

Rural Migration News

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RURAL AMERICA	1
CALIFORNIA: PEOPLE, WATER, HOUSING	1
FOOD SYSTEM	3
LABOR, COVID, INFLATION	4
FARM WORKERS	6
CALIFORNIA: COAST, UI.....	6
FLORIDA, SOUTHEAST	7
MIDWEST, NORTHEAST, NORTHWEST	8
UFW; UNIONS.....	9
IMMIGRATION	10
FOREIGN-BORN, IMMIGRATION	10
DHS: CBP, ICE, USCIS	11
H-2A GUEST WORKERS	13
CANADA, MEXICO	14
EUROPE, ASIA	16
GLOBAL: UN, THEORY, HEALTH.....	20
OTHER	23
FOOD SPENDING 2020	23
CALIFORNIA: DAIRY, MACHINES	24
US AG, TRADE	25
FOOD, WINE	25
CLIMATE CHANGE	26
FIGURE.....	27

RURAL AMERICA

CALIFORNIA: PEOPLE, WATER, HOUSING

California had 39 million residents in July 2021, 10 million more than Texas with 29 million. California had two million people in 1900, 10 million in 1950, 37 million in 2000, and is projected to have 45 million people in 2050.

The state’s fastest growth decades were the 1920s, when the population rose by 60 percent, and the

1940s and 1950s, when the population jumped 50 percent each decade during and after WWII.

The 2020 census found that 39 percent of California residents were Latino; 35 percent were non-Hispanic white; 15 percent were Asian; five percent were Black; and five percent were multiracial and Native American. About 27 percent of California residents were born abroad.

Major cities in high-cost areas, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and San Francisco, lost residents in 2021, while smaller cities such as Austin and Boise gained residents.

Water

California had atmospheric rivers in October and December 2021 that delivered more rainfall than had fallen during the previous 12 months. Water levels in reservoirs

rose, and there was talk of an end to the years-long drought. However, there was no significant precipitation in January, February, and March 2022, when the Sierra snowpack was less than 40 percent of normal levels and over 90 percent of the state was in severe drought.

Precipitation whiplash, high rainfall followed by no rain, is expected to become the new normal. The federal Central Valley Project announced zero deliveries of water in 2022, and the state water project promised five percent of normal deliveries in 2022. The federal government promised \$2.2 billion in March 2022 to begin construction of the Sites Reservoir in the Sacramento Valley to store more water in wet years.

Over 80 percent of the state's developed water is used by agriculture. Of the 20 percent used by households and industry, 80 percent is used outdoors, often to water lawns.

The proposed Guenoc Valley project near Middletown in Lake County could add 4,000 residents to an area that burned three times in the past seven years, raising questions about building new homes in areas prone to wildfires. The 1970 California Environmental Quality Act was amended to include wildfire as a factor that must be considered during environmental reviews, marking a move from making individual homes more fire-proof to blocking development in fire-prone areas.

The CEQA is often used to block new housing development. Groups suing to block new housing developments argue that, with more wildfires due to climate change, residents could be unable to evacuate safely. Developers counter with plans for more fire stations, underground utilities and vegetation management.

The CEQA was in the spotlight in 2022 when Save Berkeley's Neighborhoods sued to block the construction of more dorms because UC-Berkeley expanded enrollment without considering the environmental impacts of more students. UC-Berkeley said it would reduce the size of the incoming 2022-23 class to maintain total enrollment at 42,300, but a quickly enacted state law overrode the decision that used the CEQA to block more students. UC-Berkeley typically admits about 21,000 first-year and transfer students, and 9,500 enroll.

Filing suits that allege developers did not consider all of a project's environmental impacts can raise costs enough to prompt developers to abandon projects.

Housing

California has 50,000 chronically homeless people, half in Los Angeles. Efforts to end homelessness have stumbled, with cities using approaches that range from destroying tent encampments to enticing homeless people to move into housing. California began to close state mental hospitals in the 1960s, but never fully funded the community mental health facilities that were to replace them.

The median price of a US home rose 19 percent in 2021, raising questions about whether home prices can continue to increase faster than incomes. Housing experts say that a combination of more remote work, investors buying homes based on algorithms rather than in-person inspections, and migration from expensive to cheaper housing markets can keep home prices rising faster than incomes for years.

Some expect more housing supply and rising interest rates to slow the increase in home prices, but

the home-price increase of 2021 is unprecedented and may continue longer than expected if aging baby boomers remain in their homes rather than downsizing into smaller condos or nursing homes. Less than a quarter of California residents have incomes that are sufficient to buy the median single-family home.

California aims for 100 percent clean energy by 2045. Solar panels on homes are a key element in the strategy to achieve this goal, and they provided about 10 percent of the state's electricity in 2021. Unions and utilities are pushing to reduce current subsidies for residential rooftop solar panels that are installed by non-union workers.

Budget

Governor Gavin Newsom in January 2022 unveiled a \$286 billion budget for 2022-23 aimed at accelerating state efforts to deal with climate change, covid, homelessness, the cost of living and crime. The top one percent of California taxpayers pay over 50 percent of the state's income tax, and their taxable incomes are largely tied to the performance of the US stock market. California has a budget surplus due to stock market gains that generate income tax revenues.

Democrats, who have supermajorities in the Legislature, want to introduce a single-payer health insurance system called CalCare to be financed by additional taxes on businesses and high earners. AB 1400, which would have created CalCare at a cost of over \$500 billion a year to be financed by new taxes, died in the Legislature. If approved, CalCare would oversee and fund about 15 percent of the state's economy.

About 10 percent of California's 40 million residents lack health insurance, including 2.2 million unau-

thorized foreigners. Poor residents under 26 are eligible for Medi-Cal benefits, and those 50 and over become eligible in May 2022. Governor Gavin Newsom proposed that the state's remaining 700,000 poor undocumented foreigners become eligible for Medi-Cal at a cost of \$2.2 billion a year to the state in January 2024.

California relied on an independent commission to draw new boundaries to elect federal and state politicians after the state lost one congressional seat as a result of slow population growth between 2010 and 2020. In a third of the new congressional-level districts, Latinos are a majority of residents.

California's gas prices averaged \$1.20 more per gallon in 2021 than the US average due to higher gas taxes and regulations aimed at limiting greenhouse gas emissions that require a unique blend of gasoline.

California's Film Commission provides \$330 million a year in subsidies to firms that make movies and TV programs in the state, and doubled the subsidies in 2022 and 2023 to \$660 million a year. California began to subsidize film production in the state in 2009, and expanded subsidies in 2014 so that up to 25 percent of in-state spending of up to \$100 million in crew salaries and other costs can be recouped from the CFC. Since 2009, the state has paid \$2.5 billion to subsidize almost 600 film productions.

San Francisco voters on February 15, 2022 recalled three school board members who were instrumental in keeping schools closed to in-person instruction during covid, ended merit-based admissions to Lowell High School, and tried to rename 44 city schools that carried the names of US leaders such as Lincoln and Washington.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed supported the recall and will appoint new school board members. Breed favors pragmatism over progressives who want to transform society, including supporting a recall of District Attorney Chesa Boudin in a June 2022 election. San Francisco has more dogs, over 120,000, than children under 18, 115,000, a reflection of high housing prices that encourage families to move to lower cost areas.

Oakland has 80 public schools for 35,000 students, while districts with similar numbers of students have about 40 schools. The school district voted to close 11 schools to keep its \$700 million a year budget in balance, drawing protests from parents and students.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority in February 2022 estimated the cost of the 500-mile bullet train between Northern and Southern California would be \$105 billion; the original 2008 estimated cost was \$40 billion. The first 120-mile stretch in the San Joaquin Valley is expected to open in 2022.

California in 2020 enacted a law that created a nine-member task force to develop reparation proposals by 2023 for African Americans, especially descendants of those enslaved. In March 2022, the task force recommended 5-4 that payments be limited to African-American descendants of enslaved people and descendants of freed Black people living in the United States before the 19th century. The dissenters countered that all of the state's 2.6 million Black residents have suffered from the consequences of slavery.

California is home to 26 of the 100 richest people in the US, and 189 of the 724 US billionaires on the Forbes list for 2021 (New York is second with 126 billionaires). Forbes

says that 44 percent of the California's billionaires made their money in tech, 23 percent in finance, and seven percent in real estate. The three richest Californians are Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook and Larry Page and Sergey Brin of Google.

FOOD SYSTEM

The Biden Administration is trying to increase competition in meat processing by providing \$100 million in grants and loans to small meat processors and increase competition between meatpackers for farmers' cattle. By supporting smaller meatpackers, the goal is to encourage the four firms that process 85 percent of US cattle, JBS USA Holdings, Tyson Foods, Cargill and National Beef Packing, to pay higher prices for cattle to farmers.

The market share of the largest four meatpackers rose from 25 percent in 1977 to 71 percent in 1992 as meat processing firms merged and were sold to larger entities. Real wages fell sharply during the 1980s, as older and unionized plants in urban areas were replaced by newer nonunion plants in rural areas that were often staffed by immigrants. An average 117,000 US cattle were processed each day in 2021.

Cattle feedlots pay about \$1,200 for year-old calves that weigh 750 pounds and fatten them to 1,300-pound steers in about six months, when they are sold to meat processors for \$1,800 each.

The US Department of Justice charged that US chicken processors conspired to fix the price of chicken as well as the wages of their employees. By sharing information on wages and benefits, DOJ argues that processors can hold down labor costs. Private suits filed by workers allege that 20 chicken

processors conspired with two data-providing firms to exchange labor cost data and led to several settlements, although the processors did not admit guilt.

Most chicken and hogs are raised under contracts with meatpackers, making it harder for new and vertically integrated processing firms to compete in chicken and pork processing.

Most fresh food goes directly from farms to retail and food service distribution centers, while food that is processed goes from farm to factory and then to retailers. Processing and transportation firms in winter 2022 complained of labor shortages as covid left 10 percent of workers sick at some firms, leading to empty store shelves. Many employers asked their non-sick employees to work additional hours, which fueled employee burnout and may encourage more workers to quit their jobs.

LABOR, COVID, INFLATION

In March 2022 the US unemployment rate fell to 3.6 percent as job growth continued. The US had 152.5 million jobs in February 2020, and 150.9 million in February 2022 or 93 percent of pre-covid employment. Employment fell by 22 million between February and April 2020, and has almost recovered to pre-pandemic levels, but 20 million US residents who are 25 to 54 are not in the labor force.

Covid

Positive covid cases and hospitalizations fell sharply in spring 2022 as the more contagious but less dangerous omicron wave passed. Life began to return to normal as more people returned to offices, visited restaurants and engaged in other indoor activities.

Polls suggest that older Americans and Republicans are less worried about covid than younger residents and Democrats. Policies to counter covid further divided Americans, with Republicans stressing individual responsibility and Democrats emphasizing the need for government mandates to close businesses, mandate vaccines and masks, and support to poorer residents.

The great resignation from work continued in spring 2022, as the labor force participation rate remained below the 63.3 percent of February 2020, meaning that almost two-thirds of US residents 16 and older were employed or looking for work. Many baby boomers retired early during the covid pandemic, and many Gen Z workers in their 20s quit jobs in hospitality and other low-wage sectors to re-evaluate their life goals.

Over 47 million US workers quit their jobs in 2021, reflecting dissatisfaction with labor market trends that began before covid. Job vacancies averaged over 10 million in 2021, prompting some employers to hire too many workers, assign them less than 40 hours a week, and determine who is reliable. Some workers who were frustrated with 20- and 30-hour a week jobs quit.

Wages for low-skilled workers are rising, but earnings may not increase if workers do not get more hours of work. Most employers in service industries rely on software that schedules employees to work only when they are needed. One study found that fast food workers averaged just two months of work in 2021 at each restaurant where they worked, although some quit one restaurant and moved to another.

Many firms outsource some of their work to contractors and staffing agencies, giving them more flexibility to match employment with

consumer demand. Many workers employed by outsourcers have uncertain schedules; some are expected to be available for full-time work even if they typically work only 20 or 30 hours a week. Many workers who are employed less than 35 hours a week under just-in-time schedules are not eligible for employer-provided benefits such as health insurance and pensions.

The US Supreme Court in January 2022 declared that OSHA's regulation requiring the 84 million employees of private employers with 100 or more employees to be vaccinated or tested weekly was an unlawful exercise of OSHA's authority to keep workplaces safe. The USSC allowed a separate HHS mandate that 10 million employees of facilities that treat patients covered by Medicare and Medicaid must be vaccinated.

California in February 2022 re-introduced two weeks or 80 hours of supplemental paid sick leave for full-time workers at workplaces with 25 or more employees who are recovering from covid or caring for infected family members between January 1 and September 20, 2022. California requires three days of paid sick leave; the state's previous supplemental paid sick leave law expired September 30, 2021.

Inflation

US prices rose seven percent in 2021, the highest inflation in four decades, as the price of housing, autos, and food rose; prices rose about four percent in Europe. Wages for low-skilled workers rose as businesses scrambled to hire, but real wages for many workers declined.

