

# FORUM 411

Engaging Arizona's Leaders

## IMMIGRATION: FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL TO KIDS



### Can You Ace This Quiz?

True False

- 1. One out of three Arizona children has at least one immigrant parent.
- 2. Eighty percent of pre-K children of immigrants are U.S. citizens.
- 3. Immigrants will account for a bigger share of new workers in 2020 than native born citizens.
- 4. Half of K-12 students in Arizona are English Language Learners.
- 5. Immigrants today are learning English as quickly as those early in the 20th century.

Forum 411 is a quarterly briefing series offering policy, business, and community leaders vital information on Arizona's critical issues. Forum 411 refers to Morrison Institute's location at the ASU Downtown Phoenix Campus, which is located at 411 North Central. Morrison Institute seeks to be a source of public policy ideas and provide a venue for discussion. Morrison Institute invites everyone to be part of Forum 411.

How did you do? Surprised? You're not alone. Few people think of kids when they think of immigration. The brass-tacks truth, though, is that immigration is as much about children and parents as it is about workers and employers. In fact – no matter how you feel about immigration overall – the reality is that the opportunities and challenges represented by Arizona's global generations may be as far-reaching as sanctions and "sweeps." What's going on? This briefing reviews the basics about immigration in terms of what's happening globally, locally, and for kids.

1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. True





## Migration is at a High Point Worldwide

Demographics, economics, world events, and unintended consequences of past policies have converged to make immigration, particularly unauthorized immigration, one of Arizona's top concerns.<sup>1</sup> But Arizona is not alone in coping with people crossing borders. The Population Reference Bureau reports the "number of international migrants is at an all time high," including more than 3% of the world's population. Not surprisingly, the U.S. is in the midst of *another* historic immigration cycle. "As the 20th century came to a close, the United States experienced an extraordinary transformation of its population. More immigrants, legal and illegal combined, arrived during the decade of the 1990s than in any other decade on record."<sup>2</sup> By 2006, 37.5 million immigrants, including approximately 12 million unauthorized newcomers, resided in the U.S., comprising 12.5% of the population. This is the highest *number* in the nation's history, but in percentage terms it falls below the almost 15.0% recorded in 1890 and 1910.

### IMMIGRATION HAS ITS OWN JARGON



"Immigrant" is a big umbrella over a mix of long-time residents and recent newcomers, including naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees, and unauthorized residents. Immigrants and their children are often described by generations. Commonly used terms include:

- **FIRST GENERATION** Persons who were born abroad
- **SECOND GENERATION** Persons born in the U.S. with at least one foreign born parent
- **THIRD GENERATION** Persons born in the U.S. to native born parents
- **GEN G** Young people who are part of the global generations, meaning immigrants or their children
- **MIXED STATUS** A family with authorized and unauthorized members
- **AUTHORIZED** Legal status according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- **UNAUTHORIZED** Lack of legal approval to be and work in the U.S. over time. "Undocumented", "unauthorized", and "illegal" are used synonymously in this paper.

During much of the 19th century, the U.S. welcomed newcomers. By the 1880s, however, Americans worried that the U.S. was simply too open. Congress passed the first major qualitatively restrictive immigration measure in 1882. A century later, another landmark statute, the 1986 *Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)*, was put into place.

Immigration increased in the 1990s for some clear reasons:

- A strong economy pulled high- and low-skill workers and entrepreneurs to communities throughout the U.S., including many which had scant experience with immigration.
- Poor economic conditions and civil unrest pushed people to leave their homelands.
- Workforce pressures encouraged a wide array of employers to look to migrants as employees.
- Well-established networks, rapid transportation, and instant communication facilitated movement and keeping in touch across borders.
- The legal capacity to unify families supported migration.

While concerns for the nation's borders have always been high in some quarters, immigration tended to be tolerated through the good times of the 1990s. In the 2000s, though, the mood shifted as high levels, recession, and war created a more fearful attitude, particularly where change was "freshest and fastest-paced."<sup>3</sup> Reports on the results of Census 2000 highlighted the higher proportion of foreign born residents and movement of immigrants to rural and urban areas beyond such traditional centers as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

### Arizona Became a Destination and an Immigrant Corridor

Thanks in part to its location and economy and in part to border enforcement in Texas and California, Arizona became an entry corridor and an immigrant destination. By 2006, some 929,000 foreign born residents accounted for 15.1% of Arizonans, compared to

