



BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE:

# THE LATINO & PUERTO RICAN POLICY AGENDA SUMMIT

HARTFORD MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN  
200 Columbus Blvd., Hartford, CT

## ABOUT THE SUMMIT

Our summit provides a vital platform for Puerto Ricans and Latinos in Connecticut to discuss legislative and policy issues, fostering an environment for community responses to socio-political challenges.

**01.20.24**  
FROM 8:30 AM TO 5 PM

# LATINO POPULATION GROWTH INTEGRAL TO NATION'S GROWTH

- Latino population growth between 2010 and 2020 (**23%**) outpaced nation's growth (**7.4%**).
- Latino population increase accounted for over half (**50.1%**) of the nation's overall growth.

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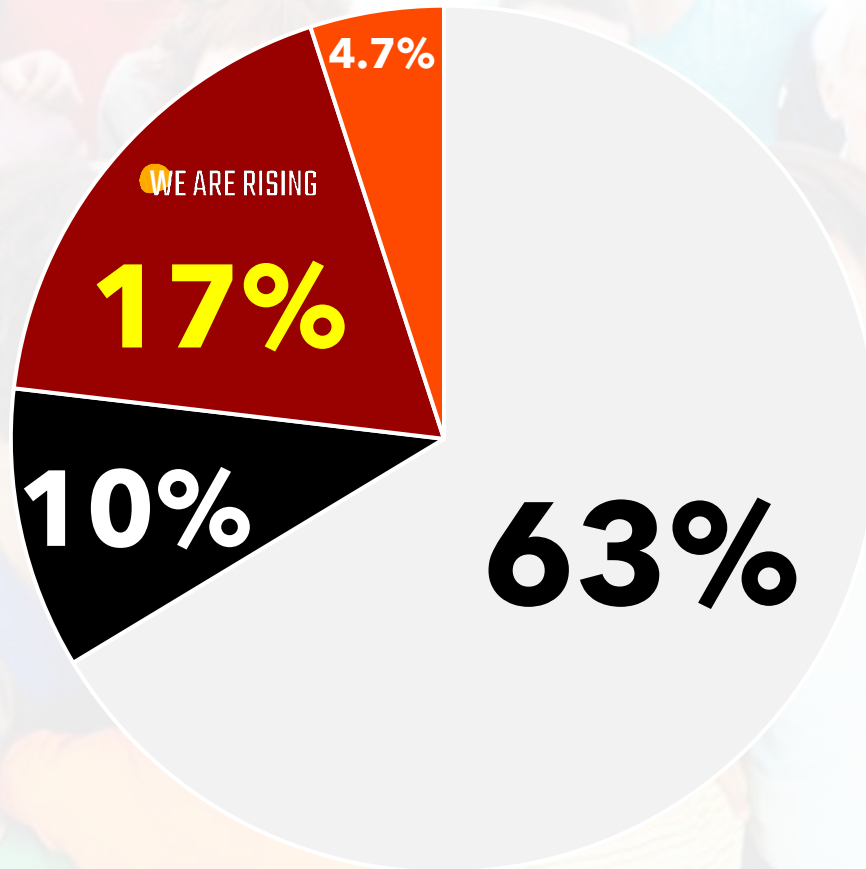
# LATINO YOUTH POPULATION

- **The latest decennial Census data** revealed a sizeable Latino youth population (under 18) in the country, with **18.8 million Latino youth**.
- Slightly more than one in four youth in the country was Latino (25.7%)
- While the total youth population declined by 1.4% in the last two decades, the Latino youth population increased by 9.5 percent.



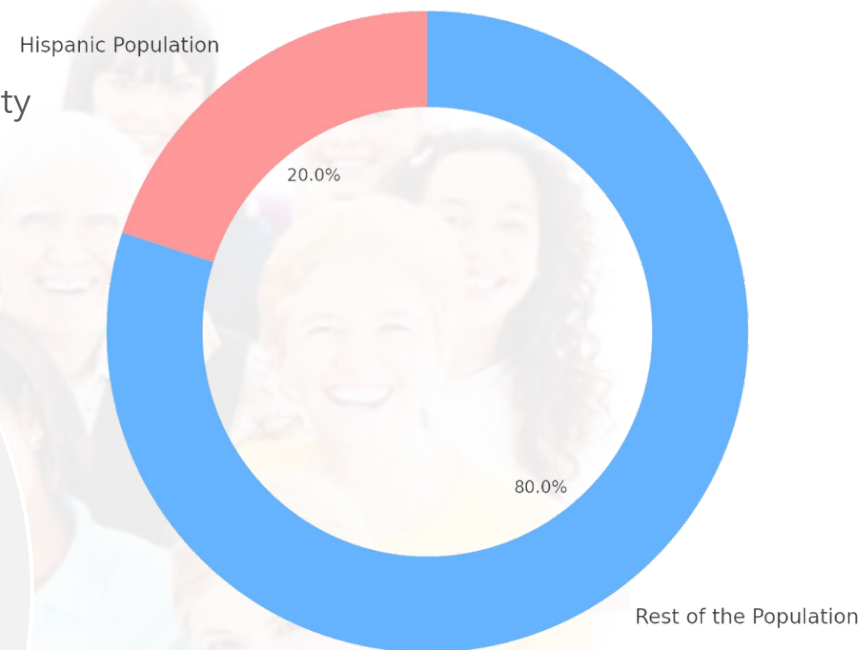


2020 Connecticut Population by Race and Ethnicity



White Black Hispanic of any race Asian (Hawaiian or Pac Isl)

Population Projections of the Latino Community



Race & Ethnicity	2020_population	
Total	3,605,944	
White	2,279,232	63%
Black	360,937	10%
Hispanic of any race	623,293	17%
Asian (Hawaiian or Pac Isl)	171,433	4.74%

