

STATE STATE OF NEW AMERICAN REPRESENTATION

STATE LEGISLATURES IN 2022

Report prepared by New American Leaders with research from Nura Sedique, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

Recent events have highlighted concerted efforts to gerrymander electoral districts, disenfranchise voters, and roll back the rights for huge swathes of people in the United States. With the deluge of attacks on civil liberties at the federal level, the composition of state legislatures is now under scrutiny. Especially after the recent decision by the Supreme Court of the United States in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, abandoning almost 50 years of reproductive freedom and standing legal precedent, attention from policymakers, grassroots organizers, the media, and the general public has turned to the states, highlighting the power legislatures have to either protect or further strip these rights.

The representation in government by those most affected by these decisions—most notably immigrants, people of color, and women—is critical. And while the influence that first and second generation immigrants (referred to as New Americans in this report) have in United States politics continues to strengthen, there is a wide margin to close before state legislatures are truly reflective of their electorates, let alone the country as a whole. With the overwhelming impact recent decisions have on these communities, it is increasingly important that their voices are represented in the legislative bodies that will have the ultimate decision-making power on critical issues.

Making up significant voting blocs across the country, the groundwork being done by grassroots and community empowerment organizations—both to build the pipeline and expand the electorate to include historically marginalized groups—is laying the foundation to create a more inclusive and representative democracy. This report focuses on New American representation in state legislatures and recent strides toward parity. As the term "New Americans" is inclusive of several ethnic breakdowns, this is a comprehensive report exploring the collective

impact of immigrants from a variety of backgrounds, while also looking closely within each group to assess where the biggest gains are being made and where more attention is needed. This report also builds off of the findings in New American Leaders' "State of Representation 2020" report, which provided a first-of-its-kind look at immigrant representation in state legislatures.

At New American Leaders, we support people with immigrant backgrounds to run, win, and lead in elected office. Through our pipeline initiative, we train prospective candidates to build a base of voters through active work within their communities. Then, when New Americans see themselves on the ballot, they vote, making possible a truer reflection of the country in legislatures across the country, which ultimately leads to more equitable policymaking. While there is still significant inconsistency in the representation relative to the demographic makeup of the electorate in most states, we are seeing positive trends and progress made towards representational parity.



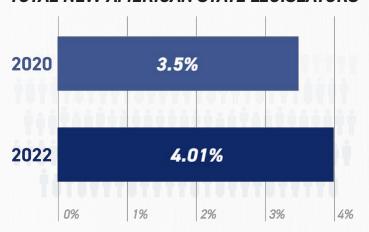
TOPLINE FINDINGS

First generation Americans comprise 10 percent of of the citizen voting age population (CVAP).

But despite their growing political power, the first edition of this report, released prior to the 2020 presidential election, found that across state legislatures, New Americans accounted for just 3.5 percent of the total state legislators in the United States. Since then, in reviewing the composition of state legislatures during the 2022 legislative session, 68 additional New Americans served within state legislatures across the United States (with 19 legislators no longer seated, raising the total to 49 additional seats). This increase highlights small but critical gains in representation, with New Americans now holding 296 of the 7,383 legislative seats—or 4.01 percent—in U.S. state legislatures.

Through this report, we seek to better understand where these gains have occurred, which New American groups have experienced the most change in representation, and how further progress toward representational parity can be made. Our findings are supported by state legislative representation compared to the concentration of New Americans naturalized citizen voting age population (CVAP) data, as identified by broader Census data. Once that baseline comparison has been established, we then identify which states have equitable representation based on state demographics and which require additional investment and changes to reach demographic parity.

TOTAL NEW AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATORS



additional New Americans in 2022 state legislatures.

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) saw the largest gains in representation, with 27 newly elected AAPI legislators serving in the 2022 legislative session, bringing the total number of AAPI legislators to 103. As the fastest-growing population in the United States, this increase in representation is consistent with national trends.

Latino

Latino communities saw a significant increase in representation, with 24 newly elected Latino legislators serving in the 2022 legislative session. There are now a total of 124 Latino legislators across the country.

