

Birthrates in U.S. again near record low in 2024

Births in the United States increased by just 1% in 2024, still near the record low rates that have alarmed demographers and become a central part of the Trump administration's cultural agenda, according to data released Wednesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

More than 3.6 million babies were born in the United States last year, a meager rise from the record-setting low in 2023. The fertility rate, approximately 1.6 births per woman over her lifetime, is well below the 2.1 births needed to maintain the country's population through births alone.

The new data represents "the continuation of a long-term decline of births in the United States that began really with the Great Recession in 2007," said Ken Johnson, a demographer at the University of New Hampshire.

These numbers, and the reasons that they have experienced such a consistent decline, are widely seen as a problem that could affect the U.S. economy in coming decades, as fewer young workers support an aging population.

President Donald Trump has called for a "baby boom," joining with a conservative "pronatalist" movement that aims to persuade more Americans to get married and have many babies.

Vice President JD Vance and others in the pronatalist movement have criticized childless young Americans, arguing that they are contributing to the potential collapse of the U.S. population because of their disdain for nuclear families and traditional gender roles.

The decrease is partly the result of a remarkable shift in who is giving birth: Much of the long-term trend can be attributed to the substantial reductions in teenage pregnancies over the past several decades.

In 1991, the most recent national peak in teen births, 61.8 births occurred per 1,000 15- to 19-year-olds, but that number was down to 12.7 births by 2024, a record low.

Through the 1990s and into the 2000s, the fertility rate in the United States was around two children per woman, approximately at the level needed to maintain the population through births alone, said Karen Benjamin Guzzo, a family demographer at the University of North Carolina.

But those numbers were actually propped up by the high rate of teen pregnancies, distinguishing the United States from nations in Europe and Asia, which were grappling with fertility rates well below replacement levels without the high levels of teen pregnancies.

"We were really unique in that, embarrassingly so," Guzzo said.

— *The New York Times*