

Minority babies now the majority in U.S.

By Carol Morello and Ted Mellnik, Washington Post

For the first time in U.S. history, most of the nation's babies are members of minority groups, according to new census figures that signal the dawn of an era in which whites no longer will be in the majority.

Population estimates show that 50.4 percent of children younger than 1 last year were Hispanic, black, Asian American or in other minority groups. That's almost a full percentage point higher than the 49.5 percent of minority babies counted when the decennial census was taken in April 2010. Census Bureau demographers said the tipping point came three months later, in July.

The latest estimates, which gauge changes since the last census, are a reflection of an immigration wave that began four decades ago. The transformation of the country's racial and ethnic makeup has gathered steam as the white population grows collectively older, especially compared with Hispanics.

The census has forecast that non-Hispanic whites will be outnumbered in the United States by 2042, and social scientists consider that current status among infants a harbinger of the change.

"This is a watershed moment," said Andrew Cherlin, a sociologist at Johns Hopkins University who specializes in family issues. "It shows us how multicultural we've become."

Although minorities make up about 37 percent of the U.S. population, the District and four states are majority minority – California, Hawaii, New Mexico and Texas.

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