

U.S. Schools Overwhelmed by Enrollment Increases

At 53.1 million students, current U.S. school enrollment has exceeded the record set in 1970 by the baby boomers and is at an all-time high. In just the past ten years, enrollment has increased by 14 percent.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, enrollment will reach 55 million by 2020 and 60 million by 2030. By 2100, the nation's schools will have to find room for 94 million students—nearly double the current number. The ever-increasing flood of students poses daunting challenges for schools already overwhelmed by classroom crowding and teacher shortages.

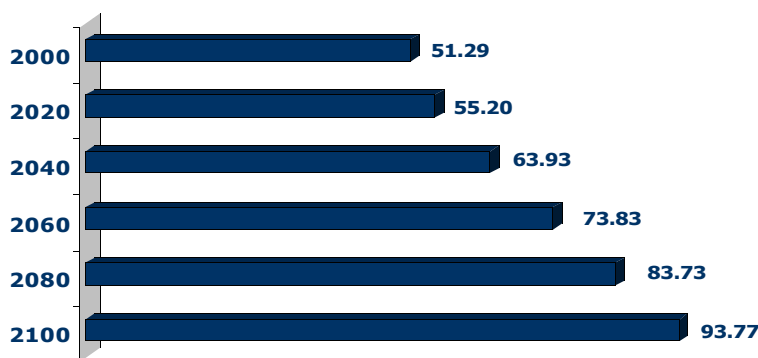
Education researchers agree that ideal enrollments are no more than 600 to 900 for a high school. Yet already, 71 percent of all U.S. high school students go to schools larger than 1,000 students. High schools with 3,000 or more students are now common in large cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and Sacramento.

Smaller schools have higher attendance rates, lower drop-out rates, less violence, less drug abuse, and higher grades and test scores. Small schools have been shown to be particularly helpful to inner-city students, especially African-American and Latino students and students from low-income families. Yet population growth makes putting smaller schools into practice virtually impossible.

About 14 percent of U.S. schools exceed their capacity by six to 25 percent, and eight percent exceed it by more than 25 percent. To alleviate overcrowding, 36 percent of schools use portable classrooms, and one-fifth hold classes in temporary instructional space, such as cafeterias, gyms, and even storage closets. In Mesa, Arizona, schools have even run out of room for classroom trailers, so 700 elementary school students attend classes in an old grocery store. In Warrensville Heights, Ohio, some kindergartners have storefront classrooms in an old shopping center across the street from a racetrack.

For more information on school overcrowding, read NPG's new education report, available at www.npg.org.

Projected Number of School-Age Children
(in millions)
2000 to 2100



Americans Worried About U.S. Population Growth

Half of all Americans think the United States' rapid population growth is bad for the country, a new Pew Research Center poll shows. Only 32 percent felt population growth was good for the U.S.

