



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 2, 2020

Exodus From Cities — Once Fueled by Economics — Hastened by Coronavirus Pandemic

While high taxes and the resultant high cost of housing units have for some time been a prime factor in people fleeing major urban areas on both coasts for less-expensive places in the countryside, the recent coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the exodus. People have started fleeing densely populated cities for rural communities with more breathing room.



As cities and states went into “lockdown mode” starting in March, people living and working in densely populated cities such as New York and San Francisco started feeling the effects more dramatically than those in areas where people lived further apart. Families sheltering in place in small city apartments for weeks on end naturally felt the effects of “cabin fever” more strongly than those in rural areas who could at least enjoy the fresh air by taking hikes through the woods or even sitting in their own backyards.

A *Washington Post* article on this phenomenon on June 1 cited a Kaiser Family Foundation poll from May showing that 34 percent of people with jobs said they were working from home. Furthermore, noted the report, people in cities hit hard by the pandemic such as New York, San Francisco, and Seattle are searching for remote work opportunities at a rate significantly higher than the those in other parts of the country.

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The *Post* report observed:

[The pandemic] is accelerating the trend of people leaving major U.S. cities for the past few years, demographers say — something that typically occurs as the economy recovers after an economic downturn such as the Great Recession. The pandemic could hasten this change, especially if permanent remote work continues to catch on quickly and job losses continue to pile up across industries such as retail and restaurants.

The trend is somewhat equivalent to what happened after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, when the destruction of the World Trade Center towers prompted some residents to move away from New York. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a much greater effect than either 9/11 or the Great Recession of 2008-2009, however.

“Obviously, the covid-19 pandemic is operating at another scale. It is global and has affected every city



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rather than certain ones,” the *Post* quoted New York University professor of sociology Eric Klinenberg. “Most importantly, the pandemic has induced a fear of closeness. To live in a city means to be in a dense environment where you’re physically close to people. I think all those trends mean this could be different, and it’s going to be a hard road to a comeback.”

The same factors that were causing people to flee some of our nation’s largest cities before the pandemic — particularly cities in “blue states” such as New York, Illinois, and California, where unmanageable state governments have hampered the economies through excessive regulation and taxation — will undoubtedly have a longer-lasting, even permanent, effect on the exodus of residents from those states to more business-friendly states such as Texas or Utah.

In the long run, it will be the socialism pandemic, not the COVID-19 pandemic, that destroys the big cities in states controlled by leftists.

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Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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