

Hispanics will soon outnumber blacks in U.S.



WASHINGTON (AP) — Hispanics will eclipse blacks as the nation's largest minority group in the year 2010, the government said Tuesday in a report that predicts a considerably different America by the mid-21st century.

By 2050, the U.S. population will be almost evenly divided between minorities and non-Hispanic whites, the Census Bureau said.

The bureau's new projections also forecast faster general population growth than previously expected, estimating that the U.S. population will reach 392 million by 2050. That's 52 percent more than the 258.7 million Americans today.

It's also up nine million from a projection issued just last year.

The projection was changed to account for the return of many military people from abroad, updated birth and death statistics, and information showing how new immigration rules have affected the population, said Jennifer Day, a Census

Bureau demographer and author of the report.

Minorities will increase their share of the population, the report said:

- Hispanics, from their present 9 percent of the population to 14 percent in 2010 and 23 percent in 2050.

- Blacks, from 12 percent today to just more than 13 percent in 2010 and 16 percent in 2050.

- Asian-Americans, now 3 percent of the population, to 10 percent at mid-century. They will remain the fastest-growing racial group.

- American Indians, from a little below 1 percent to slightly above 1 percent. Although their share barely changes, their numbers will double from 2.1 million to 4.3 million.

The growth will affect America's non-Hispanic whites, the group that has dominated the nation's politics, economy and culture throughout most of its history.

Their share of the population will drop from 76 percent now to 68 percent in

2010 and 53 percent in 2050. Their number will increase from 188.6 million to 205.8 million.

The explosion in the Hispanic-American population is projected to center around a baby boom. Births accounted for about two-thirds of the projected Hispanic increase; immigration accounts for the rest.

The number of Hispanic births will double by mid-century, the Census Bureau said. Presently Hispanic women age 14 to 49 on average bear 2.9 children apiece over a lifetime, the highest rate of any major ethnic or racial group.

The birth rate for non-Hispanic white women is 1.9 children. The Census Bureau projects births to whites will decline to 2010 and then start to increase.

Black births are expected to increase steadily by 60 percent between now and 2050, and Asian births are likely to triple. American Indian births will increase by half.

The rapid increase in Hispanics compared to other minority groups will bring changes to America from the classroom to

the Congress.

"The mushrooming numbers should translate into a much more vigorous political clout, with more Hispanic members of Congress," said Rep. Jose Serrano, a New York Democrat and leader of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. "These are not abstract numbers to us at all. They are a window into the future."

Much of the increase will happen in a few parts of the country, mainly California, Florida, New York, Texas and the Southwest, said William O'Hare, demographer at the University of Louisville.

"If they're localized, they will control more congressional districts," O'Hare said. "It means if the country is 25 percent Hispanic, they may have half the congressional districts in Texas and zero in the northern plains."

In the Census Bureau's system, Hispanics are an ethnic group, not a race. That means they include people from all the racial classifications: American Indians, Asian-Americans, blacks and whites.

Hispanic blacks are expected to be about 1 percent of the population in 2050.

What books are profs reading?

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Looking for books a college professor might read? Try *The Joy of Cooking* or *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

Those are among 48 entries on the University of Buffalo's "Unrequired Reading List," a compilation of the faculty's best-loved books.

"The list isn't made up necessarily of the 'great books,' but it's definitely full of good books," said Peter Gold, associ-

ate dean of the university's undergraduate college, who headed the project. "Our mission was not to list the great works of world literature but to help undergrads enjoy reading more."

The list was selected by a panel of professors from various disciplines. The 48 titles give undergraduates one book to read for each month of their college career.

Novels include Ray Brad-

bury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* and Katherine Dunn's *Geek Love*.

Non-fiction titles include *The Discoverers* by Daniel Boorstin, *Voyage of the Beagle* by Charles Darwin, *The Guns of August* by Barbara Tuchman, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown and *The Tomb of Tutankhamen* by Howard Carter.

Woman's death on tape

NOVI, Mich. (AP) — A woman called police and screamed, "Help, help, he's killing me!" When officers arrived they found her husband clutching a 10-inch kitchen knife stuck into her chest.

Theresa Watkins, 68, died after suffering about 20 stab wounds early Sunday, authorities said. Frederick J. Watkins, 76, was jailed without bond. No court date was set.

A 911 recording captured Mrs. Watkins pleading for mercy during the attack.

"Help, help, he's killing me! ... Skip, don't stab me again," she yelled.

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