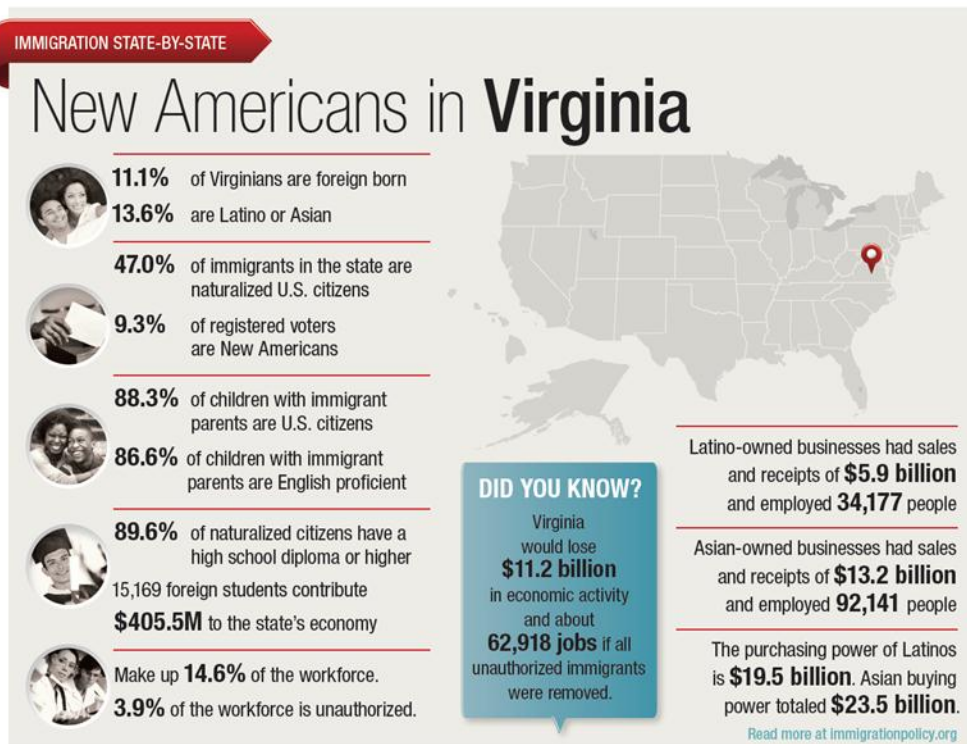


BUILDING A FUTURE OF GROWTH AND PROGRESS FOR OUR HISPANIC COMMUNITY

“According to the American Immigration Council, 1 in 9 Virginians are immigrants and 47% of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote.”

Analysts say that Latinos, when combined with Asian Americans in Virginia, a group that is referred to as the “New Americans” is poised to have a significant impact on current state races and an even greater effect in the future as Virginia continues to diversify.



We are THE fastest growing electorate here in the Commonwealth and across the nation, as evidenced by the projections of the Virginia Employment Commission:

Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity

	2020	2030	2040
Total			
Total Population	8,811,510	9,645,277	10,530,232
Race			
White	5,755,169	5,978,914	6,167,573
Black or African American	1,678,125	1,766,817	1,820,478
Asian	605,362	790,241	1,014,115
Other	772,860	1,109,306	1,528,060
Ethnicity			
Not Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7,829,139	8,225,822	8,574,707
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	982,363	1,419,461	1,955,522