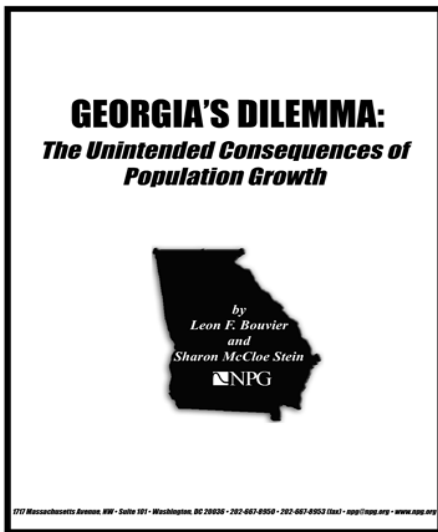
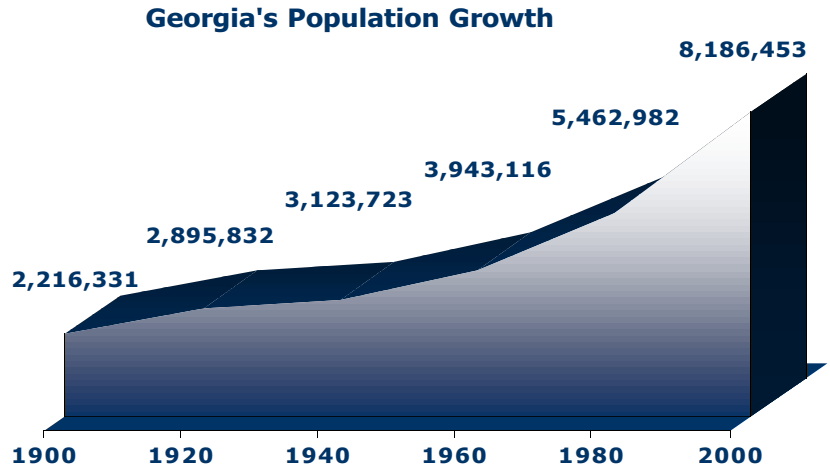
And a poll by the Public Policy Institute of California finds that 82 percent of Californians believe that the projected population growth during the next 20 years will make the state a less desirable place to live. Those questioned listed traffic congestion, high housing costs, loss of open space, and pollution as the most negative consequences of growth. More than half said they would support a ballot measure to slow development in their communities, even if it meant less economic growth.

"The American people are ahead of their leaders on the population issue," says NPG president Donald Mann. "How much longer will legislators keep refusing to hear the pleas of their constituents?"

Georgia Struggles With Unprecedented Population Growth

An NPG-commissioned poll finds that 60 percent of Georgia voters think that their quality of life will deteriorate if current population trends continue, and more than half don't believe that elected officials are effectively balancing population growth with maintaining quality of life.

A new NPG report finds that Georgia's fledgling growth control efforts are likely to be overwhelmed by the area's projected growth of over 3 million in the next 25 years. At 8.1 million residents, Georgia is the sixth fastest growing state in the U.S. Between 1990 and 2000, it grew by more than 1.7 million people. The impact? About two-thirds of the trees that used to drape in a canopy over the Atlanta area have been cut down by development, and Georgia's cities face water shortages by 2020 unless local utilities find new supplies. Already, more than 1,000 miles of rivers and streams in the Atlanta metro region don't meet federal water quality standards. And the amount of time an average Atlantan spends sitting in traffic has more than *doubled* in the last eight years—to 53 hours per year, up from 25 hours in 1992.



NPG's week-long Georgia radio ad campaign reached nearly 100,000 people and we received hundreds of calls from Georgia residents seeking more information. Our report findings were covered in a dozen Georgia newspapers, including the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*.

Georgia's situation is not unusual. Much of the South is being transformed by population growth, as are large portions of New England and the West.

Be sure to check our web site, www.npg.org, for additional installments in our state report series.

For a copy of "Georgia's Dilemma: The Unintended Consequences of Population Growth," by Dr. Leon Bouvier and Sharon McCloe Stein, contact NPG at 202-667-8950 or npg@npg.org.

NPG Special Projects

To build our grassroots and outreach support, NPG recently launched two special projects: the **Center for National Population Goals** and **NPG's Citizen Action Network**. For more information, visit www.npg.org.

Amnesty Plan in Limbo

Although President Bush spent the summer pushing hard for a plan that would legalize millions of illegal immigrants, strong public and congressional opposition, as well as the security implications of September's terrorist attacks, have put amnesty legislation in doubt.

Since opinion polls demonstrate strong public opposition to amnesty, the administration has been careful not to use the word "amnesty" to describe what would, in fact, be an amnesty (a pardon to immigrants who entered the country illegally). Instead, officials are using words like "legalization," "regularization," or even "status adjustment"—all euphemisms for amnesty.

NPG opposes granting amnesty to illegal immigrants because history shows it will increase our population size, by making migration more attractive. More people cross the border illegally, believing they will eventually be given legal status.

Amnesties also increase chain migration; once illegal immigrants are given legal status, they are eligible to bring relatives to the U.S. That's exactly what happened after the 1986 amnesty, as the relatives of newly legalized illegal

immigrants came to the U.S. by the millions. Today, there are more than 9 million illegal immigrants in the U.S.—over 4 million more than before the 1986 legislation.

