

ISSUES BRIEFING

Facts about key issues affecting Connecticut's Hispanics



Connecticut's Largest Minority

CAUSA is a statewide organization dedicated to enhancing the general well-being of the Hispanic/Latino population in Connecticut through research, advocacy and technical assistance through and with its member agencies. According to the 2006 Census estimates, Latinos are the largest minority population in the state. Since 1990, 179,422 Latinos have become new residents of Connecticut. With a population of 392,538, Latinos now represent 11.2% of Connecticut's population—a 84.2% increase since 1990. By 2025, projections indicate that the number will grow to 574,000 or 13% of the state's population.

In the U.S., almost 60% are of Mexican origin, followed by Puerto Rican (9.7%), Central American (5.1%), South American (4.0%), Cuban (3.5%), Dominican (2.3%), Spanish (0.3%) and other descent. Connecticut's profile is quite different. People of Puerto Rican origin account for 61% of all Latinos in the state, with 7% being Mexican, 2% Cuban, 3% Dominican, 4% Central American, 10% South American, and 12% other Hispanic of Latino origin.

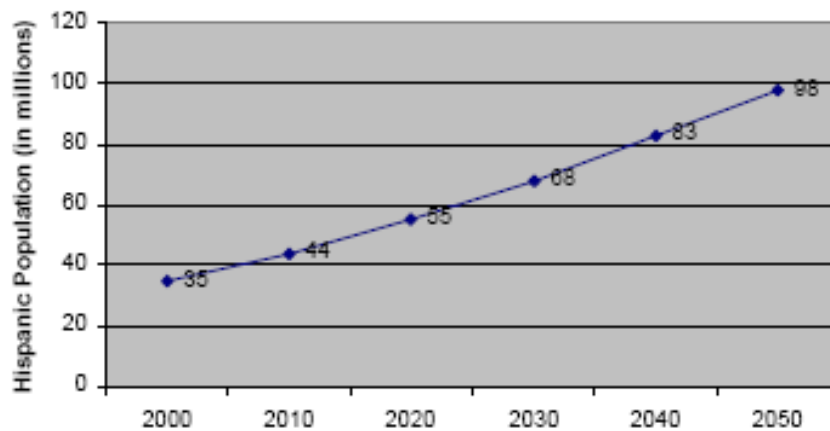
In key cities throughout Connecticut, Latinos account for a significantly larger percentage of the population including: Hartford – 41%, Bridgeport – 32%, New Britain – 27%, Windham – 27%, Waterbury – 22%, New Haven – 21%, Meriden – 21%, and New London – 20%.

Connecticut's Hispanic population has grown 84.3% since 1990.

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Hispanic American Profile



National Population Projections: 1999-2100. U.S. Bureau of the Census

GET THE FACTS!

Message from the Executive Director

Learning the facts is one of the most important first steps in taking action. This special issue of CAUSA News focuses on some of the most critical issues facing the Latino population in Connecticut. Despite the growth in population, Latinos lag behind in a number of areas—health, education and criminal justice. In addition, many Latino families are affected by immigration issues. It is our aim to make our Hispanic communities stronger and healthier by advocating for programs and resources that address these concerns.

CAUSA's member agencies throughout the state offer many services geared to Latinos. Staff are bilingual and are experienced with the challenges featured in this issue of the News. The facts are startling. We hope that by becoming more informed that you will seek out your local Hispanic-serving organization to learn about the ways that you can help contribute to a stronger, healthier Latino community in Connecticut.



Sincerely,
Carmen Sierra, Executive Director CAUSA, INC.

LATINO HEALTH CRISIS

Health Disparities

According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2005, Hispanics of all races experienced more years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 than non-Hispanic whites in five causes of death:

- Stroke (18 percent higher)
- Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (62 percent higher)
- Diabetes (41 percent higher)
- HIV (168 percent higher)
- Homicide (128 percent higher)

Widespread lack of health insurance is one the most urgent health problems facing Latinos today. Latinos without health insurance are more likely to poor health outcomes and premature death. Connecticut has one of the lowest "un-insurance levels" in the country, the eighth lowest in the nation and the sixth lowest among the employed, with about ten percent of the adult population lacking health insurance (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/RWJF, 2005).

