

What's the State of the American Population?

NASBO 2025 Analyst Professional Development Seminar in Niagara Falls, NY

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Myths about the U.S. population and economy abound

- Facts about the U.S. population are often more nuanced than what you hear on the news
- Let's walk through 10 myths about the population and economy, whether they are true or false, and the implications of these changes for policy

Ready for a true/false quiz?

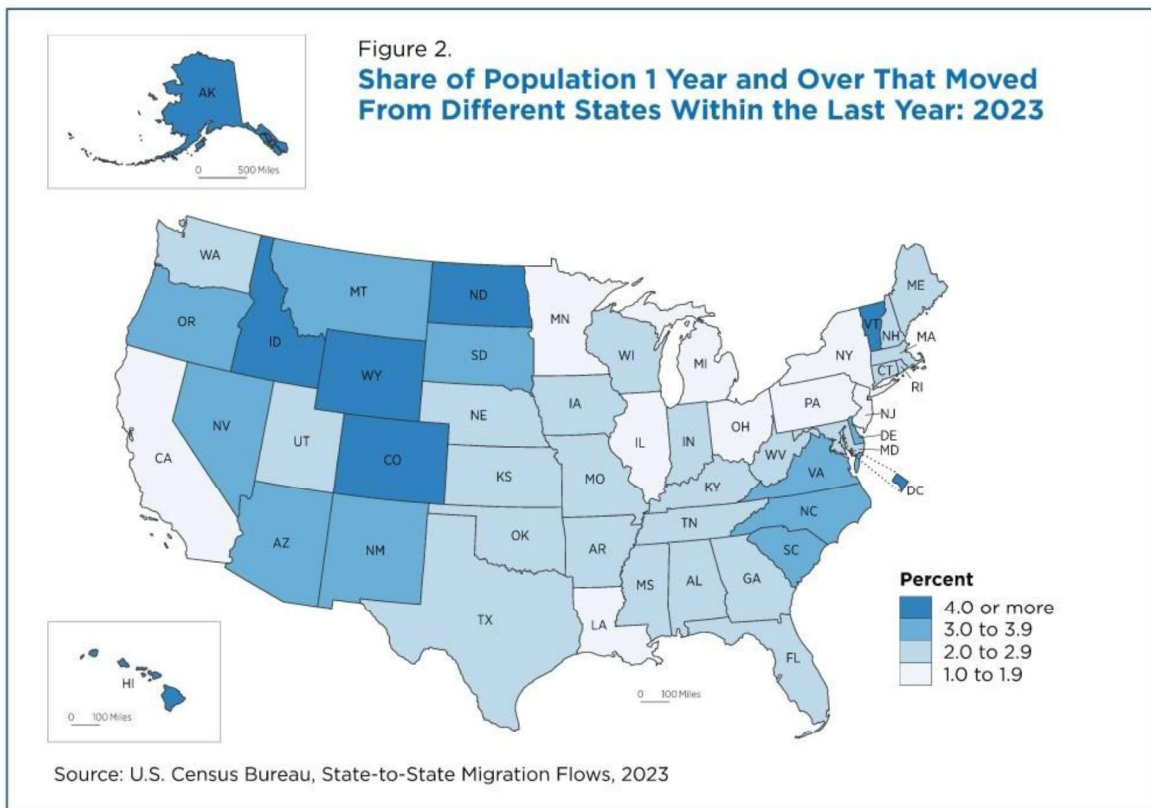
#1: The U.S. is seeing record-breaking shares of people moving to new states

FALSE!

- The percentage of people who moved in the previous year declined from 13.7% (2019) to 12.1% (2023)
- Only 7.5 million movers crossed state lines; lower than 2022 (8.2 m) and 2021 (7.9 m)
- Most states are not experiencing a rapid influx of people moving in
- Highest share was DC – 57,000 in-movers or 8.5% of population
- CO– 230,000 in-movers or 4% of their population

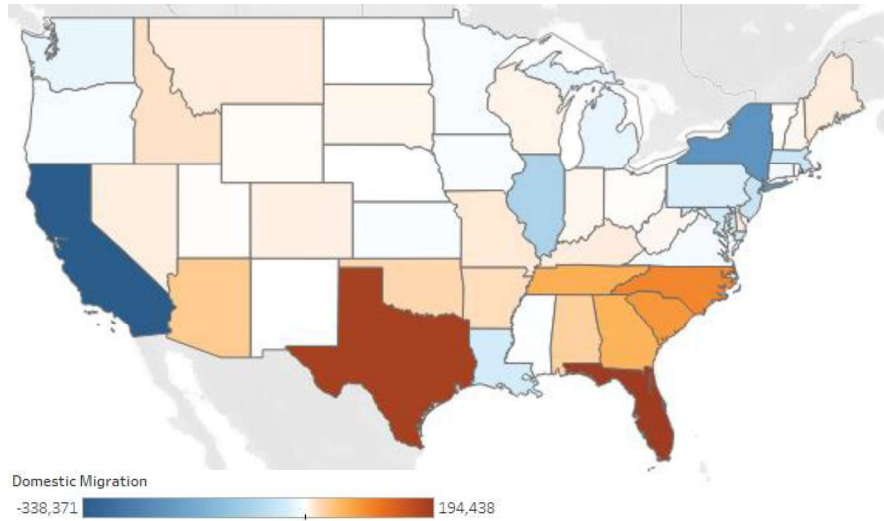


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Domestic Migration Is Net Inflow In “Sunbelt.”

Net Number of People Who Moved State-to-State 2022-2023



Source: PRB analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates

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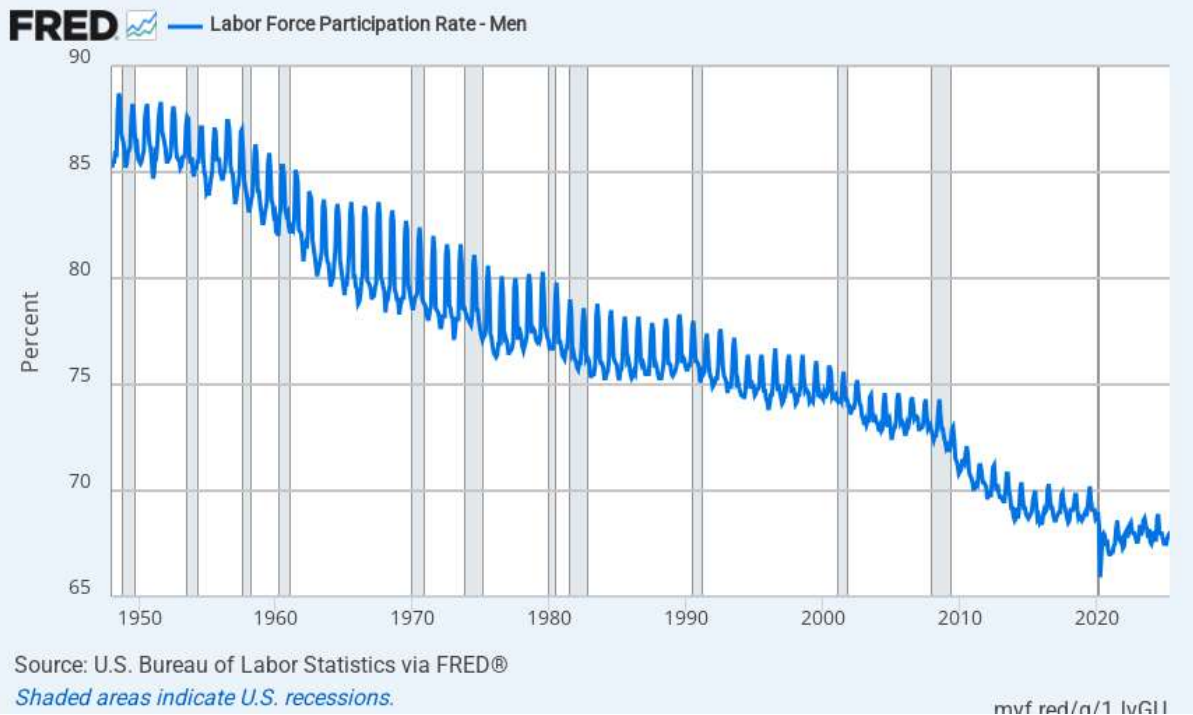


