

# THE BALTIMORE SUN

## Maryland population grows by 480,000, Census says

### State retains House seats as others in East slip

By Yeganeh June Torbati, The Baltimore Sun

December 21, 2010

Buoyed by a growing Hispanic population and the availability of steady federal jobs, Maryland grew by 9 percent in the last decade — faster than most Eastern states, according to new Census Bureau data.

Maryland's population grew by 480,000 residents, to 5,773,552, according to data released Tuesday. With a growth rate slightly lower than the national average, Maryland maintained its ranking as the nation's 19th-most-populous state — and retained its seats in the House of Representatives.

Maryland "is attracting immigrants because its economy is doing a little better than other places," said John Iceland, a sociologist at Pennsylvania State University.

Because new immigrants often choose localities where they have family, he said, "immigration can be self-sustaining as long as there are at least some jobs in the area, which I think is the case in Maryland."

The population count, mandated by the Constitution and conducted every 10 years, determines the distribution of the 435 spots in the House of Representatives and directs the flow of billions in federal aid to local jurisdictions.

"The 2010 Census will serve as a backbone for our political and economic system for years to come," said Gary Locke, the U.S. commerce secretary, at a news conference announcing the new figures.

The United States' population grew to 308,745,538, a 9.7 percent jump since 2000, according to the tally. The most robust growth came in Southern and Western states, and for the first time in the country's history, more people live in the West than in the Midwest.

Maryland is one of 32 states that will see no change in its representation in Congress — in contrast to states such as New York and Ohio, which will lose two representatives each. The big winner was Texas, which will add four House seats to its current 32, making it second only to California in representation.

Political analyst David Wasserman said that in the short term, population shifts have helped the Republican Party increase its influence as traditionally Democratic states experienced the biggest

losses in their share of the U.S. total.

Ohio is controlled by Republicans, who are likely to try to eliminate mostly Democratic districts, said Wasserman, who analyzes the House for the nonpartisan Cook Political Report. "You can bet at least one Democrat will not be sitting in a seat when the music stops."

But in the long term, demographic shifts may help the Democratic Party, he said. Several of the new House seats in Texas, Arizona, and Nevada, for example, are likely to represent districts with a majority of Hispanic residents, who typically vote in large numbers for Democratic candidates.

In Maryland, the population continued its trajectory of increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the last 10 years, according to separate estimates updated each year by the Census Bureau.

Much of the last decade's growth has been fueled by the increase in Hispanic residents, and the state is one of a handful in the country — and the only one among its neighbors — where whites are the majority but make up less than 60 percent of the population. Whites now make up about 57 percent of Maryland's population, compared to 62 percent 10 years ago.

The state's black, non-Hispanic population has remained relatively stable, at about 29 percent.

And though Latinos make up about 7 percent of Maryland's population, they have accounted for about 40 percent of the state's growth since 2000.

Maryland's steady growth in the last decade can also be attributed to its many federal workers, said Matthew Crenson, who teaches urban and American politics at the Johns Hopkins University. The state's high proportion of public employees has buffered the state from the harshest impacts of the economic downturn and kept jobs in the state, he said.

"Federal government jobs are generally not affected by recession," Crenson said. "Those people stabilize the population."

Northwest Baltimore, for instance, will soon be home to an office campus for the Social Security Administration, which will house 1,600 employees. Construction on the complex is expected to finish in 2014.

But the same is not true for local employees, whose jobs are vulnerable to belt-tightening at the state and county levels, Crenson said. Gov. Martin O'Malley recently announced buyouts for state workers who quit by the end of January, and the state's public work force has contracted by about 1,300 positions in the last three years.

Data on the populations of localities, which will be used to redraw boundaries of legislative districts, will be released in early 2011.

The redistricting process will likely stretch over more than a year and be carried out in many states by newly ascendant Republican-led legislatures. Analysts predict that they will attempt to

eliminate Democratic districts.

Within Maryland, a controversial law signed by Gov. O'Malley in April counts the state's prisoners as residents of their home addresses. That is expected to boost Baltimore's representation in the state legislature at the expense of Allegany, Washington and Somerset counties, where several large prisons are located.

Wasserman expects Maryland Democrats to try to redraw the 1st District, where Democrat Frank Kratovil lost to Republican Andy Harris in November. But the district is so conservative, he said, that it might be impossible.

"I would think that Democrats would do everything they can to help their cause in the 1st District," he said, "but it's going to be extremely tough."

*jtorbati@baltsun.com*

---

### **Numbers at a glance**

**Maryland population in 2010:** 5,773,552, a 9 percent increase since 2000

**State with the most growth since 2000:** Nevada, with growth of 35.1 percent

**State with the least growth since 2000:** Michigan, with a decrease of 0.6 percent

**States losing congressional seats:** Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania

**States gaining seats:** Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Washington

Copyright © 2010, [The Baltimore Sun](#)