

Selected Facts from *THE MEASURE OF AMERICA 2010-2011*



OVERALL WELL-BEING:

- The average American today lives nearly 9 years longer than in 1960, is twice as likely to graduate from high school, four times as likely to earn a bachelor's degree, and earns nearly twice as much.
- The typical **Asian American** in **New Jersey** lives a quarter of a century longer, is 11 times more likely to have a graduate degree, and earns \$33,000 more a year than the typical **Native American** in **S. Dakota**.
- In assessing well-being by congressional district, **Texas** is home to several noteworthy improvements in human development. Of the ten U.S. congressional districts that show the greatest progress in the period from 2005 to 2008, half are in Texas. Congressional Districts Eight, Eleven, Fourteen, Eighteen, and Twenty-nine all moved up in the rankings, largely on the strength of higher earnings. Despite the fact that these data were collected mid-recession, the earnings of the typical worker increased by over \$2,000 in each of these five Texas congressional districts, a remarkable gain considering that during this same time period earnings in over 75% of the nation's districts decreased.
- African Americans in **Maryland** have the highest HD Index scores of African Americans of any state, while African Americans in **Louisiana** have the lowest. African Americans in Maryland, on average, live 2.5 years longer, and earn over \$15,000 more than African Americans in Louisiana.
- **Connecticut** is the top-ranked state, with an HD Index score of 6.30 out of 10. This is the score that the nation as a whole will reach, if current national trends continue, in the year 2022.
- *In measuring differences in well-being, money alone does not tell the whole story.* For example, median earnings in both **Oregon** and **Texas** is around \$27,300. Yet, Oregonians today live on average about three-quarters of a year longer than Texans. While nearly 90% of adults in Oregon have at least a high school diploma, in Texas fewer than 80% have.
- *More money does not guarantee a longer life.* **Maryland** has the 3rd highest median earnings in the nation, behind only Washington, DC, and New Jersey, but ranks 33rd in life expectancy.
- *States that are not the most affluent can achieve superior outcomes in health.* **Utah** ranks 39th in the nation on earnings, yet it is in the top 10 in terms of longevity.





HEALTH:

- Americans born today can expect to live 78.6 years on average, nearly 9 years longer than in 1960.
- Life expectancy at birth in the United States (78.6 years) increased by eight months over the life expectancy (77.9 years) reported in *The Measure of America 2008-2009*.
- **Asian Americans** enjoy the longest life expectancy of any racial or ethnic group (87.3 years) in the U.S. today.
- **Latinos** enjoy the 2nd longest life expectancy of any racial or ethnic groups in the U.S. today. They live, on average to 83.5 years. This is nearly 5 years longer than whites and over eight years longer than African Americans and Native Americans.
- **African American** males today live shorter lives than the average American did in 1970—four decades ago.
- Life expectancy in the United States is 78.6 years, on par with Chile, though Chile spends 1/10 what the United States spends on health care.
- Residents of **29 countries** live longer than Americans do, while spending as little as one-eighth as much per person on their health.
- A baby born today in the northern **Virginia** suburbs of DC can expect to live more than a decade longer than a baby born today in the rural southern part of **West Virginia**—83.7 years vs. 72.9 years.
- A **white** baby born today in the nation's capital can expect to live 83.1 years. An **African American** baby born in the same city has a life expectancy of 71 years, a dozen years less and about the same as that of the average American baby in the **early 1970s**.
- An Asian American baby born today in the Atlanta, **Georgia** metro area can expect to live nearly 14 years longer than an African American baby born in the same city. African Americans in the Atlanta metro area today have a life span about equal to the average American two decades ago.
- Asian Americans have the longest life span in the Atlanta, **Georgia** metro area (89.4 years) followed by Latinos (81.1 years), Whites (78.9 years), and African Americans 75.6 years.
- The congressional districts in which Americans are living the longest are two suburbs of Washington, DC: **Virginia's** Eighth and **Maryland's** Eighth. Residents of these areas live more than 83 years, on average.
- **Young African American men** in **Philadelphia** and **Jefferson Parish, Louisiana** face a higher chance of death by homicide than do military personnel in Iraq. In these areas, the death rate for African American men ages 20–24 is about 5 per 1,000. The death rate of military personnel in Iraq is about 4 per one million, is 20% lower.

- **Asian Americans in Connecticut** have an average life span 26 years longer than **Native Americans in South Dakota**.
- If the **African American** infant mortality rate were the same as the **Asian American** infant mortality rate, approximately 6,000 babies who died in 2008 would instead have lived to celebrate their 1st birthdays.
- In 1991 every single U.S. state had an obesity rate less than 20%, but today, only one does: **Colorado**.