## U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY IS A STORY OF QUOTAS, WORKERS, AND FAMILIES



### Selected Federal Statutes and Proposals

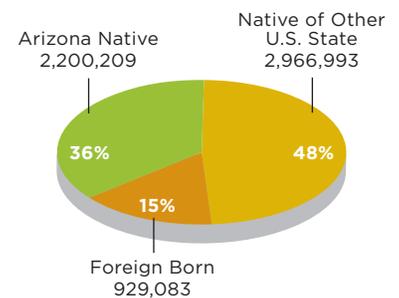
Year	Statute	Selected Features
1790	Naturalization Rule	Set a two-year residency requirement for citizenship.
1882	Chinese Exclusion Act	Banned labor from China and began the modern legislative history of immigration.
1921	Emergency Immigration Act	Established the national-origin quota system as the U.S.' first overall immigration policy.
1965	Immigration and Nationality Act	Ended the national-origin quota system. Established policies for family reunification and skilled workers.
1980	Refugee Act	Created a system to treat refugees separately from immigrants.
1986	Immigration Reform and Control Act	Set employer restrictions and required verification of legal work status. Provided a process for unauthorized immigrants to become legal.
1996	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act	Placed restrictions on federal aid to illegal immigrants. Set guidelines for access to benefits by legal immigrants.
2007	Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act or Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act (Proposed but not enacted.)	Designed to provide a path to legal residency, resources for border security, and a restructuring of priorities around skills and economic needs.

7.6% in 1990.<sup>4</sup> Metropolitan Phoenix joined such regions as Dallas, Atlanta, Las Vegas, and Washington, D.C. as new gateways, notable for their immigrant growth over the past 25 years. Indeed despite its border with Mexico, Arizona stands out for the “newness” of its immigrant communities. For example among the state’s foreign born population, according to the Migration Policy Institute:

- 32% came during the 1990s.
- Another 31% entered in 2000 or later.
- Just 30% are naturalized citizens.
- More than 20,000 were refugees who arrived between 1997 and 2006.

The big numbers, rapid changes, and genuine differences of opinion about the consequences of immigration have combined to create a raucous, and often rancorous, debate in the state. The discussion has been colored by differences between perceptions and reality. For example, many Arizonans have assumed that:

### ROUGHLY TWO OUT OF THREE ARIZONANS CAME FROM ANOTHER STATE OR COUNTRY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006.

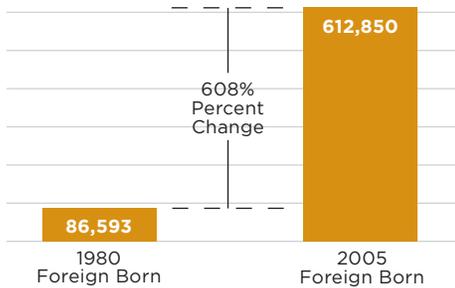
**FALSE** **NEARLY ALL OF THE STATE'S LATINO RESIDENTS ARE IMMIGRANTS - AND MOSTLY UNAUTHORIZED AT THAT.** Actually, Arizona is home to 1.8 million Latino residents of whom more than six out of 10 are native born. Two-thirds of Arizona immigrants are from Mexico. The Pew Hispanic Center has estimated approximately 500,000 unauthorized immigrants live in Arizona with some 260,000-292,500 of these residents in the labor force.



**FALSE** **IMMIGRANTS - PARTICULARLY UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS - ARE INVOLVED IN MOST VIOLENT CRIME.** National studies have repeatedly concluded that immigrant men have lower rates of crime and incarceration than native born residents. This is not to say that crimes are not committed by illegal immigrants. Most high-profile crimes among these residents have been shown to be related primarily to human smuggling and drug trafficking.



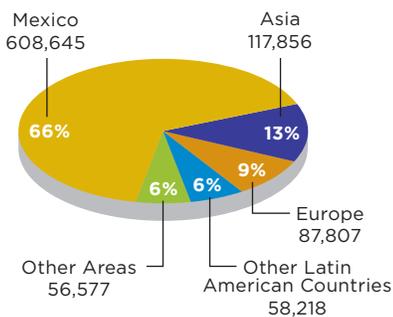
**GROWTH IN THE FOREIGN BORN POPULATION HAS MARKED THE PAST 25 YEARS IN METRO PHOENIX**



Source: *Twenty-First Century Gateways: Immigration Incorporation in Suburban America*, The Brookings Institution, 2008.