Dynamic pricing is spreading from airlines to grocery and home goods stores, allowing firms to change prices frequently. Online sellers can and do adjust their prices several times a day in response to supply and demand.

High US inflation reflects both supply and demand factors. On the supply side, the US labor force shrank and has not yet returned to pre-covid levels. On the demand side, the US government provided more stimulus aid than European governments, increasing the demand for goods. The unreliability of public and private services, from transit to schools to out-of-stock stores, led to dis-satisfaction that is blamed on both covid and inflation.

The Biden administration cited microeconomic factors such as large firms raising prices and called for anti-trust actions. Republicans, by contrast, cited macroeconomic factors such as payments to individuals and extended unemployment insurance that resulted in too much money chasing too few goods, allowing firms to raise prices. One reason for stagflation in the 1970s was the 1960s attitude that inflation is primarily a microeconomic issue.

The US economy strengthened in spring 2022 even as the Fed raised interest rates. Early in 2022, there were 900 tech startups each worth over \$1 billion, as venture capital valued efforts to capitalize on artificial intelligence, nuclear technology, electric vehicles, and space travel at stratospheric levels. US startups raised over \$330 billion in 2021, and startups that went public in 2021 were valued at \$775 billion by the stock market, including Checkout.com that was valued at \$40 billion.

Covid may mark a turning point for the economy, leaving a legacy of more government debt, persisting inflation and lower labor force participation. Before covid, a combination of weak consumer demand and an integrated global economy kept inflation low as aging residents in richer countries increased their savings, and this Japan-model appeared to be spreading to Europe and the US.

Government stimulus jump-started consumer demand, supply chains could not keep up, and inflation accelerated. The question is whether another round of globalization will reduce prices or whether reshoring or deglobalization and the switch to green energy will keep costs and prices high.

US government debt topped \$30 trillion for the first time in January 2022, up \$7 trillion from January 2020 due to pandemic-related spending. US GDP is \$22.5 trillion, making government debt 133 percent of GDP. US government debt was \$5 trillion in the mid-1990s and \$10 trillion before the 2008-09 recession.

Neoliberalism or the Washington consensus in economics became dominant in the 1990s, when the US and other economies flourished as freer trade and private markets determined more prices and wages. Several foundations committed over \$40 million in February 2022 to university research centers to develop alternatives to neoliberalism by focusing on inequalities, low-wage workers and new technologies.

The Biden administration released a report in March 2022 that concluded that the use of noncompete and nondisclosure requirements reduced worker wages by 15 to 25 percent. Outsourcing work to contractors who must compete with each other for jobs puts downward pressure on wages, according to the report, as do mergers that reduce competition between firms for workers.

H-1B

Foreigners who earn degrees from US universities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) may stay and work in the US for three years after graduation as optional practical trainees. USCIS

in January 2022 expanded the number of fields that qualify as STEM and lengthened the period of stay after graduation in order to keep foreign talent in the US.

All foreign graduates of US universities may remain in the US up to a year after graduation for OPT, but STEM graduates can remain three years. USCIS also announced that J-1 visa holders can work in the US up to three years, double the current 18 months. These changes could provide more foreign workers to US businesses who cannot obtain H-1B workers.

Education

The US Supreme Court will consider cases brought by Students for Fair Admissions that allege Harvard's admissions program discriminates against Asian Americans and that the University of North Carolina's admissions program discriminates against white and Asian applicants. A 4-3 USSC decision in 2016 upheld a University of Texas program that considered the race of applicants in order to achieve a diverse student body. UT administrators could "reconcile the pursuit of diversity with the constitutional promise of equal treatment and dignity."

Some 43 million Americans owe \$1.6 trillion in federal student debt, including over five million who are in default, meaning that they have not made any payments for at least a year; another \$130 billion is owed in private student loans. It is difficult to discharge student debt in bankruptcy, prompting calls for the federal government to forgive up to \$50,000 in student debt per borrower. President Biden pledged to cancel up to \$10,000 in student debt per person, and suspended interest and principal repayments until May 2022 due to covid.

FARM WORKERS

CALIFORNIA: COAST, UI

California's farm sales are \$50 billion a year, almost twice the \$27 billion farm sales of number two Iowa. Half of the state's farm sales are from the eight-county San Joaquin Valley, where Fresno, Kern and Tulare counties collectively account for 45 percent of the state's farm sales.

The coastal county of Monterey is fourth, with farm sales of \$4 billion, followed by Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, each with farm sales of almost \$2 billion. In the three coastal counties, the leading individual commodity by farm sales is strawberries.

The three major coastal farming counties have 600,000 acres of irrigated crop land, half in Monterey County, or eight percent of the state's irrigated crop land. However, these three counties produce \$8 billion worth of farm commodities a year, over 15 percent of the state's farm sales.

About 300,000 acres of Monterey County farm land is irrigated, and most of this irrigated crop land straddles Highway 101 that runs north and south through the center of the county. Monterey County had farm sales of \$4 billion in 2020, almost three-fourths from vegetables, making Monterey the US salad bowl. The leading commodity was strawberries worth \$920 million, followed by leaf (\$710 million) and head (\$430 million) lettuce.

Santa Barbara has 120,000 irrigated acres concentrated in the north around Santa Maria and around Lompoc and Solvang. Santa Barbara County had farm sales of \$1.8 billion in 2020 (excluding cannabis), led by strawberries worth \$725 million, cauliflower worth \$110 million, and broccoli worth \$105 million.

Ventura county had 100,000 irrigated acres and farm sales were \$2 billion in 2020, led by \$574 million worth of strawberries, \$215 million worth of lemons, and almost \$200 million worth of nursery stock.

UI

California employers pay taxes of up to six percent of the first \$7,000 of each employee's earnings in order to provide unemployment insurance benefits to laid off workers. Employers are rated, and individual payroll tax rates of 1.5 to 6.2 percent reflect how many of each employer's ex-employees are among the 50,000 Californians a week who typically request UI benefits. The maximum employer UI contribution is \$434 per employee per year.

When lockdowns were imposed in March-April 2020, up to 500,000 Californians a week applied for benefits. Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance provided an additional \$600 a week to beneficiaries, so that many low earners received over \$1,000 a week in federal and state UI benefits. State UI benefits are a maximum \$450 a week, and the average state UI benefit in 2021 was \$320 a week.

Especially the federal PUA benefits attracted fraudulent claims. Since self-employed workers could receive UI benefits for income losses that continued over several months, PUA benefit checks could be several thousand dollars. EDD and other state agencies could not easily check on self-employment income, and fraudsters found it easy to get PUA benefits. One estimate is that California paid almost \$20 billion in fraudulent PUA benefit claims.

California borrowed almost \$20 billion from the federal government to pay state UI benefits in 2020 and 2021, more than all other states combined. California's

unemployment rate rose more than the US rate and remained elevated longer. Governor Newsom wants to use some of the state's budget surplus to pay down the UI debt, while some legislators want to increase the wages on which UI taxes are paid toward the \$56,500 in Washington.

By taxing only the first \$7,000 earned by workers, California's UI system is regressive in the sense that employers of low-wage workers pay proportionately more than employers of high-wage workers. If higher UI taxes reduce wages, low-wage workers are subsidizing high-wage workers who receive UI benefits.

Employers opposed SB 1044, which would allow workers to refuse to work if they believe their workplace is unsafe due to a natural disaster, with employers liable to PAGA suits if they discipline workers who refuse to work. Employers say that existing Cal-OSHA laws and regulations already ensure a safe workplace. PAGA suits are filed by private lawyers who normally keep a third of what they recover on behalf of workers.

AB 857 in 2021 and SB 1102 in 2020 would require employers of H-2A workers to pay for travel time between worker housing and fields under the theory that guest workers have no alternative means of getting to their jobs.

AB 2847 would allocate \$6.9 million to create a state Excluded Workers Pilot Program to provide UI benefits of up to \$300 a week for 20 weeks to unauthorized workers who were laid off or had their hours reduced. Federal law prevents unauthorized workers from receiving regular UI benefits.

Roberto Perez and Perez Bros Farms in Turlock were charged in February 2022 with failing to hire US workers, underpaying H-2A workers, and providing inadequate

housing and transportation for the H-2As. WHD ordered \$83,000 in back wages for 92 workers and \$37,000 in CMPs.

The US Supreme Court heard arguments March 30, 2022 in a case challenging California's Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) law that permits private attorneys to sue employers for violating state labor laws as a violation of the Federal Arbitration Act. Many employers include arbitration clauses in their employment agreements that require aggrieved employees to submit to arbitration rather than sue their employers.

A former employee of Viking River Cruises "agreed to resolve all future employment-related disputes with Viking via bilateral arbitration," but invoked PAGA to sue for violations of state labor law on behalf of herself and other Viking employees. Viking's efforts to block the PAGA suit were denied by California courts.

FLORIDA, SOUTHEAST

Florida has more H-2A jobs certified than any other state. WHD found that Arcadia-area FLCs Benjamin M. Ramirez Harvesting Inc, AO Harvesting LLC and Gustavo Cisneros Harvesting Inc did not pay 123 H-2A workers for at least three-fourths of their contracts and ordered them to pay \$72,600 in back wages. The three FLCs used CCH Bookkeeping as their agent to obtain H-2A workers, and harvested citrus for Alico.

Florida H-2A job offers for 2022 must guarantee at least \$12.08 an hour, but many harvesting jobs pay piece rate wages. Rodriguez Citrus Harvesting of Immokalee offered piece rates of \$1 per 90-pound field box to pick Valencia oranges, with an 8.7 box per hour minimum productivity standard so that workers earned at least the \$12.41 minimum wage guarantee.

Florida expected 44.5 million 90-pound boxes of oranges in 2021-22, the smallest number since 1945, as citrus greening reduces yields. Brazil expects to harvest 264 million boxes or six times more oranges. Florida's citrus acreage declined by half between 2001 and 2021 due to urbanization and disease. The price of orange juice is rising, especially for PepsiCo's Tropicana and Coca Cola's Minute Maid brands.

Pacific Tomato Growers in Immokalee offered a piece rate of \$0.65 per bucket to pick round tomatoes, \$0.75 for Romas, \$3.25 for cherry tomatoes, and \$4.50 for grape tomatoes, setting productivity standards of at least 17, 15, 3.5, and 2.5 buckets per hour.

Harvest CROO Robotics is developing a strawberry harvester. Humans harvest at least 80 percent of the ripe strawberries on each pass through the field and pick a ripe strawberry every two or three seconds. The Harvest CROO machine can pick about half of the ripe strawberries in each pass through the field, and requires more time because the machine moves, stops, picks with 16 arms, and moves again to cover eight acres a day. Harvest CROO was co-founded by Gary Wishnatzki, whose 600 acre Wish Farms currently relies on 600 seasonal pickers, mostly H-2A workers.

Georgia

The Homeland Security Investigations agency on November 17, 2021 charged 24 people with human smuggling and labor trafficking in South Georgia, alleging that they charged fees to the H-2A workers they recruited in Mexico and Northern Triangle countries, required them to pay for housing while in the US, and paid the H-2A workers as little as \$0.20 a bucket to harvest onions.

The 26 H-2A workers who were employed when HSI arrested their employers were taken to Douglas, Georgia and provided with assistance. Some are expected to apply for T-immigrant visas, which are available to foreigners who assist in criminal investigations and their families.

The first three defendants were sentenced to federal prison in March 2022.

North Carolina

North Carolina's 2017 Farm Act makes it unlawful for employer-union contracts in agriculture to include provisions that allow employers to deduct union dues from worker paychecks and send them to the union representing them, so-called dues checkoff provisions. The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) challenged the law, arguing that its chief sponsor, State Senator Brent Jackson of the Jackson Farming Company, was retaliating against FLOC because FLOC helped workers who accused Jackson of wage theft reach a settlement in 2017.

FLOC has 6,000 dues-paying members, including 4,800 in North Carolina, but represents 10,000 North Carolina farm workers, including H-2A workers brought to North Carolina by the 700-member North Carolina Growers' Association (NCGA). FLOC charges 2.5 percent of worker wages as union dues, and says that there are about 2,000 dues-paying FLOC members in North Carolina at any one time who are served by four full-time union staff. FLOC, which first negotiated an agreement with the NCGA in 2004, reported that union dues are over half of its annual income.

South Carolina

The operators of Balcazar Nature Harvesting were charged with labor trafficking and fraud in January

2022. Balcazar allegedly forced H-2A workers to work excessive hours and threatened to deport those who did not work hard enough or produce enough.

DOL's Wage and Hour Division completed 300 investigations in the southeastern states in 2021 and found violations on 240 or 80 percent of the farms investigated. DOL ordered the payment of \$1.9 million in back wages to 4,000 employees, an average \$475, and assessed \$1.7 million in civil money penalties.

MIDWEST, NORTHEAST, NORTHWEST

Maine

Maine's governor vetoed LD 1711 in January 2022, a bill that would have allowed farm workers on farms with five or more employees to unionize, citing its "complicated provisions on mediation and arbitration." The legislature did not override the veto.

