

Shifting State Populations Show Continued Decline of Midwest and Northeast, as Most of the South and West Boom

The sixty-year trend of population shifts highlights winners and losers in the race to build the most attractive state for Americans. Broadly speaking, it is clear the states failing to keep up as evidenced by falling in the population rankings are those twenty-six states starting in the Great Plains and ending in the North-

east. These states will fall an average of 3.27 spots from 1990 to 2050, led by Missouri and Wisconsin falling eight spots. The five states that will grow the slowest are West Virginia (0.1%), Michigan (17.1%), Ohio (18.0%), Pennsylvania (19.1%), and Rhode Island (19.7%), with Connecticut (20.4%), New York (21.6%), Maine (23.1%), and Illinois (23.2%) not far behind.

One curveball that could alter these projections would be if the climate does, in fact, noticeably become hotter. Should that occur, it is possible there could be a counter-migration back to the north, as the West and South get even hotter leading people

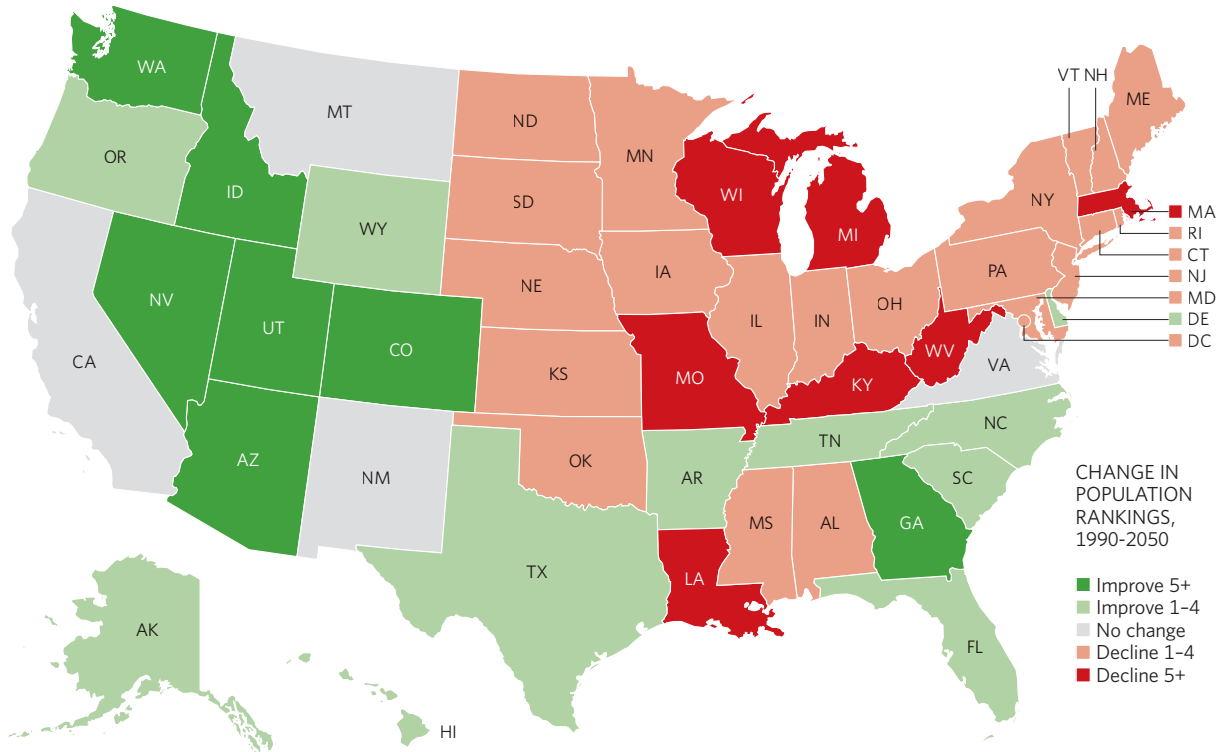
PART 1 OF 3
**Opportunity Ohio's
 Projected 2050
 Population & Political
 Power Series**

to seek out what would be more moderate temperatures in the Great Plains, Midwest, and, possibly, Northeast. The northern states could experience slightly hotter summers, but also less severe winters. The primary beneficiaries of such an event likely would be the border states such as Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, West

Virginia, and Maryland.

