

Welcome to Civil Discourse. This podcast will use government documents to illuminate the workings of the American Government and offer contexts around the effects of government agencies in your everyday life. Now your hosts, Nia Rodgers, Public Affairs Librarian and Dr. John Aughenbaugh, Political Science Professor.

J Aughenbaugh: Good morning, Nia. How are you?

Nia Rodgers: I'm good. How are you?

J Aughenbaugh: I'm pretty excited because we get to talk about the census. A favorite topic of both you and me.

Nia Rodgers: Yes. Nina Exner, our data librarian, also is a huge fan of the census. She came and visited us before and talked about the census. We may have to ask her back at some point because there's a new sense. I have a question for you, Aughie.

J Aughenbaugh: Yes.

Nia Rodgers: How many people live in the United States?

J Aughenbaugh: Well, according to the United States Census Bureau, 331,449,281 Americans live in our jurisdiction.

Nia Rodgers: I think it's hilarious that they don't round 449,281, not 280, not 285, 281.

J Aughenbaugh: Well, as my students can attest, apparently the United States Census Bureau follows my grading scale because I don't round.

Nia Rodgers: That's marvelous. I think that's great because I love that they are so specific about a number that is by its nature so approximate. There's absolutely no way that we can really count absolutely everybody who lives in the United States, it just doesn't work that way. Even if we did one giant count off where everybody just say 1, 2, 3 all the way around the nation, we still wouldn't get it right because people will die and people will be born.

J Aughenbaugh: Because as we've discussed in previous podcast episodes, one of the chief debates that the federal government asked to address every 10 years is how to do the count, because there are so many of us.

Nia Rodgers: When they put and thou shalt count every 10 years and there should be an accounting, I don't know, they didn't write like the King James Bible, but anyway, they said, you got to count everybody every 10 years, well, they were less than a million people. This wasn't a huge hard thing to do. Fascinating to me that they codified into law, not considering that there would be 331 plus because I'm going to round up, I'm going to round down actually 331 million of us. That's a lot harder to do that, that's a lot of resources.

J Aughenbaugh: It's a lot of resources. Again, as we've discussed in previous podcast episodes, there are a whole bunch of Americans who don't want to be counted for various reasons.

Nia Rodgers: Yes. We're not even talking about people who are not here legally, who don't want to be counted for legal reasons. We're talking about Americans who don't want to be counted because they don't trust the government, or because they don't feel like it, or because any number of reasons to their religion tells them not to be counted.

J Aughenbaugh: We Americans, one of our primary values is liberty, don't tell me, I've got to do something.

Nia Rodgers: Exactly. Don't you tell me I have to be counted. I'm not being counted. I think it's awesome that there is such an attempt made. I'm wondering at what point they're going to outsource that to Google, because I would be willing to bet that either Amazon or Google has a much clearer accounting of who's here. You said something at the very beginning which I want to point out, which is you said preliminary. These are the preliminary results of the census. The census data, I wish that it came out slam all at once, but it doesn't because one, it takes a long time to parse a lot of that data. For people who don't know the census comes out with a whole bunch of different censuses, there's not just the one of how many people live here. There's how many people live in apartments, and how many people live in homes that they own, and how many people live in homes that they rent? That's just housing. Then there's race questions, there's age questions, there's educational level questions. Thank you. Economic questions, and all of those census chunks come out slowly over the next, say, 3-4 years. What you'll find at your local libraries. Your local librarians can help you access data information. You can also do that at the census online, just Google census and it'll come up, that's the first link you'll get. It is that those things come out as they are processed. The demographic information that you may be interested for 2020 may not come out until 2022 or 2023, depending on which part of the census it is and whether they've gotten to it yet, because see earlier note 331 million people that you have to try to classify.

J Aughenbaugh: Their first report is supposed to be released in January, the year after the census. That's by law. This year it didn't come out until April.

Nia Rodgers: Everybody is saying COVID, which is completely a legitimate reason. We were under a worldwide pandemic.

J Aughenbaugh: But there were also delays because of the see previous podcast episode, federal court litigation about the Trump administration wanted to include a question of, are you a citizen of the United States?

Nia Rodgers: We did an episode on that a while back, you can find that.

J Aughenbaugh: The first census report gives us the overall numbers. The reason why it has to, by law, is because it affects the apportionment of seats in the House of Representatives.

Nia Rodgers: But before we get to that, can we just do some basic rough.

J Aughenbaugh: I wanted to go in and touch upon why they actually release it in chunks. Please excuse the technical language.

Nia Rodgers: The first chunk is because an elections coming up in 2022, and people are going to want to know what district they belong to.

J Aughenbaugh: I mean, because states are going to have to redistrict. According to the Census Bureau, we're going to get another wave of reports in the fall. More than likely we're going to get the demographic breakdown in the fall, but some of these other variables that Nia mentioned, we may not see them until 2022, 2023. At that point, the Census Bureau is already conducting their updates surveys because by law, they have to go ahead and do a mid Census update every 5, 6 years.

Nia Rodgers: Some of the census documents, like for instance, housing comes out every five years, but it's in an off year from the year that the population data comes out.

J Aughenbaugh: That's right.

Nia Rodgers: One part of that is because we want to keep the Census Bureau working all the time. That's part of it, but part of it too, is the sheer amount of data that you're talking about. By the way, that data is all open to you, free to you, you can download it from census. If you can't find a piece of data that you need, it's all public access except any data that would identify an individual person.

J Aughenbaugh: That's right.

Nia Rodgers: By that, I mean, if your census tract has one firm in it and the Midwest I'm looking at you. Your census tract is your firm, there will be no demographic data that you can find for that because it would be too easy to tell who was who.

J Aughenbaugh: Again, that's Congress trying to thread the needle of being transparent on one hand, but also protect the identity of Americans on the other, because one of the chief reasons Americans have given to census enumerators, those folks who actually go around and say, you've not turned in your form. One of the primary reasons that Americans give is that they don't want to have their identity known to the broader public.