Black

Black immigrants saw incremental gains in representation, adding 10 new legislators in the 2022 session. There are now 43 Black immigrant legislators serving across the United States.

Middle Eastern and North African (MENA)

Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) legislators previously held 16 legislative seats in the 2020 session. However, despite historic victories in other local elections, just 3 new MENA legislators served in the 2022 legislative session, taking the total number of serving legislators to just 17, as several previously counted officials are no longer serving in office.

State with the most change in representation

The state with the most significant change in representation was Rhode Island, with the inclusion of 6 Latino legislators almost doubling the number of New Americans in state legislative office.

TABLE 1: TOTAL NEW AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATORS

| | Recently Elected Legislators | Returning Legislators | 2022 Total New American Legislators | Percentage of Total Legislators New Americans Represent |
|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| AAPI | 27 | 76 | 103 | 1.40% |
| Black | 10 | 33 | 43 | 0.58% |
| Latino | 24 | 100 | 124 | 1.68% |
| MENA | 3 | 14 | 17 | 0.23% |
| Multiracial | 2 | 7 | 9 | 0.12% |
| Total | 66 | 230 | 296 | 4.01% |

TABLE 2: TOTAL NEW AMERICAN REPRESENTATION GROWTH AND COMPARISON

| | 2022 Percentage 2022 Total of Total State 2020 Total Legislators | | 2020 Percentage of Total State Legislators | 2022 Percentage of Total Populaton of U.S. | |
|-------------|--|-------|--|--|--------|
| AAPI | 103 | 1.40% | 84 | 1.14% | 6.20% |
| Black | 43 | 0.58% | 39 | 0.53% | 12.40% |
| Latino | 124 | 1.68% | 113 | 1.53% | 18.70% |
| MENA | 17 | 0.23% | 16 | 0.22% | 1.11% |
| Multiracial | 9 | 0.12% | 6 | 0.08% | 10.20% |
| Total | 296 | 4.01% | 258 | 3.54% | 48.61% |



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New Americans are not a monolith, and disaggregating the data illuminates which states and ethnic groups have had the most success to date at moving towards achieving representational parity. In the State of Representation 2020 report, Latino state legislators comprised the largest body of New American state legislators (44 percent), followed by Asian Americans (39 percent). Yet, as we see in Table 2, AAPI state legislative representation grew the most significantly, with AAPI state legislators holding 34.7 percent of New American-held legislative seats. This change shows that as the fastest-growing population nationwide, AAPI communities are eager to engage in the democratic process and are motivated to support leaders who identify with their communities and share their experiences.

Beyond these significant findings, the data in Table 2 further illustrates the range of diverse communities represented by New American state legislators. Despite a slight increase in the number of Black immigrants serving in legislatures, their overall representation within New American legislators

stayed the same at 15 percent. Middle Eastern and North African legislators saw the only decrease in representation in their percentage of New American legislative representation, dropping from 6.5 percent of New Americans in state legislatures in 2020 to 4.4 percent of New American state legislators in 2022.

NEW AMERICAN REPRESENTATION GROWTH

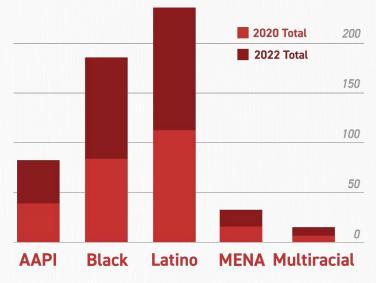


TABLE 3: GENDER OF NEW AMERICAN LEGISLATORS BY RACIAL BACKGROUND

| | 2020 Percentage of Men | 2022 Percentage of Men | Percentage Change | 2020 Percentage of Women | 2022 Percentage of Women | Percentage Change |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| AAPI | 64.29% | 61.17% | -3.12% | 35.71% | 38.83% | +3.12% |
| Black | 43.58% | 41.86% | -1.72% | 56.41% | 58.15% | +1.74% |
| Latino | 55.75% | 45.98% | -9.77% | 44.25% | 54.03% | +9.78% |
| MENA | 56.25% | 58.82% | +2.57% | 43.75% | 41.17% | -2.58% |
| Multiracial | 16.67% | 11.11% | -5.56% | 83.33% | 88.89% | +5.56% |

Similar to the findings outlined in the previous report, we note that there is close to or actual gender parity across all racial breakdowns. In fact, Latinas and Black female legislators outnumber their male counterparts, 68 to 58. This is significant and does not follow the trends for white state legislators, where 71 percent of white legislators are male, and only 29 percent are female.