**IMMIGRANTS COME TO ARIZONA FROM ALL OVER THE GLOBE**

*Countries of Origins for Arizona's Immigrants*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006.



**✓ FALSE** **TODAY'S IMMIGRANTS ARE NOT LEARNING ENGLISH AS QUICKLY AS IN THE PAST.** Researchers have shown that immigrants are acquiring skills as they have in the past. English mastery is lowest among first generation immigrants – who are currently most visible in Arizona – and greater among second generation residents, who have generally gone to school in the U.S. By the third generation, English has become the dominant, if not the only language, among the vast majority of individuals.<sup>5</sup>

**✓ FALSE** **IMMIGRANTS ARE ONLY LOW-SKILL WORKERS.** Foreign born residents account for approximately 18% of the state's 3-million-strong workforce and bring vastly different levels of human capital to the state. The scientist has skills that are in demand in Arizona's knowledge economy, while the landscaper is necessary in the service economy. Yet some skilled workers have no choice but to take low-skill jobs to get by. Stories abound of high-skill immigrants who are unable to get jobs in their fields (think engineers serving fast food) because of the lack of a U.S. credential or insufficient English. Foreign born Latinos on average have the lowest levels of education among Arizona's immigrants. Overall however, low-skill immigrants are often similar to native born workers. Arizona's below average educational attainment for 20- and 30-somethings reflects not just immigrants' low levels but also the state's poor record on educating homegrown students.

Workforce development research has shown there are pathways out of low-wage jobs, although not all workers can participate in education and training services. Due to passage of Proposition 300 in 2006, for example Arizona limits access to state-sponsored adult education, English instruction, and in-state tuition to citizens and legal residents. Among those who applied for English classes during the last half of 2007, 6% of potential participants (1,149 people) "were denied instruction because they failed to provide acceptable evidence of citizenship or legal residence in the United States."<sup>6</sup> Still, 2,434 people remained on a waiting list.

Considering the looming wave of baby boomer retirement, slow native labor force growth, and global demands, immigrants and Gen G will be important in all types of jobs.

**Now Nearly One in Three Arizona Kids Are Immigrants or Native Born Sons and Daughters of Immigrants**

More Arizona children have foreign born parents than the entire population of Mesa, the state's 3rd-largest city. These more than 471,000 kids are 31% of all residents under 18 and 61% of children age six and under. "Mixed status" families are common, in part because eight out of 10 children of immigrants are U.S. citizens.<sup>7</sup>

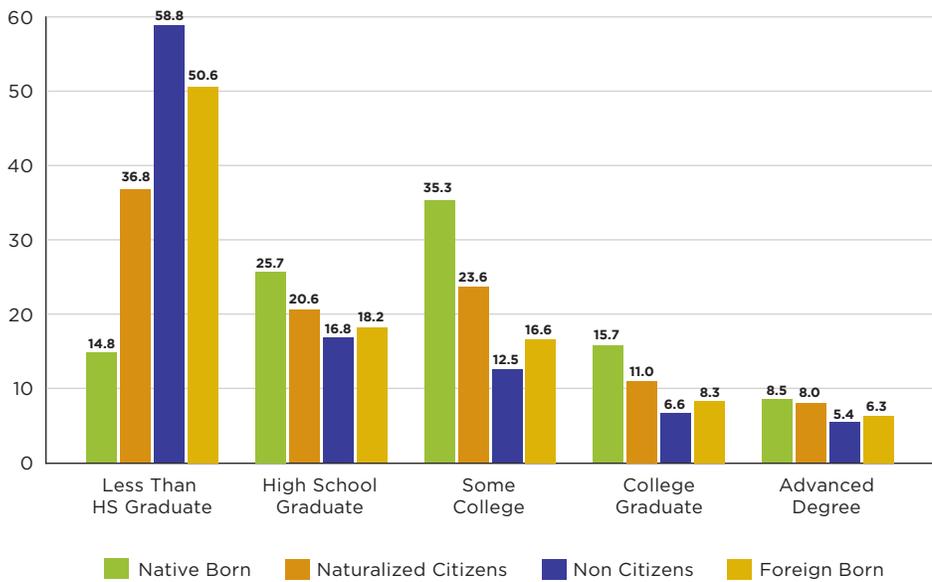
*Many Work to Integrate Newcomers into Arizona's Communities*

**FRIENDLY HOUSE** was established during the last immigration wave to assist with the naturalization of new immigrants. Today, their services include youth programs, workforce development, home care, and general family assistance.

