

NEWAMERICAN VOTERS 2020



STATE REPORT

DECEMBER 2020



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Georgia made history in the 2020 presidential election and naturalized citizens were a critical part of the record turnout and voters of color. Recently naturalized citizens, mostly originating from Mexico, India, Vietnam, Jamaica, South Korea, and Nigeria, impacted the outcome of this year's election and may do so again in 2021.

87,737 immigrants naturalized from 2014 to 2018 in Georgia, with estimates of 130,075 citizens who naturalized from 2014 to November 2020. The political presence and influence of new American voters cannot be underestimated in a state where the 2020 presidential margin of victory was 11,779 votes.¹ The new citizens and voters were a part of the coalition of Black, Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), and Latinos who selected the next president and who forced two runoff elections that will determine who controls the United States Senate. New American voters in Georgia are mostly AAPI and from Latin America with significant numbers of immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa. This group is particularly racially and ethnically diverse, politically diverse, over 53% are women, and 63% were under the age of 45 years old when they naturalized.

The record voter turnout would not have been possible without Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta, the Latino Community Fund of Georgia, GALEO and other grassroots efforts to specifically engage naturalized citizens in Georgia. For example, prior to the coronavirus pandemic, ProGeorgia registered new citizens to vote at their naturalization ceremonies in order to help them with the process and give them a copy of their naturalization certificate and a voter registration card. Without these efforts, Georgia's exact match process for voter registration, which has been challenged in the courts, would have flagged every single new citizen as a non-citizen and those new citizens would have had to have gone to the county elections office to remedy the situation, making it more difficult and potentially preventing them from voting.² ProGeorgia stepped in and registered 35,000 new citizens and gave them the resources that they needed to vote in Georgia. And all of these initiatives would not have been possible without New Americans Campaign partners and other legal services providers in Georgia who helped to naturalize over 100,000 new citizens in the last few years.

¹ "Georgia Presidential Election Results," New York Times, accessed December 11, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-georgia-president.html>.

² See Clark, Dartunorro, "Judge Rules Against Kemp Over Voters Misidentified as Noncitizens," NBC News, November 2, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/judge-rules-against-kemp-over-voters-misidentified-noncitizens-n930536>.

New American voters naturalized during the Trump era, facing a series of “second wall” barriers to citizenship;³ a backlog of over 744,000 citizenship applications before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), including nearly 18,000 in Georgia;⁴ and processing delays that range from 12.5 to 30.5 months in Atlanta’s USCIS office.⁵ USCIS policies and practices, including the backlog and processing delays, served as barriers to accessing the right to the ballot, along with other voter suppression tactics in Georgia, the coronavirus pandemic, and the need for social distancing with voter engagement efforts.

Nevertheless, many new American voters in Georgia completed the naturalization process, registered to vote, showed up at the polls or mailed in their ballots, and swayed the outcome of the presidential election, affirming that they are a constituency whose voices and stories should be heard and whose issues should be addressed by all political parties and candidates. They may do so again in the Senate runoff elections on January 5, 2021, with early voting beginning on December 14, 2020, and not only impact who will be the victors but determine the national political scenario for the next two years.

WHY GEORGIA IS SO IMPORTANT IN 2020 AND 2021

In 2020, Georgia made history by voting for a Democratic president for the first time since 1992.⁶ This was due to a historic turnout and a coalition of voters of color, including Black, AAPI, and Latino voters. This made Georgia a critical state in giving Joe Biden the necessary electoral votes to become the President-elect. It also forced two runoff elections for U.S. Senators representing Georgia, the outcome of which will determine which political party controls the Senate, and, ultimately, what legislation will be able to move forward under the administration of Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

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³ Statement from National Partnership for New Americans to Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship, “Statement for the Record on Oversight of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services” (July 28, 2020), available at: <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/recent>.

⁴ “Number of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, By Category of Naturalization, Case Status, and USCIS Field Office Location, April 1 - June 30, 2020,” U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed December 11, 2020, https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/reports/N400_performancedata_fy2020_qtr3.pdf.

⁵ “Check Case Processing Times,” U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed December 11, 2020, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>.