STATE ANALYSIS

NEW AMERICAN LEGISLATORS

To gain full insights into where representational gains and gaps have occurred, data was further disaggregated by state. The same 10 states identified in the initial State of Representation 2020 report (outlined in Table 4) continue to come closest to having representational parity, though there have been some changes in the ranking of that ten. Rhode Island, for instance, has seen the most significant gains in the last two years, increasing New American representation by 3.52 percent. On the other side of the spectrum, Florida has experienced the largest decrease in representation, dropping New American representation by 3.12 percent, putting it under the citizen voting age percentage and therefore lowering representation compared to 2020.

As in the case of Florida and Rhode Island, this data is critically important to determining how close each state is to achieving representational equity. We define representational equity to be achieved when the percentage of New Americans in state legislatures is

LATINA + BLACK WOMEN

legislators outnumber their male counterparts.



equal to the naturalized citizen voting age population (CVAP) data. The data outlined in Table 4 highlights how representational parity has shifted in the top 10 states. Arizona, for instance, has the highest percentage of New American representation relative to naturalized CVAP (15.55 to their 7.9 percent) and has maintained this level of representation over two legislative sessions. Florida, however, has fallen to the lowest ranking in this list with 8.13 percent relative to their 15.7 percent naturalized CVAP, a change of 3.12 percent since 2020.

FLORIDA

Of the states with the most New American representation, Florida has the lowest percentage of New American representation relative to parity, dropping since 2020.

TABLE 4: CVAP PARITY FOR TOP 10 MOST REPRESENTATIVE STATES

| State | State Percentage 2022 | State Percentage Difference 2022 | CVAP | Parity Increase | State Percentage 2020 | State Percentage Difference 2020 |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| California | 29.16% | +8.16 | 21.00% | ↑ | 25.00% | +4.00 |
| New York | 17.84% | +0.04 | 17.80% | V | 15.02% | -2.78 |
| Arizona | 15.55% | +7.65 | 7.90% | ^ | 12.22% | +4.32 |
| Hawaii | 14.47% | -0.33 | 14.80% | ↑ | 11.84% | -2.96 |
| Nevada | 12.70% | -1.3 | 14.00% | ^ | 11.11% | -2.89 |
| Rhode Island | 10.62% | +1.02 | 9.60% | ↑ | 7.10% | -2.5 |
| Washington | 8.84% | -0.56 | 9.40% | | 8.84% | -0.56 |
| Maryland | 8.51% | -2.19 | 10.70% | V | 9.04% | -1.66 |
| Florida | 8.13% | -7.57 | 15.70% | V | 11.25% | -4.45 |
| Texas | 7.18% | -2.52 | 9.70% | ↑ | 6.63% | -3.07 |

Unsurprisingly, the biggest gains in New American representation were achieved in progressive enclaves, with New York, Rhode Island, and California adding 9, 6, and 5 legislators, respectively, to their total New American legislators. California's representation is the highest overall with 29.16 percent New American representation to their 21 percent naturalized CVAP. New Jersey has the worst score, with just 3.33 percent representation to their 17.8 percent naturalized CVAP. Eight states—Arkansas, Idaho, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, South Carolina, and South Dakota—have no New American representation at all, a change from ten states in 2020.

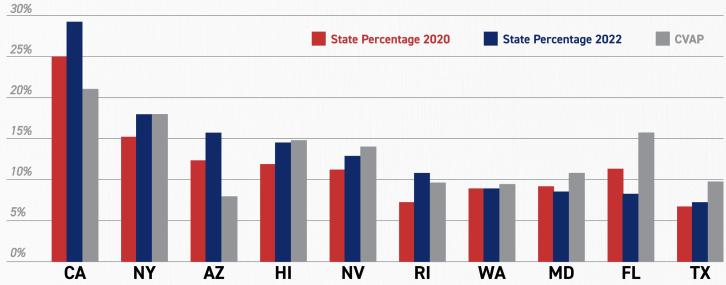
CALIFORNIA

has the highest representation with 29.17% New American representation to 21% naturalized CVAP.

