

# POPULATION CONNECTION

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**VASECTOMY SERVICES INCREASINGLY  
SOUGHT IN RESPONSE TO ABORTION  
BANS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES**

# President's Note

John Seager  
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While I have an active imagination, I can't fully envision the panoply of putrid policies that will have spewed from Trump's Sharpie by the time this column reaches you.

I'm writing this in the immediate aftermath of Elon Musk's hostile takeover of USAID, the agency charged with providing humanitarian aid to the least among us.

Trump has "flooded the zone," to use Steve Bannon's phrase, with a torrent of execrable executive orders. While a vomitorium is defined as a wide corridor designed to get people into or out of a venue quickly, the word seems like an appropriately odoriferous description of what America's Oval Office has now become.


It was not surprising that Trump gave choice inaugural seating to what the despicable Bannon accurately described as "techno-feudalists," who "don't believe in the underlying tenets of self-governance." To be clear, given the choice between living in a world ruled by Bannon and one controlled by those digital dictators, I might well take Musk up on an offer to relocate to Mars.

How should we react? I would respectfully submit that the first — and perhaps hardest — thing we must do is to stop reacting. Right now, Trump is wielding his manic laser pointer. We need to stop acting like frantic felines. Rather, we must immediately focus on effective ways to stand and fight. Marches and rallies, by themselves, are not substitutes for a serious strategy.

Our republic, which will turn 249 years old this coming July 4, still has firewalls. Our courts have not (yet) acquiesced to the Musk/Trump coup. And our congressional allies, while they may be in the minority, still have power, provided that they don't just rely on strongly worded statements and speeches.

Stay tuned for the congressional debate on the Continuing Resolution currently funding the government, which expires on March 14. Then, by some as-yet-unknown date, Congress must act to increase the federal debt limit. Our legislative allies must confront Trump around these deadlines — as dangerous as that may be. Then will come next year's elections.

This has everything to do with our mission to stop overpopulation. Trump and his repugnant renegades are taking a chainsaw to programs here at home and around the world that enable women to make the choices that we know lead to smaller families, and they are deliberately annihilating efforts to address the climate crisis and so much more.

Trump shrewdly presents himself as an irresistible force. We must be immovable objects. We must show the world he is nothing more than a failed businessman who couldn't even make money running a casino and who is now recklessly gambling with the future of our nation and the planet. 

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## Feature

### 20 Surge in Americans Getting Sterilizations Given States' Abortion Laws

By Sabrina Malhi and Emily Wax-Thibodeaux



**Cover image:** A mobile vasectomy clinic operated by Dr. Esgar Guarín was in West Burlington, Iowa, on November 18, 2022, in celebration of World Vasectomy Day, which falls on the third Friday of November each year. Dr. Guarín uses a no-scalpel technique, making tiny incisions under a local anesthetic. The procedure takes about 15 minutes to perform. Stricter abortion laws in many states have caused public interest in vasectomies to increase. (Photo by Keith Turrill / Alamy Stock Photo)



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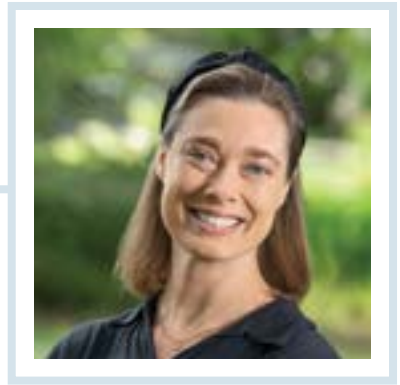
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## Editor's Note

Marian Starkey  
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I volunteer alongside over a dozen incredible people as a clinic escort at Planned Parenthood in Portland, Maine. About half are retired and remember the dark days before Roe. The other half, like me, are young enough to have taken the constitutional right to abortion for granted, until it was quashed nearly three years ago. Two-thirds are parents. A third are men.

One of those men (and parents) is my friend Sam. We've known each other since we were kids, and I've always found him to be an exceedingly positive and principled person. When he was 32, Sam was diagnosed with anaplastic astrocytoma — a rare, malignant, and ultimately terminal brain tumor. It has now been nine years since a craniotomy, a month of radiation, and 18 months of intermittent chemo bought him an unknown amount of time before another [likely more deadly] tumor develops.

He had just finished his MA in English, with plans to become a high school English teacher, when he received his diagnosis. Unable to pursue full-time work, he became a part-time director of Passport to Manhood, a Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Maine program to engage boys ages 8–14 in discussions and activities that reinforce character, leadership, and positive behavior. He helped these boys — many of them newly settled in Maine from fraught places such as Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Somalia — learn what it means to be responsible, respectful, considerate men.

Sam and his wife knew they only wanted to

have one child, for many reasons: “My cancer, our relatively low income, our tiny condo, and most of all, the vastly degrading environmental and political state of our overpopulated planet.” A few years after their daughter was born, Sam and his wife decided that he would pursue the “easiest, cheapest, and least painful way to solve this issue”: vasectomy. He was able to get a “free, fast, professional procedure” at the very clinic he defends from the sidewalk on a weekly basis.

The feature article in this issue, “Surge in Americans Getting Sterilizations Given States’ Abortion Laws,” recounts the experiences of men like Sam (pictured on page 23) who wanted to take responsibility for family planning within their relationships, especially in the wake of the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022. The article reports on a new study which found that, as a group, young men ages 19–26 had 95% more vasectomies in August 2022 than in May 2022. Another study, whose results are depicted in the infographic on page 6, looked at patients of all ages and found that vasectomy services steadily increased from 146,796 in 2019 to 198,212 in 2022.

As long as unmet need for family planning and threats to existing access persist, we won't stop fighting for universal affordable access to the full array of proven contraceptive methods — including vasectomy. And we'll continue to cheer on the men of the world — men like Sam — who take measures to lift the burden of pregnancy prevention from their partners' purview. 🌍

## Letters to the Editor

Kudos on your President's Note in the recent December 2024 issue. You nailed it with your description of our then-President-elect. But as disgusting an individual as Trump is, I lay blame with the American people for electing such a disgraced individual to the most powerful office on the planet. It does not bode well for humanity that people are more swayed by a modest increase in the cost of eggs and milk, even with gasoline prices plummeting and other costs moderating, than trying to preserve a decent future for themselves and their progeny.

You and I both know that saving our planet from the multiple ravages of climate change, deforestation, habitat encroachment, plastic pollution, and forever chemical pollution — just to name a few — is going to require a huge sacrifice on the part of every human on the planet. And our recent election, as well as elections in other countries, has shown that most of us are simply not up to the task.

One example really stands out for me. Just weeks before this election, western North Carolina suffered the most devastating natural climate disaster in the history of the state, with many people dead and hundreds or more losing their livelihood. And yet, that very state, a few weeks later, overwhelmingly voted for a climate denier to be their next leader.

