

# How do your opinions on POPULATION & environment compare with national polls of all Americans 40 years apart in 1972 and 2012?

Created just before the first Earth Day, the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future issued its final report in spring of 1972. This massive bi-partisan government effort involving environmental, civil rights, business, labor, religious and academic leaders concluded that further U.S. population growth would not be helpful in meeting the nation's environmental, social and economic goals.

The 1972 report included the Commission's nationwide poll of all Americans. In spring of 2012, the NumbersUSA Education & Research Foundation conducted a similar national poll through the Dallas-based Pulse Opinion Research, asking questions in the same categories; the wording was based on updated demographic information and issues.

## 1. HARM TO THE ENVIRONMENT?

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(1972 poll) Is U.S. population growth causing the country to use up its **natural resources** too fast?

57% — Yes

35% — No

8% — Unsure

(2012 poll) U.S. population has grown from 200 million in 1970 to over 300 million today. **In terms of the environment**, has adding the extra 100 million people damaged, improved or made no difference in environmental quality, open spaces and wildlife?

52% — Damaged

6% — Improved

33% — No difference

9% — Unsure

## 2. ADDING MORE POPULATION?

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(1972 poll) Would **adding another 100 million** to our population be too much, too little or about right?

66% — Too much

1% — Too little

15% — About right

18% — Unsure

(2012 poll) The Census Bureau says the population of the United States is **on a trend to double this century**. If the population in YOUR AREA were to double, what would it do to the **quality of life**?

**71% — Would make it WORSE**

32% — Lot worse

39% — Somewhat worse

**6% — Would make NO DIFFERENCE**

6% — No difference

2% — Unsure

**20% — Would make it BETTER**

4% — Lot better

16% — Somewhat better

## 3. GOVERNMENT ACTION?

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(1972 poll) **Should the government try** to do anything to slow down population growth in the United States?

56% — Yes

35% — No

9% — Unsure

(1972 poll) Should the number of foreign immigrants coming into the United States be increased, reduced or left the same?

51% — Reduced

10% — Increased

31% — Left the same

7% — Unsure

(2012 poll) Census data show that since 1972, the size of American families has been at a zero-population-growth level. But immigration has tripled and is now the cause of nearly all long-term population growth. Does the government need to **reduce immigration to slow down population growth**, or keep it the same or increase it?

- 68% – Reduce immigration to slow population growth
- 4% – Increase immigration to more than double the population
- 19% – Keep immigration same and double the population
- 9% – Unsure

## 4. FAMILY SIZE?

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(1972 & 2012 poll) What is the **ideal number of children** a family should have?

- |                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 1% & 2% – None  | 41% & 27% – Three or more |
| 1% & 13% – One  | 13% & 22% – Unsure        |
| 43% & 36% – Two |                           |

(2012 poll) Current levels of immigration could continue without causing population growth if Americans would cut their average family size from two children to one. Should Americans cut their family size to accommodate present levels of immigration?

- |          |          |             |
|----------|----------|-------------|
| 9% – Yes | 83% – No | 8% – Unsure |
|----------|----------|-------------|

## 5. HOW MUCH MORE POPULATION GROWTH—IF ANY?

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(1972 & 2012 poll) Would you be **concerned if the population growth of the United States slowed down and gradually leveled off?**

- |                 |                |                   |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 26% & 31% – Yes | 67% & 59% – No | 7% & 10% – Unsure |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|

(2012 poll) **Over the next century**, would you **prefer the nation’s population** to stay about the same around 312 million, slowly become smaller, or continue to grow by half to 450 million, double to 600 million, or more than double the nation’s population to above 600 million?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>10% – Approve of current high growth</b> | <b>46% – Prefer no more population growth</b> |
| 7% – Prefer current doubling to 600 million | 25% – Prefer staying around 312 million       |
| 3% – Prefer more than doubling              | 13% – Prefer the 250 million of 1990          |
|   | 8% – Prefer the 200 million of 1970           |

- 35% – Want much slower growth**
- 35% – Grow by half to 450 million
- 9% – Unsure



NumbersUSA is releasing these poll results at the “2012 Earth Day Dallas” festival where it is asking the same questions of attendees.

The Dallas results, along with those of a national on-line survey, are being displayed at <https://www.numbersusa.com/content/action/earth-day-poll-results.html>

On this 40th anniversary of recommendations for a sustainable U.S. population size for the benefit of future generations, see how your opinions compare with those of other Americans.