NEW JERSEY

has the lowest representation with 3.33% New American representation to 17.8% naturalized CVAP.

TOP 10 STATES PERCENTAGE REPRESENTATION COMPARED TO CVAP



Glimpses of progress: In rare cases, some states have surpassed CVAP relative to representation, but there are fluctuations indicating they will require consistent investment to sustain it.

STATE HIGHLIGHTS

New York: New York had the largest total increase of New Americans, with **nine** new legislators elected into office. Previously, New Americans made up 14.55 percent of New York's state legislature. They now hold 18.3 percent of legislative seats—a 3.75 percent increase since 2020.

Rhode Island: Thanks to the inclusion of newly elected Latino legislators, New American representation nearly doubled. In 2019, there were seven New Americans serving in the legislature, holding 6.19 percent of seats. There are now 13 New Americans serving in the Rhode Island legislature, holding 10.7 percent of seats—a 4.5 percent increase.

California: Five additional New Americans joined the legislature in 2022, bringing the total number of serving New Americans up to 35, serving in 29 percent of legislative seats—a 4 percent increase.

Michigan, Hawaii, and Oregon each added at least three New Americans to their state legislatures, increasing representation and coming closer to parity in each state.

An additional 18 states added one or two New American legislators.

- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Georgia
- lowa
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota

- Missouri
- North Carolina
- New Hampshire
- Nevada
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Virginia
- Vermont
- Wisconsin

Approximately half of U.S. states did not add any additional New American legislators.

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of U.S. states did not add additional New American legislators.



From zero representation to one: Iowa and Vermont previously had no New American representation. However, each added one New American state legislator in the 2022 legislative session, taking the first step towards representational parity. However, Maine recently became one of the eight states without New American representation, a change from 2020.

States that lost legislators: At least 30 New Americans did not renew their terms in office. This unfortunately left New Americans with lower representation in Florida and lost the opportunity for gains in other states.

NEW YORK

had the largest total increase of New Americans, adding 9 New American state legislators.

CALIFORNIA

added 5 New Americans to the legislature in 2022, a 4% increase.

IOWA & VERMONT

each went from 0 New American state legislators to adding 1 in 2022.

PARITY OF REPRESENTATION BY CITIZEN VOTING AGE POPULATION

| State | New American Presence by Percentage | Naturalized Citizen Voting Age Population Percentage |
|----------------|---|--|
| California | 29.17% | 21.00% |
| New York | 17.84% | 5.40% |
| Arizona | 15.56% | 7.90% |
| Hawaii | 14.47% | 6.00% |
| Nevada | 12.70% | 4.20% |
| Rhode Island | 10.62% | 4.60% |
| Washington | 8.84% | 8.60% |
| Maryland | 8.51% | 2.40% |
| Florida | 8.13% | 7.60% |
| Virginia | 7.86% | 3.10% |
| Texas | 7.18% | 2.50% |
| Michigan | 6.76% | 11.60% |
| New Jersey | 6.67% | 4.10% |
| Oregon | 6.67% | 2.60% |
| Illinois | 6.21% | 3.20% |
| Colorado | 6.00% | 5.50% |
| Minnesota | 5.47% | 4.50% |
| Massachusetts | 5.00% | 10.70% |
| Ohio | 3.03% | 2.30% |
| Wisconsin | 3.03% | 1.00% |
| Georgia | 2.54% | 15.70% |
| Connecticut | 2.14% | 10.10% |
| Nebraska | 2.04% | 1.40% |
| North Carolina | 1.76% | 17.80% |
| Alaska | 1.67% | 5.90% |