I have personally had enough. I live in a home which is heated and cooled with heat pumps, and solar panels provide most of my electricity. I drive an electric car, and I sort my trash and recycle as much as the city allows. I live alone and do not have any children. I also support, as much as possible, your organization as well as Planned Parenthood, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the Union of Concerned Scientists. Yet I feel I am spitting into the wind.

I applaud you, your staff, and your supporters for not giving in. I will always continue to support you, but I am so pessimistic these days I am ready to throw in the towel. I feel that if most people don't want to work on healing the planet, they deserve the planet they will inherit.

I recently finished reading the book of Jeremiah in the Bible, and I feel his story rings true now. He spent his life warning the people that if they did not change their ways, they would be utterly destroyed. Yet his message was treated with contempt. He was ridiculed, jailed, and even sentenced to death for preaching against the prevailing message that said that everything was just fine and no changes were needed. The result, of course, is that Babylon was utterly destroyed. It's such a pity that the large block of so-called Christians who helped put Trump into power don't really seem to have read or at least understood their Bible.

With deep respect to you and your staff.

Mel Cohen, MD

## Letters to the Editor, continued

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I just read your President's Note in the December issue, and I have to tell you I feel pretty much the same about this note as Dick Bennett felt about your last one. I will be detaching that page and slipping it into a folder in my backpack. I want to be able to refresh my memory with your wording and direction from time to time.

I may have been for ZPG before the organization bearing the term was founded. After my second child reached a healthy two years old, I had a vasectomy. The two of us replaced ourselves, and that was it. Both my sons have been married over 10 years, but I only have one grandchild. (Truthfully, I would like a couple more, but that's not happening.)

Alan Bronstein

You expressed my thoughts clearly in your December 2024 President's Note! I trust we will all survive four years IF we quietly work together.

I feel like I am a member of a silent majority, and NOT the one Nixon spoke of.

Let's hope we can avoid climate and other catastrophes over the next four years.

Keep up the good work!

Walter Mozgala

Thank you very much to Elizabeth Kidder Michael for her letter about men and their responsibilities in the December 2024 magazine. I didn't think the response really answered her question.

I have written a couple of times on the same subject. Why aren't there more articles about men and what they can do to stop overpopulation? They need to be held accountable for their actions. Some men have responded by getting vasectomies, and that's commendable. But let's have more articles geared towards men and quit concentrating on women all the time. It takes two people to make a baby!!!

Bonnie Scott

If you'd prefer to read the quarterly *Population Connection* magazine online, please visit our website at [popconnect.org/magazine](https://popconnect.org/magazine) to see archives going back to 2020. The digital version of each issue contains links to sources, staff authors' email addresses, and suggestions for further reading.



## EDITORIAL EXCERPTS

### The Washington Post

... Climate change is real. The world must find ways to produce a lot more energy that does not emit greenhouse gases. Trump's barrage of orders stands in the way of this objective. ...

Halting the disbursement of hundreds of billions in grants and loans under the Inflation Reduction Act is likely to slow the deployment of renewable resources. Moreover, stopping further development of offshore wind generation subverts the objective of ensuring America's energy supply. ...

Most alarming is how Trump's distaste for clean energy might undermine the ongoing multinational effort to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Lately, this effort has been losing steam. Thirty years after the first United Nations climate summit in Berlin and a decade after the celebrated Paris Agreement, fossil fuels still account for some 80% of the energy humanity consumes. It appears that no country is decarbonizing at the rate it promised under the Paris deal. ...

Trump is hostile not only to climate change but also to foreign aid. By curtailing assistance for climate mitigation, America would abandon the affluent nations' still unfulfilled responsibility to assist less developed countries in decarbonizing. ...

To the extent that Trump ignores this challenge, he will increase the chance that a true emergency will occur.

– January 23, 2025

### ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

... After the US Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in mid-2022, leaving it to the states to restrict abortion rights in any way they wanted, Missouri became the first state to institute a near-total ban. The procedure was prohibited from the moment of conception in almost all situations, even in cases of rape or incest.

Doctors who violated the ban could face 15 years in prison. The sole, vague exception was for "medical emergencies." Inevitably, reports arose of women in dire medical distress who were refused necessary abortions because hospitals and doctors felt they had to err on the side of caution if there was any question whether it was dire enough.

The extremism of that ban explains why even in a conservative state like Missouri, the ballot initiative to overturn it was always destined to pass. Anti-choice lawmakers knew that, which is why they tried every trick in the book to prevent a fair up-or-down vote. Their schemes included a failed attempt to change the rules to make ballot measures harder to pass, as well as a campaign of outright lies about what the amendment would do.

That all failed and the amendment passed, by a margin of a little over 3% — not a landslide, but inarguably a victory. ...

Pro-choice legislators and activists must vigilantly defend [reproductive] rights in the Legislature, in court, and in the public forum.

–December 8, 2024

# CONTRACEPTIVE USE

BEFORE + AFTER DOBBS

IN JUNE 2022,  
*DOBBS V. JACKSON  
WOMEN'S HEALTH ORGANIZATION*  
OVERTURNED *ROE V. WADE*,  
ENDING THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT  
TO ABORTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

“ While contraceptive usage increased initially in the month after *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, all contraception types except vasectomy returned to overall downward trends through the end of 2022. The decreases we found in contraceptive services and the workforce providing these methods may indicate growing challenges for contraception access. News reports suggest increased interest but persistent

barriers for obtaining IUDs and tubal sterilization following *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, and emerging research finds some differences in post-*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* sterilizations by state policy climate. State-level shifts in the contraception workforce may continue, as clinicians may leave states with abortion restrictions or exit the workforce entirely. ”

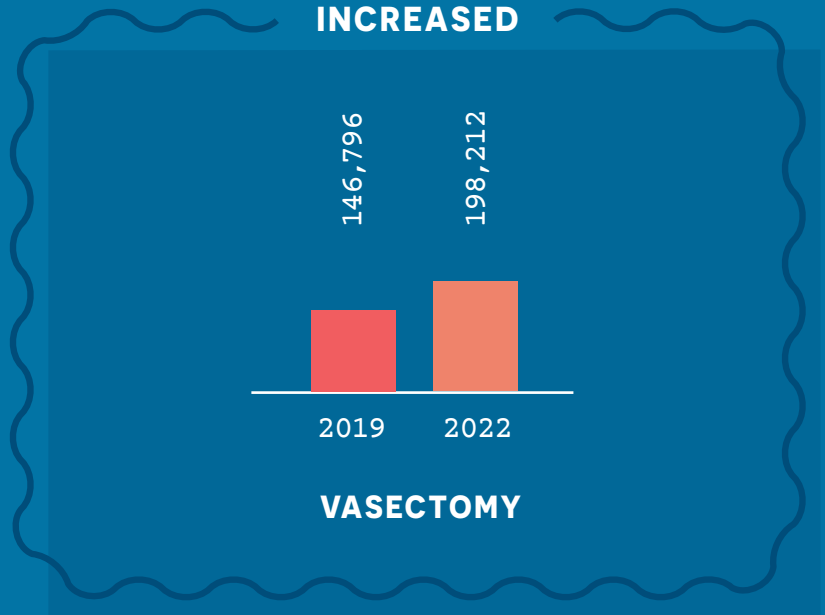
Source: Strasser J, Schenk E, Luo Q, Bodas M, Murray M, Chen C.  
Contraception Usage and Workforce Trends Through 2022.

