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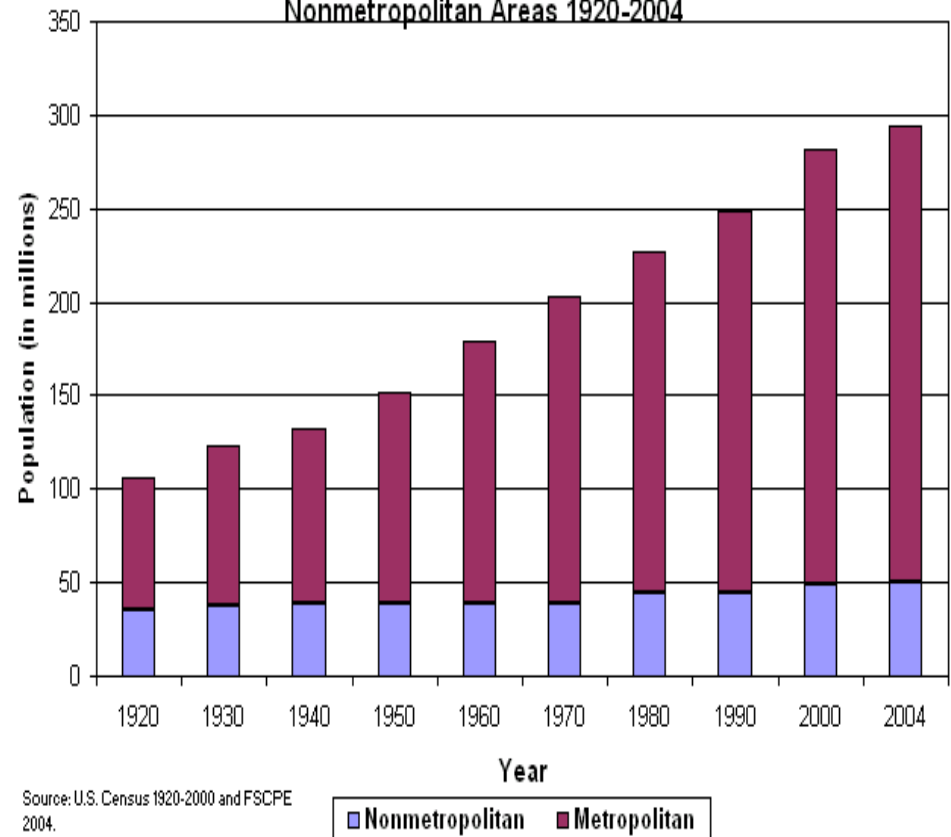
## *This morning I will*

- Provide a context for thinking about poor rural areas
- Build on the report to describe obstacles to sustaining strong community institutions in poor rural communities, and
- Consider the policy implications.

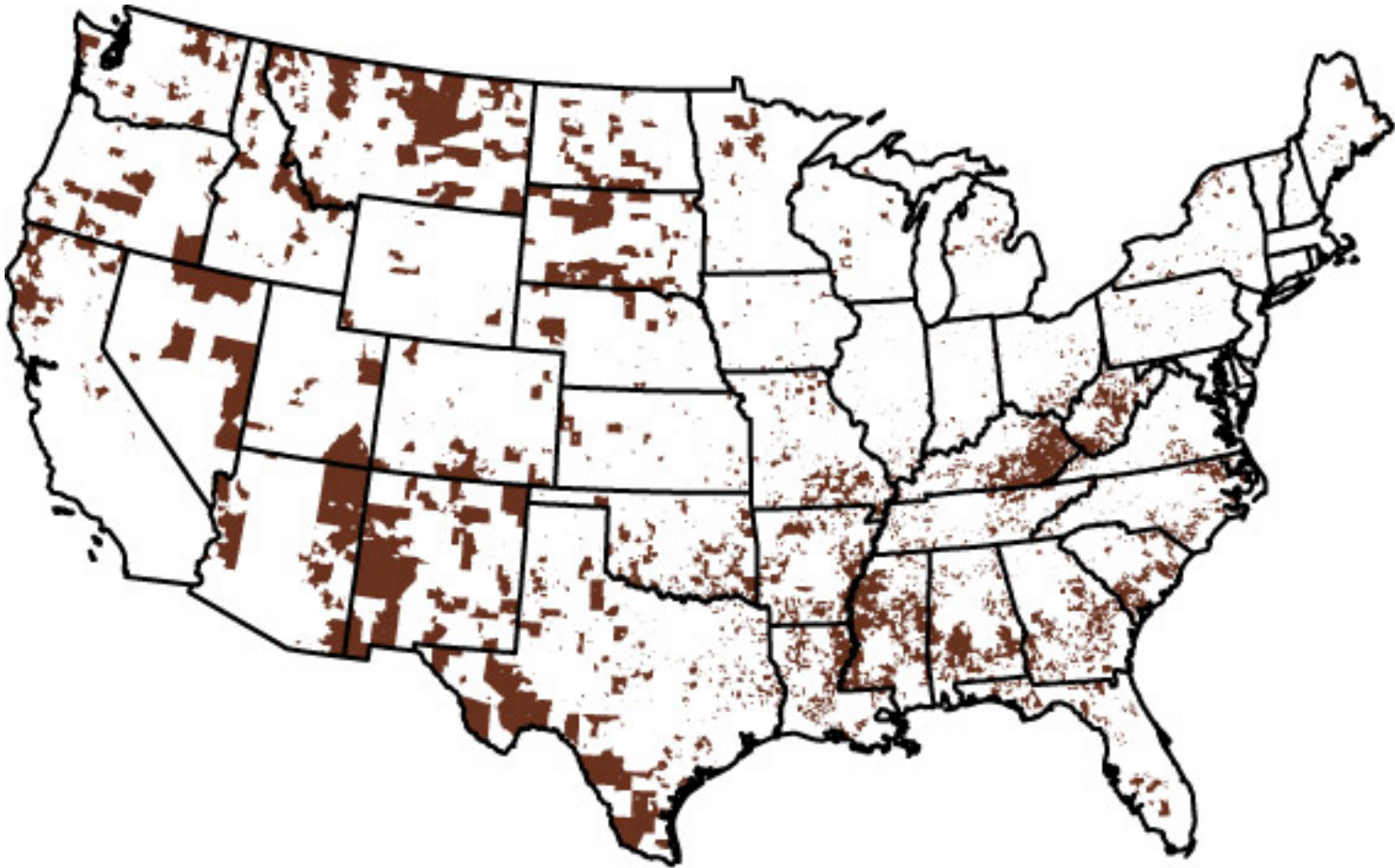
# 50 million people live in small town and rural communities