**THE ARIZONA REFUGEE COMMUNITY CENTER** helps refugees integrate into their new communities and achieve self-sufficiency. They provide ESL and citizenship courses, employment assistance, and help with housing.

## NATIVE BORN AND NATURALIZED CITIZENS LEAD IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Percent of Immigrants in Arizona by Educational Attainment Categories



Source: 2000 U.S. Census.



Like children throughout the U.S., the bulk of first and second generation children in Arizona face greater obstacles than the children of native born parents. Gen G children are more likely, among other characteristics, to:

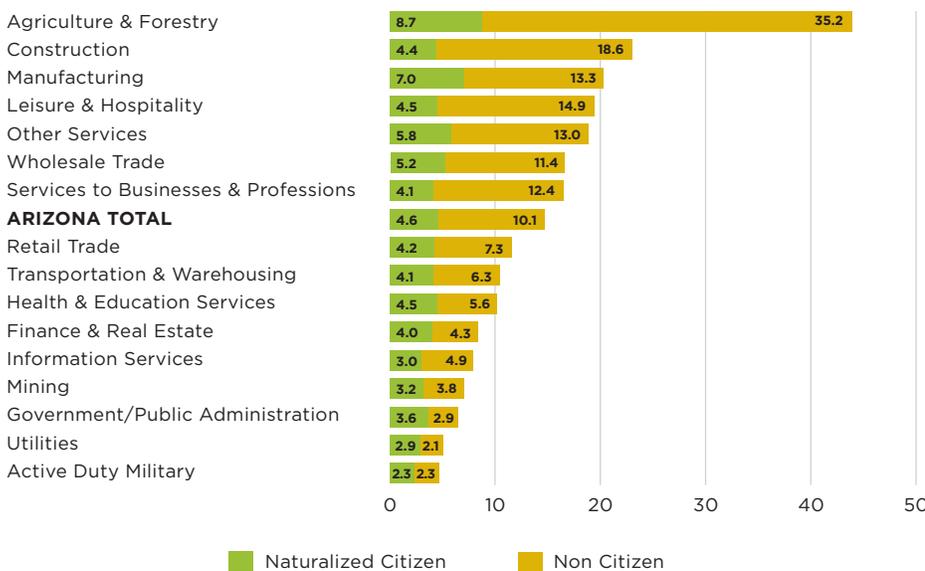
- Have parents with limited educations – a factor closely associated with lags in many facets of child development
- Grow up in poverty – another risk factor for falling behind peers
- Lack health insurance – when poor health can affect school achievement
- Tend not to use public health and benefit programs – even when they are eligible

Current research puts a fine point on the barriers facing immigrant children. For example, University of Texas sociologist Robert Crosnoe recently studied Mexican first and second generation students as they transitioned to elementary school. The circumstances faced by the Mexican immigrant families as their children started school included:

- “A lower level of the entry-level cognitive skills valued by U.S. schools
- Fewer socio-economic resources in the family
- Lower rates of parent-child activities at home as valued by U.S. schools
- Poorer physical health
- Lower rates of pre-school enrollment
- School segregation”<sup>8</sup>

## AMONG FOREIGN BORN WORKERS, NON CITIZENS OUTNUMBER NATURALIZED CITIZENS

Percent of Immigrant Workforce for Various Industry Groups in Arizona



Source: 2000 U.S. Census.

## Arizona’s Next Workers Are in School Now

Surveys over time have shown that speaking English has a high priority among immigrants and native born citizens alike. U.S. schools have been charged with providing services for English language acquisition since *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision in the early 1970s. Among Arizona’s 1.1 million K-12 students, approximately 140,000 are “English Language Learners” (ELL). Since there is no way to count the number of immigrant

students in school, this number is often used as a proxy, although it underestimates the number since not every immigrant student fits in this category. In addition, some children may speak a Native American language as their first language. The number of students targeted for language acquisition assistance escalated rapidly in recent years in Arizona and throughout the U.S. Among the 50 states and D.C., 32 saw the number of English learners rise by 50% or more between 1995 and 2005.

ELL students face disadvantages as they strive to master English and academic subjects, particularly if they come from a family with less educational achievement. They tend to:

- Score lower on standardized tests than other students. On all three major monitors of educational achievement used in Arizona – National Assessment of Educational Progress, AIMS, and Terra Nova – ELL students performed at the lowest levels at 4th grade and at 8th grade.<sup>9</sup>
- Share the lowest graduation rate (59%) with Native American students, in comparison to 70% for all students in 2006.<sup>10</sup>
- Attend postsecondary education at lower rates than other students.

