

# **Stabilizing Runaway U.S. Population Growth – Where are the Environmentalists?**

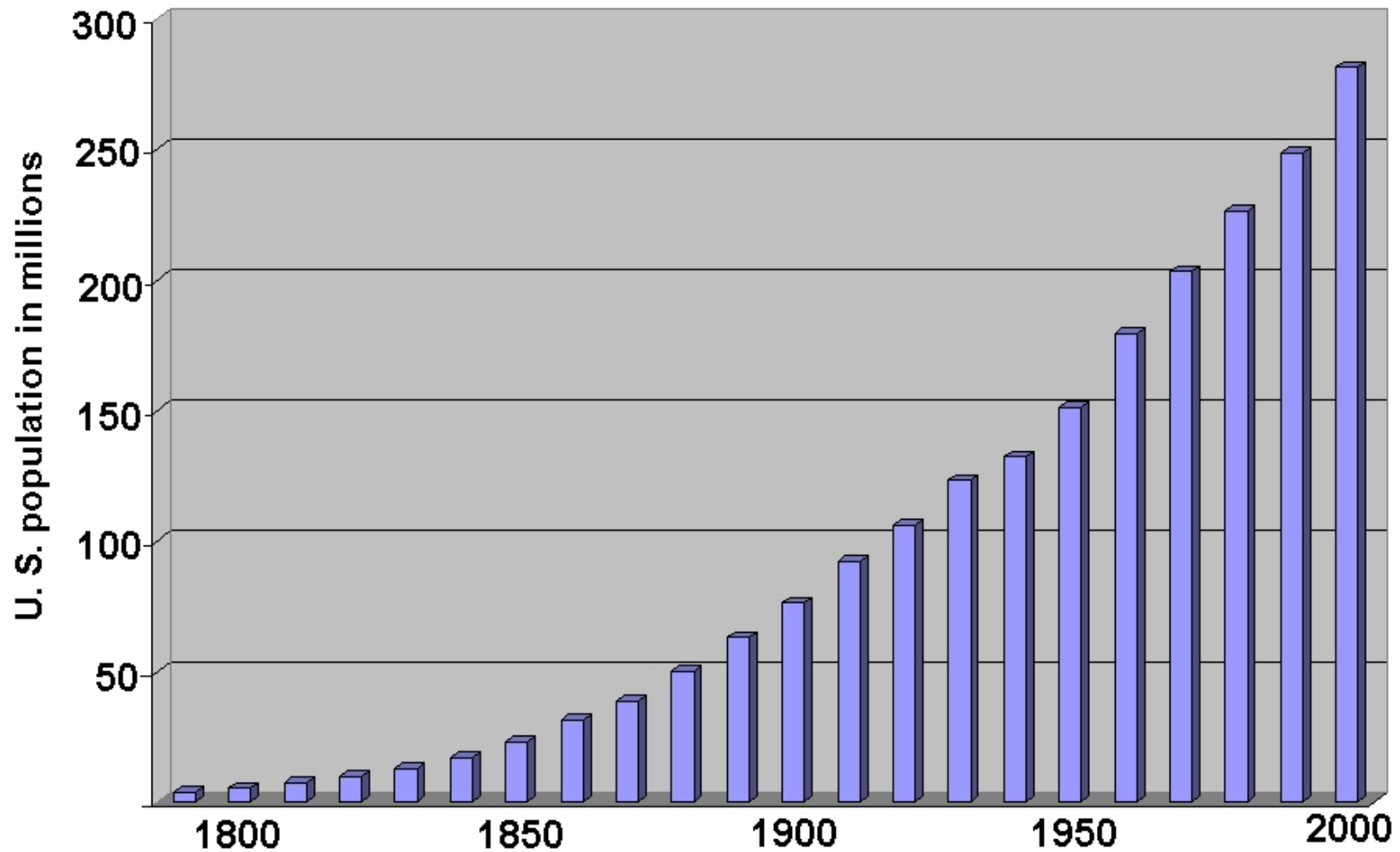
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Students for Environmental Awareness (SEA) Meeting**

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# U.S. Population Growth from 1790 to 2000

