

# 30,000,000 Texans

**T**he Texas population now tops 30 million according to recent estimates from the US Census Bureau. In fact, the state added 470,708 people (measured from July 2021 to July 2022), the largest-gaining state in the nation. Growth in Texas last year was fueled by gains from all three components: net domestic migration (230,961), net international migration (118,614), and natural increase (118,159). That's a lot of new Texans (almost 1,300 every day)!

Growth among states continues to be very uneven. Florida added the second-largest number of new residents (416,754) and was the fastest-growing state in 2022 in percentage terms, with an annual population increase of 1.9%. Other states with large gains include North Carolina, Georgia, and Arizona. About 37.5% of the net expansion in the entire country was in Texas.

However, 18 states had population declines for the year. New York had the largest annual numeric and percent population decline, decreasing by 180,341 (-0.9%). California and Illinois also had six-figure decreases.

Moves around the United States accounted for a notable component of the changes. The biggest gains from net domestic migration last year were in Florida (318,855), Texas (230,961) and North Carolina (99,796). The biggest losses were in California (-343,230), New York (-299,557) and Illinois (-141,656).

People choosing to move to Texas reflects a range of factors, from the dy-



## THE ECONOMIST

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amic economy to greater affordability. With companies locating and expanding and the likelihood that the state will outperform most areas, we can expect to continue to attract new residents from other parts of the country and the world. At the same time, a younger population contributes to the natural growth rate.

Schools will need to expand. According to data from the Texas Education Agency, total enrollment in Texas public schools increased by nearly 429,000 students (8.6%) over the past 10 years, and many schools are crowded. In addition, nearly 61% of all students are identified as economically disadvantaged and the number is rising (up by some 56,000 over the last year). The percentage of students identified as emergent bilingual students/English learners is also growing and now approaches 22%. Both of these groups may require additional resources in the classroom and are critical to our future workforce.

Accommodating the substantial population expansion expected in the decades to come will also require investing in infrastructure of all types - highways, broadband, electric transmission and distribution, pipelines, and water delivery systems. The key is to try to get ahead of (or at least stay with) the increases to avoid eroding quality of life for all.

With the right investments in education and infrastructure, we can keep Texas a great place to live and work. We have the resources. It's time to step up! Stay safe!