Forestry and logging employment averages 2,000 in Maine, and includes at least a dozen H-2A drivers who haul lumber within Maine and to Canada. A third of the logging jobs are in Aroostook County bordering Canada.

Canadian workers have long been involved in Maine forestry as H-2A workers, but a 2010 state law restricted the movement of workers and equipment from Canada to Maine under the H-2A program and reduced the number of H-2A workers from over 600 before 2009 to less than 100 in 2021. In response, some Canadian firms allegedly established US subsidiaries and used these subsidiaries to apply for H-2A visas for Canadian workers.

New York

The Farm Laborer Wage Board recommended that the state

Commissioner of Labor phase in overtime pay by reducing the current 60 hours a week threshold before overtime wages are paid to 40 hours a week by 2032. Under the Board's recommendation, the overtime threshold would be 56 hours after January 1, 2024, 52 hours in 2026, 48 hours in 2028, 44 hours in 2030, and 40 hours in 2032.

Indigenous Purepecha from the 10,000-resident village of Comachuen in the highlands of Michoacán who are employed as H-2A workers on New York farms remit an average \$7,500 a year, which sustains their families in an area that is transitioning from forestry to avocado orchards.

Virginia

DOL's WHD assessed Reyes Nature Greens LLC \$20,000 in back wages and \$36,000 in CMPs for failing to pay the AEW for all hours worked, failing to pay for at least three-fourths of the hours promised, and failing to provide adequate housing and transportation to H-2A workers.

Illinois

Chicago, a city of 2.75 million, had over 800 murders in 2021, the most in decades. Efforts to spur development in the southern and western sides of the city include raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Mayor Lori Lightfoot, who is seeking re-election in 2022, has clashed with police and teachers' unions.

Tennessee

As more people work remotely, lower cost of living areas such as Jackson County halfway between Nashville and Knoxville are benefitting from rising populations, home values and taxes. Median home prices are less than \$250,000 and median rents less than \$600 a month. Workers who earn prevailing wages from local

employers may be better off than workers in cities who earn more but have higher living costs.

Texas

DOL ordered Blaine Larsen Farms of Dalhart to pay \$1.3 million to 500 H-2A workers who worked more than 40 hours a week in Larsen's potato packing warehouses. DHS in July 2020 alleged that a Larsen Farms manager required H-2A workers to pay him up to \$1,500 for their jobs.

One of Larsen's H-2A employees died of covid in July 2020. The family filed a wrongful death suit, and in February 2022 a federal court ruled that the death was work related, making workers compensation the exclusive remedy for the worker's death.

Operation Lone Star is a state program created in 2021 to use state and local police to partner with the owners of borderland ranches and arrest migrants who cross their land for trespassing. As of January 2022, two of the 32 border counties were participating, and 2,500 male migrants had been charged with trespassing; women and children who are intercepted are turned over to federal CBP agents.

Retired judges in Kinney County who released migrants pending trial were replaced by judges who agreed to keep migrants in prison until they agree to plead guilty, are turned over to CBP, and then returned to Mexico. Convictions for trespassing may make it harder for migrants to obtain immigration benefits in the future.

Idaho

Potato farm Jorgensen Management of Bancroft in February 2022 was ordered to pay \$159,000 to 69 US workers who were paid less than H-2A workers and to H-2A workers who were not paid for three-fourths of

their contract values. WHD said that its 1,000 US farm employer investigations in FY21 recovered \$8 million in back wages for 10,000 farm workers and resulted in \$7 million in civil money penalties.

Idaho's dairy industry is expanding. In 2020, some 280 dairies with an average 7,300 employees were reported to the QCEW, an average 26 for each dairy that had an average 2,000 to 2,500 cows. Idaho has about 650,000 dairy cows and, using robotics and other technology, the cow-worker ratio is often 100 or more. Average weekly wages in dairy farming were \$750 in 2020, up 22 percent from \$615 in 2015.

Nevada

The state's population has changed over the past several decades, becoming over 30 percent Hispanic. Nevada's US senators are Democrats who are not well known among working-class Hispanics, many of whom prefer to work and risk covid rather than remain in lockdown and seek government assistance.

Oregon

HB-4002, approved by the Legislature in March 2022, would phase in overtime for farm workers over five years; overtime pay would be required after 55 hours a week in 2023 and 2024, 48 hours in 2025 and 2026, and 40 hours a week beginning in 2027. HB-4002 creates a \$100 million Agricultural Worker Overtime Account to provide tax credits to farmers for up to 60 percent of their overtime costs for several years.

If signed into law, the state's Employment Department would study the economic impacts of the overtime requirements and periodically report to lawmakers, who must decide whether to revise the tax credit system. HB 2358, which would have phased in 8/40

overtime over three years, was not enacted in 2021.

Washington

Workers employed more than 55 hours a week must receive overtime pay for extra hours in 2022 and be paid on an 8/40 overtime basis beginning in 2024. Washington's minimum wage is \$14.49 an hour in 2022, and salaried managers who earn at least \$1,014 a week can be exempt from overtime pay requirements.

Workers employed by RoozenGaarde Flowers and Bulbs' Washington Bulb Company went on strike in March 2022 just before the monthlong April Skagit Valley Tulip Festival in support of demands for higher wages and improved sick leave. RoozenGaarde agreed to discuss the worker's demands, but refused to sign a union contract.

Spokane in eastern Washington is growing rapidly, adding residents who are moving from higher-cost areas and seeking larger houses for less money. Home prices doubled over the past decade to over \$400,000, half of price of typical Seattle homes.

Alaska

The state budget of \$6 billion a year was swelled in 2022 by oil prices above \$100 a barrel. Lower oil prices since 2013 drained what had been a \$20 billion rainy day fund to \$1 billion. Higher oil prices in 2022 prompted a debate over how much to replenish the fund and how much to spend now. The governor wants to double 2021's APF dividend of \$1,114.

UFW; UNIONS

The United Farm Workers had 33 contracts in August 2021 and reported fewer than 7,000 members to DOL. The UFW collects three percent of worker wages in dues, receives state subsidies for its RFK health plan, and has a JDLC pension plan with too few assets to pay promised benefits.

The UFW helps farm workers by winning new protections and benefits for them in the state legislature, citing overtime pay and more protections from covid and pesticides. Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed a bill in 2021 that would have permitted mail ballots collected over a year rather than secret-ballot in-person elections to determine whether farm workers wanted to be represented by a union.

The alternative election proposal was re-introduced in March 2022 as AB 2183. It would give unions up to a year to collect signed cards from a majority of employees, after which they could ask the ALRB to certify the union as the bargaining representative of a farm's workers when employment is at least 50 percent of peak employment for the current calendar year. AB 2183 would give the ALRB the power to assess money penalties of \$10,000 a day on employers who fail to provide employee lists within 48 hours.

If an employer commits an unfair labor practice or engages in unfair labor practice while the union is trying to collect signed cards, the ALRB may certify the union as the bargaining representative as the remedy for the ULP. Similarly, any employer disciplinary actions against employees during the year-long ballot campaign are presumed to be retaliatory for the union's efforts to secure signature.

Teresa Romero, who became UFW president in December 2018, expressed disappointment that Newsom refused to meet UFW leaders on March 31, 2022, Cesar Chavez Day, prompting UFW rallies in support of AB 2183 around the state. There was one request for a union election in 2021, on a cannabis farm.

Unions

There were 16 major US work stoppages, each involving 1,000 or more workers, that began in 2021. They involved almost 81,000 workers, most in health and education services. The number of major work stoppages peaked at 470 in 1952 and reached a low of five in 2009.

Starbucks has 230,000 employees in 9,000 company-owned US stores. Two stores in Buffalo became the first corporate-owned stores to vote for union representation in December 2021, followed by one in Mesa, Arizona in February 2022 and another in Seattle in March 2022. Workers at another 100 Starbucks have filed for union elections in an effort led by Workers United, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union.

Starbucks said that all US employees or partners of its corporate-owned stores will earn at least \$17 an hour by mid-2022. Starbucks wants union votes to be held at all corporate-owned stores in one area rather than store-by-store. Some of the employees of the 6,500 Starbucks franchised stores are represented by unions.

The 6,100 employees of the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama re-voted by mail in February-March 2022 on whether they want to be represented by a union. Workers voted 1,798-738 against the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store

Union in February-March 2021, and appeared to be rejecting unionization again. However, the 8,300 employees of Amazon JFK8's warehouse on Staten Island became the first Amazon warehouse workers to be represented by a union when they voted 2,654 to 2,131 in March 2022 for the Amazon Labor Union.

Amazon opposes unions at its warehouses, which often employ over 5,000 workers. Amazon emphasizes that its warehouse workers earn more than similar workers elsewhere and have benefits such as health insurance. In captive audience meetings before union votes, Amazon supervisors emphasize that some of these benefits could disappear in a union contract. The 1.3 million member Teamsters union has promised to organize workers at Amazon warehouses.

Some union activists hope that tight labor markets motivated by government assistance and fears of covid will prompt more workers to vote for union representation. They want government action to break up the large firms that can muster resources to oppose unions and larger penalties for employers who violate worker rights. However, without enactment of the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO), many activists are pessimistic that the 2020s will witness a resurgence of private-sector unions.

California extended collective bargaining rights to public employees in 1975, and voters in 1978 approved Prop 13 to limit property taxes to one percent of the value of homes and businesses. As a result, the state government provided most of local education funding. Public sector unions found it advantageous to have supporters in the Legislature, and California has one of the country's most pro-union state legislatures.

The Association of American University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers in March 2022 announced a merger to create a 316,000-member union representing employees in higher education. Declining enrollment is prompting many institutions to reduce costs by hiring more instructors and fewer tenured faculty. Bills in several states, including Iowa and South Carolina, would abolish tenure at state universities.

IMMIGRATION

FOREIGN-BORN, IMMIGRATION

There were a record 46.6 million foreign-born US residents at the end of 2022, making 14.2 percent of US residents immigrants, plus 17 million children under 18 who were born to immigrants in the US. Some 14.8 percent of US residents were foreign born in 1890 and 14.7 percent were immigrants in 1910.

The stock of immigrants declined in 2020 and rose in 2021. Mexicans, other Latin Americans, and Asians are each about a quarter of the foreign-born. The US population rose by 244,000 in 2021 due to net immigration, higher than the 148,000 increase due to natural increase (births minus deaths).

A quarter of foreign-born residents are unauthorized. Almost three million unauthorized foreigners were legalized in 1987-88. During legalization, more unauthorized foreigners arrived, so the US had three million unauthorized foreigners in 1990. The number of unauthorized foreigners quadrupled to 12 million in 2007 before stabilizing at 11 million over the past decade.

Legislation

After three attempts to include some form of legalization for unauthorized foreigners in the Senate version of the Build Back Better Act (HR 5376), Democrats pivoted to voting rights legislation and once again failed to find sufficient support for new legislation. Some wanted to expand voting rights by mandating automatic voter registration and early voting, while others joined Republicans and focused on revising the Electoral Count Act of 1887 to clarify procedures after elections occur.

Several Senate Democrats refused to support ending the filibuster, dimming prospects for action on immigration reform, voting rights, and the expansion of federal government social welfare benefits. Prospects for many other 2020 Democratic priorities faded, including doubling the minimum wage, making it easier to unionize workplaces, and cancelling student debt.

President Biden began his second year in office with his legislative agenda stalled in Congress, the highest inflation in four decades, and pandemic fatigue. Two-thirds of US adults are fully vaccinated, and the US Supreme Court in January 2022 rejected an OSHA regulation that would require private employers of 100 or more workers to mandate vaccinations.

Some said that Biden's first year was perceived as unsuccessful because he focused on the priorities of college-educated Democratic activists rather than the priorities of most Americans. They say that Americans want action on their immediate concerns such as covid and inflation rather than an expanded social safety net and action on climate change that benefits future generations.

Conservative Democrats urged a repeal of the 2017 Trump tax cuts, and urged that the resulting government revenue be used to reduce government debt and to fund one Democratic priority such as lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

Crime

The US has five percent of the world's people and 20 percent of the world's prison inmates. The US has the world's highest incarceration rate: 630 of each 100,000 residents, some 2.2 million people, were incarcerated in 2020, almost five times the global average rate of 140 inmates per 100,000 residents.

The US incarceration rate increased in the 1980s and 1990s, rising from about 110 per 100,000 between 1925 and 1975. There are believed to be about 11 million prison inmates worldwide, over 90 percent men.

Almost half of federal and state prison inmates were sentenced for drug-related crimes. The average cost of a prisoner ranges from a low of \$20,000 per year in the southern states to over \$50,000 a year in northeastern states. There are many explanations for the high US incarceration rate, including the war on drugs, the availability of guns, poverty, and the fact that many state judges and prosecutors are elected and fear being tagged as soft-on-crime.

US murder rates spiked in 2021. Reasons for the drop from almost 10 homicides per 100,000 US residents in 1990 to less than five between 2010 and 2014 range from more police to easier access to abortion. Homicide rates began to rise recently, and the spike to seven per 100,000 in 2021 has been attributed to covid that curbed access to in-person violence prevention services, less aggressive policing, and more guns carried

more often in public. Fund-the-police has replaced defund the police; some argue that intelligent policing focused on hot spots where crimes occur and on repeat offenders would do most to reduce crime.

