



**NATIVE  
AMERICAN  
HERITAGE MONTH**

# Native Americans in Massachusetts: The Importance of Measurement & Migration

BPDA Research Division  
November 17, 2023



**boston planning &  
development agency**

# Credits

## Research Division

**Director**  
Alvaro Lima

**Senior Researcher – Data Analyst**  
Michael Endale

**Research Associates**  
Emily Korest  
Ethan McIntosh

**Research Coordinator/Data Analyst**  
Cecilia Takacs

**Deputy Director**  
Christina Kim

**Senior Research Associate**  
Kevin Kang

**Research Assistants**  
Camille Bergeron  
Sam Klugherz  
Nicolas DeMello

**Research Intern**  
Manyun Zou

**Senior Economist**  
Matthew Resseger

**Senior Researcher - Demographer**  
Phillip Granberry

**Supporting Indigenous Communities Fellow**  
Amira Madison

# 01

## Definitions and Measurements



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# Presentation uses the term "American Indian" because the data come from the US Census which uses that terminology

**Federal Government  
definition used by U.S. Census  
Bureau**

American Indian - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

**American Indian alone** - Census respondent selected only one race and the person identified American Indian or Alaska Native

**American Indian in combination** - Census respondent selected at least one race category including some other race in addition to American Indian or Alaska Native

**American Indian alone or in combination** - These two categories are summed

Note: Full US Census terminology is "American Indian or Alaska Native". We use "American Indian" for brevity and because Massachusetts does not have a significant Alaska Native population.

