

# Toward Negative Population Growth: Cutting Legal Immigration by Four-Fifths

An NPG Position Paper

By David Simcox

## *Executive Summary*

*Mass immigration, whether through established or extra-legal channels, has by default become the nation's de facto population policy. Net immigration plus births to immigrants account for about 2.1 million new residents, more than 60 percent of America's population growth of over 3 million each year. While Washington debates the immigrants' skills, status and provenance, their environmental impact is the same: they and their children become part of the population base that intensifies the nation's depletion of resources and environmental stress.*

*Washington has from time to time looked at the environmental effects of immigration in hearings, two special immigration commissions, and White House studies. But leaders have given them no weight in their ultimate immigration choices. In the first half of 2006 Congress and the President were considering so-called reforms legislation that would at least double annual immigration but, typically, the accompanying study of environmental consequences would come only after enactment.*

*Current immigration numbers are wildly beyond the levels needed to reach population stability leading to a slow reduction of population to an environmentally sustainable size. NPG believes that these goals can only be met if today's illegal immigration of half a million yearly is reduced to near zero, and legal immigration is reduced by four-fifths — to about 200,000 yearly. Such reductions cannot be realized without deep cuts in family chain migration. Importation of family members, both immediate and more distant, now accounts for at least three quarters of all legal entries. The proposed 200,000 ceiling slots would satisfy core national interests in rare and essential skills and in humanitarian relief.*

*After a five-year transition period away from the current family-centered system, 200,000 immigrants a year thereafter would be allocated among work and business needs (74.5 percent), humanitarian purposes (20 percent), and special immigrants (5.5 percent). Other major sources of unplanned immigration must be curtailed, such as mass asylum and refugee emergencies stemming from natural or foreign policy disasters, and must be averted with bolder action to find alternatives to resettlement in the U.S. Automatic citizenship for children of illegal aliens born in U.S. territory (now over 300,000 yearly) would be ended.*

*The U.S. has accepted over 90 million immigrants since 1820. Without guilt, the nation can now be generous to the world in new ways: by slowing its profligate consumption and waste dumping, by remaining a major food exporter, and by curbing its intense competition for world energy supplies.*

Immigration in all its many forms has in the last two decades become the main driver of America's excessive population growth. Unlike fertility and mortality, immigration is the demographic process most responsive to policy changes and to regulation.

Newly-arriving immigrants of all categories — legal, quasi-legal and illegal — now add at least 1.1 million, or one-third, to yearly national population growth of 3.3 million yearly. The net figure is based on estimated total immigration of 1.6 million yearly minus total estimated deaths and emigration of the foreign born at about 500,000 yearly.<sup>1</sup> Net illegal immigration now accounts for a little more than a third of annual permanent immigration — about 400,000 a year. Net legal and long-term temporary (quasi-legal or Limited Duration) immigration accounts for a net of about 700,000 per year.

In addition to the newcomers, nearly a million children are born to immigrants in the U.S. each year — about 25 percent of all U.S. births. Births to illegal immigrants, conferring immediate U.S. citizenship, are more than a third of all immigrant births. For many immigrant women, resettlement in the U.S. now raises their fertility above that of their counterparts back home.<sup>2</sup> Net new arrivals of immigrants and births together account for fully 61 percent of population growth. The total foreign-born population reached 35 million in 2005, or 11.8 percent of total population.

Refugee, asylee and other humanitarian admissions also swelled rapidly in the 1980s because of perceived humanitarian emergencies in war-torn Vietnam and Castro's Cuba and the 1990s lavish admissions of allegedly "temporary" humanitarian entrants. Though targeted at 50,000 a year in the 1980 Refugee Act, refugee, asylee and other humanitarian admissions averaged 114,000 a year from 1981 to 2000. All refugee admissions to the U.S. since the end of World War II until 2000 have totaled 3.49 million; 2.1 million of these (62 percent) have occurred since 1980 — not counting about 430,000 granted "temporary" protection since 1990.