DHS: CBP, ICE, USCIS

Border

The Customs and Border Protection agency encountered 1.9 million unauthorized foreigners in calendar year 2021, including 178,000 in December 2021, exceeding the previous record of 1.6 million in calendar year 2000. Over 1.7 million foreigners were encountered by the CBP in FY21, including a record 213,000 in July 2021.

The CBP has since March 2020 returned most solo adults intercepted just inside the US border to Mexico under Title 42 of the Public Health Act, which allows turnarounds to keep covid out of the US; some 1.7 million foreigners were expelled under Title 42 in two years. The DC Court of Appeals in March 2022 ruled that CBP must first determine that any families it expels back to Mexico under Title 42 will not face persecution or torture, prompting CBP to allow more families to apply for asylum and remain in the US until their case is resolved.

The CDC plans to end Title 42 in May 2022, which is expected to produce a wave of up to 20,000 migrants a day who apply for asylum, including thousands of Haitians who stopped entering the US after some were removed to Haiti. A \$10 billion bill to fight covid was delayed as Republicans and some Democrats insisted that Title 42 not be repealed when appropriately more money to fight covid.

Smugglers have been telling foreigners in Mexico that President Biden has relaxed enforcement. CBP encountered over 200,000 foreigners just inside the US border with Mexico in March 2022, an average of 7,000 a day, and almost 900,000 in the first six months of FY22; 45 percent of those encountered in March 2022 were Mexicans.

Over 400,000 of the foreigners encountered by CBP were allowed into the US in 2021, including a quarter who were given notices to register with ICE within 60 days of reaching their US destination. Many of these foreigners failed to register with ICE. Once registered by CBP or ICE, foreigners who have applied for asylum may obtain work permits, SSNs, and driver's licenses in most states.

CBP in March 2022 announced that it would vaccinate unauthorized foreigners encountered just inside the US border, and seek to remove solo adults who refuse vaccination. Families that apply for asylum and refuse to be vaccinated can be released with monitoring devices.

Under the 1997 Flores settlement and subsequent amendments, foreign children under 18 cannot be held by CBP for more than 72 hours. Those encountered are turned over to HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement, which tries to place them with parents or relatives in the US or sends them to juvenile care facilities pending the outcome of their immigration proceedings.

Almost 108,000 foreign children were released to foreign sponsors in FY21, up from 73,000 in FY19. A third of these foreign children are age 17, and half are from Guatemala.

Many Central Americans and other migrants are intercepted in the southern Mexican city of Tapachula, where they apply for asylum so that they can travel through Mexico

to the US border. Over 131,000 foreigners applied for asylum in Mexico in 2021, including 40 percent Haitians. Over two-thirds of the asylum applications are filed in Tapachula, prompting protests in February 2022 from migrants who said they had to wait months for decisions on their applications.

President Trump built 450 miles of new barriers on the Mexico-US border, most on public land in Arizona and New Mexico, using \$15 billion that was appropriated by Congress and other funds taken from the military budget. President Biden stopped construction of the border wall, and in spring 2022 faced decisions on what to do with the partially built wall. Most migrants enter the US illegally via private land along the Rio Grande River in Texas.

A wooden freighter carried 356 mostly young Haitian men to the Florida Keys in March 2022, running aground near the shore. Most Haitians try to enter the US via Mexico, but more may try to reach the US via the sea route. In January 2022, a boat with 40 migrants left Bimini, a chain of small islands in the Bahamas that is the closest to Florida, and capsized with one survivor. People on boats that are intercepted at sea by the US Coast Guard are returned to Haiti.

ICE

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency enforces immigration laws inside the US and detains foreigners who are awaiting deportation. ICE has over 20,000 employees and an annual budget of over \$20 billion.

ICE deported 59,000 foreigners in FY21, down from 186,000 in FY20. The sharp drop in deportations reflects the changing priorities of the Biden administration, which shifted the agency's focus to foreigners convicted of US crimes

and recent entries. Title 42 allows the US to return foreigners to Mexico rather than admitting them and later deporting them.

ICE detained an average 19,000 foreigners in FY21, a new low, and planned for 25,000 detention beds in 2022-23, down from the current 34,000. ICE says that its new priorities are quality over quantity, that is, focusing on the worst offenders and releasing other foreigners with monitoring devices. Critics say that Biden is pandering to those who want to halt deportations.

The US Supreme Court heard arguments in April 2022 over the Migrant Protection Protocols or Remain in Mexico program, which since 2019 has required non-Mexican asylum seekers who arrive at the Mexico-US border to wait in Mexico for a hearing on their case. The Biden administration sought to end the program, which resulted in federal court orders to continue Remain in Mexico because of the impact on states of allowing asylum seekers into the US.

USCIS

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services agency relies on paper records, some of which are stored at the Federal Records Centers in limestone caves under Kansas City that have been closed due to covid. USCIS has some 80 million paper records of foreigners seeking immigration benefits, and has difficulty finding some of them.

USCIS in February 2022 announced a new "public charge" regulation to clarify that foreigners who receive means-tested federal health, food, and housing benefits would still be able to obtain immigrant visas. By interpreting public charge narrowly as being dependent on federal cash assistance, more foreigners who are eligible for other safety net benefits may access them.

USCIS in March 2022 proposed that USCIS asylum officers rather than DOJ immigration judges decide some asylum applications, reducing the time from application to decision from five years to six months. There are 670,000 pending asylum applications among the 1.7 million cases pending in immigration courts.

USCIS will hire and train more asylum officers to deal with migrants who tell the CBP officers they encounter that they have a credible fear of returning to their country of citizenship. Some migrant advocates fear that USCIS asylum officers will not give asylum applicants full due process.

The US airlifted 80,000 Afghans from the country in August 2021, and 76,000 were in the US in winter 2022. Another 40,000 Afghans inside Afghanistan and in neighboring countries have applied to enter the US on humanitarian parole, which provides a path for about 500 foreigners a year to enter the US without a visa. The US is giving priority to those eligible for Special Immigrant Visas because they worked directly for the US government and those who have a US citizen child or parent to sponsor them.

H-2A GUEST WORKERS

The H-2A program allows farmers who anticipate labor shortages to be certified by DOL to recruit and employ H-2A workers to fill seasonal jobs that last up to 10 months. There is no cap on the number of H-2A workers, and about 10,000 US farm employers were certified to fill 317,000 seasonal farm jobs with H-2As in FY21.

The number of jobs certified has been increasing, tripling over the past decade. About 80 percent of H-2A jobs certified result in the issuance of H-2A visas; some

258,000 H-2A visas were issued to foreigners in FY21. Over 99 percent of H-2A visas went to citizens of four countries: Mexico, 93 percent; South Africa, three percent; Jamaica, two percent; and Guatemala, one percent.

Over half of H-2A jobs are in five states: California, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Washington. The share of H-2A jobs in these five states rose from 34 percent in 2007 to 52 percent in 2021 due to the growth in each state and especially in California and Washington.

Recruitment

H-2A regulations require employers to pay all worker expenses, including the cost of the H-2A visa and the cost of travel from US consulates to and from US workplaces. Regulations prohibit US employers or their agents in migrant-sending countries from charging workers for US jobs that may pay 10 to 20 times more than the workers could earn at home.

There are more workers who want H-2A visas than there are H-2A jobs, so some workers pay recruiters for jobs. A survey of over 400 workers in Mexico conducted via mobile phones over eight months in 2020-21 found that many felt unable to leave their farm jobs, had to pay their own travel costs to return home, or had to cover some of their expenses while traveling to their farm jobs. Migrants wanted freedom from threats at workplaces away from home and guarantees of no unexpected expenses.

Cierto Global is one of the few recruiters certified by the Mexican government. Cierto relies on community groups to recruit workers and certify that they did not pay to obtain H-2A contracts, and provides training so that the workers are productive in the US. Cierto charges \$250 per worker recruited.

AEWRs

DOL issued proposed regulations December 1, 2021 that would replace the current system of one AEW for all H-2A workers in a state with several AEWs per state that reflect the type of job being filled. The purpose of the change is to deal with mis-classification, as when employers call truck drivers or construction workers farm workers in order to pay them the lower AEW wages derived from crop and livestock workers.

The current AEW is the average hourly earnings of crop and livestock workers who were hired directly by farmers during the previous year, so that California's \$17.51 AEW for 2022 reflects the average hourly earnings of the state's crop and livestock workers in 2021. USDA surveys 18,000 US farms in July and October, and half report employment and earnings data for the week that includes the 12th of January, April, July, and October. USDA divides earnings by hours worked to obtain average hourly earnings for 15 multistate regions and California, Florida and Hawaii.

DOL proposed that AEWs for the 10 percent of H-2A jobs that are not covered by the USDA survey, including supervisors, drivers, and construction laborers, be the average wages determined by the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics survey. In 2020, when the average US AEW was \$14 an hour, the average US OEWS wage for heavy truck drivers (SOC 53-3032) was over \$23 and for construction laborers (47-2061) almost \$21. DOL proposed that workers with several different jobs, such as harvesting and driving, should be paid the highest AEW for all their hours worked.

DOL normally accepts employer job descriptions of what H-2A workers will do. Farm employers who now

employ drivers and construction laborers as crop workers would have an incentive to mis-classify their jobs as crop workers in order to pay lower wages.

The House approved the Farm Workforce Modernization Act (HR 1603) and the Dream and Promise Act (HR 6) in 2021, but the Senate did not act on these bills.

DHS in March 2022 announced that it would make an additional 35,000 H-2B visas available in addition to the 33,000 available for the April-September 2022 period, with two-thirds for returning H-2B workers and a third set aside for citizens of Northern Triangle countries and Haiti. There are 66,000 H-2B visas available each year, 33,000 for each six month period. In FY21, DHS added 20,000 H-2B visas to the 33,000 available each six months.

CANADA, MEXICO

Canada

Truckers protesting a government requirement that everyone entering Canada be vaccinated occupied downtown Ottawa in February 2022 and closed the Ambassador Bridge that links Detroit and Windsor and carries Canada-US trade worth \$300 million a day. As auto assembly plants closed, PM Justin Trudeau declared a national emergency that allowed police to seize the trucks used to block traffic.

Analysts attributed the protests to covid fatigue and Trudeau government policies that make life difficult for the unvaccinated. The Canadian truckers, some of whom said they wanted a restoration of their pre-covid individual freedoms, inspired similar protests against covid-related mandates in Europe.

The Toronto metro area of nine million residents has the third most tech workers in North America, after

Silicon Valley and New York City, due to the high concentration of tech talent and Canada's relatively liberal immigration policies. University of Toronto Professor Geoffrey Hinton is credited with spurring a boom in artificial intelligence startups in the Toronto area that is sustained by lower salaries, an average \$90,000 in Toronto versus \$165,000 in Silicon Valley in 2020.

Pope Francis met with indigenous Canadians and apologized for the role of Catholics in the residential school system that aimed to assimilate native children until the 1970s. Catholics operated 70 percent of the 130 residential schools. A 2006 suit brought a settlement of C\$4.7 billion, most paid by the federal government; the Catholic Church paid C\$1.2 million of a promised C\$25 million.

Mexico

Mexico has been one of the most open countries during covid, with no vaccine or negative test requirements to support tourism, which accounts for 10 percent of GDP. CDMX or metro Mexico City with 22 million residents attracts the most tourists, followed by beach resorts on both the Pacific and the Caribbean coasts. Mexico has 65 recognized indigenous groups, including 700,000 indigenous residents of CDMX.

AMLO

President Andres Manuel López Obrador wants state-owned enterprises Pemex and CFE to produce and distribute the country's energy. Mexico currently exports oil and imports gasoline and other refined products from the US. At the behest of AMLO, Pemex is building a new \$8 billion refinery in AMLO's home state of Tabasco, bought a refinery in Houston, Texas, and is spending \$3 billion to refurbish six refineries in Mexico. AMLO's goal

is to halt Mexican oil exports and gasoline imports and to restore the luster of Pemex, which generates a third of Mexican government revenues and employs 120,000 people.

Mexico spends relatively little on health care, 5.4 percent of GDP compared to almost 20 percent in the US, and spends its public health care dollars inefficiently. Mexicans with formal jobs receive health care via IMSS for private sector workers and similar programs for public employees. The 55 percent of Mexicans with informal jobs have been served by Seguro Popular since 2003, a program funded by general tax revenues.

AMLO replaced Seguro Popular with the Institute of Health for Wellbeing, allegedly to extirpate corruption by having the finance ministry buy drugs and having the army distribute them. However, many clinics do not have needed drugs, so over 40 percent of health care spending is paid personally, the highest among OECD countries.

Three journalists were killed in January 2022, including a Tijuana journalist who had asked AMLO for protection during one of his press conferences. Over 30,000 people were killed in Mexico in 2021, most in disputes between drug gangs, but journalists are often targeted after they expose corruption, prompting the complaint "hugs for the narcos, bullets for the journalists."