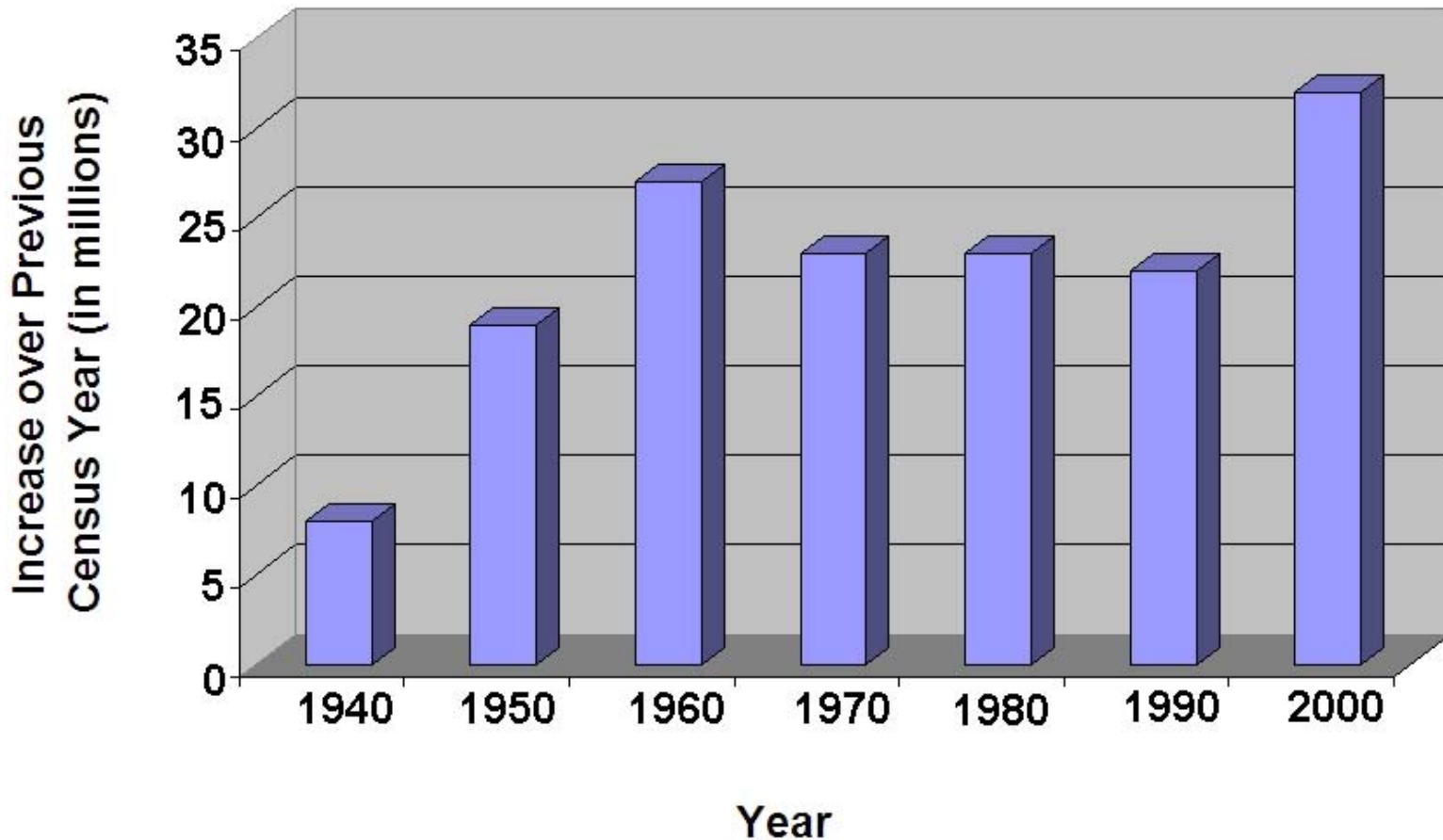
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# 1990-2000: the largest population increase in US History

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- Almost 33 million more people – and the largest percentage increase since the 60s – 13.2%



# Population Growth in the Southeastern United States

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- **No more jokes about New Jersey: Population of GA and NC will exceed NJ in the next census. (GA's % increase ~ Ethiopia)**

<u>2000 Census</u>	<u>1990 Pop.</u>	<u>2000 Pop.</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
New Jersey	7,730,188	8,414,350	8.9%
South Carolina	3,486,703	4,012,012	15.1%
Georgia	6,478,216	8,186,453	26.4%
North Carolina	6,628,637	8,049,313	21.4%
Florida	12,937,926	15,982,378	23.5%
USA	248,709,873	281,421,906	13.2%

# The Environment in the Upstate—A Unique Treasure

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# Population Increase, Sprawl, and Smart Growth

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## Is high-density "smart growth" the solution?

