



**Texas 89th Legislative Session: Latino Impact Report Series  
Preface, Methodology and Context**

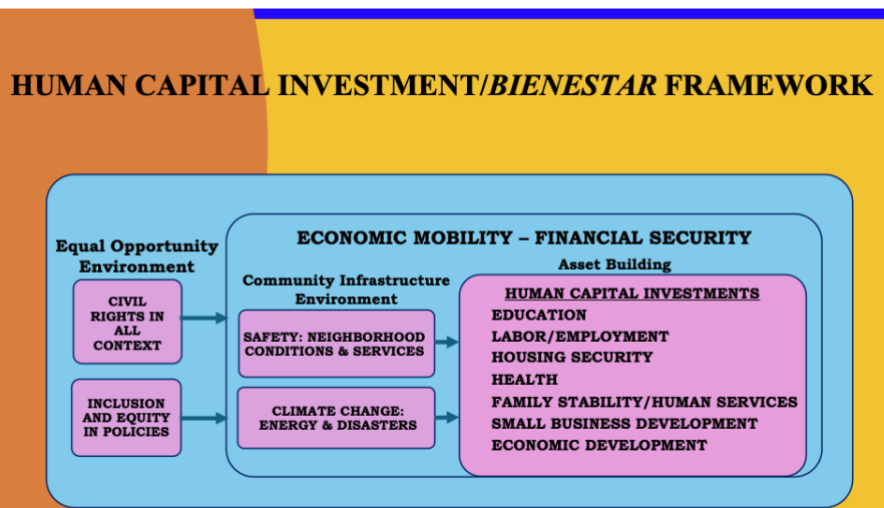
*Advancing Latino Human Capital Investment and Economic Mobility*

**Preface**

The Texas 89th Legislative Session: Latino Impact Report Series, produced by the Latino Texas Policy Center (LTPC), evaluates legislation through a Human Capital Investment/*Bienestar* (HCI/B) framework - assessing whether policies invest in, protect, or undermine the foundational conditions that allow Latino individuals, families, and communities to thrive.

The Latino HCI/B framework (Figure 1) is a unified, equity-centered approach used by the Latino Texas Policy Center (LTPC) to evaluate how legislation affects opportunity, mobility, and long-term economic outcomes for Latino communities in Texas. It evolved from:

1. LTPC’s accepting the Mexican American usage of the term *bienestar*, that explicitly and implicitly encompasses historical barriers and social justice experiences. Not as a neutral or abstract holistic concept of well-being, it is shaped by lived experiences with exclusion, resilience, and collective struggle; and
2. Human capital investments as public institutional actions that develop people's knowledge, skills, health, and productive capacity over the life course, generating individual and family, societal, and intergenerational economic returns. When equity conditions such as stability, dignity, and access are addressed, these investments compound more fully and efficiently.



**Figure 1**

At its core, the framework asks a simple but critical question: Does a policy strengthen or weaken Latino human capital/*bienestar* over time?

**Purpose of the Series**

- Identify Policymaking Approach and Commonalities: Cumulative analysis across HCI/B domains and sub-groups legislative bills targeting opportunity, equity and long-term economic mobility impact.
- Clarity: Translate complex legislative activity into accessible, evidence-based insights.
- Accountability: Evaluate whether legislation meaningfully invests in Latino human capital.
- Actionability: Provide context and results insights that inform and assist in increasing ‘proactive’ policy approach(es) refinement, advocacy strategies, and stakeholder engagement.