Connecticut's population is 11.2% Latino and yet Latinos make up 40% of the uninsured in the state.

- Connecticut ranks 49th out of the 50 states for the percent of the economy spent on state-funded health care, with programs for women and children bearing the brunt of this under-funding.
- Compared with non-Latino whites, Latinos are 2 times as likely to develop diabetes, it has been found that four out of every ten Latinos are at risk for developing diabetes. Latinos have a 60% higher mortality rate for diabetes than non-Latino whites.



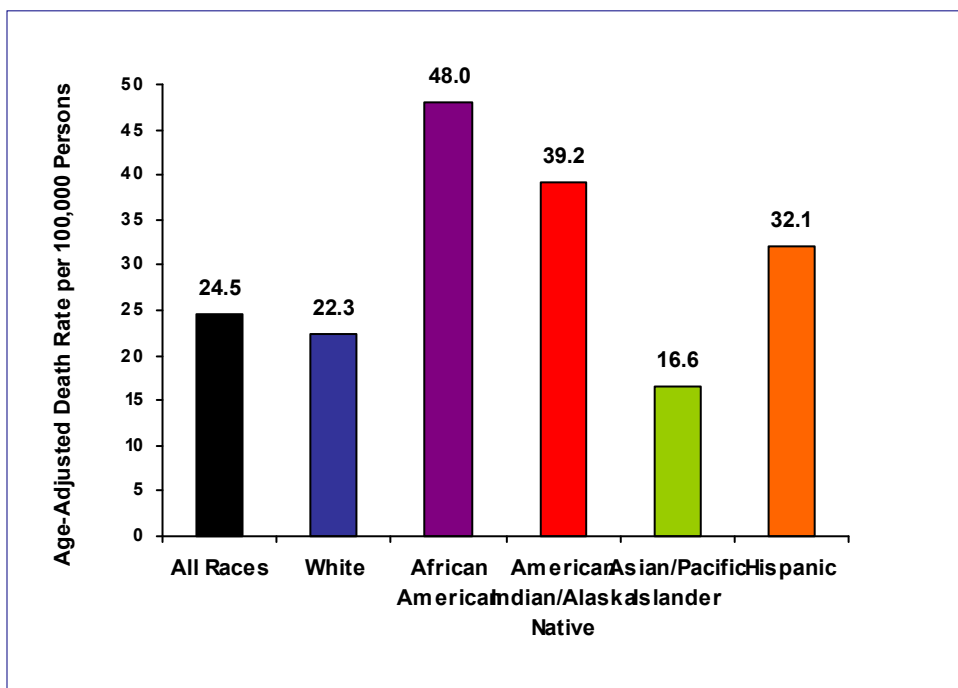
LATINO HEALTH CRISIS (continued)

- Latino children have asthma hospitalization rates that are five times higher than those of non-Latino white children.
- National data indicate that Latinos have a lower overall cancer rate than non-Latinos, but for Latina females ages 25 to 54, cancer is the leading cause of death. However, uninsured Latinas are 2 times more likely than non-Latina whites to be diagnosed with cancer at a later stage. Consequently, even though overall breast cancer incidence rates are lower among Latinas than non-Latino white women, Latinas are more likely to die from breast cancer
- The AIDS epidemic has put the Latino population of Connecticut at great health risk. AIDS prevalence is notably greater among Latinos in the Northeast, including Connecticut, than in the rest of the country. Latinos account for 25% of the cumulative AIDS cases in Connecticut. AIDS cases continue to be diagnosed at higher rates in Hispanics (58.1 per 100,000) compared with whites (6.3 per 100,000).
- Latinos currently have the highest teen birth rate. In 2004, for every 1,000 female teens between the ages of 15 and 19 there was the following number of pregnancies: Asians – 17.3, Non-Latino whites – 26.7, American Indians – 52.6, Non-Latino African Americans – 63.1, and Latino teens – 82.6.
- Hispanic families are much more likely to live in poverty and experience food insecurity than white non-Hispanic households. While 11.2 percent of all U.S. households experienced hunger at some time during 2003, the prevalence of food insecurity among Hispanic families was more than 22 percent.
- 22% of physicians report being unprepared to treat patients with limited English proficiency, a problem that is further exacerbated by the lack of language interpreter services in health settings.
- Less than one percent of the licensed psychologists in the U.S. report that they are Spanish-speaking and it is estimated that there are only 20 Latino mental health providers available for every 100,000 Latinos in the country.