- "Smart growth" (i.e., putting more people on an acre) has been widely touted by politicians, some environmentalists and the media as the silver bullet that will solve growth-caused problems.
- But is smart growth good policy or just a marketing ploy? At its core, smart growth is pro-growth while maintaining some open space. It recommends increased public transit, green zones around cities and infill of underused urban space. Ironically, even as Americans purchase ever more spacious suburban homes, smart-growth proponents pretend that they will soon cheerfully embrace much denser housing!
- Unfortunately, the media's mantra that "smart growth" will solve our sprawl problems is only half of the answer. Let's look at the evidence:

# Population Increase, Sprawl, and Smart Growth

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- Sprawl is caused by two factors: growth in per capita land consumption (per capita sprawl) and population growth.
- When the 100 largest Urbanized Areas are considered, almost half of all sprawl can be attributed to population growth.

<u>Urbanized Area</u>	<u>Sprawl (sq. mi.)</u>	<u>Sprawl due to Pop. Growth</u>
1. Atlanta	702	64%
2. Houston	639	70%
3. NYC-NJ	541	0%
4. Washington DC	450	47%
<b>Greenville SC</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>USA</b>		<b>49.7%</b>

# Pop. Increase, Sprawl, and Smart Growth: The Future

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- We can look to the most densely populated parts of the country to see how effective smart growth will be in the long run
- In the end, even the smartest growth cannot hold back sprawl

<u>Urbanized Areas that Stopped Sprawl</u>	<u>% Growth in Acres/person</u>	<u>% Growth in Land Area</u>	<u>Population Growth</u>
Ft Lauderdale	-24%	54%	102%
Las Vegas	-35%	91%	195%
Phoenix	-18%	91%	132%
Riverside, CA	-26%	49%	100%
Portland, OR*	2.4%	45%	42%
<b>Greenville SC</b>	32.2%	109%	58%

# Pop. Increase, Sprawl, and Smart Growth: The Impact

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- Feb 21, 2001: A new National Wildlife Federation White Paper finds for the first time on the basis of quantified research that sprawl is the leading cause of species imperilment in California.
- Nov 28, 2001: Sprawling cities and increasing populations are the largest threats to the forests of the South, according to a long-awaited federal report (Forest Service Study). The two-year study was instigated in part because of concerns about growing numbers of chip mills that chew up large quantities of trees.
- University of Colorado professor emeritus Albert Bartlett may have put it best: smart growth without population stabilization is like a first-class ticket on the Titanic.
- **U.S. population must be stabilized soon if we hope to save America's environment.**

# **U.S. Population Growth—Where are the Environmentalists?**

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**Around 1970, U.S. population and environmental issues were closely linked. For example**

- Organizers of the first Earth Day in 1970 note that U.S. population growth was a central theme.
- In 1969, the Sierra Club urged “the people of the United States...to achieve a stable population no later than the year 1990.”
- A large coalition of environmental groups in 1970 endorsed a resolution that “population growth is directly involved in the pollution and degradation of our environment...”
- Discussions of U.S. population problems heavily influenced the news media and were featured regularly in newspapers, magazines, and even on the “Johnny Carson Show.”

# U.S. Population Growth—Where are the Environmentalists?

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- Most of that interest disappeared by 1998, however—even though the U.S. population is booming like never before!
- “As that [the environmental] movement approaches its fourth decade, perhaps the most striking change is the virtual abandonment by national environmental groups of U.S. population stabilization as an actively-pursued goal.” – Roy Beck, Director of NumbersUSA.com
- “The (Sierra) Club has developed a deafening silence on population – global and domestic. Years 2000 and 2001 of *Sierra* magazine contain no articles featuring population growth, global or domestic. The largest ever one-decade increase in USA population—33 million in the 1990's—was never mentioned. We should provide members with much more information about overpopulation and what they can do about it.” – Ben Zuckerman, *Petition* Candidate for Sierra Club’s Board of Directors
- What’s going on here?