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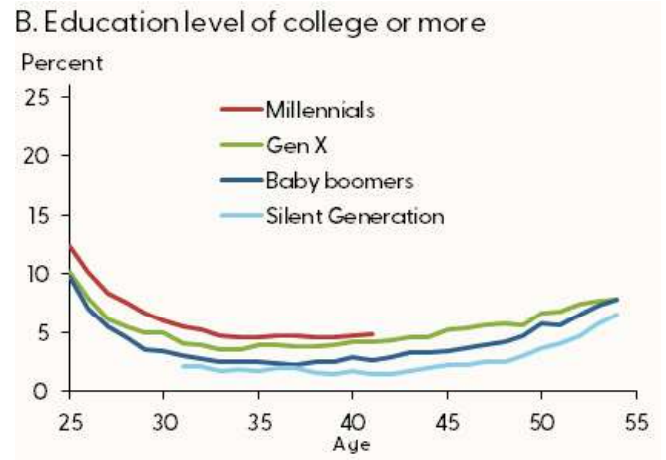
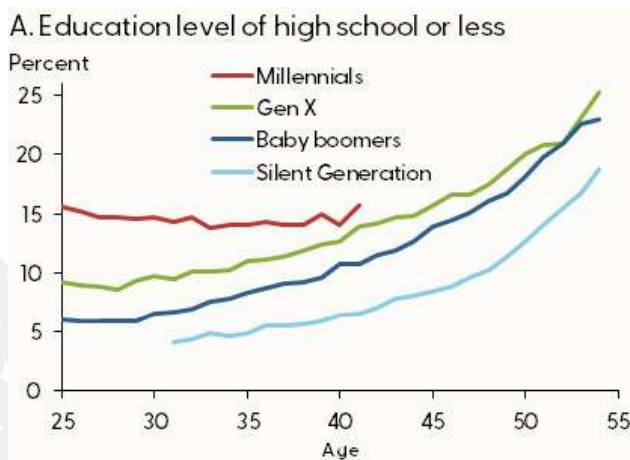
#2: There are not enough workers willing to work

FALSE!

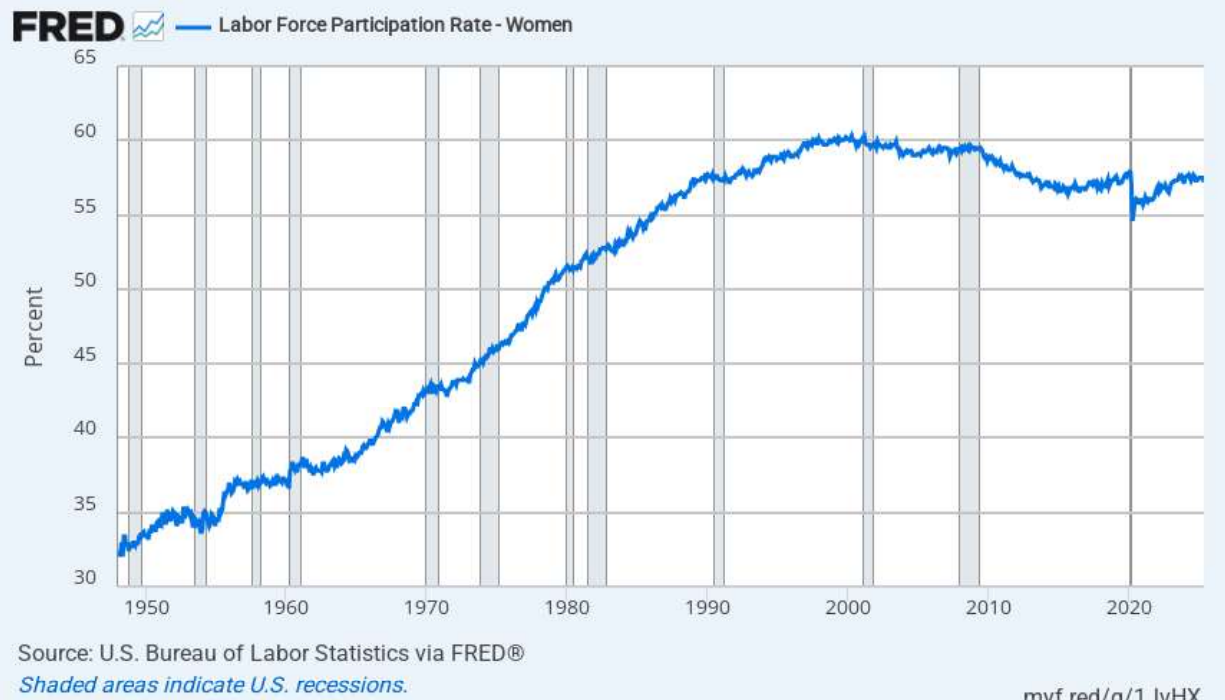
- It is true that men's labor force participation has declined over time
- But, there are many groups of people who are willing to work (mothers with young children, people with disabilities, the formerly justice involved)
- Policy can be instrumental in engaging these groups



Nonparticipation rates for prime-age men (25-55)



From Bengali, L. and E. Duzhak, "Men's Falling Labor Force Participation across Generations" Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, <https://www.frbsf.org/research-and-insights/publications/economic-letter/2023/10/mens-falling-labor-force-participation-across-generations/>



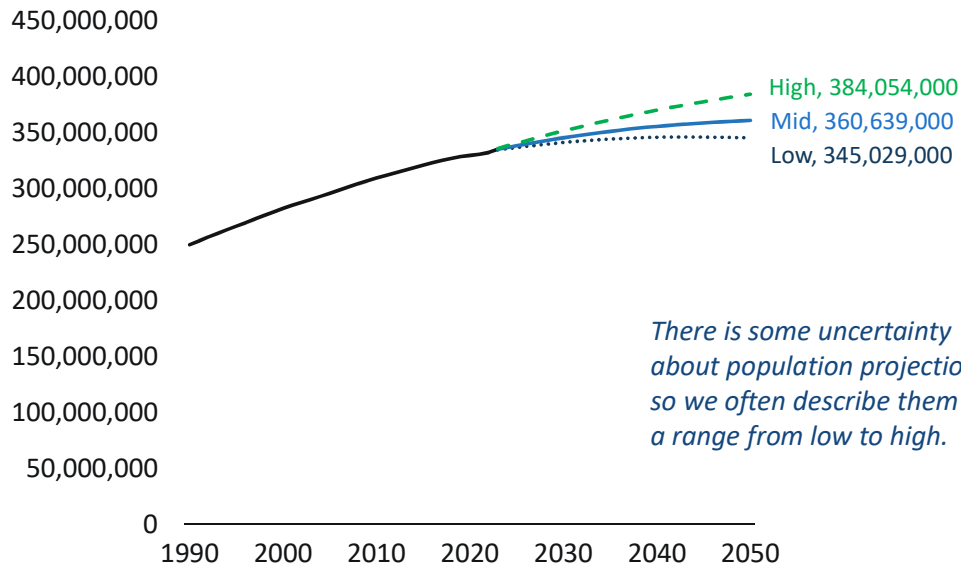
#3 There are more births than deaths in the U.S. right now

TRUE!

- There are projected to be more births than deaths in 2025
- But, as of 2038, deaths are projected to outnumber births
- If immigration slows from expected levels, this will happen in 2029
- Lower fertility and an aging population are factors

U.S. Population Growth Has Slowed And May Start to Shrink by 2050.

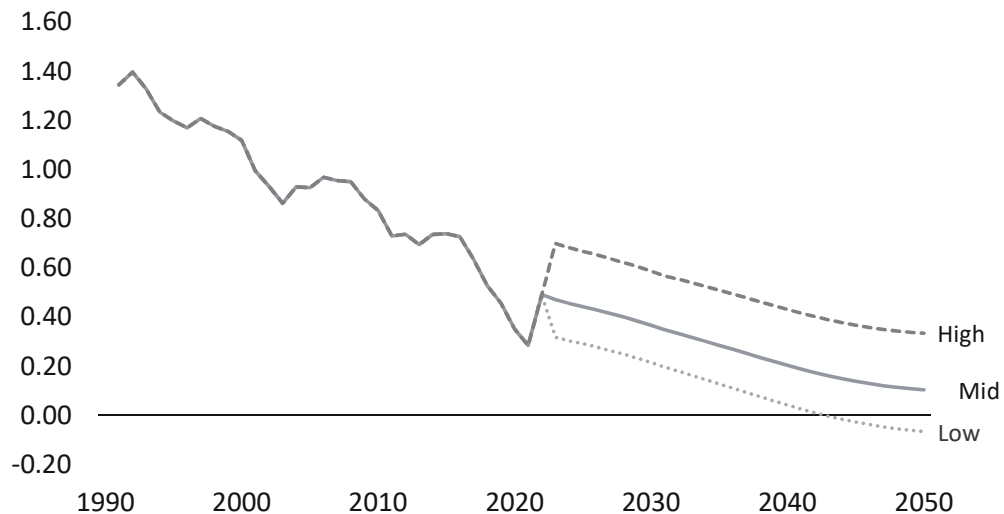
Total Population, 1990-2050



Sources: Kidsdata.org; U.S. Census Bureau

Only a “High Immigration” Scenario Holds Off Population Shrinking Until After 2080.