*JAMA Netw Open*. 2024;7(4):e246044. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.6044



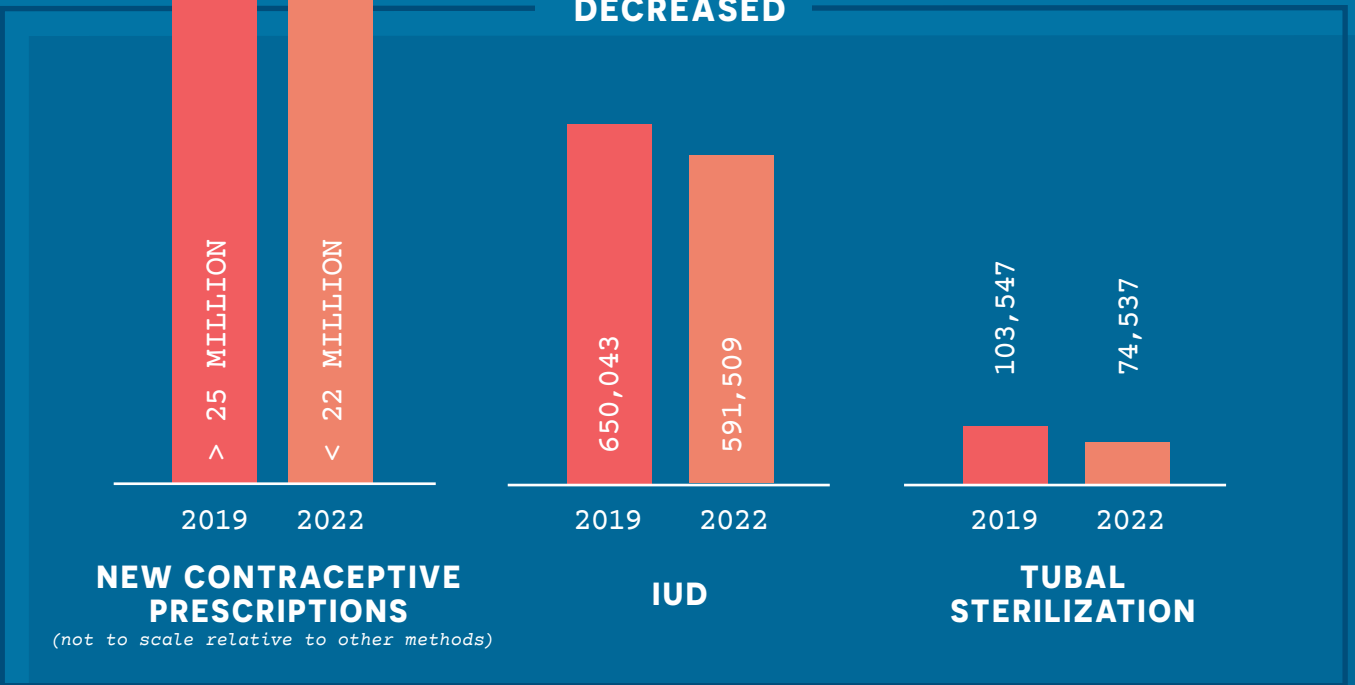
# CONTRACEPTIVE SERVICES IN 2019 VS. IN 2022

## INCREASED



## VASECTOMY

## DECREASED



## NEW CONTRACEPTIVE PRESCRIPTIONS

(not to scale relative to other methods)

## IUD

## TUBAL STERILIZATION



# IN THE NEWS

By Olivia Nater, Communications Manager

## **Trump withdraws from Paris Agreement and WHO, suspends foreign aid**

At the time of writing, Trump has just been inaugurated as the 47th US President. He wasted no time, signing a flurry of disturbing executive actions on his very first day.

One of his first moves was to withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement, the most important international climate treaty, which aims to limit global warming to less than 2°C (3.6°F) and to “pursue efforts” to limit the increase to 1.5°C (2.7°F). In his inaugural address, Trump repeated his intention to “drill, baby, drill,” and later in the day, he declared a “national energy emergency” — an action intended to boost the fossil fuel industry and distract from the real climate emergency.

Trump also began the process of leaving the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations agency that works to improve access to health care around the world and that directs the international

response to health emergencies such as pandemics. WHO stands to lose around 15% of its funding as a result of US withdrawal. The processes for leaving the Paris Agreement and WHO each take a year to be finalized.

While Trump was widely expected to take these actions, he went even further, suspending all foreign aid for 90 days pending a review to determine whether disbursements are “aligned” with his foreign policy goals. At this time, it is not yet clear how much assistance will be affected as funding for many programs has already been appropriated by Congress.

## **2024 broke climate records**

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has confirmed that 2024 was the hottest year on record, with global average surface temperatures 1.55°C (2.79°F) higher than the 1850–1900 “pre-industrial” average. WMO estimates are based on six different datasets, including from NASA and the National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The WMO also confirmed that each of the past 10 years was one of the 10 warmest years on record, and that 2024 was likely the first full calendar year with a global mean temperature of more than 1.5°C of warming relative to the pre-industrial period. While not enough time has passed to confirm that we have definitively breached the critical 1.5°C Paris target, experts agree that this is looking increasingly inevitable and warn that every tenth of a degree of further warming increases the risk to life on our planet.

Meanwhile, the impacts of the climate crisis are escalating around the world, including in the United States, where record-breaking wildfires devastated parts of Southern California early this year.

## **Congressional Budget Office revises US population projections downward**

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) published new

population projections in January, forecasting a national population size of 372 million in 2055. The population in 2054 is now projected to be 2.8% lower than CBO forecast in last year's 30-year projection, due to lower expected fertility and immigration.

The CBO projections are still higher than the most recent ones from the US Census Bureau, published in 2023, which forecast a population size of 362 million in 2055 and a peak of 369 million in 2080. The CBO projections do not extend beyond 2055. Unlike the Census Bureau, CBO includes everyone who is eligible for Social Security, including US citizens living abroad, in its projections.

While Trump has vowed to slash immigration, the new CBO projections do not incorporate the potential effects of his administration's actions.

### **Receipt of family planning services varies by age, race, education, and income**

A report published by the CDC National Center for Health Statistics showed that from 2022 to 2023, only about a third of women of reproductive age (35.7%) had received family planning services, including birth control methods, checkups, or counseling, in the previous 12 months.

The report, based on survey data, also documents racial inequities, with close to 40% of white women having received family planning services compared to 35% of Black women and 32% of Hispanic women.

Supporting previous research, there was also a strong correlation for income and education, with receipt of family planning services increasing with household income and education level.