The only two states in the West or South that will see weak population growth and a fall in population rankings are Louisiana and Mississippi. Part of the explanation for Louisiana rests in the loss of population following Hurricane Katrina when it went from 4.5 million people in July 2005 to 4.3 million people a year later, but that event only explains a temporary loss. The more likely reason those two states face such bleak futures is both states reside in a “no man’s land”—too far west to benefit from Georgia’s and Florida’s strong growth; too far east to benefit from Texas’s boom; and too far south to benefit from the

Shifting State Population Rankings, 1990-2050



RANKINGS				RANKINGS				RANKINGS			
State	1990	2050	Chg.	State	1990	2050	Chg.	State	1990	2050	Chg.
Nevada	39	18	+21	New Mexico	37	37	0	Illinois	6	9	-3
Arizona	24	7	+17	Virginia	12	12	0	Pennsylvania	5	8	-3
Colorado	26	15	+11	Montana	44	44	0	Ohio	7	10	-3
Utah	35	27	+8	California	1	1	0	Alabama	22	26	-4
Washington	18	11	+7	Maryland	19	20	-1	New Jersey	9	13	-4
Idaho	42	36	+6	South Dakota	45	46	-1	Mississippi	31	35	-4
Georgia	11	5	+6	New Hampshire	40	41	-1	Maine	38	42	-4
North Carolina	10	6	+4	North Dakota	47	48	-1	Connecticut	27	31	-4
Oregon	29	25	+4	D.C.	48	49	-1	Kentucky	23	28	-5
South Carolina	25	21	+4	Minnesota	20	22	-2	Massachusetts	13	19	-6
Delaware	46	43	+3	Oklahoma	28	30	-2	Michigan	8	14	-6
Alaska	50	47	+3	Nebraska	36	38	-2	West Virginia	34	40	-6
Hawaii	41	39	+2	Kansas	32	34	-2	Missouri	15	23	-8
Texas	3	2	+1	Vermont	49	51	-2	Wisconsin	16	24	-8
Florida	4	3	+1	New York	2	4	-2	Louisiana	21	29	-8
Tennessee	17	16	+1	Rhode Island	43	45	-2				
Arkansas	33	32	+1	Indiana	14	17	-3				
Wyoming	51	50	+1	Iowa	30	33	-3				

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau and Opportunity Ohio calculations.

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Wal-Mart effect in Arkansas and the Nashville explosion in Tennessee. There will be lots of infrastructure traffic just on the perimeter of those states, but not much going into them.

In stark contrast to the losing states, the fifteen winning states dominate the West and South. On average, these states will jump 6.53 spots in the rankings in 2050, which is twice the pace of the losing states. The big winners are Nevada (+21), Arizona (+17), Colorado (+11), Utah (+8), Washington (+7), Idaho (+6), and Georgia (+6). As this list demonstrates, cold weather alone can't explain the big population shift, as Idaho, Colorado, and Utah have winters as cold or colder than many of the loser states.

Obviously, both Florida and Texas didn't have much room to move given they already occupied the 4th and 3rd spots in 1990, respectively. Nonetheless, both states will move up a spot. In just sixty years, Florida's population will jump by 184%, as it heads towards 37,000,000 residents. Even more interesting, Texas will end 2050 less than 500,000 citizens behind California at 51.4 million people. Despite its perfect

weather, beaches, and mountains, California's tepid 74% growth since 1990 just won't be able to compete with Texas's 202% population explosion. Certainly by 2060, Texas will become the most populous state in America... a title California will have held since 1962, or almost 100 years.

In terms of Ohio, in raw numbers its population will only grow by roughly 2,000,000 people from 1990 to 2050, which places its growth as the 27th best in America. Basically, as Ohio meandered along from 1990 to 2020 by adding 1,000,000 people, it will continue to meander along over the next 30 years with a similar increase in residents. After holding tightly to the 7th spot in population rankings for decades, by 2050, Ohio will drop to the 10th spot, as Georgia, North Carolina, and Arizona rise from the 11th, 10th, and 24th spots in 1990, respectively. Ohio's 18% net growth will represent the 3rd worst growth in America.

As covered in Part Two of this series, these population shifts will impact the political power wielded by the states and the two political parties.

