Mississippi’s Challenge of a Generation

Jake McGraw
Policy Director, William Winter Institute
jake@winterinstitute.org

@RETHINKMS
What is brain drain?

NET OUTMIGRATION

The number of people who move out of an area exceeds the number of people who move in. It can reflect a high rate of departures, a low rate of entries, or both. It does not necessarily mean declining population.

HUMAN CAPITAL FLIGHT

The average educational attainment and/or skills training of people who leave is higher than the people who move in and the people who remain.
What else is brain drain?

A composite indicator of a place’s quality of life, economic opportunity, and general desirability.

A vicious cycle that makes every other public challenge more difficult to solve.

A subsidy to the economies of in-migrant states in the form of educational investments made by out-migrant states.
Mississippi was one of two Southeastern states (Louisiana) to lose more people than it gained from 2017 to 2018. Mississippi has experienced net outmigration every year since 2010. More than 3.35 million living Americans were born in Mississippi.

Sources: ACS 5-year estimates, 2010-2018; CPS lifetime mobility 2018, U.S. Census Bureau
NET OUTMIGRATION

46,825 = the population of Biloxi, Mississippi’s 5th-largest city

2010-2018
366,250
= 41% of turnout in 2018 Senate runoff

NET OUTMIGRATION

889,971 votes, 100% reporting (1,797 of 1,797 precincts)

* Incumbent
HUMAN CAPITAL FLIGHT

Grads of MS public universities employed in MS after 5 years

52%

Net Loss of Millennials from 2010-2017 – worst in the US

-3.9%

NET DOMESTIC LOSS BY EDUCATION, AGE 25+ (2010-17)

Sources: ACS 5-year estimates, 2010-2017, U.S. Census Bureau; MS Lifetracks
Where'd everyone go?

Texas: -87,646  
Illinois: -63,199  
Florida: -48,650  
Georgia: -41,485  
California: -32,291  
Michigan: -31,385  
Alabama: -28,849  

Sources: CPS lifetime mobility 2018, U.S. Census Bureau
Mississippi is a net exporter to every state in the region except Tennessee and Louisiana – perhaps*

Source: CPS lifetime mobility 2018, U.S. Census Bureau
At what cost?

MS’s outmigration caused an income deficit with 29 states – including every other state in the Southeast region.

On average, MS lost $169 million in annual aggregate income through migration from 2010-15.

Source: SOI – Tax Migration 2011-2016, IRS
More degrees, more incentive to leave

Source: ACS 2017, U.S. Census Bureau; RPP cost of living index, BLS
Mississippi is the 4th-most rural state in the US and lacks large cities that attract movers.

Money
Higher education generates higher salaries elsewhere.

Urbanization
Mississippi is the 4th-most rural state in the US and lacks large cities that attract movers.

Jobs
Few openings in certain professions and/or no room for advancement.

Inclusiveness and equality
Barriers and cultural hostility faced by minority groups, “outsiders,” and others.

Image
Never been before
Few reasons to visit or stop through.

Negative stereotypes about Mississippi are widely held, and they are reinforced by the state flag, HB 1523, etc.

Grass is greener
Some people just want to get away.
From 2010 to 2017:

Mississippi lost **4%** of total prime working-age population

= **46,500** people ages 25-54

Among that age group:

**White** population fell by **7%**

**Black** population fell by **0.2%**

**Hispanic** population increased by **8.1%**

**Other groups of color** populations increased by **9.4%**
From 2010 to 2017:

Mississippi lost 4% of its total prime working-age population.

The median county lost 8% of its prime working-age population.

72 counties lost prime working-age population.
59 counties lost at least 5%.
27 counties lost at least 10%.
10 counties lost at least 15%.
From 2010 to 2017:

The median county lost 8% of its prime working-age population

78 counties lost white population
60 counties lost black population
69 counties gained Hispanic population
56 counties gained other PoC populations