



Perspectives

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Years ago, the movie *Groundhog Day* provided all of us with an insight into the frustrations of the same thing happening day after day. As entertainment, that concept is funny – in the real world, it definitely is not.

For far too many Americans – especially NPG members who are committed to seeing our nation adopt responsible immigration policies – the erosion of Congressional promises to “stand firm” against amnesty/citizenship is a display of power politics at its worst.

The majority of Americans have consistently told pollsters that they stand against such a false “solution” to our nation’s immigration crisis. And when several legislators recently stated that our nation “owes” 12 million or more illegal aliens the chance to “get right with the law,” American citizens responded with the question: “says who?”

When a major group of legislators recently established a “set of principles” related to immigration, the document they released noted: “There will be no special path to citizenship for individuals who broke our nation’s immigration laws – that would be unfair to those immigrants who have played by the rules and harmful to promoting the rule of law.” On the surface, it seems a nod toward Americans’ obvious position on this issue: any new legislation must not act as a reward for breaking our laws. Yet upon closer review, the statement is highly subject to interpretation – the key word being “special” treatment. And how is it not harmful to the rule of law to simply cast aside our existing system? Yet again, it seems the will of the people is being dismissed.

The Washington Post has praised the prospect of a “workable deal,” and commends the growing number of legislators who – once vowing to stand and fight against amnesty/citizenship – are now more than willing to put political self-interest ahead of our nation’s future.

The *Post* also notes that “immigration rights groups will not easily give way on pressing for some eventual path to citizenship.” So don’t be surprised to see the open-border lobby step back from blocking any compromise legislation that could make it to President Obama’s desk and become law.

And after reading the latest about what may be included in such “compromise” immigration reform, I am still shaking my head. The promises of more secure borders, implementation of better entry/exit visa tracking, and more employment verification have been talked about for decades. Similar laws have been passed and ignored, and nothing has been done to solve the real problems in America’s immigration system.

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RECRUITING AMERICA'S TEACHERS TO SPREAD NPG'S MESSAGE

Young people sitting in today’s classrooms have a lot on their plate.

As every generation before them, they must not only cope with the world that surrounds them – but also take on more responsibility for what’s to come in the future.

For all the predications about what lies ahead for America’s economy decades from now, much of it is guesswork. The same is true for the environment. However, demographers work with real numbers. And while they are not ready to predict the exact population of the U.S. in mid-century, many share the expectation that our nation’s population will increase by nearly 83 million people in less than 40 years – unless we slow, halt, and reverse its growth.

That will result in a total of 400 million people crammed into our 50 states. And that will create a very different world for today’s students by the time they reach their mid-40s and 50s.

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NPG 2014 SCHOLARSHIPS: ESSAY AND PHOTO COMPETITIONS

Getting America’s students engaged in the debate on population growth continues to be one of NPG’s top priorities. However, encouraging young people to find solutions fosters a much more powerful learning experience. That is why NPG sponsors our annual scholarship competitions.

This year, we are pleased to announce two contests where students can compete for scholarships ranging from \$2,500 to \$500. Multiple prizes will be awarded for both the annual Essay Contest and for this year’s new Photo Contest – for a total of \$15,000 in awards.

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RECRUITING AMERICA'S TEACHERS (Continued from page 1)

The more we can get that message into schools now, the more we can recruit our nation's youth to work with NPG to help create a more sustainable, livable, and enjoyable America for generations to come. Thankfully, NPG's Youth Outreach and Education programs are set to expand more than ever in 2014.

As in recent years, America's teachers in grades 6 through 12 are already signing up to work with NPG in the months ahead to spread the message about the dangers of population growth. Our goal by year's end is to have thousands of teachers nationwide hanging our **NPG Population Poster** in their classrooms, distributing tens of thousands of **NPG Student Fact Sheets** to their students, and prompting deep discussions about the role each person must play now in order to protect America's future.

We have been honored by the support of a number of generous and like-minded national foundations, which have helped NPG launch and sustain a partnership with America's teachers. But it is important to remember that individual contributions from NPG members are just as vital to our growth and success. Please respond with your generous support when asked to join NPG in this valuable program!

NPG 2014 SCHOLARSHIPS

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ESSAY CONTEST

Students are requested to submit an essay of between 500 and 750 words to:

Explain why the average American citizen – particularly our youngest generation – should become active in the cause to slow, halt, and eventually reverse U.S. population growth.