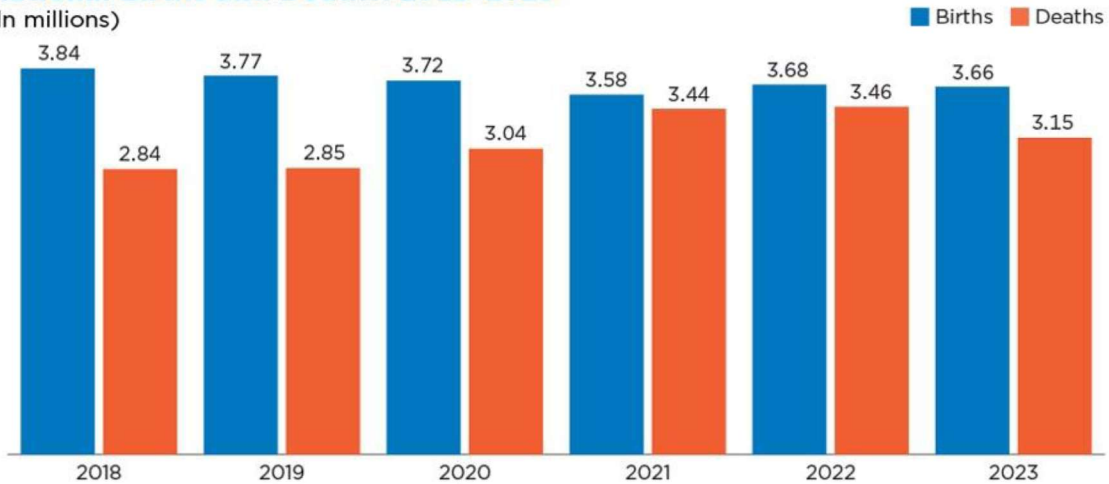
Percent Change in Population from Prior Year



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 1.
National Births and Deaths: 2018-2023

(In millions)

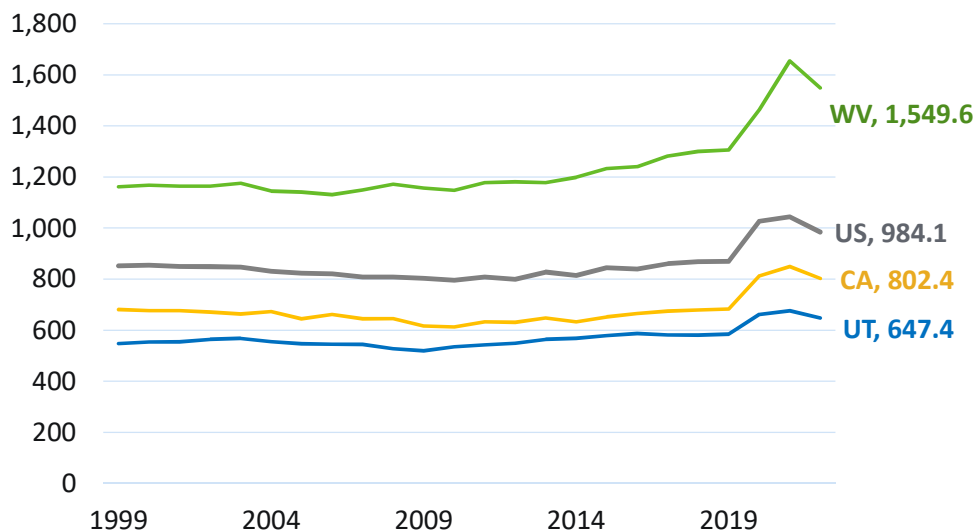


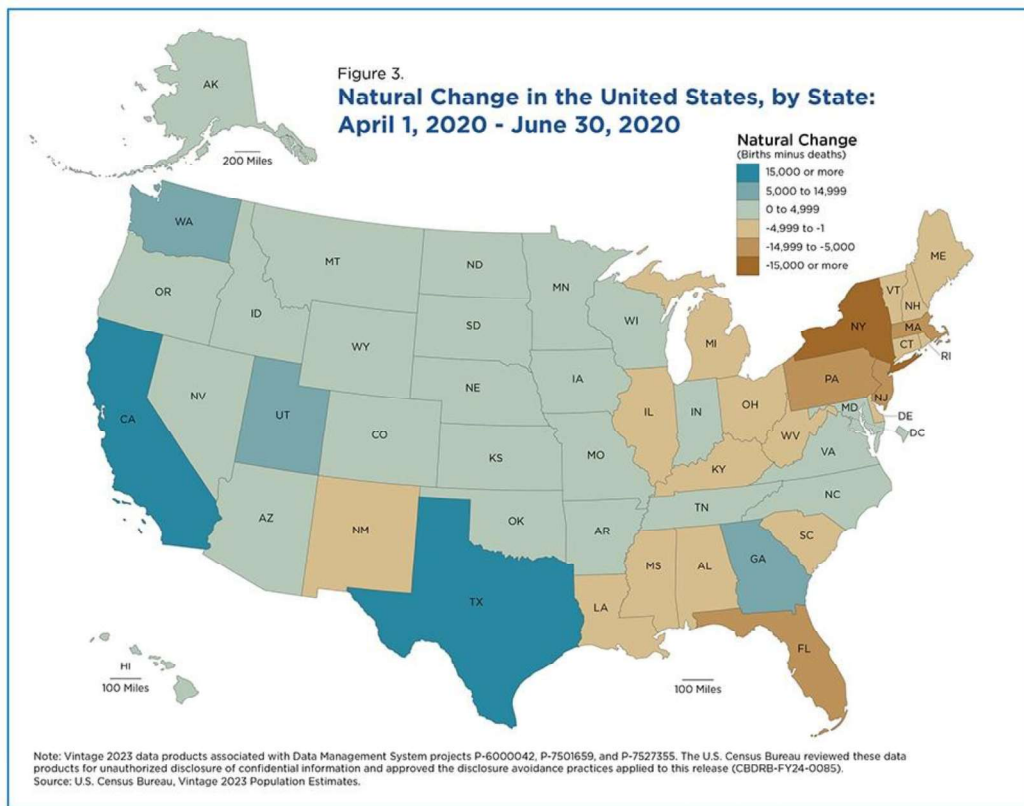
Note: Reference dates cover the period of July 1 of the prior year through June 30 of the stated year. Vintage 2023 data products are associated with Data Management System projects P-6000042, P-7501659, and P-7527355. The U.S. Census Bureau reviewed these data products for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied to this release (CBDRB-FY24-0085).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2021 Population Estimates (2018-2019) and Vintage 2023 Population Estimates.

Crude death rates were rising before the pandemic.

