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CENTER ON URBAN AND METROPOLITAN POLICY**

A BROOKINGS FORUM

**IMMIGRANT GROWTH AND CHANGE
IN METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

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DAVE GARRISON: Good morning, everybody, and welcome to the Brookings Institution. We're pleased to see such a great crowd out here today for this event. I did want to tell those of you who are here to pick up your autographed copies of Hillary's book that that event was yesterday. (Laughter.)

I'm Dave Garrison, a senior fellow here at Brookings and the deputy director of the Brookings Greater Washington Research Program. As many of you know, Alice Rivlin heads our program. She would be with us today but for the fact that she's recovering at home, nicely, I'm glad to say, from hip replacement surgery, and she sends you all her very best greetings.

We, along with our colleagues at the Brookings Center for Urban and Metropolitan Policy, are pleased to have you join us today for this important forum on immigration trends in the metropolitan Washington area. My job this morning is to say thanks to a few people and then get out of the way so we can get on with the presentation.

Now I assume you all picked up a copy of the report on the way in, which is the basis for the presentation that Dr. Audrey Singer is going to make here in a few minutes. I want to say how much those of us in the Urban Center and Greater Washington Research program appreciate the leadership and insight which Audrey has provided this critical topic of immigration. As you'll shortly hear, Audrey has a rich and insightful story to tell us about our region. We're indeed fortunate to have such a gifted demographer in our midst. Thank you, Audrey.

Audrey's report has been made possible by a funding collaborative called the Washington Area Partnership for Immigrants. The collaborative is a product of the Community Foundation for the National Capitol Region. We're deeply indebted to the partnership and the foundation for their support of this project.

I'm pleased to introduce Terri Lee Freeman, who's the president of the Community Foundation and has been the manager of this, the only such funding collaborative in the region focused on immigrant issues. Terri has been the president of the Community Foundation for seven years and has been quite successful in building the foundation's assets and amounts of annual grants to record levels on behalf of us all. So please join me in thanking and welcoming Terri Lee Freeman.

TERRI LEE FREEMAN: Thank you, Dave. Good morning. This is nice. It is almost standing room only. Thank you all for coming. We're just thrilled that you are here with us this morning, and it is really my pleasure to be a part of this insightful discussion today on the trends of the immigrant population in the greater Washington region. Many of you may not be too familiar with the full scope of the Community Foundation. We are one of the largest funders of nonprofits in the region, and we like to think at least that we are familiar with this community, with the people in the community, and the issues that face our community. We take an active role in identifying and working on emerging issues, addressing challenges, and promoting community resources. We try

to be a trusted broker and leader that connects our donors in the community to nonprofit organizations that are doing good work in the community.

In fact, this year the Community Foundation celebrates its 30th anniversary -- 30 years of being a vital part of this region. It's through this work, particularly over the past few years, that we've committed ourselves to building a much more inclusive region. We believe the diversity of this region is one of the things that makes us such a vibrant community. As the study we will be discussing today reveals, we are a destination point for an incredibly diverse array of people.

Now while this brings so many benefits for each of us, it does challenge our region's capacity to help immigrants establish roots in the community, foster the development of positive relationships between newcomers and established residents, and to have access to educational and employment opportunities that allow them to build a solid future for their family.

Six years ago we convened local foundation leaders and public representatives to launch the Washington Area Partnership for Immigrants. In fact, at that point in time it was called the Washington Area Partnership for New Citizens. It was initially established to support the ability of immigrants to obtain U.S. citizenship. The partnership has developed into a strong regional leadership group supporting emerging immigrant leadership and the protection of legal rights. Over the past four years more than \$1.2 million has been granted through the partnership to immigrant-serving organizations throughout the Washington metropolitan region.

I believe this study underscores how our community has developed over the past 10 years. Today the greater Washington region is a world-class city. We are connected to the world in an integrated manner. Perhaps most interesting is that our diversity is the one common bond that connects the many jurisdictions and communities throughout the region. Moreover, this study affirms the fact that diversity in the greater Washington region today cannot be seen in just black and white terms. Today we are a region where residents come from almost every country in the world, and a wealth of languages are spoken. These factors make the metropolitan Washington region a special place with special challenges and unique opportunities that groups like the Washington Area Partnership for Immigrants are extremely well suited to help address.

Based upon the findings of the study, I hope going forward we will be able to focus our energies to help people achieve what I believe we all want. People come here seeking a better way of life for their families and a chance at the American dream. When everyone grows closer to their dream, with improved English skills, access to adequate schooling, affordable housing and employment, we all win because our overall community grows stronger.

While the census data is encouraging in the numbers of people who are moving closer to their dreams, we know that for many immigrants, particularly those who have arrived in the last several years, life is very hard. We need to invest more in the types of

services and supports that truly make the difference in their success or failure because if they fail, we all fail. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. GARRISON: Now our session will be moderated today by Patricia Hatch. Pat began her career as a schoolteacher, doing the work of the Lord as far as I'm concerned, speaking as I do as the parent of a third grade public schoolteacher. (Laughter.) She's been working on behalf of immigrants for nearly a quarter century. Currently she's a program manager at the Maryland Department of Human Resources Office for New Americans. Please welcome Patricia Hatch.

(Applause.)

PATRICIA HATCH: As a member of the steering committee of the partnership, I'm delighted to have the opportunity to introduce Dr. Audrey Singer. She is a visiting fellow at the Center of Urban and Metropolitan Policy at the Brookings Institution. Her areas of expertise include demography, international migration, immigration policy, and urban and metropolitan change. Her work focuses on the economic, social and political incorporation of immigrants. Her current research project is on contemporary immigrant settlement and emerging gateways in the United States, including Washington, D.C.

You may be familiar with her previous study on immigrants in Washington, which she co-authored – "The World In a Zip Code: Greater Washington, D.C. As a New Region of Immigration." And she has also authored "Washington, D.C." in the Encyclopedia of American Immigration. Prior to joining Brookings in 2001, Dr. Singer was an associate in the international migration policy program at the Carnegie Endowment for International peace. She didn't have very far to move.

From 1995 to 1997 she was an assistant professor in the department of demography at Georgetown University. Prior to that she was on the staff of the division of immigration policy and research at the US Department of Labor. Dr. Singer earned a Ph.D. in sociology with a specialization in demography from the University of Texas at Austin in 1991. She has an M.A. in sociology, also from the University of Texas at Austin, and a B.A. from Temple University. She conducted post-doctoral research at the University of Chicago. Dr. Singer.

(Applause.)

DR. AUDREY SINGER: Thank you, Pat. And I just want to say a few words of thanks, too, but we've got to get on with the show. I know everybody is waiting to see what this report has to say. I just want to thank my colleagues at the Brookings Institution for all their help in the past couple of months, and particularly in the past couple of weeks, and also give my thanks to the Community Foundation and the Partnership as well.

I'll just begin by telling you something that you already know, that Washington, D.C. as the capitol of the United States is by definition an international city. With the various headquarters of international organizations and embassies, there has been a notable presence of foreign-born residents in the region for most of the second half of the 20th century. However, Washington's international character has changed considerably in recent years and in recent decades in particular, in part due to global transformations that have altered economies and politics abroad, and induced mass movements of people across national borders.

In short, Washington has absorbed many people from around the world who have been unsettled by international strife or attracted by the abundant opportunities in the United States. Washington's increasing internationalization that began largely with professionals and students has continued to grow through several different processes: in particular, the continuation of a professional class of international residents, large waves of refugee resettlement in the region, and the social networks that entice immigrants to join family members and friends already living in the Washington region.

The result of these converging processes has been a profound social and cultural transformation of the greater metropolitan area. Overall the number of immigrants in the region has quintupled during the past 30 years, from a modest, spatially concentrated 128,000 foreign-born persons to a large, relatively dispersed 832,000 persons in 2000. In fact, in the 1990s immigrants contributed nearly half of the population growth in the region.