These conservative estimates of immigration are a severe warning for America's overstressed environment. Growth from immigration is pushing any

prospect of population stability into the far future, distancing the prospect of movement toward a smaller, environmentally sustainable population. Immigration in its many forms and disguises has developed an awesome momentum that only the most bold and demanding measures can arrest.

## Population Policy & Mass Immigration

Washington's policy for the last 25 years has been described as "benign neglect" toward immigration, and, particularly in the case of legal immigration, the use of restrictionist rhetoric to cloak what in fact have been expansionist measures.<sup>3</sup> Annual illegal immigration has more than doubled since the 1970's with Washington's acquiescence.

Even when under public pressure, Congress in 1986 enacted the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). Right up to September 11, 2001 it neglected to implement any truly effective systems to control the border, to identify and block the hiring of illegal aliens, and to end the abuse of temporary visitors' visas to settle and work.

Those features of IRCA that expanded admissions through amnesties, however, were zealously carried out. Some 5 million illegal aliens have been legalized by general and special amnesties since 1986. Congress in the 1990 Immigration Act further expanded overall legal immigration, justifying it as opening the "front door" of legal immigration after having supposedly "closed the back door of illegal immigration" in the 1986 act. The 1990 act also created an open-ended "temporary protected status" used so far by over 400,000 persons from troubled areas that could not qualify as refugees. Most are still here.

To appease Americans hoping for reduced immigration, the legislators shamelessly implied that the 1990 act's Orwellian-sounding "pierceable ceiling," under which overall family immigration continued to grow rapidly, was somehow restrictive. To keep pace with the generous increases for family immigration, the 1990 act raised employment-based immigration from 54,000 to 140,000. At the same time, Congress further opened the door to the ostensibly "temporary" entry of hundreds of thousands of skilled

workers and their dependents for extended or often unlimited stays.

Has Washington seriously considered the effects on population growth in the three decades of prodigious increases in immigration? Yes, but perfunctorily and usually as a sop to its conservationist constituencies. If anything national leaders and opinion formers have shown more concern over *too little* population growth, not too much, as the post-baby boom fertility of American women fell below replacement level. Always permeating the immigration debate is the conventional American wisdom that population growth equates to prosperity and national dynamism.

Most persuasive on population issues to policy makers and opinion formers during the past three decades have been pro-populationist authors such as Herman Kahn, Julian Simon, Ben Wattenberg, major conservative think tanks such as the Cato and American Enterprise Institute, and the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal*. Prophets of population restraint such as Thomas Malthus or, in this century, Paul Ehrlich and Dennis and Donella Meadows, have been often dismissed as disproved by history.

## **Population and Environment as a Consideration in Major Immigration Commissions**

A brief review of how the population/environment nexus fared in the work of the two major commissions on immigration policy established by Washington since the 1970s is instructive. Both of them did have statutory mandates to consider demographic trends in their deliberations: the Select Commission on Immigration Policy (SCIRP) in 1979-81 (the Hesburgh Commission) and the Commission on Immigration Reform (CIR) of 1993-1997 (the Jordan Commission).

Both Commissions ended up recommending more prudent immigration policies than Congress then or since has adopted, mainly by their commitment to stronger border vigilance and effective sanctions against hiring illegal aliens. CIR, but not SCIRP, recommended small reductions of family immigration.

Both conclusively rejected guest worker programs, now again being promoted by the present administration. Both Commissions considered, but declined to push for, an overall binding cap on all forms of immigration that was most sought by environmental and population groups.<sup>4</sup>

SCIRP did bless the idea of general amnesty for settled illegals, ultimately enacted in 1986, though not the fraud-ridden farm worker amnesty that legalized nearly a million presumed workers. But in an act germane to today's debate, SCIRP conditioned amnesty on simultaneous improvement in enforcement, lest amnesty itself become a lure to new waves of illegal entries over porous borders. Subsequent events have proved them right.