The minimum wage in Mexico rose to 173 pesos (\$8.40) a day or 5,186 pesos or \$250 a month on January 1, 2022, when INEGI reported that 19 million Mexicans earned the minimum wage, 18 million earned one to two times the minimum wage, 2.3 million earned three to five times the minimum wage, and 800,000 earned more than five times the minimum wage or more than 865 pesos a day or 25,950 pesos or \$1,260 a month.

INEGI reported that there were 25 million formal sector workers covered by minimum wages and 30 million worked in the informal sector.

Export Agriculture

Mexico's Central Bank reported that the country's agro-industrial exports were \$44 billion in 2021, led by \$5.1 billion worth of beer, \$3 billion worth of tequila and mescal, and avocados, berries and tomatoes worth \$2.7 billion each.

The US suspended avocado imports from Mexico in February 2022 for a week after a USDA APHIS inspector was threatened near Uruapan, Michoacán after discovering a scheme to export avocados from Puebla as Michoacán avocados. USDA has 77 inspectors and 13 staff in Michoacán, where 300,000 people are involved in the production and packing of avocados.

The Mexican Association of Producers, Packers and Exporters of Avocado (APEAM), which represents 29,000 growers and 65 packinghouses, promised to create a security and investigation unit to protect USDA inspectors. Some speculated that drug cartels could interfere with tomato, bell pepper and berry exports to the US by threatening USDA inspectors unless they were paid by growers. Americans consume an average nine pounds of avocados a year.

The US banned imports of fresh avocados from Mexico between 1914 and 1997, and today allows imports only from Michoacán, where drug cartels are active. Jalisco will export fresh avocados to the US in 2022.

Michoacán and Jalisco are also centers of berry production, with both states shipping the four major berries, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries and strawberries, to the US. Exports of strawberries,

blueberries and raspberries almost tripled from 257,000 tons in 2011 to 754,000 tons in 2020; the value of these exports rose fivefold, from \$516 million to \$2.4 billion. Half of berry exports are from Jalisco, which has 10,000 hectares of the major berries.

Driscoll's affiliated Berrymex, founded in Jocotepec in 1991, was joined by Berries Paradise in Tuxpan in 2008 to produce berries for export. Some residents complain that berry exporters lease land from local farmers, use scarce water to grow berries, and attract migrants from poorer southern Mexican states who settle in these relatively richer Mexican states.

The US is consuming more imported Mexican cucumbers as consumption rises and US production falls. Mexico is a low-cost producer of high-quality cucumbers, and Canada is a high-cost producer of premium English cucumbers.

Mexico in 2015 barred persons under 18 from working for wages in agriculture. One result was only workers 18 or older on export farms, but not on farms that produce for the domestic market. A reform approved in 2022 allows workers who are 15 to 17 to work for wages in farm jobs deemed appropriate by the Ministry of Labor. Allowing some of the 2.6 million 15 to 17 year olds in counties with fewer than 15,000 residents to work for wages in agriculture can enable youth to earn wages and reduce labor shortages, but could also reduce school attendance: 73 percent of 15 year olds were in school in 2020 in counties with fewer than 15,000 residents, 65 percent of 16 year olds, and 59 percent of 17 year olds.

Unions

Mexico revised its labor laws in 2019 to allow workers to elect unions to represent them in

secret ballot elections in a bid to end the practice of unions signing "protection contracts" with employers before workers are hired that benefit union leaders but not necessarily employees.

The new law was put to the test at a GM truck assembly plant in Silao in February 2022, where the Independent National Autoworkers Union won 78 percent of the vote to replace the incumbent union. A first election in April 2021 was overturned when uncounted ballots were found in the offices of the incumbent union, and an August 2021 election ended the existing contract.

Mexico's minimum wage is 173 pesos (\$8) a day in 2022. Regular workers at GM in Silao begin at \$9 a day and top out at \$23 a day. Low Mexican wages in factories reflect the government's failure to raise minimum wages significantly for many years, slow productivity growth, and protection unions that assist employers rather than workers.

Puerto Rico

A federal judge approved a restructuring of \$33 billion of Puerto Rico's debt in January 2022 under a plan crafted by the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act or Promesa (promise). The plan allows Puerto Rico to repay \$7 billion and shifts future pensions from defined benefit to defined contribution plans.

Puerto Rico had \$70 billion in bond debt and \$50 billion in unfunded pension obligations to public workers in May 2017. The bankruptcies of several public entities, including the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, have not yet been resolved. Puerto Rico, with 3.2 million residents in 2022, had the largest government bankruptcy in US history; Detroit in 2013 owed \$18 billion.

Act 60, enacted in 2012 and revised in 2019, gives tax breaks to “resident investors,” defined as newcomers who have not lived in Puerto Rico for the previous 10 years; they can be exempt from capital gains tax and pay a four percent corporate tax rate. Puerto Rico’s population fell by 12 percent between 2010 and 2020, and the tax breaks aim to draw people to Puerto Rico and create jobs in construction.

St Barts, a French island collectivité of 10,000, is the winter playground of the rich and famous. The Rockefellers and the Rothschilds built hilltop mansions in the 1950s, the entire island was electrified in the 1980s, and today there is a construction boom. Even though 60 percent of St Barts is deemed unbuildable and off limits to developers, a local joke is that the green American dollar can generate building permits, making the official bird the construction crane.

Plans to build the new 50-room hotel L’Etoile next to the Eden Rock hotel led to controversy when Eden Rock and environmentalists objected. Permits were granted, construction began despite continuing suits, prompting a stop-work order in February 2022.

The Dominican Republic attracted over 700,000 foreign tourists in December 2021, the most ever and giving the Dominican Republic over five million tourists in 2021, 60 percent Americans. The Dominican Republic had \$5.7 billion in tourism revenue, the most of any Caribbean island. All of the 175,000 Dominican Republic tourist workers are vaccinated and wear masks when interacting with guests, but guests at the Dominican Republic’s all-inclusive resorts do not wear masks or test regularly.

Central America

Vice President Kamala Harris attended the inauguration of

Honduran President Xiomara Castro in January 2022 to strengthen efforts to reduce corruption and provide opportunities for potential migrants at home. Harris’s goal is to tackle by root causes of migration by “combating corruption and expanding economic opportunity.” The Biden administration says that US firms pledged to invest \$1.2 billion in Northern Triangle countries.

Some three million Guatemalans live in the US, and they remitted a record \$35 billion in 2021. Rising remittances have helped to offset the rising cost of food and other items.

El Salvador declared a 30-day state of emergency in March 2022 after gangs went on a killing spree that resulted in over 60 random deaths in one day. President Nayib Bukele promised law and order, and seemed to be keeping his promise due to a secret pact with gang leaders under which the government gave them financial incentives in exchange for less violence appears to have unraveled.

Argentina

The government has long spent more than it collects in revenue, borrowing from foreign investors and repeatedly defaulting on its foreign debt. The IMF refused to bail out Argentina in 2001, which led to an historic default and peso devaluation that sharply reduced the accumulated wealth of the middle class.

Argentina owes the IMF \$57 billion, some of which was incurred in a bail out in 2018 that aimed to support the conservative PM, who thought that borrowing to improve infrastructure would attract foreign investment. This plan failed, and Peronists were re-elected in 2019.

Almost 30 percent of Brazilian adults are obese, prompting

laws that reserve subway seats for obese people and give them priority at some public places by considering obesity a disability. Some cities remind residents that they should not discriminate against obese residents in a bid to tackle gordofobia, which has led to one of the world’s highest rates of plastic surgery as residents try to have fat removed. In Mexico, the United States and Russia, a third or more of adults are obese.

EUROPE, ASIA

EU border-control agency Frontex reported that almost 200,000 foreigners tried to enter the EU illegally in 2021, including 65,000 who attempted to travel by boat from Libya and Tunisia to Italy. The second route was from the Balkans to Croatia and Hungary, involving 60,000 migrants, followed by 20,000 migrants who traveled from Turkey to Greek islands. The leading nationalities of unauthorized migrants were Syrians, Tunisians, Moroccans, Algerians and Afghans. Over 90 percent were men.

European countries in winter-spring 2022 began to change their policies toward covid, treating it like other endemic viruses rather than as a special threat to be extirpated. Instead of lockdowns, most governments urged residents to be vaccinated and boosted.

Britain

A Vietnamese man was sentenced to 15 years in prison in Bruges in February 2022 for organizing the smuggling of 39 Vietnamese migrants who died in a refrigerated truck October 22, 2019 that was to travel from Zeebrugge to London. Seventeen other members of the smuggling ring were found guilty and given sentences ranging from one to 10 years in prison. Up to 20,000 Vietnamese pay \$10,000 to \$50,000 each to be smuggled

into the UK each year to work in nail salons and factories.

British farmers can hire up to 40,000 guest workers via the Seasonal Worker Scheme if they pay guest workers at least £10.10 per hour. Dubai-based DP World, owner of P&O Ferries, laid off 800 directly hired workers in March 2022 and replaced them with agency-supplied workers to save 50 percent on labor costs.

France

President Emmanuel Macron was expected to win the largest share of the vote in the first round of voting in April 2022; two of his three major rivals are rightists who stress anti-immigrant themes, while one is a leftist whose goal is to reduce inequality. An estimated 10 percent of France's 67 million residents are Muslim, and some Muslim professionals have emigrated because of anti-Muslim attacks in France.

Germany

Germany dropped most covid restrictions in March 2022 as the coalition government pushed for a vaccine mandate. Anti-mask protestors and populist politicians threatened public health officials in some former East German states. Police counted more than 10 verbal and physical attacks on politicians a day in 2021, many linked to anti-mask and anti-vaccine protestors.

Russia's February 24, 2022 invasion of Ukraine transformed Germany's energy and defense policies. Europe's largest economy is very dependent on Russian natural gas amidst a rapid transition away from coal and nuclear power by 2030. Nord Stream 2 is an \$11 billion 746-mile pipeline that moves gas from Russia to Lubmin under the Baltic Sea did not go into operation due to the invasion of Ukraine despite the support of ex-German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. The

Nord Stream 1 pipeline that ends in Lubmin remained in operation, contributing to the \$220 million that Germany paid Russia each day for coal, natural gas, and oil.

Germany announced that its defense spending would rise by €100 billion en route to two percent of GDP, the NATO goal. The US spends over three percent of GDP on defense.

Tesla received approval to open its \$7 billion factory near Berlin in March 2022. Tesla produced almost a million vehicles in 2021, and expected to employ 12,000 workers to produce 500,000 Model Y cars and sport utility vehicles a year in Germany. Tesla has other plants in Newark, California, Austin, Texas, and Shanghai.

Italy

Italy re-elected its 80-year-old president to another seven-year term after squabbling political parties could not agree on a successor.

The 951-foot-long Costa Concordia cruise ship sank January 13, 2012 after the captain ordered the ship to steer close to the island of Giglio to salute an old friend and struck submerged rocks, killing 32 of the 4,229 passengers and crew. The captain is serving a 16-year sentence for abandoning the ship.

Russia-Ukraine

Russia invaded Ukraine February 24, 2022, aiming to remove the pro-western government headed by President Zelensky. Russia retook the Crimean peninsula in 2014 that had been "given" to Ukraine in 1954 and supported pro-Russian separatists who have been seeking independence in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine since 2014.

Before the Russian invasion, France and Germany stressed the need for diplomacy to preserve Ukraine's borders, while Poland and the Baltic

states called for a more muscular response to Russian aggression. Western leaders decried Russian President Putin's efforts to break the post WWII international order in Europe by invading another European country.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine unified NATO leaders, who imposed economic sanctions on Russia that caused the value of the ruble to fall sharply before recovering to about 82 to \$1 in April 2022 when the government doubled interest rates to 20 percent and prevented people from moving their money abroad.

The Bank of Russia had \$640 billion in foreign exchange reserves in February 2022, much of which is held outside the country and was frozen by sanctions.

After five weeks of fighting, over four million Ukrainians, mostly women and children, fled to neighboring Poland, Moldova, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, about 10 percent of all Ukrainians and the largest refugee flow in Europe since WWII. Half of the refugees entered Poland, where trains gave free passage to those headed to Germany and other EU countries. In 2015, some 1.3 million Syrians and others arrived in EU member states.

The EU urged member states to grant three-year work and residence permits to Ukrainians. Poland had two million Ukrainians before the February 24, 2022 Russian invasion, including some who had been displaced by fighting in eastern Ukraine. Many European companies hired Ukrainian refugees, who are usually well educated. Some employers offered on-site child care to the women with children who were the majority of refugees.

Many of the Ukrainian refugees wound up in Germany and Poland, reluctant countries of immigration

that may wind up with the highest shares of foreign-born residents among large EU member states. The US pledged to accept 100,000 Ukrainian refugees, some of whom fled to Mexico and sought to apply for asylum at US ports of entry; the US has a million residents with Ukrainian roots.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine upended many assumptions about the 21st century global order, from no more war in Europe to increased economic integration that made war too costly. Russia sends a quarter of its oil exports and 40 percent of its natural gas exports to European countries, and the value of Russian energy exports is a fourth of Russia's GDP.