**35 million eligible voters in the U.S.**

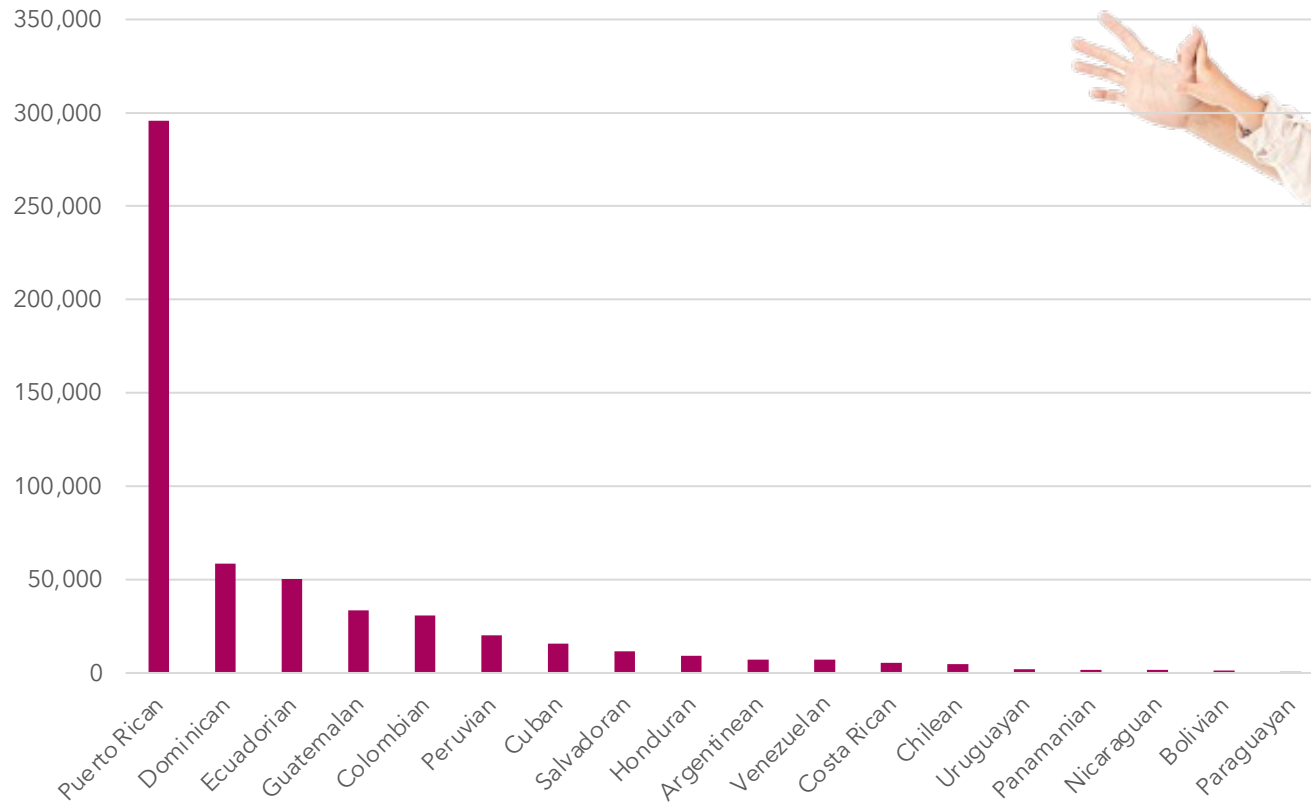
**About 52% of Latinos in CT are eligible to vote.**

**Every 30 seconds a Latino turns 18 years old in the U.S.**

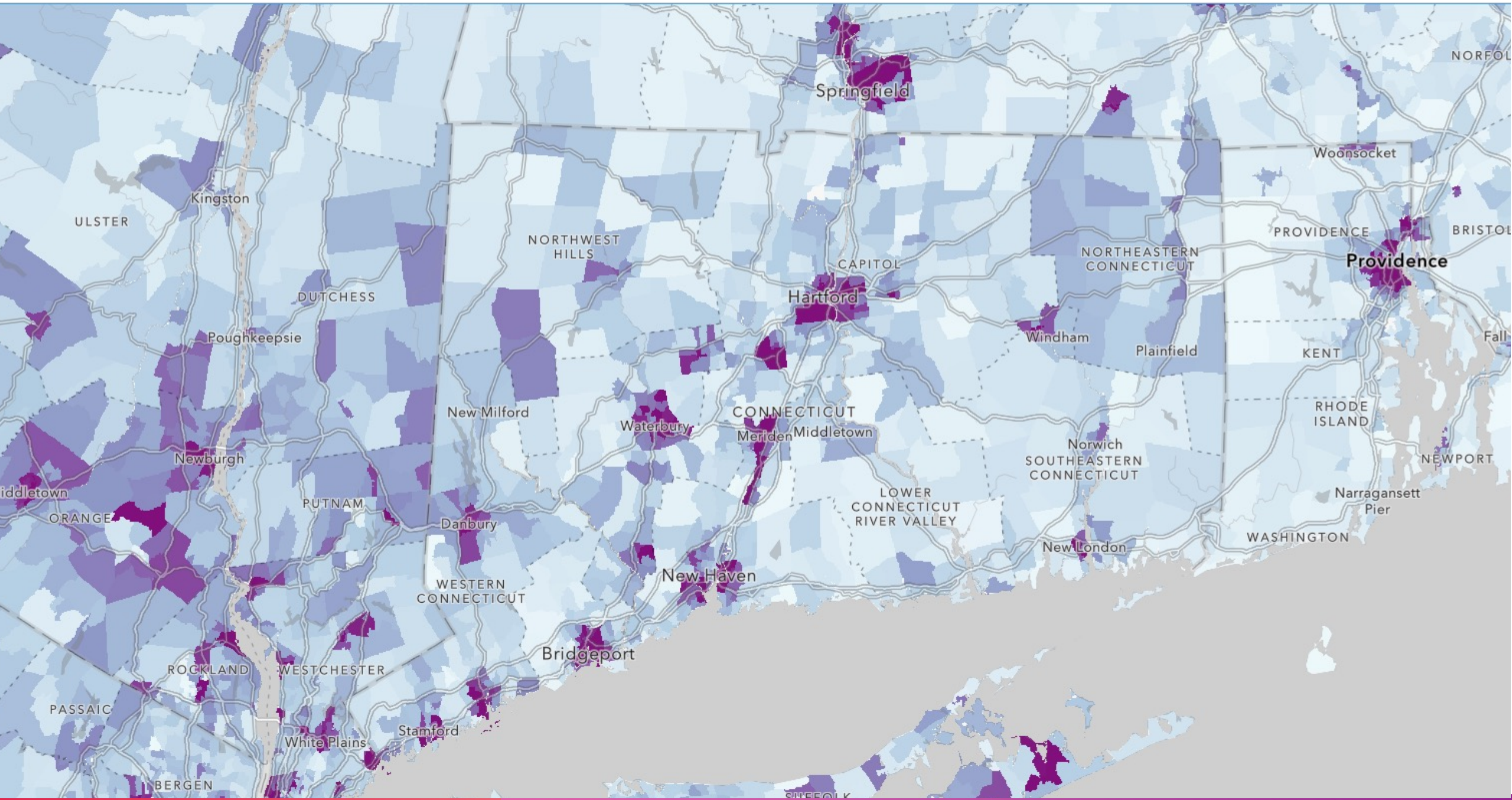
# DIVERSITY



Latino Origin - Population Size







Springfield

Woonsocket

PROVIDENCE

Providence

CAPITOL

Hartford

NORTHEASTERN  
CONNECTICUT

Windham

Plainfield

KENT

RHODE ISLAND

NEWPORT

Narragansett  
Pier

WASHINGTON

New London

LOWER  
CONNECTICUT  
RIVER VALLEY

Norwich  
SOUTHEASTERN  
CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT  
Meriden Middletown

