

*Pennsylvania State Senate Urban Affairs  
Committee Hearing  
October 14 2014*

# Urban Flight

The **INSTITUTE** for

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Public Policy & Economic Development

at Wilkes University

*A partnership among Keystone College, King's College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University,  
Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Commonwealth Medical College,  
University of Scranton & Wilkes University*

# Population

## 20 largest PA communities

Population Growth		
	Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	20 Largest Cities in PA
Total Population (2000)	12,281,054	2,757,828
Total Population (2012)	12,699,589	2,758,168
Population Growth (2000-2012)	3.41%	0.01%
Percent of Pennsylvania Population in 20 Largest Cities in 2000:		22.46%
Percent of Pennsylvania Population in 20 Largest Cities in 2012:		21.72%

# Population

## 40 smallest PA communities

<b>Population Growth</b>		
	<b>Commonwealth of Pennsylvania</b>	<b>40 Small Cities</b>
<b>Total Population (2000)</b>	12,281,054	551,311
<b>Total Population (2012)</b>	12,699,589	540,249
<b>Population Change (2000-2012)</b>	3.41%	-2.01%
<b>Percent of Pennsylvania Population in 40 Smallest Cities in 2000:</b>		4.49%
<b>Percent of Pennsylvania Population in 40 Smallest Cities in 2012:</b>		4.25%

# Effects of Urban Flight

## Urban Decay

urban blight

high rental occupancy

higher vacancy rates

poverty

unemployment

# Unemployment & Poverty

<b>Poverty &amp; Unemployment</b>		
	<b>Commonwealth of Pennsylvania</b>	<b>20 Largest Cities in PA</b>
<b>People in Poverty (2012)</b>	1,604,464	695,462
<b>Percent in Poverty (2012)</b>	12.63%	25.21%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	8.5%	13.3%

<b>Poverty &amp; Unemployment</b>		
	<b>Commonwealth of Pennsylvania</b>	<b>40 Small Cities</b>
<b>People in Poverty (2012)</b>	1,604,464	87,596
<b>Percent in Poverty (2012)</b>	12.63%	16.21%
<b>Unemployment Rate (2012)</b>	8.5%	8.8%

# Housing & Education

Housing & Education		
	Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	20 Largest Cities in PA
Total Housing Units (2012)	5,563,832	1,228,590
Vacant Housing Units (2012)	10.9%	13.2%
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	62.5%	44.7%
For Population Age 25+ :		
At Least High School Diploma	88.29%	81.35%
At Least Bachelor's Degree	27.05%	22.66%

Housing & Education		
	Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	40 Small Cities
Total Housing Units (2012)	5,563,832	249,339
Vacant Housing Units (2012)	10.9%	10.3%
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	62.5%	54.2%
For Population Age 25+		
At Least High School Diploma	88.29%	84.05%
At Least Bachelor's Degree	27.05%	21.72%

# Summary

- Population growth in Pennsylvania's 20 largest cities is flat and underperforms the Commonwealth as a whole.
- Small cities, on average, fare worse.
- Population change is highly uneven.
- For most cities, population loss peaked decades ago, but the lingering effects of urban flight remains in the form of urban decay or blight.

# Conclusions

- Many of the areas on the decline are older industrial areas where unemployment rates tend to be higher.
- More than population growth is necessary to ensure the health and stability of urban cores.
- Distressed communities must attempt to attract wealth and economic activity.



# Strategic Priorities

- job growth
- fiscal stability of local government
- redevelopment – residential/commercial
- pre -K-12 Education
- crime
- quality of life

# Process

- community planning/visioning
- develop the strategic plan
- partnerships
- create the environment
- develop the tools
- address community elements