- 17% of the U.S. population on 80% of the land
- Slow, modest growth, though trends vary by type of community
- There are 7.5 million rural poor, half living in areas with high poverty

Figure 1. Population Trends in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Areas 1920-2004



# Concentrated Rural Poverty Is Widespread: and Half the Rural Poor live in Poor Areas



# Big challenges impact rural America differently, depending on conditions

## Economic challenges

Loss of stable, blue collar jobs that pay a living wage and decades of neglect in poor areas

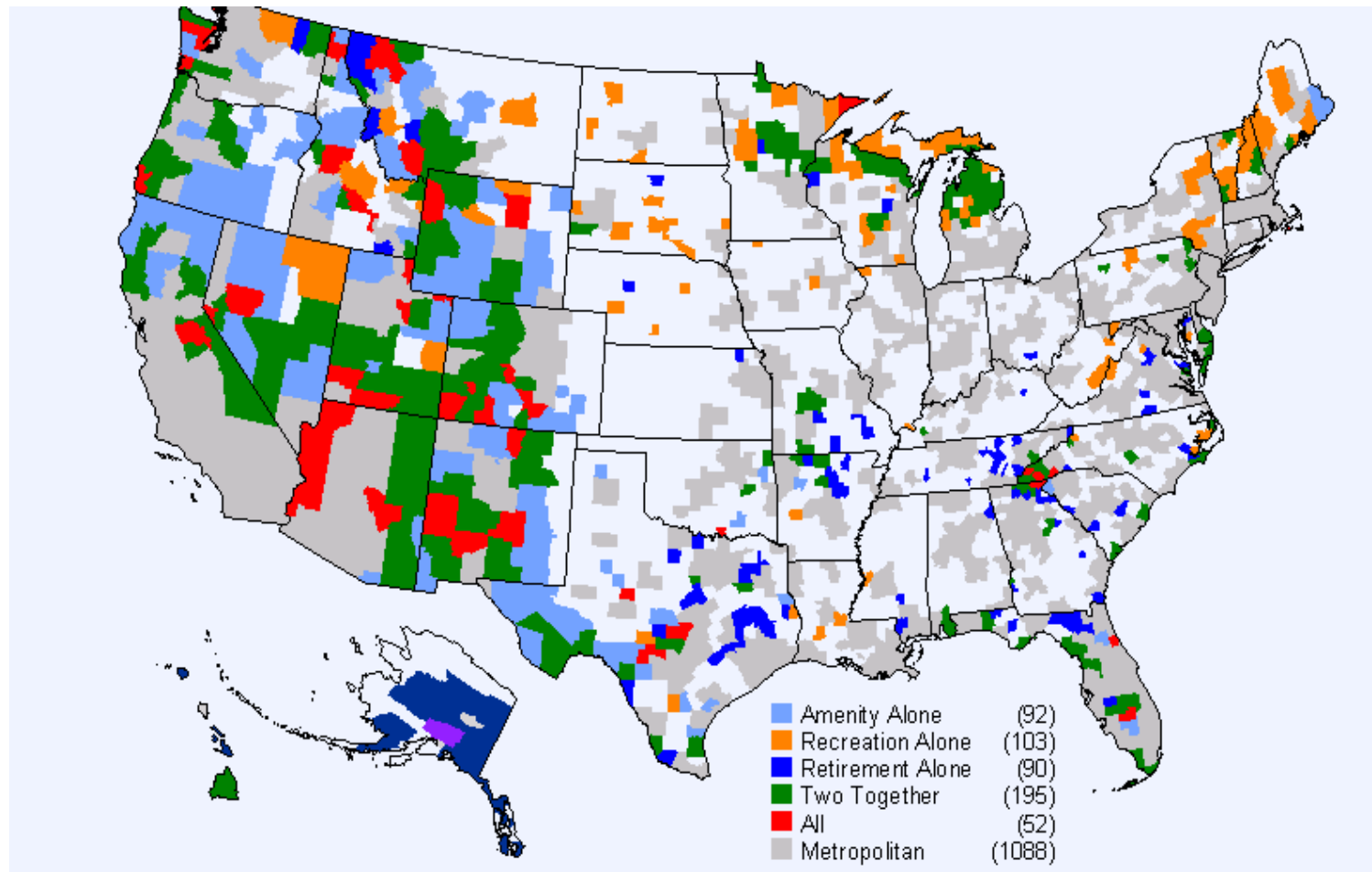
## Demographic changes

An aging population, outmigration of young and the educated, and a growing immigrant population

