



Immigration in Texas: Is it an Attack on Latinos?

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Texas, along with the rest of the nation, is amid changes and economic challenges. Too many Texans, including our state government, are struggling to make ends-meet. But it's imperative we find a balanced approach to addressing the state's needs and priorities. We believe that shared prosperity and responsible government is possible and that it begins with addressing the underlying *structural revenue deficits* that jeopardizes our future prosperity, *strengthening public education* not destroying it, fostering the *creation of new living wage jobs*, and *improving our social and health safety nets*. **This does not include fragmented state and local Immigration policies that are largely anti-immigrant and by default anti-Latino.**

The Changing face of America is Texas today.

With the new census figures revealing a 20.6% growth in state populations to a whopping 25,145,561, Texas was among the biggest gainers. As a result, this will bring 4 new congressional seats for Texas. This growth is fueled by birth to Latinos and immigration trends. More specifically, 65% of the Texas growth is attributed to Latinos. Today, one-in-three Texans are Latino (37.6%). In 17 Texas counties, the Latino population grew by 100%. Among our largest cities, Houston just under 2.1 million continues to grow followed by San Antonio, Dallas, Austin and Fort Worth, Latino growth was significant. The impact of currently proposed anti-immigrant legislation will have a direct impact on the Latino community of Texas.

Population Change of Texas Cities

City	2000	2010	Change
Houston	1,953,631	2,099,451	7.5%
San Antonio	1,144,646	1,327,407	16.0%
Dallas	1,188,580	1,197,816	0.80%
Austin	656,562	790,390	20.4%
Fort Worth	534,694	741,206	38.6%
El Paso	563,662	649,121	15.2%
Arlington	332,969	365,438	9.8%
Corpus Christi	277,454	305,215	10.0%
Plano	222,030	259,841	17.0%
Laredo	176,576	236,091	33.7%

According to U.S. Census, the foreign-born population in Texas makes up 16% of the population in 2008. Nationally, unauthorized immigrants accounted for 3.7% of the nation's population in 2009. Their share of states' total population were highest in California (6.9%), Nevada (6.8%) and **Texas (6.5%)**, Arizona (5.8%) and New Jersey (5.6%) in 2009 according to Pew Hispanic Center.

It is estimated that **more than four-in-five (85%) Texan children** are in immigrant families according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany (2007). Almost 4 million (79%) U.S. citizen children are living in a mix status family. It is estimated that children of unauthorized parents comprise 8% of newborns and 7% of children under 18. It is estimated that 1.5 million of 6 million uninsured children are excluded from programs due to their legal status.

Quick Facts on Latino/Immigrant Contribution to Texas:

- **Latino purchasing power** in Texas totaled \$175.3 billion an increase since 1990 according to Selig Center for Economic growth. Texas's Latino-owned businesses (319,340) generated over \$42.2 billion in sales and receipts and employed 280,156 workers in 2002. Many of these businesses are immigrant.-owned.
- **Immigrants contribute over \$300 billion annually to the U.S. economy.** Immigrants will contribute an average of \$80,000 more in per capita in taxes than they will utilize in there lifetime. Immigrants, without valid social security number, contribute \$7 billion to Social Security and \$1.5 billion in Medicare taxes annually.
- In 2006, Texas reported that immigrants **contribute over \$1.6 billion to the state economy** after taxes and fees. Texas is estimated to have 14% of the U.S. undocumented population.
- In a global economy, the interdependence of immigrant labor and their positive contribution to Texas can be measured by the loss (\$390.1 million) in exports by 2010 to the rest of the world and 18.7 billion GRP loss if they were deported.
- **Immigrants comprise of 20.4% of Texas' workforce in 2008** and 7.9% of state's workforce are unauthorized immigrants. Immigrants come to work but they are more likely to work in industries that do not offer health insurance. Nationally, among legal immigrants 44% had health insurance in 2005. Only 5% of workforce were unauthorized, comprising 9% of low-wage workers and 23% of low-skilled workers.
- **Legal immigrants must comply with 5-yr eligibility restrictions** of federally matched services (Medicaid, Medicare, SCHIP) The truth is, it impacts bienestar (well-being) and places a strain on the healthcare system as they fall into the uninsured population silo. Legal and undocumented immigrant children are more likely to be uninsured, sicker and more costly when they finally attain service. The current citizenship process can take anywhere from 8 to 18 years.
- Contrary to popular belief, utilization of the ER by immigrants is lower than that of the native citizen and reflects their hesitance and fear to utilize health care services.