Both Commissions favored larger legal immigration and refugee admissions than are compatible with early population stability. Had all their recommendations been fully heeded, refugee numbers would be lower. And illegal immigration today would be closer to the 50,000 a year they projected from their recommended enforcement measures than to the present tragic flow of some 500,000 a year, which rapidly swells the permanent pool of 10 to 15 million illegals already here.

Population growth was taken more seriously in SCIRP's deliberations than in CIR's. Only seven years had passed since the 1972 recommendations of the Rockefeller Commission that the U.S. strive for population stability. Major population and environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club, Zero Population Growth, The Environmental Fund and the National Parks and Conservation Association, were still willing to speak out on the environmental risks of extravagant immigration.

SCIRP decisively rejected the proposition that America's population growth and the concomitant decline in the ratio of immigrants to native-born justified major increases in intake (in 1970 the foreign born were 4.5 percent of the population compared to the all-time high of 14.7 percent in 1910):

If we were to return, for example, to the scale of immigration that existed during the first

decade of the twentieth century . . . It would mean admitting close to 2.5 million immigrants each year for the next ten years. A return to such levels would mean, even at present low rates of fertility [1.8], that the U.S. was abandoning any effort to bring about population stability in this country for many decades to come.<sup>5</sup>

Oddly, SCIRP's proponents of bigger immigration argued that higher numbers would *reduce* global environmental stress by relieving pressures on resources in dense third world countries, spreading environmental and conservationist ideals around the world, and slowing world population growth as immigrants reduced their fertility to U.S. levels.

Sadly, immigration continued to grow rapidly after SCIRP's prudent recommendations were disregarded; and U.S. fertility rose from 1.8 to 2.0. Assuming continued 1.8 fertility, net refugee flows and illegal settlement of 50,000 each, and only modest increases in legal immigration, SCIRP at that time had projected population stability in 2050 at 274 million — well above the 150 million threshold of true sustainability, but far more promising than today's 300 million and the projected 420 million by mid-century. The U.S. reached 274 million in 1998, a half century earlier than SCIRP's best case projection.

Population as a consideration in immigration policymaking was at least acknowledged in the creation in 1990 of the Commission on Immigration Reform (CIR). The 1990 chartering act mandated the CIR to consider "... social, demographic and natural resources impact of immigration."<sup>6</sup>

It was a stellar opportunity to change Washington's increasingly pro-populationist mindset, but it went unexploited. Population and environmental effects were addressed in only one of the more than 20 hearings the Commission held around the country. Leading advocates of immigration reduction, such as former Colorado Governor Richard Lamm, labor economist Vernon Briggs, Center for Immigration Studies' Mark Krikorian, demographer Leon Bouvier and Dan Stein of the Federation for American Immigration Reform testified before the Commission,

but did not concentrate on population.

CIR made no findings or recommendations on population and environment in its interim and final reports. It ignored the 11.6 percent increase in American fertility starting in 1988. And no works by population and resource authorities such as Paul Ehrlich, David Pimentel or Donella and Denis Meadows appeared in CIR's official bibliography.<sup>7</sup> NPG advocate and author Lindsey Grant testified, but is not cited in the report.

CIR's sole gesture toward the issue was to commission and publish a research paper on immigration and the environment. That work, however, only briefly and perfunctorily addressed the substance of the issue of population growth's effects on environment and resources. The study questioned the grounding in social science of the terms of the equation often used by Paul Ehrlich and others: *Impact of population = population size X affluence X level of technology*. Generally, the study demurred on the issue itself by dwelling on research questions and methodology. It concluded there was little hard evidence and called for more research.<sup>8</sup>

To its credit, however, CIR concluded its work by calling for an end to ever-expanding non-nuclear family reunifications and recommended cutting family and work-related legal immigration from 700,000 a year back to 550,000 and targeted refugee admissions at 50,000. It also called for a reduction of illegal migration to no more than 50,000, urging more resources for the border patrol, foolproof systems for verification of worker eligibility, and more INS commitment to deportations.