In light of these changes, I'm going to present to you the results of a study that uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau to examine how the geography and characteristics of the region's immigrant population has changed. About two years ago the Brookings Institution published a paper on immigrants in the region called "The World in a Zip Code." Pat mentioned it. Several of my co-authors are here. I'm happy that Samantha Friedman and Ivan Cheung are here, and Marie Price is not here. It examines the settlement patterns of legal immigrants who arrived in the region in the 1990s. In that study we found that immigrants came from very diverse national origins, chose mostly suburban residences, and did not cluster much upon arrival by country of origin.

This study, in contrast, includes data on the entire stock of the foreign born population and not just the flow of legal immigrants. In this regard the current study extends the findings of the earlier piece of research.

This is a table that puts the metropolitan area into context. The Washington metropolitan area is now seventh ranked in terms of metropolitan areas behind Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Miami, Houston, and Orange County, California, and the list begins with the two largest. Los Angeles and New York both have over 3 million immigrants and more than one-third of the population in those metropolitan areas is now foreign-born. Chicago and Miami are both over a million, but Houston and Orange County and Washington, D.C. have similar absolute numbers of immigrants residing in them in 2000.

I'm going to tell you a little bit about the data. We used census data from 1980, 1990, and 2000, and how we defined immigrants in this study is by using the census question on birthplace. So the question asks people what country they were born in, and if they were born in any other country besides the United States, they are counted as a foreign-born person. I use the term foreign-born and immigrant interchangeably in the study, although legally the official definition of immigrant refers to people who are admitted to the United States for permanent residence.

The census definition, however, being so broad, allows us to capture all foreign-born persons living in the United States and here in the region, and the exception is those Americas born abroad to US citizen parents. Those people are excluded. Census does not ask a question about immigration status. Therefore, it's not possible to identify people by different legal status, but we know that the data includes all foreign-born persons, so it includes legal permanent residents, temporary migrants such as students or temporary workers, refugees and asylum seekers, and also undocumented migrants.

The data do not include the children of immigrants. We don't have access to their status, and they're born in the U.S. so they're U.S. citizens. They don't show up in that birthplace question. We cannot control for an undercount of any kind. To be sure, some foreign-born persons are not counted by census, but this is not something that we can deal with. In addition, since 2000, certainly because of the dynamic nature of immigration in this region, more immigrants have come in the last three years since the data was collected. So think of these numbers as a very broad perspective on the foreign-born in the region. The numbers represent those who filled out a census form in 2000. These are the best data that we have available, and I'm personally very happy that the Census Bureau collects them, and that's not just because the whole Census Bureau is sitting over there. (Laughter.)

Let me tell you a little bit about the definition that we use for the metropolitan area, which is also the census definition of the PMSA, primary metropolitan statistical area. I refer to it as the metropolitan area. It includes the District of Columbia. I'm using some terms in the paper and also in the talk that collapse some of the counties and the jurisdictions around the metropolitan area into five different areas. The inner core, which is Arlington and Alexandria, the inner suburbs, which includes the jurisdictions of Montgomery County, Fairfax and Prince George's and the cities in Fairfax. The fourth is the outer suburbs and includes these six counties and the far suburbs, in green here, which are the eight outlying counties.

For much of the study I look at these breakdowns in these jurisdictions, but I also look at census tracts. There are over 1,000 in the region. Nearly all of them have at least one foreign-born person living in them, and in 22 percent of all the census tracts one in four persons is foreign-born.

This is a graph that simply shows you the size and the growth of the immigrants in the region over time from 1970 to 2000. The immigrant population, as you can see,

nearly doubled in size and in both the 1970s and the 1980s. In the 1990s it grew by 70 percent. However, the base was already very large so it was numerically a larger size – 350,000 in the 1990s compared to the growth of 233,000 in the 1980s. But not all of the jurisdictions grew at the same pace. Across jurisdictions the distribution has shifted, and this shows you two periods of time, 1970 and 2000, and you can see that of the foreign-born residing in the region in 1970, 25 percent lived in the District of Columbia. That changed over time in terms of the share. By 2000 this was nine percent, although the number in absolute terms increased incrementally over those decades.

You can also see that Montgomery County has grown but the share has stayed constant at 28 percent. Fairfax is where we see the greatest change since 1970. Immigrants residing in Fairfax comprise 13 percent of the region's immigrants and that is now 30 percent in 2000.

This is a graph that shows the breakdown by jurisdiction in 2000 of the share living in those jurisdictions who are immigrants. The blue bar at the top shows that 17 percent of the region is foreign-born, and you can see most of the inner areas and the outer suburbs, far suburbs are at the bottom. One-fourth of Arlington, Alexandria and Montgomery County and Fairfax is just behind, are foreign-born. So greater than that in the first three and Fairfax is almost there. The District and Prince George's are about 13 percent and 14 percent, respectively. The outer counties, 7.8 percent are foreign-born, and in the far suburbs we have less than three percent foreign-born. They are largely a native-born population there.

This is a map that shows the residential distribution of immigrants in 1990, and you can see, I hope, and it's also in your report if you have it in your hand, that immigrants in 1990 were concentrated in Fairfax, Arlington, Montgomery County, the District, and portions of Prince George's county. The outer and the far suburbs virtually were native born, and there are some exceptions to that. Parts of Prince William particularly near Manassas and in Manassas and parts of Loudon County.

This map shows the same distribution, but in 2000, and you can see how things have changed. There's both been a densification of immigrants in the inner areas, as well as a spreading out in suburban areas, further out from the beltway in particular. And notable areas of residential concentration in 2000 are evident in places like Langley Park, Silver Spring, Wheaton and Rockville in Maryland, and Arlington, Alexandria, Tysons Corner, Bailey's Crossroads, Annandale and Seven Corners in Virginia.

Now in addition to the high growth and the dispersion in the region in the 1990s, almost half of immigrants that were counted in 2000 census came to the United States in the 1990s. They didn't necessarily arrive directly in Washington. They could have moved from some other place within the United States. But 47.5 percent of immigrants in the region came during the 1990s, and this is slightly higher than the national average of around 42 percent.

You can see that in the inner area of the District and Arlington and Alexandria the shares were over 50 percent, so you can see that new immigrants are concentrated closer to the core.

This is just a very broad brush showing you the region of origin, and you can see that 39 percent of immigrants in the region came from countries in Latin America or the Caribbean, 36 percent from Asia, which includes a very big region, all parts of Asia, like East Asia, China and Korea in particular, South Asia – India and Pakistan – Southeast Asia like Vietnam, and what is called here Western Asia, which includes the countries of the Middle East.

Twelve percent of immigrants in the region came from Europe, 11 percent from Africa, and two percent from all other countries. Now the census does not identify all countries. A lot of smaller sending countries are collapsed into regional categories, but we know from our earlier study, “The World in a Zip Code,” that in the 1990s alone among legal immigrants, immigrants arrived from 193 countries and territories, so we know that we have something for everybody here. We have people who are from all over the world, almost every single country. I’ve never been able to get an actual count of the countries in the world because it seems to change pretty frequently, but it’s well over 200.

One thing that’s very distinctive about the immigrant population residing in Washington is the large number and the diversity of the origins of the African immigrants who are residing here. The region has nearly 100,000 foreign-born Africans residing in the region coming from very mixed backgrounds both in terms of country of birth, but also the circumstances in which they arrived. Some came as professionals, some as students, some as refugees. But the important thing is, this is the second largest community of Africans in metropolitan areas across the United States, just behind New York. There’s a very similar number living in New York, but that’s only about three percent of the immigrant population of New York, whereas African immigrants in this region comprise 11 percent.