| State | New American Presence by Percentage | Naturalized Citizen Voting Age Population Percentage |
|----------------|---|--|
| Delaware | 1.61% | 6.30% |
| Pennsylvania | 1.58% | 5.70% |
| Tennessee | 1.52% | 2.00% |
| Kentucky | 1.45% | 3.80% |
| New Hampshire | 1.42% | 14.00% |
| Kansas | 1.21% | 2.50% |
| Wyoming | 1.11% | 2.90% |
| Utah | 0.96% | 9.70% |
| New Mexico | 0.89% | 17.80% |
| West Virginia | 0.75% | 9.40% |
| Louisiana | 0.69% | 1.90% |
| Oklahoma | 0.67% | 3.00% |
| Indiana | 0.67% | 10.00% |
| Iowa | 0.67% | 2.50% |
| Vermont | 0.56% | 5.10% |
| Missouri | 0.51% | 1.20% |
| Alabama | 0% | 1.60% |
| Arkansas | 0% | 2.00% |
| Idaho | 0% | 14.80% |
| Maine | 0% | 2.10% |
| Mississippi | 0% | 5.90% |
| Montana | 0% | 2.70% |
| North Dakota | 0% | 4.00% |
| South Carolina | 0% | 9.60% |
| South Dakota | 0% | 2.60% |

STATES WITH ZERO REPRESENTATION

Nine states currently have no New American representation—a decrease from the 10 states that had no representation in the 2020 State of Representation report.





NATURALIZED CITIZEN VOTING AGE POPULATION

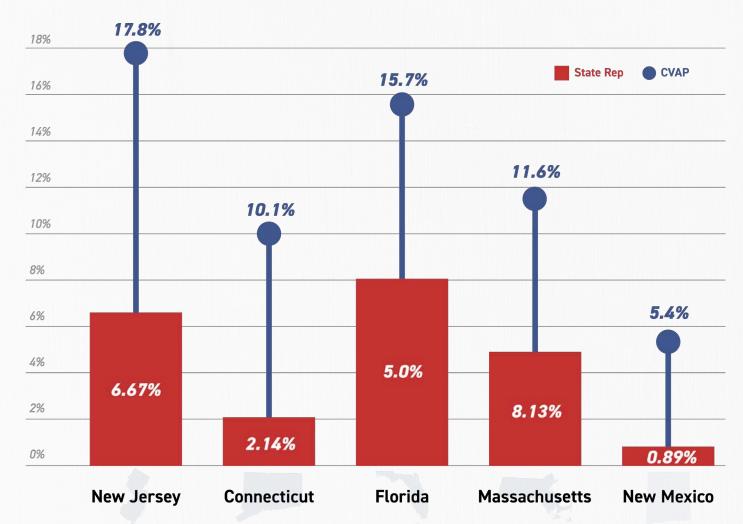
The naturalized citizen voting age population (CVAP) offers a metric of how many New Americans are voting age citizens'. This estimate gives a sense of what proportion of the state's voting age population is made up of naturalized citizens, and ultimately a large block of New Americans are represented as voters when we take this metric into account.

Through the analysis conducted in this report, we have found that New Jersey, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, and New Mexico are the five states with the most egregious gaps in New American state legislative representation.

¹ The appendix includes the full methodological steps utilized to calculate the CVAP.