Waterbury

New Milford

Danbury

WESTERN  
CONNECTICUT

New Haven

Bridgeport

Stamford

White Plains

ROCKLAND

WESTCHESTER

PASSAIC

BERGEN

ORANGE

Newburgh

Poughkeepsie

DUTCHESS

NORTHWEST  
HILLS

ULSTER

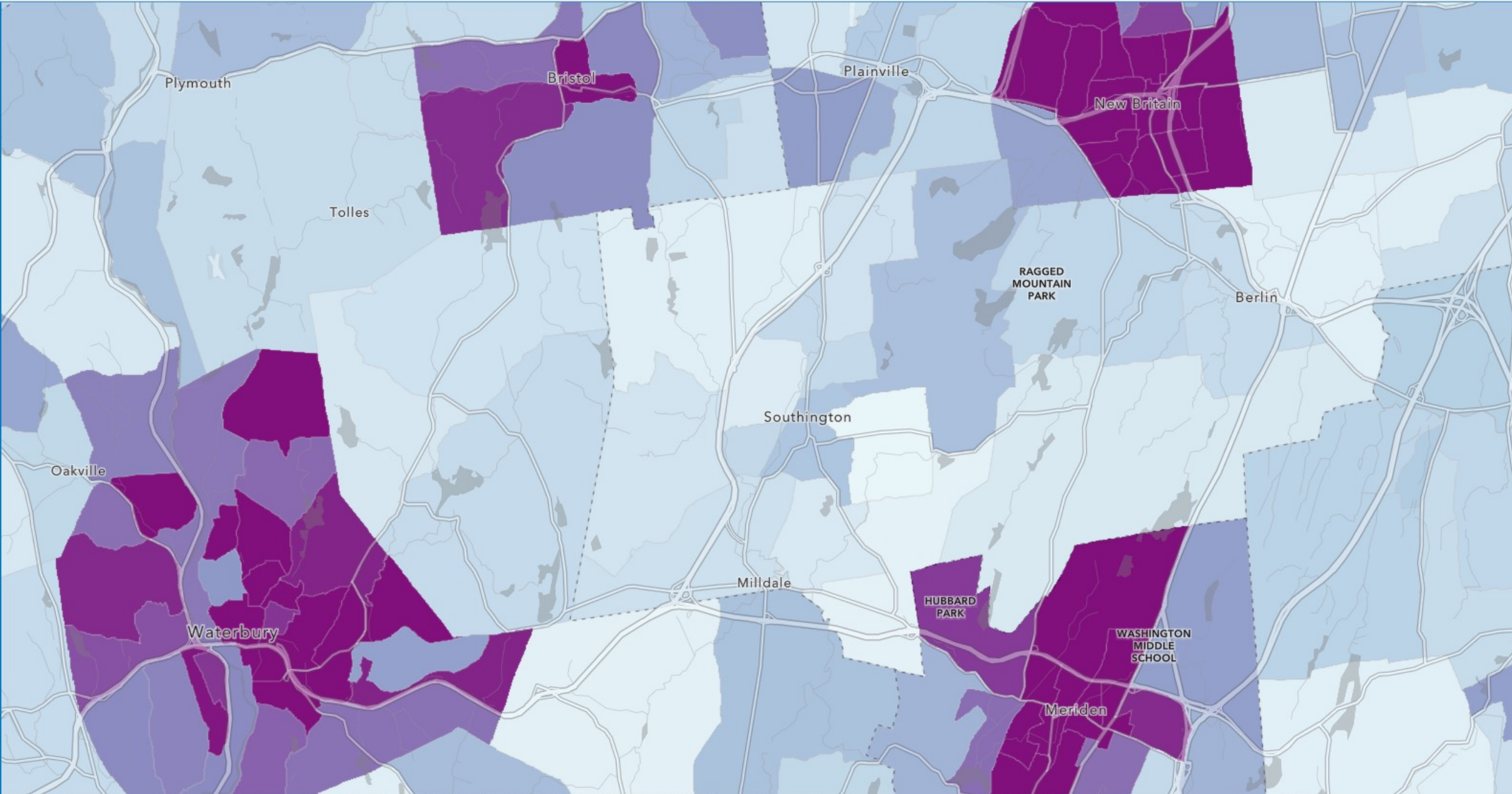
Kingston

NORFOLK

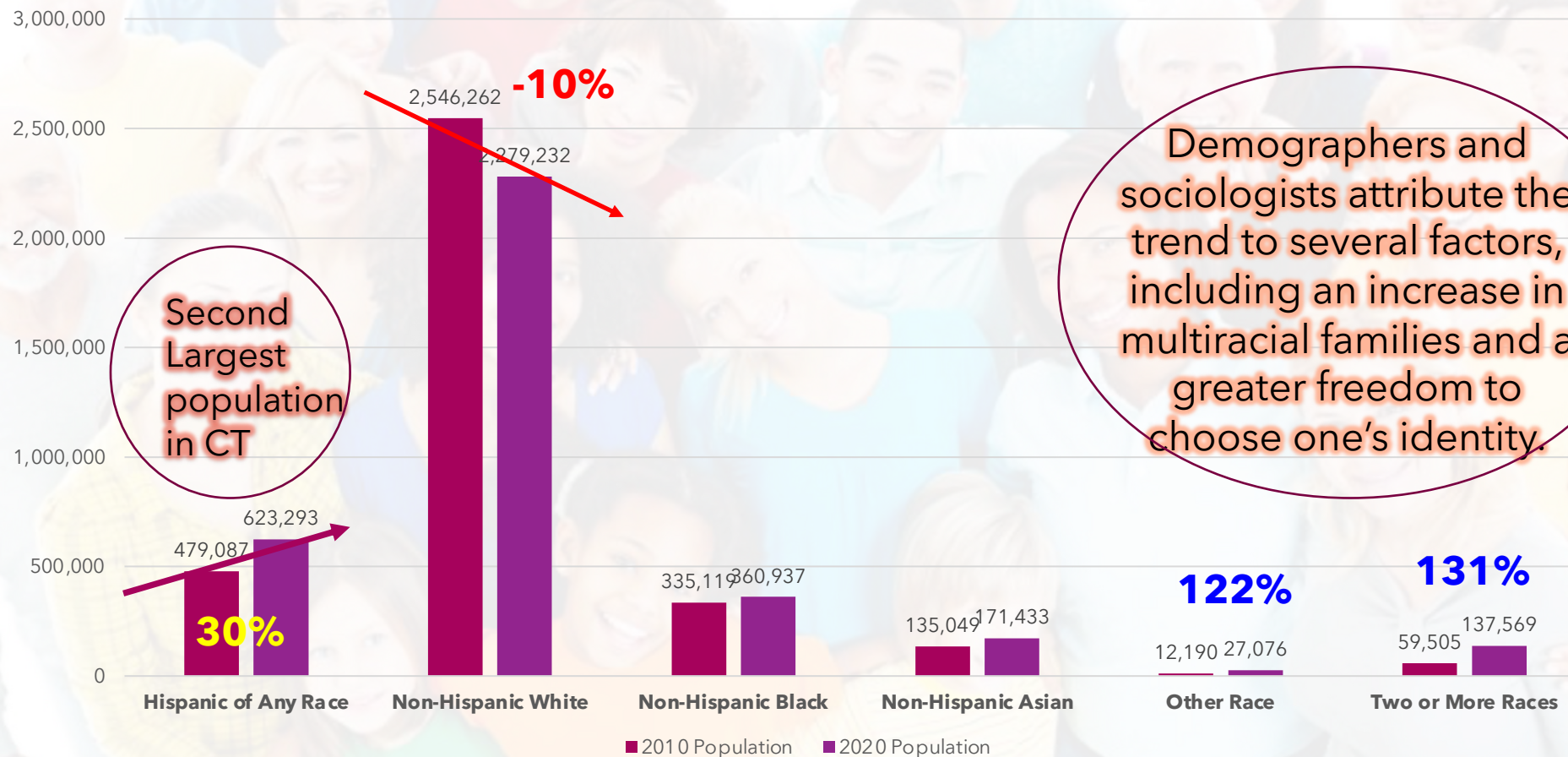
BRISTOL

Fall



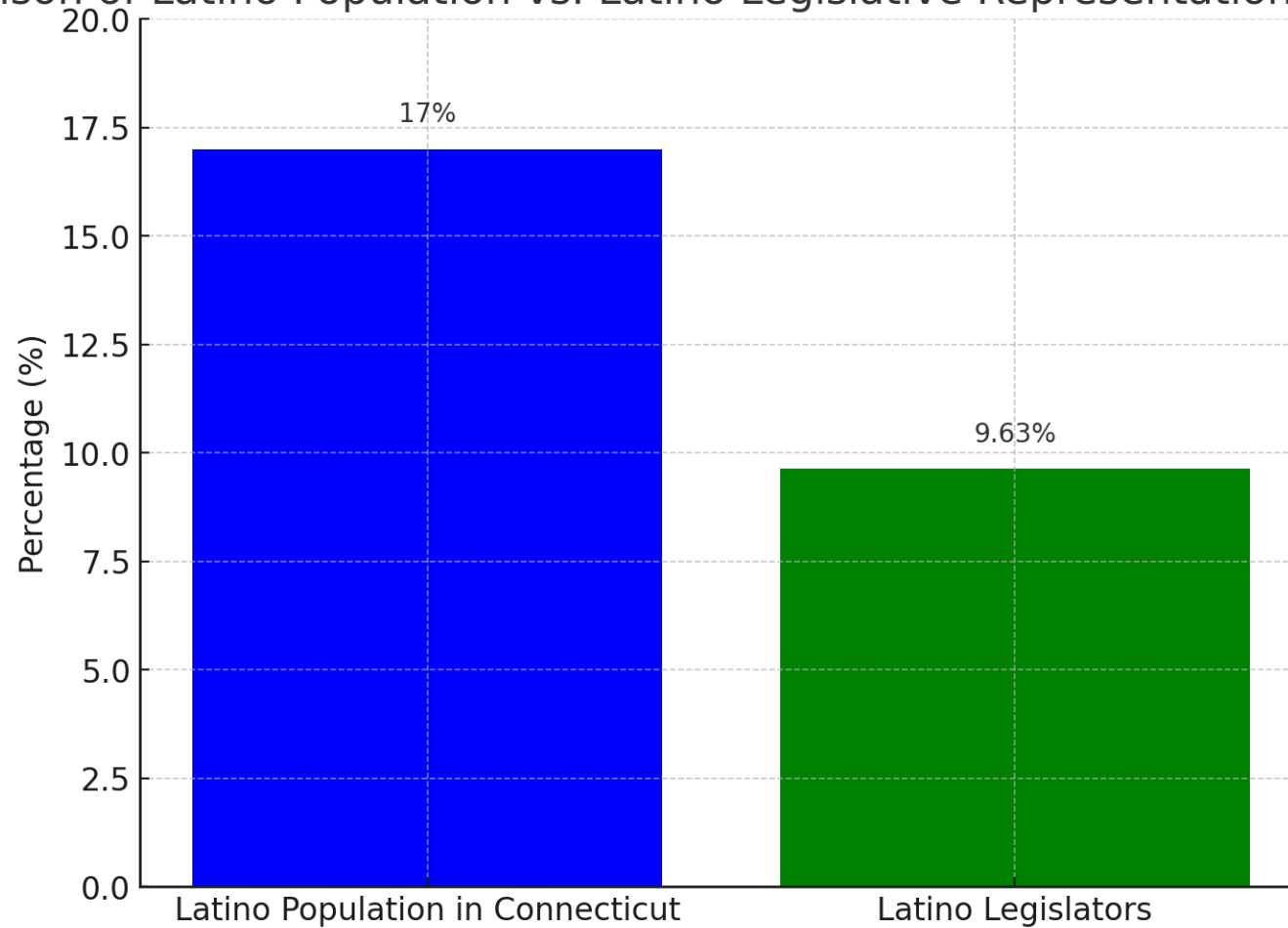


## Connecticut Racial and Ethnic Population Changes - 2010 - 2020





## Comparison of Latino Population vs. Latino Legislative Representation in Connecticut









# MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Begin to identify convergences among Puerto Ricans and Latinos that can better help understand the needs of PR/Latinos throughout the state
- Hear directly from the community members
- The main objective of the listening sessions was to collect information from the perspective of the participants that could help us identify local needs and potential recommendations that could be shared with Puerto Rican and Latino state legislators.
- In this presentation, we are focused on five topics, i.e. 1) Housing; 2) Education; 3) Health; 4) Voting and Civic Engagement; 5) Linguistic Justice, with state and local (New London, Hartford, Waterbury and New Haven) data.