## Environmental pressures

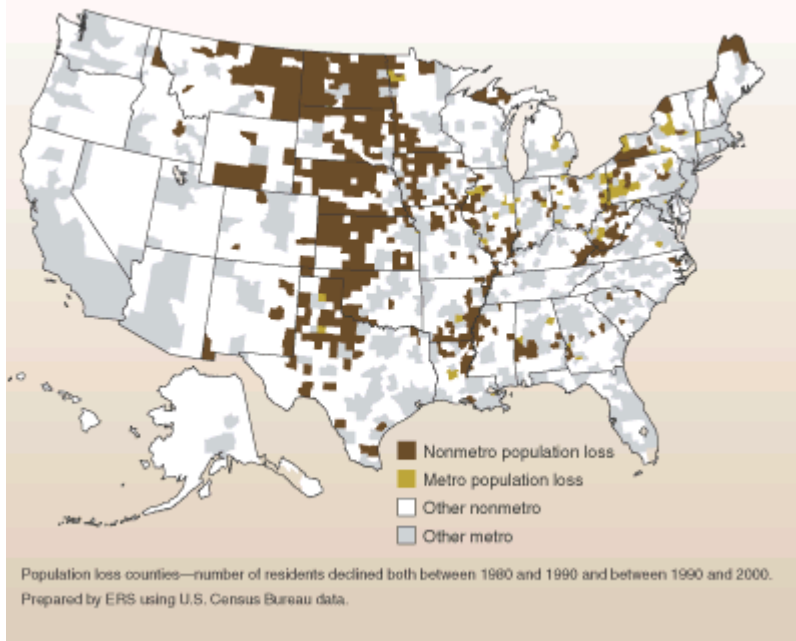
Environmental degradation and stress on natural resources; impact of climate change and high energy costs

# Amenity-rich areas are growing and likely to grow more over the next decade

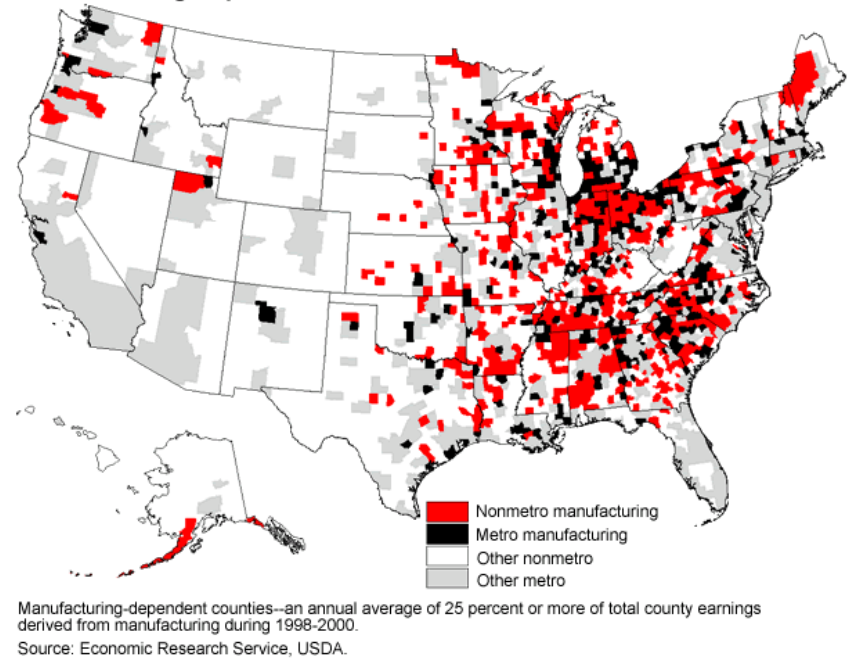


# Declining resource dependent areas see population loss and job loss

Population loss counties are clustered in the Great Plains, Corn Belt, and Appalachia



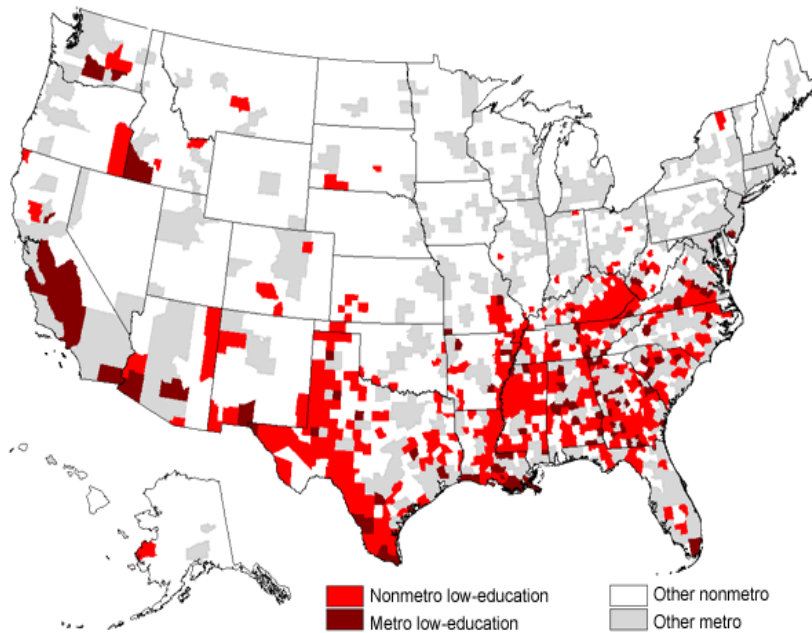
Manufacturing-dependent counties, 1998-2000