Nia Rodgers: That's a privacy issue. They also do some crunching to prevent while maintaining the percentages properly, but preventing individual ethnicities, race, religion, all of that from coming out, but we know a couple of things. Are we making babies?

J Aughenbaugh: We are not. The growth rate between the 2020 census and the 2010 census was an increase in our population of 7.4 percent. That is the lowest increase since the 1930s. That is the second lowest, if you will, rate of expansion, in the terminology of the Census Bureau since the decade of the 1930s.

Nia Rodgers: But we're not the only country that seeing lower birth rates, that's a worldwide.

J Aughenbaugh: It's a worldwide thing. You see this in a lot of Western democracies. Most nations in the European Union are encountering this slow growth rate, Japan has for decades, and most noteworthy, China.

John Aughenbaugh: China, earlier this year announced that it's unofficial policy of limiting birth to two children per family is now being increased to three. Because China is also experiencing a low population growth rate. The difficulty for nations, whether we're talking about the United States or other nations, is that we know in terms of economic growth you need an increase in the birth rate.

Nia Rodgers: You need younger people to be in the workforce.

John Aughenbaugh: Yes.

Nia Rodgers: Eventually, those babies will grow up to be workers.

John Aughenbaugh: They'll be workers.

Nia Rodgers: If you consider them in their most base level, they're humans and that's nice and we love humans, but they're workers.

John Aughenbaugh: They're workers.

Nia Rodgers: They're going to contribute to the economic prosperity of your nation.

John Aughenbaugh: Because we want them to get jobs. We want them to create cool stuff. We want them to go ahead and process a whole bunch of people, things, etc. But also, most countries welfare systems broadly conceived are predicated on having a bunch of people in the workforce to pay for social service programs, many of which are designed for elderly benefits.

Nia Rodgers: Right.

John Aughenbaugh: Elderly beneficiaries, so we know this. On the other hand, if the population growth is too high, then you have a resource issue. Again, we want to talk about threading the needle Nia. If you have too great of population growth, a nation may not be able to feed its population.

Nia Rodgers: Then you have famine, you have homelessness, you have chronic problems like that within society.

John Aughenbaugh: According to most demographers, the United States growth rate of 7.4 percent is not high enough.

Nia Rodgers: Do you know what it should be, or is that one of those things that they question?

John Aughenbaugh: Well, it varies. But we know this in the United States, we need to have a population growth rate every 10 years of well over 10 percent simply because we know a whole bunch of Americans are going to retire soon. The baby boom generation in its echo. Basically, the generation before us Nia, are supposed to be retiring soon. Now, some of them have delayed retirement because of the Great Recession of 2007-2009, and also the uncertainty due to the pandemic. But basically, this decade is where the demographers in the United States, they have been projecting as being the decade where we're going to see a whole bunch of Americans stop contributing economically. Because when they retire, they basically stop producing, and they basically just become consumers. I don't mean to be smirking elderly people, but in terms of economics, if you're no longer working, you're primarily consuming.

Nia Rodgers: Right.

John Aughenbaugh: That's why you want a birth rate to be higher, and you want a population growth rate to be higher, particularly of young, if you will, migrants. Because again, young migrants grow up to be what, Nia?

Nia Rodgers: Workers in the economy.

John Aughenbaugh: Workers in the economy.

Nia Rodgers: Well, and I'm assuming the part of the problem now is that now that boomers are reaching retirement age. We wanted to be having a lot more babies in the previous 20 years -

John Aughenbaugh: Yes.

Nia Rodgers: - so that they would be workers. If we have them now, then we have consumers on the infant side and consumers on the elder side. Because children are consumers too. I'm not trying to be ugly. They're not yet workers, and therefore, they are consumers.

John Aughenbaugh: That's right.

Nia Rodgers: Though the sweet spot would've been about 20 years ago.

John Aughenbaugh: Yes.

Nia Rodgers: If we could have gotten a big giant baby boom. But 20 years ago, we were having 911.

John Aughenbaugh: Yes.

Nia Rodgers: Right?

John Aughenbaugh: Yes.

Nia Rodgers: Then people finished freaking out about that and we had a recession. There's been a lot to suppress the birth rate relatively speaking.

John Aughenbaugh: Then you couple it with the last two presidential administrations; Obama and Trump. Not the same, but both in their own ways depressed migration into the country.

Nia Rodgers: Right.

John Aughenbaugh: Okay.

Nia Rodgers: We couldn't even replace our not had babies numbers with immigrant numbers.

John Aughenbaugh: That's right. Yep.

Nia Rodgers: Now, I'm assuming that what's happening, at least in some Western democracies in Europe and perhaps eventually in the United States is, they are trying to entice working age people, young workers into their countries to naturalize and be part of the economic engine.

John Aughenbaugh: That's part of the immigration debate, not only here in the United States, but also in many developed nations.

MALE: If you are stopping the in-migration of individuals, what's that doing to the economy? Because many businesses are saying, we want educated, well trained foreigners to come into our countries because we have jobs that need to be filled.

FEMALE: Right.

MALE: But why do you go ahead and privilege those migrants but then you don't privilege migrants who want to come to your country because of political persecution, religious persecution, gender persecution, etc. right?

FEMALE: Right.

MALE: Humanitarian reasons becomes secondary to economic reasons, right?

FEMALE: Right.

MALE: That's part of the difficult immigration debate that many nations, not just the United States. Let's be very clear listeners. These are some of the tough questions that nations like in the European Union have.

FEMALE: Japan has this question.

MALE: Japan has this question. China has this question.

FEMALE: Other nations are grappling with it and when people say, "Why can't they just fix immigration?" This is why.

MALE: Yeah.

FEMALE: This is more complicated than either throw open the doors or slam the door shut or build a wall or don't build a wall, like all of those things. Every thread that you pull, you bunch up the sweater on the shoulder of the other side.

MALE: That's right.