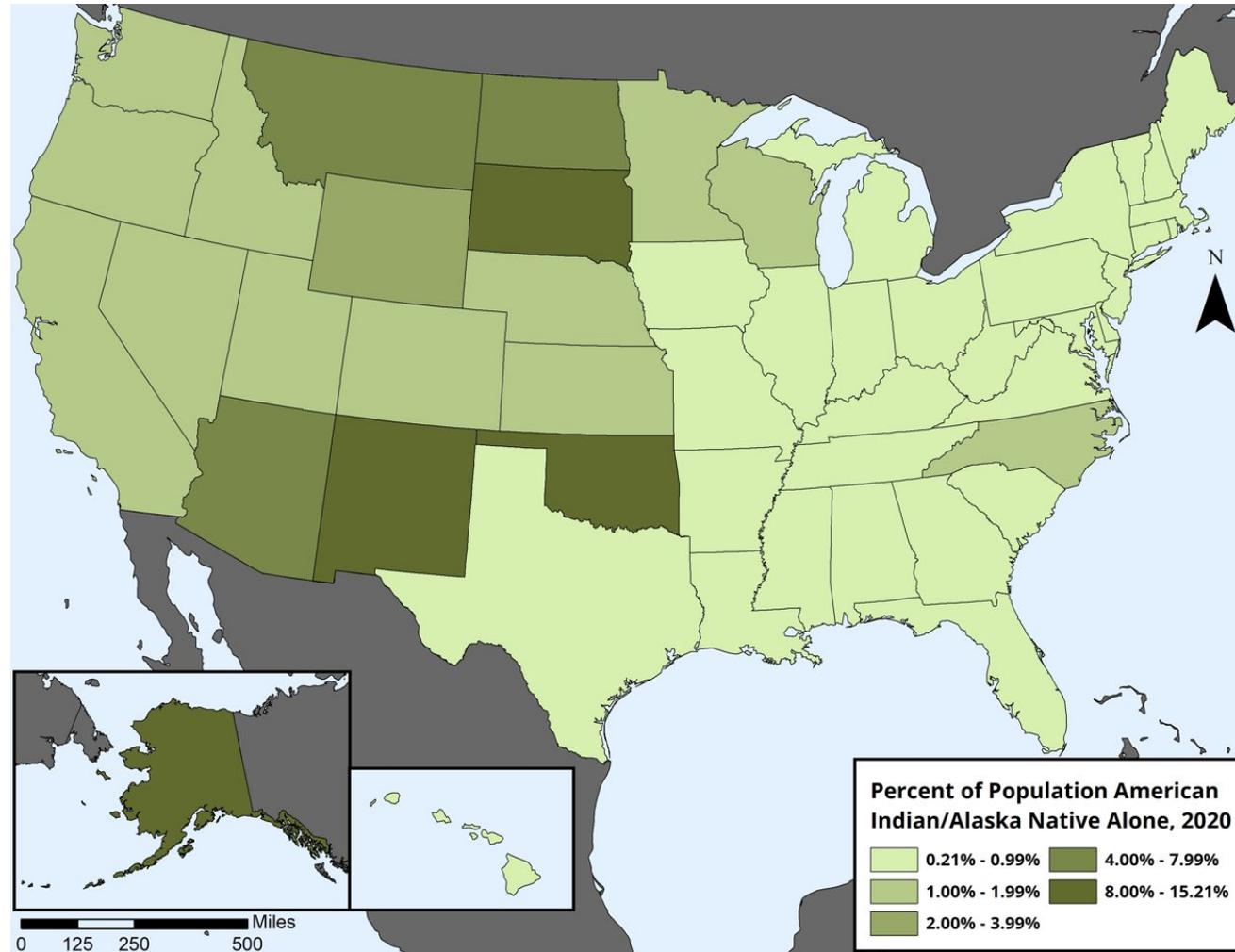
# 02

## 2020 Census and the growing American Indian population

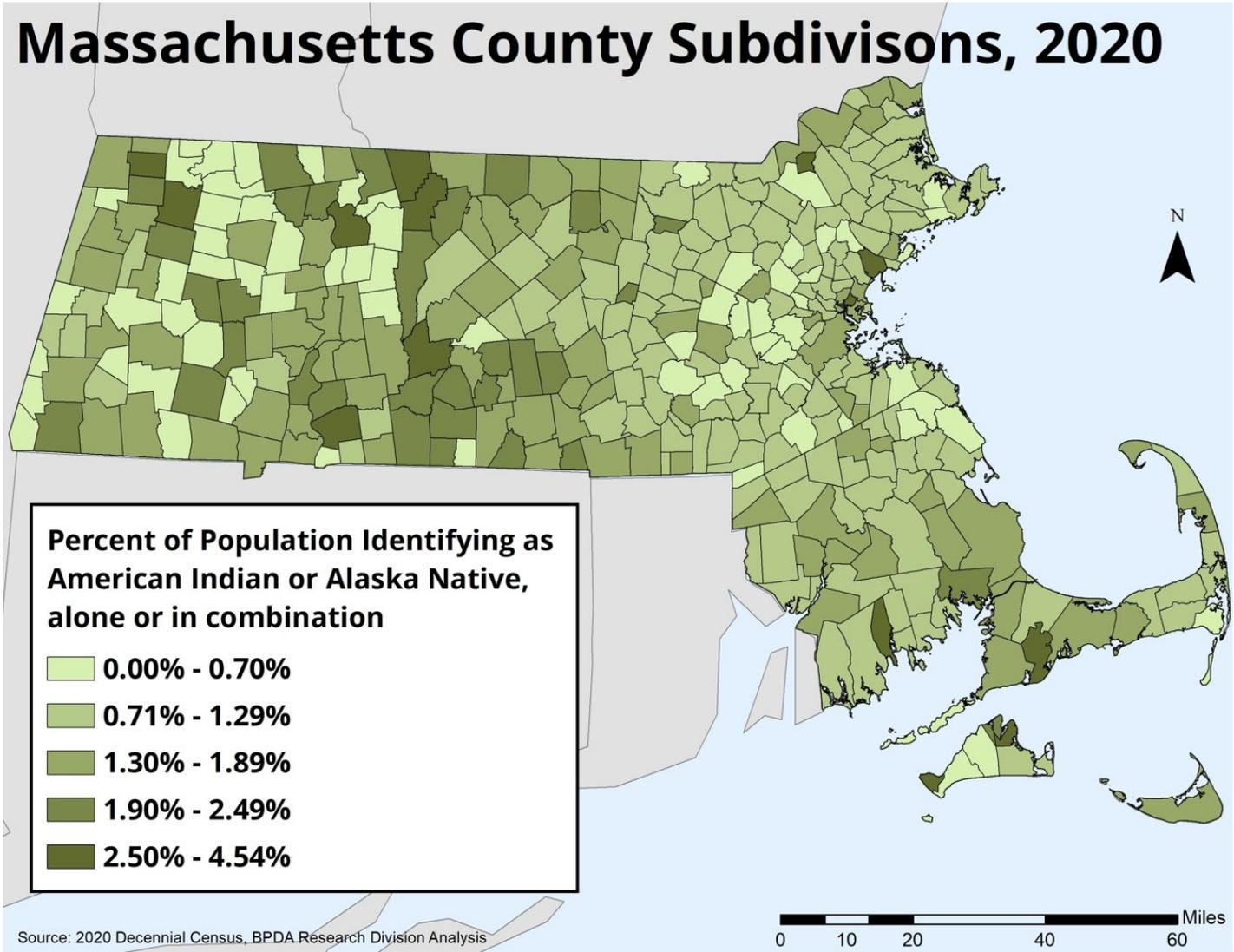


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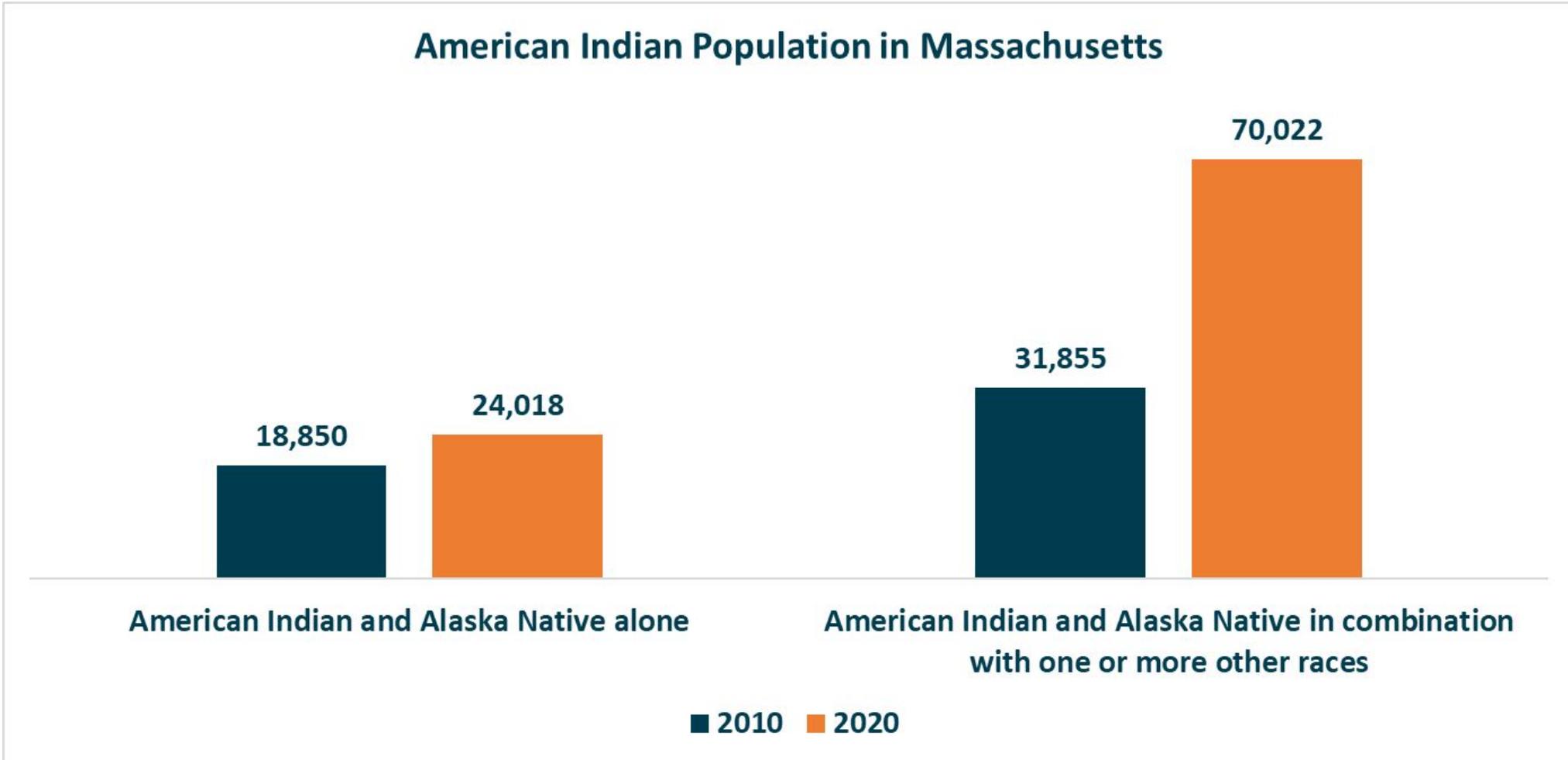
# In the 2020 Census, 9.7 million US residents identified themselves as American Indian



# 94,000 Massachusetts residents, 1.3% of the population, identify themselves as American Indian



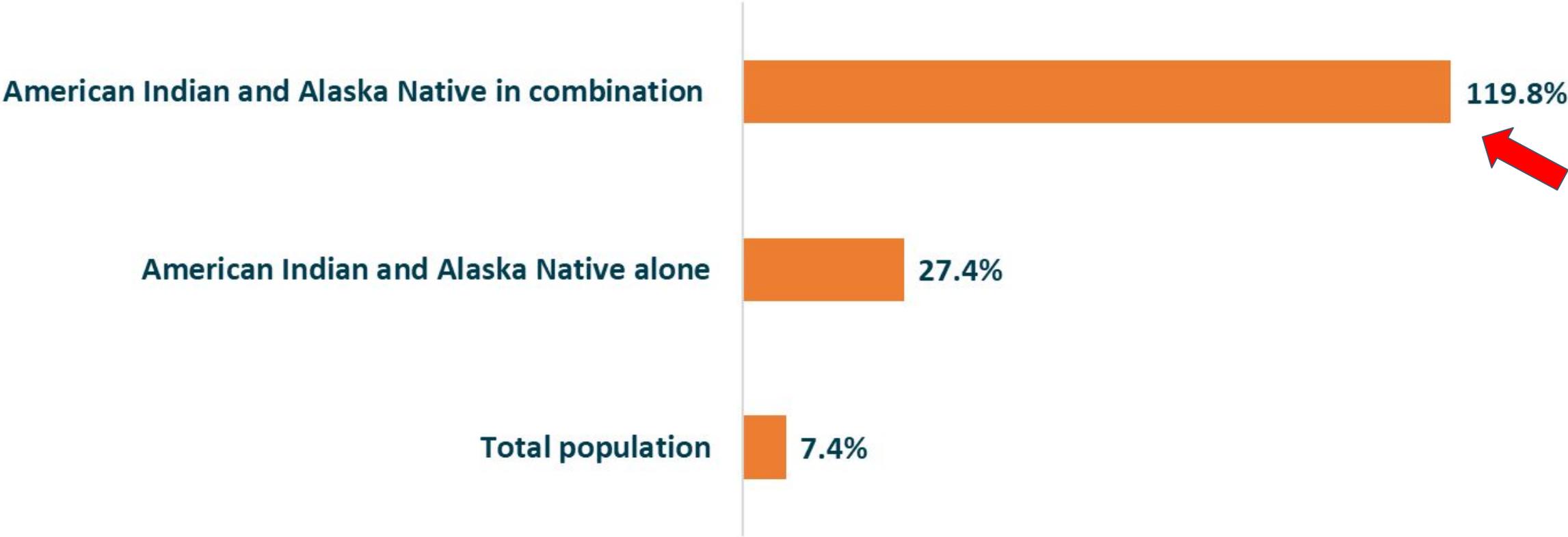
# The American Indian population of Massachusetts grew by ~43,000 people from 2010 to 2020



Source: 2010 & 2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# The Massachusetts multi-racial American Indian population grew by 120% from 2010 to 2020