September's terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are further, tragic evidence of the fact that the U.S. lacks meaningful immigration controls. Some of the suspected terrorists entered the country on legal visas, despite the fact that they were on a government "watch list"—demonstrating just how overwhelmed our immigration system has become. Lower legal immigration levels, heightened enforcement resources, and a secure worker identification program are essential in order to gain control of the system.

After this fall's terrorist attacks, 80 percent of Americans said it is too easy to enter the U.S. 53 percent want legal immigration decreased.

—Associated Press

NPG recently submitted testimony to a Congressional subcommittee hearing on immigration and population growth. Please add your voice to ours, by telling your U.S. Representative and Senators that you want to see immigration laws tightened, not loosened. Call the Congressional switchboard at 202-224-3121 or visit NPG's web site, www.npg.org, and click on Citizen Action Network.

NPG in Action

NPG public education efforts have reached across the country this quarter.

Most recently, NPG executive director Sharon McCloe Stein was quoted in *The New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Charlotte Observer*, *Omaha World Herald*, *Duluth News-Tribune*, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *Marietta Daily Journal*, and *Morristown Daily Record*.

NPG communications director Alison Green was featured on radio talk shows in Pittsburgh, California, Cincinnati, and North Dakota.

Craig Lewis, our deputy director, appeared before community groups in Washington, D.C. and West Virginia, helping citizens become more active in the fight against U.S. population growth.

Our letters to the editor program continues to reap success, with our op-eds and letters to the editor appearing in 27 newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, *Washington Times*, *Sacramento Bee*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Newsday*, *Cincinnati Post*, and *Detroit News*.

Water Conflicts Grow as Demand Outpaces Supply

Tensions over water supply are mounting around the U.S., as population growth turns water into an increasingly precious resource.

In August, 5,000 protesters rallied around an enormous empty bucket, a symbol of the water crisis in southern Oregon. In Florida, the water shortage is so severe in parts of the state that people have been ordered to appear in court for violating water rationing standards. In Kentucky, more than half of the state's 120 counties ran short of water or were on the verge of shortages this year before heavy rains brought relief. In northeast Kansas, the water shortage is so severe that state officials are considering building a pipeline to the Missouri River—but most of the water in the river is already spoken for by other users.

Parts of six counties bordering Lake Michigan, one of the world's largest freshwater sources, could face serious water shortages within 20 years, according to the *New York Times*. Lake Michigan contains one-fifth of the world's surface fresh water.

In Seattle, "demand for water is outstripping the capacity of nature and the region's pipelines and soon could leave some suburban communities unable to deliver adequate supplies," reports the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. With the region's population expected to climb 27 percent by 2020, experts predict shortages within 20 years.

U.S. Geological Survey associate director Robert M. Hirsch says that some parts of the country are quickly depleting ground water that has been around since the Ice Age. Several major Southwest cities, such as El Paso, San Antonio, and Albuquerque, face water crises in 10 to 20 years.

"Until the U.S. gets serious about halting and reversing population growth, our supplies of water and other finite resources will increasingly be no match for demand," says NPG executive director Sharon McCloe Stein.

New from NPG

Continuing our series on why population matters, NPG has released new reports on population growth's connection to sprawl and school overcrowding, as well as a compilation of Americans' views on immigration levels. New population reports for California, Nevada, North Carolina, and Texas are now available, as well. All publications are at our web site, www.npg.org.

Total Fertility Rate Rises

The total fertility rate in the U.S. rose 3 percent in 2000, to 2.1335--the U.S.'s highest fertility rate since 1971. (The total fertility rate is the average number of births per woman.) The total number of births also rose by 3 percent from 1999 to 2000, to 4,064,948.

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK!

You can help build support for NPG's work and spread our important message at the same time, by signing up a friend for membership. Please call for our new membership kit: 202-667-8950.

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

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