

NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH



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Press Release

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New NPG Forum Paper Discusses the Trajectory of Population Growth Will the On-going Pandemic Change Recent Population Predictions?

Alexandria, VA, (February 15, 2022): Negative Population Growth has published a new paper to their Forum series: [*Will 2022 Be the First Year of U.S. Negative Population Growth?*](#) Written by Nathaniel Gronewold, this paper discusses the potential trajectory of population growth in the U.S. during this time of historically low birth rates and a global pandemic, positing: “U.S. population growth could be dragged lower or even turn negative in 2022 as America begins Year Three of the COVID-19 pandemic.” Beginning with the basics, Gronewold presents two salient facts to the reader, sharing: “Neither I nor Negative Population Growth is celebrating the cause of this demographic downshift. No one is – there are no words to describe the devastation wrought by the pandemic and the amount of suffering COVID-19 has caused. *The pandemic is a crisis. A barely growing or even declining population is not.*”

Next, Gronewold examines recent research about life expectancy, birth rates, and national migration patterns, then counters the predictions that post-pandemic life will flourish, and population numbers will soar once more. After noting that life expectancy and birth rates are expected to rebound to pre-pandemic averages, he adds that we are still experiencing the pandemic and that the final numbers – ultimately – may not reflect researchers’ hypotheses. Looking at the great COVID-19 migration, Gronewold describes the shift from one location to the next as “nothing new,” explaining: “Los Angeles has been losing people to places like Texas, Arizona, and Utah for the better part of a decade, but L.A. still registered a net gain in residents from 2010 to 2020 due to natural increase and contributions from immigration.”

To further disrupt the media frenzy surrounding current population trends, Gronewold presents the possible scenario where calls for increased immigration grow louder because of the narrative that expanding the nation’s population is the only way for the economy to grow. He then introduces a potential sticking point, sharing that for the scenario to work, “one must assume that the immigrants actually want to come to our shores.” Adding: “America’s reputation abroad has taken a beating as of late and would-be immigrants have other options.” Touching again on the significance of birth rates within the population conversation, Gronewold points to the Great Recession of 2008-2009, arguing: “Birth rates did not recover after the most recent economic crisis of a decade ago.” He goes on to say: “I suspect we may see the same thing happen in the years following the COVID-19 crisis – America’s birth rate may recover somewhat but will likely fall lower again as time passes.”

Gronewold then persuades the reader to see the migration shift – not as a trend – but as a direct response to population density, stating: “The pandemic exacerbated or accelerated a pre-existing trend of Americans leaving the most expensive cities or states in favor of urban centers with lower populations and more affordable

housing.” Gronewold is then able to highlight a critical point that does not get the attention it deserves, saying: “The exodus from New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and other expensive urban hubs is not making life more affordable in these cities. It is, however, driving up the cost of living in the new urban magnets of Denver, Austin, Atlanta, and other rapidly growing metropolitan areas.”

In closing, Gronewold considers the magnitude of the many moving parts that make up the reasons for population growth in the U.S. and then surmises negative U.S. population growth is possible, telling the reader: “While epidemiologists believe this pandemic will eventually phase out and become something like the seasonal flu, for the short term we cannot ignore what has happened over the last two years. Nevertheless, there is a silver lining. This author believes lower, slower, and ultimately negative population growth in the U.S. is both desirable and inevitable. Reaching that milestone this year gives us an opportunity (albeit a temporary one) to demonstrate how all the things made wrong by population growth – rising economic insecurity, biodiversity loss, global warming, etc. – could be made right by its opposite.”

Founded in 1972, NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to educating the American public and political leaders regarding the damaging effects of population growth. We believe that our nation is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long-range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. NPG advocates the adoption of its [Proposed National Population Policy](#), with the goal of eventually stabilizing U.S. population at a sustainable level – far lower than today’s. We do not simply identify the problems – we propose solutions. For more information, visit our website at NPG.org, follow us on Facebook [@NegativePopulationGrowth](#) or follow us on Twitter [@npg_org](#).