

Caged by lockdowns & curfews, flocks of people & businesses are fleeing California

by Michael Rectenwald



Compounded with the exorbitant real estate prices, gouging tax rates, and a prohibitive cost of living, the draconian Covid-19 restrictions have made Californication all but untenable.

2020 has brought an unprecedented exodus from California, once a preferred destination for millions. Now people are bolting almost as quickly as they once rushed in. And who can blame them? The place is virtually uninhabitable.

The Covid-19 pandemic – or rather, local governments' responses to it – have proven to be the catalyst for the unprecedented emigration. For the first time since 1900, California's population has declined, this year by over 70,000 residents. With the prospect of [losing](#) a congressional seat,

the implications are politically significant. Let's hope the emigres don't take their politics with them.

As working remotely has become the *'new normal'*, geographic flexibility is now the rule. Individuals and corporations alike have capitalized by relocating en masse, refusing the exorbitant taxes, draconian lockdowns, and the high cost of living that comes with living in the Eureka state.

Corporations have abandoned Silicon Valley by the fistful this year. Major players like Tesla, Hewlett-Packard, and Oracle have cited local government restrictions as the stimulus for their anti-Eureka moments.

According to the Census Bureau, Texas is the most popular destination for fleeing Californians. It also happens to be one of nine states with no income tax. [Calculations](#) suggest that a typical company moving from California to Texas reduces its operating cost by 32 percent.

Palantir is among the major players that relocated to Texas. Co-founder Joe Lonsdale cited California's 13.3 percent income tax rate as a chief concern, telling [CNBC](#), *"I could either put that money toward things that are fixing the world or give it to the California state government."* Yeah, I'm sure Joe knows how to fix the world. But despite his hubris, he's right about ditching Silicon Valley.

Palantir CEO Alex Karp also [critiqued](#) the political climate in California, slamming the *"increasing intolerance and monoculture"* (i.e., the totalitarian wokeness) in Silicon Valley. *"We seem to share fewer and fewer of the technology sector's values and commitments,"* he [said](#).

Other deviationists from the woke political orthodoxy, in news and entertainment, have followed suit by relocating this year as well – including popular podcaster Joe Rogan, and conservative news outlet the Daily Wire.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk has been particularly outspoken in his [criticism](#) of Governor Gavin Newsom's lockdowns, declaring Newsom's health orders "*fascist*," and likening stay-at-home mandates to forcible home imprisonment. Although in May, Newsom smugly [told](#) CNBC, "*I'm not worried about Elon leaving anytime soon*," Musk made good on his promise by [relocating](#) his company and personal residence to Texas by December.

Musk's concerns reflect the dramatic decline in quality of life for Californians who face aggressive lockdown measures, curfews, mask mandates, beach closures, and two rounds of stay-at-home orders, while Republican-run states operate with minimal restrictions.

The lockdowns have particularly hurt small businesses. Before the pandemic response hit, the state had already been ranked the most burdensome in the country. Recent lockdown measures have since rendered California entirely inhospitable to the hospitality industry. The restaurant trade has been all but destroyed. Though Los Angeles health officials have [admitted](#) that there's no specific scientific basis for closing outdoor dining, restaurants in the city were ordered to cease sidewalk seating in November.

The ban has since been extended to all of California, without an end in sight. Businesses are being crippled as their income is stripped away by overzealous lock-downers faster than the clothing from pole dancers. Meanwhile, Gavin Newsom was [caught](#) dining indoors with healthcare lobbyists at the tony French Laundry – where, unlike Newsom's hands, the nouveau cuisine comes clean, one supposes.

While 2020's departures have been record-breaking, they're merely a continuation of a longer pattern – and a sign of things to come. Data [reveals](#) that 100,000 more Californians have left the state than moved in over the last 15 years. 2018 and 2019 alone saw the relocation of 660 [companies](#) out of the state. Many seek refuge in Texas.

Meanwhile, the Golden State is not the only Democratic hellhole to see such flight. Against the backdrop of anti-police rhetoric, violent protests, and rising crime, over 3.57 million residents left New York City – in 2020 alone! The majority that high-tailed it out are high-income earners, taking their \$34 billion in [revenue](#) with them. A [poll](#) of high-earning New Yorkers revealed that 44 percent considered leaving New York City this year, with two-thirds agreeing that working from home makes the Big Apple bite back. For a city whose top one percent [generates](#) 43 percent of income taxes, such exodus spells disaster. New York may also lose a House [seat](#).

Do the mayors and governors of these wards care about losing their wealthiest inhabitants? After all, at least Governor Andrew Cuomo gave himself a hefty [raise](#) and has won an [Emmy](#) for his mismanagement of the Covid crisis. Who's paying these people for destroying the places they oversee?

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