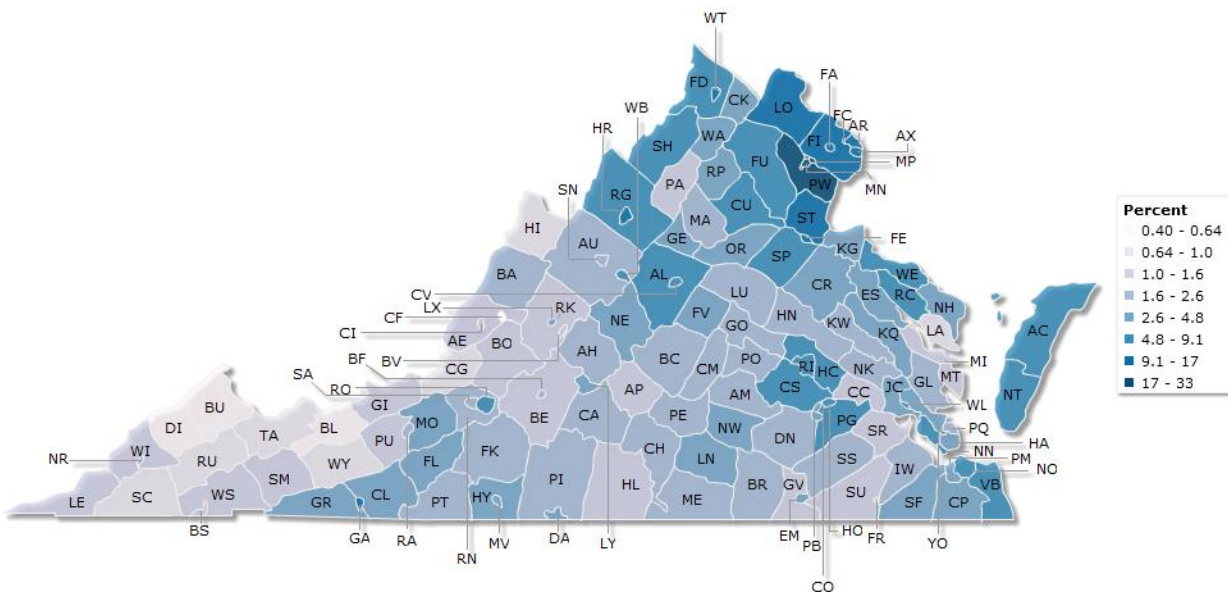
Population and National Origin

		U.S. Rank ²
Total Hispanic Population in Virginia	649,000	16
Hispanics as Percent of State Population	8%	28
Hispanics as Percent of U.S. Hispanic Population	1.2%	16
Native-Born Hispanics (Percent of Hispanics)	53%	46
Foreign-Born Hispanics (Percent of Hispanics)	47%	6
Mexican Origin (Percent of Hispanics)	24%	38
Non-Mexican Origin (Percent of Hispanics)	76%	10

Virginia’s Latino population of 649,000 has soared by 92% since 2000 and Latinos represent **20 billion dollars in purchasing power**, not to mention that 74% of them are citizens registered to vote.

Earnings: Persons 16 and older with earnings	Median	U.S. Rank
Annual Personal Earnings of Hispanics	\$24,000	4
Annual Personal Earnings of Non-Hispanic Whites	\$36,000	9
Annual Personal Earnings of Non-Hispanic Blacks	\$26,300	11

The state’s expanding Latino electorate is a consequence of its fast-rising population, now 8% of all residents. While Latinos are moving out of old suburban strongholds such as Arlington, their numbers are skyrocketing elsewhere - in cities such as Richmond (up 152%), rural counties such as Chesterfield (up 200%), and scattered towns such as Harrisonburg (up 114%).



Because of us, we now have leaders at the state and federal level that support programs, like SWaM (the Small, Women-owned, and Minority-owned Business certification program) and DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals); like the DREAM Act and SB-1090, that would allow immigrant students that meet certain criteria, to apply for in-state tuition.

VIRGINIA AT A GLANCE	
HISPANIC POPULATION	649,000
HISPANICS AS PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION	8%
MEDIAN AGE OF HISPANICS	27
MEDIAN ANNUAL PERSONAL EARNINGS, HISPANICS 16+	\$24,000
POVERTY RATE, HISPANICS 17 AND YOUNGER	25%
HISPANICS WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE	32%
HISPANIC HOMEOWNERSHIP	44%
HISPANICS AS PERCENT OF ALL K-12 STUDENTS	10%

All these programs not only lift up our community, equalize the playing field, and provide us with economic opportunity and the power to succeed; but they also contribute to the state's economy and incentivate growth and development:

- Virginia's 15,169 **foreign students contributed \$405.5 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.

- In Virginia, **86.6% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of 2009, according to data from the Urban Institute.

- In Virginia, **48.8% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2011 had a **bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 33.5% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 10.4% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 27.1% of noncitizens.

- The number of immigrants in Virginia with a college degree increased by 91.1% between 2000 and 2011, according to data from the Migration Policy Institute.

And the best part of it all is that WE did that; we made that happen, since Latinos comprised 2.0% (or 48,000) of Virginia voters in the 2008 elections and, at the end of the day, democracy is about creating change at the voting booth.