This is a chart that shows you by country of birth that we are indeed a very diverse area. These 20 countries are the top 20 immigrants groups. They comprise nearly two-thirds of the total of all immigrants in the region. We have more than 100,000 Salvadorans here. This is another distinctive feature of the region. It’s the second largest Salvadoran community in the United States behind Los Angeles. The interesting thing here is that Salvadorans are 13 percent of the region’s immigrants, but that is only still twice the number of any other group in the region.

The next couple of groups, as you can see, are pretty heterogeneous. Korea and India, number two and number three, 5.5 percent each, about 46,000 from those two countries. Vietnam follows with 4.5 percent of the population. And number five was a surprise to me, about four percent of the population counted in Census 2000 came from Mexico. You can see there’s a table just like this in the paper.

What's also interesting and very characteristic about this region, is it's a relatively new phenomenon – that is, immigrants coming to the region in large numbers – is relatively recent. I just wanted to take a little time and show you what's happening in some neighborhoods. These are neighborhoods throughout the region. The first panel shows some in Virginia, the second in Maryland, the third in Arlington County, and a fourth are a couple of neighborhoods in the District. These are some of the higher shares of foreign born residing within these local areas, so you can see the highest number, almost two-thirds of all people living in Langley Park are immigrants. That's the highest share that we have here. But you can also see there's also very high shares in Seven Corners and Bailey's Crossroads and various areas within the District, including Mt. Pleasant and in Arlington.

The District and the Arlington neighborhoods I'm showing you here and that I'll show in the next map tend to be a lot smaller than these other named areas that are called census-designated places above. These are areas that are identifiable by people who live in the area and by local officials, but they're not incorporated into cities or other places. So let me show you some of these areas.

This is a map showing the region's local areas with the highest number of foreign-born residing in them, and of course the darker means there's a higher share. But you can see that it's very clustered, closer to the core, both inside and outside the Beltway. But what's interesting and what's really distinctive about Washington is the kind of immigrants that are residing locally in the same area. So for example, Gaithersburg, which has about 18,000 immigrants, or about 34 percent, the largest group is El Salvador at 17 percent, followed by China and India, both about 7 percent, Mexico and Iran, about 4 and 5 percent each.

Annandale, which is also more than a third foreign-born and has 19,000 immigrants, has a very different distribution. About 15 percent each of the total foreign-born population come from Vietnam and Korea, followed by Bolivia and El Salvador, both representing around 8 percent and India four percent.

In the District I'm showing you the Logan Circle-Shaw area, which is now almost one-quarter foreign-born. Again, this is a much smaller area. There's about 5,000 area living in this neighborhood cluster. About a quarter of the immigrants in that region come from El Salvador, and you can see Guatemala and Mexico are also highly represented and also Latin American countries. But then China and Vietnam are the fourth and fifth largest countries.

Silver Spring has the largest in terms of absolute numbers, the large immigrant population, almost 27,000 residing in Silver Spring. You can see again it's very mixed, less than a quarter are from El Salvador, more than five percent from Ethiopia and Vietnam each, and about four percent from other countries in Western Africa and Guatemala.

The last one I'll show you is Buckingham, which has very high share, more than half of the immigrants residing in this area were born outside of the United States. Again, this is about 4,500 residents, smaller than those other larger places I was showing you. But what you can see here is a more heavily concentrated Latin American population, with more than a quarter from El Salvador and about the same amount from Bolivia, Guatemala 10 percent, Mexico 5.5. If you just take these four countries alone and look at the population living in Buckingham, one in three persons that lives in that area is from one of these four countries. Buckingham is in Arlington County.

This map shows a lot of variation within places, a lot of variation across places, and there are many areas in the region that have about 20 to 35 percent foreign-born in 2000.

I want to talk a little bit about language proficiency. Immigrants with low English language proficiency--this is one of the most immediate issues that local communities and governments must address, particularly when there's a large influx of immigrants, and you can see that 17 percent of the region's immigrants reported in Census 2000 that they spoke only English. Sixty-two percent reported that they spoke English well, or very well. On the other side of that we have the 21 percent of immigrants who report that they cannot speak English well or at all. This is almost 175,000 people, so it's a considerable issue, particularly when you look at the local level. When you do look at the local level, you see that there are higher shares of the immigrant population in neighborhoods in Arlington and Alexandria and the District that cannot speak English well or at all. The larger numbers, of course, because these counties are larger, are in Montgomery and Fairfax County. There is a map in your copy of the paper.

In addition to English proficiency the Census Bureau calculates something that they call linguistic isolation, and this is for households and it refers to households where no person over the age of 14 speaks English well. So what I've done here is map – here's the first layer – the inner areas where we find a higher concentration of households that are linguistically isolated. The hatching shows the tracts where there are more than 20 percent of the immigrant households that are linguistically isolated.

Then I've added here a layer of settlement of the most recent immigrants. This layer of the map shows immigrants who arrived in the 1990s only, and you can see that there's a very high correspondence between the two. In particular in Maryland you can see that the local areas that seem to have a higher share of linguistically isolated households are in places like Langley Park, Silver Spring and Wheaton, and you can see up through Rockville and Gaithersburg area, and Virginia, South Arlington, the western part of Alexandria, Seven Corners, Annandale, Springfield and out through Fairfax City and into Manassas.

Let me just say something about economic indicators. In this round of census data we do not have many indicators of the economic status of immigrants. Later on we'll have more information about that as Census releases data in months to come. But what we do have is the poverty rate. This is a graph that shows you native and foreign-

born poverty rates across different metropolitan areas in the nation. Washington is two bars to the right here and you can see that 10.6 percent of immigrants in the region are living in poverty, versus 6.8 percent of the native-born population. You can also see that in Houston and LA and New York these metropolitan areas all have nearly twice the rate of poverty for immigrants living in those areas. So Washington's immigrants look more like, in this case on this graph, San Francisco. But it's actually the lowest of all the top 10 immigrant gateways and considerably lower, as you can see, from most of them.

Poor immigrants of course are not evenly distributed across the region. There are higher shares of poor immigrants living in the District of Columbia and the inner core. That yellow line in the middle just gives you a quick way to see the average is 10.6 percent for foreign-born. So since I only have poverty, I had to get creative and I made a map that I'm about to show you, which maps the median incomes of all residents in the region, and this is what we have here. The median household income in the region is \$62,216. This map shows in blue the census tracts that have median household incomes higher than the average for the region, the yellow lower. You can see how those are distributed in this map, which shows most of Fairfax, Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.

Since I cannot directly identify the incomes of immigrant households themselves, what I did is I took this map and then I mapped – and this is green hatching that you see – I mapped tracts that had higher shares than the regional average, which is 17 percent. So this green hatching indicates that immigrants are living in these areas in higher numbers than the average. Then I also added in in red outline the tracts that you see that I just put up. These are tracts with higher-than-average, about 25 percent, I believe, poverty rates of the foreign-born population. Yes, that's greater than 25 percent.

So what you see here, or what I take away from this map is there are higher than average shares of immigrants in most of the inner suburban areas, both inside and outside the beltway, regardless of neighborhood median income levels. In fact, many of the wealthiest tracts have greater than the average proportion of immigrants. And in Prince George's County and the District, where median incomes tend to be lower, immigrants are less concentrated in the poorest places, and you can see that the dark yellow tracts are largely not outlined in red, which would indicate a higher share of immigrants in poverty.

The second finding is that there's little clustering of immigrant poverty. Most of the tracts outlined in red, the higher poverty places, do not have above average shares of immigrants. In other words, there's an absence of green hatching if you look at the map. So by and large the region does not have vast areas of immigrant poverty. However, there are neighborhoods like Mt. Pleasant in the District where relatively large shares of poor immigrants reside, and serve as gateway neighborhoods for the newest arrivals.

These neighborhoods are emblematic of the greatest challenges immigration presents. There, immigrants are able to afford housing and have the familiarity of other immigrants who are culturally and linguistically similar. Many eventually move into other areas as they improve their economic circumstances, yet these neighborhoods still

serve as landing and launching areas for successive waves of immigrants, repeatedly housing the most disadvantaged.