Massachusetts Population Change 2010-2020

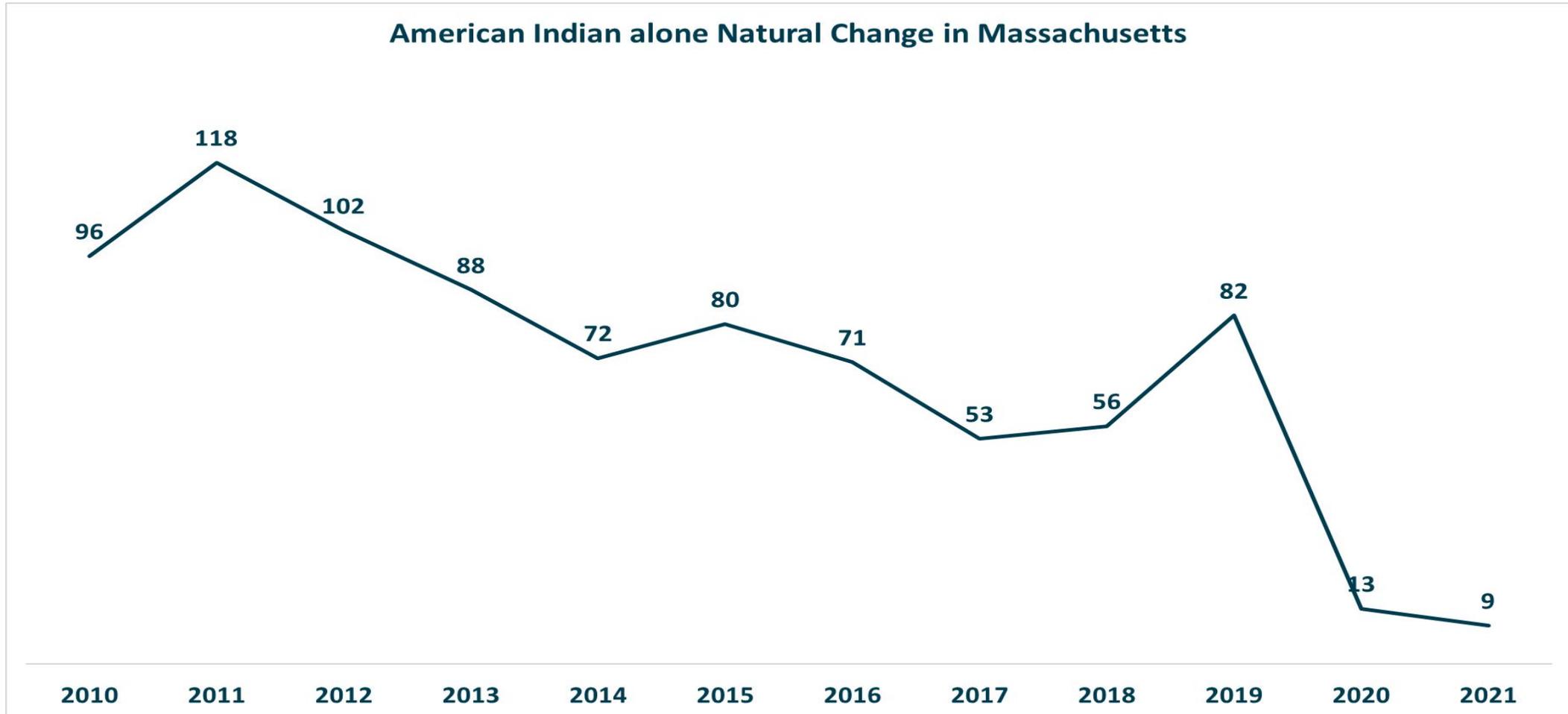


Source: 2010 & 2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Possible explanations for population growth:

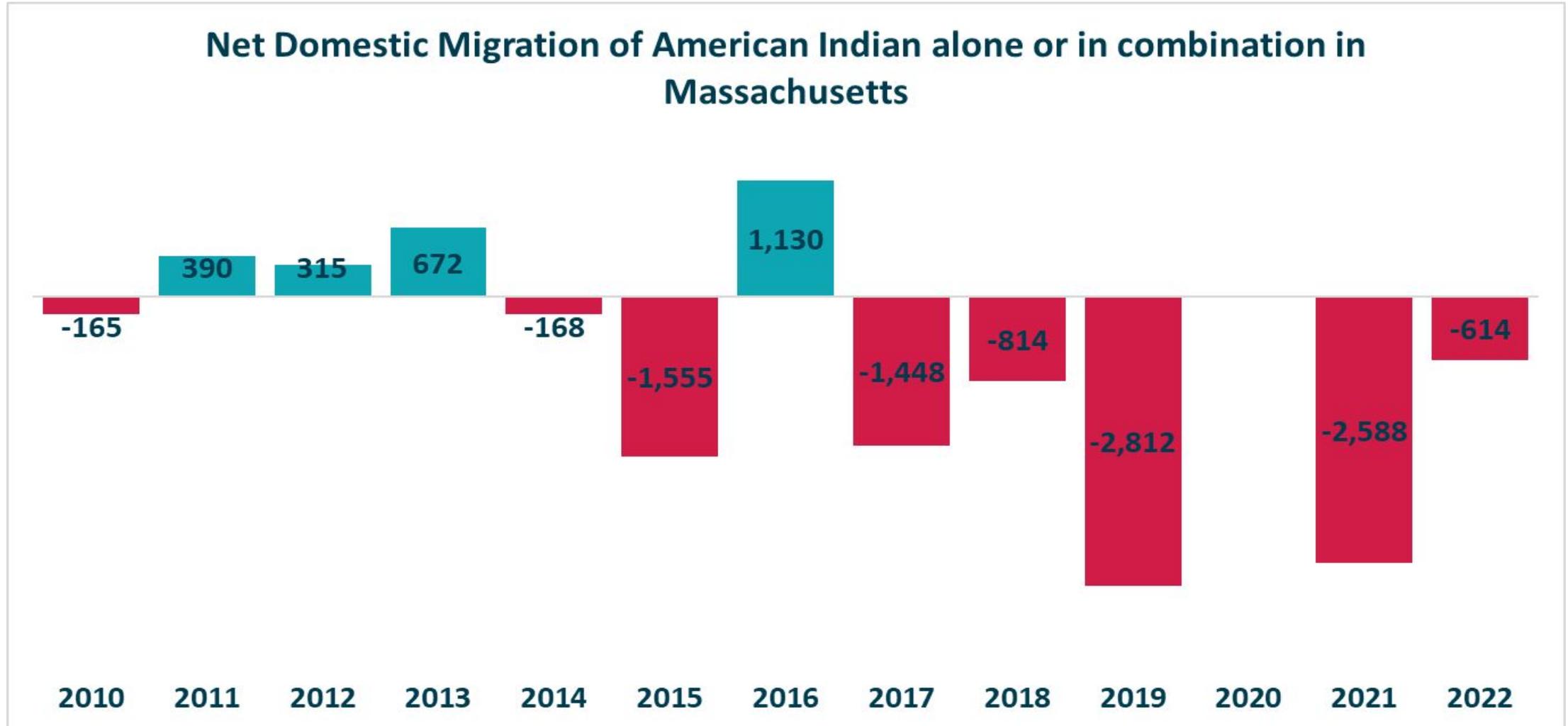
- Natural Change: Births minus Deaths
- Domestic Migration
- International Migration
- Cultural Change
- Technological or Methodological Change