⁶ Schaul, Kevin, et al., “How Georgia Became a Swing State for the First Time in Decades,” Washington Post, November 8, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/elections/2020/11/08/georgia-swing-state-democrats/?arc404=true>.

⁷ “Georgia Presidential Election Results,” New York Times, accessed December 11, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-georgia-president.html>.

As of December 7, 2020, 2,473,633 Georgians voted for Biden compared to 2,461,854 votes for incumbent Donald Trump, leaving a margin of 11,779 votes.⁸ In the years preceding this election, from 2014 to 2018, there were 87,737 immigrants who naturalized and became eligible to vote. From 2014 to 2020, the number of new citizens is estimated to reach as high as 130,075⁹

The numbers of new citizens are based on USCIS data on naturalizations that occurred from Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 through FY 2018 and naturalization applications that the agency approved in FY 2019.¹⁰ The estimates for naturalizations during FY 2020 is based on previous spikes in naturalizations in FY 2016, before that calendar year's presidential election.¹¹ These estimates of new citizens were made in the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) report, *The Power of Newly Naturalized Citizens in the 2020 Elections*, released in June 2020, which estimated that there would be 5.3 newly naturalized citizens from 2014 to November 2020. Since the report's release, USCIS has continued to refuse to conduct remote oath ceremonies during the coronavirus pandemic and office closures, despite the agency's legal authority to do so.¹² USCIS also released data indicating that approximately 290,000 naturalization applicants awaiting their interview would not be naturalized in time to register to vote.¹³ This means that NPNA's original estimates of 5.3 million will be reduced to around five million new citizens.

Nevertheless, citizens who naturalized from 2014 to 2018 exceeded the margin of victory for the 2020 presidential election in Georgia. Recently naturalized citizens from Mexico and India alone exceeded Georgia's margin of victory, as did naturalized citizens from the top two Asian countries represented in Georgia, India, and Vietnam. Recently naturalized citizens from Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil exceeded the presidential margin of victory. And new citizens from the most represented African and Caribbean countries, Jamaica, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, and Kenya, also exceeded the margin. The

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Iñiguez-López, Diego, "The Power of Newly Naturalized Citizens in the 2020 Elections," National Partnership for New Americans, June 2020, newamericanvoters2020.org/assets/2020/06/NAV-REPORT-2020-UPDATED.pdf.

¹⁰ See "Naturalizations," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 12, 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/naturalizations>; "Immigration and Citizenship Data," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 12, 2020, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-and-studies/immigration-and-citizenship-data>.

¹¹ See Iñiguez-López, Diego, "Naturalize Now, Vote Tomorrow: New Americans Vote 2020," National Partnership for New Americans, February 2020, https://partnershipfornewamericans.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Naturalize_Now_Vote_Tomorrow_FINAL.pdf.

¹² DeChalus, Camila, "USCIS Resumes Naturalizations, Ushers in 2,000 New Citizens," Roll Call, June 10, 2020, <https://www.rollcall.com/2020/06/10/uscis-resumes-naturalizations-ushers-in-2000-new-citizens/>; Nasr, Ethan and Peggy Gleason, "Remote Naturalization Oaths are Legally Permissible," Immigrant Legal Resource Center, July 2020, https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/remotes_naturalization_oaths_are_legally_permissible.pdf.

¹³ See Rampell, Catherine, "The 'Missing' Immigrant Voters Whose Absence Might Swing the Election," *Washington Post*, August 27, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-missing-immigrant-voters-whose-absence-might-swing-the-election/2020/08/27/db144c16-e897-11ea-97e0-94d2e46e759b_story.html; "The Fix Is In — Nearly 300,000 Immigrants Won't Become U.S. Citizens In Time For the 2020 Election," *Boundless*, September 3, 2020, <https://www.boundless.com/blog/immigrants-citizenship-vote-2020/>.

number of new American voters is also likely to exceed the Senate margins of victory in 2021.

