



**New documents on political and social issues**

**February 2011**

## **DIVERSITY**

### **THE U.S. FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION: TRENDS AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

Congressional Research Service, January 18, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/155631.pdf>

This report offers context for consideration of immigration policy options by presenting data on key geographic, demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the foreign-born population residing in the United States. Interest in the U.S. foreign-born population stems in part from the changing demographic profile of the United States as well as from the rapidity of such change, and how both of these trends correspond to U.S. immigration policy.

## **EDUCATION**

### **THE 2010 BROWN CENTER REPORT ON AMERICAN EDUCATION**

Brookings Institution, February 7, 2011

[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2011/0207\\_education\\_loveless/0207\\_education\\_loveless.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2011/0207_education_loveless/0207_education_loveless.pdf)

This edition of the Brown Center Report marks the tenth issue of the series and the final issue of Volume II. The publication began in 2000 with Bill Clinton in the White House and the Bush-Gore presidential campaign building toward its dramatic conclusion. That first report was organized in a three-part structure that all subsequent Brown Center Reports followed. Part I presents the latest results from state, national, or international assessments and alerts readers to important trends in the data. Part II explores an education issue in depth, sometimes by investigating different sources of empirical evidence than previous research, sometimes by posing a conventional question in an unconventional way. Part III analyzes a current or impending question regarding education policy.

## **ELECTIONS**

### **THE HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT AND ELECTIONS REFORM: OVERVIEW AND ISSUES**

Congressional Research Service, January 13, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/155625.pdf>

Since the November 2000 presidential election, previously obscure details of voting and vote counting have been the focus of ongoing public attention and legislative action at the state and federal levels. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA, P.L. 107-252) was enacted in October 2002, and the states have made additional changes to election laws and procedures since then.

Numerous bills to amend HAVA have been considered in the Congress as well, although only one has been enacted that made a minor change to the law. HAVA created a new federal agency (the Election Assistance Commission), set requirements for various aspects of election administration, and provided federal funding. However, the law did not supplant state and local control over election administration.

## **IMMIGRATION**

### **IMMIGRANTS IN NEW-DESTINATION STATES**

Migration Policy Institute, February 2011

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=826>

While the total US foreign-born population grew by 57 percent from 19.8 million to 31.1 million between 1990 and 2000, this growth was considerably more pronounced in the southern and central regions of the country. The immigrant population more than doubled in 19 states, many of which had little prior experience with the foreign born.

This trend continued in the 2000s, despite the slowing of overall immigration that saw the foreign-born population grow at less than half the rate of the previous decade.

### **UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANT POPULATION: NATIONAL AND STATE TRENDS, 2010**

Pew Hispanic Center, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011

<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/133.pdf>

As of March 2010, 11.2 million unauthorized immigrants were living in the United States, virtually unchanged from a year earlier, according to new estimates from the Pew Hispanic Center, a project of the Pew Research Center. This stability in 2010 follows a two-year decline from the peak of 12 million in 2007 to 11.1 million in 2009 that was the first significant reversal in a two-decade pattern of growth. Unauthorized immigrants were 3.7% of the nation's population in 2010.

## JUSTICE AND CRIME

### **GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION**

Congressional Research Service, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/156521.pdf>

This report provides basic firearms-related statistics, an overview of federal firearms law, and a summary of legislative action in the 111th Congress and selected legislative action in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress that involved issues revisited in the 111th Congress. The report concludes with a discussion of other salient issues that have generated significant congressional interest in the past.

### **SMART ON CRIME: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS**

The Constitution Project, February 18, 2011

<http://www.besmartoncrime.org/pdf/Complete.pdf>

This analysis of the criminal justice system and the accompanying set of recommendations for change is one of the most comprehensive reports ever published addressing the problems in this field.

### **STATE OF SENTENCING 2010**

The Sentencing Project, February 17, 2011

<http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/publications/Final%20State%20of%20the%20Sentencing%202010.pdf>

Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia adopted new criminal justice policies—ranging from scaling back mandatory sentencing laws to reforming crack and powder cocaine sentencing disparities to improving parole supervision -- all aimed at reducing prison populations and facilitating successful reentry of ex-offenders, while at the same time, ensuring public safety.

## LABOR

### **UNEMPLOYMENT: ISSUES IN THE 112TH CONGRESS**

Congressional Research Service, January 11, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/155621.pdf>

Following the longest and deepest recession since the Great Depression, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) has declared the U.S. economy to be in expansion since June 2009. The unemployment rate in December 2007 was 4.9%; by October 2009, the unemployment rate was above 10%. Although economic output began to grow in the third quarter of 2009, the labor market remained weak into 2010. For the year, unemployment averaged 9.6%, and showed no improvement in the second half of the year.

In response to high unemployment, some members of Congress proposed job creation bills.

## **MEDIA**

### **JOURNALISTS' PRIVILEGE: OVERVIEW OF THE LAW AND LEGISLATION IN RECENT CONGRESSES**

Congressional Research Service, January 19, 2011

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/155578.pdf>

Since 2009, the movement to adopt a federal statutory journalists' privilege appears to have lost momentum. Nonetheless, the issue does have bipartisan support. Should the issue gain prominence again, it is possible that the 112th Congress may again attempt to create a federal statutory journalists' privilege. As of this writing, proposals to create a federal journalists' privilege have not been introduced in the 112th Congress.

## **POVERTY**

### **STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA 2011**

National Alliance to End Homelessness, January 11, 2011

[http://www.endhomelessness.org/files/3668\\_file\\_SOH\\_report\\_FINAL\\_LOW\\_RES\\_NOT\\_embargoed.pdf](http://www.endhomelessness.org/files/3668_file_SOH_report_FINAL_LOW_RES_NOT_embargoed.pdf)

The nation's homeless population increased by approximately 20,000 people from 2008 to 2009 (3 percent increase). There were also increased numbers of people experiencing homelessness in each of the subpopulations examined in this report: families, individuals, chronic, unsheltered.

## **RELIGION**

### **CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS MAY INFLAME ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Center for American Progress, February 3, 2011

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/02/islamophobia\\_hearings.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/02/islamophobia_hearings.html)

Rep. Peter King (R-NY) plans to hold hearings this month in the U.S. House of Representatives on his inflammatory charges about "radicalized Muslims" in America. According to King, 80 percent of mosques in this country are controlled by radical imams.

King's blanket condemnation of a diverse religious community flies in the face of facts. According to recent statistics, Muslim-American communities have helped prevent more than one-third of Al Qaeda terrorist plots in the United States since 9/11.

**All previous web alerts can be found at:**  
<http://france.usembassy.gov/web-alert.html>