FEMALE: Until your sweater is so misshapen that you can't flatten it out anymore.

MALE: You think about the fact that we moved into a discussion of immigration because it has an impact on population. I mean, this is an episode about the census, but one of the reasons why the United States population is not growing is that one, we do have a low birth rate. So of those people here in the United States, we're not having kids.

FEMALE: We're not all not having kids at the same rates, is that right?

MALE: That is correct.

FEMALE: Because some demographics are growing at higher rates than others.

MALE: Yes.

FEMALE: Seven percent is the average, right?

MALE: Yes, I mean, that was the overall percentage increase.

FEMALE: Communities of color are growing at a higher rate, not still, but are growing at a higher rate than white communities. Is that correct?

MALE: Yes, white communities. Yes. Now we don't have the specific numbers on that yet. That's part of the data dump later on this year. So we don't have the precise breakdown in growth within particular demographic groups. What typically has happened is that the part of the American population that is not growing is Caucasians.

FEMALE: Which is one of the things politically that the Republican Party wrote about. We didn't like previous write about that about 50 years ago when they did, not 50, you know what I mean. It was after

which loss? After the McCain lost to Obama. It was the discussion of we need to change the demographics of the party because demographics in the nation are changing.

MALE: Yeah. You and I have discussed this and I discussed this at length in a number of my classes. If you look at the demographics of those who typically support either political party, the Democratic Party, should be growing because of who typically supports the Democratic Party. If you think about it, people of color in roughly the last 50 to 60 years have tended to vote for the Democratic Party. Caucasians have increasingly voted for the Republican Party, particularly older white males. But we know these older white males, their life expectancy is not as tie as one women generally. That's a shrinking percentage of the population.

FEMALE: Right.

MALE: Demographically the Republican Party would seem to be at a deficit. On the other hand, as we've also mentioned in other podcast episodes, you got to be careful about making generalizations about demographic groups. Because as we saw in the 2020 presidential election, Donald Trump actually did far better in 2020 than he did in 2016. Or Mitt Romney did in 2012, or John McCain did in 2008 in regards to Hispanic voters, particularly Hispanic male voters.

FEMALE: Hispanic voters who tend to be Catholic and who tend to be conservative.

MALE: That's right.

FEMALE: Just something to keep in mind.

MALE: Particularly on social issues.

FEMALE: Right. Not as simple as making assumptions about groups.

MALE: We also know, and we're probably going to get into this probably later on in the year or once we see the next wave of census reports. Within broad demographic categories like race or gender there are subgroups. For instance, Nia, you and I have talked about, for instance, Asian Americans. That category is imprecise. According to scholars, when you go ahead and use a category like Asian-American, you need to break it down into subcategories. When you go ahead and talk about women, you need to break it down into subcategories. You may even have to do it regionally. Because there are women voters in some parts of the country that are more liberal than the Democratic Party, or they're more conservative than the Republican Party.

FEMALE: Right. No group is a monolith.

MALE: Yeah, right.

FEMALE: It's basically what you should take away from that.

N. Rodgers: I know that to get to the heart of where this takes us politically. First of all, it takes us to the parties not being certain about their futures because the numbers are all wonky and up in the air. Like I noticed in your notes that you said Texas, Florida, and Arizona came in with lower population numbers than were expected and that may mean that Hispanics were under counted.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah, we don't know that yet because we haven't gotten that precise data information [inaudible 00:26:31].

N. Rodgers: But it also may have been affected by immigration?

J. Aughenbaugh: That's right.

N. Rodgers: Immigration to those areas where you get and California would be part of that too as well. Where you get farming, where you get other immigrants who were coming into work and they are adding into the economic prosperity of the nation. Because while they are here, they pay taxes, they do all that thing.

J. Aughenbaugh: But they're hard to count. That's part of the difficulty here, Nia you went ahead and joked early on in his episode, why doesn't the Census Bureau round up? Well, one of the chief debates is, again, should the Census Bureau use statistical modeling to estimate? Because we do know, for instance, in certain months in the agricultural part of California, the immigrant population swells. We know this, on the other hand-

N. Rodgers: By the way, we're talking about legal immigration we're not talking about illegal immigration, which also swells but they'll never be able to count illegal immigration because that's a whole different can of worms.

J. Aughenbaugh: But we also don't know necessarily what is the impact, for instance, the Obama administration of a deportation program? Or we don't know the extent to which the Trump administration's border wall travel banned. In other policy initiatives impacted, if you will even legal immigration.

N. Rodgers: Well, and then we can't even get into the pandemic and its effect on orders around the world not being open to anything.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah, because the census folks even put caveats in there first report about the impact of the pandemic.

N. Rodgers: Yeah. This is going to be 2020 asterisk. That's enough if census is going to be reported forever.

J. Aughenbaugh: Most of the counting for the 2020 census to this year, occurred before the greatest impacts of the pandemic.

N. Rodgers: But the clean up, which is the follow-up and the end people who are coming along saying, "We notice that we didn't find you in the census data could you please fill out your form" that was affected by the pandemic.

J. Aughenbaugh: Then we know that a whole bunch of Americans, at least anecdotally moved during the pandemic.

N. Rodgers: That's true.

J. Aughenbaugh: Right.

N. Rodgers: I'm going to live with my parents, I'm going to live with friends.

J. Aughenbaugh: I'm getting out of states that are restricting my liberty.

N. Rodgers: Or I'm going to states that are restricting people's liberty because I like that thing.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah, we don't know that and that's one of the huge caveats. We do know this, there are certain trends, there were reaffirmed with the 2020 overall census data. Some parts of the country are continuing to add people. The South and the West, once again, grew the fastest in this past decade and that's continuing a trend that we saw in the latter part of the 20th century. People were moving to the South and to the West.