**HCI/B Domains**

Domain	General Description & Sub-Group Areas
Education & Skills Development	Early learning, K-12, higher education, workforce training, credentialing, and lifelong learning; funding support and governance
Health	Physical, mental, maternal, and community health supports that sustain learning and productivity
Housing	Housing stability, affordability, and neighborhood conditions supporting family and workforce stability
Labor & Employment	Job access, job quality, wages, benefits, worker protections, and career mobility
Family Stability	Family economic and caregiving stability, child well-being supports, and community resilience
Business & Economic Development	Entrepreneurship, small business supports, wealth-building, and regional economic growth
Civil Rights	Voting access, due process, nondiscrimination, language access, and fair enforcement protections

**How the Latino Human Capital Investment/*Bienestar* (HCI/B) Framework Works**

***Domains and Subgroup Bill Selection***

Using key words relating to each of the domains and subgroups, bills were filtered from the total bills introduced in the 89<sup>th</sup> legislative sessions; 11,504 regular session, 594, first special session, and 693, second special session. Bills selected (SAS 9.4 Software) for assessment were identified through a three-level filtering process:

- ◆ Level 1 Filter: Select bill that fall into each domain using terms often use in bill descriptions.
- ◆ Level 2 Filter: Review the description of all the bill selected from the Level 1 filtering and eliminate bills with no or limited relevance to a priority concern or impact on large numbers of Latinos.
- ◆ Level 3 Filter: Categorize selected bills from the Level 2 filtering into distinguishable sub-groups under each domain - e.g. education domain sub-groups: funding, curriculum, special programs, governance, etc.

***One Analytic Framework, Multiple Applications***

LTPC uses a single Latino HCI Framework across domain policy areas. Each policy domain applies the same core principles while **tailoring indicators and weights** to reflect how human capital is built in that domain and its subgroups.

### ***The Four Core Dimensions***

- Access – Does the policy expand or stabilize access to opportunity?
- Quality – Does it improve the quality of services or outcomes?
- Equity – Does it reduce structural disparities affecting Latinos?
- Sustainability – Are benefits durable and fiscally reliable over time?

### ***How Scores Become Impact Ratings***

Each dimension is scored on a 0–3 scale, where 0 indicates no benefit or potential harm, and 3 indicates a strong, direct benefit. Scores are informed by bill text, funding mechanisms, and alignment with documented Latino concerns and needs.

### ***Weighted Latino Human Capital Index***

Dimension scores are combined into a Weighted Latino Human Capital Index to reflect their relative importance. Equity is weighted most heavily due to persistent disparities affecting Latinos.

Formula:  $(\text{Access} \times 0.25) + (\text{Quality} \times 0.25) + (\text{Equity} \times 0.30) + (\text{Sustainability} \times 0.20)$ . The resulting score is normalized to a 0–100 scale for interpretability.

### ***Impact and Tier Classification***

Bills are classified as Positive, Neutral, or Negative Impact based on weighted scores. They are further grouped into High, Moderate, or Low Impact tiers to support prioritization.

#### **Tier Classification**

- High Impact (80-100)
- Moderate Impact (60-79)
- Low Impact (<60)

### ***Use of Stakeholder Perspectives***

Public reports and statements from Latino and allied organizations, institutions, advocates, and other stakeholders may be incorporated qualitatively to contextualize scores.

### **Limitations**

The analysis evaluates policy bill design and potential impact rather than implementation outcomes. Administrative policy and rules decisions, state and local implementation capacity, advocate influence, or economic conditions may influence realized outcomes. Results should be interpreted as directional indicators of likely human capital impact, not as precise forecasts. The framework is intended to support policymaking, advocacy, and public accountability.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Disclosure**

This Preface and Methodology—and the associated monthly Latino Impact Reports—were developed by the Latino Texas Policy Center using original legislative research, policy analysis, and human review. Artificial intelligence tools (including ChatGPT) were used as research support aids to assist with drafting, summarization, formatting, and scenario exploration.

All analytical frameworks, Human Capital Investment (HCI) scoring, impact classifications, civil rights risk determinations, interpretations, and final conclusions were developed, reviewed, and approved by LTPC researchers.