# Natural change increased the American Indian alone population by less than 1,000 people over the decade



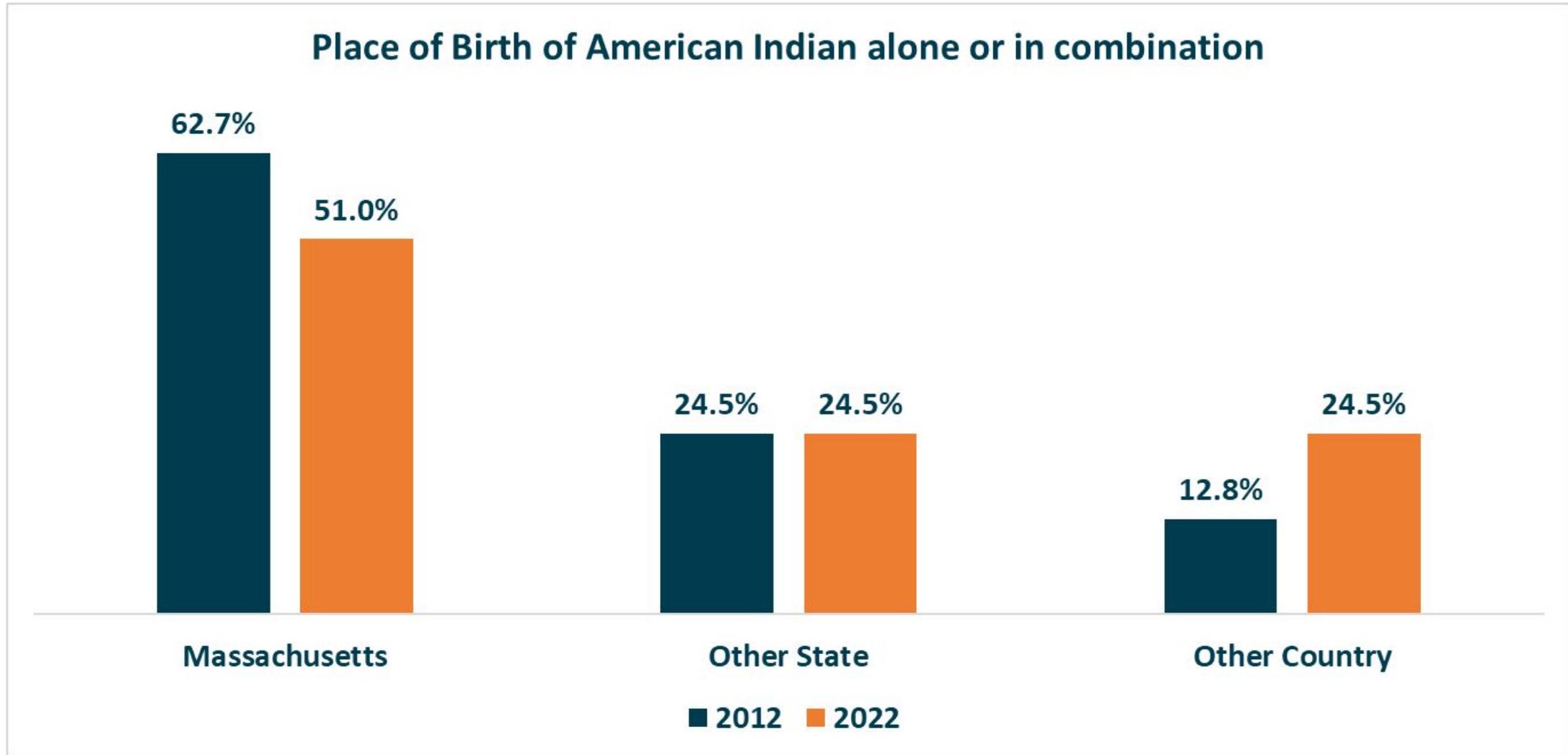
Source: 2010-2021 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System