N. Rodgers: Is that because manufacturing has moved or is that because there is less manufacturing in the United States and so other-

J. Aughenbaugh: Well, in terms of manufacturing jobs, when manufacturing jobs have remained in the United States, they tend to be in the South and West. But most of those jobs have already left the country, let's be very clear. A lot of it has to do with the fact of other economic opportunities, or certainly, if you will preferences in regards we do. I would be shocked in future census reports if many Americans did not report the fact that they moved for political reasons. We know this. People who are Democrats are tending to move to urban cities on the coast.

N. Rodgers: Okay.

J. Aughenbaugh: Republicans are moving to the South and to the West. If you were in the Republican Party, you are like this might be a good thing. On the other hand, Democrats are, if you will, congregating in urban areas, which actually minimizes their vote numbers. Because if you've got a whole bunch of people living in, for instance, Oregon and they're not in surrounding states. Well, those surrounding states are overwhelmingly Republican, and Europe basically only going to control the politics within the state of Oregon.

N. Rodgers: As we've noted, the Senate is two each.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's right.

N. Rodgers: The more states that are of one political group or the other, the more likely they will have control of the Senate. While it seems like picking on the South, on the house to say, so what who cares? I'm not saying so what who cares, but I'm saying policy is driven less in the house than it is in the Senate.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. The Senate is anti-majoritarian, let's do a statistical hypothetical. Let's say 55 percent of the American population supports the Democratic Party or leans towards the Democratic Party. But those people are overwhelmingly populated and a handful of states.

N. Rodgers: Ten states, that's 20 of them.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: Out of 100.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's right.

N. Rodgers: While their population may be, what is our number, 331. Let's even say that they are 150, that there are a huge number. If they're spread in only 10 states, California, New York, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Virginia.

J. Aughenbaugh: Will again Washington.

N. Rodgers: Every other state.

J. Aughenbaugh: There's Republican.

N. Rodgers: Forty other states are Republican. The numbers don't look so good. You can have a majority of the population identify as one party. But because of the spread, they could still be the minority in the Senate, which is largely the decision-making body. Just as a side note, all kinds of crazy stuff makes it out of a house. It would not surprise me if a house co came out that was like we are banning all cats from the United States and people got only be dog owners. It would get to the Senate and it would go to the cat committee and it would die in the Senate. Because the Senate would say we're not even going to take that up, that's crazy talk or whatever.

J. Aughenbaugh: Bored and again, there's good and that remind students of this all the time. The Senate was designed to be a check on the people's representatives in the House.

N. Rodgers: A slow deliberative body, hence why they are six years in service.

J. Aughenbaugh: Six year terms that's right.

N. Rodgers: Because two years leads you to populism. You again, you go away I want somebody new and fresh and fabulous. Hence why we have such turnover in the house and less turnover, although there are people who have been in the house for 1,000 years too, so it's always old.

J. Aughenbaugh: But their districts have been so gerrymandered.

N. Rodgers: Let's get to gerrymandering. First of all, is it not gerry, and we mispronounce it. No, but the guy was.

J. Aughenbaugh: Elbridge Gerry. But it's pronounced gerrymandering.

N. Rodgers: Mr. Gerry, it says.

J. Aughenbaugh: He was a governor up in Massachusetts.

N. Rodgers: He says "We're going to take the population and we're going to make these wonky shape districts."

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah, gerrymandering is the combination of Elbridge Gerry, and salamander. The shape of a salamander.

N. Rodgers: I didn't realize that's where the mander comes from.

J. Aughenbaugh: Gerrymandering comes from the combination of those two words. Because when Gerry was the Governor of Massachusetts, in an attempt to go ahead and protect his political party and he was a Democrat, he helped, the Massachusetts State Legislature, draw up a couple of voting districts that look like salamanders. In the press in Massachusetts when a head in coined the phrase, again, that looks like a salamander. It's gerrymandering and that's the phrase.

N. Rodgers: Both parties do it?

J. Aughenbaugh: Oh, yes.

N. Rodgers: Whenever the party is in charge when the census comes out. Gerrymandering is not out of their state?

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes, and it's good whatever political parties is in charge of the states redistricting process after the census. Right now we have 50 states, they are about ready to do the redistricting process.

N. Rodgers: How many of those states are Republican controlled at this time?

J. Aughenbaugh: Where both houses of the state legislature and the governor's office is Republican 30 out of 50.

N. Rodgers: Likely, this go round, Democrats will be quashed into salamander shaped districts-

N. Rodgers: Then so that Republicans will have a better chance of winning other districts where they are more competitive.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's right.

N. Rodgers: That's the theory with redistricting, is that what you're doing is you're creating safe districts. Then where you can't create a safe district, you create a district that's so politically wonky. Then it could go either way and then you pour money into it to win it.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. In both political parties want to minimize the latter and emphasize the former.

N. Rodgers: Right

J. Aughenbaugh: Right.

N. Rodgers: They want as many safe districts as they can make.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. They're quite willing to go ahead and give the opposition party, the party not in control of redistricting two or three safe districts. Why? Because you've gone ahead, impact a whole bunch of those parties' voters into only two or three districts. Well, maximizing your opportunity to go ahead and control a majority of the districts in the House of Representatives.

N. Rodgers: Right. I'm sorry.

J. Aughenbaugh: Forty out of the 50 states have a political redistricting. It's controlled by the politicians. Roughly, 10 out of 50 have, "Nonpartisan commissions or nonpartisan processes." In those 40 states, whatever political party controls the redistricting process will attempt to go ahead and minimize how many safe seats there are for the non-majority party.

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: This is where the census numbers come into play, Nia. Because according to the 2020 population count, seven House of Representatives seats will shift among 13 states. One state gains two seats, Texas. By the way, Republicans control both of the state houses and the governor's position in Texas.

N. Rodgers: No question. Those are going to be Republican.

J. Aughenbaugh: Oh, yeah. I would be shocked.

N. Rodgers: Even though three-quarters of California's wealthy population is moved to Texas in the last two years because of tax issues, I still don't think it's going to make a difference.

