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Seeking a Sustainable Demographic Future

The US is the most consumptive country in the world. With 5 percent of the world's population, Americans consume nearly a quarter of the world's energy.¹

By 2060 Census Bureau projections say there will be 459 million Americans, not counting undocumented immigrants. This is an increase of more than 200 million, the vast majority of which is due to legal immigrants and their offspring.²

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 drastically increased the number of immigrants allowed into the United States. As a result, the 1990s saw the biggest population expansion in US history.

Since 1972, native fertility has been below the replacement-level rate while immigration has been 250 percent more than the replacement-level rate and immigrant fertility is 30 percent above the replacement-level rate.³

For these reasons NumbersUSA is pushing for immigration policies that balance population and the environment.⁴ Up until the 1970s legal immigration averaged 250,000 immigrants per year. Today, it is up to 1,000,000 annually with about 700,000 undocumented individuals coming to the US every year. NumbersUSA is calling to return immigration policy back to the traditional level of 250,000 per year.⁵

"To talk about changing immigration numbers is to say nothing against the individual immigrants in this country," said Roy Beck, executive director of NumbersUSA. "Rather, it is about deciding how many foreign citizens living in their own countries right now should be allowed to immigrate in the future."⁶

NumbersUSA states that reaching a population-environment balance need not be anti-immigrant. The US can still accept immigrants, just not at the current rate.⁷

from the editor