

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 population growth in a way that the Earth can support 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

Call to Action

What will our great-great-grandchildren say about us?

Imagine the year 2070. We may not be there, but our children or grandchildren probably will be. Their grandchildren will ask about the olden days, back in the early 21st century, saying, “What were they thinking? Didn’t grown-ups know back then how bad this was going to be?”

These survey topics may seem vast and impersonal. We may shrug and claim that our actions as individuals don’t matter. As one of more than 8 billion people, it’s easy for us to hide in the herd and dodge blame. However, these topics become personal, and we feel more accountable, when we realize that our direct descendants will judge us for our actions and beliefs.

Our grandchildren will be caught flat-footed – or worse, misrepresent our beliefs! – when their kids confront them about our generation’s legacy. Don’t let *your* grandchildren throw you under the bus when talking to *their* grandkids in the year 2070. (Unless you deserve to be blamed for the state of the world in the late 21st century.) Ensure your descendants have an accurate record of your thoughts and beliefs. These surveys are the simplest way to do that.

Guidance

Each survey is meant to cover a wide range of beliefs about a single topic without being biased. Respondents 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 that uncertainty may lead to some healthy research and introspection before they feel ready to share their beliefs with posterity.

This survey may inspire you to archive hard copy versions of other documents and photos that are important to you. We all have thousands of digital files and images stored in the cloud or on backup drives. Consider storing physical copies of 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. How about a time capsule?

For the Respondent

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

For the Surveyor

Take the time to sit down with people who matter to you, especially older folks. Don’t confront them. Instead, work with them to capture their point of view. Archive the document in a way that someone will be able to access it in the year 2070.

Good luck