If CIR's final recommendations had been accepted and applied, it would by now have reduced total immigration by as much as half a million. But its recommendations were out of sync with the incipient spirit of globalization in Washington. Mass immigration dovetailed well with Corporate America's drive to both enlarge and discipline the labor force, drive down labor costs, and make America more competitive by unburdening the country of "market rigidities" such as trade unions.

The economic boom of the 1990s and perceptions of labor shortages doomed any proposal to curb illegal entries or slow temporary worker admissions. Not runaway immigration and population growth, only the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks have since convinced the White House and Congress to reconsider the nation's lax policies and practices.

## **New Typologies and Strategies for Immigration Limits**

Immigration laws, like the tax laws, are complex for a reason. Their complexity numbs the latent anger Joe Citizen would voice if he could pierce the legal camouflage surrounding the huge numbers actually arriving. Congress still increases admissions while seeming to restrict them. Good examples are the limits proclaimed on annual conferral of formal asylum status: 10,000 a year for all asylees and 1,000 a year on grants of asylum for persons claiming to flee coercive birth control policies, such as in China. In fact, in most years considerably more are admitted as "conditional asylees" in these classes and become U.S. residents. Then it's only a wait for available ceiling spaces to be designated formal asylees. For purposes of population economy, these are truly ceilings that do not seal.

Forget the proliferating opaque categories of immigration used in Washington-speak. New labels are coined with confusing frequency as special interests or the courts succeed in tweaking Congress or the Executive into some new twist of law or regulation. A simpler way of thinking about the complexities of our immigration laws might be both an incentive to action and a clearer guide to the actions needed.

Those concerned about the mid- and long-term damage of today's big numbers on the nation's future quality of life must concentrate more on cutting the overall numbers than on juggling the categories.

For a more simplified model, consider that there are three interacting and mutually-nourishing streams in today's mass immigration: illegal immigrants, legal immigrants and quasi-legal immigrants. Illegal and quasi-legal immigrants tend, over time, to become legal. All streams bring in people for extend-

ed or permanent stays, making them full contributors, regardless of their category, to the polluting and resource-devouring base population.

All three immigration streams are now largely ungoverned by any effective numerical limits and devoid of any rational comprehensive management. If policy is more clearly defined by the actions of a government rather than by written documents, then America's immigration policy has been simply "more" — more people and more immigration, with no ultimate limits.

The following discusses the goal of reducing immigration to a demographically neutral size and how it might be managed. It does not deal with illegal immigration. Strategies and policies for eliminating illegal entries are addressed in another separate NPG position paper.

## **Critical to Reduction: Closing Out Chain Migration**

The official immigration numbers released by Customs and Immigration Service (CIS), show a count of annual grants of legal residency — a little less than one million in 2004 — rather than the real world inflow of people. Yet millions more are in the pipeline for "Green Cards." If the government chose to do so — and there are serious pressures from interest groups to do just that — it could easily double its annual output of new legal residents from this backlog. Some two-thirds of those stamped in are already living in the U.S. either illegally (about 160,000 illegals are legalized each year), or under some conditional status.

The first population effect of "green carding" is the new legal resident's right to apply for admission of family abroad under limited quotas. But the event of greatest demographic consequence in the immigration cycle is naturalization — usually attained by the alien six to nine years after his legal admission. Now annual naturalizations are the highest in history, running well over 400,000 yearly.

Naturalization is the golden key to chain migration for the newcomer, opening the door to prompt admission, without quota limits, of his or her

spouse, children and parents. The new citizen, subject to quota limits, also gets a preference to bring in his or her adult children and siblings. The annual intake of immediate families of citizens — an unlimited category — has increased apace, rising from 235,000 a year in 1992 to over 400,000 in 2004.