# **The Rapid U.S. Population Growth—What's Causing It?**

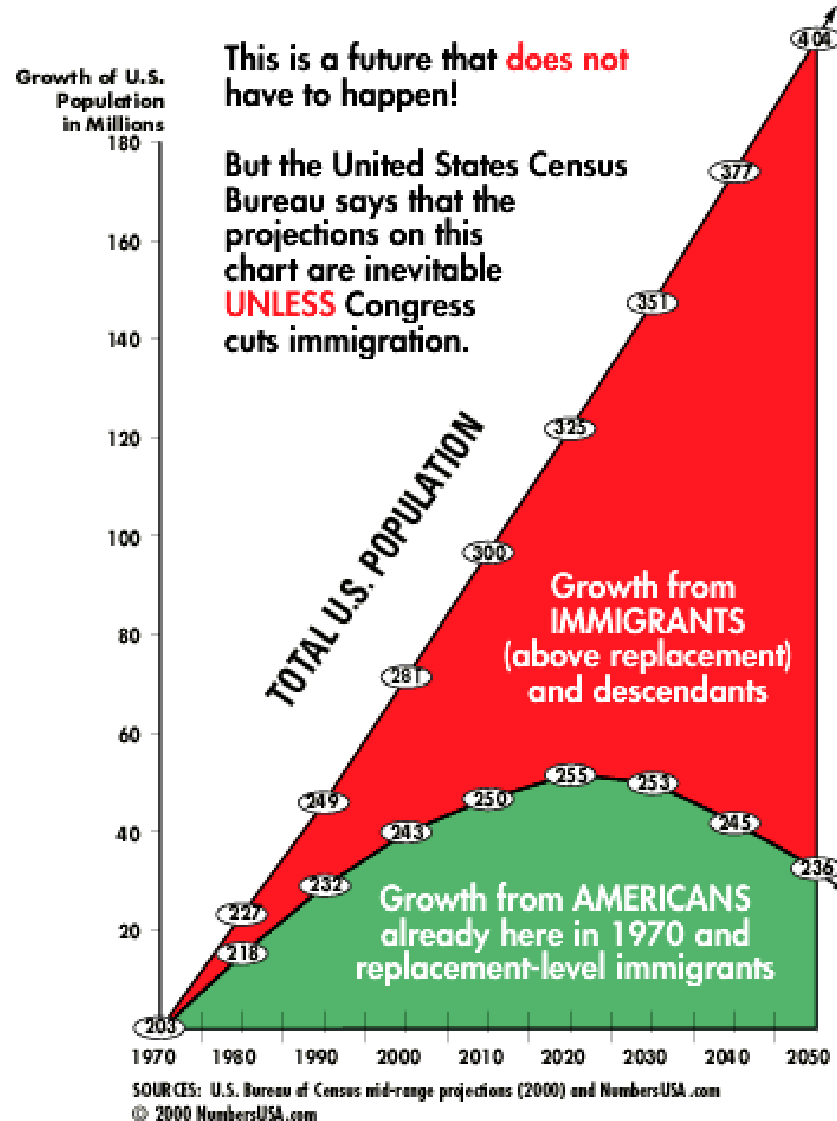
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- **What is causing the new wave of rapid U.S. population growth?**
  - (a) **Dramatic cuts in family planning funding?**
  - (b) **Americans are having too many kids (the boomer boomer echo)?**
  - (c) **High rates of immigration?**
  - (d) **Evil scientists are cloning too many people?**