However, our work is not done here yet...

When we talk about building a future for growth and progress for the Hispanic Community in Virginia, it is important that we understand the forces that affect our society: we need to have a vision that focuses on people and their quality of life. A vision that emphasizes diversity, and inclusion and provides direction and motivation for change.

In Virginia, over half of our community views immigration reform as the most important issue, including me. Immigrants are essential to Virginia's economy as workers, since they comprised 14.6% of the state's workforce (or 624,635 workers) in 2011, according to the U.S. Census

Bureau; and unauthorized immigrants comprised 3.9% of the state's workforce (or 160,000 workers) in 2010, according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center. People ask me all the time why am I so passionate about Immigration Reform, and my answer is always the same: because I am an immigrant myself.

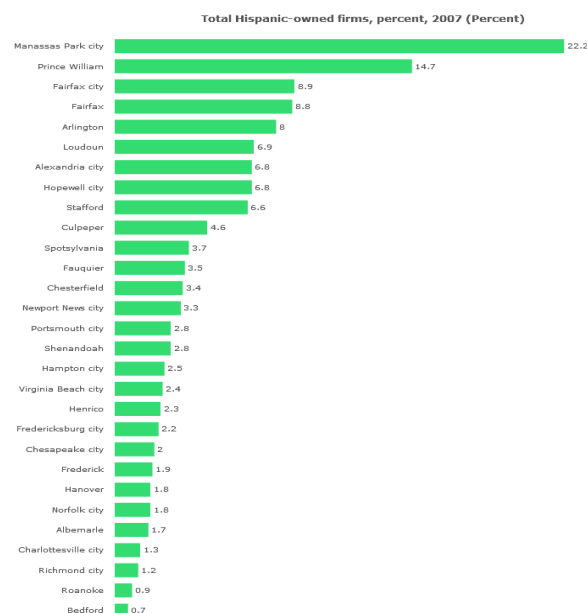
I am originally from Mexico City and I came to this country after marrying a Naval officer a little over three years ago. Even though I have two bachelor's degrees, two masters, and I have been working in two of Wall Street's major powerhouses for the past three years, things have not been easier for me in any way. I am here on a greencard. I have all the responsibilities that a citizen has such as paying taxes and social security, but sometimes I still get looked down as some sort of class B citizen: a legal resident alien.

Nobody ever said that moving to a different country would be easy. Making a life change is scary and even if we don't have the power to control the things that happen to us we do have the power to decide where do we go from here.

Even though deciding to leave my country was one of the hardest choices I have ever made, I have found a home here, in Virginia. A state whose driving factors encompass economic development, a strong military presence, quality of education, employment for future generations, safe and stable neighborhoods, urban and cultural opportunities, and recreational and environmental preservation.

"41.2% of Virginia's foreign-born population age 25 and older had a bachelor's or higher degree in 2011, compared to 34.1% of native-born persons age 25 and older"

This new generation of Latinos who I represent, is made up of educated people with family values and high ethical standards. Some of them have an extensive academic preparation, some of them were denied that opportunity, but all of them are part of this community, of the workforce and of your every day life.



Some of these immigrants work in agriculture and construction, others are teachers and professors in academic institutions, started their own businesses, or work for the largest companies in the United States, but there is one thing we all have in common: we are all now a part of this country. We are all immersed in the development of America, a country that has given us the opportunity to grow, to learn and to apply our knowledge and experience in different fields.

Just as this country has offered us the chance to be a part of it by employing us in its workforce, each and every single one of us is also directly contributing to improving the economy and in making this country a better place for everyone that lives here:

“If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Virginia, the state would lose \$11.2 billion in economic activity, \$5.5 billion in gross state product, and approximately 62,918 jobs, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time.”

Growth and progress come into practice through public policy and fiscal incentives. At the end of the day, it is not about the left or the right, the color, or the hat. It is about doing what is best for this country, for the community and for our families.

This is why I get involved. This is why I care. The things that you're passionate about, I came to find out, are not random: they are you calling. And I would like to encourage others from our community, especially all the members of this board, to stand up and let their voices be heard.

Great things never came from comfort zones... So let's take a chance! Let's make a difference. Let's create change by working together and getting involved!

Will it be easy? No.

Will it be worth it? Absolutely!