J. Aughenbaugh: No. It's not going to make a difference. Five states will gain one seat. Colorado, which increasingly is a Democratic state. Florida, which is in the last two sets of elections, again, by and large Republican. It's probably a dark purple state bordering on red. Montana, Republican, North Carolina, purple state, and Oregon, a Democratic state.

N. Rodgers: Can I just side note? You just said Montana?

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: Montana has a second seat for the first time ever in its history as a state.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's right.

N. Rodgers: It's got enough people to have a second seat. That's very exciting for a state that is ginormous.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes. In terms of square miles, it is one of our larger states. In terms of population, it finally has now graduated to the big kid's table.

N. Rodgers: That's right. It now has two seats.

J. Aughenbaugh: It's not up to the adult table yet.

N. Rodgers: It's just in teenage table, and we love Montana.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. Listeners are making reference to what Nia and many of us have experienced in regards to holiday meals, which is so many people would be in a particular family member's house, that the small kids would be at one table, the big kids would be at another table, and then you had the adult table.

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: Montana now has a seat at the big kid's table.

N. Rodgers: Yeah. Which is very exciting for them.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: They pushed hard for the census this year. You know why? Because the more people you have representing you in Congress, the more you can get stuff for your state.

J. Aughenbaugh: We're going to get to that.

N. Rodgers: The entire plate.

J. Aughenbaugh: We're going to get to that in just a moment. Seven states lost one seat. California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

N. Rodgers: Six of which are Democratic, right?

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes. All those states except for California are what's known as Rust Belt states.

N. Rodgers: Oh, yeah. Obviously, just looking at West Virginia as a Republican, but you're right. The others are?

J. Aughenbaugh: Rust Belt states. They are northeast.

N. Rodgers: People moved out because there's no jobs.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's right.

N. Rodgers: Okay.

J. Aughenbaugh: Now, most of the states losing seats are Democrats. I mean, think about it. California, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania.

N. Rodgers: Michigan and Ohio are purple, aren't they?

J. Aughenbaugh: Ohio is increasingly gone Republican. Michigan is definitely purple. Pennsylvania, with the exception of 2016, I mean, it's a confusing state because the state legislature, both houses are controlled by Republicans, but all the statewide positions are controlled by Democrats.

J. Aughenbaugh: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Attorney General, the Secretary of State, yes.

N. Rodgers: North Carolina does that pretty often, except in the reverse.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: The state officials are often Republican, but then they go for Democrats for presidents, an odd way to go about things. Okay.

J. Aughenbaugh: So most of the states gaining are Republican.

N. Rodgers: Okay.

J. Aughenbaugh: Couple that with what you mentioned previously, partisan gerrymandering. If you're a member of the Democratic Party, you should probably not feel all that comfortable about retaining control of the House of Representatives after 2022. Here's another reason.

N. Rodgers: Some of those seats for the Democrats will still be safe. Because some people, even in Republican states, their city is so Democratic that their district will remain and they will remain.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah.

N. Rodgers: But that could mean though that the districts around them change.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. I mean, think about this if you represent the city of Philadelphia in the House of Representatives.

N. Rodgers: You're probably safe as a Democrat.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. You're safe as a Democrat. However, a couple of suburbs, if you're a Democrat, they'll be shocked if your district all of a sudden has an infusion of Republican voters.

N. Rodgers: Again, both parties do this when they are in charge.

J. Aughenbaugh: Oh, my goodness, yes.

N. Rodgers: The brilliant thing here is that Republicans played the wrong game. They've been working on the state legislatures for the last 10, 15 years to move those into the Republican category because that was the way to change the Federal. There's a Congress.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. The Congress, right?

N. Rodgers: It's to slowly move those states into Republican leaning states. Even if they're not super Republican. Even if they're only mildly Republican, it doesn't matter because right now that's what's being decided and whoever's in charge gets to draw the map. Except that we then almost immediately have lots of people trying to take that to court and fighting that up to the Supreme Court about this wasn't fair and it was done.

J. Aughenbaugh: But there are two points here. One, when you win control of the state legislature becomes important in regards to redistricting. If you're a political party, you want to have control of the state legislature the year the census results are released.

N. Rodgers: Right. Not the year before or the year after because that might change things.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah.

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: The second point here is there will be plenty of federal court lawsuits, but because of the Supreme Court ruling in the North Carolina case, where basically a narrow majority of the Supreme Court a couple years ago held that partisan gerrymandering is not unconstitutional, it's now a state issue. Unless your state gets rid of partisan gerrymandering, the Supreme Court is not going to go ahead and weigh in on this.

N. Rodgers: It stands. Okay.

J. Aughenbaugh: They said it was a political question. I mean, here in Virginia, we saw this, Nia, last year. Redistricting was shifted from the state legislature to a "Nonpartisan commission."

N. Rodgers: Which promptly hired partisan lawyers.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes. Do you know who's most upset right now that the process has changed, the Democrats. Because they now have control of both houses of the state legislature. They're like, hey, wait a minute here.

N. Rodgers: We could have done right.

J. Aughenbaugh: We could have done what the Republicans did in the state legislature in 2011.

N. Rodgers: Yeah. This thing is, and I know it's a game played by both sides, but it just seems patently unfair when anybody plays it. It just doesn't seem like it. It seems like the people who get screwed are the voters. That they get to pick voters rather than voters picking them. That doesn't seem like it's how it should be.

J. Aughenbaugh: That is the common critique of partisan gerrymandering. It looks like the elected officials are picking who their voters will be instead of the converse, which is what we hope or think democracy should be.

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: The voters get to pick their elected representatives. Now, here's a couple of interesting things here for those of you who like to know which ones are the larger states and which ones are the smaller states.

N. Rodgers: Wait, side note.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah.

N. Rodgers: There's no maximum. Well, I guess there's 435 if you decided to take over all the other states, but that point you have a war. There's no maximum for a state, but there are minimums.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: Okay.

J. Aughenbaugh: The smallest states and they only have one representative in the house are Alaska, Delaware, the two Dakotas, Vermont, and Wyoming.