Deaths per 100,000 Population, 1999-2022

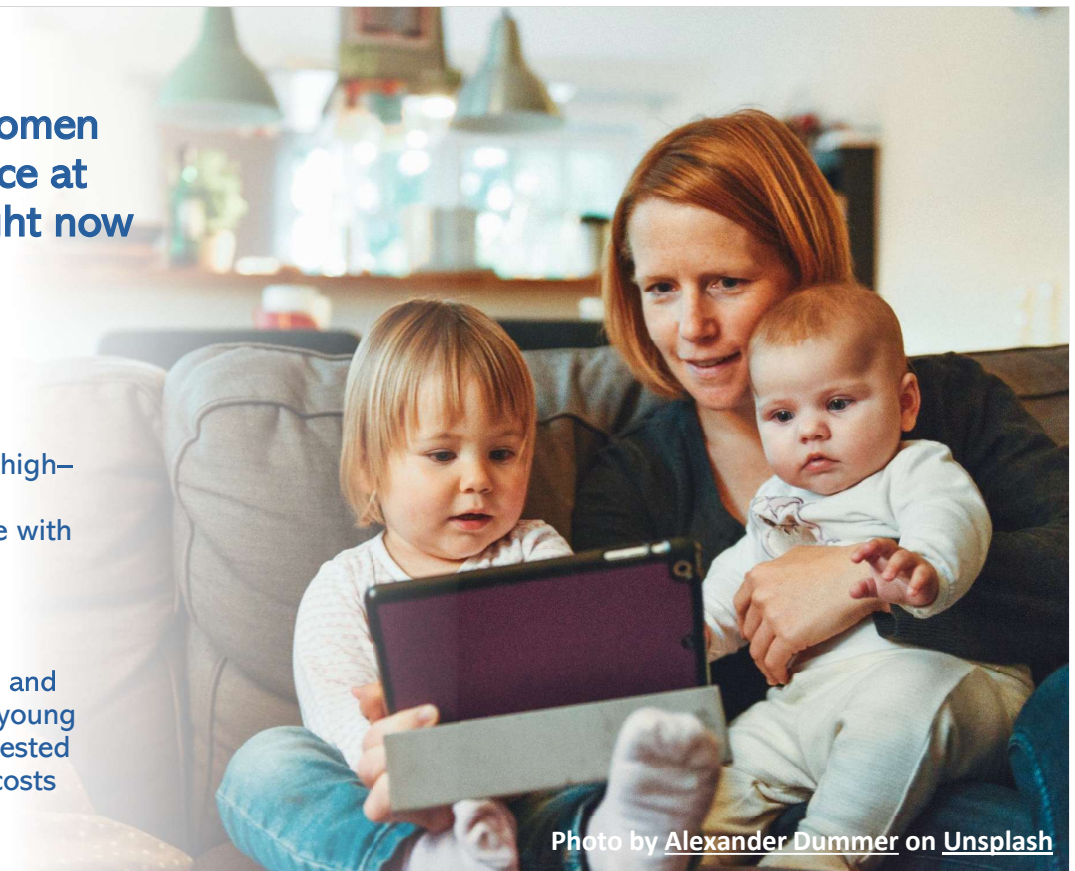




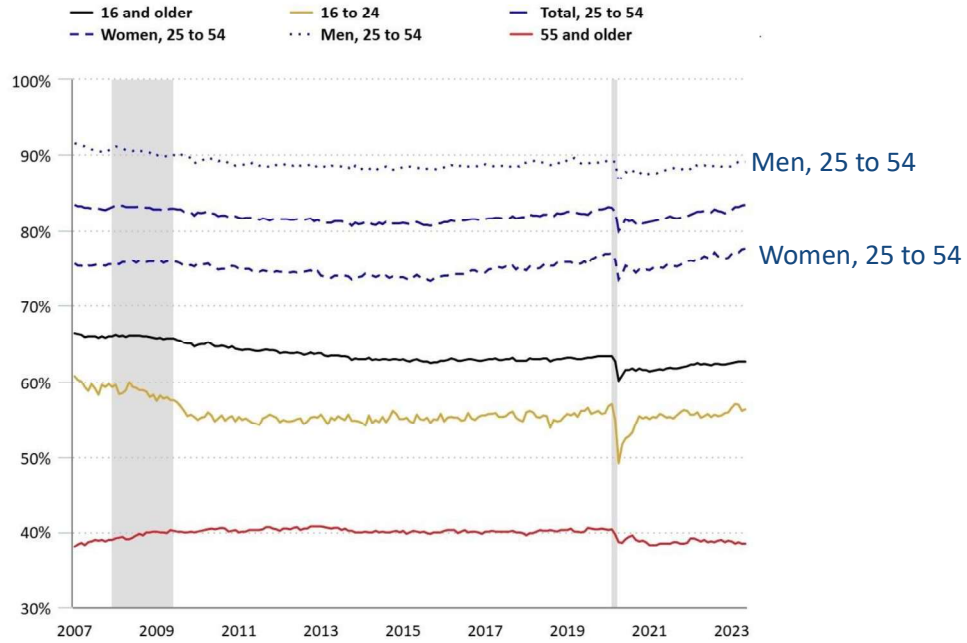
#4 Working-age women are in the labor force at record numbers right now

TRUE!

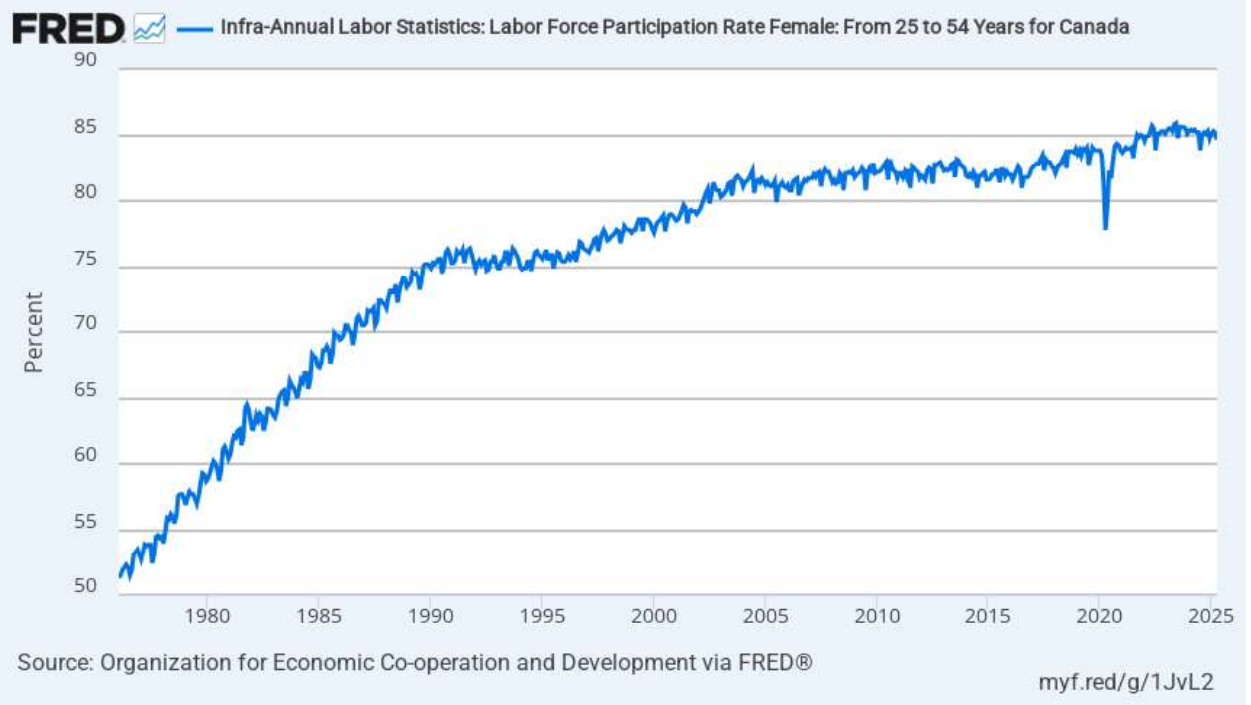
- Women's labor force participation is at a new high—83.4% aged 25-54 are working; lowest for those with young children
- But, we can do better
- Canada's rate is (84.6%) and notable for women with young children; government invested billions to cut childcare costs



Labor force participation rates by age and sex, seasonally adjusted, January 2007 to May 2023



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
 Shaded areas represent recessions as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research.
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