"There are continuing disparities in illness and death experienced by...Hispanics."

—Office of Minority Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Death Rates per 100,000 Persons by Race & Hispanic Origin for Diabetes Mellitus: U.S., 2004 (Office of Minority Health)



EDUCATION

Too Many Latinos Left Behind

The Latino community consistently rates the education of its children as a top priority. Latino students have made progress over the past decade, but gaps along the educational pipeline still exist. The greatest disparities are in the areas of early childhood education and high schools, where the disparity between Latinos and other groups is greatest. CAUSA has advocated for policy outcomes that will make the Connecticut's public school system more responsive to the needs of Latino children.

Approximately 2.9 million Hispanics are enrolled in U.S. high schools, representing 17% of all secondary public school students. Yet, Hispanic students are less likely than their non-Hispanic peers to complete high school, and high school dropout rates are highest among recent Hispanic immigrants who face the enormous challenge of learning English, performing well on state academic assessments, and graduating within four or fewer years.

- Hispanic students had the poorest performance on the Connecticut Mastery Tests with only 32% of Hispanic students at or above the goals standards. At the 8th grade level, less than 20% of Hispanic students were at or above the goal on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test. (Connecticut Department of Education).
- According to the Urban Institute, only 53% of all Hispanic students in the U.S. graduated from high school in 2001. Among Hispanic males, only 48% graduated. In Connecticut, Hispanics have the highest drop out rate at 4.4%.
- In 2005-06, over 20,000 or 69.6% of Connecticut's 29,552 English language learners were Hispanic. This group of Hispanic students represented almost one-quarter of all Hispanic students in the state.
- While Connecticut's student population is somewhat diverse, with 33.2 percent of students drawn from racial or ethnic minority groups, Connecticut's teaching force is quite homogeneous. During the 1996-97 school year, 66.4 percent of the teaching force was made up of white women. By 2005-06, that figure had grown by 2.2 percentage points to 68.6 percent.
- In 2005-2006, Hispanic male teachers represented only 0.9% of all teachers; Hispanic females represented 2.3%.

Connecticut's Statewide Annual Dropout Rate by Ethnicity

	Asian American	American Indian	Black	Hispanics	White
1999-00	2%	5.1%	4.7%	8%	2.1%
2000-01	2%	5.1%	4.7%	8%	2.1%
2001-02	2.4%	4.9%	4.1%	5.4%	1.9%
2002-03	1.6%	1.6%	3.2%	5.2%	1.5%
2003-04	1%	1.6%	3%	4.3%	1.3%
2004-05	1.1%	3%	2.8%	4%	1.1%
2005-06	0.7%	2.2%	2.6%	4.4%	1.2%



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Hispanics Overrepresented in the Criminal Justice System

Recent polls show that Latinos care very much about protecting public safety and fighting crime, but the Hispanic community is losing a whole generation of people.

