

Surveyor: _____

Respondent: _____

Date: _____

POPULATION GROWTH

Opinions

- We need to reduce the human population
- We need to hold steady as we reach peak population
- We need to keep growing our population
- _____

Beliefs

- At current birth and death rate projections, the earth will reach peak population by the 2080's
- Our current population is straining Earth's resources
- The population "time bomb" that made headlines in the 1970's never materialized
- Technology and innovation have enabled our species to grow and will continue to do so
- Until the 20th century, population growth was very slow - high birth rates were countered by high death rates for infants and children
- In the early 20th century, better health care and medication caused high population growth rates
- From the late 20th century to the present, birth rates declined due to higher income and education levels for women, access to contraception, and changes in social norms about families and parenting
- Without population growth there will be increased tension between wealthy and poor nations over differences in resource consumption and standard of living
- Birth rates are too low - our species is doomed if our population shrinks
- Nations will take away women's rights through incentives and coercion to have more children
- Overpopulation will degrade the environment, deplete limited resources, strain social relations and infrastructure
- We will figure out ways to accommodate negative (or zero) population growth rates and still have a healthy economy
- The demographic shift to an older population is unsustainable
- Our world is rapidly aging, with fewer working-age bodies to support social programs and growing populations of pensioners
- A growing population will accelerate innovation, grow the economy, and increase the workforce.
- Our country needs to grow our population to be economically competitive and protect national security
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Respondent

Review the survey. You should be able to find some statements that you agree with and check them off. Feel free to add some of your own opinions and beliefs. Perhaps add a personal note. Then, ask that the document be stored in a way that a future generation will discover it.

For the Surveyor

Find someone in your life who is part of an older generation. Don't confront them. Just work with them to capture their point of view. Archive the document in a way that someone you trust can access it in the year 2070. Storing a digital image is a fine idea, but how many of the thousands of images you have stored will ever see the light of day? Consider preserving a physical copy.

Background Information

There are many strongly held opinions about this survey topic. There is some uncertainty about how it will play out over the next few decades. Many of us will not be here to defend ourselves when future generations judge us. More importantly, how will our direct descendants remember us?

You can fill out and archive this survey for yourself. Or you can ask someone else to fill it out and archive it for them. The survey is meant to cover a wide range of beliefs about a topic without being biased. Whoever fills out the survey should be able to find a few comments that they agree with. There are blank lines for respondents to write-in their own beliefs. If respondents do not have clearly defined beliefs on this topic, then it is OK for them to take a little time and do some research.

This survey may inspire you to archive hard copy versions of documents and photos that are important to you. We all have thousands of digital files and images stored in the cloud or backup drives. It won't hurt to print and store key items from your life: birth and marriage certificates, concert tickets, family portraits, and this survey! Use acid-free paper (most ordinary copy paper will do). Keep items away from sunlight, heat, humidity – a closet is better than the attic or garage.

Call to Action

Be ready for the year 2070. We may not be there, but our adult children or grandchildren probably will be. At a family gathering, our descendants might be pulled aside by a young child. That child will ask about the olden days, back in the early 21st century, saying, "What were they thinking?" Don't let your adult descendants be caught flat-footed. Don't let them misrepresent your views – throw you under the bus – and blame you and your generation for the state of the world in 2070. Make sure your adult descendants have a record of your thoughts and beliefs. This survey is the simplest way to do that.

Good luck