## Appendix 1: Methodology Context

Latinos represent the largest and fastest-growing share of Texas's population, workforce, and future electorate. Yet legislative outcomes do not always reflect the needs, lived realities, or long-term *bienestar* of Latino individuals and families. The Texas Legislature influences and shapes access to education, health care, housing stability, workforce opportunity, and economic mobility - valuable human capital investments

Public policies matter to individuals and families because they form the foundational framework for daily life, ultimately shaping opportunities, security, and quality of life. Understandably, public policies must address basic infrastructure (roads/highways, water/utilities, public safety, etc.) needs; and ensure the fair application of individual civil rights and unconstrained opportunities for civic engagement and representation. Finally, policies must be equitably responsive to human capital investments (HCI) that build social and economic opportunities and prosperity for all its citizens.

HCI must be viewed as economic mobility and middle-class opportunity assets, which include education, livable wage employment and benefits, job training opportunities, affordable housing, health care, human services, and business and economic development support. These investments contribute to growing the middle class, increasing wealth accumulation, and strengthening families. They are economic win-wins for a family's achievement of the American Dream, their children's future, and the state's prosperity. **The investments must be viewed as equally important to private-sector legislative lobbied requests that help them build capital and profits.**

In **absolute** terms, Latino Texans are, on average, wealthier and earn more than in previous decades, e.g., increased income, spending power and significant GDP contribution, population and workforce and small business growth, and higher education rates. Despite absolute gains, progress in **relative** terms has seen little change, and the gap in income and assets remain significant when compared to White Texans, e.g., persistent income gaps, stagnant relative earnings, significant wealth gaps, and higher rates of financial hardship. Indeed, narrowing the income gap by 50% to full parity would result in an estimate annual GDP gain of \$60 to \$150 billion.

Whether intended or not, the structures that enable inequitable policies are the state's ideological foundation of limited government, low taxes, pro-business positions, state-rights, minimal human capital investments, and the belief that lack of individual initiative defines one's failure to achieve. This policymaking foundation has historically not been balance, i.e., weighted to counter-productive excesses that limit equality of opportunities for Texans, particularly low income and people of color populations.

Further, suppression of civic engagement, regulatory rules, and processes reinforce disenfranchisement and marginalization. The harmful unequal impact on Texans is demonstrated by the state's consistent poor performance in national rankings in HCI and quality of life indicators. The social and economic imperatives for needed change are extensively documented. State policymakers have largely ignored this reality, instead, have 'strategically' moved to a far right and nationalist politically driven leadership focused on 'cultural war' policies and further enabling more severe inequitable policymaking.

The absolute improvements in the quality of Latino *bienestar* was not given, but acquired through sacrifice, resilience, legal, and political advocacy movements. They would not have occurred without the significant labor movements of the 1920s, post-World War II Mexican American civic organizing and advocacy of the 40s and 50s, and the civil rights/Chicano engagement of the 1960s and 70s.

Important questions emerge regarding changing state legislative engagement strategies: Are Latinos and allies organized in pro-active or reactive position in their policy engagement? Is their involvement primarily defensive to immediate issues versus structural problems that permeate most domestic issues, e.g., cause(s) from

minimalist policymaking, regressive tax laws, or revenue and budget approaches? Finally, is there a statewide Latino policy strategy that addresses priority issues, builds ‘strategic capacity’ to influence policy making, and involves some level of metrics to assess outcomes over time?

## **Appendix 2: Methodology Sources**

This appendix provides (not all inclusive) the research foundations, data sources, and analytical traditions informing the Latino Texas Policy Center’s Human Capital Investment / *Bienestar* (HCI/B) framework. Sources provided the conceptual components, domains, and scoring logic used in the methodology.

### **1. Mexican American Lived Experience and Texas Policy Impact Sources**

This category grounds the HCI/B framework in the historical, legal, cultural, and policy experiences of Mexican Americans in Texas. These sources document how public policy has shaped opportunity, exclusion, resilience, and collective advancement across generations, and justify equity weighting and civil rights protections in the framework.