It is time to recognize that the economic sustainability of Texas is interdependent on our bi-cultural/bi-lingual heritage. Texas' rich history has always been interwoven with Latino influence from the state's early development to the present - *it's the Texas way*. It is time to end the dehumanization of immigrants by acknowledging the importance to our border socio-culture environment and the economic sustainability of Texas. **Anti-immigrant legislation sends an Anti-Latino message to media, business, tourists and our community.**

Just like in Arizona, Latinos and immigrants are vital to the state economy. In 2006, Texas reported that immigrants contribute over \$424 million to the state's economy after accounting for state spending on immigrants. A leading economist in Texas, Rick Perryman, estimates that if all undocumented individuals were to leave Texas, the state would lose \$69.3 billion in spending and 403,000 jobs. This is based on the experience of Arizona, who lost more than \$140 million in lost meeting and convention dollars according to a report by Center for American Progress, Texas cannot afford the economic impact to the state's revenue during this budget crisis.

Unfunded mandates only further exacerbate budgetary challenges for local communities. Asking state agencies, our underfunded schools and local communities with limited resources to act as immigration enforcement is the most ineffective and expensive means to deter immigrants or address the broken immigration system. We need to be having a real discourse on state's priorities that build on our future such as quality education for our children, jobs, and social and health safety nets for our vulnerable.

The bienestar (well-being) of the Latino community is interconnected to community well-being and security. Subsequently, Texas security depends on community security. Legislation that hurts vital relationships needed for building public safety and community trust by requiring local law enforcement to engage in immigration will make it a challenge to keep our communities safe. Overwhelming, **Eight-in-ten Latinos say local police should not be involved in identifying undocumented** or illegal immigrants reveals a poll by the Pew Hispanic Center.

We need real policy solutions not legislation that creates "suspect class" of Texans. With one-in-three Texans of Latino descent, targeted anti-immigrant legislative efforts hurt Latinos and Texas as a whole. A recent report by the Southern Poverty Law Center highlights the effects of anti-immigrant ordinances and states laws on local communities and states; which gave way to an increase in tension to race-relations between Latinos (Latino immigrants) and mostly White natives and spikes in hate crimes against Latinos. This is not the Texas way!

Texas' future is in your hands, lets build and invest not segregate and isolate. Investing in Texas's future begin with children and students. **Schools are not border check points!** Unfunded mandates to schools and institutions of higher learning to monitor immigration status is misguided as school face unprecedented budgetary cuts that will undoubtedly shape our educational system.

With the latest debate heating up regarding the repeal of the Constitution's 14th amendment which seeks to challenge the birthright citizenship of children of unauthorized immigrants will only exacerbate efforts to make Latinos feel socially isolated and segregated. Thus, utilizing policy obstacles or deny public services under this premise undermines civil rights of U.S. citizens, opens the door to racial profiling and places our state vulnerable to lawsuits.

The health security of Texas should be based on improving accessibility not creating unfunded obstacles for both Texans and local communities. The current efforts, that are anti-immigrant in nature, will have dire implications to the delivery and access of healthcare resources to our whole Latino community. This misguided effort to close the largely non-existing loophole will only further exacerbating real problems of affordable and accessible healthcare in areas that really need it, such as medically under-served areas. Policy deterrents like denying public services are not effective and often penalize those who need it most, poor U.S. citizens and children.

Immigrants are integral to our social and economic well-being as Texans, and misguided efforts to scapegoat immigrants, otherwise known as Latinos, will not solve the real problems at hand - a \$25 billion dollar budget deficit. Socially and economically isolating immigrants through unfunded mandates does not make our communities safer nor remotely begins to address immigration or our budget crisis. **We ask that you not support legislation that unjustly targets a segment of Texas' population, does not make our communities safer and are economically damaging.**