# Domestic out migration reduced the American Indian population by ~4,500 persons over the last decade

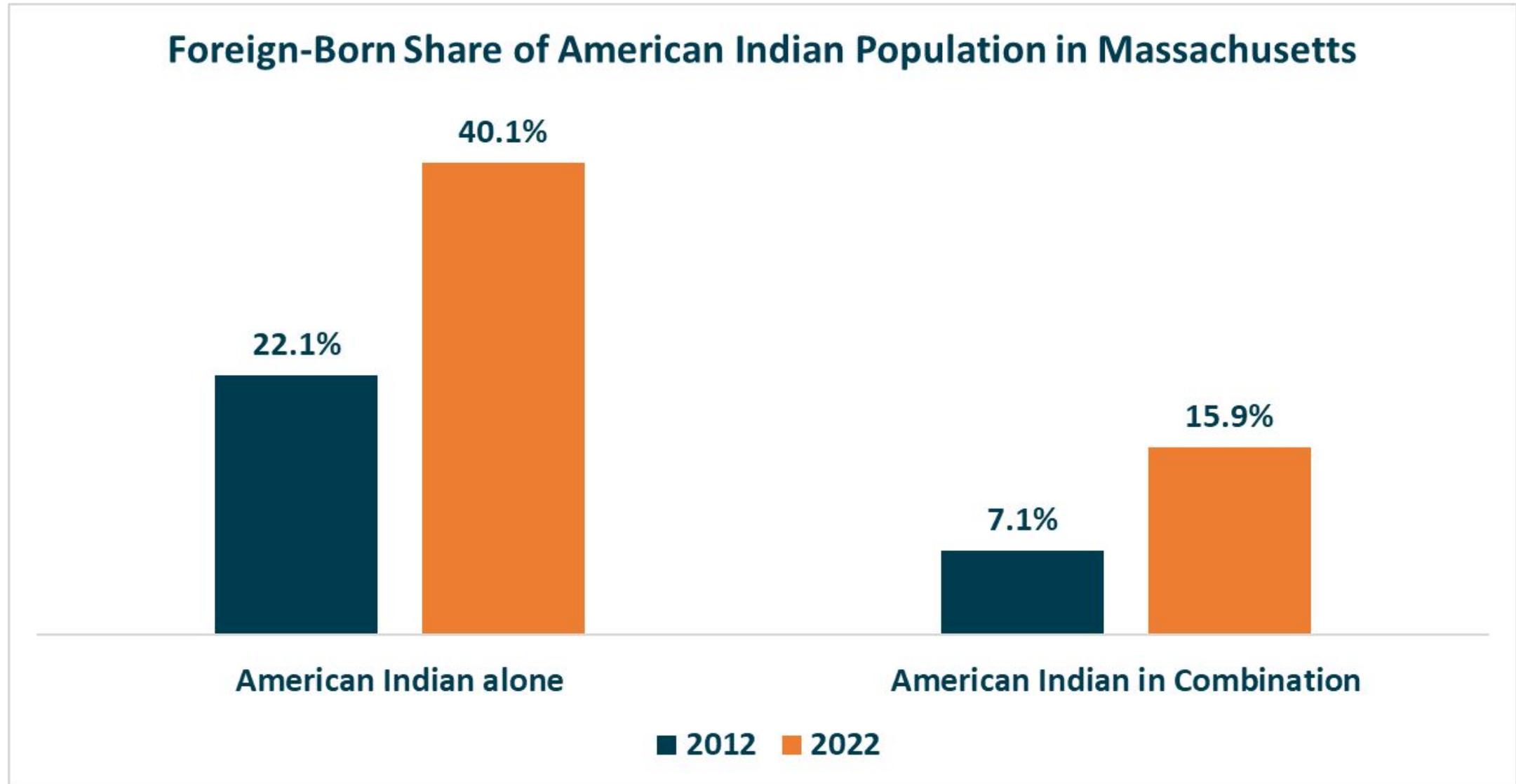


Source 2010-2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

# The share of American Indians born in another country has increased through international migration

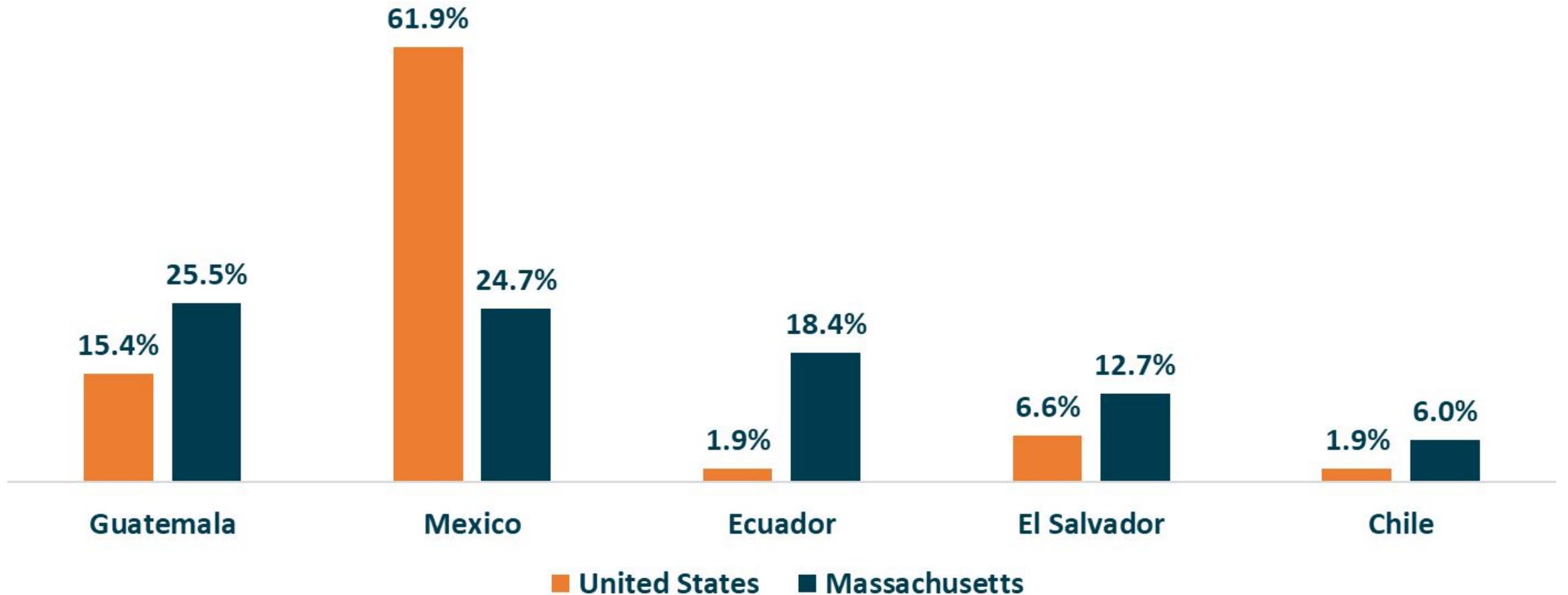


# The increasing foreign-born share suggests that international immigration is driving population growth among the “American Indian alone”

