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CLARK BENSEN

POLIDATA · 1303 HAYWARD RD, P.O. BOX 530 · CORINTH, VT 05039
Tel: 703-690-4066 · Fax: 202-318-0793 (24hrs) · email: info@polidata.org

PUBLISHER OF THE POLIDATA® DEMOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL GUIDES AND ATLASES
website: www.polidata.org

DESERTION OF MIDWEST AND NORTHEAST CONTINUES Latest population estimates confirm shift of political power

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Executive Summary. As every year winds down into the holiday season the U.S. Bureau of the Census releases estimates of the state populations which are used to divine how the political sweepstakes known as congressional apportionment will play out in December of 2020. Based upon the 2016 release the general trends of the past few decades of population shifting away from the Northeast and Midwest regions are once again confirmed.

By using the latest estimates the most recent growth trends can be extended out to April 1, 2020 to project what seat shifts are likely to occur once the data from the full count is released at the end of that year. The apportionment that will be made after the 24th federal census will determine the number of members of the U.S. House for the 118th Congress to be elected in 2022 and the number of electoral votes for the 2024 and 2028 presidential elections.

These projections are subject to some margin of error for several reasons but if the growth patterns over the previous year, i.e., from July 2015 to July 2016, continue, 15 states would experience actual shifts in the number of members in their delegations. Nine states would lose one seat each while four states would gain one seat each; one state (FL) would gain two seats and one state (TX) would gain three seats. Seven of the nine states losing a seat are in the Northeast or Midwest (RI, NY, PA, OH, MI, IL, and MN). All six of the states gaining at least a seat are in the South and West (NC, FL, TX, CO, AZ, and OR).

¹ Clark H. Bensen, B.A., J.D., is a consulting data analyst and attorney doing business as POLIDATA® Political Data Analysis and a publisher of data volumes operating as POLIDATA® Demographic and Political Guides. POLIDATA has been analyzing the annual estimates and using projections for apportionment since the 1980s. (See <http://www.polidata.org/news.htm>).

Growth Trends. Nationally, the one-year growth was a net 2.2 million persons, a rate of 0.6%, which is 323.2 million persons for the 50 states and DC. If this rate continues through to the 2020 Census date there would be 331.8 million persons in the nation; a growth rate of 7.4% for the decade. In comparison the national growth rate for the 2000-2010 period was 9.7% and the rate for the 1990-2000 period was 13.1%.

States that experienced a growth rate similar to the nation included California, Nebraska, and Minnesota. The states with the highest rates over the past year include Utah, Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Arizona, and Florida. Twelve states experienced zero net growth or actually lost population: Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Kansas, West Virginia, Mississippi, Wyoming, and New Mexico.

At this rate there would be seven states that would see an increase of more than 15% by 2020: Utah, Texas, Florida, Colorado, Nevada, Washington, Arizona, and Idaho. California will remain the most populous state for some time because at 40.2 million persons it would be far ahead of second-place Texas at 29.6 million. Third place would continue to be Florida at 22.1 million which has now outdistanced the former holder of that spot, New York with 19.7 million. The states in spots six to ten are more evenly sized, from fifth-place Pennsylvania at 12.8M; Illinois at 12.7M; Ohio at 11.6M; Georgia at 10.7M; North Carolina at 10.6M; and Michigan at 10.0M. These ten would account for 54% of the nation's population.

There would be six states and DC below 1,000,000 by 2020. The two smallest states would be Wyoming at 582,000 and Vermont at 619,000. DC would be next in line at 723,000; then Alaska at 758,000; North Dakota at 762,000; South Dakota at 894,000; and Delaware at 983,000.

Regionally, the Northeast and Midwest would gain about 2% over the decade while the South and West would gain about 11% over the decade. More on these numbers can be discerned by reviewing the growth charts which illustrate the components of change which include the rates for births, deaths, foreign migration, and domestic migration. In the Northeast and Midwest the two migration factors are close but with the domestic out-migration leading. In the South and the West the domestic migration is clearly in-migration on balance; in the South the net domestic in-migration generally exceeds the foreign migration but in the west the net foreign migration generally exceeds the domestic migration.