But disadvantage is also in the eye of the beholder. Kent Paredes Scribner, superintendent of the mostly immigrant Isaac School District in central Phoenix (and soon moving to the Phoenix Union district), has noted that first and second generation students have much to offer. “For many of them, English is not the only language they speak and their cultural experiences differ from those of mainstream America. They must overcome great obstacles in order to attend school regularly and be ready to learn. We have repeatedly been told that companies competing globally actively recruit employees who are bilingual, bicultural, and resilient... students attending schools in Arizona’s inner-city neighborhoods have many ‘disadvantages of success’ that can provide them a competitive edge in the global economy.”<sup>11</sup> Schools in the Isaac district are just some throughout Arizona that have shown success in raising achievement levels among immigrant students.

The long-running (since 1992) *Flores v. Arizona* lawsuit has sought to improve English acquisition among students. The subject of numerous court rulings and studies over the years on methods and costs, *Flores* has continued to keep the spotlight on Arizona’s English learners. In 2006, the technique of English immersion was adopted by the Arizona Legislature. On April 14, 2008, Governor Janet Napolitano allowed a measure providing \$40 million in additional funding to become law without her signature to avoid millions of dollars in fines, saying “the legislature has more to do.”

Arizona has been in the forefront of states’ responses to unauthorized immigration in recent years. In 2007, Arizona was the first to pass an “employer sanctions” bill, requiring Arizona businesses to use a federal verification program to ensure they do not hire unauthorized individuals. Violators of the *Legal Arizona Workers Act of 2007* are subject to a suspension or revocation of their business licenses if they do not comply. A quantitative analysis of the effects of the law has not been done yet, but observers in Arizona businesses, housing complexes, and school districts report that workers and families are leaving the state. With fewer jobs in this economic downturn and this new atmosphere, no one can predict what the next stage of the immigration story will be and what life will be like for Gen G.

## ARIZONA’S IMMIGRANT FAMILIES COME IN SEVERAL FORMS

### Status of Children of Arizona’s Immigrant Families

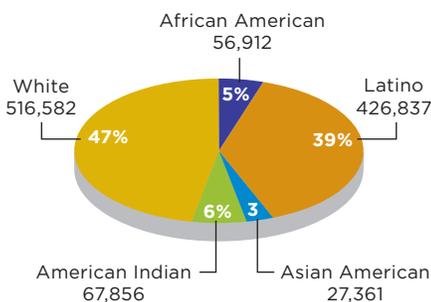
Parental Nativity	Total Children in Family	Native Born Children in Family
Both parents foreign born	238,996	176,734
One native, one foreign born*	112,829	112,829
Single foreign born parent	119,591	96,601
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>471,416</b>	<b>386,164</b>

\* Children with one native born parent are considered native born.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006.

## MINORITY STUDENTS ARE THE MAJORITY OF K-12 LEARNERS IN ARIZONA

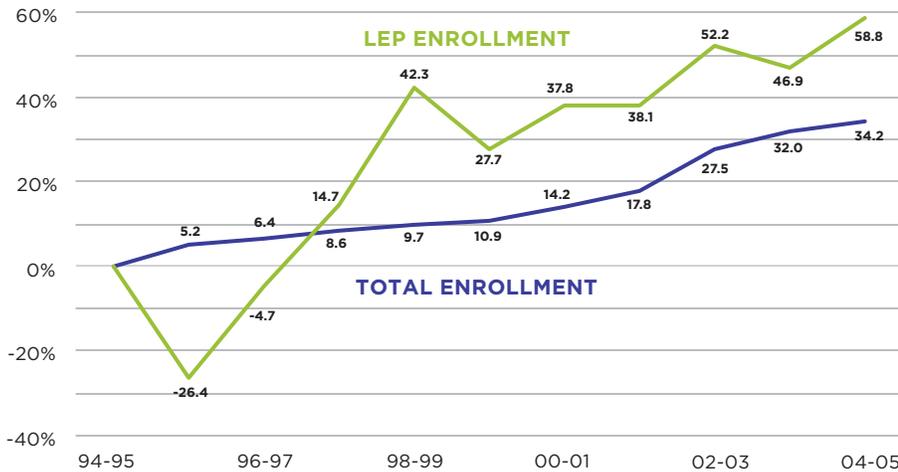
### Race and Ethnicity, 2005-2006



Source: Arizona Department of Education.

**THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH HAS RISEN FASTER THAN TOTAL ENROLLMENT SINCE 1994-1995**

*Limited English Proficient in Arizona, 1994-2005*



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students, August 2006.



**Is Arizona Ready to Make the Most of Gen G?**

Reason Magazine editor Nick Gillespie has noted: “This nation of immigrants has never been particularly comfortable with new arrivals.” In this era of rapid immigration, Arizona and the nation are falling back on the familiar policies of exclusion, security, and rapid assimilation. The stresses and costs of large numbers of unauthorized residents cannot be ignored but Arizona should also be working to integrate newcomers of all ages, particularly Gen G. Does the state have the civic, education, and workforce policies to do so? Will failure to work well with Gen G put the state at still another competitive disadvantage or will individuals and businesses step up to support and mentor these young Arizonans? National experts offer some suggestions for not just immigration policy, but also an immigrant policy.

Labor market expert and former Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall says the future depends on how the nation relates immigration to economic and social policy. He suggests the nation “make immigration an integral component of economic and social policies to promote broadly shared prosperity in the United States, Mexico, and other countries.”

Manhattan Institute scholar Tamar Jacoby suggests the “challenge for American immigration policy today is not so much to keep out billions we don’t want, but rather to create a legal, orderly path for the smaller number we need.” Michael Fix and colleagues at the Migration Policy Institute recommend focusing on integration for stronger communities, including civic education, workforce development, and support for English language learning.

Superintendent Kent Scribner suggests learning environments to help inner-city youth achieve high academic standards and leverage their “disadvantages of success.”

Many other observers recommend a clear-eyed approach that starts with seeing Gen G kids as assets, not as liabilities. If as the saying goes, the pessimist complains about the wind, the optimist expects it to change, and the realist adjusts the sails, it’s time for Arizona to get cranking. Gen G is here to stay. Arizona will see them grow up, get educations, and, one should expect, great jobs. The numbers are too big and the stakes too high to ignore.

How will you help to treat Gen G – like native born kids – as our future?

## ARIZONA IS ACTIVE IN IMMIGRATION MEASURES

Because of federal inaction, many states have crafted their own responses to immigration. Between ballot measures and legislative actions, Arizona has been among the most active. Recent actions include:

**PROPOSITION 200 (2004)** Voters approved this statewide ballot initiative to require proof of citizenship before registering to vote or applying for public benefits.

**IMMIGRANT SMUGGLING LAW (2005)** Makes human smuggling a state-level felony.

**PROPOSITION 100 (2006)** Denies bail to unauthorized immigrants charged with felonies.

**PROPOSITION 102 (2006)** Prohibits unauthorized immigrants from being awarded punitive damages in any civil lawsuit filed in the state.

**PROPOSITION 103 (2006)** Declares English the official language of Arizona.

**PROPOSITION 300 (2006)** Prohibits unauthorized immigrants from receiving in-state tuition, financial assistance, or access to state-subsidized childcare, adult education, and family literacy programs.



- 1 Cronkite-Eight (KAET) Poll November 2007, [www.azpbs.org/horizon/poll/](http://www.azpbs.org/horizon/poll/).
- 2 Audrey Singer, Susan W. Hardwick, Caroline B. Brettell, editors, *21st Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America*, The Brookings Institution, 2008, p. 3.
- 3 *21st Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America*, p. 4.
- 4 *Fact Sheet on the Foreign Born*, MPI Data Hub, Migration Policy Institute, [www.migrationinformation.org](http://www.migrationinformation.org).
- 5 *Immigration Now, Immigration Tomorrow, Immigration Forever*, Reason Foundation, September 2006.
- 6 Proposition 300 Semiannual Report to the Arizona Legislature from Adult Education Services, December 20, 2007.
- 7 ACS 2006.
- 8 Vivienne Baumfield, Review of *Mexican Roots, American Schools: Helping Mexican Immigrant Children Succeed*, Robert S. Crosnoe, 2006, EBSCO Host EJS Content Distribution, March 2008.
- 9 *Educating Arizona*, Arizona Community Foundation, January 2008, p. 27 and 29.
- 10 Arizona Department of Education, 2007.
- 11 *Sustainability for Arizona: The Issue of Our Age*, Morrison Institute for Public Policy, November 2007, p. 48.

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