The American Election Eve Poll, conducted by Latino Decisions, African American Research Collaborative, and Asian American Decisions, found that nationwide, 89% of Black voters, 70% of Latino voters, and 68% of AAPI voters voted for Biden.¹⁴ According to election results of Georgia voters from the National Election Pool/Edison Research, 88% of Black voters and 62% of Latino voters voted for Biden, compared to 30% of whites.¹⁵

The American Election Eve Poll tested for nativity in Latino voters in Georgia. It found that 70% of U.S.-born Latinos voted for Biden, 61% voted for the Democratic candidate, Jon Ossoff in the regular Senate election, and 60% voted for both Democratic candidates in the special Senate election. Sixty-eight percent of naturalized Latinos voted for Biden, 58% voted for Ossoff, and 57% voted for both Democrats in the special Senate election.¹⁶

These numbers show that naturalized citizens joined a record turnout and voters of color in determining who will be the next president and their Representatives, and forcing a runoff for both Senate elections. In January 2021, new American voters will play a critical role in elections for Georgia's Senators and determining political control of the U.S. Senate. This confirms the findings of the New American Voters Impact Model, which identified Georgia as one of the most impactful states for newly naturalized citizens. The Model, created by NPNA, ranks Georgia as the tenth most influential state for newly naturalized citizens and voters and was based on factors like the 2016 presidential election margin of victory; the margin of victory average during the last three presidential elections; the number and concentration of new citizens in the state; and the occurrence of a senatorial, gubernatorial, or state legislative election and their competitiveness.¹⁷

Of the more than 444,000 naturalized citizens in Georgia, approximately 30% are new citizens. Since the release of NPNA's June 2020 report, which utilized American

¹⁴ See "American Election Eve Poll 2020," American Election Eve Poll, accessed December 11, 2020, <https://electioneve2020.com/poll/#/en/demographics/latino>.

¹⁵ "Georgia Exit Polls: How Different Groups Voted," New York Times, accessed December 11, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/exit-polls-georgia.html>.

¹⁶ "State Results: Georgia," American Election Eve Poll, accessed December 2, 2020, <https://electioneve2020.com/poll/#/en/demographics/latino/ga>.

¹⁷ Iñiguez-López, Diego, "The Power of Newly Naturalized Citizens in the 2020 Elections," National Partnership for New Americans, June 2020, newamericanvoters2020.org/assets/2020/06/NAV-REPORT-2020-UPDATED.pdf.

Community Survey (ACS) data from 2017, ACS released 2018 data, which this report uses.¹⁸

TOTAL POPULATION	REGISTERED VOTERS	ALL NATURALIZED	NATURALIZED 2014-2020
10,297,484	7,002,328	444,501	130,075

WHO ARE GEORGIA'S NEW AMERICAN VOTERS

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders represent 34% of Georgia's new citizens, 27% are from Latin America, 16% are from African countries, eleven percent from European countries, eight percent from Caribbean countries, and four percent from Middle Eastern and North African countries. The chart below provides totals for 2014-2018.

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	29,527	34%
LATIN AMERICAN	23,826	27%
AFRICAN	14,124	16%
EUROPEAN	9,586	11%
CARIBBEAN	6,862	8%
MIDDLE EASTERN & NORTH AFRICAN	3,812	4%
TOTAL 2014-2018	87,737	
TOTAL 2014-2020	130,075	

The following map represents the top 20 countries of origin for newly naturalized citizens.



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RANK	COUNTRY	TOTAL
1	MEXICO	8,821
2	INDIA	8,766
3	VIETNAM	3,998
4	JAMAICA	3,947
5	SOUTH KOREA	3,708
6	NIGERIA	3,192
7	CHINA	3,001
8	COLOMBIA	2,933
9	ETHIOPIA	2,343
10	BRAZIL	1,780
11	PHILIPPINES	1,704
12	PAKISTAN	1,626
13	UNITED KINGDOM	1,539
14	EL SALVADOR	1,492
15	GHANA	1,443
16	HAITI	1,291
17	KENYA	1,251
18	PERU	1,187
19	CANADA	1,151
20	BANGLADESH	1,138

Sixty-three percent of newly naturalized citizens in Georgia from 2014-2018 were below the age of 45 when they naturalized and over 53% of all new citizens are women. The full breakdown by age and gender is shown in the following table:

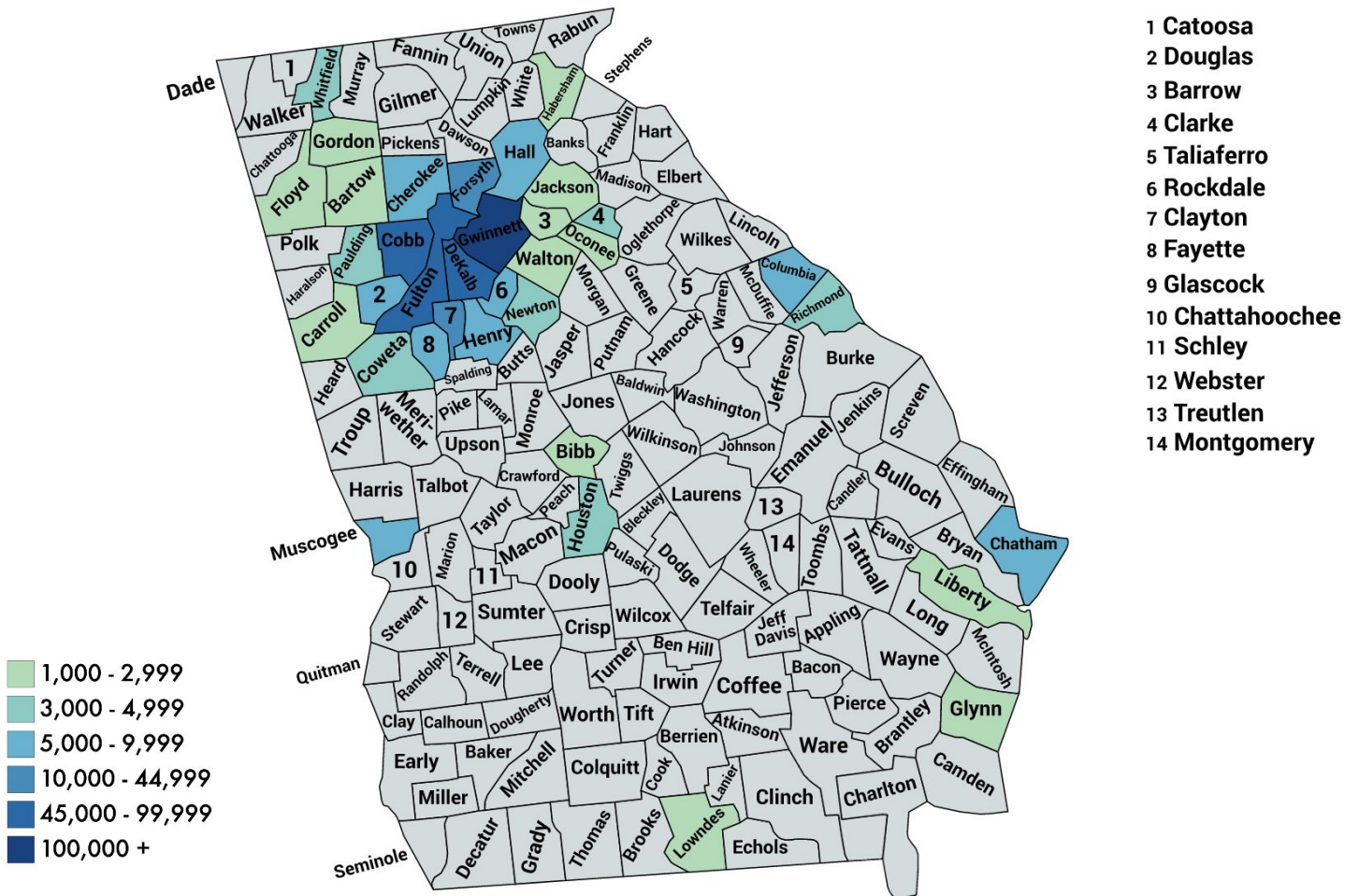
GEORGIA 2014-2018 NATURALIZED BY AGE				
AGE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	%
18-24 YEARS	3,884	4,739	8,623	10%
25-34 YEARS	11,918	9,567	21,485	24%
35-44 YEARS	13,987	11,447	25,434	29%
45-54 YEARS	9,033	8,098	17,131	19%
55-64 YEARS	4,960	4,268	9,228	10%
65 YEARS AND OVER	3,579	2,473	6,052	7%
TOTAL	47,361	40,592	87,953	