As can be gleaned from the above discussion, numerous states have seen a negative net domestic migration each year through the decade so far: Alaska, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

Projections. The most basic of projections uses the one-year growth rate and extends it out, in a year-by-year compounding manner, to the last year of the decade; this is the A-series. The only generic adjustment is thus applying 75% of the last year's growth to account for the fact that as the record date for the census is April 1 the last 'year' is only nine months long.

Other means of projection can easily be employed and the two used here for comparative purposes to the A-series are the B-series in which a simple average of the two-year rates is used as the compounding factor or the C-series in which a weighted average (using the most recent rate at twice the value of the previous rate) is used as the projection factor. In most situations the differences between the three series, if any, are no more than one or two seats.

Overseas Persons. Additional considerations for projections include some adjustment for the overseas population, which was over 1M persons in the 2010 apportionment. This may include those serving in the military; non-military federal government personnel; and others. The difficulty here is that there is no estimate of these persons throughout the decade and they are only available, or have been so far, at the end of the decade from a review of administrative records. There is some inconsistency in this information and these persons were not included for the 1980 Apportionment. Nevertheless, because the apportionment formula is sensitive to small differences in persons, the additional of overseas personnel can shift a seat.

An additional complication is that while these persons may be included in the apportionment population, they are not included in the redistricting population base when lines are drawn in each state. This is basically due to the mission of the U.S. Census Bureau to count every person, count them only once, and in the right place, i.e., their place of usual residence. Overseas persons are thus not resident in the state for purposes of districting and do not have their 'own' member of the U.S. House, although their 'residence' in the state may affect representation for the state in the House.

Apportionment Formula. The operative concept for the apportionment formula, the method of equal proportions, is relativity. States which experience a population growth or loss much higher or lower than the nation are most likely to be affected by the shift in seats but the purpose of the apportionment formula is to minimize the relative difference in population per member as between any pair of states.

However, regardless of the relative differences, there are absolute standards which come into play by the application of the formula. Even though a state may experience a growth rate larger than the nation does not mean it will get even one additional seat. Absolute growth, in terms of actual persons, is a limiting factor. Likewise, just because California, the nation's largest state, gains many millions of persons, it must be remembered that millions of persons would be needed just to keep pace with the nation's growth rate.

State Summary. As mentioned above, 15 states are likely to see a shift in seats based upon the most-recent growth rates. Obviously, there is no guarantee these shifts will occur though the odds are in favor of most as they are already occurring with these estimates. The unforeseen shifts that can upset the 'expected' shifts can be caused by several factors: a) a change in the direction or quantity of the most-recent growth rate of a state; b) the addition of the overseas personnel; c) states for which the current last seat rank is near the 435 cutoff; and d) simply due to the lack of precision on the estimates or the projections.

For example, based upon the most-recent trends of the A-series, MT is the 436th seat, losing by about 1,000 persons. The trend in MT has been increasing in the degree to which it is faster than the nation and the consistency of the estimates is high as well. As another example, in the A-series, RI is the 441st seat, short about 24,000 persons. The trend in RI has been consistently downward and based upon the current trends it would become an at-large single member state with the 2017 or 2018 estimates. However, the consistency of the estimates for RI this decade has not been very high.

The nation's most populous state, CA, the recipient of seven new seats as recently as the 1990 Apportionment, and which, for the first time in over a century gained no seats in the 2010 Apportionment, stands close to a repeat performance, albeit too close to call based upon these numbers. As a populous state with 53 seats it shows up in the rankings frequently and is currently at rank 435 to stay at 53 and 440 to gain a seat to 54; thus occupying two of the ten near-the-cutoff ranks.