Well, the region has changed so much since Census 2000 was conducted, although the Washington regional economy tends to be relatively strong because of the stability of the federal government and associated agencies. The kinds of industrial and occupational centers that falter during slow economies are also those that tend to employ immigrant workers. Since 2000, high-skilled technology workers and low-skilled service sector workers, many of whom are immigrants, have been affected by the turn in the economy.

Another major event that continues to reverberate within immigrant communities is the terrorist attacks of 2001. Big changes around entry and screening procedures and the new Department of Homeland Security, increased security and enforcement efforts, and the registration, detention and deportation of men from Middle Eastern and Islamic countries sow uncertainty within immigrant communities. How Washington area leaders and communities meet these challenges will determine whether the region remains a home and employment center for immigrants.

Thank you.

MS. HATCH: I'd like to tell you just a little bit about how we're going to format the rest of our morning. We will have our panel of experts come up to the stage now and they will each have five to seven minutes to distill their wisdom regarding Audrey Singer's presentation and share it with us, after which we will have approximately half an hour for your questions and answers. You might want to be thinking as the presentations are made of questions that you have either for the panelists or for Dr. Singer herself.

Our panelists this morning, starting from my right, after Dr. Singer, are Isis Castro, who is chairman of the Fairfax County School Board. Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez, who represents District 18 in the Maryland House of Delegates. Handel Mlilo, coordinator for the Center for the New American Community at the National Immigration Forum. Thang Nguyen, executive director of Boat People S.O.S.. And Gustavo Torres, executive director of CASA de Maryland.

We're going to start with asking Isis Castro to make her remarks.

ISIS CASTRO: First of all I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate this morning, to talk about something which is very dear to me, which is the immigrant community. You are dealing with something that is very dear to me, and that is the immigrant community. Having been an immigrant myself, coming to this country at the age of 14 as a refugee from Cuba in 1962. I came in a group called Peter Pan, so this was a group of children that left Cuba and came to a camp for children, and then we were sent to different parts of the United States until we were able to be united with our parents. The immigrant community is very dear to my heart.

You were told that I am the chairman of the Fairfax County School Board. Fairfax County is the largest school system in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We have 164,000 students, and out of those 164,000 students, 48,000 speak a different language at home. Out of those 48,000, 20,974 are in the limited English proficiency classes. They are learning English. Our numbers are a little bit different than the findings that we have seen just presented. Our student population represents 120 different countries, and collectively they speak 100 different languages.

The largest speakers-of-other-languages student population in Fairfax County comes from Asia, to be followed by Latin America, and the third largest group is from the Middle East. Since 1995 our immigrant student population has doubled. These students participate in the English for Speakers of Other Languages programs, in which they learn English through specialized instruction, where they are regularly assessed depending on their age, background, and previous education. Students spend an average of three years in the program, progressing through beginning, intermediate and advanced instruction.

The ESOL instruction commonly takes place with the students grouped by proficiency level, but they may also receive instruction from the ESOL and general education content teachers jointly instructing a whole class. In addition, we have transitional high school for older students who come to us with very few skills in their own language, and they need to get English literacy skills plus a job. In order for our ESOL population to learn English as soon as possible, they would need to attend year-round school. We have very few year-round schools in Fairfax County, but we offer summer school. Also they need to have opportunities to interact with other English-speaking students.

For the younger child it is very important to attend pre-school. There are a number of families who believe that once their children attend kindergarten, they will learn English. Unfortunately that is not necessarily the case. We need to educate parents. We need to educate the immigrant community and we need to let them know that education should begin earlier than kindergarten. If they wait until kindergarten, their children will start school behind everybody else and it will take them longer to catch up.

There is a need for the parents to learn English and parenting skills so that they can best understand and help their children in the educational process. In our adult education program the English classes we offer in Fairfax County are always at capacity, and we always have to turn away students. We send them to local churches where English classes are taught.

Also I'm a member of the largest church in the Mt. Vernon area, which is Good Shepherd Catholic Church. Our Spanish population has increased. The church began a weekly Spanish mass in 1990, and now we are serving over 1,100 Spanish speaking families that are registered, and there are so many others that are afraid to register. We have 450 students at the Church who are bilingual, taking religious education classes.

The culture with the largest representation, both in our school system and in the church, which is highly impacted by Hispanics, is from El Salvador, to be followed by Mexico, but almost every single Spanish-speaking country is represented. Through surveys and personal interviews in the community of Good Shepherd we have found that the community views their needs as immigrational legal services as being number one, then English classes, citizenship opportunities, and computer classes.

What is happening in my community and in my church community reflects really what is happening all through the United States. In our school system we have designated low achieving schools as Project Excel schools. These are schools that are highly impacted by language minority students and we have placed for the last three years half a million dollars additionally every single year in order to provide the resources that are needed so that all our children will receive an education.

But we are facing additional challenges, and with the legislation, No Child Left Behind, this legislation will require all students to be tested yearly in language as well as content area, and this legislation only provides five percent of students being accepted. When you are dealing with a large number of students, five percent is not enough. This has really created further challenges not only for our language minority students, their teachers and the schools.

Schools that do not meet these challenges will be considered as failing schools. These will have a great impact on our community, and this is not just happening here. This is legislation that is all over the United States, so the impact is going to be countrywide. We need everybody's help in helping us meet the great challenges that we are facing. This is the case that it takes a village to raise a child.

I also wanted to add that in dealing with so many different language minority students and families, they come from different backgrounds, different low social economic groups and different cultures. One of the things that we find, one of the challenges is bringing parents into the school system, letting them know what they can do to advocate for the children, how they can best help their children. Many of these families have two and three jobs and it's very hard for them to get involved in their daily routine life. This indeed is the land of opportunity and all of us who are here, I'm sure we are all immigrants, whether we came in different boats at different times, but we are all immigrants here and we have made it. It's just a matter of helping those who are newly arrived getting them the opportunities that we have. Thank you.

MS. HATCH: Thank you, Ms. Castro. Delegate Gutierrez.

ANA SOL GUTIERREZ: Thank you very much. First of all, let me thank you for coming and I particularly want to thank the Foundation and the Brookings Institute and Audrey for getting all of us together around this incredibly important issue. I'm a numbers and policy wonk, so this is just exactly what I love.

When I was invited to come to speak, I said this report really tells the story of my life. There are several parts that I could talk about, and I will try to stay on the public policy part. But I can't help but reflect on what the report says. I am foreign-born. I was part of that at the beginning of the report, the international institution community. My father was one of the founding directors of the World Bank and IMF, so I came when I was about three or four years old. Probably if you extended your lines all the way back to the late 40s, probably my father and my family were one of the very few people who were here.

I think I've lived through this report with my own personal experience. I'm also from El Salvador. If we could form football teams, I'm sure El Salvador would rock, just out of sheer numbers. I do think that an awful lot of what we're dealing with is something that I used during my campaign, and that's the slogan that "it's the numbers, stupid." I think that's what this report shows. If we're able to understand what the numbers are trying to tell us, I think we'll all be better off.

I've also been very much involved with the new immigrant community working with CASA de Maryland, and Gustavo Torres will focus, I think, on those particular problems. But I think that that is where a lot of the critical issues that are facing us need to be understood better.

I have also the pleasure of serving as the chair of the advisory committee to the census, the REAC committee. Looking at these numbers and what they're able to tell us, but also what they're not able to tell us has been something that we've all been focusing on on the REAC committee. We see that there are some changes in policy and funding around the Census that really may have an impact on how well we're able to continue studying what is the demographics of the United States.

But then coming down to the reason why I think I was invited was my experience, I think, as an elected official. I first served on the school board and Isis has now inherited all those difficult problems that we experienced in Montgomery County from 1990 to '98, and they just continue being a challenge in the success not of the school system but of the kids. How do we make sure that every child that is coming to our school systems is successful.