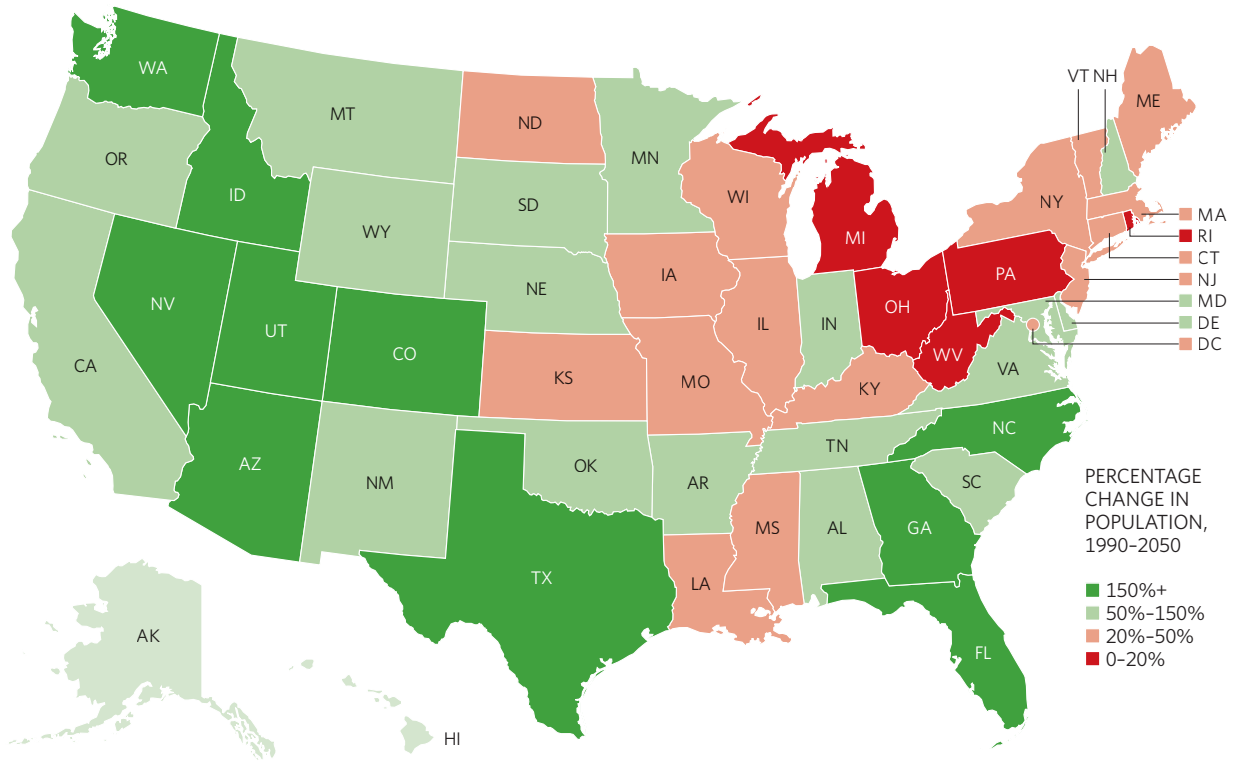
Biggest Winners and Losers: Changes in State Population Rankings, 1990-2050

BIGGEST WINNERS				BIGGEST LOSERS			
State	1990	2050	Chg.	State	1990	2050	Chg.
Nevada	39	18	+21	Louisiana	21	29	-8
Arizona	24	7	+17	Missouri	15	23	-8
Colorado	26	15	+11	Wisconsin	16	24	-8
Utah	35	27	+8	Massachusetts	13	19	-6
Washington	18	11	+7	Michigan	8	14	-6
Georgia	11	5	+6	West Virginia	34	40	-6
Idaho	42	36	+6	Kentucky	23	28	-5

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau and Opportunity Ohio calculations.

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State Population Percentage Growth, 1990-2050



Rank	State	% Change	Rank	State	% Change	Rank	State	% Change
1	Nevada	590.6%	19	California	74.1%	37	Massachusetts	34.8%
2	Arizona	298.4%	20	Hawaii	72.5%	38	Mississippi	32.8%
3	Utah	261.3%	21	Minnesota	70.3%	39	Iowa	32.0%
4	Idaho	234.4%	22	Maryland	66.3%	40	Vermont	30.7%
5	Colorado	212.7%	23	Arkansas	64.5%	41	District of Columbia	30.3%
6	Texas	202.3%	24	South Dakota	62.3%	42	Illinois	23.2%
7	Florida	183.7%	25	Wyoming	62.2%	43	Maine	23.1%
8	Georgia	179.0%	26	Oklahoma	58.5%	44	Louisiana	21.9%
9	North Carolina	154.0%	27	Alabama	55.7%	45	New York	21.6%
10	Washington	153.1%	28	Nebraska	54.4%	46	Connecticut	20.4%
11	Oregon	122.7%	29	New Hampshire	54.4%	47	Rhode Island	19.7%
12	South Carolina	121.7%	30	Indiana	50.8%	48	Pennsylvania	19.1%
13	Delaware	121.1%	31	Kentucky	49.6%	49	Ohio	18.0%
14	Tennessee	104.7%	32	North Dakota	49.5%	50	Michigan	17.1%
15	New Mexico	96.5%	33	Missouri	45.4%	51	West Virginia	0.1%
16	Virginia	95.3%	34	Wisconsin	45.4%			
17	Montana	84.2%	35	New Jersey	43.8%			
18	Alaska	78.3%	36	Kansas	40.7%			

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau and Opportunity Ohio calculations.