This “chain migration” dynamic now powers the legal immigration conveyor belt and stimulates the illegal immigration of relatives. While satisfying one immigrant’s kinship needs, admission of his relatives thereby creates several newly entitled persons to eventually seek fulfillment of their longings for overseas families. Nearly 75 percent of all persons made legal residents in 2004 entered because of kinship to earlier immigrants. Only 7 percent were admitted for their skills or business abilities. Most of the remaining 18 percent are humanitarian immigrants and “Diversity” visa lottery winners.<sup>9</sup>

The ominous momentum of immigration is evident in the increasingly long waits for quota numbers among relatives of non-citizens, and in the staggering backlog of unattended petitions for family preference. The State Department no longer releases the worldwide totals on waiting lists. But in July 2005 the shortest waiting period for any form of quota-limited family visas was over four years. In the most oversubscribed category, brothers and sisters of citizens, the wait ranged from 12 years to 22 years. Another backlog, the petitions for immigration preference waiting to be filed, reached six million in 2004.<sup>10</sup>

Some would conclude from these data that the rationing intended in our immigration laws is working and that the U.S. is not taking in immigrants faster or in greater numbers than it should. But the mere approval of petitions in heavily oversubscribed categories creates in many recipients a sense of entitlement to come and do their waiting in the U.S. Pressures from sponsoring immigrants here compels top immigration managers to switch more money and people to campaigns to clear backlogs or to give special “temporary” visas to relatives to join their family members in anticipation of a quota number becoming available. The result is hurried, rubber stamps case-work and diversion of scarce CIS resources needed elsewhere. The “temporary” family visas now given to

fiancées and certain relatives of citizens and permanent residents is nothing more than permanent immigration with a head start.

Moreover, the rationing of visas is unappealing to harried legislators, and the clamor grows to circumvent the waiting lists. Near the end of 2005 the U.S. Senate, including the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, introduced several major bills that would more than double family immigration or remove the numerical limits on family members of certain classes of immigrants.<sup>11</sup> The present family immigration system is a dam with many leaks waiting for complete collapse.

## Getting Along with Just 200,000 Immigrants a Year

NPG accepts that there must be some immigration to fulfill the ideal of the “open society” and to meet irreducible national interests, such as investors, otherwise unavailable rare skills and specialties, and refuge of last resort for limited numbers of those truly fleeing mortal danger and lacking any other options. But above all, NPG believes the nation’s population should decline to an environmentally sustainable level, around 150 million Americans, in as short a period as reasonably possible. Prolonging the transition will compound the environmental damage to the nation and the planet.

We believe the maximum allowable level of immigration to attain these competing ends is 200,000 a year.<sup>12</sup> At that level, emigration would exceed present rates of immigration by 250,000 to 300,000 yearly for an initial stage. Emigration could be expected to fall as the reforms we advocate in legal and illegal migration began to significantly reduce overall entries. But the 200,000 admissions allowed would continue to assure a rough balance between admissions and departures. That amount could be fine-tuned in future years, depending on trends in fertility, emigration or mortality.

To reach 200,000, the nation must sharply curtail and eventually end the family reunification privilege for everyone — immigrant and US-born citizen alike. Family chains alone now produce over 600,000

newcomers a year, a number antithetical to an early reversal of population growth.

Those 200,000 admissions should be selected with great care to satisfy priority national interests without creating additional expectations. NPG has no recommendations as to how these numbers should be allotted to the various world regions or how that might be done. A distribution of admissions roughly proportionate to the world’s major regions would be the most defensible against criticism. The numbers could be best allocated among the categories of immigration as follows:

a) **Humanitarian** — Up to 30,000 for permanent humanitarian admission of refugees, asylees and displaced persons that in the strictest sense are in mortal peril and have no other options. All other humanitarian admissions, granted only in truly life-threatening situations, would be temporary — not more than a year — until the threat abroad had eased or resettlement elsewhere had been arranged. There should be a ceiling of 50,000 on humanitarian migrants allowed to remain temporarily at any one time.