#### **A. Historical & Structural Policy Context (Texas-Specific)**

- The 2021 book, “Mexican American Civil Rights in Texas,” determined that Latino social and economic inequities persist after five decades - creating lost economic power and the freedom to have functioning choices including gains in political and policy influence.
- LTTC 2023 report, “The Texas Way to Economic Miracles: Generations of Inequality” documents Texas’ ideological policymaking history and its direct link to its continued poor performance across human capital investments, and disproportionate impacts on the Latino population.
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). Texas-focused litigation, policy briefs, and reports on education equity, voting rights, and redistricting.
- La Fe Policy Research and Education Center (part of Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe in El Paso). Series of Latino-based research reports, policy briefs, and sponsored symposium on healthcare, education, housing, labor and employment, civic engagement and grass-root advocacy.
- League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). Historical records and policy advocacy on segregation, education access, labor rights, and civic participation in Texas.
- Southwest Voter Research and Education Project. Latino voter-based research, litigation, and advocacy.
- Texas Civil Rights Project. Documentation of civil rights enforcement, border policy impacts, criminal justice, and voting access affecting Mexican American communities.

#### **B. Education, Language, and Segregation Experience**

- Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). Research on school finance inequities, bilingual education, segregation, and student opportunity gaps in Texas.

#### **C. Labor, Wages, and Economic Exploitation**

- Economic Policy Institute (EPI). Texas-relevant analyses on wage suppression, occupational segregation, and labor standards affecting Latino and Mexican American workers.

#### **D. Housing, Segregation, and Community Displacement**

- Texas Housers. Policy analysis on housing affordability, zoning, and displacement affecting Latino and Mexican American communities.

#### **E. Border, Immigration-Adjacent, and Enforcement Experiences**

- Migration Policy Institute (MPI). Texas-focused research on mixed-status families, enforcement spillover effects, and economic impacts.

- American Immigration Council. Policy analysis on immigration enforcement impacts on U.S.-citizen Mexican American families and communities.

#### **F. Cultural Strength, Resilience, and Collective Action**

- University of Houston – Center for Mexican American Studies. Scholarship on Mexican American political participation, culture, labor history, and policy engagement in Texas.
- University of Texas System Universities – Mexican American Studies. Statewide, regional, and local community specific research reflecting lived experiences.

### **2. Human Capital Investment & Economic Mobility Foundations**

- OECD. The Well-being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital.
- Heckman, James J. The Economics of Human Potential (Heckman Curve).
- UN Development Programme. Human Development Index (HDI) Technical Notes.

### **3. Lived-Experience, Equity in HCIs, and Economic Mobility Frameworks**

- Urban Institute. Economic Mobility Framework.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Health and Economic Well-Being.

### **4. Education, Skills, and Workforce Development**

- Pew Research Center. Education and Economic Mobility Research.
- Institute for Higher Education Policy. Equity-Weighted Postsecondary Outcomes.

### **5. Health, Housing, and Family Stability**

- World Health Organization. Social Determinants of Health.
- Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. Housing Stability and Opportunity.
- Child Trends. Family Stability and Child Well-Being.

### **6. Labor, Business, and Economic Development**

- Economic Policy Institute. Job Quality, Wages, and Worker Protections.
- Kauffman Foundation. Entrepreneurship and Economic Mobility.

### **7. Civil Rights as a Human Capital Protection**

- U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Voting Access, Language Access, and Discrimination Reports.
- American Bar Association. Civil Rights and Access to Justice.
- Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. Civil Rights and Economic Participation.

### **8. Composite Indices, Weighting, and Scoring Methods**

- OECD. Composite Indicators: Methodology and User Guide.
- Social Progress Imperative. Social Progress Index Methodology.

#### **Notes on Methodological Use**

These sources situate legislative analysis within the cumulative lived experience of Mexican Americans in Texas. They inform LTPC’s equity weighting, civil rights risk flagging, and interpretation of long-term human capital impacts. Inclusion of a source does not imply endorsement by the issuing organization.