hispanic, 2010	Percent Growth in Hispanic Population, 2000–2010
South Carolina	4,625,364	235,682	5%	148%
Alabama	4,779,736	185,602	4%	145%
Tennessee	6,346,105	290,059	5%	134%
Kentucky	4,339,367	132,836	3%	122%
Arkansas	2,915,918	186,050	6%	114%
North Carolina	9,535,483	800,120	8%	111%
Maryland	5,773,552	470,632	8%	106%
Mississippi	2,967,297	81,481	3%	106%
South Dakota	814,180	22,119	3%	103%
Delaware	897,934	73,221	8%	96%

Source: NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "American FactFinder," 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> (accessed March 2011).

### 3. Latino population growth continues to bolster the country's economic strength and troop readiness, and will increasingly do so in the future.

- Latino men have the highest labor force participation rate of any demographic group. In 2010, three out of four Hispanic men (75%) were in the labor force, compared to 69% of non-Hispanic men.<sup>5</sup>
  - Today, 15% of the labor force is Latino, and by 2050, 30% of the workforce will be Latino.<sup>6</sup> Over the same time period, the country will age as the percent of the total U.S. population that is over age 65 grows from 13% in 2010 to 20% by 2050.<sup>7</sup> The growing Hispanic population will provide substantial contributions to Social Security coffers in a nation whose aging population increasingly depends on this program.
- The number of Hispanic-owned\* firms grew by 44% from 2002 to 2007, compared to 15% growth in the number of firms owned by non-Hispanics. Approximately 2.3 million businesses—8% of all U.S. non-farm businesses—are owned by Latinos.<sup>8</sup>
- Approximately 16% of newly enlisted, active duty members of all branches of the military are Hispanic.<sup>9</sup>

### 4. Trends over the past two decades show that Latinos are active participants in civic life and have a positive outlook toward the future. Moreover, Latino immigrants are successfully integrating all throughout nation.

- In the past decade, nearly six million Latinos became eligible to vote.<sup>10</sup> Hispanics exhibit the highest growth rates of voter registration and participation; investments in citizenship assistance and voter education and engagement will help this electorate reach numbers commensurate with its population size.<sup>11</sup>
- Nearly three in four Latinos (74%) are U.S. citizens, and more than nine in ten Latinos under the age of 18 (93%) are U.S. citizens.<sup>12</sup> Based on the trends of the last decade, at least 500,000 Latino youth will turn 18 every year for the next 20 years, adding ten million potential voters to the population.<sup>13</sup>
- A full 92% of U.S. Hispanics over age five speak at least some English. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of all Latinos report speaking only English at home; another two-fifths (39%) speak Spanish at home and report speaking English “very well,” which is considered the threshold for English language proficiency. About 28% of Hispanics speak Spanish at home and report speaking English “less than very well,” while 8% do not speak English.<sup>14</sup> The portion of Latino children who are fluent or speak only English increases from 58% in the first generation to 79% and 95% in the second and third generations, respectively.<sup>15</sup>
- In a poll conducted in early 2011, 72% of Latinos said that they felt optimistic about the future, despite the disproportionate impact of the economic recession and housing crisis on this population.<sup>16</sup>

\* The definition of “Hispanic-owned” is when Hispanics of any race own 51% or more of the stock or equity of a business.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010," *2010 Census Briefs*. Washington, DC, 2011, <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf> (accessed March 2011).
- 2 NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table P2: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race," "American FactFinder," 2010 Census National Redistricting Data SF, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> (accessed March 2011); and U.S. Census Bureau, "Table: P4 Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race for the Population 18 Years and Over," "American FactFinder," 2010 Census National Redistricting Data SF, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> (accessed March 2011).
- 3 Ibid.; and NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table QT-PL: Race, Hispanic or Latino, and Age, 2000," "American FactFinder," 2000 Census Redistricting Data SF (PL 94-171), <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> (accessed April 2011).
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 U.S. Census Bureau, "Data Retrieval: Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2010 (CPS)," [http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstc/cps\\_table\\_creator.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstc/cps_table_creator.html) (accessed April 2011).
- 6 NCLR calculation using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Annual Averages-Household Data," Current Population Survey, Washington, DC, 2010, <http://www.bls.gov/cps/tables.htm> (accessed July 2011), Tables 3 and 4; NCLR calculation using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Projected Labor Force Data—Long-Term Projections to 2050, Civilian Labor Force, to 2050," Employment Projections: Labor Force Demographic Data. Washington, DC, 2010, [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_data\\_labor\\_force.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_data_labor_force.htm) (accessed July 2011).
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- 8 U.S. Census Bureau, "Hispanic-Owned Businesses: 2007," *Survey of Business Owners*. Washington, DC, 2010.
- 9 Defense Manpower Data Center, Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Service*. Washington, DC, n.d., <http://prhome.defense.gov/MPP/ACCESSION%20POLICY/PopRep2009/appendixb/appendixb.pdf> (accessed March 2011).
- 10 Mark Hugo Lopez and Paul Taylor, *The 2010 Congressional Reapportionment and Latinos* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, 2011), <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/132.pdf> (accessed February 25, 2011).
- 11 NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008, 2006, 2004, 2002, 2000, 1998, 1996, and 1994," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics: P20 Series*, <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/p20.html#vote> (accessed March 2011).
- 12 U.S. Census Bureau, "Table BO50031: Sex by Age by Citizenship Status (Hispanic or Latino)—Universe: Hispanic or Latino Population," "American FactFinder," *2009 Community Survey*, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?\\_bm=y&-geoSkip=0&-tree\\_id=309&-toggle=&-showChild=Y&-context=dt&-skip=0&-mt\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G2000\\_BO50031&-redoLog=false&-currentselections=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G2000\\_BO50031&-lang=en&-SubjectID=18599050&-geo\\_id=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?_bm=y&-geoSkip=0&-tree_id=309&-toggle=&-showChild=Y&-context=dt&-skip=0&-mt_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G2000_BO50031&-redoLog=false&-currentselections=ACS_2009_1YR_G2000_BO50031&-lang=en&-SubjectID=18599050&-geo_id=) (accessed February 23, 2011).
- 13 Ibid.; *The 2010 Congressional Reapportionment and Latinos*; and U.S. Census Bureau, "Table C01001H: Sex by Age (White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino)—Universe: White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino Population," "American FactFinder," *2009 American Community Survey*, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?\\_bm=y&-context=dt&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G00\\_&-CONTEXT=dt&-mt\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G2000\\_C01001H&-tree\\_id=309&-redoLog=false&-caller=geoselect&-geo\\_id=01000US&-search\\_results=01000US&-ds\\_%20name=ACS\\_2009\\_1YR\\_G00\\_&](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?_bm=y&-context=dt&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&-CONTEXT=dt&-mt_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G2000_C01001H&-tree_id=309&-redoLog=false&-caller=geoselect&-geo_id=01000US&-search_results=01000US&-ds_%20name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_&) (accessed February 23, 2011).
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