# METHODOLOGY

- We drew on publicly available data from U.S. Census (American Community Survey)
- Conducted 4 listening sessions in the towns/cities of New London, Hartford, Waterbury and New Haven
  - Approximately a total of 180 participants
  - Sessions were taped, transcribed and translated into English
  - Four people coded each one of the sessions and from that themes were identified
- We worked with community organizations (Hispanic Alliance, Hispanic Health Council & Junta), legislators (Representatives Gerardo Reyes and Hilda Santiago), and UConn (Director Fumiko Hoeft) to create safe spaces that bring community participants to talk to us.
- Examples have been selected from these four towns/cities
- There were several findings/themes identified in the listening sessions. Only five themes of those themes will be presented today because they provide some background for the afternoon sessions

# HOUSING: NEW HAVEN

- Connecticut homeownership rates among Puerto Ricans (42%) was slightly higher compared to Hispanic/Latino (38%), but much lower compared to the state's overall population (66%).
- Rent burden in Connecticut, also known as tenants paying at least 30% or more of their incomes towards rent, was higher among Hispanics/Latinos (56%) and Puerto Ricans (55%) compared to the state's overall population (48%).
- Rent burden in New Haven, also known as tenants paying at least 30% or more of their incomes towards rents, was higher among Hispanics/Latinos (63%) followed by Puerto Ricans (60%) and total population (52%).

## Housing Characteristics

	Total Popul..	Hispanic	Puerto Rican
Renters	72%	72%	74%
Median Rent	\$1,267	\$1,321	\$1,251
Rent Burden	52%	63%	60%
Owners	28%	28%	26%
Mortgage Burden	39%	38%	34%
Median Mortgage	\$1,355	\$1,813	\$1,764



# HOUSING SUMMARY

Concerns about housing were largely centered around economics, quality of living, and feelings of insecurity regarding their position as renters. The feelings of powerlessness are related to not having their concerns and complaints addressed by the landlords and housing officials, often feeling exploited if they are non-US citizens. They are susceptible to unregulated rent increases and unhealthy living condition. include increasingly higher rents, without reasonable controls.



# HOUSING

New London

**Many people, when they see us Latinos, in this case, when they see us immigrants, they ask us for a lot of money.** For example, recently I wanted to rent a place and they asked me only to rent the place 7,000 dollars. The first month was the entrance fee, the first month was the legal fee, then they asked me for a guarantee, then they asked me for the last month and apart from that, a guarantee that I would go. Even though my husband and I have permanent jobs, we have a company that is managed here, and even though that, \$7,000 for just renting an apartment.... the rent was \$2,000 to \$2,500, depending on, and we didn't get a parking lot because if we had more vehicles, they wanted to chase us for the parking lot. (Speaker 5, 2:00)





# HOUSING

## New Haven

Because of COVID, **everything doubled or tripled**. So, the day after he gave me the letter, 60 days, two thousand pesos, and they rented it. Because the rent had already gone up so much that it was cheap for a three-room apartment. So, I was 1,400, now I pay 2,400. It's not, It doesn't make sense. It just doesn't make sense by income. Sp 7 00:11:55

## Hartford

The biggest concern right now is the increase in rent, the terrible conditions that most of us live in, for what we pay. **I think rats live better**. I hear every case that comes in. And it's unfair. You pay \$1,500 for it. In Hartford, two years ago, an apartment was \$1,000. Now it's \$1,300. And a room. And it's full of mold. Sp9 00:31:50



# HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Rent control.
- Landlord regulations

La verdad es que hay un problema de vivienda. Es un problema muy grande. Y si ahí, lo que nosotros le tenemos que pedir a los legisladores es que haya un control, que no lo haya aquí. Porque lo que pasó durante COVID fue que vinieron mucha gente, What we have to ask the legislators is that there be a control. (Speaker 3, 16:12)

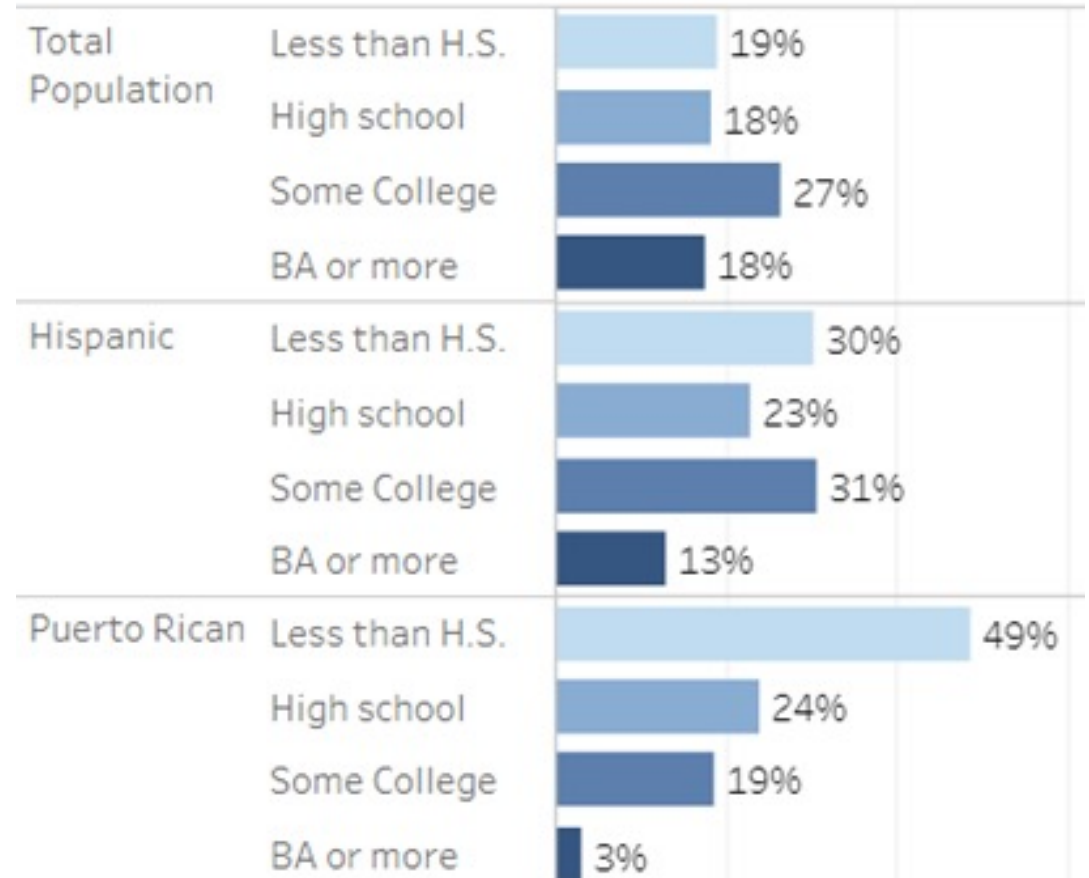




# EDUCATION: WATERBURY

- Puerto Ricans (11%) in the state of Connecticut had the lowest educational attainment rates of those with a 'bachelor's degree or more' compared to Hispanics/Latinos (20%) and the total population (41%).
- Puerto Ricans (3%) in Waterbury had the lowest educational attainment rates of those with a 'bachelor's degree or more' compared to Hispanics/Latinos (13%) and the total population (18%).