States Groups by Likely Outcomes: Based upon the estimates (as they were originally released) several states have already 'won' or 'lost' a seat based upon the estimates alone or the current projections. These can be classified into several groups:

- 1) Gainers:
 - a. Already gained: FL to 28 in 2015; NC to 14 in 2011; OR to 6 in 2015; TX to 37 in 2014.
 - b. Soon to gain: AZ to 10 by 2018; CO to 8 in 2017; FL to 29 by 2019; TX to 38 by 2017 and to 39 by 2020.
 - c. Likely to change soon after 2020: ID+1 to 3; UT+1 to 5; WA+1 to 11.
- 2) Losers:
 - a. Already lost: IL to 17 in 2015, MI to 13 in 2015; MN to 7 in 2011; PA to 17 in 2014.
 - b. Soon to lose: AL to 6 by 2018 or 2019; NY to 26 by 2017; OH to 15 by 2018; RI to 1 by 2018; WV to 2 by 2017.
 - c. Likely to change soon after 2020: CT-1 to 4; IL-1 to 16; NJ-1 to 11; WI-1 to 7.
- 3) Too close to call:
 - a. Cliffhangers at this point: CA to stay at 53; MN to stay at 8; MT to 2; RI to 1.
- 4) Others, trends have changed:
 - a. MO was trending up to 9 through 2011 but has begun to move downward: no change soon.
 - b. SC was trending down to 6 through 2012 but has begun to move upward: no change soon.
 - c. VA was trending up to 12 through 2012 but has stabilized: no change soon.

Other Apportionment Bases. While the discussion contained herein has focused exclusively on the use of total population, which is the current base for the apportionment process, several other bases are used to illustrate the role of two other variables: age and citizenship status and how the different mix of demographics in states affect the political landscape. This is not an endorsement of using the factors for the apportionment process but a means by which the demographic mix may affect redistricting.

For example, districts are generally created using the total resident population (i.e., excludes Americans overseas) so that each district has approximately the same number of census persons. For congressional districts there is an almost zero tolerance for any deviation but stakeholders disagree over the range of tolerance for other districts from state legislature to local city councils. The point here is that equality on the basis of persons affords equality in representation to the residents of the districts but it does not necessarily afford equality of electoral weight as census persons are not all entitled to register to vote.

If *voting age population* (VAP) was the basis for apportionment the trends would closely align with the trends under the total population base. Four states would lose seats if the apportionment were made now on the basis of voting age population. MI, IL, MN, and CA would lose a seat each and NC and OR would gain a seat while FL would gain two seats.

If citizens of all ages, *citizen population*, (CPOP) were the basis for apportionment the shift of seats would be somewhat different than using total population. Based upon the 2016 estimates alone, if the citizen population were used CA would lose four seats and NY, FL, and TX would lose one seat. On the other side seven states would gain a seat based upon citizen population: OH, MO, VA, NC, LA, MT, and OR.

If *citizen voting age*, (CVAP) was the basis for apportionment the trends would closely align with the trends under the citizen pop except for a state or two. If the apportionment were made today based upon these numbers CA would lose five seats; TX would lose three seats and NY would lose one seat. The nine states gaining these seats would include MA, PA, OH, MO, VA, NC, LA, MT, and OR.

Electoral College: Of course, seat shifts in an apportionment are likely to have some effect on the presidential elections as well. The apportionment following the 2020 Census will be used for the 2024 and 2028 elections. Based up these projections the shift in the 2016 election, leaving aside faithless electors, would have shifted a net of 2 votes to the Republicans. Six of the 21 states won by Hillary Clinton would be a +2 and -4 and nine of the 30 states won by Donald Trump would be a +7 and -5.

Summary: Even though the above observations are discussed in the context of likelihood as if demographic trends do not change they should be reviewed with caution. While it is true that current trends are unlikely to shift too much and thus most of the observations will become fact, there are other factors that come into play. Hopefully the discussion of possible scenarios will assist stakeholders in the several states to prepare for the upcoming redistricting phase of the constitutionally mandated apportionment process.

See more about the study at <http://www.polidata.org/census/est016dl.htm> .

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