Economic integration to prevent war was a rationale for what has become the EU, and many Europeans assumed that integrating more closely with Russia would have the same no-war effects. However, exporting energy is different from linking manufacturing supply chains because reduced energy exports can mean higher prices and the same revenue for exporters.

Sanctions on Russia reduced the value of the ruble by 30 percent, increased inflation to over 10 percent, and shrank the economy. Many western firms stopped doing business in Russia, leading to layoffs. Demand for goods rose as Russians tried to buy items before prices rose more.

After a month of fighting, there was speculation about what would be required for peace. President Putin seems immune to internal pressures to stop the fighting, with dissidents arrested quickly and many Russians apparently believing that Ukraine is governed by "Nazis" who persecute Russian-speakers and the country has bioweapons labs that threaten Russia. Meanwhile, the invasion unified western allies, who

sought to pressure China to avoid supporting Russia.

Western allies were careful about aiding Ukraine to avoid nuclear war with Russia, emphasizing the delivery of defensive weapons with limited ranges to make clear that they were not supporting a Ukrainian invasion of Russia. One lesson from the Russia-Ukraine war is that allies are careful about providing aid to countries whose enemies have nuclear weapons, which may encourage Iran and other countries to develop such weapons.

Serbia

A \$900 million Ling Long Tire factory is being built in Zrenjanin in northern Serbia by Chinese and Vietnamese migrant workers, some of whom complain of poor treatment by the subcontractors who are building the plant. The factory is expected to produce 130 million tires a year and make Serbia China's beachhead in Europe; China also funded a steel mill near Belgrade and a copper mine in Bor.

Some of the Vietnamese migrants say they are trapped because they mortgaged their homes and land to brokers at home who promised higher wages than they are receiving in Serbia. If they break their contracts and return, they could lose their assets.

Spain

Spain exported fruit worth E9.1 billion and vegetables worth E6.5 billion in 2021, sending 80 percent of its export fruits and vegetables to EU countries such as France and Germany and the UK.

Turkey

Inflation topped 50 percent in winter 2022 as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan insisted on low interest rates despite a falling lira. Real wages are falling, and the recession that began when covid

reduced tourism continues. The government-set price of electricity rose sharply in January 2022 to over \$1,000 a month for some small businesses and restaurants, as much as they pay in rent.

During his 18 years in power, Erdogan expanded services to the middle class and poor and borrowed money to build infrastructure. As the bill for these investments comes due, some professionals are emigrating, including doctors who have seen the value of their wages decline even as their workload increases. Turks who turn to hospitals for primary care have attacked doctors in frustration with long waits and short appointments.

China

China had 10.6 million births in 2021, down from 12 million in 2020 and only slightly larger than the 10.1 deaths. China introduced a one-child policy in 1980 that ended in 2016 with women allowed to have two children. The limit was raised three children beginning in 2021, but the average Chinese woman has only 1.3 children.

China is building fences on its southern borders with Burma, Laos, and Vietnam. China's Southern Great Wall is ostensibly designed to prevent the spread of covid, but local residents who used to cross the border to work or trade complain that border walls interfere age-old migration patterns. Some covid-precautions reduce trade, including the practice of sanitizing containers at the Burma-Chinese border, holding them for several days, and then transferring the containers to Chinese trucks for transport within China.

China has one of the world's most unequal economies. The richest 10 percent of Chinese control almost 70 percent of Chinese wealth, while the poorest 50 percent share six

percent. China has more billionaires than the United States, India and Germany combined, while the poorest 40 percent of Chinese residents have incomes of \$150 a month or less.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to speculation that China might take similar actions to reclaim Taiwan, which declared independence in 1949. Taiwan has 24 million residents and a US security guarantee that might deter China, which has a larger and more diversified economy than Russia. China has a million active-duty troops, ten times the Taiwanese armed forces, but would have to invade across 100 miles of water.

India

Over 45 percent of Indians are employed in agriculture. The agricultural share of employment rose as covid-inspired urban lockdowns sent migrant workers back to their villages. About half of working-age Indians are in the labor force, a low labor force participation rate.

Delhi is projected to surpass Tokyo as the world's largest city by 2030. Delhi has 19 million residents, but the surrounding National Capital Region has 30 million to 60 million people, depending on whether suburban cities such as Gurgaon and Noida are included.

The NCR region contains seven of the 10 cities with the worst air quality, and where 70 percent of workers have informal jobs. People and businesses build housing and shops first, and the NCR government later decides what is authorized and what must be torn down.

Seafarers say that they have been tricked by Indian recruiters into forced labor on Iranian ships. Young Indians seeking experience often pay recruiters for seafaring jobs, and when they are sent to Iran

rather than Dubai at the last minute, some feel compelled to go in order to repay recruitment debts. Once in Iran, the Indians say they are given food and accommodation but no wages.

Sri Lanka

The Rajapaksa family, which has governed Sri Lanka most of the 21st century, took on debt in a bid to turn the island off the coast of India into the next Singapore. There was no economic take off, but the debt burden led to inflation, power cuts, and shortages of fuel and food. A flawed effort to convert Sri Lanka's agriculture to organic stopped fertilizer imports and reduced rice production, prompting protests and a state of emergency as the government sought a bailout from the IMF.

Japan

Japan has the highest share of people over 65 in its population; a quarter of residents are 65 or older. Japan also has the highest share of people with dementia, over four percent and rising, raising questions about how to deal with those who are losing the ability to care for themselves.

Some communities are using trackers in phones or wallets that allow persons with dementia who live alone to be tracked. In most cases, caregivers request the approval of a doctor to begin tracking a person, which allows police to monitor the person's movements. In some cities, far more parents tracked their children rather than the elderly.

The seven-million member Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo) got its first female leader in October 2021, infusing new energy in the struggle for gender equality during the spring 2022 shunto or spring offensive for higher wages. Unions represent a sixth of Japanese

workers, down from a third in the 1970s. The share of Japanese workers who are non-regular, meaning they are not guaranteed lifetime jobs, is 21 million or over a third of the 56 million-strong labor force. Almost half of those with non-regular jobs are women.

ANZ

Australia reopened to international visitors February 21, 2022, after 94 percent of residents 16 and older were fully vaccinated. Australia, with 25 million people and fewer than 3,000 deaths from covid in two years, endured lockdowns in Melbourne and other cities and restrictions on both internal and international travel aimed at keeping covid at bay. China is the largest source of tourists, sending 1.3 million visitors in 2019.

Serb tennis pro Novak Djokovic was denied entry into Australia in January 2022 despite a medical exemption from the country's vaccine mandate. PM Scott Morrison, who is seeking re-election in May 2022, was not sympathetic, noting that "rules are rules, especially when it comes to our borders." Morrison was Australia's immigration minister in 2013-14 when boats carrying asylum seekers from Indonesia were not allowed to land in Australia. Djokovic was eventually deported from Australia for not being vaccinated.

Australia's east coast experienced flooding in February-March 2022, as once-in-a-century floods overwhelmed some communities. Climate change is exacerbating natural disasters, including massive bush fires in 2019-20 and flooding in New South Wales and Queensland in February-March 2021, the same areas that flooded again in 2022.

Farmers complained of too few harvest workers in February-March 2022, prompting the government

to offer to refund the A\$495 fee for working holidaymaker (WHMs) visas for those who arrive before April 2022 and fill farm jobs. WHMs who work on farms at least three months in their first year are entitled to remain in Australia and work in nonfarm jobs in urban areas a second year, and those who work at least six months in ag during their second year can stay a third year and work anywhere. WHMs could work three full years for one farm employer.

Australia in 2020-2021 produced 6.6 million tons of horticultural commodities worth A\$15 billion. The leading fruit exports are table grapes and citrus, which together account for almost three-fourths of Australia's fruit exports.

Farmers can hire migrant workers as WHMs or as guest workers admitted under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility and the new Australian ag visa program that brings guest workers from southeast Asian countries. There were about 50,000 WHMs employed in agriculture in 2021-22, up to 20,000 PALM workers, and there may be 10,000 Asians from the 10 ASEAN countries admitted with ag visas, setting the stage for competition between Asian and Pacific Island countries to send migrant farm workers to Australia.

The ag visa program allows employers to request: (1) visas of up to nine months to fill seasonal jobs and; (2) visas for workers who will be employed for one to four years. Employers who are accredited for the PALM program can seek ag visas, as can those who are certified as in compliance by third parties. In all cases, employers must be certified by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to bring guest workers into the country.

GLOBAL: UN, THEORY, HEALTH

The UN SG released a second assessment of the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in January 2022 that included 14 recommendations under four categories including: migrants in pandemic response and recovery programs; promoting safe and regular migration; preventing loss of life and other tragedies during migration; and building capacity.

The UN report calls for facilitating pathways for migrant entry and stay, developing flexible policies to prevent migrants from falling into irregular status, and regularizing irregular migrants. However, the report includes no hints on how to deal with trade offs between these policies. For example, developing new or expanding existing guest worker programs could encourage more people to consider going abroad and, if there were not enough legal guest worker options, more people may migrate illegally.

Theory

Over the past 50 years, the number of international migrants tripled and the share of global migrants in industrial or rich countries rose to two-thirds. The major reasons for more international migration are demand-pull forces within receiving countries, as with farmers seeking workers, and supply-push forces in sending countries, as when over half of Mexican workers have informal jobs not covered by the minimum wage and social security.

Inequality between countries motivates most cross-border migration. Global GDP was \$85 trillion in 2020, making the per capita GDP of the world's 7.8 billion people almost \$11,000. In the 50 high-income countries where per capita GDP was \$12,700 or more, the average was \$51,300, while in the 150 lower- and middle-income

countries, the average was \$10,700, a five to one income gap.

Most of the major emigration countries are lower-middle-income, with GNIs of \$1,000 to \$4,000, including India, the Philippines and Ukraine, meaning that per capita income gaps are more than 10 to one. However, some emigration countries are in the upper-middle-income group, including the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Mexico.

The brain-grain-via-drain argument attributes rising emigration from India and the Philippines to economic development that allows more people to move, and from the Dominican Republic and Mexico to migration networks that encourage family unification.

Why has migration increased faster than population growth over the past half century? Many political scientists highlight the liberal paradox of managing migration in rich countries. Employers want governments to open border gates to migrants, while cultural and security concerns push governments to limit immigration.

The liberal paradox is evident in all industrial countries, where admissionists trumpet labor shortages and aging populations to urge more immigration, while restrictionists argue that migrants provide cheap labor that benefit a few and can reduce social cohesion. Faced with these competing narratives, rich country governments are converging on policies to manage migration, making it easier for high skilled migrants and their families to enter, ensuring that low-skilled migrants rotate in and out of the country, and struggling with refugees and asylum seekers.

The convergence hypothesis argues that rich countries facing similar problems converge on

similar policies to deal with them, whether the issue is dealing with climate change or the changing labor market, while the gap hypothesis argues that governments cannot achieve their migration goals. There are goal-outcome gaps in most areas of public policy, from preventing crime to ensuring decent jobs, but the goal-outcome gap may be especially large in migration policy, as evidenced by significant unauthorized migration and unpredictable waves of asylum seekers.

The perception that migration is not under control often fuels public dissatisfaction with migration policy.

Is more migration into rich countries a side effect of more development and trade? As countries such as Mexico, Morocco and Turkey got richer and integrated into the global economy, there was a migration hump as trade and migration rose together. Sub-Saharan Africa, in this view, has not yet experienced a migration hump because of lagging development and incomplete integration into the global economy.

What effect does the arrival of migrants from developing countries have on richer countries? Economic theory predicts slower wage growth and higher profits, but a wide range of studies has failed to find negative impacts of migrants on similar native workers. Instead, the arrival of migrants often slows labor-saving mechanization, as with the arrival of Mexicans in US agriculture.

Development economists whose primary goal is to speed growth in developing countries urge richer countries to open doors to migrants that provide incentives for residents of developing countries to obtain more education, which raises productivity and incomes at home and abroad. Rising education levels, in turn, speed development, increase trade, and spur even more

emigration, the migration hump, until per capita incomes top \$10,000 per person per year.

The development-centered view of migration's impacts argues that more rapid economic growth means more emigration from the most rapidly developing countries. Workers in rich countries are not harmed by the migrant influx, this theory argues, and residents of poorer countries have new incentives to invest in education, raising productivity and incomes at home or abroad. This brain-gain-via-brain-drain theory of development imagines residents of developing countries who see the success of migrant nurses and IT professionals and are encouraged to acquire the credentials needed to imitate them.

Migration networks allow migration to continue until per capita income differences narrow to about four to one, with the ratio affected by the hope factor in emigration countries or prospects for jobs and income growth.

Instead of migration from poorer to richer countries, investment in poorer countries could create jobs that keep workers at home. Firms that export tend to pay higher wages than firms that produce for the domestic market, and investments in garment manufacturing in south and southeast Asian countries turned many young women from informal farm workers into factory workers earning \$100 a month or more. Trade agreements that facilitate investment to create export-sector jobs can thus reduce emigration pressure.