Ongoing reproductive rights restrictions, including state abortion bans, will make it even more difficult for low-income communities to access vital reproductive health services, including family planning.

### **Two sides of pronatalism: Japan and Russia**

Governments in low-fertility countries around the world are trying to boost birth rates — whether it's for socioeconomic or nationalistic reasons — and are taking vastly different approaches. Recently announced policies include the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's plan to introduce a four-day workweek for government employees, beginning in April. Japan's fertility rate stands at just 1.2 births per woman, according to the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare. The new policy is intended to help

parents and prospective parents, especially women, balance work and childcare — Japan's grueling work culture and patriarchal expectations currently make it very difficult for working women to raise a family.

Russia, on the other hand, is taking a more questionable approach, with several regional governments offering cash payments to female college students who deliver healthy babies. Putin has long been trying to increase Russia's fertility rate (currently 1.5 births per woman), with increasingly worrying measures. He's frequently called on women to resume traditional roles and have many children, and last November, he signed a bill into law banning "child-free propaganda." 🇷🇺

Visit our blog to read more about some of these news items: [popconnect.org/blog](https://popconnect.org/blog)

The digital version of this article includes hyperlinked sources: [popconnect.org/article/in-the-news-March-2025](https://popconnect.org/article/in-the-news-March-2025)

# CALLING ALL PROFESSORS!

## **Did you know that we speak to over 100 college and university classrooms each year, in addition to teaching a full-credit summer course at the University of North Carolina?**

The connections between population growth, health, development, and the environment are complex and can be difficult to articulate if you don't spend all day, every day, working on them like we do!

Hannah Evans, Senior Analyst, is available as a guest speaker for your college or university classroom to help explain these connections to students and to demonstrate how population stabilization is crucial for achieving a sustainable future.

Hannah educates students across the country about human population dynamics through lively, thought-provoking presentations focused on causes and impacts as well as solutions to global population challenges.



**"It was very eye opening."**



**"It introduced me to many things I wasn't aware of."**



**"The speaker seemed very knowledgeable about the subject."**



**"Was very thorough and interesting, shed a new light on how climate issues are also social issues."**



**"Overall, I really enjoyed it – you know your stuff about the topic but explained it in a way that someone with little knowledge (me) could understand! Thanks again!!"**

## ★ STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

★ “The organization of points was very powerful. Hearing about the interdisciplinary application of concepts I had only ever studied in the discipline of biology (as a biology student) was incredibly cool. The visuals presented were very intriguing and supported the talk excellently.”

★ “She is clearly extremely knowledgeable about the topic and was very comprehensive. I thought it was easy to follow along with the presentation, and she included a lot of helpful graphics and statistics.”

★ “I enjoyed the way the presenter was able to connect many different problems in modern society and the environment in a way that was easy to understand but still gave new information on the subject.”

★ “I loved seeing how everything tied in together. It is a really cool way of framing things and helping to sell the ideas of reproductive health care and educating women across the board. It made me feel optimistic about the world. The graphics were great, and the ideas flowed well together.”

★ “I enjoyed that Hannah was open to our questions at all times during the presentation and was mindful about keeping the presentation as engaging as possible.”

### INVITE HANNAH TO YOUR CLASS



If you'd like to invite Hannah to speak to your college or university class, please get in touch with her!

[hannah@popconnect.org](mailto:hannah@popconnect.org)

# PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE MEMBER PROFILE

## Wayne Grody, MD, PhD

By Sydnie Stocks, Special Gifts Officer

Dr. Wayne Grody has been a steadfast member of Population Connection since the early 1970s, when the organization was known by its founding name, Zero Population Growth (ZPG). His interest in environmentalism and population challenges began in early adulthood, after taking a population-oriented course at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. It was in this course that he read *The Population Bomb* by Paul Ehrlich. His copy of the book included a call to action to join ZPG. He joined that day and has been a member ever since!



Dr. Grody was born and raised in Syracuse, New York. He earned a BS in Pre-Medical Biology at Johns Hopkins University and then continued his education at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, where he obtained both an MD and a PhD. In 1982, Dr. Grody moved to Los Angeles where he completed his residency and a fellowship in medical genetics, before being appointed to the medical faculty at UCLA. He describes his career as the “triple threat of academic medicine” — teaching courses, seeing patients, and conducting research. He is the founding director of UCLA’s DNA diagnostic lab, which utilizes cutting-edge molecular biology techniques to diagnose cancers and genetic disorders. He is also an attending physician in the Department of Pediatrics.

In addition to Dr. Grody’s academic and patient-oriented work, he works (for low or no pay, he jokes) as a medical consultant to the film and television industry. He says, “It’s fun. I get to work with a lot of creative people, and most of the screenwriters and directors I work with want to be as medically accurate as possible.” He reads scripts and gives feedback on jargon to




**“I like how Population Connection isn’t afraid to assert that population growth is an environmental issue. Population growth is the root cause of so many issues we face, and it’s rarely discussed, even by other prominent environmental groups.”**

ensure that it sounds realistic and shows actors how to hold and interact with lab equipment. Sometimes, he’s asked to identify a genetic disease that fits a narrative, based on parameters the writers give him. Other times, he’s asked to “dress a set” to make it look more realistic. He’s even contributed his own office and laboratory materials to scenes! He’s worked on projects such as *CSI*, *Law & Order*, *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Chicago Med*, *Virgin River*, and both of the *Nutty Professor* movies. He got involved in this work through a side job he held as the film critic for *MD Magazine* for a dozen or so years.

Asked why he supports Population Connection, Dr. Grody shares, “I like how Population Connection isn’t afraid to assert that population growth is an environmental issue. Population growth is the root cause of so many issues we face, and it’s rarely discussed, even by other prominent environmental groups. I also appreciate your pro-choice advocacy work. I see the impacts in real time when women are denied essential reproductive health care. In my specialty of medical genetics, half of what we do involves prenatal testing. There are cases

where fetal abnormalities occur due to genetic disorders, and they are not always obvious or well-defined in early pregnancy. It’s imperative that these patients have options, including to terminate an affected pregnancy.”

When Dr. Grody isn’t working in his lab, attending to patients, teaching classes, presenting at medical conferences around the world, or advising on a TV or film project, he enjoys listening to classical music and attending orchestral concerts by the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Due to the technical nature of his career, he likes to prioritize music and film as creative outlets. 

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We are so appreciative of Dr. Grody’s dedication to making our world a better place! His investment in our programs, through his President’s Circle support, expands our reach and contributes to a more sustainable future. If you would like to learn more about our giving societies, contact our Development team at [giving@popconnect.org](mailto:giving@popconnect.org).

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We are honored to include Joyanne Bloom in our ZPG Society. In addition to her yearly support, she established a **charitable gift annuity** with Population Connection.

*"It's a win-win. I can feel good about donating, and I'm also receiving quarterly checks, which is nice."*

Joyanne, pictured here hiking in Alaska with her dog, Kenai, will continue to receive payments for life.



