

## Illegal Immigration Soars During the 1990s

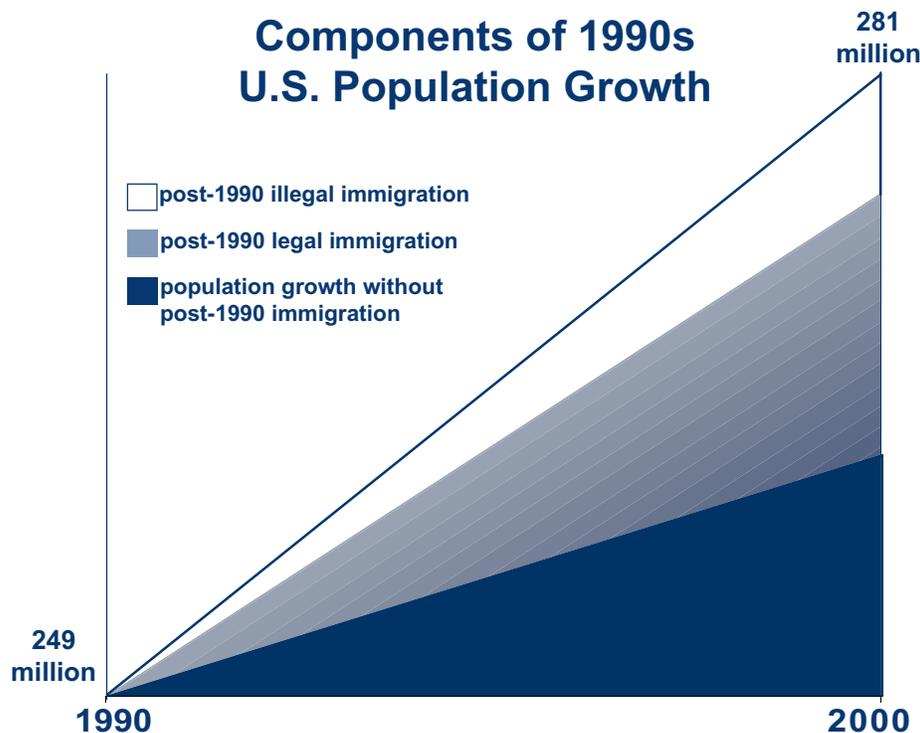
Illegal immigration more than doubled during the 1990s, according to new Census Bureau data. About 8 million illegal immigrants live in the United States, the figures show—one million more than the Immigration and Naturalization Service had estimated earlier this year and a 4.5 million increase since 1990.

The total foreign-born population in the U.S. is now 31.1 million, a record 57 percent increase since 1990. Almost one-third of all immigration during the 1990s was illegal.

According to Census data, illegal immigrants accounted for 14 percent of population growth during the 1990s; legal immigrants accounted for 29 percent. Demographers say that the number of illegal immigrants could be even higher, because of the Census undercount.

An NPG demographic analysis of age distribution, fertility, and mortality data shows that if there had been no immigration to the U.S.

since 1990, the population in 2000 would have been 262 million—19 million less than the 281 million counted. Thus, post-1990 immigrants and their children accounted for 61 percent of population growth during the decade.



## NPG Members Now Using New Legislative Action Center

NPG recently launched our Legislative Action Center, where visitors to our web site can easily communicate with their elected officials, including the president, U.S. Senators and Representatives, state governors, and state delegates.



During the last quarter, our site garnered 483,000 hits and generated almost 1,000 letters to members of Congress.

The service allows users to instantly generate letters on featured topics, or write their own. Messages can be sent via email from the site, or printed out and mailed or faxed.

Visitors to our web site can also sign up for NPG's weekly news update, delivered via email and full of the latest population news and action alerts.

To use the Legislative Action Center or sign up for our email list, go to [www.npg.org](http://www.npg.org) and click on Citizen Action Network.

# A Message from the Executive Director by Sharon McCloe Stein



In the aftermath of September 11, NPG faces a critical challenge.