Some 30 percent of Central Americans are employed in agriculture, which generates less than 10 percent of GDP, suggesting low wages and a reservoir of potential migrants. There has been investment in factories to sew garments in Central America,

but there have been few wider economic effects such as the development of supplier industries and moving up the supply chain to designing clothes. Until Central America can create an economic framework that attracts long-term investment, freer trade may generate jobs but not economic development.

Some migration flows are not easily predicted, including many flows of refugees and those linked to natural disasters. The arrival of large numbers of unexpected migrants can lead to a restrictionist backlash, as with the arrival of over a million Syrian and other migrants in Europe in 2015. Such migrants may be welcomed initially, as with Ukrainians in 2022, but eventually public opinion can turn restrictionist if there are difficulties integrating newcomers.

Health

Many older health care workers retired during the covid pandemic, prompting hospitals and nursing homes to recruit replacement health care workers in developing countries. Recruiters say that 1,000 foreign nurses a month arrived in the US in 2021, and that 10,000 are waiting for required visa interviews at US consulates abroad.

Salaries of health care workers are five to 10 times more in industrial than in developing countries, and many industrial countries have special programs that speed recognition of foreign-earned health credentials or allow families to accompany migrant doctors and nurses. The WHO's 2010 Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel recognizes the right of health care workers to migrate, but calls on industrial countries to permit recruitment of doctors and nurses only under the terms of bilateral agreements that take into account the needs of sending

countries, such as compensation in the form of aid to train more health care workers.

Countries such as India and the Philippines have private schools that train nurses to host-country standards, facilitating out-migration. Many African countries prohibit private nursing schools, and pay health care workers such low salaries that many graduates are not employed in health care.

There were far fewer covid cases in sub-Saharan Africa than expected; malaria made more people sick than covid in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, blood samples indicated that two-thirds of sub-Saharan Africa residents had antibodies to fight covid even though only a seventh were vaccinated, suggesting that many Africans got and recovered from covid. One theory is that the relative youth of Africa, a median 19 versus 38 in the US, protected Africans from severe covid illness. Another is that covid killed sub-Saharan Africa residents but their deaths were not recorded.

Conflict and migration are interlinked. After WWII, the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol aim to prevent refugees from being denied protection by obliging signatory countries not to refoul or return persons inside their borders to their countries of citizenship if they have a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion fear or persecution” there. Some 146 countries signed the 1951 Convention.

Refugees are persons recognized as in need of protection; asylum seekers are those who want host governments to recognize them as refugees. Economic migrants, on the other hand, are persons seeking a better life who could remain in or return to their countries

of citizenship without fear of persecution.

It is very hard to draw sharp distinctions between refugees and non-refugees. Are Afghans who supported the US and face discrimination at the hands of the Taliban refugees or economic migrants? When such mixed-motive migrants move to a third country such as Pakistan, should they be encouraged to integrate into the local economy or kept in camps to facilitate their return or resettlement in third countries?

Some researchers who look at migrant enclaves in the developing world urge rich countries to provide aid so that Pakistan can integrate Afghan migrants, or Kenya and other African countries can integrate the migrants who arrive due to conflicts, climate change and other factors from their neighbors. Aid money goes much further in developing host countries than to integrate Afghans and Africans in Europe or the US, this argument runs. However, the reality is that rich countries are often asked to spend more to help integrate migrants abroad and at home.

Fears that diverse newcomers cannot be integrated successfully abound in Europe, are inflamed after terrorist incidents, and often become the anti-immigrant planks of populist parties. Many European countries have foreign ghettos and no-go areas and fear importing the conflicts that some migrants escaped. Concentrated areas with “different” migrants and their children who are dependent on social welfare benefits is a recipe for a backlash against migrants.

Human trafficking may be far less common than is sometimes assumed. NGO Polaris operates a National Human Trafficking Hotline with \$4 million a year from HHS. If operators identify instances of fraud, force and coercion from the

calls and texts received, they report a potential trafficking case. Polaris identified 11,193 potential cases of trafficking in FY21 and reported 3,353 cases to law enforcement, that is, the hotline costs taxpayers about \$1,200 per case referred to law enforcement. The FBI, by contrast, reported 1,883 incidents of human trafficking in 2019 that led to 708 arrests.

Population

Austria’s Wittgenstein Centre for Demography developed several long-run scenarios for the world’s population. In the high-fertility scenario, life expectancy would be 75 in 2100, adults would have an average 10 years of schooling, and the total fertility rate or the average number of children born per woman would be 2.3, yielding a global population of 14 billion in 2100. In the low-fertility scenario, life expectancy would be 100 in 2100, adults would have an average 14 years of schooling, and the total fertility rate would be 1.3, yielding 7.2 billion people by 2100, half as many as under the high-fertility scenario.

Africa

There were military coups in Mali, Chad, Guinea, Sudan and Burkina Faso in less than two years, highlighting the fragility of democracy in countries struggling with separatist groups, corruption and poor economic prospects that leave youth unemployed and frustrated.

About 10 percent of global trade passes through the Suez Canal that has connected the Mediterranean and Red Seas since 1869. About 100 ships a day pay an average \$300,000 to transit the canal, which is owned by Egypt.

OTHER

FOOD SPENDING 2020

The US Bureau of Labor Statistic's Consumer Expenditure Survey reported a total of 131 million US "consumer units" or households in 2020 with an average of 2.5 persons, 1.3 earners and 1.9 motor vehicles. Some 63 percent were homeowners, and the average age of the reference person in the household was 51. Average consumer unit income before taxes was \$84,350, and average annual expenditures per consumer unit were \$61,300.

Between 2019 and 2020, average household income rose and expenditures declined, indicating that households increased their savings.

Household expenditures in 2020 included an average \$7,300 for food, 12 percent of total expenditures and down due to less food consumed away from home. Food spending was divided between food eaten at home, 67 percent or \$4,900 of total food spending, an average or \$94 a week, and \$2,400 or \$46 a week for food bought away from home.

The cost of food away from home largely reflects convenience, service, atmosphere and other factors. The cost of food is an average 35 percent of what is spent in cafeteria-style restaurants, 30 percent of spending in fast food restaurants, and 25 percent of spending in fine dining restaurants.

Other significant consumer-unit expenditures were \$21,400 for housing, \$9,800 for transportation, \$5,200 for health care, \$2,900 for entertainment, \$2,300 on household furnishings, and \$1,400 for apparel. Spending on apparel fell by 24 percent

between 2019 and 2020, while spending on reading rose by 24 percent. There was a 10 percent increase in spending on household furnishings, a 10 percent decrease in transportation spending, and a 50 percent decrease in entertainment fees and admissions.

The largest food-at-home expenditures in 2020 were for meat and poultry, an average of \$1,075 per household. Expenditures on cereal and bakery products, \$640, exceeded the \$474 spent on dairy products.

Consumer units spent an average \$478 on alcoholic beverages in 2020, down because of a sharp drop in spending on alcohol away from home and a small increase in spending on alcohol at home. In 2020, consumer units spent an average \$122 on beer consumed at home, \$155 for wine consumed at home, and \$55 on other alcoholic beverages consumed at home.

Expenditures on fresh fruits (\$349) and fresh vegetables (\$311) were \$660 a year or \$12.70 a week in 2020, and consumer units spent an additional \$125 on processed fruits and \$192 on processed vegetables. Data on major commodities show that consumer units spent an average \$54 on fresh bananas in 2020, \$50 on fresh apples, and \$38 on fresh oranges. They spent an average \$54 on fresh tomatoes, \$53 on fresh potatoes, and \$38 on fresh lettuce.

Farmers get less than 20 percent of the average retail food dollar, but slightly more for fresh fruits and vegetables. Farmers received an average 35 percent of the average retail price of fresh fruits in 2019 and 25 percent of the average retail price of fresh vegetables. This means that average consumer expenditures on these items include \$200 a year for farmers ($0.35 \times 349 = \$122 + 0.25 \times 311 = \78).

Farm labor costs are about a third of farm revenue for fresh fruits and vegetables, so farm worker wages and benefits for the fresh fruits and vegetables consumed by the average consumer unit cost \$66 a year ($0.33 \times \$200 = \66). Consumer spending reflects purchases of both US-grown and imported produce. Since 60 percent of the fresh fruit available to Americans and 35 percent of the fresh vegetables are imported, the US farm labor costs included in average consumer unit spending are less than \$66 a year.

About half of the workers employed on US crop farms are unauthorized. These unauthorized crop workers are aging and settling, making them less mobile and flexible just as many states raise their minimum wages and require farm employers to pay overtime wages on the same basis as nonfarm employers, that is, after eight hours of work a day or 40 hours a week. Farmers are adjusting to higher labor costs by substituting machines for workers and supplementing the current workforce with legal H-2A guest workers who cost more but are also more productive, while retailers are turning more to imports.

What would happen to consumer expenditures on fresh fruits and vegetables if farm labor costs rose? A natural experiment occurred after the Bracero program ended in 1964. Mexican Braceros were guaranteed a minimum wage of \$1.40 an hour at a time when most US farm workers, who were not covered by the minimum wage, earned less than \$1 an hour.

Some of the US table grape workers who were paid \$1.40 an hour when they worked alongside Braceros in 1964 were offered \$1.25 an hour in 1965. These workers resisted the pay cut, calling a strike led by Cesar Chavez that ended with a 40 percent wage increase in the first United Farm Workers table

grape contract in 1966 that raised grape workers' wages from \$1.25 to \$1.75 an hour.

What would happen to consumer expenditures on fresh fruits and vegetables if there were a similar 40 percent wage increase today? The average hourly earnings of US field and livestock workers were \$15.55 in 2021; a 40 percent increase would raise them by over \$6 to \$21.75 an hour.

The \$6 an hour increase in wages for a farm worker employed 1,000 hours a year means an additional \$6,000 that would raise earnings from \$15,550 to \$21,750 a year. For a typical household or consumer unit, a 40 percent increase in farm labor costs translates into a four percent increase in the retail price of fresh fruits and vegetables (0.30 farm share of retail prices x 0.33 farm labor share of farm revenue = 10 percent; if farm labor costs rise 40 percent, retail spending rises 0.4 x 10 = 4 percent).

If average farm labor costs rose by 40 percent, and the increase were passed on to consumers, average spending on fresh fruits and vegetables for a typical household would rise by \$25 a year (4 percent x \$660 = \$26.40), equivalent to the cost of two movie tickets. Farm labor costs play a small role in the retail price of fresh fruits and vegetables, but a large role in farm worker incomes.

CALIFORNIA: DAIRY, MACHINES

Dairy

California surpassed Wisconsin as the leading producer of dairy products in the early-1990s, and today accounts for 18 percent of the US dairy herd of 9.4 million cows. Most of the milk produced in California is processed in the state and shipped elsewhere as cheese, dry milk and other products.

Dairy farmers expect the price of milk to exceed \$20 per hundredweight in 2022 as the US dairy herd stabilizes at 9.4 million cows and as US and foreign demand for dairy products increases.

Milk arrives at processing plants and is bottled or turned into dairy products. Class one is fluid milk and usually generates the highest price for farmers, class two milk is used to make yogurt and ice cream, class three is turned into cheese, and class four is turned into milk powder and other storable products. An increase in demand for cheese in 2020 temporarily made the price of class three milk the highest of all classes.

Most California dairies are large, with at least 1,500 cows and 15 to 20 hired workers. Tulare county has almost 500,000 dairy cows and accounts for almost 30 percent of the state's milk, followed by Merced, Kings, Stanislaus and Kern counties. States with rapidly growing dairy industries, such as Idaho and Texas, have similarly large dairies, while dairies in New York and Wisconsin often have fewer than 500 cows.

California subsidizes the production of natural gas produced from methane, and offers a higher subsidy for natural gas from cow manure than from garbage. California's Low-Carbon Fuel Standard requires firms selling transportation fuels to buy per-ton credits if they exceed carbon-emissions standards; dairy renewable natural gas projects generate credits that dairies can sell. California Bioenergy has projects at 40 dairies that convert methane into natural gas, with 60 more projects in development.

Pigs are pregnant for 115 days, and most farmers keep them in gestation crates that do not provide sufficient room to turn around, about 24 square feet compared

to the current average 14 square feet. California voters approved Prop 12 in 2018 to require pork sold in the state after 2022 to be from pigs whose pregnant mothers had enough room to turn around.

California produces very little pork, so the effects of Prop 12 will be felt mostly in midwestern states. Farmers as well as retailers and restaurants oppose Prop 12, whose implementation has been delayed pending a US Supreme Court review of a 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision upholding Prop 12. Less than 10 percent of US hogs satisfy Prop 12 standards.

Machines

The Western Growers Association released a report in February 2022 that found farmers expect that a third- to two-thirds of their pre-harvest work will be automated by 2025, but they expect slower mechanization of harvest tasks. WGA noted that mechanizing ag tasks is hard; three-fourths of start ups have not gone beyond venture funding to generate revenues, and most have fewer than five functioning prototypes. Most automation projects focus on pre-harvest tasks or are harvesting assist devices rather than harvesting machines.

