

Guest Column: California is in a state of decline

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California is in a state of stagnancy. Since California joined the Union in 1849, it has enjoyed dynamic and dramatic growth. This expansion has apparently come to a grinding halt.

In fact, the Golden State is actually losing population, stagnant and stalled at 39.185,000 as of January 2022, according to the California Department of Finance and published in the Sacramento Bee.

Blame it on COVID, the slow or no-return-to-normalcy after State-mandated schools and business closures, onerous, oppressive and excessive taxes, the highest fuel prices in the contiguous 48, stratospheric real estate prices, lack of affordable housing, spiking rents, it matters not...

According to the Department of Finance, which provides the statistical data I'm sharing with you, 117,552 Californians moved out of state in 2021. The 3/10 of one percent decrease follows a .59 percent decrease in 2020, when 183,000-plus departed to points North and East. And 34 of 58 counties lost population, including Del Norte County which suffered a 1.4 percent loss since the 2010 census.

Crescent City lost about a thousand residents between 2010 and 2022. The County similarly said sayonara to another thousand departed Del Norte residents. It makes me wonder about the genesis of the housing shortage. Heck, without being too sarcastic, even Pelican Bay State Prison participated in the exodus releasing a significant amount of its inmate population.

California lost a Congressional representative after the 2020 Census. Overwhelmingly, most of the soon-to-be 52 Representatives in the Golden State belong to the Democrat Party.

There's a lot at stake. Jobs, provided services, housing, and numerous negative economic repercussions will impact each one of us.

Since 2009, California's population has been hovering between 38.1 to 39.6 million Golden Staters. And now, as of the beginning of this year, California is home to an estimated 39,185,605 souls. California remains the most populated State in the Union. Texas and Florida are far behind second and third with growing populations of 30 million and 22 million, respectively.

The largest demographic is Baby Boomers representing about 22 percent of the population. This growing seniors group will place great strain on the challenged and beleaguered healthcare system.

The Department of Finance projected 40 million by 2018, 45 million by 2035 and 50 million by 2055. Those projections are clearly and historically obsolete and unrealistic.

Is California stuck in a state of stagnancy? Some affirm stagnancy is on the horizon. I say stagnancy is here now.

How will California fare into the future? How will life change as the Golden State contracts? Uncertain, as the picture is not necessarily a rosy one for the Land of Milk and Honey.

The model for the One Party State is one of more and higher taxes, more government oversight, and more burden placed on those, like me, who won't cut and run to Texas or Tennessee.

California may be doomed to follow the dogma of the Democrat socialist left who spend billions on those whose dependency on the Department of Health and Human Services is more than profound. Dependency on DHHS is big business.

Del Norte County will continue to languish in this utopian swamp. I hold the Board of Supervisors responsible for its Pied Piper loyalty to legislators Mike McGuire, Jim Wood and Gov. Gavin Newsom in expanding the welfare state during their terms in Office.

Panhandlers shamelessly proliferate on public street corners throughout Crescent City and County jurisdictions with faux gas cans and hastily made signage, begging you for money. Some are bold enough to approach you in the private parking lots of Walmart and the Jed Smith Center with their personal sagas. It's intimidating.

Many are desperate, drug addicted, alcoholic and some are mentally ill. Law enforcement is self-handcuffed. The Department of Health and Human Services is inert and fails to address its futility in mitigating these intolerable social conditions. These events are painful to watch and personally more disturbing for me to be the courier of this daunting news.

You and I, and thousands of Del Norters, along with millions of Californians, can make a difference. Find the courage to speak up and say NO to this road to a guaranteed Socialist abyss. There's an election in November.

You matter.

I will continue to stand up with my Constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech and share my core values. Please join me. Don't cut and run.

Stand up and stick it out. You may not find so easily bliss in Boise, happiness in Hialeah, tranquility in Tucson or serenity in San Antonio.

You can make a difference. California is worth fighting for.

Roger Gitlin is a two-term retired Del Norte County supervisor and resides in Crescent City.