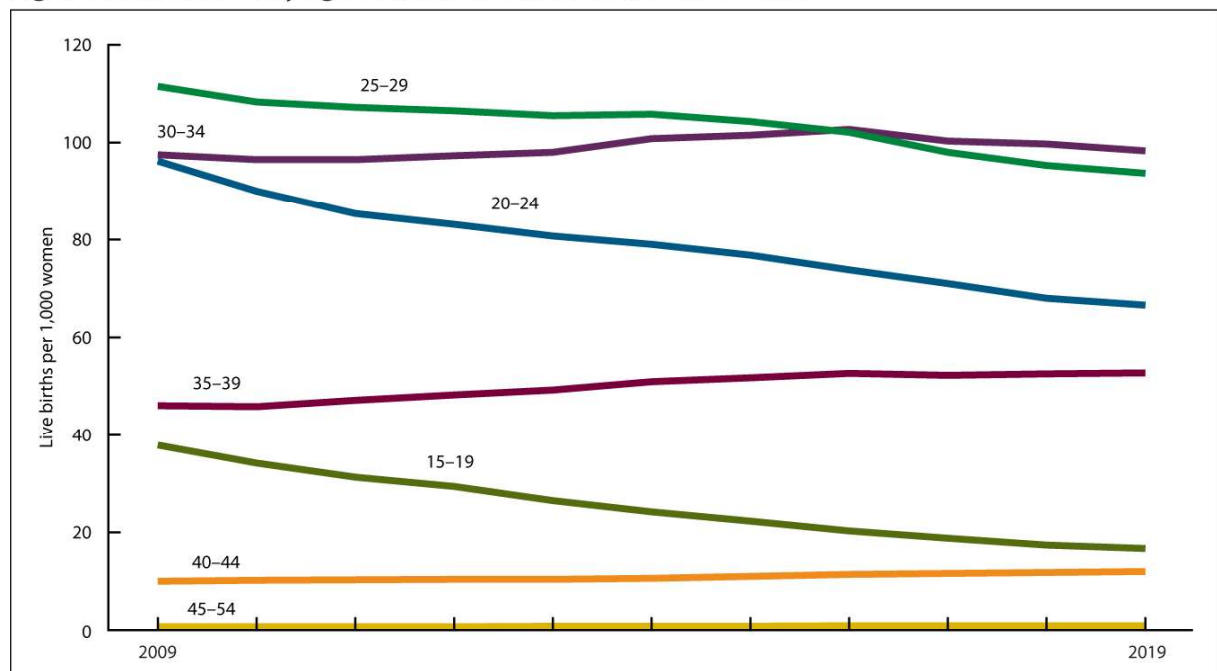
#5 Undergraduate enrollment is in decline

TRUE!

- Between fall 2012 and fall 2022, undergraduate enrollment decreased by 13 percent (from 17.7 million to 15.4 million students).
- Some suggestion that enrollment has rebounded following the pandemic.
- Fewer births; strong labor market; changing ideas about the value of a degree; pandemic lag are factors
- There are fewer under 18: 73.6 million children under 18 in 2014; 72.8 million in 2023
- Most recent high in 2007 and since, births have declined 17%, and the general fertility rate has declined 21% (by 2023)

Photo by Arlington Research on Unsplash

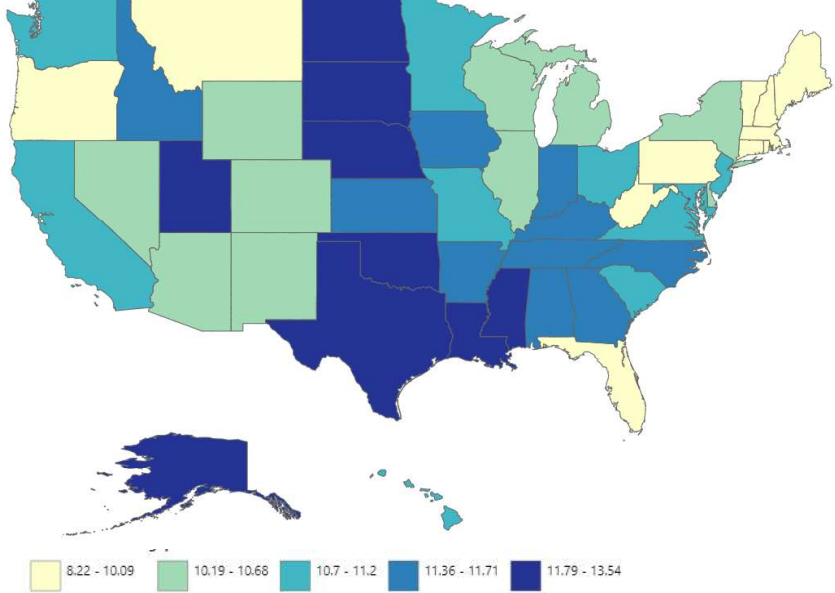
Figure 1. Birth rates, by age of mother: United States, 2009–2019



Source: National Center on Health Statistics, 2009-2019

Birth Rates Vary Widely by State

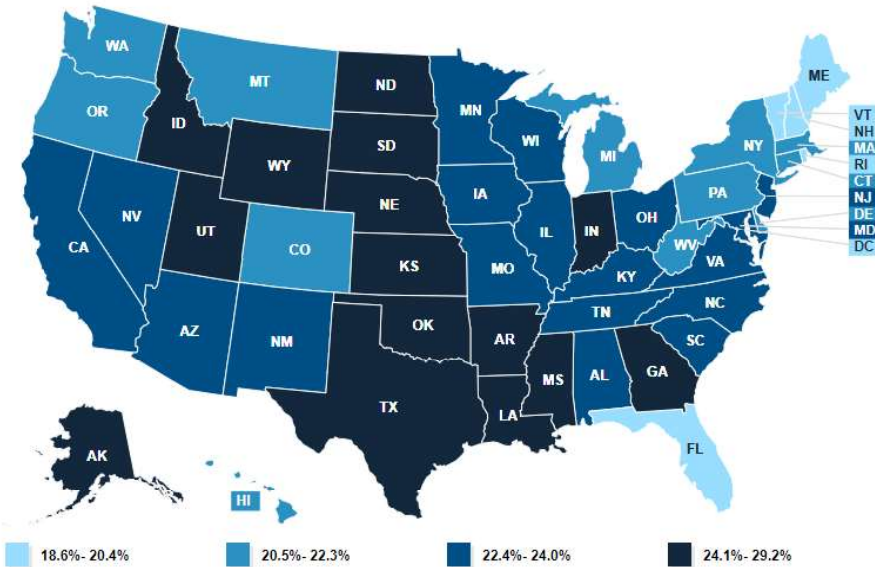
Births per 1,000 Population, by State, 2022



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Rates for 2021 and 2022 from reports "Births: Final Data for 2021" and "Births: Final Data for 2022."

Age Structure of Adult Population, Coupled With Birth Rates, Lead to Variation in Child Population by State.

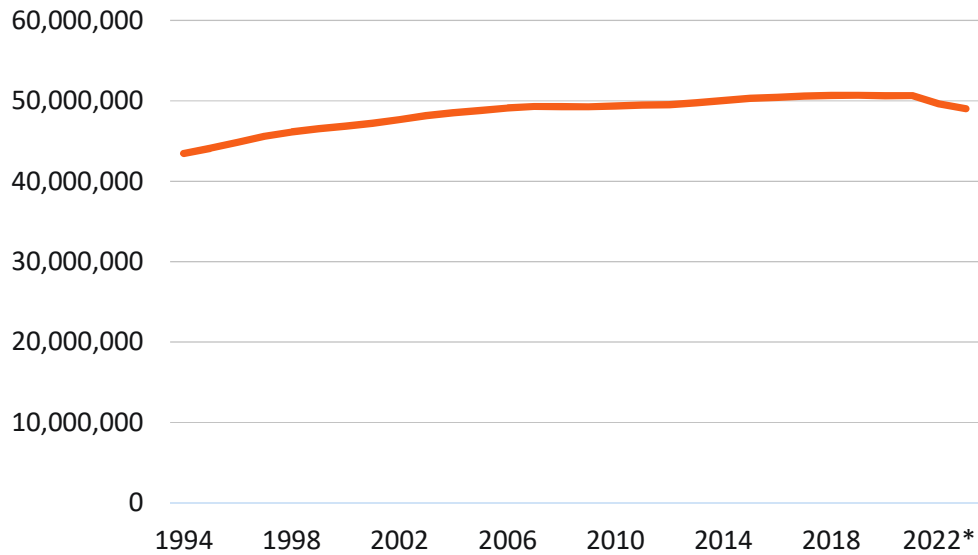
Share of the Population Ages 0-17, by State, 2022



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Public School Enrollment Has Been Declining.