b) **Work /Business** — 110,000 for skilled professionals, technicians, artists and entrepreneurs and their immediate families. There would be no admissions of semi-skilled or unskilled workers. Existing long-term “temporary” visas for skilled workers and professionals, which now account for 230,000 “quasi-legal” immigrants a year would be abolished and those determined most needed by labor market measurements would be incorporated into this category

c) **Special Needs** — Up to 10,000 to cover a range of special immigrant allocations, such as religious ministers, rare specialty workers and artists, military recruits and espionage specialists, and foreign employees of the U.S. government abroad.

d) **Family Reunification Transition** — The reunification of nuclear families is too emotion-laden a process to be ended overnight. Those U.S. citizens with approved petitions for spouses and minor children at the time of enactment would not be affected. To phase out the last of family reunification, 50,000 slots would be set aside for qualified spouses of U.S. citizens and their

biological children under 16, over the next 5 years.

Eligibility during transition would be limited to one spouse only, who must have also lived in legal wedlock with the sponsor for at least three uninterrupted years before the sponsor’s petition. The immigrating spouse’s children from other marriages would not be eligible. The immigrating spouse would have to leave the U.S. if the marriage ended by divorce before her naturalization.

Also ineligible would be mail-order brides and other arranged marriages; spouses who would not have been eligible to marry under U.S. law, such as child brides, multiple wives and close relatives; and marriages contracted while the non-citizen partner was in the U.S. illegally or in non-immigrant status.

Financial requirements for sponsors would be stringent: income at least two and a half times the poverty level, performance bonds if necessary, and prearranged full coverage health insurance for the arriving family members.

After five years these transitory provisions would lapse. The lower immigration levels would create fewer family chains. All admissions of immediate family members would thereafter have to qualify under other immigration sub-quotas. There would be an immigration fee for all but humanitarian issues of at least \$10,000 per person. The 50,000 temporary allocations would be prorated among the three basic categories of permanent immigration.

### Immigration Allocations Under 200,000 Annual Cap Before and After Five-Year Transition

Category	Transition Numbers	Post-Transition Numbers
Humanitarian	30,000	40,000
Work/Business	110,000	149,000
Special Needs	10,000	11,000
Transitional Reunification Nuclear Families of Citizens	50,000	None

There would be no carry-over of unused numbers to subsequent years, though surplus numbers in any category could be transferred to oversubscribed categories within the 200,000 cap.

## Mass Immigration Emergencies and Amnesties

It will do little to ease population pressure if we conscientiously maintain a 200,000 ceiling, but permit huge backdoor admissions in knee-jerking responses to proclaimed emergencies or as foreign policy gestures. General amnesties or rolling special amnesties can nullify any population savings from restricted intake and boost immigration momentum and must be ruled out.

The government, if unable to repatriate those fleeing an emergency or resettle them in another country, should meet genuine emergencies first using the allotted humanitarian numbers, and then the employment and special use categories for those needy aliens who qualify.

For more questionable emergencies, such as the 1986 Mariel boat lift, the amnesty for Chinese visitors following Tiananmen Square, and the open-ended “temporary” protected status granted Central Americans during that region’s troubles, the U.S. must have the planning and discipline to head-off or divert the flows and leave unchanged the temporary status of visa holders. Admission should be the last resort, not the first, and it should be strictly temporary.

Effective preparation for massive surges of unplanned migration requires hard-headed thinking about the tough measures to block them. We have learned a few things since Mariel and the explosion of Haitian boat people in the early 80s. Maritime interdiction, though deplored by the UN High Commission on Refugees, has cut sharply the ship-borne flow of Haitians and Cubans into South Florida.