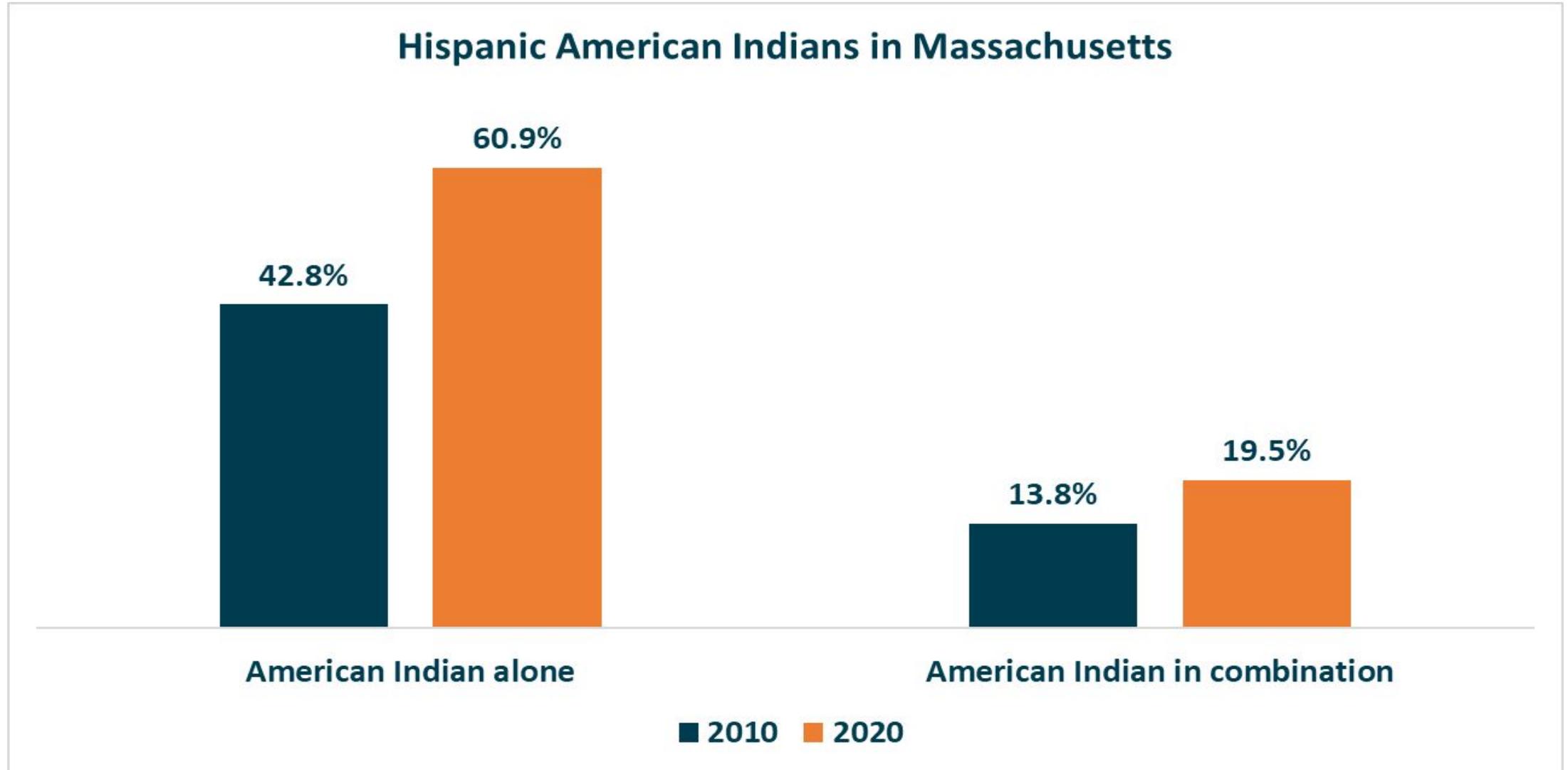


# 25% of foreign-born American Indians in Massachusetts come from Guatemala

Top 5 Countries of Birth for Foreign-Born American Indian alone

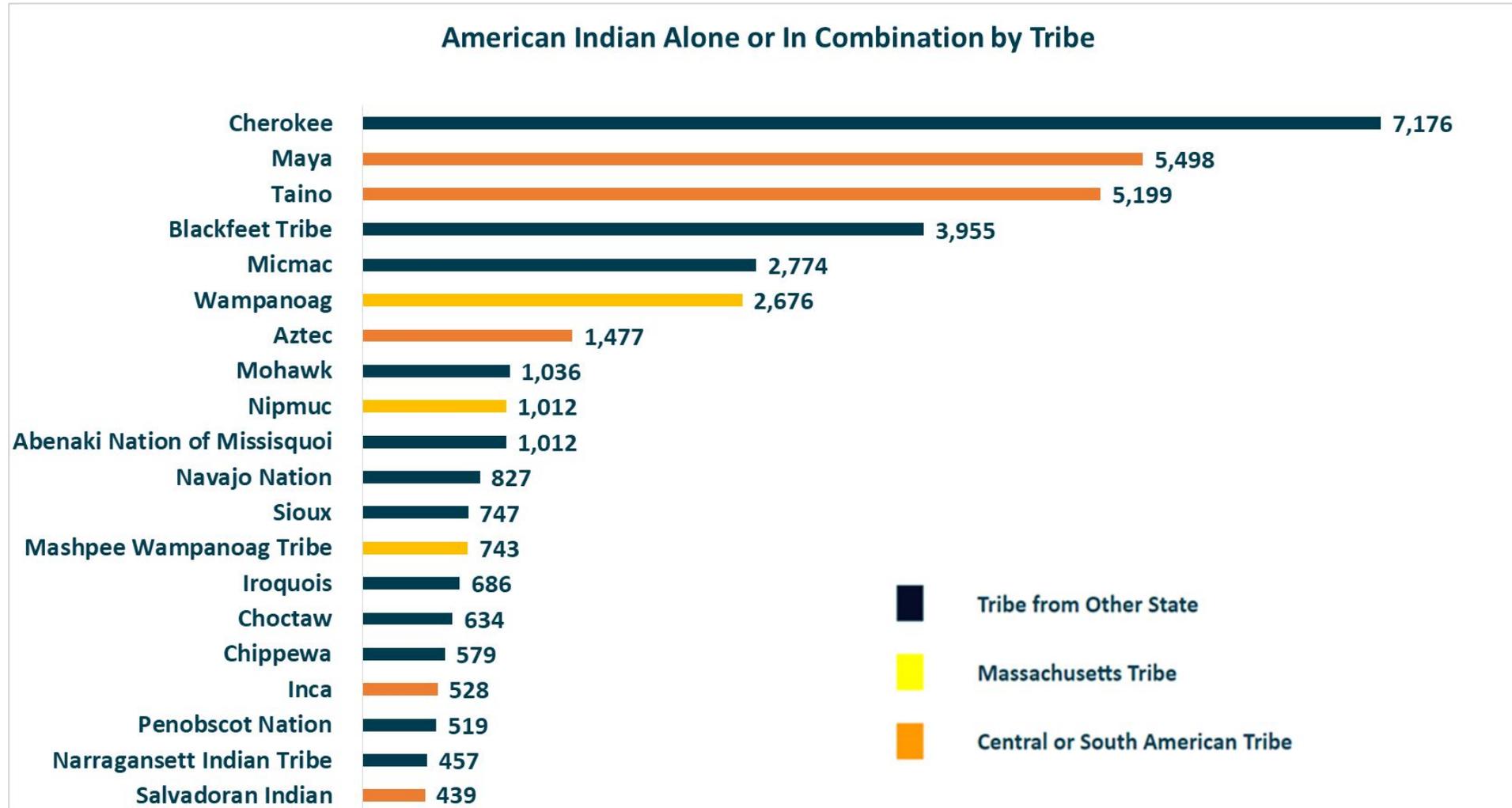


# International migration from Latin America has increased the Hispanic American Indian population



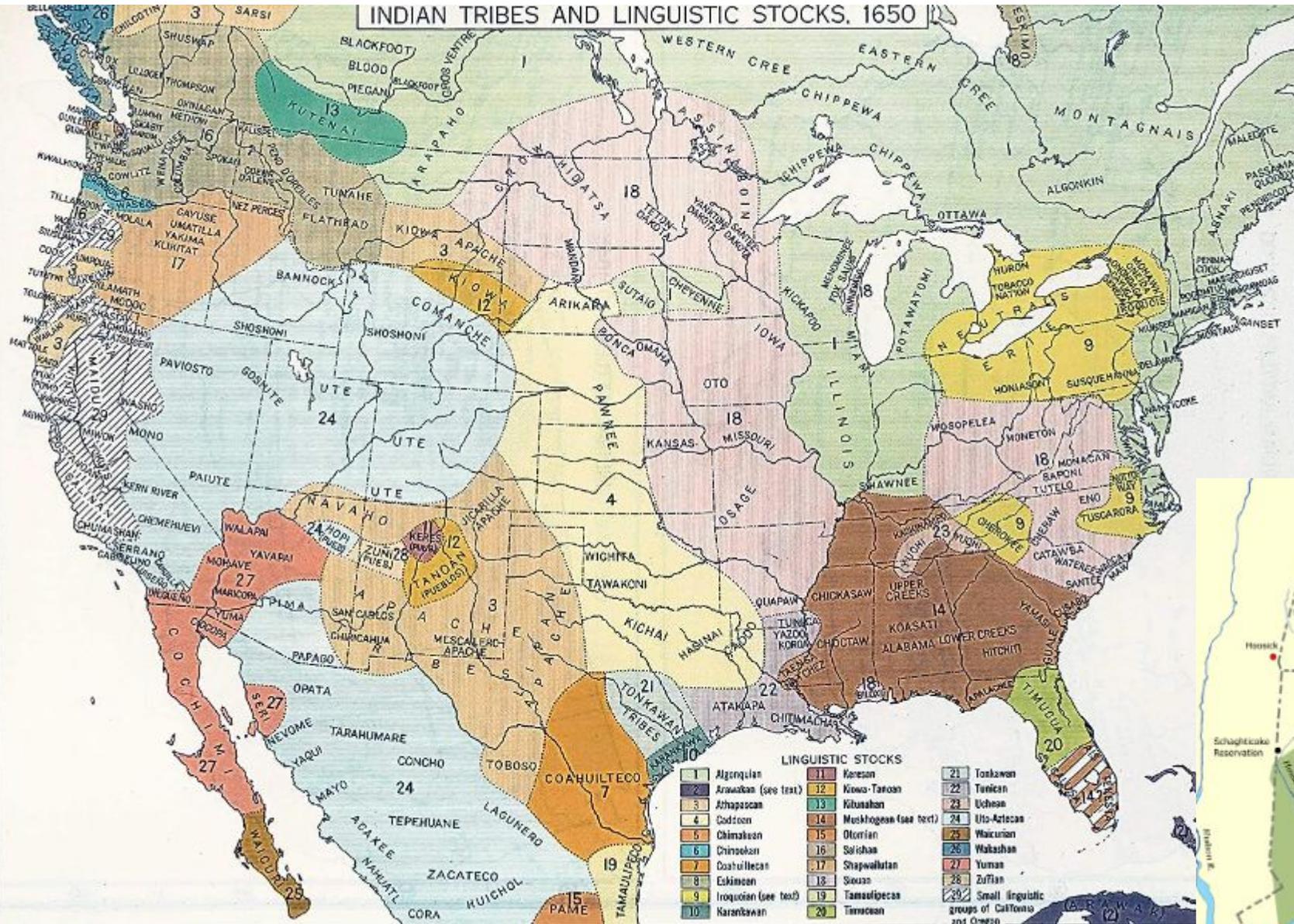
Source: 2010 & 2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Most American Indians currently living in Massachusetts are affiliated with tribes from other areas



Source: 2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Historical Ancestral Homelands



# Other possible explanations for population growth cannot be proved with available data:

**Cultural changes** could increase likelihood of identifying as American Indian

**Technological changes** such DNA testing could identify more people with American Indian ancestry

**Methodological changes** in Census questions could lead to more people identifying as American Indian, especially in combination with another race

# Census Questionnaire in 2020

→ **NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 6 about Hispanic origin and Question 7 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.**

## 6. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – *Print, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.* ↴

## 7. What is this person's race?

Mark  one or more boxes **AND** print origins.

- White – *Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc.* ↴

- Black or African Am. – *Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.* ↴

- American Indian or Alaska Native – *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.* ↴

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese   | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese   | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino  | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean   | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian  | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese   | <input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian –<br><i>Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.</i> ↴ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander –<br><i>Print, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.</i> ↴ |  |

- Some other race – *Print race or origin.* ↴

# Possible explanations for population growth:

- **Natural Change: Births minus Deaths**
  - yes, small positive effect
- **Domestic Migration**
  - no, net loss of population
- **International Migration**
  - yes, immigration from Latin America
- **Cultural, Technological, or Methodological Change**
  - possible, but embedded in the data