## Educational Attainment



# SUMMARY OF EDUCATION

Within the listening session there were repeated concerns about educational disparities believed to be influenced by a lack of teaching training, lack of resources and language barrier.

These issues along with the lack of Latino teachers represented in the schools contribute to a feeling of marginalization the Latino community.

These feelings were heightened when it came to access and availability to special education for those students who require it.





# TU VOZ, TU INFLUENCIA

## Listening Session



Wednesday, January 10, 2024

Waterbury: I've noticed that most of the kids aren't getting life skills. And that's very important. Usually, as a parent or a mother who is taking care of the kids, doesn't know. It's important that the kids also get that type of information at school.

They're not learning math. They're not coming home with books. And it's just a laptop and it's just one or two tasks and that's it....**now the minimum is, oh, were you present at school? Yes. Okay, you passed.** That's not going to work. That's why they think that everything is going to be easy and we're not going to have any progress in the future because they're not learning anything(SP 11, 01:02:34).





# TU VOZ, TU INFLUENCIA

## Listening Session

Miércoles, 29 de Noviembre

5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

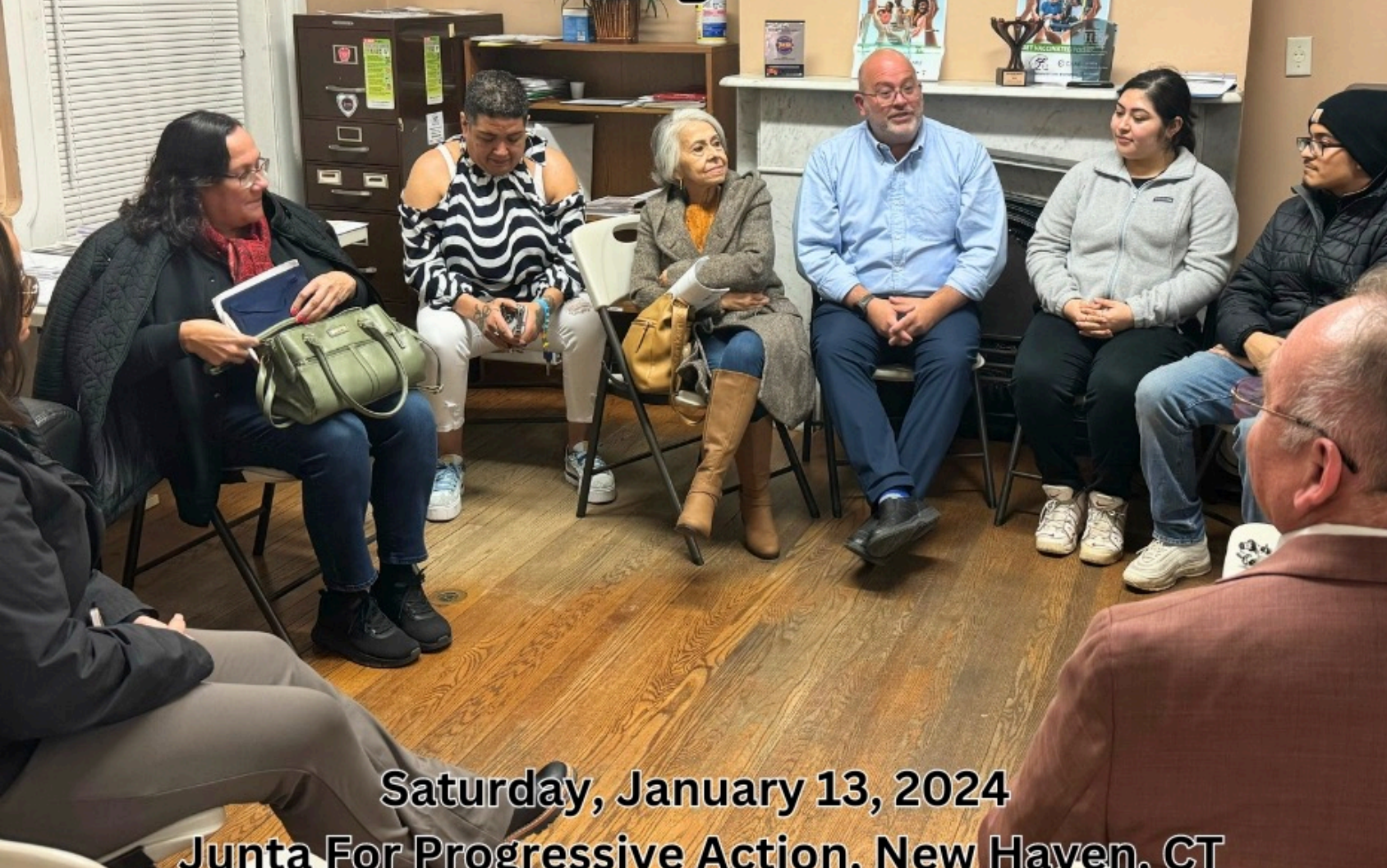
Consejo de Salud Hispana - Centro de Bienestar Familiar  
Hartford, Connecticut

Hartford - It is that the children are not motivated...there is no such connection. The person who is the counselor is not opening the way for him...The teachers are not from her, they are not Hispanic, they are rich, they studied in expensive schools, over there they are from the suburbs...Sometimes they don't have empathy to talk to the child, but there must be a task force among all those needs with the high school students so that there is no dropout, and they are ready and there will be more schools. One {school} in Manchester, one in New Britain, and another in Hartford, it doesn't work. **The kids cry. I know people who want their kids to go to a particular school but there is no room. That is not just.** Sp1 00:23:26



# TU VOZ, TU INFLUENCIA

## Listening Session



New Haven: And so I just feel like as a graduate now from a New Haven public school, I feel like I am at a disadvantage. And I shouldn't feel like that. New Haven is an amazing place. We have so many, we could have so many wonderful resources. There's so many people here who want to help. **And I just feel like they're not heard.**  
(Speaker 10, 33:45)

# RECOMMENDATIONS: EDUCATION

- More affordable education.
- Access to better vocational education.