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# SURGE IN AMERICANS GETTING STERILIZATIONS GIVEN STATES' ABORTION LAWS

Interest in tubal ligations and vasectomies has skyrocketed in the past two years, according to research and health care providers.

**For nearly two years**, in the wake of the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade*, Alexander W. Pastuszak and his wife grappled with growing anxiety about the implications of an unplanned pregnancy.

As the parents of two children, with no desire to have a third, the Utah couple worried they might not be able to get access to an abortion if the unexpected occurred.

“We weren’t thinking necessarily about a tomorrow timeline, but it was more about like, okay, well, what happens a year from now?” said Pastuszak, 46. “What happens two years from now if these services continue to get diminished?”

So in May, he underwent a vasectomy. Despite their state allowing abortion up to 18 weeks of gestation or later under certain circumstances, he worried that a national ban could be implemented.

“Are we going to fly to another country to have an abortion? I mean, that just seems ridiculous and unsafe,” said Pastuszak, a urologist at the University of Utah School of Medicine.

His decision reflects a growing trend across the country, with health experts predicting that more people will choose sterilization because of fears over restricted access to reproductive health care during a second Trump administration.

Research shows a significant increase in vasectomies and tubal ligations in the months just before and after the Supreme Court ruled in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the 2022 decision that ended a constitutional right to abortion after nearly half a century.

A study in the journal *Health Affairs* this month found that from May to August 2022, vasectomies surged by 95% and tubal sterilizations by 70% among adults ages 19 to 26. Researchers used medical records to analyze procedure codes and found that states likely to ban abortions after *Dobbs* experienced a greater increase in permanent contraception procedures compared with states unlikely to implement bans.

The data tracked with that of a JAMA Health Forum research letter published this past

**Photo, opposite:** Marcus Aguinaga exits the Planned Parenthood Mobile Health Clinic after getting a vasectomy on Monday, August 19, 2024, in Chicago. His procedure was free. The mobile health clinic was set up less than a mile from the Democratic National Convention at the United Center, where reproductive rights were an important topic in the November election. (Photo by Stacey Wescott/Chicago Tribune/Tribune News Service via Getty Images)

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spring, which noted a rise in permanent contraception procedures among adults ages 18 to 30 years following the ruling.

“We know that young people, including young adults, are sensitive to major changes like the Dobbs decision, so it’s not totally surprising to me that we would see some type of shift,” said Julia Strasser, author of the latest study and an assistant research professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at George Washington University. “I do think the magnitude of the change was somewhat surprising.”

Vasectomies involve cutting and sealing the vas deferens, the tube that carries sperm from the testes to the urethra, to prevent sperm from mixing with semen during ejaculation. While considered a permanent method of contraception, vasectomies sometimes can be reversed through surgery.

**“It’s absolutely a phenomenon because urologists in our area had a six-month wait list,” Clegg said. The clinic responded by expanding vasectomy services and hiring a second doctor just for that procedure.**

Tubal sterilizations are irreversible procedures that either block the fallopian tubes, in the case of ligation, or remove them completely, an operation known as a salpingectomy.

Women’s health clinics are also reporting increases in people interested in sterilization.

Planned Parenthood has seen a dramatic jump in interest in tubal ligations, with visits to its main website skyrocketing the day before the 2024 presidential election, according to Priscilla Vazquez, Communications Manager at Planned Parenthood Federation of America. In-person queries soared at some of the organization’s regional health centers, even in parts of the country where abortion remains legal and widely available.

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England has 15 locations that log over 54,000 patient visits yearly. After Donald Trump’s reelection in November, it saw a 368% increase in consultations for vasectomies, Chief Executive Nicole Clegg said.

“It’s absolutely a phenomenon because urologists in our area had a six-month wait list,” Clegg said. The clinic responded by expanding vasectomy services and hiring a second doctor just for that procedure.

With nearly 20 states now banning or significantly limiting abortion, many Americans are also worried about future access to birth control. Health experts predict the number of people looking for a permanent solution will continue to grow if restrictions expand further.

Marc Goldstein, a board-certified urologic surgeon specializing in male infertility at New York’s Weill Cornell Medicine, said he has





seen a big jump in the number of men and couples without children who are opting for sterilization.

“In 43 years of doing this, I’ve seen maybe three or four couples who never had children or men who never had children,” he said.

“But now we’re seeing a huge increase in the number of couples who think the world is too awful a place to bring children into.”

In Ventura County, California, 30-year-old Maelen Sallee had her fallopian tubes removed in December. That move, she said, reflected her own health issues, a decision not to have children, and concerns over the country’s political stability once Trump returns to

Sam Koenigsberg scheduled a vasectomy at the Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE) branch in Portland, Maine, as soon as the clinic began offering the service in 2023. The urology practices that his doctor had previously contacted on his behalf all had six-month waiting lists. PPNNE said that by the middle of November 2024, vasectomy consultations that month had already exceeded the pre-election monthly average. (Photo by Marian Starkey)

the White House. “When *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, it catapulted this kind of realization and awareness around my health,” she said.



Photo illustration created March 8, 2023, in Washington, DC, shows an editor looking at online information about vasectomy procedures. Squeezing his eyes shut, a man breaks into song while filming himself getting a vasectomy — a TikTok trend helping dispel misinformation about the procedure whose demand has soared following US upheaval over abortion rights. Men across the United States have chosen to get snipped since the Supreme Court scrapped the federal right to abortion when it overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022, according to multiple urologists and reproductive health experts. (Photo by STF/AFP via Getty Images)

Sallee takes medications for epilepsy that could severely compromise a pregnancy and would require full-time monitoring if she got pregnant. She chose sterilization as the best way to prioritize her health and safety, especially given the challenges her condition would pose during a pregnancy.

Yet she was worried about finding a physician willing to perform the procedure. Some people have recounted facing questions and resistance from doctors, particularly if they are young and do not have children.

Karen Tang, a gynecologist from Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, said she has seen a swell of patients wanting to undergo sterilization procedures since 2022 — many of them citing

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concerns for their reproductive rights if they were to become pregnant.

“Every birth control can fail, and you can, even if you’re using reliable birth control, have an unintended pregnancy,” Tang said.

Jonathan Harrison, 33, is a bartender who lives in Palm Beach, Florida. He chose to have a vasectomy last year because “there are not a lot of options for guys, and the options for women are harmful to their health.”<sup>1</sup>


For him, the end of *Roe v. Wade* “definitely was a wake-up call and influenced me to get my vasectomy sooner rather than later.”

Some states impose waiting periods before the procedures. New York, for one, requires an individual to be 21 and to wait 30 days between signing the consent forms and undergoing sterilization. Some states allow health care providers to refuse to provide such services, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a nonprofit research center that supports abortion rights.

To combat her state’s hurdles, OB/GYN Franziska Haydanek began curating a list of physicians across the country willing to perform sterilization procedures, regardless of

a patient’s personal medical history or reasons for pursuing permanent contraception.