I think we need to be able to change some of the processes that we use. For example, in Montgomery County I went to public school here, but to this day I think some of the same teachers and some of the same methods and some of the same attitudes are still there, though the population has completely changed. I was one of two Latino students in my high school. I mean, that is unheard of, I think, right now. I don't think that there is a high school that only has two Latino students.

But let me try to focus my thoughts on the political impact, the public policy impact. After serving one year at the General Assembly in Maryland, I happen to represent that corridor in Montgomery County that has those huge numbers of foreign-born. It's the Silver Spring-Wheaton area and on up to Rockville. I would even say that

I was elected because there are now immigrants that are able to vote, and that they are beginning to make that political difference from a voting perspective. That is something I think that merits really another conference just to look at the political empowerment, what are the barriers as well as what are the numbers telling us in this area.

I think that my lesson learned, especially around the issues of immigration, is that politics is less based on science and fact and more based on emotion and perception. I think that as I went from Montgomery County, where there is really quite a bit of an awareness of our changing demographic, and I think locally clearly the schools you couldn't escape it, but when I went to the state level immigrants are invisible. They are totally invisible in terms of state laws and legislation and public policy.

It's been a lesson to me in that I'm finding that I went back to square one, and maybe sometimes square minus 10 in helping to bring forth the important critical aspects of what immigration is in Maryland. So this report is very valuable. I'd like to talk about three things that I think this report is helpful for us in public policy.

One is it destroys that very negative stereotype of immigrants in our area. It does demonstrate the huge diversity, not how many countries and how many languages, but the diversity of who is an immigrant. We see that economically, for example, in the area we do have a very positive immigration in the sense that there is a huge contribution, not only from a professional and higher income perspective, but I think even those that are on the lower income, there's been huge growth in the service sector. I would say that our quality of life in the Washington area is sustained by a very large workforce that is willing and able to work one or two jobs at very low wages in many cases, but that do represent a very positive image of immigration. It's more than just an image. And yet we're fighting constantly in the political arena against a very well organized, negative stereotyping of immigration. This report will help us be able to look at the facts in a better, more positive way.

I think it also provides an incredible degree of better ways to assess what is immigration in the area, and perhaps will provide a kind of beginning step towards several other steps that we need to take. And I would encourage the Foundation and Brookings to perhaps help us move forward in, for example, looking at what is that economic impact. The census provides numbers, but what does that mean in terms of wages, in terms of services, the kind of things that I was just describing. What are those next steps that we should be taking in terms of public policy because of the impact of these numbers. I think as the panel speaks we'll touch upon these things, but I really do think that there's a need for more disciplined research in this area.

Then finally, what does this report say to policymakers, not only at the local level, at the state level, but I think also at the federal level, where foreign policy has in my mind impacted why we're here. I can tell you from a Salvadoran perspective that's why we're here, because we were being bombed a while ago and so we needed to get out of the way of bombs and dire poverty. I think also we need to be looking at what are the drivers that are still encouraging this immigration here, including this free trade and globalization.

That is, making countries poor, particularly mine or Central American ones, with less opportunities for work. That continues to mean encouraging people to go find something better for their lives.

MS. HATCH: Thank you very much. I hate to interrupt because each of you has so much to share. I think we need to move along to Dr. Mlilo.

HANDEL MLILO: Thank you. I too find this report very interesting in terms of what it reflects about what we have in Washington is what many other communities in the United States are beginning to realize is lacking in their own. Recently in Philadelphia the city and other public and private institutions launched a welcoming center for new Pennsylvanians, dedicated to bolstering Philadelphia's and southeastern Pennsylvania's immigrant communities in recognition, they said, and acknowledgement of the fact that immigrants rebuild neighborhoods and develop businesses. The chairperson of the center actually said that the aim of the center is to serve Philadelphia by serving its immigrants.

Previously Pittsburgh had been asking, how do we get into this immigrant act and bring in more, and the mayor of Schenectady in New York has been in Brooklyn neighborhoods personally, issuing invitations for immigrants to move into his city. They are looking at places like this one in Washington and realizing what we already know here and that is that newcomers are a hard-working, tax-paying, and law-abiding lot, and they have made a difference in every corner of our metro region, and in every sector of the local economy, including working at some of those jobs that native-born Americans take for granted but will not do themselves. You look at Adams-Morgan or Arlington, Prince George's, and you see in reality what a researcher once said about New York's boroughs, that immigrants have done more for urban renewal than any other federal program.

Yet this report also points to some unique challenges in the numbers that it reveals. We have newcomers in this region dispersed in two states and a federal territory and in local government, enabling us to look actually at the challenges facing immigrants from both a national and local perspective. We need not look too far from the borders of Washington, D.C. to see what effects federal policies have on newcomers in the entire country. Simply put, federal policies have a direct local impact, as we see every day here. From what we see, it is clear that there is an absence of leadership and rational policy at the federal level.

Whether we're talking about a legalization program that gives hard-working, tax-paying immigrants already in this country an opportunity to earn legal status, or creating adequate legal avenues for people to come here and work, and therefore safeguard the economy of the future, which many analysts predict will have a worker shortage of about 10 million people, some say as recently as 2006, even with the current economic downturn. Or ensuring that our refugee admissions program meets its established targets for reuniting families torn apart by war and persecution and hatred, or drastically reducing backlogs to immigrants acquiring citizenship or receiving their green cards, or

ensuring that our workforce investment policies provide the necessary skills training, as you have heard, and English language instruction for newcomers already here to become even more productive citizens.

Washington and its suburbs of Virginia and Maryland can tell us a lot about the effects of not addressing these policy issues. There's a wealth of evidence in official Washington's back yard to demonstrate what needs to be done to meet the challenges that arise as a result of immigrants settling in different communities of our country. And really the main challenge is to bring this evidence graphically to the attention of official Washington.

In my opinion local immigrant advocacy organizations, local governments and local elected officials, we have two sitting here with us, but also including the mayor of D.C. and the governors of Virginia and Maryland, local funders, local businesses and labor leaders in the region, all of these people have a special responsibility to lead in this challenge that we face because they more than any other institution are close to the issues and they know what has worked well and what has not because they grapple with it every day. They also know that the effects of federal policies have not affected this region uniformly, and they know what local efforts have worked successfully and which ones have been unsuccessful and where. They are in a unique position, being close to D.C., to lead the rest of the country in showing what leadership at the federal level can and should do to address this myriad of issues that affect what goes on at the local level everywhere.

I really am not saying this lightly. This is the central point. This is the seat of power. What happens here affects things everywhere. But we also know that the changes that are made here are usually brought about as a result of efforts and forces from everywhere and elsewhere.

“March on Washington.” Now who better to lead that march than those who know the way, who see directly the effects of federal policies on local communities that are closest to the center of power? In urging all these local institutions to take the lead, I'm including immigrant advocates and leaders themselves in this effort. The history of our capitol city is replete with various groups and institutions coming here and successfully arguing their own case. When Martin Luther King said, not too far from this building, that he had a dream, he was addressing officials in a city that had been itself a haven for those of his people who had faced persecution all over the country. He came to Washington because this is where it happens. Active civic engagement by the newcomers on immigration and immigrant policies with those who are here in this region taking the lead can surely produce similar results.

I know in my experience in advocacy, I found the personal story of the human factor to be the most effective and persuasive. I'm talking about efforts like the upcoming immigrant workers freedom ride, a national mobilization to focus public attention on immigrant rights and the inadequacies of current immigration policies, specifically issues of legalization and protection of worker rights on the job without regard to legal status.

This freedom ride was inspired by the freedom riders of the civil rights movement. Immigrant workers and their allies will set out in late September of this year from 10 major US cities and others across the country. They will converge on Washington, D.C., where they will meet with members of Congress and hold a rally, and then move on to New York City. This effort is supported and sponsored by institutions and individuals from every center, including grassroots organizations, faith-based institutions, local and national unions, business and many advocacy groups, and also public officials. Wouldn't it great if the governors of Virginia and Maryland and the mayor of Washington, D.C. were visible in this effort?