PHOTO CONTEST

A new opportunity for 2014, students are asked to:

Submit your original photo of a threatened environmental treasure you believe is worth protecting, along with an explanation (40-50 words) of how population growth has put this treasure at risk.

Both scholarship contests are open to high school seniors and currently-enrolled college undergraduates. Official rules and eligibility requirements can be found online at www.NPG.org.

We are pleased to promote and fund these scholarship opportunities as part of our Youth Outreach mission: to enlist a new generation of leaders who will work to slow, halt, and eventually reverse U.S. population growth.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN (Continued from page 1)

What's most worrisome is that **nowhere** – within any proposed legislation or the debates surrounding it – **is there discussion of what these policies will mean for U.S. population growth**. I have been asked many times why NPG cares so much about immigration rates and the reform of immigration laws. The answer is simple: immigration (legal, illegal, and the children of immigrants) is the single largest contributor to our nation's population growth.

Without immigration, America's size would have stabilized in about 1970, and we would be a much smaller – much more environmentally stable – nation today. Unfortunately, the 1965 Immigration Act drastically changed that course and we have suffered the consequences ever since. The current immigration debate reminds us that – with the stroke of a pen – Congress can change our nation forever. We simply cannot allow that to happen again! We must continue to call and write to our elected leaders and express our opposition to any legislation that would increase the size of our population.

The good news is that there are still many Senators and Congressmen who will stand by their promises to fight for responsible, common-sense changes to strengthen – rather than destroy – our nation's immigration system. These solid leaders won't back down or give in to pressure from the media, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, or special-interest groups. They are willing to speak the truth: that the solution to America's immigration crisis is

not a massive bill that will run over 1,000 pages. We must continue to voice our support for reasonable policies, and encourage Congress to address this crisis one issue at a time – and with a result that will not increase U.S. population size!

Here at NPG, we very much need your help if we are going to win this battle.

We must get Congress focused on creating immigration laws where America – and legal American citizens – come first. We must keep the pressure on them to establish policies that strictly limit the number of legal immigrants permitted to enter our country, eliminate illegal immigration as much as possible, and make jobs for out-of-work American citizens the top priority.

While fighting for common-sense immigration reform will surely be a top concern for NPG this year, we also face the giant task of continuing to educate the American people about the destructive consequences of overpopulation. As we work to carry our message into America's schools, rally citizens to fight environmental destruction, or highlight our mission in the national media – we continue to need your support.

If you have yet to renew your NPG membership for 2014, please do so. If you can help today with a special contribution, we would be most grateful. As always, we at NPG remain very thankful for all you do.

BY THE NUMBERS

America's Population (1/1/14): 317,297,938
(An increase of 0.7% or 2,218,622 since 1/1/13)

World Population (1/1/14): 7,137,577,750
(An increase of 77,630,563 or 1% since 1/1/13)

Top world growth: India added 15.6 million people in one year
(Next-highest growth: China, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia)
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

NEW FROM THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

MY CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

As activists, NPG members are constantly called on to contact their elected leaders – especially Members of Congress – to voice their concerns on critical issues such as immigration reform, environmental challenges, and other population-driven issues. You speak as a representative of your fellow citizens. Yet, how much do you personally reflect your community – especially your Congressional District?

The U.S. Census Bureau, using data collected by their ongoing American Community Survey, can tell you in a flash! A quick online search at www.census.gov/mycd will turn up selected statistics on such topics as population (gender, age, race, place of birth, ancestry, and veteran status), jobs, housing, economic status, education, and more.

NOTABLE QUOTES

CALIFORNIA'S DROUGHT

“While additional winter storms may provide a limited boost to reservoir storage and water deliveries, it would need to rain and snow heavily every other day from now until May to get us back to average annual rain and snowfall.”

California Department of Water Resources
(in reference to that state's current drought)

TOO FEW DOCTORS

“The medical field has long been fretting about an upcoming doctor shortage. The aging of baby boomers already worried medical planners before changes to health care took a front seat, especially because so many doctors themselves are boomers and they will be aging (and retiring) at the same time. Add in the trend of medical students choosing sub-specialties over primary care, and now finding a doctor and getting an appointment can rival finding a parking space in midtown Manhattan...”

“A recent special issue of *Academic Medicine* is devoted entirely to the challenge of matching the physician workforce to the needs of the patient population. The estimates of doctor shortages in the next 15 years range from 50,000 to 150,000. Whichever number turns out to be true, there will be legions of patients whose health will suffer.”