U.S. Children in Public School, 1994-2023



Sources: KidsData; National Center for Education Statistics

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#6 Homes are so unaffordable that homeowners are more cost-burdened than renters now

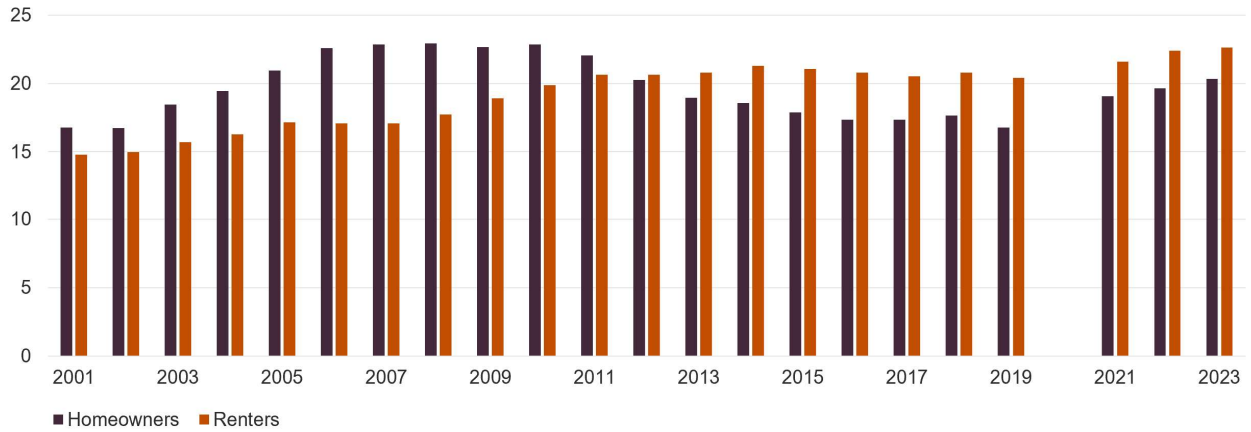
FALSE!

- Housing affordability hit a record low in August 2023 because of high housing prices and mortgage rates
- But, most homeowners had already locked in low mortgage rates; only affects people currently looking for a new home
- Nearly half (49%) of renter households were cost-burdened in 2023, spending more than 30% of their income on housing
- 18.8 million homeowners were spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs; insurance is especially on the rise

Photo by [Gustavo Zambelli](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Figure 1: The Number of Cost-Burdened Households Reached Another Record High in 2023

Cost-Burdened Households (Millions)



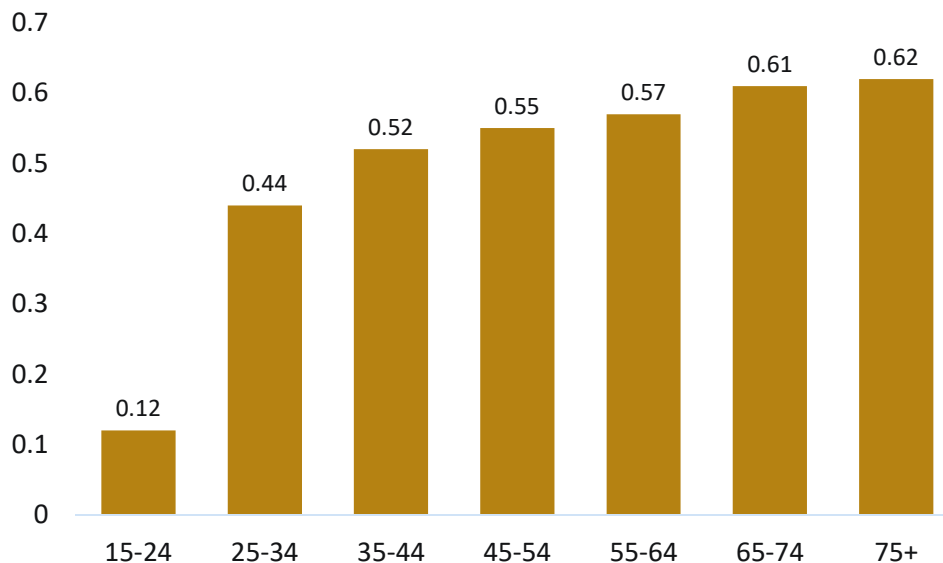
Notes: Cost-burdened households spend more than 30% of income on housing and utilities. Estimates for 2020 are omitted due to data collection issues experienced during the pandemic. Source: JCHS tabulations of US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

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Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University JCHS

Household Headship Rates Suggest We'll Need More Housing Per Person As Population Ages.

Ratio of Householders to Household Population, by Age, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

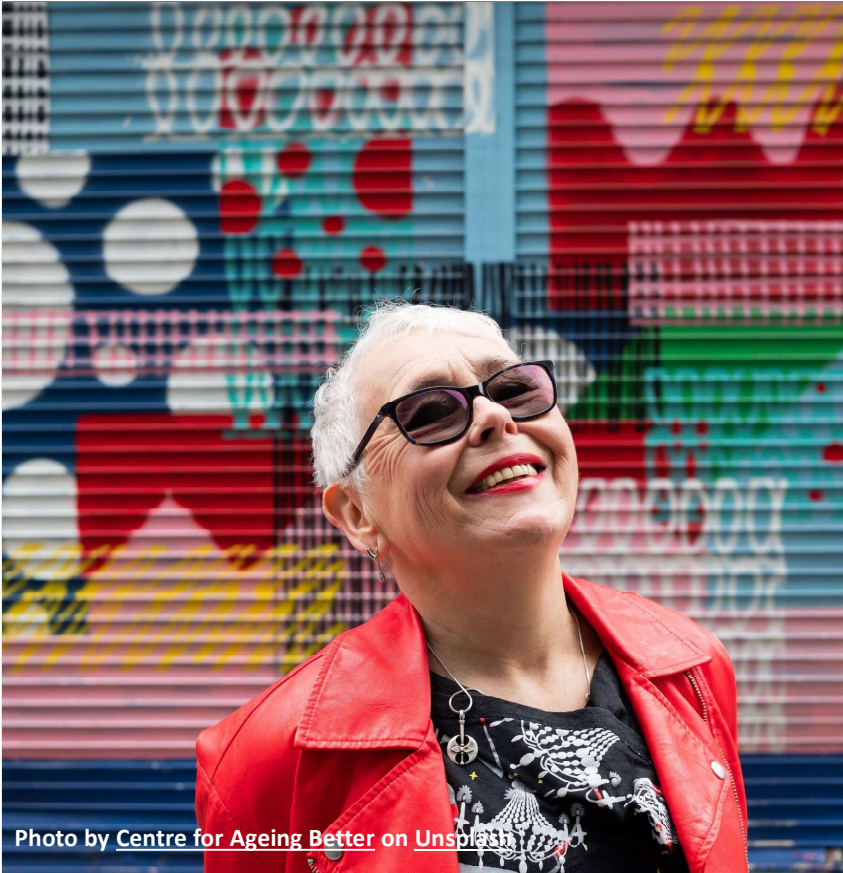


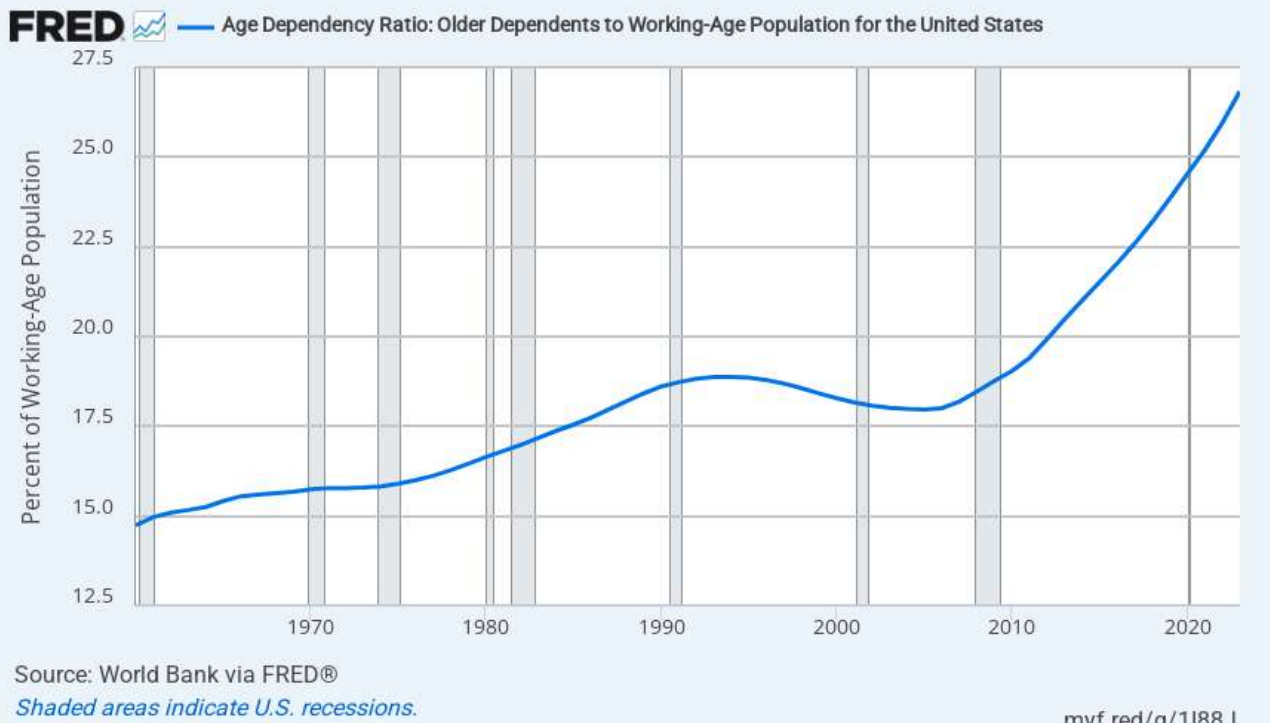
Photo by Centre for Ageing Better on Unsplash

#7 We are experiencing a gray tsunami of older people retiring right now

TRUE!

