

## **STATEWIDE PLANNING**

### **California Cuts Its Population Projection**

**The state is reconsidering the demands for new schools and other services primarily because of an unexpectedly large decline in the Latino birthrate.**

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**By Daryl Kelley, staff writer**

Excerpt:

California analysts have sharply reduced estimates of the state's future population, and state planners are reconsidering long-term needs for new schools and other public services primarily as the result of an unexpectedly large decline in the birthrate among Latinos.

The state's population will keep growing as the result of two things: immigration, and births continuing to outpace deaths. But the increase will be notably slower than once believed.

Demographic experts now project California's population to hit about 51 million by 2040 — 7 million fewer than they forecast a few years ago, according to new state estimates. The state currently has about 36 million residents.

So instead of 600,000 new residents a year, officials now project the state will average about 400,000 annually.

"That maybe takes some pressure off. But even at 51 million, that's nearly a 50% increase over today's population," said Terry Roberts, a director in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

"We still have to take care of the people who are here today and who arrive next year, much less 35 years down the line," she said. "And we're already behind."

Much of the drop in projected population results from about 6 million fewer births than originally estimated.

The decline was particularly steep, as much as 30%, among the hundreds of thousands of Latinas born in foreign countries, said Hans Johnson, a demographer at the San Francisco-based Public Policy Institute of California.

"It's a big story for California's future," he said. "It will have a significant effect on demand for everything from schooling to water and infrastructure and other public services."

"The shift from rural economies to urbanization is a big part of it," said Tim Miller, a demographer at UC Berkeley. Around the globe, when families move from farms to cities, they no longer need children as laborers and begin to have fewer.

Here at home, California's overall fertility rate has dropped to 2.13 children for each woman of childbearing age, down from 2.46 in 1990, according to the state's most recent figures. #

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/state/la-me-birthrate4oct04,1,7496712.story?coll=la-news-state>