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State Population Growth, 1990 vs. 2050

Rank	State	1990	2050	Change	Rank	State	1990	2050	Change
1	Texas	16,986,510	51,354,483	34,367,973	27	Ohio	10,847,115	12,796,379	1,949,264
2	Florida	12,937,926	36,710,205	23,772,279	28	Oklahoma	3,145,585	4,985,670	1,840,085
3	California	29,760,021	51,812,122	22,052,101	29	Kentucky	3,685,296	5,513,251	1,827,955
4	Georgia	6,478,216	18,074,506	11,596,290	30	Michigan	9,295,297	10,882,761	1,587,464
5	Arizona	3,665,228	14,601,746	10,936,518	31	Arkansas	2,350,725	3,867,076	1,516,351
6	North Carolina	6,628,637	16,833,575	10,204,938	32	New Mexico	1,515,069	2,977,568	1,462,499
7	Washington	4,866,692	12,318,457	7,451,765	33	Kansas	2,477,574	3,486,113	1,008,539
8	Nevada	1,201,833	8,300,377	7,098,544	34	Louisiana	4,219,973	5,143,475	923,502
9	Colorado	3,294,394	10,300,976	7,006,582	35	Iowa	2,776,755	3,665,731	888,976
10	Virginia	6,187,358	12,082,244	5,894,886	36	Nebraska	1,578,385	2,437,770	859,385
11	Tennessee	4,877,185	9,985,392	5,108,207	37	Mississippi	2,573,216	3,416,869	843,653
12	Utah	1,722,850	6,225,474	4,502,624	38	Delaware	666,168	1,472,657	806,489
13	South Carolina	3,486,703	7,729,219	4,242,516	39	Hawaii	1,108,229	1,912,110	803,881
14	New York	17,990,455	21,877,836	3,887,381	40	Montana	799,065	1,471,577	672,512
15	Oregon	2,842,321	6,330,120	3,487,799	41	Connecticut	3,287,116	3,957,292	670,176
16	New Jersey	7,730,188	11,114,827	3,384,639	42	New Hampshire	1,109,252	1,712,481	603,229
17	Maryland	4,781,468	7,951,879	3,170,411	43	South Dakota	696,004	1,129,586	433,582
18	Minnesota	4,375,099	7,450,003	3,074,904	44	Alaska	550,043	980,822	430,779
19	Indiana	5,544,159	8,359,128	2,814,969	45	North Dakota	638,800	955,310	316,510
20	Illinois	11,430,602	14,079,120	2,648,518	46	Maine	1,227,928	1,511,611	283,683
21	Idaho	1,006,749	3,366,870	2,360,121	47	Wyoming	453,588	735,804	282,216
22	Missouri	5,117,073	7,442,035	2,324,962	48	Rhode Island	1,003,464	1,200,681	197,217
23	Pennsylvania	11,881,643	14,145,874	2,264,231	49	D.C.	606,900	790,957	184,057
24	Alabama	4,040,587	6,289,206	2,248,619	50	Vermont	562,758	735,508	172,750
25	Wisconsin	4,891,769	7,111,828	2,220,059	51	West Virginia	1,793,477	1,795,493	2,016
26	Massachusetts	6,016,425	8,111,278	2,094,853					

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau and Opportunity Ohio calculations.