Compared to all other states, Georgia ranks fifth for new citizens from the Caribbean, seventh for new citizens from Africa, tenth for new citizens from Latin American, eleventh for new citizens from Asia or the Pacific Islands, and 13th for new citizens from Europe.

TOP 15 STATES BY REGION								
LATIN AMERICA			AAPI			EUROPE		
Rank	State	Total	Rank	State	Total	Rank	State	Total
1	California	314,645	1	California	302,467	1	California	69,325
2	Florida	266,187	2	New York	131,603	2	New York	55,372
3	Texas	155,321	3	Texas	80,503	3	Florida	34,438
4	New York	138,284	4	New Jersey	57,651	4	Illinois	31,056
5	New Jersey	69,942	5	Illinois	41,225	5	New Jersey	23,112
6	Illinois	36,444	6	Virginia	37,600	6	Massachusetts	20,328
7	Massachusetts	34,288	7	Florida	34,613	7	Washington	17,473
8	Arizona	32,893	8	Washington	32,572	8	Texas	16,685
9	Virginia	24,555	9	Pennsylvania	31,916	9	Pennsylvania	13,261
10	Georgia	23,826	10	Massachusetts	30,770	10	Michigan	12,689
11	North Carolina	19,581	11	Georgia	29,527	11	Connecticut	10,017
12	Nevada	18,049	12	Maryland	24,857	12	Virginia	9,860
13	Maryland	17,432	13	Ohio	21,848	13	Georgia	9,586
14	Washington	15,954	14	North Carolina	20,613	14	North Carolina	8,515
15	Pennsylvania	15,907	15	Michigan	19,099	15	Ohio	8,174
AFRICA			MENA			CARIBBEAN		
Rank	State	Total	Rank	State	Total	Rank	State	Total
1	Texas	25,907	1	California	62,108	1	Florida	62,494
2	New York	25,509	2	Michigan	21,860	2	New York	57,642
3	Maryland	24,438	3	New York	20,615	3	New Jersey	12,599
4	California	17,151	4	Texas	15,726	4	Massachusetts	12,447
5	Minnesota	15,555	5	New Jersey	13,128	5	Georgia	6,862
6	Massachusetts	15,493	6	Florida	11,709	6	Connecticut	6,477
7	Georgia	14,124	7	Illinois	10,536	7	Pennsylvania	5,088
8	Virginia	14,120	8	Virginia	10,007	8	Maryland	4,680
9	Ohio	11,910	9	Massachusetts	8,746	9	Texas	3,169
10	New Jersey	10,177	10	Pennsylvania	6,280	10	California	2,441
11	Pennsylvania	9,600	11	Ohio	5,710	11	Virginia	2,193
12	Washington	8,522	12	Arizona	4,917	12	North Carolina	1,912
13	Illinois	8,263	13	Tennessee	4,104	13	Illinois	1,653
14	North Carolina	7,879	14	North Carolina	4,055	14	South Carolina	1,448
15	Florida	6,027	15	Maryland	4,034	15	Ohio	919

WHERE ARE GEORGIA'S NATURALIZED VOTERS

Naturalized citizens are concentrated in the counties that are a part of and near Atlanta but they are also dispersed throughout the state, showing significant geographic diversity. The following map and table show counties with 1,000 or more naturalized citizens. Gwinnett County has more than 100,000 naturalized citizens, while Fulton, Cobb, and DeKalb have approximately 50,000 each. Clayton and Forsyth counties each exceed 10,000 naturalized citizens. There are also over a dozen counties throughout Georgia that have several thousands of naturalized citizens.