# Chronically poor communities, places with majority people of color and low education

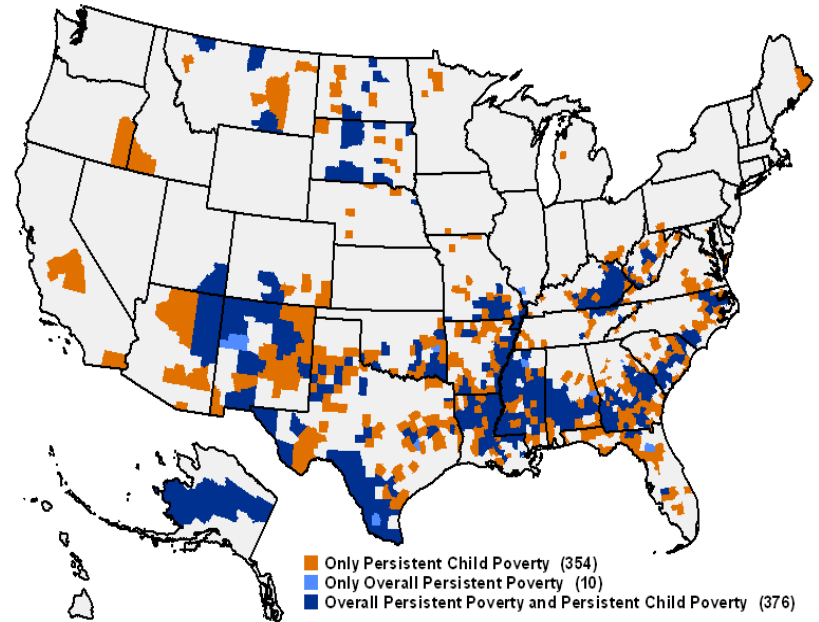
Low-education counties, 2000



Low-education counties--25 percent or more of residents 25-64 years old had neither a high school diploma nor GED in 2000.

Source: Economic Research Service, USDA.

Counties with Overall Persistent Poverty and Persistent Child Poverty



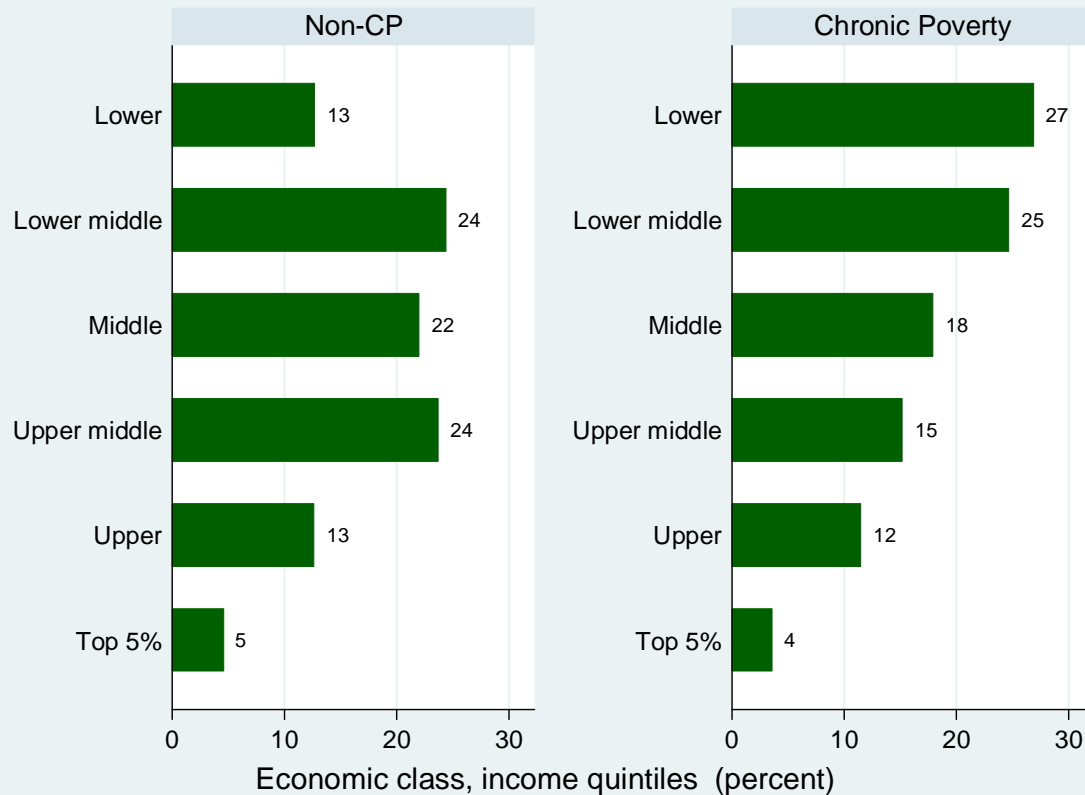
Data: Census data supplied by Economic Research Service, U.S.D.A.



# Carsey Surveys of Rural America: Population Loss in Declining Areas, Low Education, Low Work, and High Poverty in Poor Areas

REGION/TYPE	POPULATION % CHANGE 1990-2005	% CHANGE IN POPULATION AGE 25-34 1990-2005	% AGE 16-64 WORKING 2000	% w/o HS DIPLOMA 2000	% IN POVERTY 2004
ROCKY MOUNTAINS/ AMENITY-BOOM	<b>71%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>
PACIFIC NORTHWEST/ AMENITY-DECLINE	<b>2%</b>	<b>-1%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>14%</b>
NORTHEAST/ AMENITY-DECLINE	<b>3%</b>	<b>-24%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>12%</b>
UPPER PENINSULA/ AMENITY-DECLINE	<b>9%</b>	<b>-11%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>14%</b>
MIDWEST/ DECLINE	<b>-19%</b>	<b>-50%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>
APPALACHIA/ CHRONIC POVERTY	<b>-12%</b>	<b>-28%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>27%</b>
DELTA/ CHRONIC POVERTY	<b>-3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>29%</b>
BLACK BELT/ CHRONIC POVERTY	<b>-4%</b>	<b>-21%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>22%</b>