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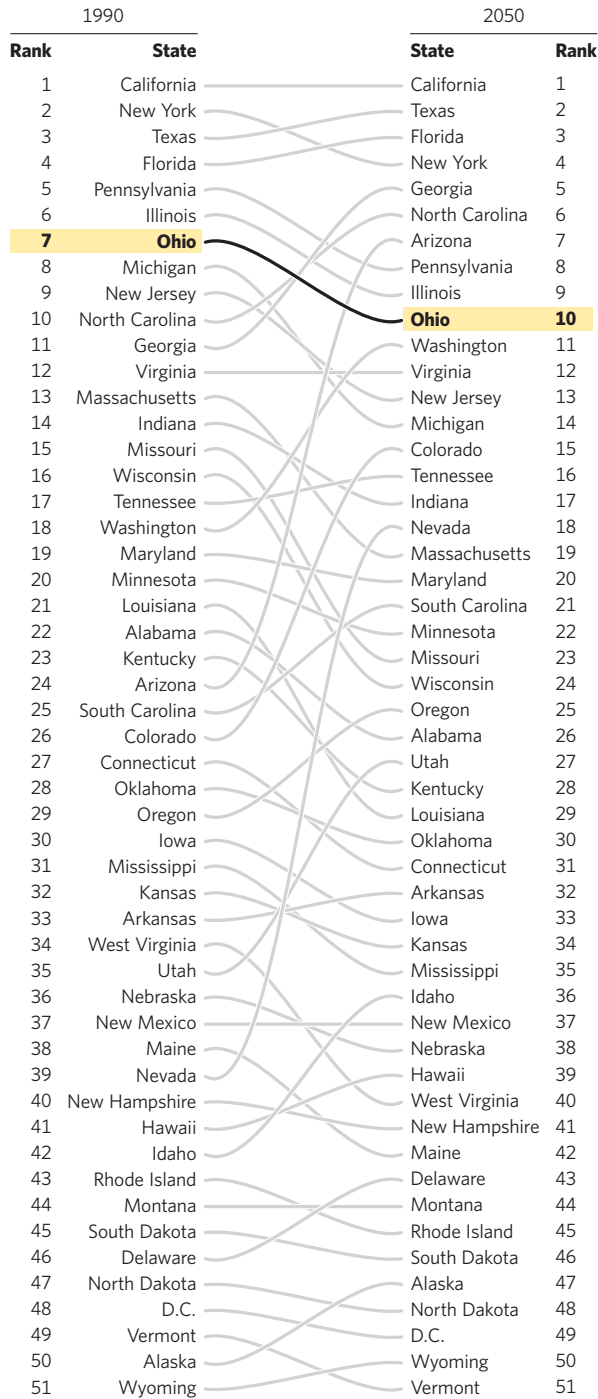
State Populations, 1990 vs. 2050

State	1990		2050		State	1990		2050	
	Population	Rank	Population	Rank		Population	Rank	Population	Rank
Alabama	4,040,587	22	6,289,206	26	Montana	799,065	44	1,471,577	44
Alaska	550,043	50	980,822	47	Nebraska	1,578,385	36	2,437,770	38
Arizona	3,665,228	24	14,601,746	7	Nevada	1,201,833	39	8,300,377	18
Arkansas	2,350,725	33	3,867,076	32	New Hampshire	1,109,252	40	1,712,481	41
California	29,760,021	1	51,812,122	1	New Jersey	7,730,188	9	11,114,827	13
Colorado	3,294,394	26	10,300,976	15	New Mexico	1,515,069	37	2,977,568	37
Connecticut	3,287,116	27	3,957,292	31	New York	17,990,455	2	21,877,836	4
Delaware	666,168	46	1,472,657	43	North Carolina	6,628,637	10	16,833,575	6
D.C.	606,900	48	790,957	49	North Dakota	638,800	47	955,310	48
Florida	12,937,926	4	36,710,205	3	Ohio	10,847,115	7	12,796,379	10
Georgia	6,478,216	11	18,074,506	5	Oklahoma	3,145,585	28	4,985,670	30
Hawaii	1,108,229	41	1,912,110	39	Oregon	2,842,321	29	6,330,120	25
Idaho	1,006,749	42	3,366,870	36	Pennsylvania	11,881,643	5	14,145,874	8
Illinois	11,430,602	6	14,079,120	9	Rhode Island	1,003,464	43	1,200,681	45
Indiana	5,544,159	14	8,359,128	17	South Carolina	3,486,703	25	7,729,219	21
Iowa	2,776,755	30	3,665,731	33	South Dakota	696,004	45	1,129,586	46
Kansas	2,477,574	32	3,486,113	34	Tennessee	4,877,185	17	9,985,392	16
Kentucky	3,685,296	23	5,513,251	28	Texas	16,986,510	3	51,354,483	2
Louisiana	4,219,973	21	5,143,475	29	Utah	1,722,850	35	6,225,474	27
Maine	1,227,928	38	1,511,611	42	Vermont	562,758	49	735,508	51
Maryland	4,781,468	19	7,951,879	20	Virginia	6,187,358	12	12,082,244	12
Massachusetts	6,016,425	13	8,111,278	19	Washington	4,866,692	18	12,318,457	11
Michigan	9,295,297	8	10,882,761	14	West Virginia	1,793,477	34	1,795,493	40
Minnesota	4,375,099	20	7,450,003	22	Wisconsin	4,891,769	16	7,111,828	24
Mississippi	2,573,216	31	3,416,869	35	Wyoming	453,588	51	735,804	50
Missouri	5,117,073	15	7,442,035	23					

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau and Opportunity Ohio calculations.

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How State Population Rankings Will Shift, 1990-2050



SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau and Opportunity Ohio calculations.

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