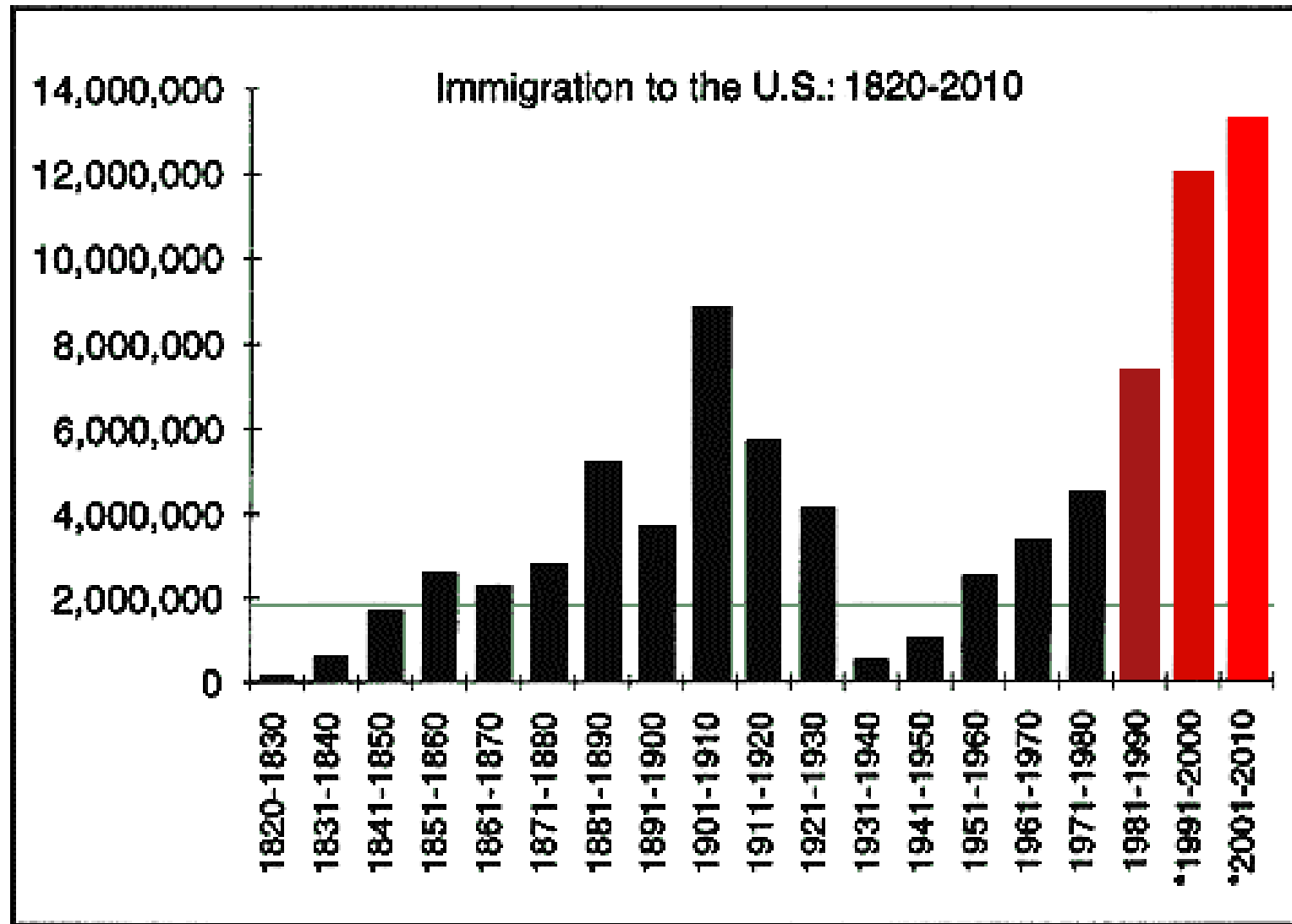
# U.S. Population Growth – Now Driven by Overimmigration

90% of population growth in this century will be due to post-1970 immigration

In your 20s?  
Immigration will at least double the U.S. population in your lifetime.



# Immigration has *not* always been at such high levels



# U.S. Census Bureau projections for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

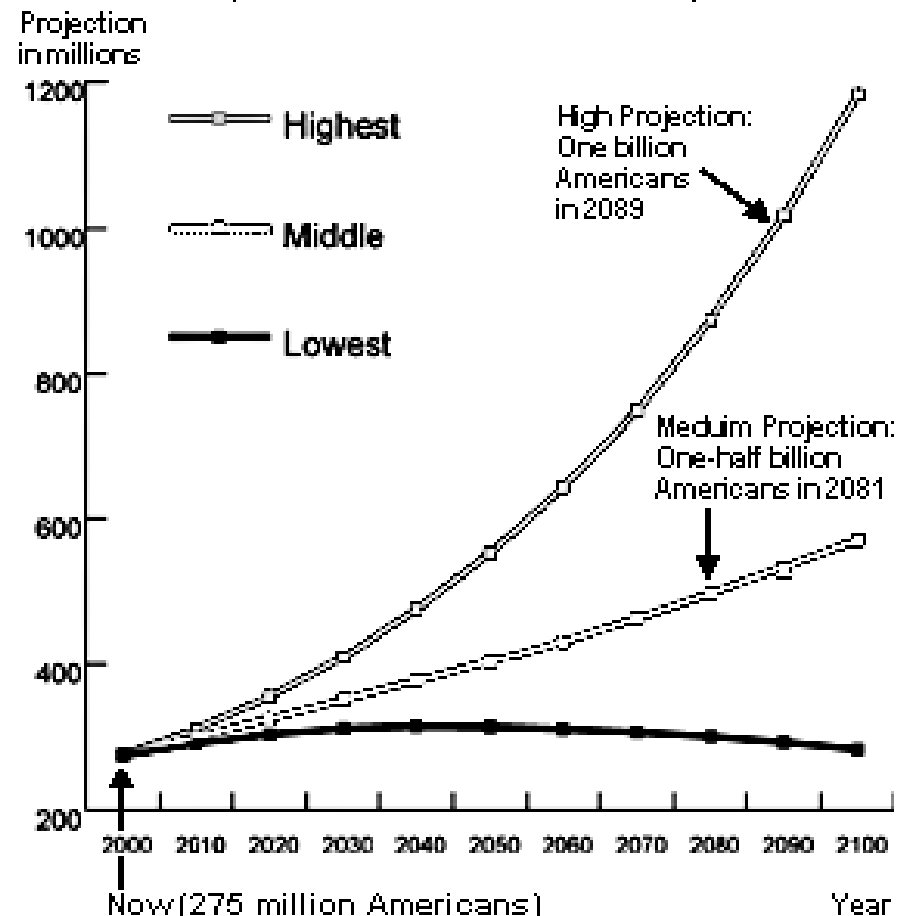
The currently unsustainable rates of immigration will put us on the high projection