Hartford

To put more programs, so they can get involved more and train them more, because they are leaving high school. They don't have a good level in school, and they don't want a school that, you know, trains more of those kids that leave school, I would say, that would be the key to make things more productive. Sp5 00:14:47

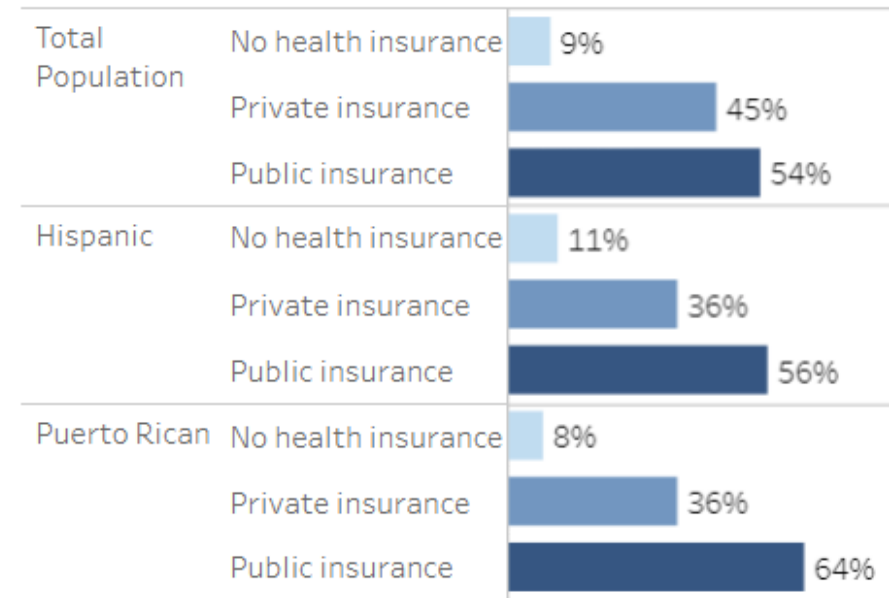




# HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH: HARTFORD

- At least 48% of the Puerto Rican population relied on public insurance coverage, this was higher than Hispanic/Latinos (36%) and the state's overall population (36%).
- The percentage of Puerto Ricans (5%) and total populations (5%) without health insurance was two times lower compared to Hispanic/Latinos (10%).
- In the city of Hartford, 64% of the Puerto Rican population relied on public insurance coverage, this was higher than Hispanic/Latinos (56%) and the city's overall population (54%).

## Health Insurance Coverage





## HEALTH / MENTAL HEALTH

Access to affordable health care, along with safe, reliable, and healthy housing were crucial issues affecting the overall health and mental health of the Latino population. Many expressed the need for but lack of mental health services available in both Spanish and English. This unmet need for quality health and mental health services are a form of violence inflicted on the community, both emotionally and physically.



Hartford

**Insurance is very high and doesn't cover everything** we need. The medication, the tests. I have insurance for my job, but I had to cancel it because they charged me too much weekly. I got one from the state. Now they are charging me regularly, but it doesn't cover me completely. Sp4 00:0216 And apart from that, it's also the time that the doctors must attend to you. No, in three months I'll see you. In three months, I'll die and when are you going to see me? It takes too long. And when you go to the doctor, it takes three or four hours for them to attend to you. Sp4 00:3:09

New Haven

It [health and mental heal] all falls in the same category because the health becomes the mental health because they're **overstimulated, overwhelmed, and not being heard**. So they end up with mental health issues.... (Speaker 7, 30:59)

Hartford

There are a lot of problems of interpretation on the health issue.. ...it should be a priority that you attend to. And if you come to the hospital, a person who speaks Spanish. I live in Manchester, and I don't attend there because no one speaks Spanish there....**I must wait for the interpreter to arrive. And I'm already dying of pain.** And the person who comes to speak to me in Spanish takes a long time. What do I do? I came to Hartford by emergency. And I say, I'm going to find someone who speaks Spanish. But it's the same. **And they look at you with a face as if you're not going to pay them.** Sp9 00:008:00

# RECOMMENDATIONS:

- More affordable health insurance.
- Extension of Husky Health to undocumented immigrants.
- Better access to culturally competent translators/interpreters.

Well, that's what I was saying. The mental health, as you were saying, ADHD, OCD issues, social anxiety, especially after COVID, they are not being helped. They're not, the families are not being helped. The parents, the kids, They need more groups of resources in the school. Latino, that speak Spanish, that can get them to where they need to get. There is, it took me years to get where I'm at with my son. And one of the school now, they got parents into the school because, and it was a school that traumatized my son in elementary school because they're not skilled for kids with certain behavioral issues. And no one will help me. I had a bang on doors and everyone to get the help. That shouldn't be like that. It should not be that hard to get help. And it's still, I'm still going through it. And he's 15 now. There's no help. (Speaker 7, 28:13)

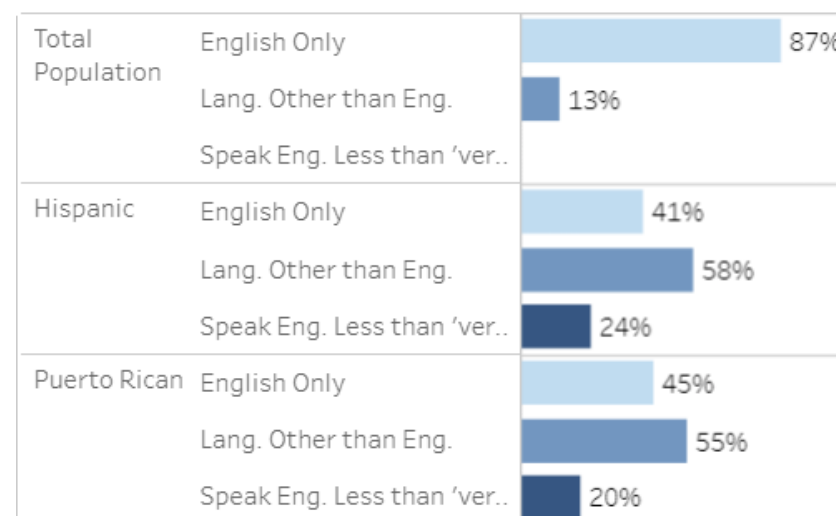




# LANGUAGE: NEW LONDON

- Puerto Ricans (18%) and Hispanic/Latinos (24%) are less likely than the total population (38%) to speak two languages in the state of Connecticut.
- Available data documents that bilingual speakers have higher educational attainment than persons who speak one language (either English or Spanish).
- In New London, Puerto Ricans (20%) and Hispanic/Latinos (24%) are more likely to be bilingual than the total population.