So I think again that this report points us in the right direction. We have been confirmed as a community that is an example of the vibrancy that immigrants bring to many communities in the United States. This city and its surrounding communities are still the place where people come to seek freedom and the American dream. But I think we should also constantly remind ourselves that this is also the city where people come to find and recommend solutions to problems. Thank you.

MS. HATCH: Thank you. Now let's move on to Dr. Nguyen.

THANG NGUYEN: I came here in 1979 as a poor person, and now am executive director of Boat People S.O.S., a national community-based organization serving the Vietnamese-American community in 50 different locations across the country. From that vantage point I find this report very important and interesting in two ways. One, it confirms some of our commonsense beliefs and knowledge, and two, it challenges some of our commonsense knowledge and beliefs. (Laughter)

It is comforting to know that when we started out to locate our offices in the D.C. metro area we just guessed that that area would have a very large population of Vietnamese refugees, and therefore we placed our offices there. Now this report does confirm that we were right. However, it's disturbing to find out that while the report says that 79 percent of immigrants in this area speak English fluently, our service experience indicates the contrary. We conduct annual surveys of Vietnamese taxpayers who come through our tax clinic. This is not a scientific sampling representative of the Vietnamese community here, but through those surveys we found out that 88 percent of the respondents reported that they spoke little or no English at all.

This is an apparent contradiction here, but that doesn't invalidate the findings of this report. However, it does caution us about how to use this report. It would not be wise to extrapolate or generalize from this report for the purpose of policymaking and its assessment of program development because the report has a certain number of constraints and limitations. First of all, it doesn't differentiate between refugees and immigrants. Refugees and immigrants come from very much different backgrounds. They experience different needs and face very much different challenges, and I'm going to go into that later on.

Second, the report doesn't account for the uncounted. In our survey of Vietnamese taxpayers, we asked a simple question, did you participate in Census 2000? Forty percent said no. So if we account for those uncounted immigrants and refugees, that may explain the bias in the finding.

Three, there's a lack of stratification. By that I mean, we need to differentiate not only between refugees and immigrants, or refugees and immigrants from different countries, but also refugees and immigrants from the same country but arriving here in different ways. For instance, in the latest wave of Vietnamese refugees who arrived here since 1990, two out of every three Vietnamese are either a torture survivor or the immediate family member of a torture survivor. Few people in this room know this fact.

Now I'd like to go into a little more detail about the survey we conducted. Again, it's not based on a representative sample of the community, but we believe that it is a representative sample of the people, the population that we serve. First of all, as mentioned before, 88 percent speak very little or no English. Ninety percent are under-employed, and prior to 9/11 27 percent were unemployed. After 9/11, the latter figure increased to 37 percent of the Vietnamese community in the group that we surveyed were unemployed. Thirty-eight percent were without independent means of transportation. Sixty-five percent never had used a computer, 69 percent never had used the Internet. Only 42 percent were citizens.

Of these seven things here that Audrey mentioned, before I go further – we talk about language barriers. We talk about cultural barriers. We talk about political barriers, but it's a lot more subtle than that. For instance, language barrier doesn't just mean that people don't speak English. Vietnamese may speak different types of Vietnamese words, and we haven't got the translation. Among the groups that you mentioned, the latest arrivals, they were tortured by the communist government. But now the communists are recognized by this country and Vietnamese translation – one from District of Columbia, it's very well translated, however the terminology used something wrong. But communist, no, and a lot of people here resented that and they refused to use that material.

So we have seen through that, and to that level of stratification, 75 percent of Vietnamese smoke, and lo and behold 78 percent of them reported back, yes, they were aware of the risks of smoking. I'll skip over some of the interesting but not relevant information about health awareness, about health issues. Thirty-five percent report that they were witness to one incident of domestic violence in the community. Thirty-five percent were unbanked – that is, they do not have a bank account. And again, 40 percent did not participate in Census 2000. So the conclusion is, while this report is very interesting and very useful and has many meaningful findings, I would caution against using it across the board and against generalization or extrapolation based on the findings.

I hope that this report will serve as the foundation and starting point for follow-up studies with a greater level of degree of stratification. Thank you.

MS. HATCH: Thank you. Mr. Torres.

GUSTAVO TORRES: Thank you. Again, my name is Gustavo Torres and I am the executive director of CASA of Maryland, which is the largest Latino organization in Maryland. I want to focus on my experience and what I do every single day, which is working with these 10 percent of the people that the report mentioned because I believe that it's a change that there are more than 85,000 immigrants who are in the Washington metro area. So I just want to share with you our experience and what we identify like five different particular areas that we believe that permit many, many immigrants live in poverty in the Washington metro area.

First of all, I just want to say that I am also new. I arrived just in 1992, so I am one of these almost 1 million people. It's a nation, a contribution that we do for this great society. I think that part of our responsibility is to educate a lot of people about the immigrant contribution in this society.

We identify five different areas, as I mentioned before. I think that this kind of report needs to help us make policies, to make policies to attack the poverty from my viewpoint. The first one is something that we believe that is a serious problem, and some of our colleagues already mentioned here, which is the immigration status. Definitely immigration status matters. It's a huge issue. Probably you already know that almost 9 million people live without documents. They are undocumented around the United States. Thousands and thousands of them live right over here in the Washington metro area. Because they don't have immigration status, they cannot qualify for many of the benefits, or they cannot even receive basic health care access. In addition to that, they work in the worst conditions and they even sometimes receive less than minimum wage, or even reading in the Washington Post back two days ago, they live in slavery. Part of our CASA work every single day is to work to help to liberate many of those domestic workers who live in those kinds of conditions.

It's also a change that many immigrants who are doing very well are some of those unscrupulous employers who abuse the workers and enslave workers. So it's something that we really need to attack because, again, the immigration issue is a serious issue for our communities. I am totally involved in this freedom ride because it's one of the ways we are going to educate, push for regularization or amnesty. Many people change the names, but the reality is the issue that we have work authorization for more than 9 million people around here. So I believe that this is one of the main issues, according to our experience.

The second one is related to the low wage immigrants who confront multiple barriers to employment. We mentioned one of them right over here, which is English. It's a serious problem in our communities and in our experience in CASA Maryland, for instance, now we see only Latinos, and the report mentioned the African immigrants from different countries in Africa. Now in our organization – probably some of you don't know CASA. Of course you are welcome to visit us. Every single day we provide

employment and training and English classes to more than 250 day laborers and domestic workers in our facilities. Now the new situation that we face that for us is a great opportunity but at the same time rather challenging, is that we have a lot of new immigrants from Africa who come to our facilities.

We don't have the competency to provide them services because of the different languages that we don't know, and we need to learn or bring somebody else to do it, or partner with a different organization, but for us it's a great opportunity to work with them. So the report reflects the growing population from different countries of Africa and we face and we love this new situation that we face in our organization. So English is a huge issue.

Limited skill and low level of education is a serious problem, and of course the issue of knowing about the cultural workplace in the United States is another factor affecting poverty in our community.

The number three issue is that many job training and placement programs are not accessible to immigrants. It's a reality, and is a lot of information about that, an issue regarding with this different approach of one is top-centered. Many of them don't have the capability to provide different languages, they don't have bi-lingual, bi-cultural staff in English and French and different languages, and Vietnamese. And it's a serious issue. So they keep the community out, and people don't have access to these great opportunities with that.

Number four, there is another problem that is not directly related with salaries and with training but is very, very problematic, is the non-job-based benefits. For instance, the taxes. The low-income community cannot have access to that kind of benefits. They pay taxes, but because they are undocumented or even they have work authorization but the new law says that at least for five years you cannot have access to that kind of benefits, so it's very, very difficult for them to have that kind of benefits. So this is the number four issue that we believe that is keeping our working community in the Washington metro area in poverty.