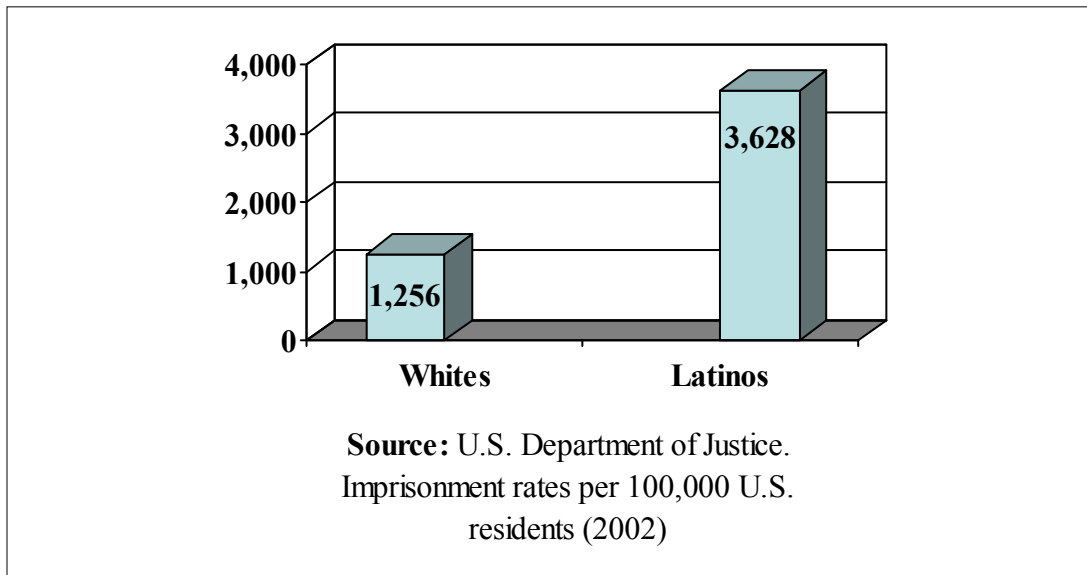
Lost Opportunities: The Reality of Latinos in the U.S. Criminal Justice System, co-authored by National Council of La Raza, the Center for Youth Policy Research (CYPR), and Michigan State University's Office of University Outreach & Engagement, is the first comprehensive examination of Hispanics in every facet of the criminal justice system – from arrest to sentencing, including juvenile justice. The analysis is based on data from government sources, including the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Hispanics are overrepresented in the nation's criminal justice system, with Hispanic defendants imprisoned three times as often and detained before trial for first-time offenses almost twice as often as whites, despite being the least likely of all ethnic groups to have a criminal history.
- The report also found that Hispanics represented 13 percent of the U.S. population in 2000, but accounted for 31 percent of those incarcerated in the federal criminal justice system. Hispanics have one chance in six of being confined in prison during their lifetimes.
- According to Connecticut Department of Corrections data, Hispanics represent 26.7% of those incarcerated in the state.
- On June 29, 2007, Connecticut raised the age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 16 to 18. The passage of the provision (contained in the state budget bill) followed a legislative report issued earlier in the year that recommended the change. The raise in age will come into effect on July 1, 2009, to give the courts and state agencies time to plan for the change. There are now only two states, North Carolina and New York, which set 16 as the age of criminal court jurisdiction.

"The future economic and social prosperity of the U.S. is largely dependant on the well-being of the Latino community. Therefore, we cannot afford to lose a generation of Latinos to incarceration."

—Congressman Ciro Rodriguez, U.S. House of Representatives Chair, Congressional Hispanic Caucus

Imprisonment Rates per 100,000 U.S. Residents



IMMIGRATION

Immigration Reform On Hold

The current U.S. immigration system is in need of fundamental reform, but efforts for comprehensive immigration reform will be delayed until after the 2008 Presidential election. The current immigration laws are out of tune with our country's economy, and millions of close family members remain in visa backlogs for years, waiting to be reunited with their families. Furthermore, more immigrants are paying large sums to smugglers and risking their lives to work and be reunited with their families; the number of border deaths has increased dramatically in recent years, now reaching nearly one death per day. There are approximately eight to ten million undocumented immigrants living and working in the U.S., filling essential gaps in the labor market while enduring low wages and poor working conditions. These workers often live in the shadows of society, often using false identification documents, and fearful of reporting crimes to the police.

Immigration to Connecticut

The increase in Connecticut's foreign-born population during the 1990s accounted for 77 percent of the state's overall population increase during the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, Connecticut gained 91,000 immigrants, bringing the total number of foreign-born residents in the state to almost 370,000, an increase of 32 percent. Foreign-born residents now account for 11 percent of the total state population. In Stamford and Danbury, more than one of every four residents is an immigrant, while in Norwalk and Greenwich, about one in five is. About 806,000 people in Connecticut are immigrants or the children of immigrants, 24 percent of the state's population, slightly above the national average of 20 percent.