Language Spoken at Home



# LANGUAGE

- Within the listening session there were repeated concerns about educational disparities as a result of the language barrier as well as difficulty accessing quality health and mental health care due to lack of Spanish speaking providers or qualified translators. They often feel marginalized and powerless when navigating English dominant systems and are often ignored, misinformed or misunderstood as a result of cultural domination embedded in all systems.



### Waterbury

I identify a lot with what she was saying. My mom was an immigrant too. She was undocumented for a while. I was my mom's translator. Without me knowing the entrance, it creates a **horrible stress and anxiety level in the child**. I had to do my homework by myself, without anyone to help me. There was no tutor, no counselor, no one. So, to go from living in a country with a totally different educational system, to coming here and feeling totally alone, for me it was a culture shock. (SP 4 01;04:59)

### New Haven

But not all parents have the knowledge because they don't speak English, **they are afraid** because they don't have documentation. They don't know what's there. (Speaker 1, 29:40)

### New Haven

There are no interpreters. I went last week [to the DMV] and that was horrible. No, you have to make an appointment, but no one helps you, **no one pays attention to you**. There's not a single person who speaks Spanish. (Speaker 0, 25:17)

### Hartford

The police, any emergency you have, you do not speak the language, they fill out the report because the other one was American, white, American. They fill out the report or they tell you there are no police, **They kill you, bury you and then they come**. (Speaker 3, 26:20)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

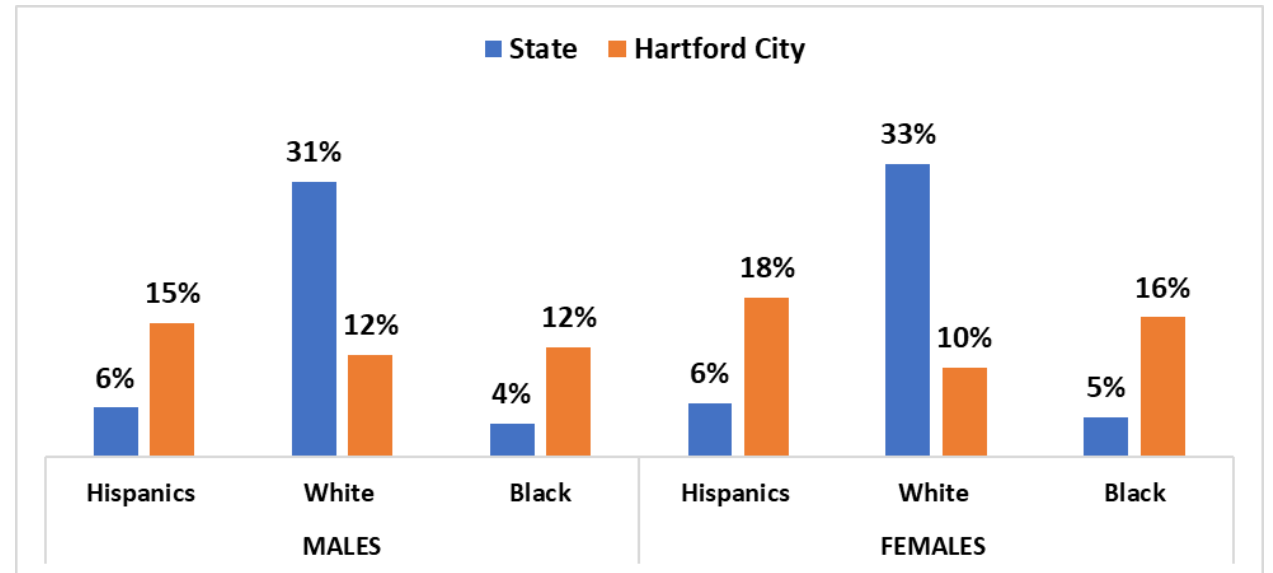
- Easier certification of Spanish language speakers.

A law was passed by the linguistic justice. We have to see that this is being implemented in schools. Because we don't know the language, English, that they put a professional translator, and they are not doing it. So, what do they say to implement this law? That we ask legislators, those who give the money, the budget, which are the ones we have to go to tell them that they have to give the funds so that this law can be implemented. So, We have to go to the legislators. (Speaker 5B, 19:29)



# VOTING & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: HARTFORD AND CONNECTICUT

- In 2022, approximately 61% of Hartford City's citizen voting age population consisted of Latinos (33%) and African Americans (28%).
- In terms of absolute numbers, Latinas represented a slightly higher citizen voting age population compared to African American women in Hartford City, with 17,240 and 15,125 individuals, respectively.
- This accounts for over a third (34%) of the city's overall population who were eligible to vote, with Latinas comprising about 18% and African Americans comprising about 16%.



# VOTING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Issues related to lack of participation in voting and civic engagement can be associated with enduring social exclusion and systemic discrimination manifested in various forms such as racism and language barriers. The lack of information regarding political processes, available services, and accountability of policy and law makers leaves Latinos feeling powerless and marginalized.





### Waterbury

We need more Latin senators, more Latin mayors.

**But we have to go out and vote.** We have to... But we can't complain. We have to get involved. (SP7, 52:56)

### Hartford

The politicians are corrupt. They like to fill their pockets like a boyfriend when he is in love with a girl. They **promise you many beautiful things** and after he's gone, you know, right? Saying elegantly, already in, **he forgot what he promised.** (Speaker 3B, 29:51)

### New Haven

So, we can't lose that day to go and vote because **you're not offering me anything.** In other words, everybody has to fight for what they want. So, the Latino, there are many Latinos, but we also have to pay for citizenship, we have to pay for the application, everything. (Sp0, 01:01:09)

### Waterbury

But to offer it in the language to the people that we really want to participate. Because if we say, ok we have these programs, we want to hear your voice, we want you to participate, but we are not giving you the space to express yourself and really understand. **Then what does the Latino do? He shuts up. He goes home.** (Sp 3 00:09:29)

# RECOMMENDATION

- Better voter mobilization

The state has changed the law that says you can vote early. Why doesn't the state of Connecticut make it a holiday? Because a lot of Latinos don't go out to vote, but it's because we have to work. If it's a state day, then the employees have to close, the schools have to close. (SP 0B, 42:02)





# THANK YOU!

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