The greatest test of U.S. determination to stop immigration surges would likely come from a political and social cataclysm in Mexico — not an unthinkable situation given the Mexican state’s dilatory approach

to its grave social and economic problems and its corrupt and predatory public security structure. The influx of Mexicans — now numbering 105 million in their homeland — in the case of a widespread persecution or a breakdown in public order could within weeks end any prospects of a stable population for another century. Some 42 percent of Mexicans polled by Pew Hispanic Center in 2005 answered that they would prefer to live in the U.S. if given the chance.

Conventional means relying only on border patrol forces could not curb it. Mass detentions would be futile with no way of holding such numbers and preventing their dispersal within the U.S. The U.S. must have sound plans with strong military and National Guard involvement and a diplomatic component. The U.S. cannot rule out humanitarian intervention in the major urban border areas of northern Mexico to create “zones of safety” for those fleeing, protecting them as displaced persons within Mexico rather than as refugees in the US.

Following an approach taken by Australia, the U.S. should have emergency stand-by legal authority to nullify outstanding border crossing cards and temporary visas and designate major avenues into the U.S. as zones exempt from the application of International Refugee and Asylum Conventions.

## Automatic Citizenship by Birth in the US: Unwise and Unnecessary

The practice of granting citizenship to babies born in the U.S. to illegal and temporary visa alien mothers is both a magnet to illegal entry and a source of new migration chains. Defenders of the practice claim it is sacrosanct under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, but bills introduced into Congress every session to end it are predicated on the conviction that the amendment’s ambiguous language can be resolved legislatively. Such legislation deserves a try. If it is denied by the courts, then a constitutional amendment should be enacted.

## Zeroing Out Quasi-Legal Immigration

Long-term “temporary” visas and other forms of quasi-legal immigration increased rapidly during



the 1990s. They served as a disguised form of permanent immigration of highly skilled labor, temporarily protected migrants who don't qualify for refugee status, and those on waiting lists to join immediate families ("fiancée" and "V" visas). The most commonly abused are the H1-b "specialty occupations" visa and the L1 "intracompany transferees." In 2003, 218,000 visas were issued to workers and their dependents in those two classes alone. They and similar other long-term visas are estimated to produce an average of over 230,000 *de facto* immigrants a year since 1998.<sup>13</sup>

Persons admitted for periods of five to ten years or without any time limit, such as treaty traders and investors, add to the permanent U.S. population base regardless of nominally temporary status. All such "temporary" categories must be limited to much shorter stays of one year or less, with no family members to accompany. If longer periods are essential, the migrants should be accommodated within the work/business sub-ceiling.

It is incomprehensible that in a nation with a labor force of 147 million, more than 10,000 post-secondary education centers, and 45 million college graduates, some can claim that annual intake of hundreds of thousands of skilled and professional workers is vital to its economic growth.

## **A U.S. Transition: From "Mother of Exiles" to Exemplar of Sustainable Population**

The United States should feel no shame or guilt for these massive reductions. The nation historically is the most generous receiver of immigrants in

the world. Nearly 80 million people have immigrated to America since 1820, not counting most illegal aliens. Even at 200,000, U.S. admissions of immigrants would rank it well for generosity among so many nations that accept few or none.

Now the U.S. needs to be generous to the world in other ways, by ending its profligate consumption of goods and energy and dumping the masses of waste in the world's common sink. By population discipline, the U.S. can be a guide and example to other nations beset with runaway numbers. A smaller U.S. population would cease its brain-draining intake of a sizable share of the world's energetic workers and skilled professionals. More human capital would become available for nation-building in the Third World.

By curbing its consumption of energy, America can reduce world price pressures and slow the coming depletion of the world's stock of hydrocarbons. By slowing its own demand for food, the U.S. can remain the grain producer and exporter of last resort for the famine-prone world. In general, a smaller U.S. population would be a less intense competitor for the resources of a shrinking planet.

Perhaps most important is that a smaller America could concentrate on building its citizens quality of life in depth rather than defining it in the ethos of "more."