John Deere was a Vermont blacksmith who moved to Illinois in the 1830s, discovered that mud stuck to the cast-iron plows in use, and designed a self-scouring steel plow. Deere introduced driverless tractors that cost over \$500,000 in 2021, and says they will be operating on 50 farms in 2022. The tractors have six cameras and are operated via smartphones. CNH Industrial is developing autonomous capabilities for its Case and New Holland tractors.

Nuts

California is the leading producer of tree nuts, led by almonds worth \$6 billion in 2019, pistachios worth \$2 billion, and walnuts worth \$1.3 billion. Global pistachio production was almost a million metric tons in 2020-21, including almost half from California.

US AG, TRADE

Net farm income was \$117 billion in 2021, including federal government payments of \$27 billion to farmers that accounted for almost a quarter of net farm income. With fewer government payments, net farm income is expected to fall in 2022.

Farmers complained of rising production costs in 2022, when USDA estimated total farm production expenses at \$280 billion. The largest expenses are projected to be feed for animals, \$70 billion, followed by the purchase of livestock and poultry, \$35 billion. Seeds cost \$23 billion, pesticides \$23 billion and fertilizers \$32 billion; fertilizer expenses rose due to sanctions on Belarus and Russia, major exporters of potash.

USDA put the import share of fresh vegetables at 34 percent in 2020 and the range in import shares from less than six percent in head lettuce to over 97 percent in asparagus. The import share of fresh fruit was 60 percent in 2020, and ranged from less than five percent for apples to 100 percent for bananas, limes and pineapples.

Monsanto introduced Roundup Ready seeds in 1996 that allowed farmers to spray glyphosate on their fields and kill only non-corn and soybean plants. As weeds evolved resistance to glyphosate, Monsanto developed seeds that could tolerate glyphosate and dicamba in Roundup Ready Xtend seeds. Dicamba proved hard to

handle, vaporizing and drifting when sprayed in hot weather. The EPA required buffer zones around fields sprayed with glyphosate and dicamba, but farmers complain that their organic crops continue to be contaminated by drifting weed killers.

The \$1.9 trillion stimulus bill enacted in 2021 included \$4 billion to forgive the debts of 15,000 Black and other “socially disadvantaged” farmers. USDA began the process of forgiving debts in May 2021, but federal courts blocked debt relief because the program could discriminate against white farmers. About 40,000 of the two million US farmers are Black.

CEA

Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA), which involves growing plants under protective structures that shield them from weather and pests, is attracting more private investment. The largest US CEA may be Plenty, a firm based in South San Francisco that expects to open a 95,000 square foot indoor farm in Compton, California in 2022 that uses vertical plant towers, LED lighting and robots to plant, feed and harvest crops.

Other CEA startups including AppHarvest and Gotham Greens raised over \$100 million from investors in 2021 as they scale up production in order to reduce the cost of producing leafy greens and other short-season vegetables indoors. Total sales from US CEA facilities that guard their growing system secrets are projected to grow from \$3 billion in 2021 to \$10 billion by 2026.

The Clean Water Act of 1972 aimed to ensure clean water in 700,000 miles of US rivers and streams. A 2022 report found that some 350,000 miles of US waterways are too polluted for fishing and swimming, due primarily to fertilizer

and manure runoff. The CWA regulates pollution from fixed points, but not nonpoint pollution from agricultural activities.

FOOD, WINE

Food sales in supermarkets are projected to be \$765 billion in 2022, less than the expected \$900 billion spent in all types of restaurants, cafeterias and other facilities that serve food in institutions.

Food service employers complained of labor shortages in 2022, noting that higher wages and signing bonuses are not attracting enough workers. Fast food restaurants are reducing portion sizes and raising prices to cope with the rising costs of meat and labor. Many franchisees raised prices by 10 percent or more as beef prices rose and average hourly earnings topped \$16.

Retail sales of organic fresh produced surpassed \$9 billion in 2021, led by \$1.5 billion worth of bagged salads and \$1.5 billion worth of berries.

Salads and berries obtain some of the highest price premiums for organic produce, while organic bananas have the lowest price premium over conventional produce.

Bananas are the world’s most valuable fruit; banana exports are \$7 billion a year. Seven major banana exporters, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Honduras, in January 2022 appealed for importers to pay higher prices to support the 450 million people involved in producing bananas for export.

The Biden administration tackled food-price inflation by focusing on the growing concentration of meatpackers and grocers. The four

largest beef packers account for 80 percent of cattle that are processed and the four largest supermarket chains account for 70 percent of sales. Grocery stores that believe fresh produce is a “cart starter” or the major factor in selecting a store tried to hold down produce prices.

Some 22 million households with 42 million people participated in SNAP or Food Stamps in FY21, receiving stored value cards that provided \$417 per household or \$217 per person per month. USDA raised the value of SNAP benefits to almost \$450 per household and \$240 per person per month in 2022.

Obesity

A third of American adults are obese. If current trends continue, half of US adults are expected to be obese by 2030. The highest rates of obesity are among minority and low-income women, a reflection of cheap fast and processed food.

Researchers say that the single best weapon against obesity is a soda tax, noting that people who drink extra calories do not fill up as much as when they eat caloric-rich foods. Some want to require restaurants to make entrees that are low in fat and sugar the default or recommended option, and to reduce portion sizes.

The CDC recommends that American adults consume one to two cups of fruit a day and two to three cups of vegetables daily, but only about 10 percent of US residents do. High-income older women are most likely to consume recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables, and low-income young men least likely.

The US has over 70 plant-based or alt-protein suppliers including Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods that have raised more than \$3 billion in venture capital. Plant-based proteins often use animal stem cells to create meat substitutes. US cattle ranchers are

pushing back, asking USDA to ensure that plant-based meats are not confused with animal meat.

Europeans protect the place names associated with particular foods, such as Parmesan and Gruyère cheese. A US judge in January 2022 ruled that Gruyère is a generic descriptor that cannot be trademarked, allowing US cheese producers to label their cheeses Gruyère. The US allows feta cheese to be made in the US rather than Greece as well as Munster and Parmesan cheeses.

Wine

Americans spent \$67 billion in wine in 2020, and a survey of 650 wineries found that most had higher sales in 2021 as restaurants reopened and restocked. Wineries worry that younger consumers prefer hard seltzers and spirits to wine. The 200 million Americans who are 21 and older drink 800 million gallons of wine a year, an average four gallons or 20 bottles each, double the 400 million gallons of wine that was consumed annually in the mid-1990s.

California growers crushed over four million tons of wine grapes each year between 2016 and 2019, but the crush fell in 3.6 million tons in 2020 and 3.9 million tons in 2021; the 2020 crush was lower due to drought and wildfire. District 13 (Fresno) crushed 1.2 million tons in 2021, while District 4 (Napa) crushed less than 120,000 tons.

California wine grape acreage is stable as growers remove and replant about 20,000 acres a year, keeping wine grape acreage stable at about 600,000 acres. Grape production challenges include expensive water, a warming climate and damage to grapes from wildfire and smoke.

The best Old World European wines are linked to terroir and tradition; winemakers say that their wines

reflect the soil and winemaking methods allowed by a particular appellation. New World wines, by contrast, feature the variety of grape used to make the wine on their label and not the place where the grapes were grown or the rules that were followed to make the wine.

Old World wines use appellations as brand names, while New World wines feature grape varieties. Defenders of appellations say they help small producers, while detractors say that they lock in antiquated methods of making and marketing wine.

Coca Cola, which markets drinks that range from Peace Tea and Costa Coffee to Innocent Smoothies, Minute Maid Juices, Simply almond milk and Dasani water, joined Constellation Brands to sell ready-to-drink cocktails under the Fresca brand in 2022. During the covid pandemic, sales of ready-to-drink cocktails increased alongside sales of flavored alcoholic beverages.

Constellation sold many of its mass market wine brands to Gallo, and split its wine and craft spirits division into a premium segment including The Prisoner, Meiomi, and Kim Crawford and a mass segment that includes Woodbridge and Svedka vodka.

Italy sold 900 million bottles of sparkling wine in 2021 for €2.4 billion, compared with France’s 320 million bottles of champagne in 2021 worth €5.5 billion. Three-fourths of Italian sparkling wine is exported to countries led by the US and UK and followed by Germany and France.

CLIMATE CHANGE

A warming earth is expected to unleash more extreme weather events including drought and floods, wildfires and heatwaves

and severe storms. Seven of the 10 hottest years on record have been in the past decade.

Average global temperatures increased by an average of 1.1C or 2F since the 1850s. World leaders have pledged to limit global warming to 1.5C to avoid larger climate change impacts, although most researchers expect average world temperatures to be 2C to 3C higher in 2050. Higher temperatures could reduce food production, threaten coral reefs and reduce fish stocks and increase coastal flooding.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report in February 2022 that estimated that storms, floods and other extreme weather events displaced over 13 million people across Asia and Africa in 2019; these weather events allowed mosquitoes that carry diseases such as malaria and dengue to spread into new areas. Incremental defenses such as flood barriers may be insufficient to deal with extreme weather if natural systems go beyond a tipping point, which could lead to mass migration induced by climate change.

The IGCC acknowledged that agricultural innovations such as the green revolution and improved public health systems have reduced deaths from climate disasters over the past half century. However, the IGCC warned that further temperature increases could overwhelm current defenses against climate events.

The major policies to slow global warming are to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases that are trapped in the atmosphere and act as a blanket to trap the sun's heat that reaches the earth's surface. Alternatively, carbon could be captured from the atmosphere and stored underground. Economists favor a carbon tax that charges polluters for the right to

emit carbon, giving them incentives to reduce their emissions as the carbon tax rises.

During the winter of 2022, oil and gas prices rose due to increasing demand, supply interruptions and sanctions after Russia invaded Ukraine. The US is the largest producer of oil and gas, and Russia is the second-largest exporter after Saudi Arabia. Russia produces about 10 million barrels of oil a day and exports 5.5 million barrels, including two million barrels a day to China.

Biden announced in March 2022 that the US would release a million barrels of oil a day from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to hold down gas prices. Biden's goal of reducing US greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2030 is not likely to be achieved.

After President Biden's Build Back Better proposal stalled in January 2022, Democrats separated the BBB's expanded social safety net and climate components, hoping to enact legislation to slow global warming and fulfill commitments that US made in Paris in 2015 by subsidizing the production of more wind and solar power, the purchase of electric cars and research into carbon capture technologies.

One question underlying many federal government regulations is the price that should be assigned to each metric ton of carbon emitted, the social cost of carbon. A higher social cost justifies more federal interventions to reduce carbon emissions. A federal judge in February 2022 ruled that the \$51 per ton of carbon emitted used by the Biden administration could only be determined by Congress, and that EPA regulations based on the \$51 cost were invalid.

The US Supreme Court will decide how far the Clean Air Act can be stretched via EPA regulation to

regulate power plant emissions. The failure of Congress to enact specific limits on emissions means that the EPA has tried to fill the breach by regulating emissions from power plants as well as other sources of emissions.

John Muir (1838-1914) was the father of the US national park system and co-founder of the 2.4-million-member Sierra Club. Current Sierra Club leadership, which considers climate change the major threat to humanity, wants to link the environmental movement with the environmental justice movement, arguing that environmental rights are also human, justice, gender and reproductive rights.

The Center of Migration Studies estimated that 10.4 million unauthorized foreigners were in the US for at least a decade by 2019. Under the Farm Workforce Modernization Act (HR 1603), some 353,000 would qualify for Certified Agricultural Worker status because they did at least 180 days of US farm work before March 2021. CMS estimated that half of those who qualify for CAW legal status have been in the US at least 15 years, a third completed high school and a quarter own or are buying a house. The New York metro area had the most CAW-eligible workers, followed by Salinas, Los Angeles, Bakersfield, Santa Maria, Oxnard and Fresno; CMS estimated that at least a third of CAW-eligible workers were in California.

ESTIMATED POPULATION ELIGIBLE FOR CERTIFIED AGRICULTURAL WORKER STATUS TOP 20 METRO AREAS

Metropolitan Area	Total undocumented population	Farm Workforce Modernization Act	Percent of undocumented population
US Total	10,348,900	343,400	3%
New York-Newark-Jersey City, Ny-NJ-PA	960,300	17,300	2%
Salinas, CA	60,300	17,100	28%
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	927,900	16,700	2%
Bakersfield, CA	51,500	15,200	30%
Santa Maria-Santa Barbara, CA	41,700	12,300	29%
Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	51,200	11,000	22%
Fresno, CA	52,800	9,900	19%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	413,300	9,500	2%
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	217,600	8,000	4%
Yakima, WA	24,900	7,800	31%
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	374,600	7,300	2%
Visalia-Porterville, CA	21,900	7,100	33%
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	581,100	6,300	1%
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	81,000	5,900	7%
Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA	13,500	5,600	41%
Merced, CA	26,400	5,600	21%
Stockton-Lodi, CA	39,700	5,500	14%
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA, NJ, DE, MD	138,100	4,200	3%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	66,500	3,700	6%
Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	19,100	3,500	18%

Source: Center for Migration Studies. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/23315024211065016>

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