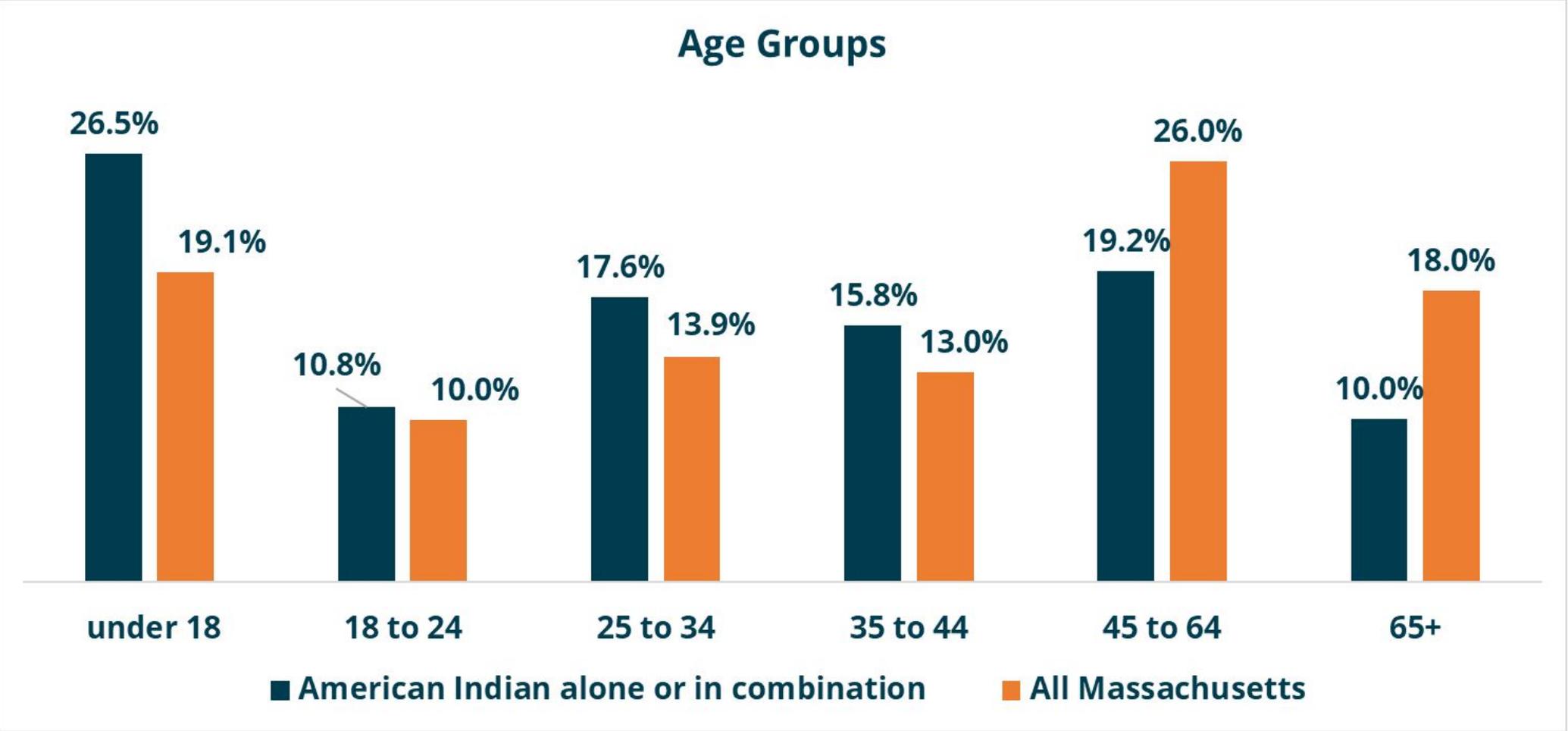
# 03

## Characteristics of American Indian Population



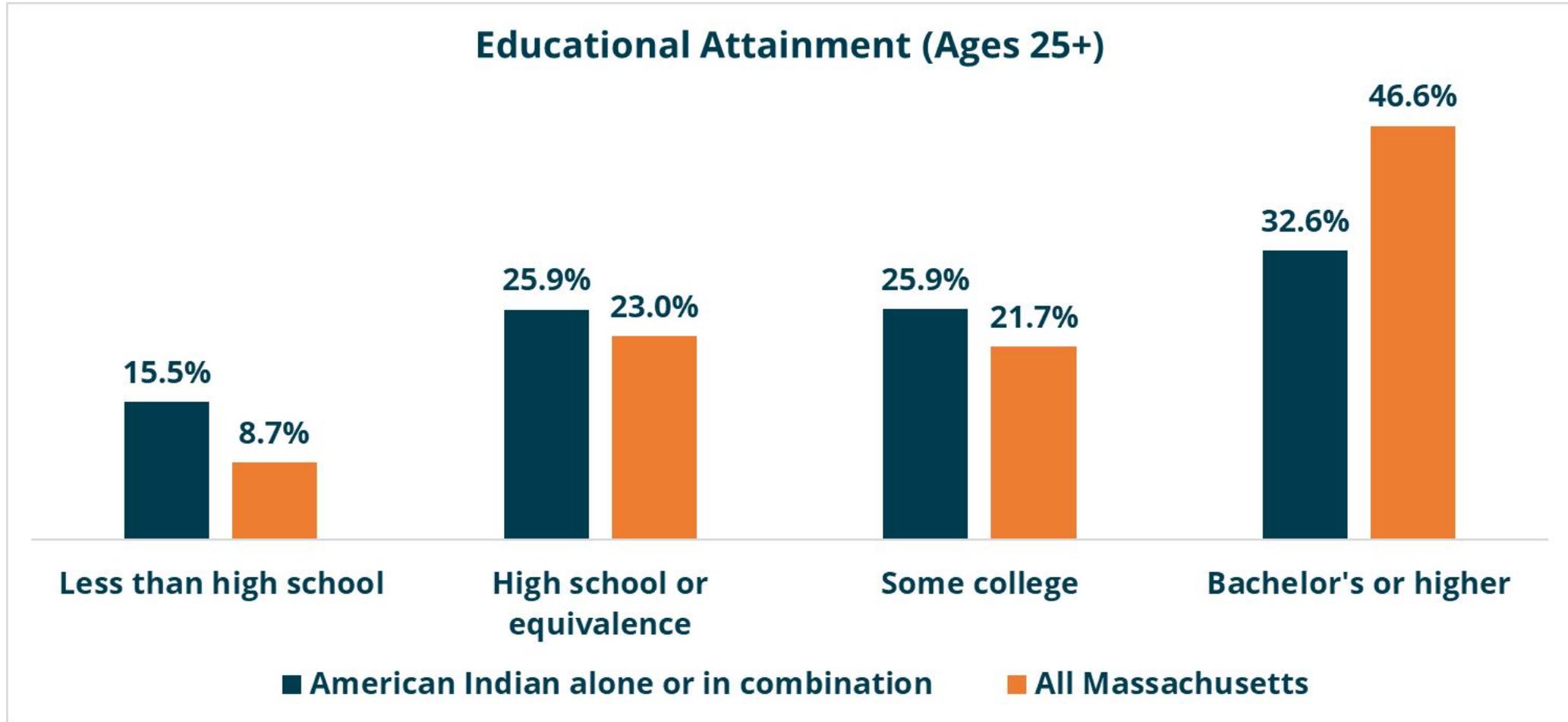
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# American Indians are younger - over half are under 35

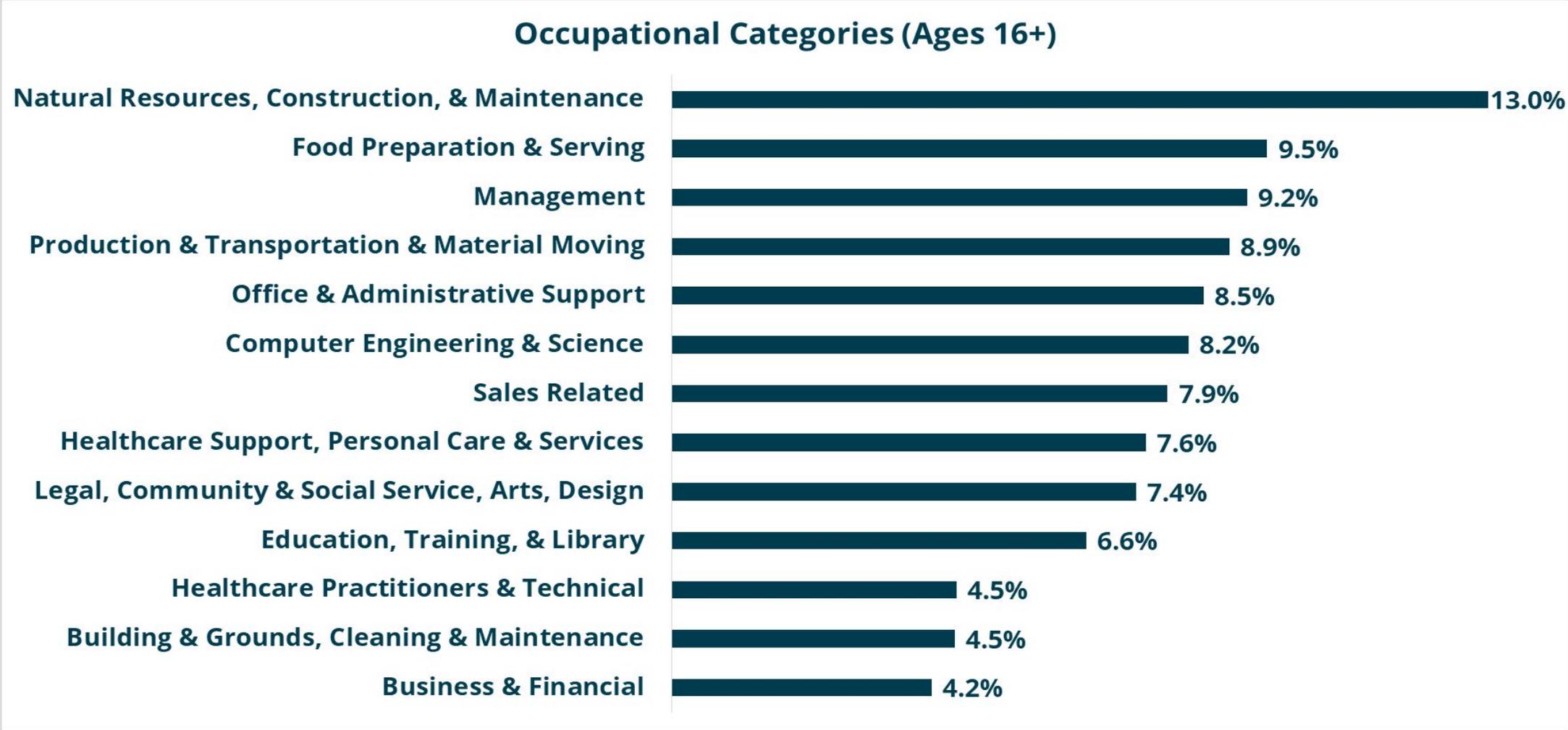


Source: 2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Foreign-born American Indians are more likely to have less than high school education