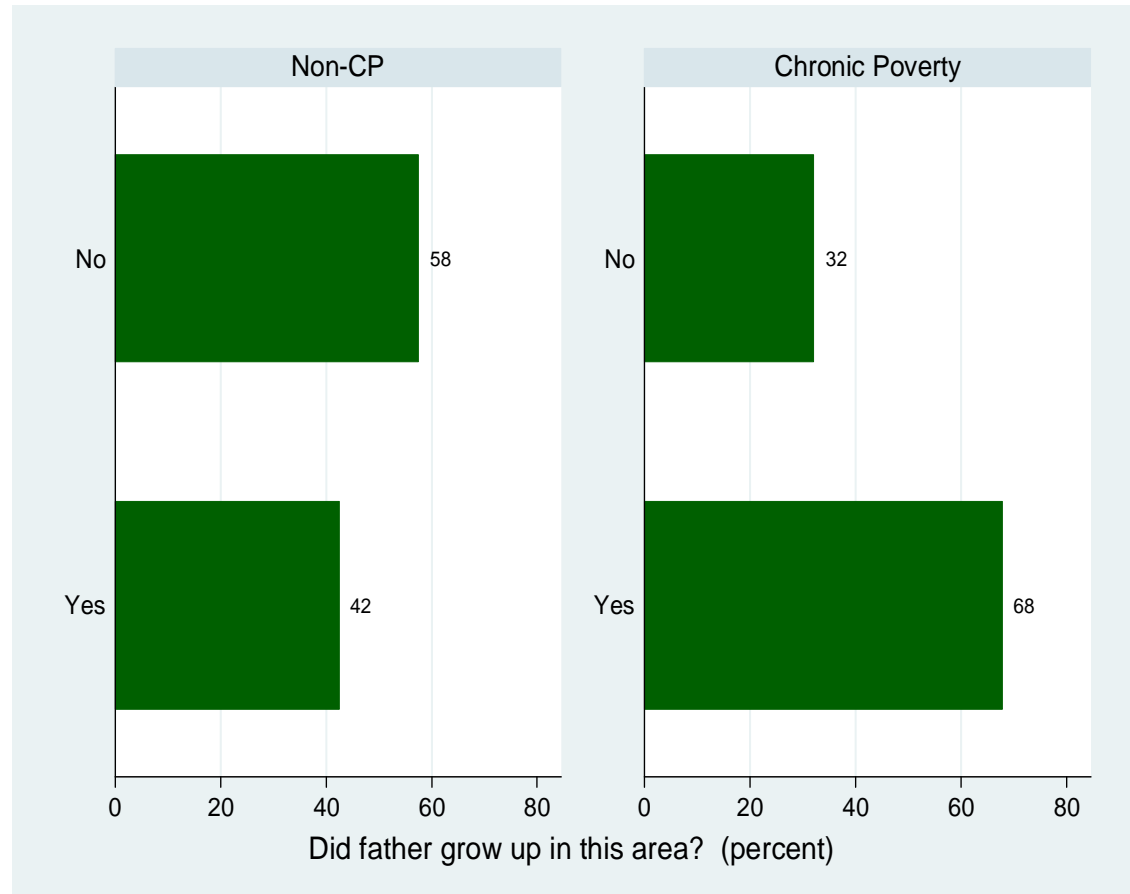
# Poor areas have a small middle class and a large lower class with very low education



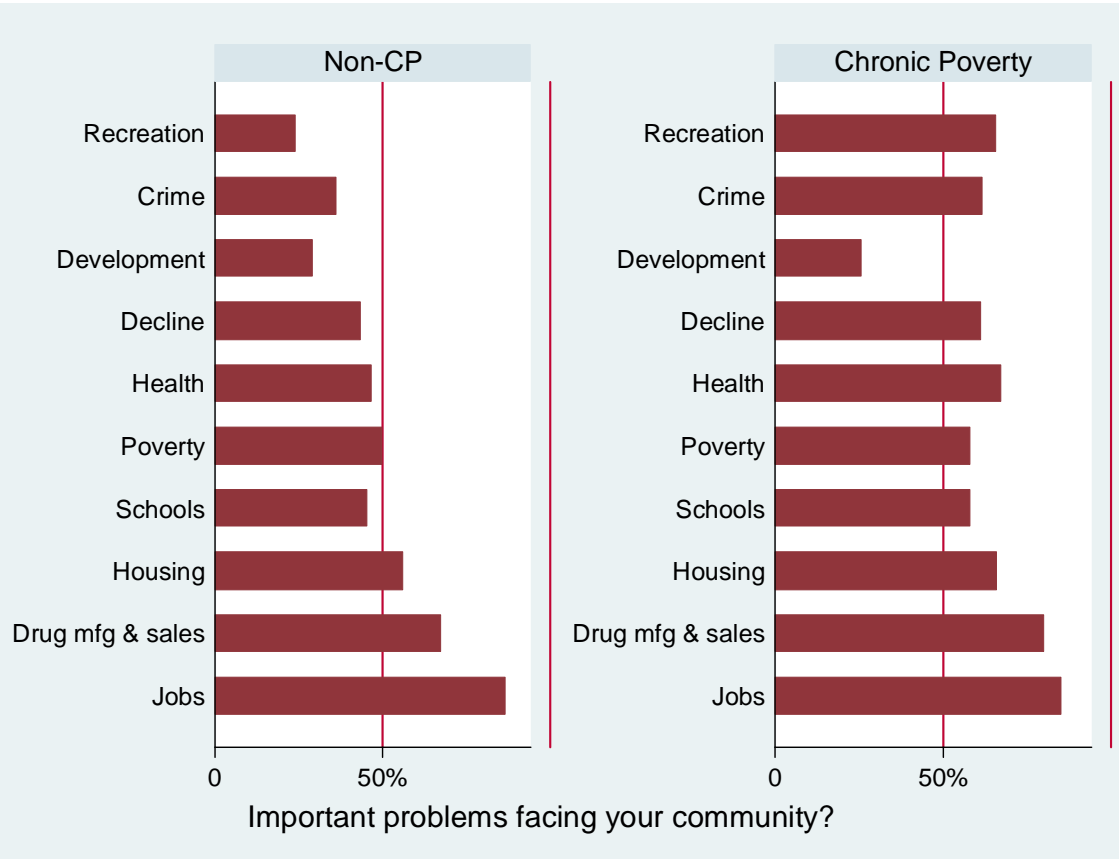
In chronic poverty areas 40% say their father did not go further than the 8<sup>th</sup> grade...