Haydanek, who practices in Rochester, New York, said she recognized a growing need to support people seeking more control over their reproductive health. “I didn’t really realize how difficult it was for patients to find doctors willing to perform permanent sterilization procedures,” she said.

Many patients face significant barriers beyond restrictive policies, including providers’ judgments because of age, gender, or life circumstances. In Haydanek’s view, “They are adults, and they should be counseled appropriately on what the risks, the benefits, and the alternatives are.” 

**“In 43 years of doing this, I’ve seen maybe three or four couples who never had children or men who never had children. ... But now we’re seeing a huge increase in the number of couples who think the world is too awful a place to bring children into.”**

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<sup>1</sup> Contraceptives are indispensable for preventing pregnancy; reducing the risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer in people with a family history; and treating a variety of conditions, including endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, migraine, acne, painful, heavy periods, and more. To read about the potential side effects of different contraceptive methods, visit [fda.gov/consumers/womens-health-topics/birth-control](https://www.fda.gov/consumers/womens-health-topics/birth-control).

– Marian Starkey, *Population Connection* editor

# GLOBAL PARTNERS

## Seeds for a Future

By Marian Starkey, Vice President for Communications

Photos courtesy of Seeds for a Future

Seeds for a Future, based in Guatemala, has been a Population Connection Global Partner since 2022. The organization, founded by two longtime Population Connection members, helps families break out of the poverty trap by improving their health, introducing them to new sources of income, and giving their kids the best start in life.



Suzanne de Berge (l) and Armando Astorga (r), a Guatemalan Agronomy Engineer and Project Manager at Seeds for a Future, with a family and their thriving tomato plants

Chronic malnutrition affects nearly 50% of Guatemalan children — one of the highest rates in the world — causing them to be shorter than average for their age. Stunting doesn't only affect a child's stature — it also hinders cognitive development and has other lifelong negative effects.

Suzanne and Earl de Berge saw this firsthand when they were working in the area around

the village of Chocolá, in the department of Suchitepequez in southwestern Guatemala, as archaeology volunteers in 2004. They observed the poverty and malnutrition of the rural, Indigenous population living there and decided to see if they could help. After several community meetings identified the greatest needs, the organization was officially founded in 2007. Seeds for a Future has been

helping rural families improve their food security ever since.

Over 5,200 families in 20 communities across 10 departments in southern Guatemala have completed the Seeds program to learn how to grow their own nutritious, diverse crops and to raise small animals using environmentally sound methods for their own sustenance and to sell at markets. They take advantage

of whatever land they have, however small the plot — containers are especially useful for growing food in tight spaces, so those are often utilized. Families learn how to save and store the seeds of existing plants to use the following season and how to create nutrient rich compost from their kitchen scraps and yard waste. Permaculture and regenerative farming techniques improve soil health, crop yields, and biodiversity.

Maternal and child health, kitchen hygiene, and first aid are additional aspects of the program that help with its success in the community — people see their neighbors enjoying good health and nutrition and want to participate as well.

The organizational model does not involve recruiting or convincing anyone — rather, families approach Seeds with an interest in participating in the program. Families sign up for a 12-month membership, paying about \$1.50 per month. It's a token amount but it's important, as many Guatemalans have become suspicious of things that are given, but assign value to those to which they contribute monetarily, Suzanne says. The membership entitles them to nutritional education, mentorship in gardening, weekly in-home visits, community events, and more.

Seeds offers nutrition and family health education focused on women, children, and infants, paying special attention to the critical 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday. The field staff educate women about the importance of their own nutrition during pregnancy and while breastfeeding, which helps keep women healthy and strong and ensures that their children get the healthiest start in life. Suzanne says one of the best, although originally unplanned, impacts of the program is the empowerment and sense of agency that occurs among women participants.


Seeds for a Future is currently working toward setting up family planning projects with two of our other Global Partners in Guatemala — one with WINGS in Guineales,

**“We knew from the start that we wanted a self-help program for families. A program where they could build their own futures and create success, using the skills and confidence gained through knowledge-sharing and education.”**

—Suzanne de Berge

and another with Maya Health Alliance in the Chocolá region.

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Learn more about Seeds for a Future at [popconnect.org/seeds-for-a-future!](http://popconnect.org/seeds-for-a-future!) 



A grandmother and her team of gardening assistants!

# VIRTUAL EVENTS

## Kicking Off 2025 and Looking Forward to Spring

By Natalie Widel, Director of Digital Marketing

We're proud to host expert speakers, bring you stories from those working on the front lines of reproductive health care and conservation efforts, and facilitate important conversations about how population issues impact our world at virtual events throughout the year! We hope that this will be the year you join in, if you haven't already — see recaps of past events and information about upcoming opportunities at [popconnect.org/virtual-events](https://popconnect.org/virtual-events).

### January Confronting Population Denial Within the United Nations

Population Connection members and supporters celebrated the start of a new year by joining Nandita Bajaj of Population Balance for an insightful virtual event in January.

Founded in 1991 and based in Minnesota, Population Balance works for “a future where our human footprint is in balance with life on Earth, enabling all species to thrive.” Nandita became the Executive Director in 2021, and she also produces and co-hosts the organization's two podcasts,

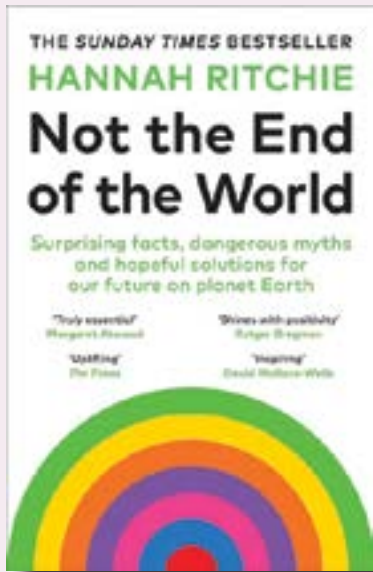
*OVERSHOOT* | *Shrink Toward Abundance* (formerly called *The Overpopulation Podcast*) and *Beyond Pronatalism*. Additionally, she is an adjunct faculty member at the Institute for Humane Education at Antioch University.

Her presentation examined the impact that population growth and overconsumption have on today's most pressing global crises. She also discussed the dismissal by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) of the consequences of population growth and how the agency is at odds with the way people in fast-growing countries perceive population challenges.

Finally, Nandita shared insights from a paper she

coauthored, “Challenging Pronatalism Is Key to Advancing Reproductive Rights and a Sustainable Population,” which was published in 2023 in *The Journal of Population and Sustainability*.





## February Page Turners Book Club

In February, members convened for our first Page Turners book club meeting of 2025 — the book club is now in its fifth year!