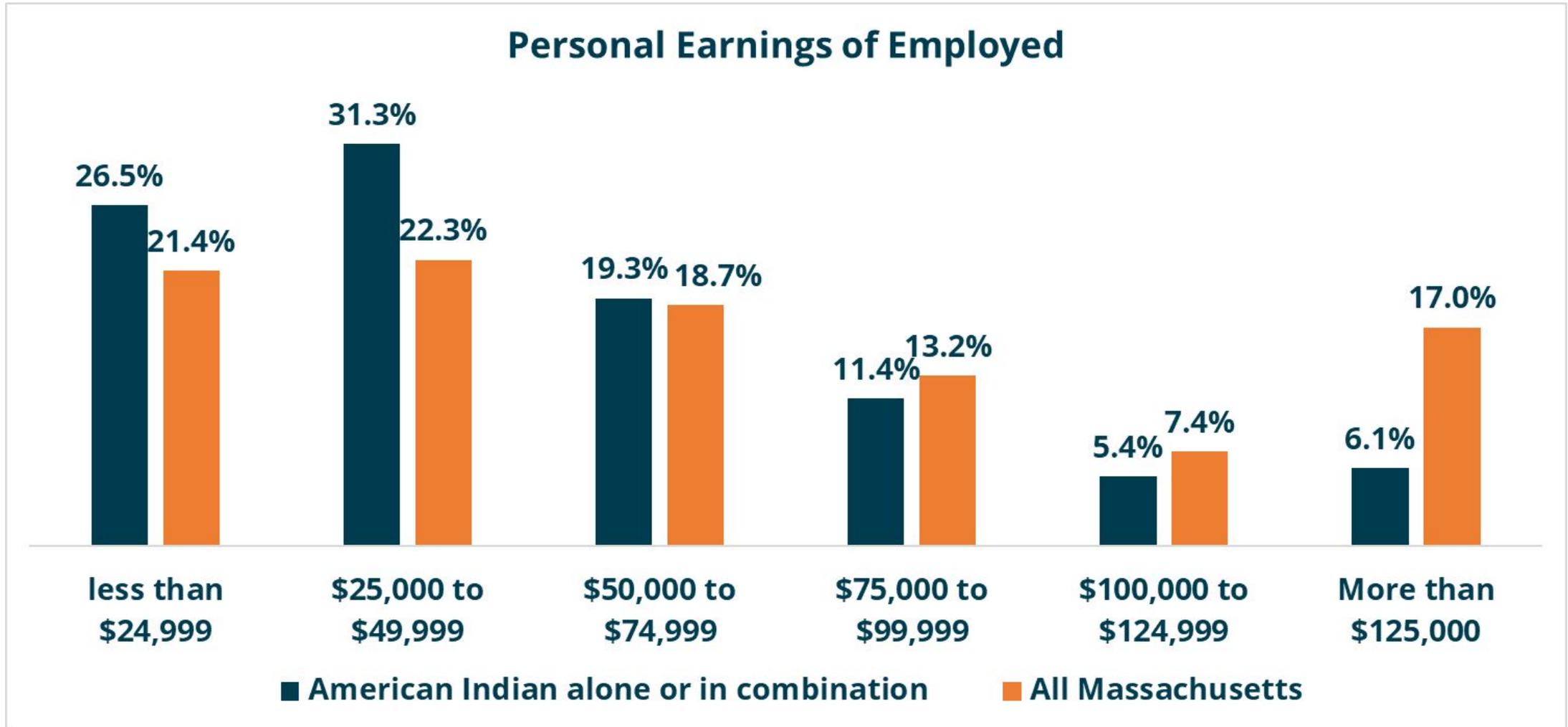


# American Indians work in both higher and lower skilled occupations

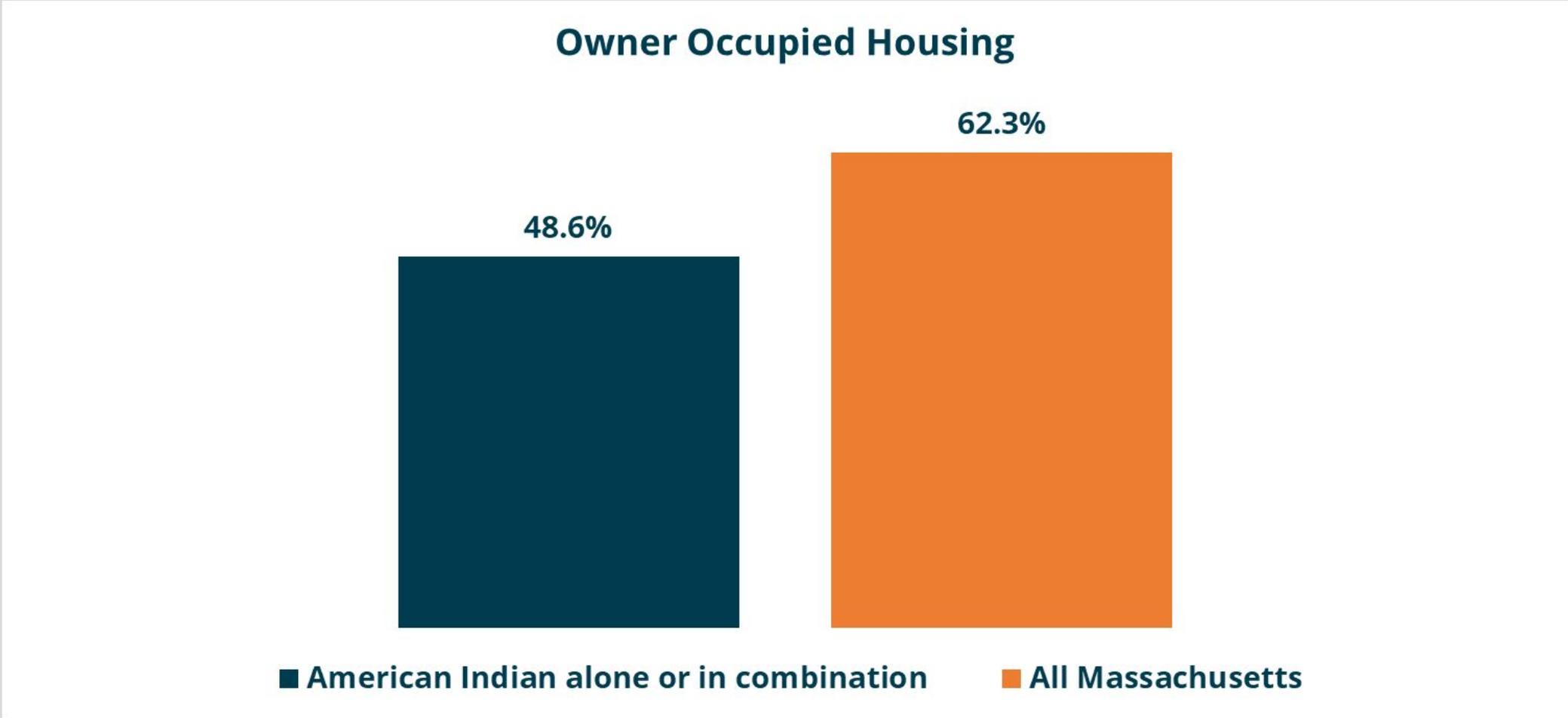


Source: 2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Over half of American Indians earn less than \$50,000



# American Indians are less likely to be homeowners than others in the state



Source: 2022 American Community Survey (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

# Further Resources

<https://www.boston.gov/equity-and-inclusion/native-american-heritage-month>

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/new-urban-mechanics/supporting-indigenous-communities>