A billion people by the turn of the century is possible

Sustainable rates of immigration could put us on the low projection

## Census Projections over One Century

(U.S. Census Bureau Numbers)



# **First steps in developing a sustainable immigration policy**

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- **No amnesties for illegal aliens.** President Clinton's former INS Commissioner estimates that the 245i amnesty that Bush and the Democratic leadership are pushing will result in 27 million new residents of the U.S. 25% of all legal immigration slots are now being taken by those who came here illegally.
- **Limit chain migration to immediate spouses and minor children.** Annual immigration has tripled since chain migration became the central feature of U.S. policy in the mid 1960s, and has led to additional millions consigned to visa waiting lists. The Safer Bill (HR 5013) is a start. It would eliminate some of the categories of chain migration, for example, remove adult siblings and adult children of U.S. citizens, and adult unmarried children of legal permanent residents.
- **Interior enforcement of immigration laws.** There has been none since President Bush Sr. This would have dramatic effect.

# Mass Immigration, the Environment, and Congress

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- **Most environmental scorecards for Congress are distortions of the truth, as they don't include immigration votes.**
- **Alan Kuper's CUSP [www.uscongress-enviroscore.org](http://www.uscongress-enviroscore.org) Website rates all of Congress's votes on U.S. overpopulation:**
  - **Hollings (D-SC) has one of the highest CUSP scores (83)**
  - **Spratt (D-SC) rates "0" on immigr.**
  - **Thurmond (R-SC) needs to retire.**
  - **DeMint (R-SC) rates "100" on immigr.**
  - **Tancredo (R- CO) has formed Immigration Reform Caucus**
  - **Most Congress(wo)men have mixed records.**
- **Accurate reporting of representatives' records could help change our immigration laws, as many proudly wear their environmental badges.**

# The Ethics of U.S. Immigration Policy

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- **Overimmigration is hurting virtually all Americans—no matter what race, educational level, creed, lifestyle and political persuasion.**
- **Overimmigration is being driven by two groups: Republicans in search of cheap labor (to drive wages down) and Democrats in search of cheap votes (recent immigrants tend to vote Democratic).**
- **And this is happening in spite of the fact that every single poll taken on the immigration issue indicates that a majority of Americans favoring significant reductions in both legal and legal immigration.**

# Is Overimmigration in the U.S. Morally Defensible?

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- **In closing, let me speak on behalf of three multitudinous, but “voiceless” groups in America who are harmed by mass immigration:**
    1. **America’s poor.** All studies show that today’s immigration policy negatively impacts the economic well-being and educational opportunities of the poorest Americans.
    2. **Indigenous non-human species.** Nature Conservancy’s new book shows a high correlation between U.S. endangered species and area with rapid, immigration-driven population growth. Massive, destructive sprawl in the SW and FL is *not* due to poor urban planning, but rapid population growth.
    3. **People and creatures yet unborn.** Current immigration policies are propelling the US into the same bad situation that China now faces.
- adopted from article by Prof. Ben Zuckerman, recently elected to Sierra Club BoD**

# Is Overimmigration in the U.S. Morally Defensible?

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## Counterarguments

- Immigration is a compassionate way of helping those in the 3<sup>rd</sup> world; it would be selfish to limit immigration
- Rebuttal: showed “marble scenario” from <NumbersUSA.com> “Immigration by the Numbers” tape

# Acknowledgments

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- Alan Kuper at Comprehensive US Population Stabilization (CUSP)
- Sierrans for US Population Stabilization ([www.susps.org](http://www.susps.org))
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- Jim Staudenraus at [www.fairus.org](http://www.fairus.org)
- Teela Roche