Attendees discussed *Not the End of the World: How We Can Be the First Generation to Build a Sustainable Planet* by data scientist Hannah Ritchie, a senior researcher

at the University of Oxford and Deputy Editor at Our World in Data. She draws on research and data to present actionable strategies for individuals, communities, and policymakers to help create a thriving, resilient future. She also displays skepticism that a shrinking population would alleviate environmental crises, which sparked an interesting conversation amongst book club members.

## Upcoming: Earth Day!

We're now looking ahead to spring and Earth Day! In addition to hosting virtual events throughout the month of April, the Membership Relations team is available to facilitate member tabling at your local Earth Day events. Check out [popconnect.org/earth-day-2025](https://popconnect.org/earth-day-2025) to see what's in store and how you can get involved! 🌍



Longtime Population Connection members Audrey Bernstein, Middy Streeter, Kevin Farley, and Paula Grande tabling at the NYC Earth Day event in Union Square in 2023

## Florida Man Takes Office, Chaos Ensues

By Brian Dixon, Senior Vice President for Governmental and Political Affairs

Chaos may be too tame a word to describe the first weeks of this administration. By the time you read this, much will have changed — hopefully things will have gotten better, but it's equally likely that they will have become worse. Much, much worse.

### Inauguration aftermath

On Monday, January 20, at 12pm EST, a twice-impeached former president convicted of 34 felonies was sworn into office for a second term in the White House.

In less than 24 hours, Donald Trump had ordered a 90-day halt to all foreign assistance in order to ensure that it didn't conflict with his positions on anything. He also announced that he was withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Paris Climate Accords. And he ordered that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) cease all communications — in the middle of a worsening flu season and a rising threat from bird flu.

His fellow Florida man, Marco Rubio, was confirmed as Secretary of State hours after Trump was inaugurated. He's assuming management of a department being systematically hollowed out. The new administration demanded the resignations of scores of career diplomats in order to appoint loyalists.

### Trump pardons violent anti-abortion extremists

On January 23, the President issued pardons for 23 anti-abortion extremists who had been convicted of violating the federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act.

Several of them were convicted in Washington, DC, after forcing their way inside a clinic using chains, locks, ropes, and other implements. During this live-streamed assault, they injured a nurse

and harassed patients. One of those pardoned was found with five fetuses in her house at the time of her arrest.

This continues the early pattern of Trump offering pardons to people convicted of violent crimes.

### Return of the Global Gag Rule

Trump waited until the evening of Friday, January 24, to reinstate the Global Gag Rule, which blocks US health assistance to any overseas provider that has anything to do with legal abortion in their own country, even if they do so with non-US funds.

When in effect, the Global Gag Rule forces health care providers into an impossible choice: They can either deny their patients crucial information about all of their reproductive health care options, or they can forfeit



desperately needed funding to provide family planning, maternal health, vaccines, and any other health care required by the people they serve.

The policy, when in effect, as it has been under every Republican president since 1984, has caused clinics to shut down and outreach efforts to end. It has caused contraceptive shortages and dramatic increases in unsafe abortion. The evidence on the impact of this policy is clear: It violates human rights, undermines public health, and threatens global efforts to reduce poverty and protect the environment.

The same day that Trump reimposed the Global Gag Rule, Marco Rubio announced that the United States was signing on to the so-called “Geneva Consensus Declaration,” joining a coalition of some of the most oppressive governments in the world dedicated to weakening international reproductive health programs.

### **Global HER Act revived**

On January 28, Rep. Lois Frankel (D-FL) in the House and Sens. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) in the Senate reintroduced the Global Health, Empowerment, and Rights (HER) Act (H.R.764 / S.280) to eliminate the Global Gag Rule and prevent a future

president from unilaterally reimposing it.

Sen. Shaheen is the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and serves on the Appropriations Committee where she has pushed for inclusion of this legislation in funding bills. She is joined on that committee by Sen. Murkowski, who has long supported reproductive health and family planning programs around the world. In the House of Representatives, Rep. Frankel is succeeding Barbara Lee, as both primary sponsor of this bill and as the senior Democrat on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State Department and Foreign Operations.

We expect the first debates on this bill to occur when the House committee takes up the 2026 funding bills in late spring or summer.

### **Bills seek to improve and protect access to care nationally**


Democrats in the House and Senate are preparing to reintroduce several bills focusing on access to reproductive health care and contraceptives in the United States. The Right to Contraception Act to create a federal guarantee for all Americans to use the birth control they want will be introduced in the House by

**“At a time when women around the world are facing unprecedented threats to their safety and well-being – including conflict-related sexual violence – the Global Gag Rule is a cruel and dangerous step backward.”**

– Rep. Lois Frankel

Reps. Angie Craig (D-MN), Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX), Sara Jacobs (D-CA), and Nikema Williams (D-GA). In the Senate, we expect Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) to bring the bill back.

Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA) will be introducing the Equal Access to Contraception for Veterans Act. This bill will give veterans the same access to affordable contraceptives as non-veterans with health insurance, without co-pays.

Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-TX) is introducing The Health Care Providers Safety Act. This legislation will create a new federal grant program to help reproductive health providers improve and expand security at their clinics or offices. 

# FIELD + OUTREACH

## Standing Together for Reproductive Freedom

By Rebecca Harrington, Senior Director of Advocacy and Outreach

Now that the new year has begun, and with it (unfortunately) a new presidential administration, we are gearing up to push back against the introduction of harmful policies threatening reproductive health and rights. We are reimagining what “resistance” looks like within the context of a second Trump presidency, and are resolved to stand in strong opposition to all actions that threaten reproductive freedom.

Following the election, we asked our supporters to contact their representatives to oppose the “Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act” (H.R.9495), a bill that would give the executive branch the ability to deem tax-exempt organizations (universities, news outlets, nonprofits, etc.) “terrorist supporting organizations,” and strip them of their tax-exempt status. The concern with this broadly written bill is that it could give the Trump administration the power to punish nonprofit organizations whose missions are not ideologically aligned with the administration’s views. Nearly 600 of our supporters took action to protect free speech and prevent political retribution. The bill didn’t clear the 260 votes needed for passage (256 voted yes, 124 voted no, and 33 didn’t vote).

### People’s March

On January 18, we participated in People’s March events across the country and encouraged our supporters to do the same. Coordinated by a coalition of organizations led by Women’s March, the rallies were envisioned as a first act of opposition to the second Trump administration.

We urged our supporters to meet up at marches here in DC and across the country, and several of our staff marched in their respective cities. 🌍



**“The energy of the march in DC was incredible. I met volunteers who had traveled from as far as the Pacific Northwest just to attend. We were obviously hurt and enraged, but the speakers also reminded us of the joy of coming together for a common cause. I saw that mindset in everyone I spoke with.”**

– Grace Long, Field Coordinator

“Being at the People’s March in Charlotte was an experience I’ll never forget. The camaraderie was palpable; there was a deep, shared understanding that almost made me bawl — and I wasn’t alone! Despite the cold, rainy day, over 200 passionate people showed up, braving the weather to fight for what matters most. It felt personal and empowering to see two of my neighbors there, and I was so proud when the organizers gave #Fight4HER and the Global HER Act a shout-out — they knew what’s at stake.”