LARGEST GAPS IN NEW AMERICAN REPRESENTATION TO STATE CVAP



PARITY OF REPRESENTATION BY CITIZEN VOTING AGE POPULATION

| State | State Percentage | Percentage CVAP | Difference |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| New Jersey | 6.67 | 17.8 | -11.13 |
| Connecticut | 2.14 | 10.1 | -7.96 |
| Florida | 8.13 | 15.7 | -7.58 |
| Massachusetts | 5.0 | 11.6 | -6.60 |
| Delaware | 1.61 | 6.3 | -4.68 |
| New Mexico | 0.89 | 5.4 | -4.51 |
| Alaska | 1.67 | 5.9 | -4.23 |
| Utah | 0.96 | 5.1 | -4.14 |
| Illinois | 6.21 | 10 | -3.79 |
| Georgia | 2.54 | 6 | -3.46 |
| Idaho | 0 | 3.2 | -3.2 |
| Pennsylvania | 1.58 | 4.6 | -3.02 |
| New Hampshire | 1.42 | 4.1 | -2.68 |
| South Carolina | 0 | 2.6 | -2.6 |
| Kansas | 1.21 | 3.8 | -2.59 |
| Vermont | 0.56 | 3.1 | -2.54 |
| Texas | 7.18 | 9.7 | -2.52 |
| Maine | 0 | 2.4 | -2.4 |
| North Dakota | 0 | 2.3 | -2.3 |
| North Carolina | 1.76 | 4 | -2.24 |
| Missouri | 0.51 | 2.7 | -2.19 |
| Maryland | 8.51 | 10.7 | -2.19 |
| Nebraska | 2.04 | 4.2 | -2.16 |
| Arkansas | 0 | 2 | -2 |
| South Dakota | 0 | 2 | -2 |
| Oklahoma | 0.67 | 2.6 | -1.93 |
| Indiana | 0.67 | 2.5 | -1.83 |
| Iowa | 0.67 | 2.5 | -1.83 |
| Alabama | 0 | 1.6 | -1.6 |
| Louisiana | 0.69 | 2.1 | -1.41 |
| Montana | 0 | 1.4 | -1.4 |
| Nevada | 12.70 | 14 | -1.30 |
| Mississippi | 0 | 1.2 | -1.2 |
| Tennessee | 1.52 | 2.5 | -0.98 |
| Virginia | 7.86 | 8.6 | -0.74 |

| State | State Percentage | Percentage CVAP | Difference |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Washington | 8.84 | 9.4 | -0.56 |
| Wyoming | 1.11 | 1.6 | -0.49 |
| Kentucky | 1.45 | 1.9 | -0.45 |
| Minnesota | 5.47 | 5.9 | -0.43 |
| Hawaii | 14.47 | 14.8 | -0.33 |
| West Virginia | 0.75 | 1 | -0.25 |
| Ohio | 3.03 | 3 | 0.03 |
| New York | 17.84 | 17.8 | 0.04 |
| Wisconsin | 3.03 | 2.9 | 0.13 |
| Colorado | 6 | 5.5 | 0.50 |
| Oregon | 6.67 | 5.7 | 0.97 |
| Rhode Island | 10.62 | 9.6 | 1.02 |
| Michigan | 6.76 | 4.5 | 2.26 |
| Arizona | 15.56 | 7.9 | 7.66 |
| California | 29.17 | 21 | 8.17 |



BREAKDOWN

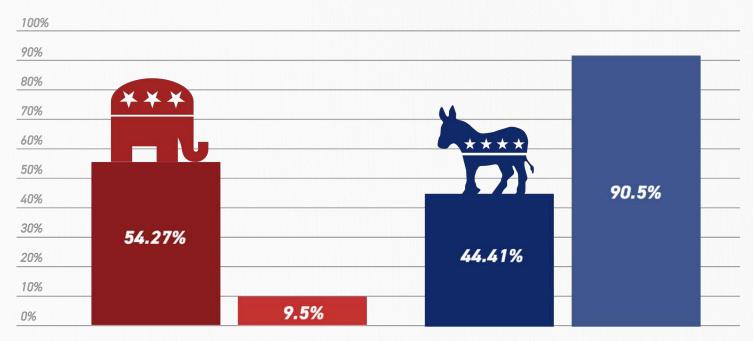
POLITICAL PARTY

Republicans control 54.27 percent of all state legislative seats nationally, while Democrats hold 44.41 percent. Republicans also hold a majority in 62 chambers, and Democrats in 36 chambers. Just one chamber—the Alaska House—is organized under a multi-partisan, power-sharing coalition.

And while New Americans have made gains in representation since the 2020 report, large gaps remain in party representation. The vast majority of New American legislators are Democrats, with 90.5 percent of all New American legislators identifying as Democratic elected officials—a slight increase from the 89.5 percent of New American state legislators identified in the 2020 State of Representation report. While there is some bipartisanship in most ethnic groups, in the Black immigrant group, out of 43 state legislators, all are Democrats.