The devastating attacks left all Americans wondering what steps we can take to protect our nation and our families. Lawmakers are beginning to understand that the answer must include overhauling our immigration system—a system so chaotic and uncontrolled that at least nine of the hijackers were in the U.S. on valid visas, and three more had entered legally and simply stayed beyond their visas' expirations.

With increased attention being paid to an issue that has an enormous impact on our population size, NPG is working to ensure that the public, the media, and lawmakers don't lose sight of the pressing need to bring both legal and illegal immigration numbers down to more manageable rates.

Currently, immigration levels are so high—and record-keeping is so shoddy—that the Immigration and Naturalization Service is unable to track the more than 3 million immigrants who are overstaying their visas. (Of all illegal immigrants in the U.S., 40 percent are believed to have entered with tourist, business, or student visas and simply remained here when those visas expired.) In 1996, Congress passed laws that would have required a computerized entry-exit system, but enforcement has been delayed by lobbying from border business interests.

It's crucial that we keep the pressure on lawmakers to acknowledge what the overwhelming majority of Americans have said all along: Our immigration system is out of control. Recent polls make this sentiment clearer than ever. Ninety-two percent of Americans want to see stricter immigration and border crossing policies. Two-thirds favor stopping *all* immigration during the war on terrorism.

Congress is considering some strong first steps, such as Senate bill S. 1627, introduced by Senators Dianne Feinstein (Calif.) and Jon Kyl (Ariz.), which would set up a centralized immigration database, introduce tamper-proof visa cards for all foreign nationals, and tighten the rules governing student visas. (The companion bill in the House of Representatives is H.R. 3229, introduced by Representative Elton Gallegly [Calif.]

Such legislation is an excellent starting point, but ultimately the flow of legal immigration must be substantially reduced if we are to regain control of the immigration system.

NPG has contacted all members of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees, calling for lower legal immigration levels, increased interior enforcement and border security, and a secure verification system to protect against identity fraud. These reforms are imperative in order to restore meaningful immigration controls and ultimately reduce population growth.

You can help by making your views known to your legislators. We've made this easier for you, with our new legislative action center (see page 1). Please act today.

## ***NPG In Action***

NPG's letters to the editor and op-eds were published in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Californian*, *Roanoke Times & World News*, and *San Ramon Valley Herald*. Our staff worked with reporters at the *Florida Times-Union*, *Providence Journal*, and *Idaho Statesman*, and our work was featured in the *Lake Charles American Press* and the *Opelika-Auburn News*. We reached hundreds of thousands with information-packed ads in *Audubon*, *Roll Call*, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, *Tallahassee Democrat*, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, and *E magazine*.

In October, NPG co-sponsored World Population Awareness Week, providing sample letters to the editor, ads, and action tips to local activists.

## **New NPG Report: 5.5 Million More Floridians by 2025**

Florida's population growth is overwhelming the state's growth management efforts, straining schools and highways, drying up already scarce water supplies, and destroying the state's quality of life, according to a new NPG report. If Florida does not institute a plan to limit population growth, warns the report, it can expect more than 5.5 million new residents in the next 25 years, further overwhelming the infrastructure and damaging quality of life.

Among the report's findings:

- Florida loses 450 acres of forest and 410 acres of farmland every day. Housing developments have invaded the wetlands that used to cover much of the central and southern part of the state. As the natural habitat for so many species is destroyed, entire animal populations, including the Florida panther and the manatee, are disappearing.
- In some parts of the state, the water shortage is so severe that some residents have been fined and ordered to appear in court for violating water rationing rules. A doubling of demand for water over the next twenty years is likely.
- Florida schools are so overcrowded that legislators are considering paying students to go to private schools instead of public ones. In Sarasota, some classrooms have more than 40 students at a time. In Manatee County, some days lunch lines are so long that students don't have time to eat unless they miss class. Yet Florida can expect another 50,000 public school students every year for the foreseeable future. That means building at least 50 new schools every year. To teach these additional students, Florida will need about 16,000 new teachers a year over the next decade—2,000 to 3,000 more than may be available for hire.