– Florence Blondel, Digital Media Manager



“The People’s March in Boulder coincided with a winter storm bringing 10 inches of snow and freezing temperatures, but that didn’t stop dedicated local activists from making their voices heard and calling for social justice, reproductive health and rights, and climate action. Our small group made it clear that we stand united to fight back against Trump’s destructive ‘broligarchy’ and work towards a better future.”

– Olivia Nater, Communications Manager

To join the fight for reproductive freedom, text FIGHT to 83084 or visit [popconnection.org/fight4her](http://popconnection.org/fight4her).

“The People’s March in my small city of Portland, Maine, drew hundreds of supporters who came out in the cold to be inspired by a diverse collection of speakers on the steps of City Hall, to demonstrate that we will fight back against the ignorant and evil agenda of Trump and his enablers, and to be together during a sad, stressful, and disappointing time.”

– Marian Starkey, VP for Communications



# POPULATION EDUCATION

## Educating the Youngest Global Citizens

### PopEd Releases New Edition of K-5 Curriculum

By Carol Bliese, Senior Director of Teacher Programs

The PopEd team recently released a new version of our elementary curriculum, *Counting on People: K-5 Activities for Global Citizenship*. The 44 teacher-friendly activities include updated favorites, as well as new lessons that focus on real-world topics like climate change and wealth inequality. All are interdisciplinary, incorporating content and skills for science, social studies, mathematics, and language arts. Here's a sampling of some of the new or newly updated elementary lessons we're most excited to share with teachers.

#### Lend a Hand to the Earth

This activity goes beyond individual actions and puts collective action front and center for young learners. Students discover the difference a group can

make when everyone works toward the same goal. The lesson builds data literacy skills, like creating simple data representations, and incorporates art to help students tap into both sides of their brains.

#### Lessons from the Lorax

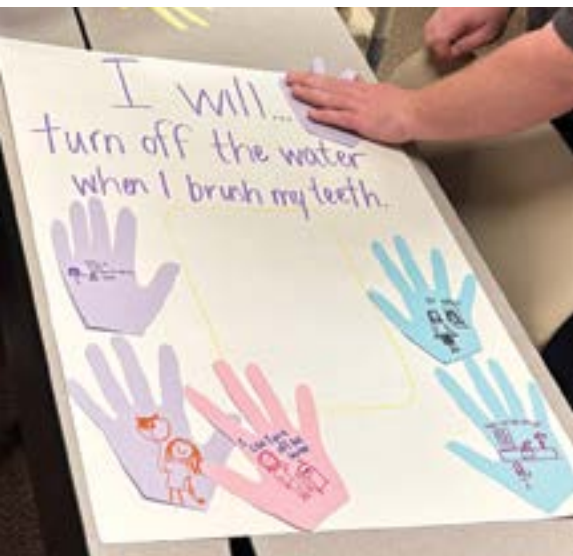
After reading the classic Dr. Seuss book, students play a new board game that picks up where the story ends, once all of the Truffula trees have been cut down. Students aren't playing against each other. Instead, they must all cooperate and work together in order to "win" by planting trees in the forest while a lumberjack simultaneously tries to cut them down!

#### Counting Carbon

This new lesson helps upper elementary students model CO<sub>2</sub> production and carbon sinks using biodegradable packing peanuts. In Part 1, they solve word problems to find how much CO<sub>2</sub> is emitted into the atmosphere to get a class of students from home to school. In Part 2, students investigate the four types of natural carbon sinks (oceans, forests, grasslands, and wetlands), and how they store CO<sub>2</sub> (including the emissions from their drive to school in Part 1). Then they strategize ways to limit the "extra" CO<sub>2</sub> that goes into the atmosphere.

#### More or Less

Our popular cause-and-effect "word web" lesson got an upgrade. In addition to using



provided word cards to build a concept map around the central idea of “more people,” images are now included to help build vocabulary and support English Language Learners.

### Building Communities


This new lesson introduces students in grades 3–5 to the concept of wealth inequality. They work in small groups to construct 3-D communities with supplies purchased in the “class store,” but they don’t know that each group has a different amount of money to spend. When they examine the completed communities, they’ll see that some groups were able to buy more, and better, materials than other groups. Starting with this local look, students are then challenged to consider wealth inequality at larger scales.

### Green Spaces

The urban planning lesson begins with students rating and graphing how they feel before and after spending time outside in nature. They discover some of the unexpected benefits of green spaces — like boosting one’s mood — before they design a city with adequate green space for its population. In addition to the science, social studies, and math content, there is a nice dose of social and emotional learning (SEL), too.

### Energy Imagery

In this guided visualization lesson, students portray how energy is used today versus 200 years ago. They pretend to do various tasks, like making breakfast or heating their home, as they would in present day and in the 1820s. Then, it’s time for creative thinking: Students develop an original idea for a renewable energy source that doesn’t yet exist, and create a drawing to share with the class.

In addition to classroom activities, *Counting on People* also includes age-appropriate readings and annotated lists of recommended children’s books and multimedia links to enhance the PopEd lessons. The full curriculum is provided free (in a digital form) to teachers and future teachers attending our K–5 workshops, and is for sale online. Many of the lessons are also free to download from our program website, [PopulationEducation.org](http://PopulationEducation.org). 



CARTOON



Cartoon by Joel Pett



We are honored to include Kathy and Julian Donahue in our ZPG Society. In addition to having included Population Connection as a beneficiary of their trust, the Donahues have recently chosen to give through their IRA, by making an annual **qualified charitable distribution** to Population Connection.

Contact us or your IRA administrator to find out if a QCD is right for you!

*Kathy and Julian Donahue  
ZPG Society Members*



## GIVE THROUGH YOUR IRA **TAX-FREE**

If you are at least 70 ½ years old, you can make a **qualified charitable distribution** and give directly from your traditional IRA to Population Connection. You can reduce your taxable income and make a difference by building a healthier, more sustainable future. You may also include Population Connection as a charitable beneficiary of your IRA! Contact us or your IRA administrator to find out how.



To learn more, visit [popconnect.org/support](https://popconnect.org/support), email [giving@popconnect.org](mailto:giving@popconnect.org), or call **202-974-7756**.



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*Rebecca Weiner,  
ZPG Society Member,  
and her husband,  
Mike, in the Black Hills  
of South Dakota*

## PLAN FOR YOUR LEGACY

By including a gift to Population Connection in your will or trust, you can ensure our work continues as long as overpopulation threatens our world. After providing for your loved ones, you might consider designating a remainder gift, or a percentage, to Population Connection. Make your legacy one that protects people and our planet well into the future.

Make your will for free! Just go to [freewill.com/populationconnection](https://freewill.com/populationconnection)



To learn more, visit [popconnect.org/support](https://popconnect.org/support),  
email [legacy@popconnect.org](mailto:legacy@popconnect.org), or call **202-974-7756**.