



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on March 16, 2011

Pew Center: Census Estimate For Hispanics Too Low

The latest decennial census shows that the Census Bureau's estimate for the number of Hispanics in the United States is too low, the Pew Hispanic Center reports.

The Pew Hispanic Center, a subsidiary of Pew's umbrella research organization, analyzed the Census estimate of what the 2010 census count should be in 33 states and then looked at the actual numbers. The bureau's estimates missed their correct number by nearly 16 percent in one state and by more than 13 percent in another.



[The Census undercounted](#) by 590,000 people, Pew reports, or 1.5 percent of the 38.7 million Hispanics in those states.

As well, according to Pew:

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In 23 of the 33 states, census counts were higher than the latest census estimates of Hispanics by at least 2%. In three states, the census count was at least 2% lower than the census estimate. In the remaining seven states, the difference was less than 2% in either direction. By comparison, the difference between census estimates and the 2010 Census count for the total population in these 33 states was well under 1% (.2%)

The Numbers Breakdown

The Census Bureau estimated the Hispanic demographic in April 2009; the decennial census was conducted April 2, 2010.

Where the Census estimates of total population were too small, [Pew reports](#), they were also too small for the Hispanic portion of the population. As well, states with smaller Hispanic populations typically showed an estimate of their population farther below the actual count than in states with large Hispanic populations.

As a group, the 27 states that have Hispanic populations under a million people (including many where Hispanic counts grew sharply) had a larger percentage gap between their census counts and census estimates than did the six states with larger, long-duration Hispanic communities.

The estimates for states such as Texas and California, for instance, were not far off from the bureau's count, just 0.9 and 0.7 percent.

The six traditional Hispanic states for which Hispanic counts from the 2010 Census have been released include Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, New Jersey and Texas. Each has more than a million Hispanic residents and collectively, 31% of their population is Hispanic. As a group, those states house 30 million Hispanics, according to the 2010 Census, yet their aggregate census count was only 88,000 (or .3%) larger than their aggregate census estimate.



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In 27 states where the Hispanic population is just 7 percent of the population, [Pew reports](#), the discrepancy between the estimate and the count was even larger.

These states as a group house 8.7 million Hispanics, and their combined 2010 Census count was 501,000 people (or 6.1%) higher than their combined census estimate. Among them [is] Alabama, where the Hispanic census count of 186,000 people was 16% higher than its census estimate, the largest gap among states seen so far. At the other extreme, the census count of 22,000 Hispanics in South Dakota was 10% below the most recent census estimate. (Smaller populations by nature tend to be more volatile than large ones, so even a small numerical change could result in a large percentage change.)

Then again, the estimates in some states with large Hispanic populations varied significantly from the actual count. New Jersey's estimate, for instance, was 4.66 percent below its real figure of 1.56 million. In Arizona, the Census count of 1.9 million Hispanics was 8.7 percent below the estimate, which was 2 million.

And Arizona was one of the states, with Colorado, Vermont, and South Dakota, that posted counts below the estimates, with the difference between the two in South Dakota being 10 percent.

The census estimate for Alabama, [Pew reports](#), was the lowest among the 33 states compared to the bureau's actual count. The bureau counted 186,000 Hispanics in Alabama, after estimating a population of 160,000, a difference of 15.9 percent. Louisiana's estimated 170,000 Hispanics was too low by 13.2 percent. Its population of Hispanics is 193,000. And Kansas's 300,000 Hispanics are 10.8 percent more than the estimated 271,000.

What It Means For Texas

The estimate for Texas missed the mark by less than 1 percent. That state is home to 9.4 million Hispanics. So the margin of error was in keeping with [Pew's finding](#) that the larger a state's Hispanic population, the less difference there is between the estimate and the count.

Texas [also faces](#) an uncertain future, *The New American* reported last week, because of its large Hispanic population. Steve Murdock, a demographer for Rice University, recently reported that "it's basically over for Anglos" in the Lone Star State.

[The Houston Chronicle quoted](#) Murdock thusly:

Today's Texas population can be divided into two groups, he said. One is an old and aging Anglo and the other is young and minority. Between 2000 and 2040, the state's public school enrollment will see a 15 percent decline in Anglo children while Hispanic children will make up a 213 percent increase, he said.

The state's largest county — Harris — will shed Anglos throughout the coming decades. By 2040, Harris County will have about 516,000 fewer Anglos than lived in the Houston area in 2000, while the number of Hispanics will increase by 2.5 million during the same period, Murdock said. The projection assumes a net migration rate equal to one-half of 1990-2000.

Within 30 years, the number of white children in schools will be a mere 20 percent.

The upshot is, Texas [will face](#) problems as the Hispanic population increases because its educational and income levels are so [far below](#) those of whites.

The state's future looks bleak assuming the current trend line does not change because education



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and income levels for Hispanics lag considerably behind Anglos, he said.

Unless the trend line changes, 30 percent of the state's labor force will not have even a high school diploma by 2040, he said. And the average household income will be about \$6,500 lower than it was in 2000. That figure is not inflation adjusted so it will be worse than what it sounds.

"It's a terrible situation that you are in. I am worried," Murdock said.

The question other states must ask, vis-a-vis their Hispanic populations, is whether they face the same future.

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