# Roots run deep for the poor in chronically poor places, and there are few newcomers

- 70% of poor area residents say their father grew up in this community
- Only 20% are newcomers



# Community conditions are much worse in poor areas



- In poor areas people worry more about the lack of social services, especially health and recreation, affordable housing and drugs. Everywhere people worry about jobs.

# The report finds similar conditions in concentrated poverty areas

- Isolation
- Bad schools, low levels of education, high dropout rates
- Low skills, low labor force attachment
- Teen pregnancy and lone parent families
- Lack of public safety, crime and drugs

# Defining Poverty

“Poverty is the lack of adequate resources to participate in the accepted ways in society.”

“Social exclusion” – being cut off from, left out of, the mainstream and participation in the wider society

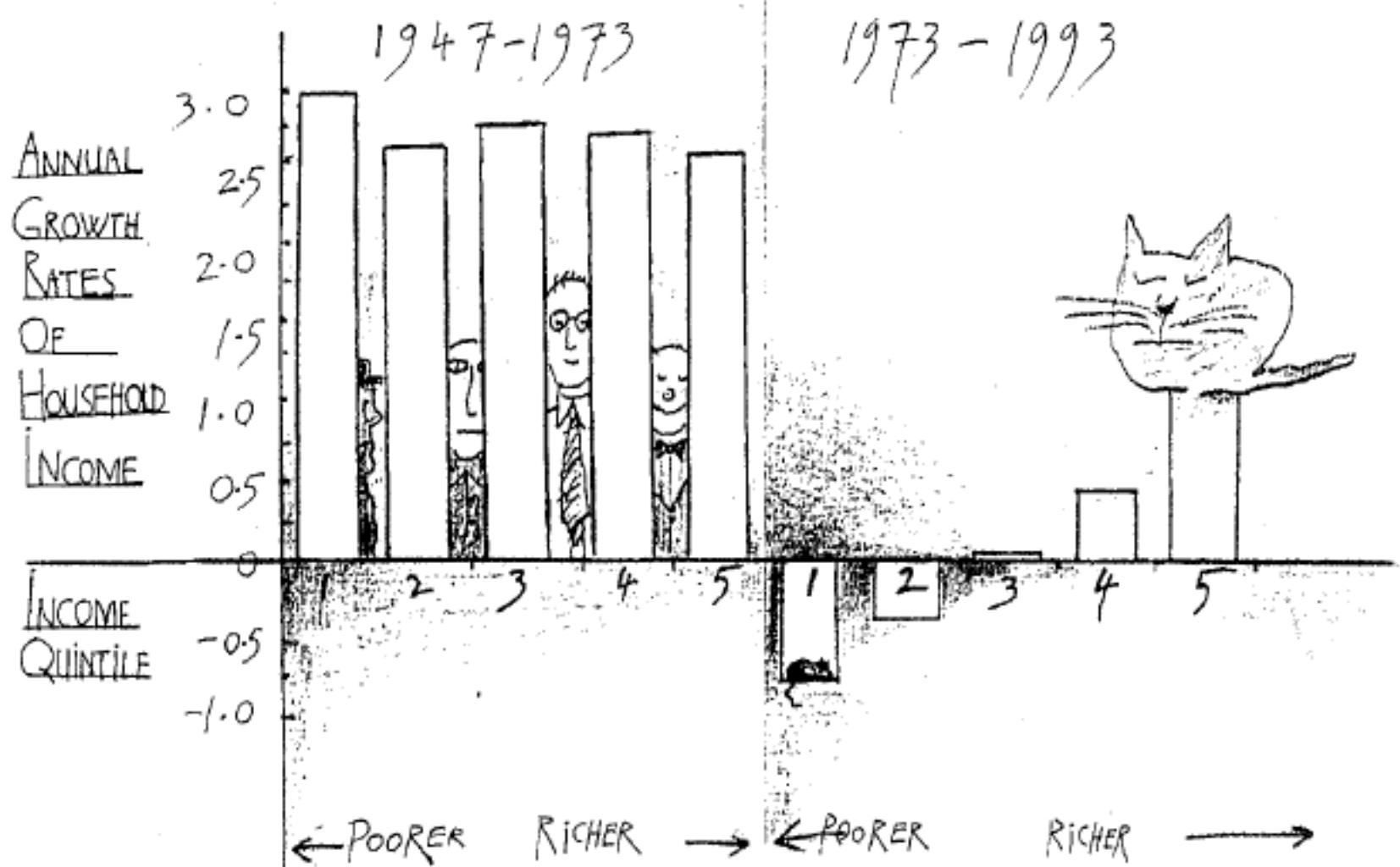
# In the 1980s William Julius Wilson's Chicago studies moved us beyond the old "values versus structure" debates

- Work disappeared, especially for low skill workers seeking stable blue collar jobs.
- The black middle class left the ghetto, leaving neighborhoods
  - without role models
  - with little access to cultural learning about the mainstream, and
  - disinvestment in community institutions.