Danielle Ofri, M.D.
(as published in *The New York Times*)

TEXAS' POPULATION BOOM

When the U.S. Census Bureau recently released its estimates on state population growth from July 2012 to July 2013, the figures reflected the traditional tale of some states gaining and others losing people.

One surprising figure, which the Census Bureau attributed to continued effects of the recent recession, showed that “only 4.8 million Americans moved across state lines in 2012 – about half the percentage that did so in the boom years of the 1990s.”

In a recent article, national columnist Michael Barone highlighted how one state stood out in the dormant numbers.

Barone notes: “A vivid contrast is Texas, whose population grew 5.2 percent between 2010 and 2013, a higher percentage than anywhere else except much tinier North Dakota and D.C.” He highlights: “With 8 percent of the nation's population in 2010, Texas produced 18 percent of its population growth in the next three years. That has largely been the result of relatively high birth rates and domestic in-migration. Immigration, running about the national average rate, has been a smaller factor, accounting for only one-sixth of the state's growth.”

It has been widely reported how the shale boom and a growing and diversified economy make Texas an attractive destination for many Americans looking for jobs. Figures show that the nation lost 1.8 million jobs from September 2007 to November 2013, yet Texas gained 1.1 million.

However, all of the growth comes with a price. And while Texas is a large and prosperous state, land area and dollars cannot negate the population challenges it faces. In fact, three of the largest cities in the U.S. (Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas) are located in the Lone Star State.

Laredo, Texas, located near the new rush of oil and gas drilling that has brought staggering growth, has seen its population increase by one-third since 2000. This city and others – even those far from the new hydraulic fracturing (fracking) activity – must confront the need for more housing and schools along with environmental damage to the air and water. The roller-coaster history of Texas droughts has many citizens especially worried about the impact of increased fracking – a very water intensive activity – on the state's aquifers.

The bottom line: beware the boom! The very things (such as fast-paced economic growth and rampant drilling activity) that are bringing more people to Texas today are only sowing the seeds for future economic, social, and environmental crises.

ARE UNDERGROUND FARMS THE FUTURE?

Underground caves have traditionally been a great place to grow mushrooms – but are we approaching a time when much more food will come from beneath our cities?

The launch of a brand new 2.5-acre farm one hundred feet below the streets of London may soon answer that question. Ecowatch.com recently reported how Zero Carbon Food owners Richard Ballard and Steven Dring are working with two-star Michelin chef Michel Roux, Jr. to open their Growing Underground farm.

Roux, who first denounced the idea as “crazy,” was more convinced of its potential success when he “toured the tunnels and sampled the delicious produce.”

He exclaimed: “the market for this produce is huge.”

Zero Energy Food has been conducting trials for the last 18 months and claims that the farm will be carbon neutral, keep the temperatures around 16 degrees centigrade all year and consume minimal energy. It also says its system “uses about 70 percent less water than open-field farms.”

According to Ballard: “there is no ‘could’, ‘might’ or ‘maybe’ about our underground farm. We will be up and running and will be supplying produce later this year.” Early crops will include pea shoots, broccoli, garlic chives, mustard leaves, and other items. Stage-two crops will include heritage tomato varieties and mushrooms.

NPG applauds these efforts to reduce carbon emissions and innovative farming techniques which reduce environmental impact. However, if we are now attempting to grow crops underground due to a lack of arable farmland and water, what will we do in another 50 or 100 years – when world population exceeds 10 billion people? Clearly, we must begin to reverse this trend!

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY THROUGH NPG

Bequests play a critical role in helping to ensure a sound and lasting future for the work of Negative Population Growth. Estate gifts – both large and small – have helped carry this organization through 42 years. In the closing months of 2013, NPG produced a brand-new publication titled *Leave a Lasting Legacy: Things to Consider as You Draft Your Will*. This informative booklet sets forth just how easy it is to make a bequest to NPG. Call us at (703) 370-9510 and we will gladly mail you a **FREE** copy of this publication.

IMMIGRATION REFORM 101

“There are a lot of businesses out there that want an endless supply of cheap labor, which would be fine, except that they want everyone else to pay for it.”

John Hawkins, National columnist

NPG Asks: What of the real costs of immigration and growth to U.S. population size? What of our rising unemployment, our budgets stretched to their max, our vanishing green spaces, the pollution caused by development, or our animal and plant species threatened by extinction? Who will pay for those “costs” but the generations of Americans to come?



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Population Perspectives is a quarterly publication by Negative Population Growth, a national non-profit membership organization dedicated to educating Americans about the devastating effects of overpopulation on our environment and quality of life.

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