- Between 1980 and 2022, the median age of the population increased from 30.0 to 38.9
- One-third (17) of states in the country had a median age above 40 in 2022, with Maine (44.8) and New Hampshire (43.3) at the top of the list.
- The share of working-age people shrank to 64.9% (from peak of 67.3% in 2007)
- All Baby Boomers—born 1946 to 1964—can access retirement savings and most can claim Social Security
- 90% projected to stop working by 2030

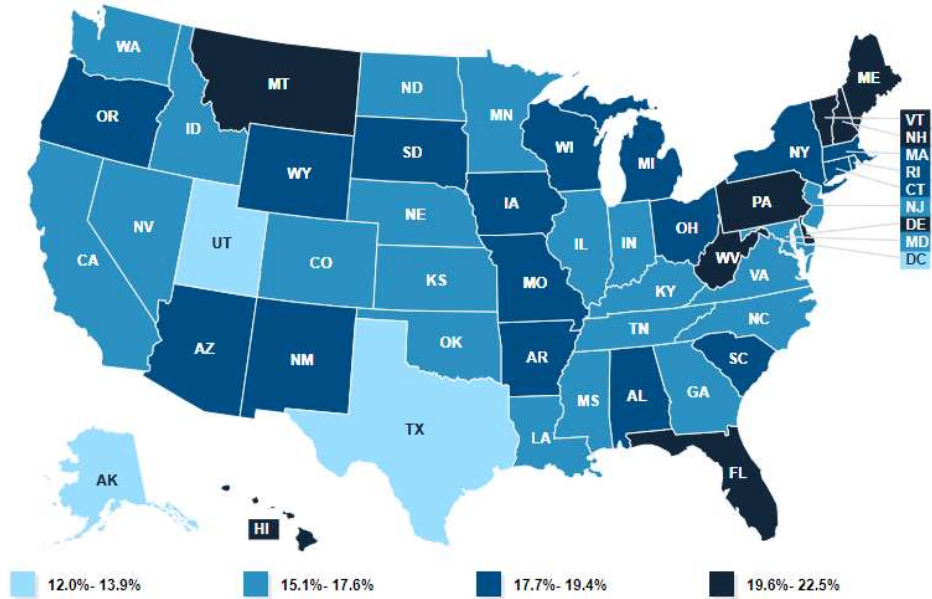
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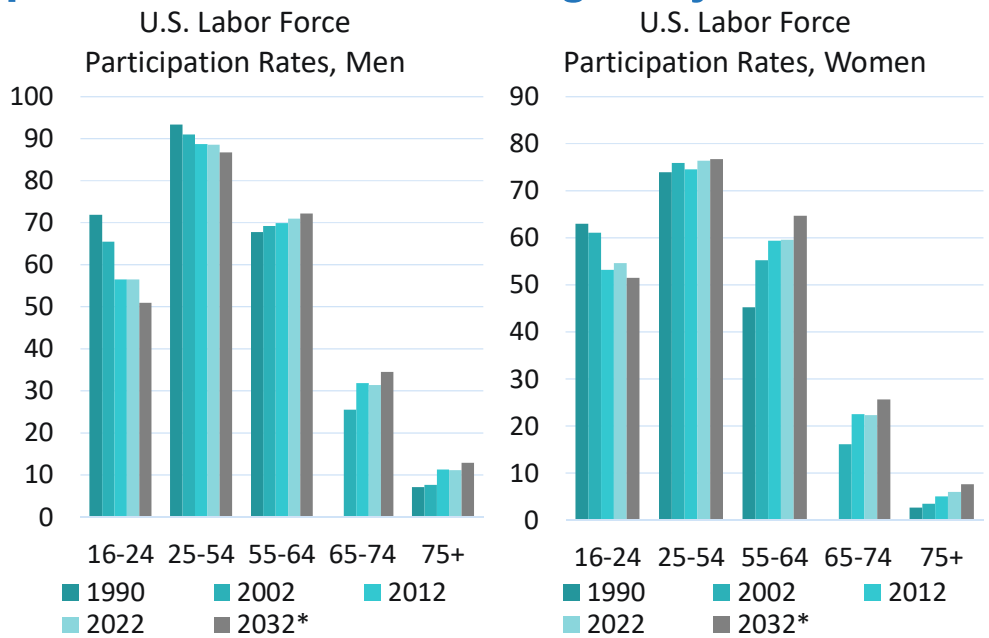
Older Adult Population Share Also Varies by State.

Share of the Population Ages 65 and Older, by State, 2022



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

U.S. BLS Shows Optimistic Increases in Labor Force Participation Rates at Older Ages by 2032.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

#8 Immigration is keeping the U.S. population from declining

TRUE!

- Between 2023 and 2024, the U.S. population increased by 1%
- 84% of the increase in the population between 2023 and 2024 was from net international migration
- Uncertainty about what 2024 to 2025 net international migration will be like this year



Net migration - United States

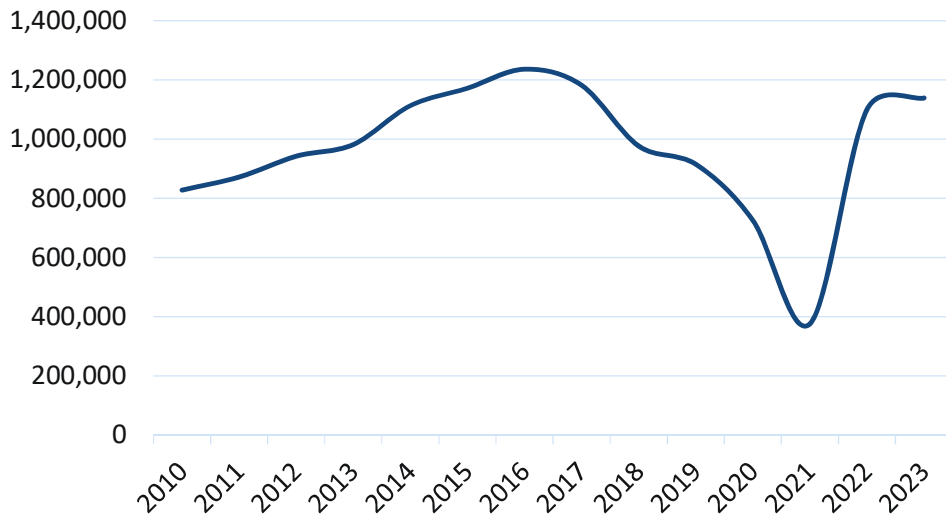
United Nations Population Division. World Population Prospects: 2024 Revision.

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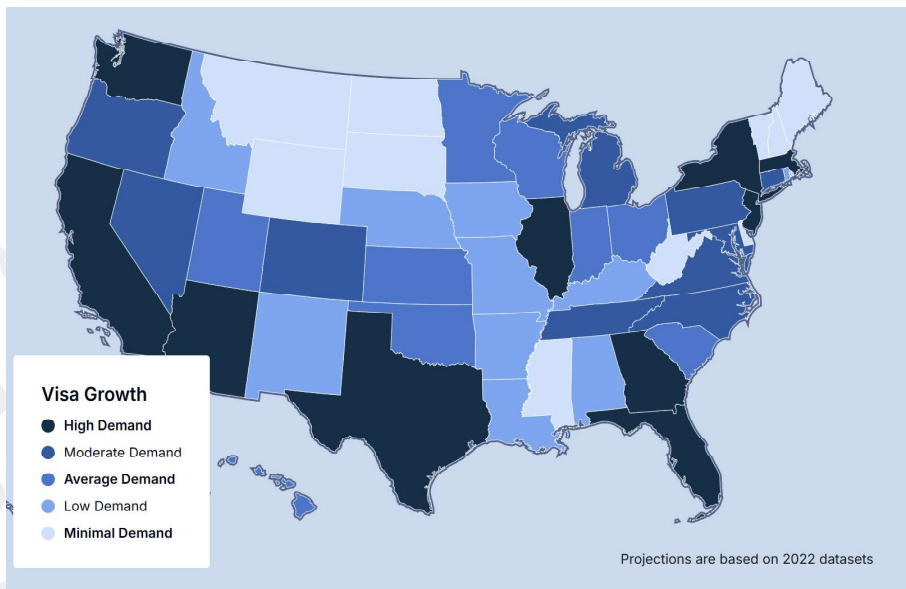


International Migration Slowed Starting in 2017, Plummeted During COVID-19 Restrictions, Rebounded Recently.