# The report's observations about causes of concentrated poverty

- Economic change – job loss in core industries
- Out-migration of the middle class
- Historical race and economic segregation
- Poor schools
- Changing patterns of family formation and structure
- New poor immigrants in gateway communities



**THE PICKET FENCE AND THE STAIRCASE**

*During the postwar Golden Era, real incomes rose at the same rate for everyone. But from 1973 to 1993 the gap between the classes grew enormously.*

# Consensus on policy to help working families earning low wages

- encourage work and make it pay
  - raise minimum wage, expand EITC;
- support working families
  - with child care, health insurance, paid leave;
- invest in educating poor children and connect youth to the mainstream
  - early childhood education, quality child care, youth mentoring and training programs

# Less consensus on how to address intractable concentrated poverty

- Bill Galston says give up, we don't know anything that works, target individuals and families in need.
- Geoffrey Canada, immersed in a poor area with all its social problems and cultural challenges, focuses on kids, builds supportive systems and institutions—97 blocks in Harlem.

# Challenges in rural places

- Isolation – physical as well as social
- Low education
- Stigma and low expectations for chronically poor families
- Scarce jobs, controlled by a few
- Broken institutions, lack of investment in the “common good,” political corruption

## Haves and Have-nots.

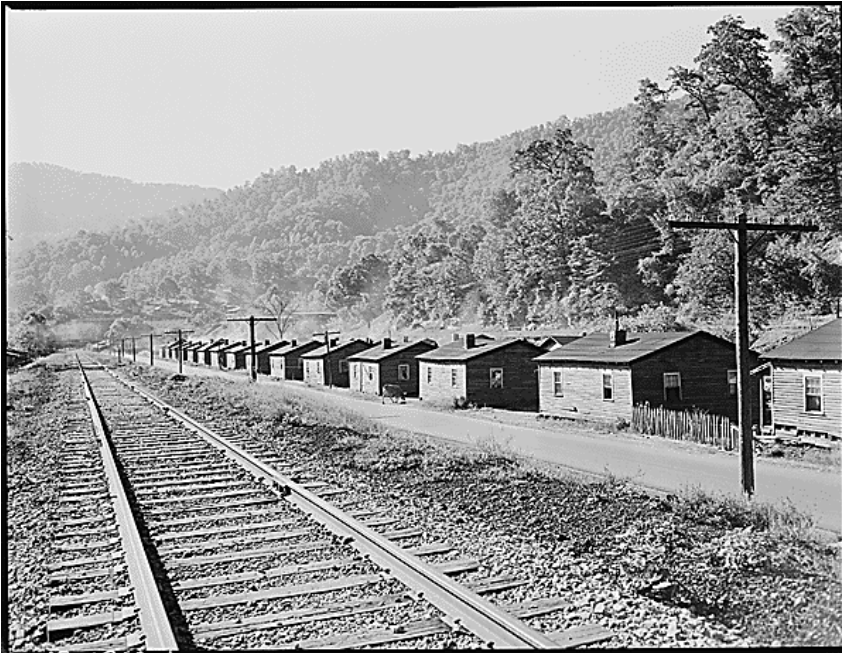
- The poor are socially isolated, worlds apart from the haves.
- They rely on different institutions – schools, churches.
- They do not develop the “cultural learning,” skills and contacts that they need to participate in the mainstream.

# The middle class is missing

- Families with middle incomes ally with the elite, hold themselves separate from the poor and invest in separate institutions.
- There is no middle class to demand high standards in public schools and hold public officials and employers accountable for honest fair practices.



# Appalachia: family name matters



- *“A lot of times you can hear somebody’s last name and before you even meet, you’ve already got the idea that they’re either a good person or they’re sorry as can be.”*
- *Those that have a family with a horrible name, when they come in, we know them, and they’re not worth two cents. They’re sorry as can be – stealing, selling dope, bootlegging, picked up for driving drunk, in and out of bankruptcy court.”*

# Family, not community, concerns

*“I see people very, very concerned about their own families, and their concern stops there. They’re strongly family oriented here. And they would do anything for their family.*

*They have a great concern for their own family. I've talked to my congregation. This concern ought to go beyond family.”*

*-- Minister in Appalachia*

# Delta: Blacks are the have-nots, and they are still vulnerable



- *“If one of the blacks was to piss Jimmy off--you know he drives for a farmer--he could make it hard on him if he said something to his boss. He could make it really hard on the boy, make him get fired.”*
- *It’s just over here the blacks don’t have the opportunities that whites does. They’re really disgraced.”*

*--Truck driver’s wife in the Delta*

# Change comes slowly

*“Blacks who have known only the plantation and a life in which they relied on the bossman will vote with him out of habit and deference...”*

*Uneducated people need to go through someone, they need to get help from Toms that have been there for a long time and the whites have gained control of them.”*

*-African-American leader in the Delta*

Places with a middle class have trust, cooperate, include rather than exclude and invest in the common good. Thus community institutions work and the poor have greater opportunity.



- *“We're a working community... There's very little difference between people. There doesn't seem to be any class-level distinctions...”*
- *We have a broad, working middle-class. Most of the people who live here feel that they're part of the community...*

*-- small business leader in northern New England mill town*

# Community Challenges

- Isolation and remoteness makes it hard to implement programs
- Small social worlds mean family stigma can have real consequences.
- Few new people and businesses make changing local leadership and politics challenging.



# Economic challenges

- Weak markets
- Physically remote
- Low education and skill levels

And training is not enough to link people to jobs because jobs do not exist.



# Policy strategies for rural America

- In declining places build on human and social capital, and provide incentives for investment – New Homestead Act
- In poor places invest in child and youth education *and* strengthening community institutions:
  - early childhood education, schools that work, youth recreation and mentoring programs
- In both – build on opportunity to steward natural resources and create alternative energy sources
  - technical colleges to train for middle skill jobs not only in health, construction, but also jobs to restore the natural environment, provide local energy and food.

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**New Immigrant Settlements in Rural America: Problems, Prospects, and Policies**

EDITED BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

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**Rural Workers Would Benefit More Than Urban Workers from an Increase in the Federal Minimum Wage**

BY DAVID M. HARRIS AND JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
The minimum wage is a critical policy tool for addressing low wages in the United States. While the federal minimum wage has remained flat for over a decade, it has a significant impact on rural workers. This report examines the impact of a minimum wage increase on rural and urban workers, finding that rural workers would benefit more from such an increase.