N. Rodgers: All, except Delaware, are really big states. Physically big size-wise.

J. Aughenbaugh: In terms of square miles, yes.

N. Rodgers: Can you imagine being the Alaska representative? You show up in borough and you say, "I'll see you all in three years. I got to go visit everybody else." Your town halls must be terrible.

J. Aughenbaugh: Think about your home-style of political science a scientist Richard Fenno, wrote a well-known book about House of Representatives basically, they have a style of governing when they go back home to meet constituents versus their style of governing when they're in DC, but imagine your home-style in a state like Alaska or Wyoming, where you're like, you just mentioned town halls. You might have to travel 350 miles just to go ahead and do a town hall with eight people.

N. Rodgers: You have to act like that's okay.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. This is a great thing you have to live this side of you all.

N. Rodgers: You have to be a marvelous actor. The Alaska representative in the House of Representatives. That person should get an Oscar, because they show up and they're like, "Hey, I love whale blubber. Let's hang out for four hours in the complete darkness." That's all.

J. Aughenbaugh: Think about if you're a representative.

N. Rodgers: I just hit every stereotype. Sorry, folks.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's all right.

N. Rodgers: I didn't mean that. I mean it in a good way. The other thing though, is that in a state like that with a really relatively low population boy, do you know what people think because they are going to let you know?

J. Aughenbaugh: Oh, sure.

N. Rodgers: You could probably actually handle getting an email from every single person that lives in Alaska?

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah.

N. Rodgers: Do you know what I mean? You would know when people like something or don't like something you would it. That would be really cool in a lot of ways.

J. Aughenbaugh: When you get to know them on a personal level if you're a representative from the Bronx, New York, you're not going to get to know your constituents as well, even though it's a more densely populated area, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: Speaking of which the four largest states, no big change. Even though a couple, one or two of them lost a population. California, Texas, Florida, and New York. Those are the four largest states. By the way and I know nearly.

N. Rodgers: Edge states. It's centrifugal force. All our people go out to the edge

J. Aughenbaugh: That's why by the way, my students are like they'll look at a map an electoral college map after a presidential election. In most of the map is red. I'm like, but remember guys rural states, states with large world populations generally tend to vote Republican, but a whole bunch of democratic voters in the last roughly 20 to 30 years are congregating in a few densely populated states, right?

N. Rodgers: Yeah. When you do the presidential election, you're doing it a one-to-one vote. What we've been talking about is congressional representation but it doesn't really matter where Democrats and Republicans live in the United States as far as the presidential election is concerned, because that's an individual vote until you get into the.

J. Aughenbaugh: Electoral college map, Math. In again, each state's electoral college number is based on their number of House of Representatives plus two of their senators, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: Again, for most presidential party candidates, you want to get to 270. Think about the four largest states. Two of them are reliably Democrat, New York and California, right?

N. Rodgers: Right. Starting on the election night, the assumption is that the Democratic candidate will win California and New York. They always put those electoral numbers in that pile to start with. It would be something hitting the earth from outer space for that to change. They always put Texas in the Republican well, always meaning in my adult lifetime, but that's not been forever I know you and Bill keep trying to teach me that.

J. Aughenbaugh: No, but since Lyndon Johnson.

N. Rodgers: Texas goes into the Republican category and it just automatically goes in there. They just assume Texas is going to be Republican. Then Florida is always Florida man, and nobody can ever figure out what it's going to do. It gets waited until the end of the night.

J. Aughenbaugh: For a lot of reasons, Floridians have trouble voting.

N. Rodgers: There's all kinds of issues in Florida.

J. Aughenbaugh: Jurisdictions of Florida have a hard time counting votes. In the Florida Supreme Court occasionally likes to make stuff up as it goes along, then the federal courts after get involved.

N. Rodgers: I have a theoretical question for you.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah.

N. Rodgers: John Ogenball runs for president.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah.

N. Rodgers: He's so beloved by political science students everywhere that he actually wins California, Texas, Florida, and New York and the comment does not hit the Earth that's not enough by itself. But it's pretty dang close, isn't it?

J. Aughenbaugh: Where you're basically talking about is and I'm going to do the quick math here right now.

N. Rodgers: In Joe mansion's world, technically Florida should go with Texas so that you have New York and California, and Florida and Texas. You basically take all four of those states out of the running, and now it becomes an issue of the other states, but if you could win those four states, would it matter if anybody voted anywhere else?

J. Aughenbaugh: Okay, so Florida in 2020 had 29, New York had 29 so correct my math, that's 58.

J. Aughenbaugh: California had 55. So that's a 103, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: Is that 103?

N. Rodgers: Yes.

J. Aughenbaugh: Oh, wow. How about that? Then you have Texas.

N. Rodgers: No, that's 113. You're not counting that. That's 113.

J. Aughenbaugh: A hundred and thirteen, Texas has 38. That's a 151, right?

N. Rodgers: Yeah.

J. Aughenbaugh: You need to get to 270.

N. Rodgers: You'd still have to pick up a few other states.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. But again, let's just put it this way.

N. Rodgers: But a 151, you're more than halfway there.

J. Aughenbaugh: You're more than halfway there. Then if you went ahead and picked up North Carolina and Virginia, North Carolina has got 15 in Virginia's got 13. That's 28 more, right? You pick up a couple of Rust Belt states: Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio.

N. Rodgers: Part of what goes on with this argument is that in districting or rather in dividing up the United States, that you want to make sure that all the states count. All the states are important to electing the president. Otherwise, the president can say, I don't care about Montana. It's got three people. I don't care about their electoral votes and they never go to Montana and that in fact does happen to the smaller states.

J. Aughenbaugh: It won't work.

N. Rodgers: Why don't presidents don't go to all 50 states? Because a big thing about Obama was that he had a 50 state strategy.