COUNTY	TOTAL	LATIN AMERICAN	ASIAN	AFRICAN	EUROPEAN	OCEANIA	NORTH AMERICAN
Gwinnett	100,822	31,448	44,758	13,134	10,557	170	755
Fulton	51,706	12,846	22,315	5,582	8,846	210	1,907
Cobb	50,565	18,776	16,645	8,012	5,929	74	1,129
DeKalb	48,272	16,092	14,986	11,668	4,628	167	731
Clayton	16,313	6,553	6,573	2,798	334	24	31
Forsyth	14,496	3,415	7,472	844	2,324	25	416
Henry	9,800	4,549	2,813	1,005	953	324	156
Cherokee	8,088	2,911	2,068	547	2,026	0	536
Hall	7,896	5,038	1,807	197	627	4	223
Chatham	7,466	1,711	3,245	654	1,556	14	286
Douglas	6,387	3,720	823	1,364	354	92	34
Fayette	6,156	2,226	2,096	663	893	14	264
Columbia	5,697	927	3,009	448	1,204	0	109
Muscogee	5,546	1,762	2,044	215	1,448	8	69
Rockdale	5,058	3,672	912	102	236	0	136
Paulding	4,891	2,388	929	1,062	480	0	32
Whitfield	4,619	3,799	675	48	97	0	0
Houston	3,827	1,083	1,758	157	723	0	106
Richmond	3,809	1,110	1,646	252	713	27	61
Coweta	3,598	1,597	951	150	780	12	108
Clarke	3,577	1,319	1,200	343	646	0	69
Newton	3,356	2,350	497	71	369	0	69
Bibb	2,715	658	1,276	409	288	0	84
Walton	2,378	1,187	504	312	278	0	97
Barrow	2,244	957	886	87	279	0	35
Liberty	2,233	1,028	544	270	354	37	0
Glynn	2,058	708	702	86	392	30	140
Floyd	1,889	1,070	583	76	151	0	9
Lowndes	1,741	455	747	70	371	0	98
Gordon	1,639	1,116	355	18	115	0	35
Bartow	1,506	884	369	46	169	0	38
Jackson	1,486	647	351	17	426	26	19
Carroll	1,360	636	365	134	160	0	65
Habersham	1,360	908	263	32	35	92	30
Oconee	1,092	215	587	100	190	0	0

TESTIMONIES

The following testimony is credited to this [CNN article](#).



CARLOS GARCIA | 40 | RIGGER

“Once you actually get there and stand in front of the immigration officer and you raise that hand to pledge allegiance to the United States, it's like -- that's why they call it a dream. Yes, it is a dream, because you can't believe it. This is what you've been working for, so hard, for 21 years, and you're there. You made it, but a lot of your friends didn't. You just let out that big sound from deep inside your gut. You exhale.

I've been silent for 21 years, without any official representation. I couldn't really come out of the shadows. And at this point, I'm ready to scream from the top of my lungs. I'm going to vote in person. I want to experience for the very first time that feeling, that emotion that I'm casting my vote. And I'm voting against my oppression. I waited 21 years for this moment. I can wait 21 hours in line to cast my vote. I don't care what happens. Nobody's going to stop me from voting.

Most of the people that I know, they can't vote. And that's why I feel like it's crucial for me to cast my vote. I feel like it's not just my vote, but I'm casting the vote for many of us, possibly hundreds, that they have no voice because they just can't. And I understand the need to get out there and express ourselves and our frustration with the way the system works.

I was very scrutinized going through the immigration process. I think our elected officials need to be held to the same standards as they hold us. Going through the immigration process, moral character is one of the most important things. If you lie, it can disqualify you. Or if you get caught in a lie. Or because simply you forgot something. Or if your data is not accurate. When I vote, I will be very proud, wearing an American flag mask my neighbor gave me as a present when I became a US citizen.”

RESOURCES



GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF LATINO ELECTED OFFICIALS (GALEO)
galeo.org | 1-888.54GALEO



LATINO COMMUNITY FUND (LCF GEORGIA)
lcfgeorgia.org | (313) 444-4761
latinosfordemocracy.net/espanol/



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advancingjustice-atlanta.org | 404-585-8446