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**The State of Working New Hampshire 2007**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report provides a comprehensive overview of the labor market in New Hampshire for the year 2007. It covers key indicators such as unemployment, wages, and job growth, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for workers in the state.

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**REPORTS ON NEW ENGLAND**

**The Changing Faces of New Hampshire**  
Recent Demographic Trends in the Granite State

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

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**CHANGING FACES IN THE SOUTH: IMMIGRANTS AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report explores the relationship between immigration and political attitudes in the Southern United States. It discusses how demographic changes are influencing the political landscape and the concerns of the local population.

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**Substance Abuse in Rural and Small-Town America**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report addresses the issue of substance abuse in rural and small-town America. It examines the prevalence of various substances, the impact on communities, and potential strategies for intervention and support.

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**New Faces at the Helm for New Hampshire Presidential Primary**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report analyzes the demographic and geographic distribution of voters in New Hampshire's presidential primary. It highlights the unique characteristics of the state's electorate and the implications for candidates.

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**A Profile of Latinos in Rural America**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report provides a detailed profile of the Latino population in rural America. It covers issues such as immigration, employment, and social services, offering insights into the experiences of this growing demographic group.

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**Low Wages Prevalent in Direct Care and Child Care Workforce**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report focuses on the issue of low wages in the direct care and child care sectors. It discusses the challenges these workers face and the need for policy interventions to improve their economic situation.

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**Low-Income Families in New Hampshire**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report examines the prevalence of low-income families in New Hampshire. It includes data on income levels, poverty rates, and the impact of these conditions on children and communities.

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**Children's Health Insurance in New Hampshire: An Analysis of New Hampshire Healthy Kids**

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Introduction  
This report provides an analysis of children's health insurance coverage in New Hampshire. It uses data from the New Hampshire Healthy Kids survey to assess the extent of coverage and the needs of uninsured children.

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**SEC is Vital for Thinking from Frontiers to Rural America**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report discusses the importance of the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Economic Development Office (EDO) in rural America. It highlights the role of the EDO in providing technical assistance and financing to small businesses.

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**The State of Coos County: Local Perspectives on Community and Change**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report offers local perspectives on the state of Coos County, Vermont. It explores community challenges, opportunities for growth, and the role of local stakeholders in driving change.

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**Rural Teachers More Likely to Be Gifted**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report examines the characteristics of rural teachers, with a focus on the prevalence of giftedness. It discusses the implications of this finding for teacher education and professional development in rural areas.

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**Rural Families Choose Home-Based Child Care for their Preschool-Aged Children**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report explores the reasons why rural families opt for home-based child care for their preschool-aged children. It discusses factors such as availability, cost, and family preferences.

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**Child Poverty in Rural America: New Data Shows Increases in 41 States**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report presents new data on child poverty in rural America. It shows that child poverty has increased in 41 states, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support low-income families.

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**Rural America in the 11th Century: Progress via High-Speed Internet**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report discusses the impact of high-speed internet on rural America. It explores how digital connectivity is enabling economic growth, education, and improved quality of life in rural communities.

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**Child Poverty High in Rural America**

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**U.S. Rural Soldiers Account for a Disproportionately High Share of Casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report examines the disproportionate impact of military service on rural America. It discusses the challenges faced by rural soldiers and their families, and the need for support services.

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**Rural Children Increasingly Rely on Medicaid and SCHIP**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report discusses the increasing reliance of rural children on Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). It highlights the importance of these programs in ensuring access to health care for vulnerable populations.

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**Urban and Rural in Rural America: A Study of Rural Migration and the Role of Schools**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report explores the phenomenon of rural migration and the role of schools in this process. It discusses how schools are adapting to changing demographics and the needs of a more diverse student body.

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**Child Poverty in Rural America: New Data Shows Increases in 41 States**

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**Food Stamp and School Lunch Programs Alleviate Food Insecurity in Rural America**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report examines the role of food stamp and school lunch programs in alleviating food insecurity in rural America. It discusses the impact of these programs on children's health and nutrition.

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**Some Small Towns in Rural America Face Population Shifts**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report discusses population shifts in small towns in rural America. It explores the factors driving these shifts and the implications for local communities.

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**The Changing Faces of New England: Increasing Spatial and Racial Diversity**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report examines the changing faces of New England, focusing on increasing spatial and racial diversity. It discusses the impact of demographic changes on the region's economy and culture.

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**Employment Rates Higher Among Rural Mothers Than Urban Mothers**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report compares employment rates among rural and urban mothers. It finds that employment rates are generally higher among rural mothers, despite the challenges of rural life.

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**Rural America Depends on the Food Stamp Program to Make Ends Meet**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report discusses the dependence of rural America on the food stamp program. It highlights the role of this program in supporting low-income families and ensuring food security.

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**Coos County Community Indicators: A Profile by Town**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report provides a profile of Coos County, Vermont, by town. It includes data on various community indicators such as income, education, and health, offering insights into the unique characteristics of each town.

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**Refusing Rural Development: Making the Case for Limiting Retail Production in Rural Communities**

BY JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report discusses the challenges of rural development and the potential benefits of limiting retail production in rural communities. It argues for a focus on preserving rural character and supporting local agriculture.

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**New England Has the Highest Increase in Income Disparity in the Nation**

BY DAVID M. HARRIS AND JAMES H. JOHNSON

Introduction  
This report examines income disparity in New England, showing that the region has the highest increase in income disparity in the nation. It discusses the causes of this trend and the need for policy interventions.

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**Good Life**

**Demographic Trends in Rural and Small-Town America**

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