J. Aughenbaugh: I've actually said that to students who want to get rid of the Electoral College. I'm like, right now with the Electoral College most presidential candidates never visit the Dakotas. They don't go to Wyoming. They hardly ever go to Rhode Island or Delaware.

N. Rodgers: Montana, they don't go to Alaska.

J. Aughenbaugh: Main.

N. Rodgers: They may make it out to Hawaii but probably not.

J. Aughenbaugh: But I said, let's say you go by popular vote. The candidate who wins a majority of the popular vote becomes president. You get rid of the Electoral College. The incentive is still for presidential candidates to go to states that have what?

N. Rodgers: Illinois, because it's got Chicago, Colorado, because it's got Denver. Texas, California, Florida.

J. Aughenbaugh: New York.

N. Rodgers: New York.

J. Aughenbaugh: Pennsylvania.

N. Rodgers: Pennsylvania because you got Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Massachusetts because you got Boston.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's right.

N. Rodgers: That probably does it for you.

J. Aughenbaugh: Look at the number of states you've counted. Roughly the same number of states that most presidential candidates visit because of the Electoral College math.

N. Rodgers: Right. You're not doing anything by getting rid of the Electoral. If what you're mad about is how presidents are elected, the Electoral College is not the problem.

J. Aughenbaugh: No. The larger problem is a whole bunch of your people are either congregating in a few large states, or they've congregated in particular regions of the country.

N. Rodgers: Right. What you need to have as an invasion strategy. Where you send your people out and because it's the census, you have to make babies in various states, in various rural areas and you shift. That'll be an interesting strategy, but I don't think I'm Machiavellian enough to pull that off.

J. Aughenbaugh: Well, it's funny you went in and said that making babies is a potential campaign strategy. I once got in trouble teaching intro to US government when we got to the issue of Social Security. Social Security is one of those social welfare programs, safety net programs that's predicated on as you described at the onset of this podcast.

N. Rodgers: Having enough population to cover the expenses.

J. Aughenbaugh: But particularly workers, right?

N. Rodgers: Right. You need people from their 20s to their 50s to cover your olds.

J. Aughenbaugh: Because basically right now, it takes two and a half full-time workers paying into Social Security to cover one person on Social Security, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: You want to keep that first number, that first poll, as robust as possible unless you make structural changes to Social Security. One of my students who was like 18 years old quickly did the Math, he's just like, Social Security, as we know it today, won't be around for my generation. I'm like, probably not. He goes, "What's the solution?" I went ahead and jokingly quipped, you all need to start making a whole bunch of babies. Which got reported to the university [inaudible 01:03:08].

N. Rodgers: Of course, they did.

J. Aughenbaugh: Professor Aughenbaugh is advocating unsafe sex. That's not what I was advocating. What I was responding to was the fact that we have a demographic problem with many of our entitlement programs in this country.

N. Rodgers: Increasingly in partisanship in the Congress. If you thought partisanship was going to be bad before, wait until after the redistricting that's about to happen. It's only going to get worse until we figure out a different system.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's right.

N. Rodgers: It isn't going to work and it's going to keep dividing us. It's not because we're divided as a nation, it's because of the way we divide ourselves up.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: It's cheer where you live and tribalism and that kind of thing that's causing the partisan. When people say, and I know why the Congress is so partisan, I can tell you why they're so partisan. Because we as a nation have allowed gerrymandering to flourish from both sides in a way that has made it impossible for there to be bipartisanship.

J. Aughenbaugh: Think about how we continue to reward the messages or the incentives Nia, that we send to our politicians, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: We elect or pick people who have no interest in getting rid of partisan gerrymandering.

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: We voted out of office those elected representatives who are willing to compromise.

N. Rodgers: We accept the way these things are being done in our end.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. Because we think about it in terms of short-term gain, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: I don't want to get rid of partisan gerrymandering if right now my party has control of the redistricting process. I don't want to get rid of the Electoral College if it benefits my party. Oh, my party got screwed, now I want to get rid of the Electoral College. Well, that doesn't seem to be a principled argument.

N. Rodgers: Exactly.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's an argument that losers make.

N. Rodgers: Exactly.

J. Aughenbaugh: The reason why we loss is because the rules of the game are rigged, so I want to change the game. How about this? You lost because you picked a candidate who didn't connect with a whole bunch of voters.

N. Rodgers: Well, and, or alternatively, yeah, it's rigged, so throw away this game and get a game that's not rigged. That's the other way. Are you willing to accept consequences means?

J. Aughenbaugh: Are you willing to go ahead and accept the trade offs if you make the changes? Because these changes don't occur in a vacuum.

N. Rodgers: Exactly. But before we go, I want you to tell people how close it was.

J. Aughenbaugh: Okay.

N. Rodgers: The photo finish, when you bet a lot of money on a horse and that horse doesn't actually get their nose across the line first, how you feel. Imagine how you feel if you are in New York.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes. For people who want to know why it's important that they fill out the census form, do not turn away the census enumerator in the state of New York.

N. Rodgers: State of New York. Not any of the districts or burrows, the State of New York.

J. Aughenbaugh: Which by the way, remember folks, Nia and I just listed the four largest states.

N. Rodgers: Right. Third or fourth.

J. Aughenbaugh: Okay. In the state of New York, New York lost a seat in the House of Representatives by 89 people.

N. Rodgers: How many people take your 103 class every fall?

J. Aughenbaugh: On average, about 200 people.

N. Rodgers: Okay. Two times that number take 103 every fall.

J. Aughenbaugh: Or how about this?

N. Rodgers: Eighty nine people, you know that Governor Cuomo was like, you have got to be kidding me. He could have gone out and just found 89 people who probably didn't fill out their census for 90 people because you'd want a one-person margin. But 89 people for an entire state.

J. Aughenbaugh: Or think about how you avoid a really bad automobile accident by seconds by like 20 or 25 feet, that's Minnesota.

J. Aughenbaugh: Okay. Held on to a seat in the House of Representatives by 26 people. That's like the average number of people who show up for one of my upper-level classes.