EDUCATION:

- Eighty five percent of adults have at least a high school education today, and overall school enrollment (student ages 3 to 24) is higher than at any other point in American history.
- Forth-three states showed improvement on the Education Index (educational degree attainment combined with school enrollment) between 2005 and 2008.
- In the 2007–9 Great Recession, college graduates faced a combined unemployment and underemployment rate of 1 in 10; the rate for high school dropouts was greater than 1 in 3.
- In **Florida**, more than a quarter of Latinos have a bachelor’s degree, roughly equivalent to the rate of the nation as a whole.
- **California** and **Texas** together educate more than half of the nation’s Latino children.
- About one-quarter of the country’s high schools educate more than 85% of the country’s **Latino** children. The schools that most Latino children attend are disproportionately large in size, low in resources, located in central cities, and largely confined to just seven states: **California, Texas, Florida, New York, Arizona, Illinois, and New Jersey**.
- **Wyoming, Alaska, Minnesota, Montana, and New Hampshire** have the highest percentage of high school graduates of all states in the nation, with more than 90% of adults in each state having completed high school.
- Internet access ranges from a high in **New Hampshire**, where nearly 83% of residents live in a household with Internet, to a low in **Mississippi**, where just over half (52.8%) live in a household with Internet.
- The bottom five states for school enrollment (student ages 3 to 24) are all located in the Mountain West and the Plains—**Wyoming, Montana, Nevada, and the Dakotas**. Enrollment in these states is around 80%, as compared with 90% for states with the highest school enrollment rates.

- In **California's 13th Congressional District** (Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Malibu), more than 1 in 4 residents have advanced degrees. A few miles away in downtown Los Angeles, **California's 34th District**, only 3 in 100 hundred residents have advanced degrees.
- In a recent school year, the U.S. spent an average of \$900 less per student educating the poorest children, as measured by the number of students per school eligible for reduce-price school lunch, than the wealthiest.
- In **Texas'** District 29 (Houston area), only 54% of adults over 25 have completed high school, whereas in **Colorado's** District 6 (southern suburbs of Denver), 97% of adults hold at least a high school diploma.
- In **Nevada**, fewer than three in ten 3- and 4-year olds are enrolled in preschool, whereas in **New Jersey**, nearly seven in ten are.
- Fewer than 1 in 5 adults in **West Virginia, Mississippi, and Arkansas** have a college degree, compared to 1 in 4 adults nationally.
- In **Illinois**, schools spend over \$2,000 per pupil less each year educating kids in low-income schools. In **New York**, average spending in low-income schools is nearly \$2,500 less per pupil than in high-income schools.
- **African Americans** overall have school enrollment rates (88.6%) that are above the national average (87.3%) and equal to **whites**.
- **Massachusetts** is the best state for African Americans in education. There, 97% of African American children and young people are enrolled in school, more than four in five adult African Americans have a high school education, and more than one in five have a bachelor's degree.
- More than one quarter of high school freshmen in America today do not graduate in four years.
- On the international scale, U.S. students performed below the OECD average, ranking 21st out of 30 affluent democracies in average science score and 25th out of thirty countries in average math score. (Canada, meanwhile, ranked second in science and fifth in math).



STANDARD OF LIVING:

- Median personal earnings in the U.S. have stagnated since 2000. During an earlier three-year period, from 1995 to 1998, earnings increased by almost \$2,000. Americans' earnings today are not enabling living standards to rise.
- American women today have higher levels of educational attainment than men and live, on average, five years longer. Yet men earn an average of \$11,000 more.
- In no U.S. states do **African Americans, Latinos, or Native Americans** earn more than **Asian Americans or whites**.
- **Washington, DC**, has the highest median earnings, at \$40,342; **Arkansas** has the lowest, at \$23,471. Earnings in Arkansas today are typical of those of the United States as a whole in the late 1970's.
- Between 2005 and the most recent available data (2008), median personal earnings for men grew in only two states: **Mississippi** and **Wyoming**. In the remaining 48 states and DC, earnings declined or the change is not statistically significant.
- The wealthiest congressional district in the United States is District 14 on **Manhattan's East Side**, with median personal earnings of \$60,000; the poorest is District 16, a few subway stops away in the **Bronx**, with median personal earnings of \$18,000.
- Typical earnings of Native Americans in **California** are around \$24,000; in **Minnesota**, they are about \$16,000.
- In the last 25 years, the richest American households doubled their assets (from an average of \$9.2 million to \$18.5 million), while 2 in 5 households lost ground (from an average of \$5,600 to \$2,200).
- While the typical white worker in the Atlanta, **Georgia** metro area earns about \$39,000, the typical Latino worker earns about half as much.
- White workers in the Atlanta, **Georgia** metro area earn the most (about \$39,000), followed by Asian Americans (about \$32,000), African Americans (about \$30,000), and Latinos the least (about \$20,000).
- The wealthiest 20% of U.S. households have slightly more than half of the nation's total income. The poorest 20% have 3.4% of total income.
- The wealth of the top 1% of households rose, on average, 103% from 1983 to 2007. Wealth in the poorest 40% of households dropped 63% during the same period.
- For every \$1 of net worth **whites** have, **Latinos** have 12 cents, and **African Americans** have 10 cents.