Continuation of our current rapid population growth through mass immigration means evermore competition for resources within the U.S. and the world, greater income inequality, spreading environmental decay, and even more regimentation to keep basic order in an increasingly crowded nation. That is not an acceptable vision of the American Dream.

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### **End Notes**

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## About the Author

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## Other publications by David Simcox available from NPG:

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Humanitarian Immigration: Third World "Persecution" Swamps the West	March 2004
Amnesty: Overpopulation by Fiat	December 2002
Ending Illegal Immigration: Make It Unprofitable	March 1999
Social Security: The Ponzi Path To Dystopia	October 1998
Nixon and American Population Policy: Anniversary of a Missed Opportunity	March 1998
Review of Ending the Explosion: Population Policies and Ethics for a Humane Future	October 1996
Review of The Case Against Immigration	October 1996
The Pope's Visit: Is Mass Immigration a Moral Imperative	December 1995
Political Asylum: Achilles' Heel of Immigration Control	November 1995
The Caribbean Immigration Centrifuge: A Portent of Continued Immigration Growth	February 1995
Refugee and Asylum Policy: National Passion Versus National Interest	February 1992
Sustainable Immigration: Learning to Say No	March 1990
Secure Identification: The Weak Link in Immigration Control	May 1989

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## Statement of Purpose

Human population growth in the past century was three times the total growth from the origin of the species until 1900.

Coupled with sharply rising levels of resource consumption and economic activity in the more prosperous nations, that growth has imposed unprecedented strains on the ecological systems that support us and other living things. It has led in many parts of the world to rising unemployment, intensifying water shortages, increasing competition for resources, and the specter of hunger. It is affecting the world's climate, and the consequences -- rising sea levels, more powerful hurricanes, heat waves, and more intense floods and droughts -- are becoming apparent. Population growth has depended on fossil fuels, which are running down. Future generations must depend increasingly on renewable energy, which is unlikely to be recoverable in amounts sufficient to support more than a fraction of current world populations.

U.S. population has also quadrupled since 1900. The U.S. and the world are in a condition of overshoot.

NPG (Negative Population Growth) is the ideal of a turnaround in U.S. and world population growth until we approach less destructive and more tolerable levels, perhaps at numbers that were passed two or more generations ago.

Our objectives are to

- document the harm humans are inflicting on ourselves and our support systems and arrive at some rough idea of "optimum population" -- the human numbers that can live at a decent standard of living within the constraints of environmental sustainability,
- suggest the policies on migration and human fertility that would make it possible to come down to such numbers,
- persuade our government at all levels, and other governments afflicted by population growth, to pursue such policies, and
- dissuade them from the pursuit of policies and behavior that, intentionally or not, lead to population growth.

To those ends, we promote concepts such as "the two-child family", lowered rates of migration to the United States, and the development of conceptual systems such as the steady state economy. And we comment on the demographic implications of present and proposed policies and legislation.

NPG, Inc. is unique among national organizations in calling for a turnaround in population growth and describing the means to achieve it.

## About NPG

Negative Population Growth (NPG) is a national nonprofit membership organization with over 30,000 members nationwide. It was founded in 1972 to educate the American public and our political leaders about the devastating effects of overpopulation on our environment, resources, and standard of living. We believe that our nation is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long-range carrying capacity of its resources and environment.

NPG advocates gradually halting and then reversing our U.S. population growth so that, after an interim period of population reduction, our population can be stabilized at a level that would be sustainable indefinitely, and afford an adequate standard of living for all, in a healthy environment. We believe that in order to be sustainable indefinitely our population should not exceed 150 million, its size two generations ago. We are convinced that goal could be reached within several generations by non-coercive tax incentives to encourage parents to have not more than two children, coupled with a substantial reduction in immigration.

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This paper, as well as other NPG publications can be found on our internet website at [www.npg.org](http://www.npg.org).

NPG is a national membership organization founded in 1972. Annual dues are \$30 and are tax-deductible to the extent the law allows. Please write or call for a list of available publications.

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