N. Rodgers: Thank you all for showing up and thank you for filling out your census form. We need to hold on to an entire district. We held onto an entire representative, the newcomers.

J. Aughenbaugh: Because 26 of you before you went to bed.

N. Rodgers: Filled out the form.

J. Aughenbaugh: Filled out the form.

N. Rodgers: See, I'm thinking that tells you something about people from Minnesota and people from New York. People from Minnesota, sort of Midwest. Yes, we just do what we're asked to do because we're more Midwestern and that's what we do.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. We fulfill our obligations.

N. Rodgers: I'm walking over here. I'm not filling out your stupid census form. I'm from New York. Yeah. Wow.

J. Aughenbaugh: Twenty-six people before they went to bed at night, they were channel surfing on the TV, they couldn't find anything to go ahead and occupy their last remaining 15-20 minutes before they went nighty night, were like "George, let's fill out the census form." "Well, okay honey."

N. Rodgers: There you go. Bullet dodged.

J. Aughenbaugh: Nia, real quick question before we conclude. Now, when you filled out the census, did you fill it out online this year or last year?

N. Rodgers: Yeah.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah, I did. That was cool. That was the first time I did it online.

N. Rodgers: It was the first time I did it online too, and I thought, well, this is super easy. Why don't more people do this? Which I'm sure again is what Governor Cuomo thought in New York. Why do 89 more people do this? But it wasn't very long. It didn't have a huge number of questions. I remember back when they used to send you the really big one and my parents would sit down like they were doing taxes. It was this big long involved. But I come from a long line of people who believe in doing the census because I come from a long line of people who also do genealogy, and a lot of genealogy work is wrapped up in the census in a variety of ways as those names get released. But yeah, it was really cool to do it online and I'm looking forward to doing the interim ones. I think that now that they've worked out the bugs, there'll be more of those. I think we'll have more of an opportunity to-

J. Aughenbaugh: Listeners, it was so easy. I remember I got up one morning, I was having a cup of coffee, and I clicked on the link, and I started filling it out. I know some folks are concerned about internet security. But it was very easy to do and I felt it was a very secure process.

N. Rodgers: I suggest to those people, by the way, who are worried about internet security, that maybe they want to stop carrying around a phone.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah.

N. Rodgers: I'm just saying. If you're really worried about security, announcing to Google where you are every 10 seconds is probably not helpful to your privacy. After [inaudible 01:12:27] out there, you can do what you want to, listeners, we appreciate freedoms of all sorts. But your argument loses a lot of water when you shake your smartphone at me and say, "The government listens in." I'm like well, "Because you told them to. You're carrying that thing around with you all the time."

J. Aughenbaugh: Or you make it really easy because four or five times a day you go ahead and post on social media where you are and what you're doing, and with whom you were doing it.

N. Rodgers: Exactly. This is the money I stole from my neighbor. This is me wearing his t-shirt. Well, you don't get to be surprised that you got caught. Sorry. I also think it's important for us to think about it in terms of a common good, and to do as much as we can because it is a common good, and because the information that we get from it is so valuable. We understand demographic change in the United States, we can answer a lot of questions about ourselves by looking at census data well beyond the political questions of gerrymandering and everything else.

J. Aughenbaugh: I'm glad you mentioned this, and as a concluding point for this podcast episode. Another reason why the census is important is that so much of what the federal government allocates. Nia, you just mentioned collective good. But so many of the government programs that allocate money for essential stuff like Head Start programs, welfare benefits, Medicare, Medicaid.

N. Rodgers: Roads, bridges.

J. Aughenbaugh: Is based on a state's population. There are formulas for these programs, that are driven by a state's population, and what we report as Americans, what we report about ourselves, and yes, I can understand your concern that the government knows this, knows that about you. But the next time you complain that you don't derive any benefits from the government, remember, "Simple" in air quotes, "A simple thing like counting how many people live in a state or district affects how much the government allocates in terms of public goods."

N. Rodgers: You have to budget in some way and that's the way we budget. Otherwise, how would they know how much money to give us? Well, let me give you a couple of million. Let's see how far that goes. That's not a reasonable way to budget. That's not the way you would budget as a person spending your own budget, you do not assume that you are going to feed your teenage child as much as you feed your infant. Sorry. The reverse. You're going to feed your teenage kid a lot more than you're going to feed your infant unless your infant is also a hippo.

J. Aughenbaugh: It's like when I go to the grocery store with my daughter, I don't buy groceries assuming that four people are at the dining room table. Because I have an accurate account of how many people are in my household-

N. Rodgers: Exactly.

J. Aughenbaugh: And who we are. I know how much food to buy at the grocery store.

N. Rodgers: If you're going to make cheeseburgers, you're going to make two for you and one for her because that's the reasonable amount. That's what she's going to eat and that's what you're going to eat. But if you were like, guests might be coming and I don't know how many, do you buy 100 burgers? Do you buy 20 burgers?

J. Aughenbaugh: If you're just even remotely curious. The thing that you and I share is that the census reports that get issued are a person with a healthy curiosity, they're like manna from heaven. These are full meals.

N. Rodgers: Well, and almost every dissertation at some point or another ends up using the census for something, like just the sheer demographic knowledge of who we are and what we do, and what means American.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah, and how are we changing? It's just fascinating stuff. I know Nia has already said this, but if you get a chance, browse through it. It's got some fascinating stuff in there. Let's face it guys, we're concluding the podcast episode by talking about how New York lost a seat in the House of Representatives by 89 people.

N. Rodgers: That's so painful considering the number of people who live in New York, that's like 0.001 percent or something. It's some terribly tiny amount that could have pushed them over the top and kept representation. We appreciate you sticking with us for the length of this episode and we will be back in the fall for more census information once we have more of the release.

J. Aughenbaugh: Sounds good.

N. Rodgers: Thanks.

J. Aughenbaugh: Bye, Nia.

N. Rodgers: Bye, Aughen.

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