Net Number of Migrants, U.S, 2010-2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau



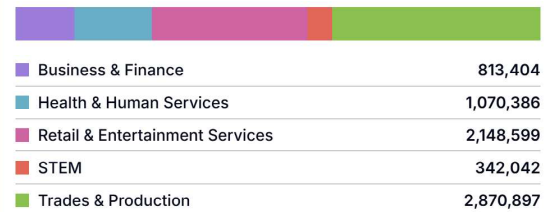
Visa Distribution by Occupation

Selected Region: National

[Download Data](#)

Total Projected Visa Demand: 7,245,328

Outlook Year: 2030



Focused Occupation Insights

Occupations	Job Growth	Visa Outlook	Direct Entry
Advertising, Marketing, Promotions, Public Relations, and Sales Managers	11%	16,608	●
Business Operations Specialists	10.5%	137,838	●



Photo by [Dominik Lange](#) on [Unsplash](#)

#9 There are plenty of care workers in the U.S. to help our older population

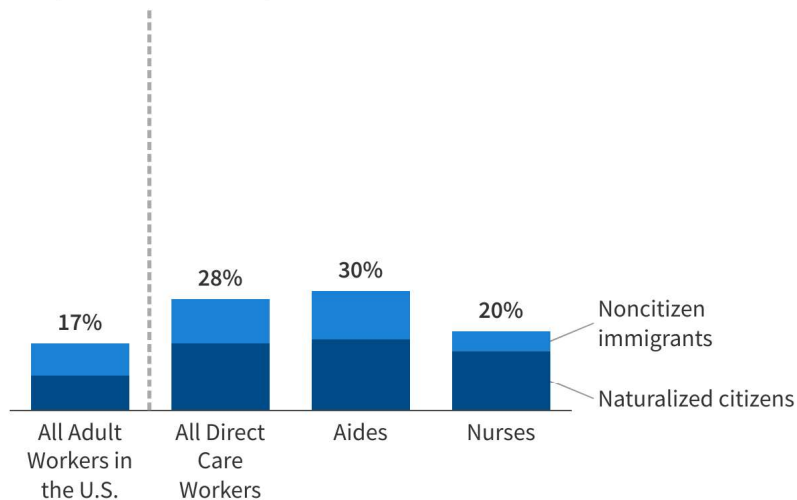
FALSE!

- We have a careworker crisis in the U.S.
- The careworker crisis is being felt not just in the U.S., but among our peer countries, too
- As the population ages, we will have more older people in need of care without a notable increase in care workers

Figure 1

Immigrants Make Up 28% of the Overall Direct Long-Term Care Workforce

Share of direct care workers providing LTC services who are immigrants, by occupation and citizenship status



Note: All adult workers include all individuals 18 and older who earned at least \$1,000 during the year. Direct care workers are a subset of all long-term care workers. Aides include home health aides, personal care aides, and nursing assistants. Nurses include licensed practical nurses and registered nurses.

Source: KFF analysis of American Community Survey, 2023



Photo by [luis arias](#) on [Unsplash](#)

#10 Low fertility can be solved through incentives

FALSE!

- Fertility is slowing globally – this is not only happening in the U.S.
- There is no single reason why fertility is declining – changes in preferences, availability of contraception, age of first birth increasing
- If policy incentives worked, then Korea and Japan would not have the lowest total fertility rates globally

Fertility rate, total (births per woman) - United States

(1) United Nations Population Division. World Population Prospects: 2024 Revision; (2) Statistical databases and publications from national statistical offices; (3) Eurostat: Demographic Statistics.

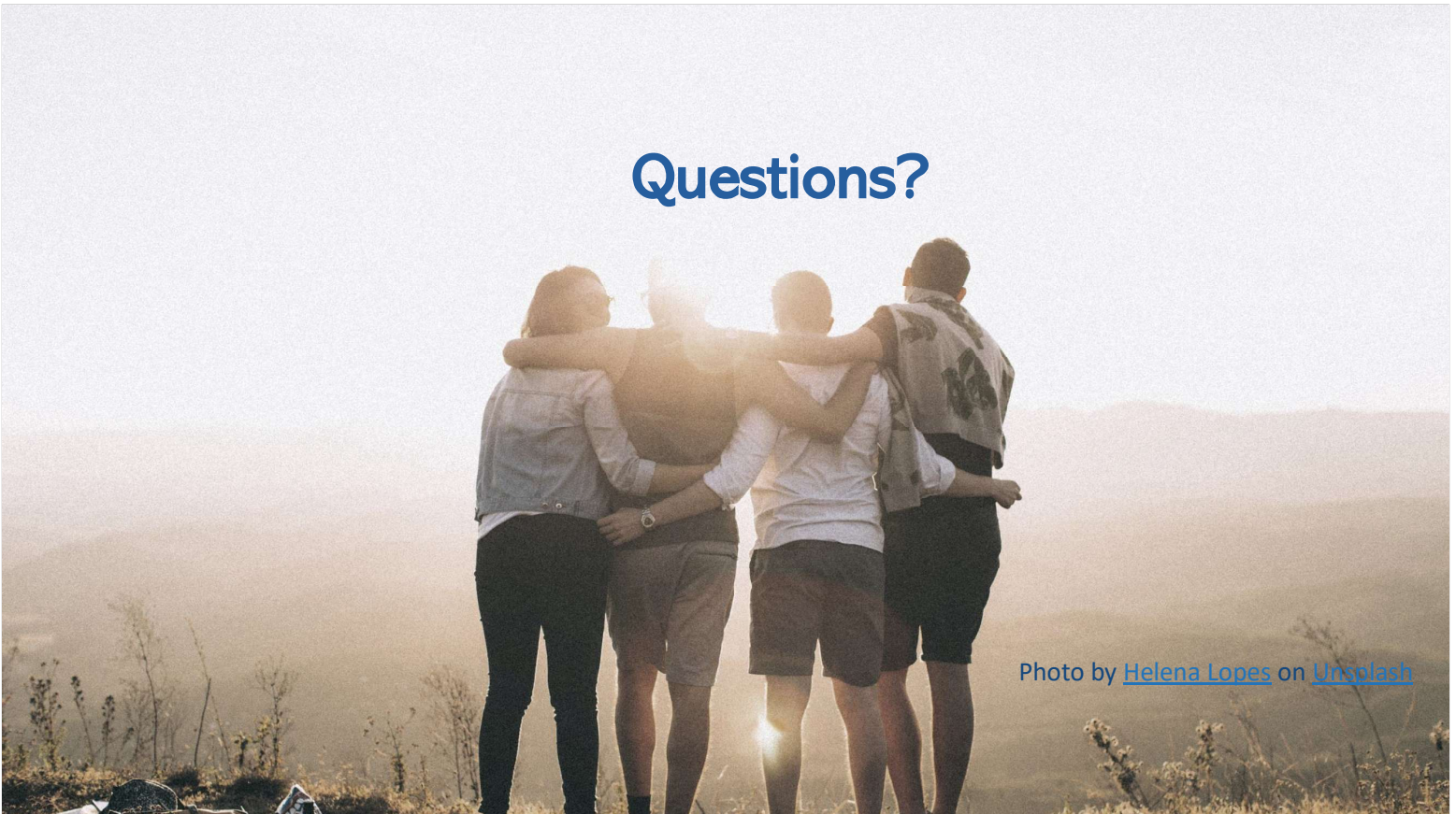
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What can we take away from this?

- The U.S. is getting older; deaths will soon surpass births in the U.S.
- Baby boomers are aging out of the labor force, future generations of workers are smaller
- Immigration keeps the U.S. population robust – but other countries are vying for immigrants, too, as many countries confront the same trends
- The future of the labor force, housing, school enrollment suggest trends, but could look differently because of policy
- Regardless – the future needs high-quality data -- all of the slides produced for this presentation relied upon investments in government data

Questions?





Thank you!

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