

Community Comment  
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It's the numbers

The news of the day, any day it seems, is seldom good. It's not that the news reflects how our families relate to one another or how our individual lives are going. Rather, the news reflects the larger social issues of the day. The quality of our institutions such as government, education, police, financial, and military and defense provide a gage that makes up much of the news of the day. It's becoming more difficult to find success stories about these institutions and it all relates to the numbers.

The United States is still the beacon for the world for political fairness and individual representation in government. We are far from perfect. But the question is are we heading towards a more perfect union or not? Read the headlines. Our elected officials can't seem to get much accomplished regarding the public's business. Over eighty percent of us want more comprehensive gun control laws and congress can't get it done. We all know that laws related to stimulating job creation are probably the top priority and congress can't get it done. Immigration reform, financial institution oversight, defense spending, climate change are just a few of the critical work that is simply not being done. Why not? We argue that we are split as a country and that is reflected in congress. I don't buy it. Through out our history, congress has risen to the occasion to solve difficult issues. Why not now? I think it's the numbers. With more of us to govern, the issues become more complex and the lobbying becomes more intense. Different regions of the country become more diverse. This leads to trying to govern the whole from ~~the~~ Washington as we did in the past but these diverse regions call for individual solutions. The bigger we get, the harder we will be to govern effectively.

Back to gun control as an example. As our numbers grow, the complexity of this issue will grow as well. We are becoming more urban, hunting will become less of a factor. But guns for self protection will become more attractive and more of a factor. Some regions see the gun as the problem while other ~~areas~~ see it as the solution. How we reconcile this diversity in Washington is difficult now; as our numbers grow, so will the degree of difficulty.

I could make this argument for any of the major issues of the day. That is, that the more of us there are, the more difficult we are to govern. Government is not the problem, the act of effective governing by representative democracy becomes more difficult as our numbers grow. Add to that this; as we grow in numbers, so will the basic facts of the problems we face. We have people with mental illness. Even if the percentage of these people doesn't change, by a growth in population we will see a growth in people with mental illness. Growth doesn't help these issues, it make more of these issues.

I happen to be an optimist. Unlike in nature, we humans have a brain that can make choices in our self interest. Nature effectively controls population as the carrying capacity of a habitat is reached. We can control our own destiny but we have to take our future seriously. We can do better.

→ This has been Sam pennisi for community.

A growing population will serve to diminish individual rights, not enhance them.