Illegal Immigration to Connecticut

In August of 2007, New Haven Connecticut became the first U.S. city to issue identification cards to illegal immigrants. More than 100 people lined up outside City Hall to receive the largely debated cards. This issuing of identification cards comes in the midst of heated immigration debates. The cards, which are being offered to all of New Haven's 125,000 residents—including some 10,000 to 12,000 illegal immigrants—are designed to open up many services such as banking to the immigrants, who face increasing crackdowns by communities across the United States.

For many of these immigrants, the cards offer peace-of-mind in a climate where the federal and local governments are increasingly at odds over what to do with the roughly 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. While Congress has failed to move forward on a controversial immigration law, new laws or proposals in more than 90 cities or counties across the U.S. prohibit landlords from leasing to illegal immigrants, and penalize businesses that employ them. Some of the measures are being challenged in court. City officials feel the cards will also encourage immigrants who are crime victims or witnesses to cooperate with authorities.

Days after city officials approved the program, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents conducted raids that led to about 30 arrests. City officials said the raids appeared to be retaliatory, but ICE officials have said the raids had nothing to do with the city's approval of the ID program. There is speculation that some immigrants may be reluctant to apply for an ID card because of the raids. However, it is predicted that most will still seek the ID cards.

According to INS (USCIS) figures, 39,000 illegal aliens resided in Connecticut as of 2000. This figure is 34 percent higher than the previous INS estimate in 1996. It is 105 percent higher than the estimate taken in 1990.



Danbury: Tensions Around Immigration Issues

In early February 2008, the Danbury Common Council voted 19-2 to approve a plan to allow some city police officers to enforce immigration law. Outside during the testimony, hundreds of protestors gathered outside the building to object. As a result of the approval, Chief of Police Al Baker can enter into a training partnership with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Mayor Mark Boughton, a supporter of the agreement, indicated that the training is needed because of the federal government's lack of action on immigration reform. "On the local level, we have to manage the policy of failed Federal Policy -- and that's all I'm trying to do," Mayor Boughton concluded. Danbury has a large number of undocumented workers.

New Haven: Senators Christopher Dodd and Joseph Lieberman and Representative Rosa DeLauro Raise Questions About Immigration Raid

In June 2007, an immigration raid was conducted in New Haven—a day following the approval of the identification card program by the City of New Haven. In a letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, the three lawmakers asked for clarification about the way in which the raid was conducted.

"Several aspects of the enforcement operation have raised concerns for us, the Mayor of New Haven, and many residents in Connecticut," the lawmakers wrote. "For instance, while it is our understanding that the enforcement action that took place in New Haven was part of a nationwide initiative to target and apprehend individuals with final orders of removal, we have received reports that only 4 of the 31 individuals who were detained had deportation orders."

Between 1990 and 2000, Connecticut gained 91,000 immigrants, bringing the total number of foreign-born residents in the state to almost 370,000, an increase of 32 percent. Foreign-born residents now account for 11 percent of the total state population.

Speakers of Foreign Languages <i>(at home in Connecticut in the 2000 Census)</i>	
Spanish	268,045
Italian	50,890
French	41,960
Polish	38,490
Portuguese	30,660
German	14,310
Chinese	13,090
Greek	9,445
Russian	8,805
French Creole	7,855

(Source: Census Bureau report: Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over, April 2004)

MEMBER AGENCIES and PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



Casa Boricua

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Casa Otoñal

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New Life Corporation

Ariel Martinez 203-777-0313
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San Juan Sports Center

George Cruz 860-525-0360
180 Pleasant St. Hartford, CT 06103

San Juan Center

Aura Rivera 860-522-2205
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South Norwalk Community Center

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Spanish Community of Wallingford

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Spanish Speaking Center of New Britain

Mary Sanders 860-224-2651 29 Cedar St.
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