New IFS Report: Without Action, America Will Soon See Population Decline

American fertility has collapsed to record lows, and will begin to experience population decline sooner than popular forecasts are expecting.

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A blockbuster new report from Dr. Lyman Stone and Peter Foreshaw Brookes of the Institute for Family Studies examines the sustained decline in American fertility, what it means for the U.S. population, and the cultural and political actions necessary to reverse the tide.

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>
> *Lyman Stone*

The Demographic Dead End: Without Action, American Population Will Soon Decline, presents data-driven findings on American fertility rates, the impacts of culture, and a suite of out-of-the-box policy proposals for combating the fertility decline in new ways.

Remarkably, the report argues that mainstream population forecasts are plagued by wishful thinking, making their projections overly optimistic. The IFS forecast predicts that the total U.S. population will peak in the 2050s and begin a long decline unless bold steps are taken to change American family policy and culture.

KEY FINDINGS:

- 351 MILLION: U.S. population will peak at about 351 million and begin declining in the 2050s if fertility rates keep declining. The IFS population forecast accounts for a continued reduction in fertility rates and lower levels of immigration than popular forecasts suggest.

- 2.4 Children: Although the U.S. fertility rate has plunged to 1.6 children per woman, Americans aspire to have 2.4 children each, as the gap between desired and actual fertility widens.

- 10%: Helpful friends can increase couples’ intention to have another child by 10 percentage points, an indication that a culture can directly impact desired fertility.

- $15,000: The amount of money put invested in the name of each child in what the report calls “American Birthday Accounts,” a long-run baby bonus that takes a market-oriented approach to investing in family formation.

“All too often, family policy is based on one bad idea: tax workers to subsidize parents. This fails because, it turns out, most parents are workers too. We have a different idea: invest in markets, and use the returns to subsidize parents. Instead of family policy fighting the markets, we're suggesting that family policy embrace the markets,” Stone said.

“If current trends continue, American population will peak in 2054, before entering Japanese-style decline. If we want to turn that around, we're going to have to do something big.”

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Lyman Stone is a Senior Fellow and Director of the Pronatalism Initiative at the Institute for Family Studies. He is also the Director of Research at the consulting firm Demographic Intelligence. A widely cited demographer and economist, Stone holds a PhD in sociology from McGill University and previously worked as an international economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Peter Foreshaw Brookes is a Research Associate for the Pronatalism Initiative at the Institute for Family Studies. Brookes holds a Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Oxford and is based in the United Kingdom.

ABOUT IFS

The Institute for Family Studies is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Our mission is to strengthen marriage and family life and advance the welfare of children through research and public education.
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