An NPG poll in 1999 found that over 70 percent of Florida voters believe overcrowding and overpopulation is a major problem in the state. Nearly 60 percent believe that adding another five million people to Florida's population is a serious problem. And 68 percent agree that "Florida would be better-off in the long term with a smaller population to maintain a sound economy and a healthy environment."

"It's time for Florida legislators to pay attention to what the people of Florida are saying and get out of the business of promoting population growth," NPG communications director Alison Green told Fort Myers radio station WGCU. "Instead, Florida needs to look at ways to halt population growth altogether."

To date, NPG has completed state reports for eleven states. Thanks to your continued support, we will be compiling reports for all 50 states in the coming months.

For a copy of "Focus on Florida: Population, Resources, and Quality of Life," contact NPG at 202-667-8950 or [npg@npg.org](mailto:npg@npg.org).

### ***Worried About Sprawl? Stop Population Growth!***

Sprawl is becoming a hotter and hotter issue, as communities struggle with the increased traffic and decreased open space that accompany it. But too many communities try to solve sprawl without considering a major root cause of the problem: population growth.

NPG has contacted over 200 groups fighting sprawl in their communities and urged them to tackle the problem at its source, by fighting population growth. We provided materials explaining how population growth drives sprawl and suggested specific steps they can take in their own regions. We also provided a sample resolution to bring before their city councils, stating that addressing the negative impact of population growth is an essential component of any efforts to contain the spread of sprawl.

In response to our outreach efforts, local mayors and other city officials have contacted us to learn more about how to stop sprawl. We hope to enlist additional officials in coming months.

## Land of Milk and Honey ... and Garbage?

The Associated Press reports: "As California's population climbs past 34 million people, a heralded decade of recycling and trash diversion is being overtaken by unceasing population growth. Even as the California Highway Patrol uses re-refined oil and recycled tires to trim vibration on San Jose's light rail tracks, the state is dumping more garbage in landfills than a decade ago ... [T]he dramatic early drops in annual landfill tonnage have been overtaken by 4 million newcomers and one of history's biggest economic trash-generating booms ... By 2010, 2.5 million more people will live in metropolitan Los Angeles' five counties. Where their garbage will go is anyone's guess."

## Death by Pollution

Many of the world's freshwater lakes face death by pollution, resulting in catastrophe for humans and animals who depend on them, the World Water Council warns. The organization notes that most of the hazards are the result of population growth, which has sparked a rising demand for water throughout the world.

In Lake Victoria, Africa's largest lake, pollution is so severe that fishermen can't move their boats away from the shore. In Taihu Lake in China, pollution is so dense that people can almost walk on the lake's surface.

## Cost of Growth: Who Pays?

A University of Kentucky study confirms that new residents increase the cost of living to existing residents in a community. The study, commissioned by the governor's Smart Growth Task Force, examined what it would cost a family of four if 1,000 new residents moved into its county. The cost of adding new services (such as police and fire protection, roads, schools, sewers, etc.) rose as the population grew and spread out. In Pendleton County, one of the counties examined in the study, researchers estimated that an influx of 1,000 new residents would cost a family of four \$1,222.39 more per year.

## New from NPG

New population reports for Florida and Utah are now available. We've also updated our compilation of Americans' views on immigration levels, incorporating national polls conducted in the wake of September 11. All publications are at [www.npg.org](http://www.npg.org).

## Members Corner

• A special thank you to members who recently renewed their NPG memberships. If you haven't already, please renew your commitment in time for our 30th Anniversary in 2002! We're counting on your support in order to continue our work.

• Complimentary copies of *Elephants in the Volkswagen: Facing the Tough Questions About Our Overcrowded Country*, by Lindsey Grant, former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Environment and Population Affairs, are now available to NPG members. In this highly recommended book, specialists on the environment, food and energy supplies, urban issues, national defense, and economics address the optimum population size for the U.S. and how we might get there. Call for your copy: 202-667-8950.

• Tell your friends and family about NPG! NPG's new membership brochure provides a colorful, attractive introduction to our work and is a great resource for spreading the word to others about how they can get involved. To order, contact us at 202-667-8950 or email [npg@npg.org](mailto:npg@npg.org).



*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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