STATE LEGISLATIVE SEATS BY POLITICAL PARTY



REPUBLICAN

State Legislative Seats New American Legislators

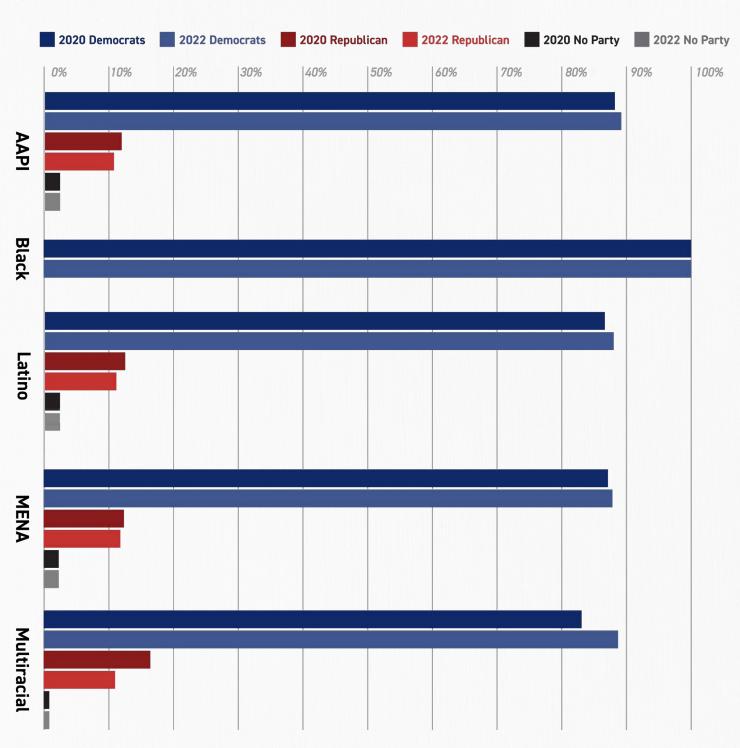
DEMOCRAT

State Legislative Seats

New American Legislators

TABLE 6: NEW AMERICAN LEGISLATOR'S PARTY AFFILIATION

| State | 2020 Democrat | 2022 Democrat | Change | 2020 Republican | 2022 Republican | Change | 2020 NP | 2022 NP | Change |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| AAPI | 88.10% | 89.10% | 1.12% | 11.91% | 10.68% | -1.23% | - | - | - |
| Black | 100% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | - | - | - |
| Latino | 86.72% | 87.90% | 1.18% | 12.39% | 11.29% | -1.10% | 0.88 | 0.81 | -0.07 |
| MENA | 87.50% | 88.23% | 0.73% | 12.50% | 11.76% | -0.74% | - | - | - |
| Multiracial | 83.33% | 88.89% | 5.56% | 16.67% | 11.11% | -5.56% | - | - | - |
| Total | 89.15% | 90.21% | 1.06% | 10.46% | 9.46% | -1.00% | | | |



MOVING FORWARD

As New American communities prepare for critical policy fights on voting rights, reproductive freedoms, and civil liberties, it is more important than ever that they are represented by elected officials who understand the impacts these decisions have on their communities and share their experiences in state legislatures. And while clear progress has been made in improving representation in just two years, this report highlights the need for significant progress to reach representational parity and an inclusive democracy in state legislatures.



Reflecting on the data presented in this report, the following recommendations offer actionable next steps to achieve representational parity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

Invest in New American Communities and Leaders

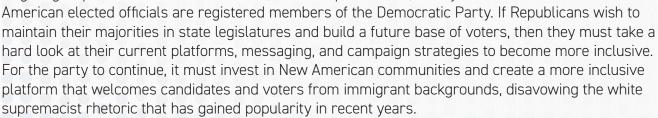
As recommended in the 2020 State of Representation report, having a bench of New Americans who are ready to run, win, and lead improves representation at every level of government and opens the door for more sustained engagement in the democratic process. When immigrants and people of color see candidates who represent and understand their communities, they are more likely to yote and take part in the civic process, strength

understand their communities, they are more likely to vote and take part in the civic process, strengthening our democracy as a whole. Recent wins by New American candidates across the country support this hypothesis and underscore the need for continued investment, training, and community support from political parties and grassroots organizations alike, especially at this critical juncture in our history.



