

BY WILLIAM H. FREY

**America is aging fast;** if you doubt it, think of the blizzard of ads for products ranging from Viagra to Lipitor to Botox. Yet the states are not graying in lockstep. And in coming years, the differences will make life more interesting for marketers, policy wonks and labor recruiters – most of all in the Sun Belt, where “younging” and aging will occur simultaneously.

The demographic dominance of the Sun Belt is all the more dramatic when one remembers that just 35 years ago, the Northeast and Midwest were home to a majority of Americans, and the source of the country’s manufacturing-based economic muscle. Yet, by 2030, the Snow Belt will house barely one-third of all U.S. residents, and New York will no longer be one of the three most populous states.

The Sun Belt mega-states – California, Texas and Florida – will lead all others, while North Carolina and Georgia will likely edge Ohio and Michigan from the top eight.

Perhaps most striking, Sun Belt states are gaining population at both ends of the age spectrum. Immigrants and interstate migrants are likely to flock to these “sun and fun” locations, even as the “yuppie elderly” are moving there to retire. Nevada is the best



example; its senior population will more than triple by 2030, but its child population will also double. By contrast, 20 states, most of them in the Snow Belt, will suffer absolute declines in their child populations.

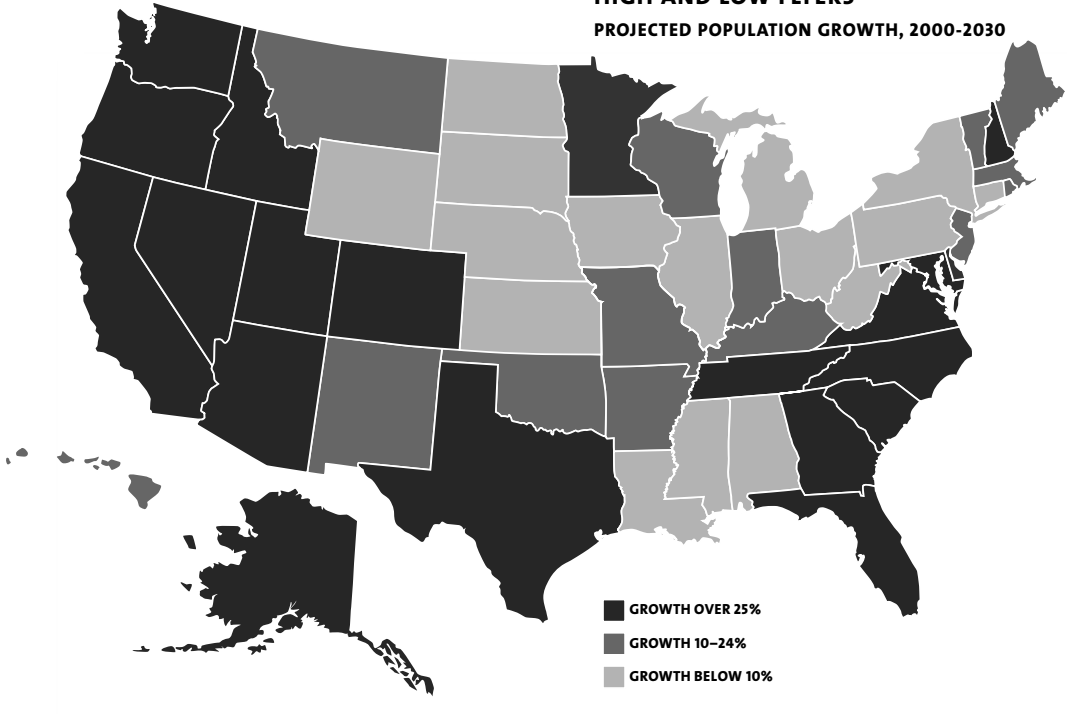
Florida will continue to have the highest share of seniors. But, ironically, most of the extreme aging will take place in the North, where pockets of economically pressed elderly will be left behind. In 2030, residents of Maine and West Virginia are expected to have a median age of 47. In comparison, Sun Belt hotties, Texas and Georgia, will boast a median age of 35.

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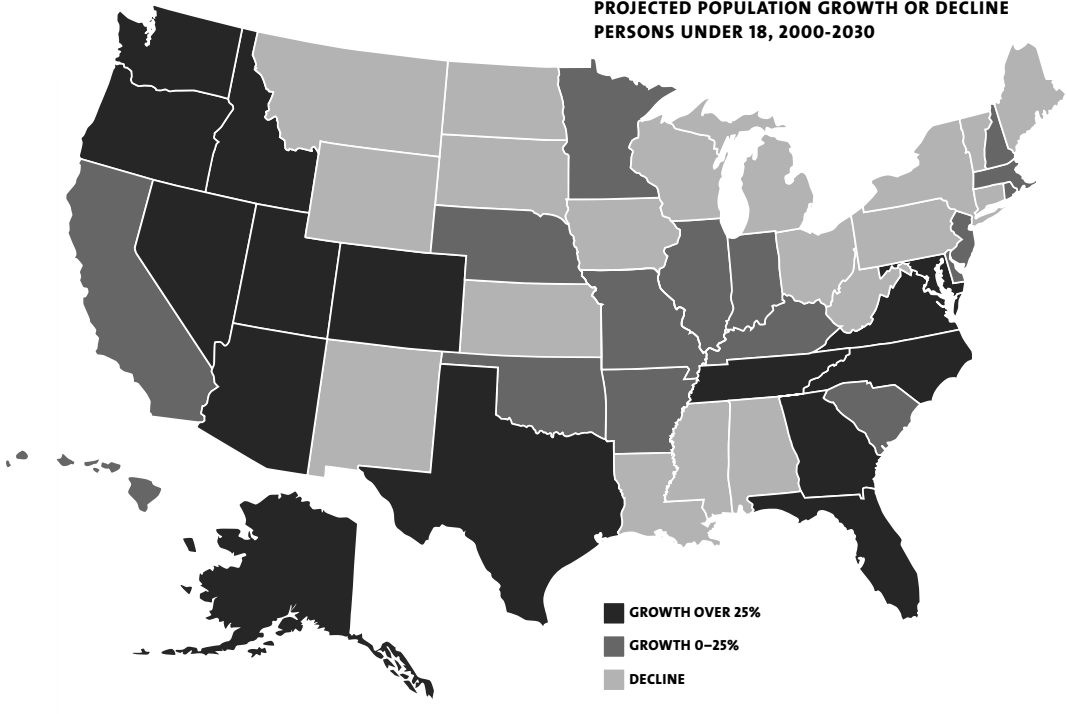
### HIGH AND LOW FLYERS

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH, 2000-2030



### YOUTH EXCHANGE

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH OR DECLINE  
PERSONS UNDER 18, 2000-2030



SOURCE: William H. Frey analysis of U.S. Census sources