Number five from our experience is discrimination. This is a serious issue in our community. Even though the US-born workers also face that kind of discrimination, in our case we suffer unique discrimination because of language, because of immigration status, and because of the color of our skin. The people who fight to unionize and who fight to bring much better conditions in their lives, in many occasions they receive retaliation by the employers and we know for a fact and from our experience that many workers who are undocumented, on many occasions the employers call INS and they are scared to report that kind of information. Rather than fight for much better conditions, they prefer to stay quiet. However, some people who all the time are trying to fight regardless that they are going to suffer that kind of discrimination and that kind of retaliation by some employers.

So this is pretty much from our viewpoint the five different issues that we believe that in some ways we need to create policies and we need to attack to ensure that we move these almost 85,000 people from poverty. As you know, this report is a report of 2000 Census. Now we are in 2003, so I think the situation is even bigger now. I believe that the situation is bigger and we need to face it and I think that we need to work together to ensure that we attack the poverty in our communities. Thank you very much.

MS. HATCH: All right. Now it's your turn. If you have questions, I believe we have some microphones that can be brought to you, so please raise your hand and we'll ask the folks with the microphones to get to you.

Q My name is Eugenio Arene. I'm also Salvadoran, a new arrival. I arrived in 1988. Just one issue that I would like to mention at the regional level. We have a compromise, an important role to play at the regional level. It is the same issue that Washington, D.C. is confronting, the taxation without representation. I think immigrants, most of us pay taxes and yet do not have the right to vote. I think at the regional level we should follow what Takoma Park did in 1990, provide immigrants the right to vote. I think that's fundamental.

These flavors of democracy I think will be an incentive for immigrants to become resident citizens. I think it's important to promote that at the regional level, and that perhaps can be promoted to have new conversation among the different organizations in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia in terms of forming regional immigration forums. Perhaps first a Latino immigration forum, an African immigration forum, an Asian and Pacific Islander forum. But I think it's important that until we have access to the structure of power in this region, we will not make these numbers change in terms of access.

I think it's vital to have a truly regional movement, and so I want to thank the Brookings Institute for that, and hope that next time the Latino population will also be represented on this panel, particularly because the numbers are showing that Washington represents the poorest of our immigrants, and yet is only one and a half miles from the White House. Thank you very much.

MS. HATCH: Thank you. I would just remind you that these should be questions rather than comments at this time. We have a distinguished panel here and we have the author of the report here, so this is our opportunity to ask them the questions that the report has brought to mind.

Q My name is Sandy Dang and I'm the executive director of Asian-American Leadership Empowerment and Development here in the District of Columbia. My question is that because this region is not a traditional immigrant resettlement area, so a lot of the structure – like for example, government, public schools – a lot of structures are not there to help answer the question of what can we do to help immigrants resettle in this region.

So I would like to ask all of you on the panel to address what kind of structures are going to answer the question, what can we do to help immigrants, from the government policy level all the way down. I just want to give you a quick example. D.C. public schools is not able to help a lot of the immigrant and refugee children because they don't have bilingual counselors and all of that. That's an example. I want you to help me sort of answer the structural question.

MS. CASTRO: I can only speak about Fairfax County and in Fairfax County we do have services, maybe not as much as we would like to but we have registration services conducted in five different languages. We have a handbook that has just been developed and it's being translated in five different languages that is for parents. We do have ESOL classes, the English for speakers of other languages classes. We do encourage principals and PTA's to do an outreach and bring those families in. In the last five years we have an increase of what we call parent liaisons. These are community people that are working in our schools who represent the minority students, and are the liaisons between the schools and that language minority student population.

I would advise you if DC doesn't have it, you really need to go and speak to the school board and bring your community to the school board meetings, sit there and put the pressure so that they can offer – I can only tell you how we work. If we have a room like this at our school board, the school board is going to hear what you have to say, so you really have to address that at your local level and address it at the school board level.

MS. GUTIERREZ: Could I just make one comment. I do believe, though, that the concept of welcoming immigrants and the resettlement approach that you describe is just non-existent. I think that there is no political will for that kind of an embrace of immigrants here. Where it's occurred I think it's because there was a political benefit or part of a larger political policy. But until that happens, what's left is that you have local school boards and local services trying to make up for those needs. The needs are there but there is no top-down approach towards a welcome.

MS. SINGER: Let me just follow up real quickly on what Ana just said. Probably everybody is aware of this at some level. There is no national policy that works towards integrating immigrants into communities and into schools. There's no official language training programs. There are some funds that exist for immigrant language training in schools. But aside from very targeted specific funds at the federal level that then get passed through, it's up to local governments and local nonprofits to kind of do the work, all this work of what we've been talking about here, and to bring people together.

It's a serious challenge and it's particularly amplified in places where there are lots of new immigrants, like various places around the region.

MS. HATCH: If I could be excused for interrupting, this year Delegate Gutierrez suggested that where there is political will, things will happen. Sometimes you can find the political interest when there is a new interpretation of legislation, such as what

happened when the Office of Civil Rights issued guidance on what it means to offer equal access to services if the barrier to access is language. This is something that is being enforced by the Office of Civil Rights. They are doing monitoring. Sometimes it may take an invitation for a monitoring visit to find that local government is out of compliance.

Any local government that receives a single dollar of federal funds must comply with this new guidance. It's called the LAP guidance. If you need additional information, I'm sure many of us might be able to provide that. Excuse me for taking that privilege.

It's been suggested that we take several questions and then allow the panelists to address the question of their choice. Why don't we take one from each side now and give a couple of panelists an opportunity.

Q I'm Jack Martin from the Federation for American Immigration Reform. I'd just like to say that I found the study very worthwhile and very interesting, but the question for Dr. Singer is, some of the information that is not there I wonder if she can comment on. I've only had a chance to look through it very briefly, but one of the things that it does not distinguish is something that was alluded to by some of the panelists. One of the issues, for example, is, of these people who are described as immigrants, who are US citizens and who are not, that information is available of course from the Census Bureau. That makes a difference with regard to political participation.

Similarly, many of these people who are described as immigrants, as was pointed out in the study, are foreign students and may be temporary workers, either legal or illegal. They may be people here who are on an extended voluntary departure, which is of course a very large number of Salvadorans and Nicaraguans fall into those categories.

I just wonder, Dr. Singer, from your research with regard to legal immigration if you can give an estimate of this 830,000, how many of these people would be immigrants in the sense of US citizens who immigrated to the United States, or green card holders as opposed to all those that may be in effect in a more impermanent status.

MS. SINGER: Sure. About 40 percent of the immigrants in this study had naturalized in 2000, so if you think about the universe of people that were counted, and you just described them to us, there are many people who have not been here long enough in a legal permanent residence status to qualify or to be eligible to naturalize. But there are people in other statuses that haven't even reached the point of getting there. So I think if you take away the immigrants that came in the last decade, sort of narrowing the pool, the share who have naturalized is around 60 percent. That sort of gives you some indication of what's going on here.

In terms of trying to identify various legal statuses, it's not something that I've attempted to do. It's a difficult question to take apart. Some of the best estimates are at the national level, and I can talk about those. They're by Jeff Bissell at the Urban

Institute. They're also in footnote number 5, page 19. His estimates passed at the national level roughly break out this way: legal permanent residents, 30 percent, naturalized citizens 30 percent, refugees and asylum seekers, 7 percent, nonimmigrant residents 3 percent, and undocumented residents 28 percent. I'm sure those numbers vary here. We already know the naturalized varies. That's my best answer for now.

MS. HATCH: We're going to try to take two questions.

Q Good morning. I'm excited to hear you speak about integration because I think that's a topic that most of the immigrant movement has not addressed, about the fact that immigrants, once they're here, how do they integrate and about the policies that we need to do that. My question goes to your graph where you show that the core areas where immigrants settle are in Alexandria and D.C., yet the poorer immigrants are in those areas. Yet those are the areas that are most expensive in this region. How do you account for that, and how does affordable housing play into all this movement?