Reimagine the Republican Party to Ensure Its Future

The data is irrefutable: New Americans are the future of our country. As some of the fastest growing demographic blocs, immigrant communities comprise the largest groups of future voters. However, as this report details, nearly all New





RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 3

Address Systemic Barriers

New Americans have not reached representational parity in all but nine states.

Republicans and Democrats alike must reimagine what engagement looks like in immigrant communities and communities of color to ensure their futures, investing time and resources to better understand the systemic barriers these communities face when engaging in the democratic process as candidates and voters. While political landscapes vary significantly even within states, New Americans across the country commonly face barriers such as voter intimidation and anti-voter laws, political gatekeeping, lack of access to traditional political fundraising networks, and outdated, discriminatory methods many political party officials use when evaluating who is a viable candidate. These systemic barriers must be addressed to improve representation.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Deepen Relationships to Create Meaningful Representation

This report shows that representation is improving, especially within AAPI and

Latino communities. However, many New Americans are still under- or unrepresented, even in states that have achieved improved representation. Middle Eastern, North African, and Black immigrants face especially high levels of underrepresentation. To create a truly inclusive democracy, this must be addressed through community investment and leadership trainings, relationship building by existing elected officials with community members in their area, and open dialogue to find solutions to the barriers that prevent representational parity from being achieved.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Reduce Barriers to Staying in Elected Office

Although New Americans won historic elections and ultimately improved representation in 2022, others decided to not pursue reelection after making initial advancements due to barriers they faced while in the legislature. As outlined in our *State of Pay report*, issues such as low pay, a lack of support for caregivers serving in state legislatures, and limited staff assistance while in elected office all contribute to challenges that overwhelmingly impact New American state legislators. Addressing these systemic issues will help immigrant, working-class, and other underrepresented communities gain—and maintain—representation.

APPENDIX

METHODS

The data used in this report was built utilizing data from Reflective Democracy's roster of the 50 state legislatures, with verification from the roster at Rutgers' Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP).

The state legislator information was verified and the legislator's electoral results from the 2020 and 2021 election cycles were also inputted and confirmed. The first-round verification came from existing data that Rutgers CAWP provided on women state legislators. Legislators that were labeled as "non-white" became the primary legislators focused upon for verification. In order to find out whether legislators were first or second generation Americans within the second round, the research team examined the campaign websites and published material to verify whether they are a New American based on their self-reported biographies. We define New American as a first or second generation immigrant, so if a person themselves migrated or one of their parents migrated to the United States of America. For individuals that we could not identify, the third-round verification involved contacting state legislator offices. The research team both called and emailed state legislators to verify all publicly available information.

Finally, in the third round of data verification, community organizers in local areas where these legislators serve were contacted to verify information.

It is important to note that there is still a small subset of state legislators with whom there remains uncertainty of whether they are first or second generation Americans. However, the state legislators in our dataset are on the record as having publicly discussed identifying as New American.

There is the possibility of an underestimation, given the ambiguity of some state legislators who have not disclosed their status as New Americans. The primary focus of our verification efforts was centered on state legislators who identify publicly as African American, Asian American, Latino, or Middle Eastern.

CVAP (CITIZEN VOTING AGE POPULATION) ESTIMATES

The information on the citizen voting age population used in this report was drawn from the U.S. Census American Community Survey, which offers five-year estimates on populations. The New Americans included in this survey data are defined as individuals who became legally naturalized citizens. New Americans, by New American Leaders' definition, also includes second generation immigrants. The data here focuses on first generation immigrants. It is important to note that the current data and analysis offer a conservative estimation of the effect New Americans may have on forthcoming electoral decisions, since it does not account for second generation immigrants.



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New American Leaders is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. Our mission is to empower New Americans to run, win, and lead, creating an inclusive democracy that works for and represents everyone. We do this through trainings, building partnerships with elected officials to pursue inclusive policies, researching solutions to break down systemic barriers, and honoring the contributions of New American elected officials.

Our affiliated 501(c)(4) organization, the New American Leaders Action Fund, is building a democracy that represents and includes all people by engaging new voters, supporting New Americans as they run for office and expanding civic engagement.