

Ohio's Decline and Florida's Rise

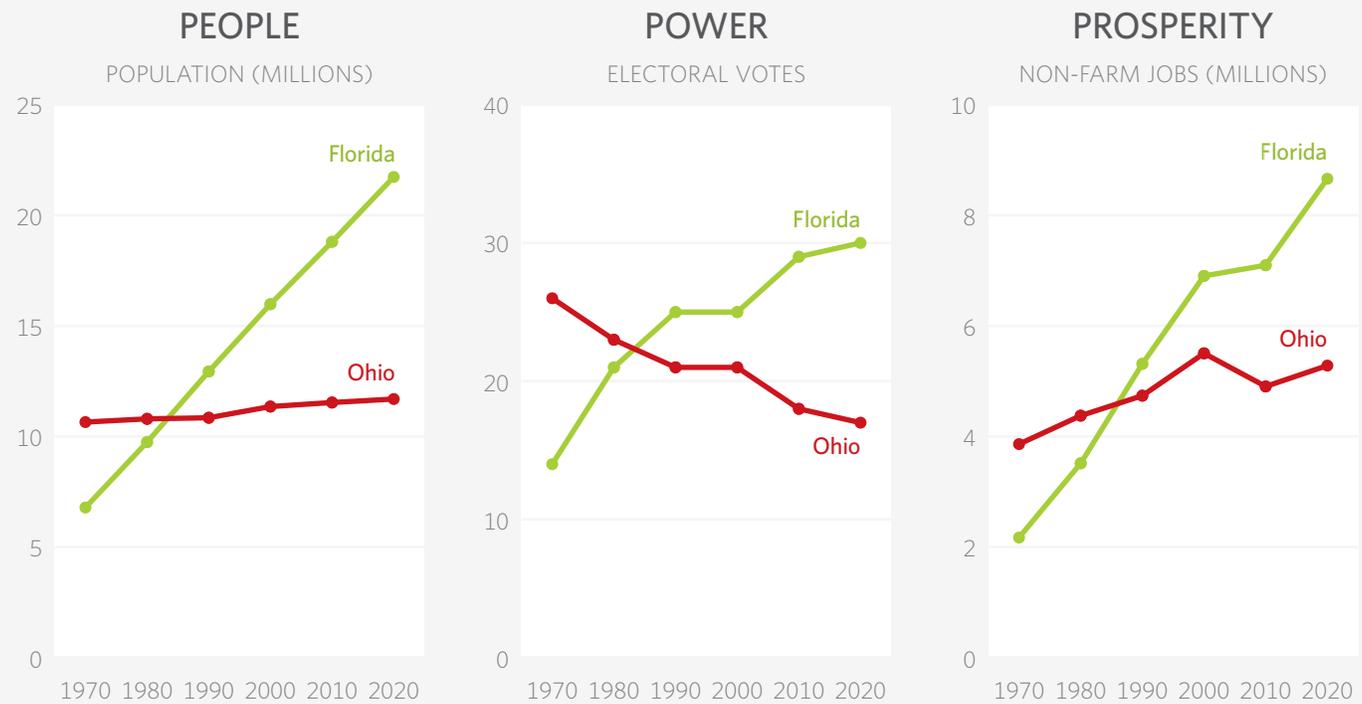
Fifty years ago, Ohio began its slow descent from one of America's strongest states to one of its weakest. At the same time, Florida began its rapid ascent to become the place Americans increasingly decided to call home.

In 1970, Ohio had nearly 4 million more citizens than Florida, twelve more Electoral Votes (i.e., power in Washington), and roughly 1.7 million more jobs. By

1990, Florida surpassed Ohio in all three areas: 2 million more citizens, 4 more Electoral Votes, and 580,000 more jobs.

Today, Ohio's fall and Florida's rise are vividly illustrated by where these numbers stand. Florida now has over ten million more citizens — nearly doubling Ohio's population, thirteen more Electoral Votes, and 3.4

By the Numbers: Ohio vs. Florida



SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau and Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

million more jobs. In fifty years, Ohio's population has only grown by 9.8 percent, while America expanded by 61 percent, which explains why Ohio's clout in Washington has plummeted. On the jobs front, Ohio's paltry growth rate of 37 percent over fifty years — less than 1 percent per year — is roughly one-third of America's job growth rate. Surely the sunshine and beaches explain some of Florida's rise, but those factors existed from the founding of America. The difference over the last fifty

years comes down to Florida's far stronger public policies that attract individuals and businesses.

If Ohio's policymakers truly want to return Ohio to greatness, they would launch a commission to study in-depth the differences between Ohio's and Florida's laws, rules, regulations, layers of bureaucracy, and other factors that led to Florida's staggering rise and Ohio's equally staggering fall.