Q My question has to do with policy around bilingual education. Most world-class cities in the world value bilingual education and promote polylinguism. In this country we have a tremendous ambivalence about being bilingual. I'm really concerned about the terms "language minority." Clearly we're not the minority any more, at least Latinos aren't. I'm wondering what is being done regionally to discuss a stronger emphasis on bilingual education.

Montgomery County has three tiny little immersion programs that nobody knows about and are never promoted. I know that the Chinese community is pushing very strong for that. I'm wondering what is happening around the region in terms of bilingual education.

MS. HATCH: Why don't we let Dr. Singer respond to the question that was directed to her, and then anyone on the program can respond to the question of bilingualism.

DR. SINGER: I think on the question of integration and the sort of higher density, newer poor immigrants living in the core, what I can't demonstrate with this data but from what we can tell from lots of sources, probably a lot of people have experience in this vein, is that certain neighborhoods, indeed certain apartment buildings, serve as a sort of circular gateway for immigrants coming in. The newest ones can move in pretty quickly to more affordable places, and as they do better, they may be able to move out.

In addition, I think in some of the wealthier areas, because we did see from that map that a lot of immigrants are living in two of the wealthiest counties in the United States, there are plenty who can afford to live there and there are plenty who can't. So there is an affordable housing issue. Some ways that people make up for this is by housing more than one family within a household. In fact, on the local level we've seen some resistance to that in terms of local legislation that's been raised around

overcrowding, what's been called overcrowding in some areas. Other people see that more as a problem with having affordable housing.

I think it's clear that these inner areas serve a purpose, that they are closer and there is transportation there so there are benefits to living there. People may pay more, all of us who live in these places pay more, but people are finding ways to manage, it seems. I don't know if someone else has something to add on affordable housing.

MS. GUTIERREZ: I would just point out the obvious. Poor people live in low income housing, in poor neighborhoods. The fact that they're scattered in the area I think is clear by the map that she has been able to draw. I think it really is very clear in all of our areas there's not sufficient low income housing and that low income housing stock is, one, very deficient, and disappearing. We see a huge move in our area toward gentrification.

Yes, on average these are expensive areas, but those poor neighborhoods where people live really are deteriorating. I think that should be a concern of public officials.

MS. CASTRO: I just wanted to add that also we do have several families, as she said, living together. In some of our schools we have a mobility rate of 38 percent, so within the year 38 percent of the school population moves somewhere else. It's very traumatic for kids. Sometimes the numbers will tell more.

As far as bilingual education, what I want to say is that it is not a big secret, the "anti" movement of bilingual education in the United States. There is a big movement for English only and I know that as far as Fairfax County is concerned, we do have an immersion program. The person who asked the question said they had in Montgomery County. We have what is called dual language program, where in schools that have highly impacted communities, for instance Hispanic students, they would form a class where 50 percent of the class are English speakers. Then they would teach half a day in Spanish and half a day in English, the same courses. So both groups of kids would learn both languages. That's as close as we get to bilingual education.

Q Merrill Smith, unaffiliated at present. This is a policy question for Mr. Torres because he listed on his list of five factors in the poverty of immigrants the lack of legal immigration status and employment authorization. Anybody else of course can weigh in on this.

Earlier this week there was a briefing on Capitol Hill by three members of Congress, their offices, Flake, Colby, and Reyes, a bipartisan group, on legislation they planned to introduce shortly that would provide just that – legal immigration status and work authorization for virtually the – it was uncapped. It would be the form of H4A and H4B visas, the former for new arrivals and the latter for undocumented workers who are present in the United States now, with no numerical cap and they are fully aware that the numbers might be in the millions. With an avenue toward permanent resident status, in varying staggered degrees, which I won't go into now.

I just wanted to know, what is your opinion of this type of initiative? Do you think that could, if not solve all five of the problems that you mentioned, at least put a big dent in the first one?

MR. TORRES: I don't know the initiative so I think that is very difficult for me to comment about. I don't know the details. What I can tell you is that there is some legislation that we are not supporting because it doesn't allow the workers to organize. We believe that that doesn't help them at all because there are people who are going to be here for a few months and they need to go back to their countries. It's very easy for employers to abuse the workers. I don't know the details of that legislation. I don't say it is the same one. I just need to see more.

What we are doing in that direction is that we are going to have a national meeting because there are a lot of different national organizations with different proposals. For the local nonprofit organization and community-based organizations it is very difficult to advocate with our congresspersons because when we come to the table and sit down with them, it's very difficult to explain the difference between one legislation or one initiative.

We are in a process to call and have a meeting with national organizations and our goal is to have just one proposal that is going to be introduced, where many, many nonprofits and national organizations are going to be behind that one proposal only for regularization of undocumented workers. This is what I can tell you about that.

MS. HATCH: Let's get two more questions.

Q I think this question is for the author. I'm the executive director of an arts policy incubator for new immigrant communities called Word, Sound, Action. We're actually doing a study right now of the population of the region out of the Urban Institute. I am curious about new philanthropy and new entrepreneurialism. I feel like the second half of the panel was talking a lot about jobs and immigrant communities having jobs, but I want to know whether there's any way to measure the amount of job creation and NGO creation, nonprofit creation, that's serving residents in this community, whether you can count that, or whether there's any way to find out about that.

Q My name is Jose Segurra and I am a mental health therapist in the Seven Corners area in Virginia. Of course I am very interested in the relationship between mental health services and immigration. I was just wondering, for anybody on the panel, what is your sense about the delivery of services of mental health to the immigrant population. What we are doing, what the school system is doing in terms of helping children who are having difficulties with mental health.

MS. CASTRO: The school system, we have psychologists, we have social workers in the school system, and when there's a crisis, or when a student is referred and they meet with the parents, they do refer them to mental health. Mental health, as you

know, is part of the community board. What I have found is that in Fairfax County we don't have enough bilingual mental health counselors. We do advocate for that.

MR. NGUYEN: There's a five-year study at Harvard Medical School, there's a group there led by Dr. Molita. It's called InterChinese Psychiatry. Through interviews and assessment of hundreds of Vietnamese survivors, they found that 90 percent of them suffer post-traumatic stress disorder, and 49 percent have symptoms of major depression. We have found similar data in our surveys and focus groups here.

We have tried to refer many of our clients to local mental health clinics, but the problem is that very few Vietnamese-speaking therapists or psychiatrists available at local clinics. So far for the past three years we have been able to refer only three cases in Fairfax County. Two cases in D.C., and two cases in Montgomery County. We have a long waiting list.

MR. TORRES: I just want to make a comment about this because it's a very important issue. In Maryland the problem is not only mental health but health care in general. I'm very sure that in the Washington metro area the same situation. In Maryland we advocate for an initiative that we are going to introduce in this year. Actually we are going to Ana Sol Gutierrez for her support, which is health care for all. This initiative is sponsored for more than 2,000 organizations, that is going to allow immigrants, regardless of immigration status, to receive the benefits of health care.

In Montgomery County in particular is a good initiative called the Latino Health Initiative, which is probably one of the good models in the Washington metro area that targets specifically the Latino low-income community and different issues. I think that definitely health care is a huge issue in our community.

MS. SINGER: Let me answer that other question because I know it's noon and we're going to have to wrap up. I don't have an answer to your question about how to measure this, or how to study entrepreneurial starts or new businesses in the region by immigrant status. I don't know if anyone else here has some ideas, but we will look forward to hearing what you come out with with your study.

I think we're going to have to wrap it up, though, and I wanted to thank everybody on behalf of our panelists. I want to thank the panelists, and everybody for coming, and feel free to take an extra copy. We have about 8,000 upstairs we have to get rid of. Thanks everybody for coming.

(END)