

Statement by Mayor Mike Quaranta Council Meeting of September 14, 2022

Good evening. I've just returned from several business meetings where workforce, workspaces, residential living, and business trends were on the agenda. Here are a few highlights:

- The workforce as we knew it in the pre-pandemic world has changed employer needs and given both employers and employees more options. Salaries are up, "quit rates" persist, female labor force participation has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, retirements and early retirements are way up.
- Employees want clean, safe, modern places to work, competitive salaries, and best-in-class technology.
- Urban areas are transitioning from having less commercial office space, to more multifamily residential as housing inventory is low and affordability is dropping for most buyers. Home ownership is on a course to drop 10 percent over the next decade.
- The face of retail shopping is as dynamic as ever. Decades ago, shopping centers disrupted Main Street in most communities. Then, the big box stores disrupted the malls, and then the online platforms disrupted the big box stores. In China, about 21% of all food shopping is done online, and that's a trend heading here.
- About 20 percent of home delivery will be by driverless vehicles or drones by 2032.
- Best Buy is moving quickly into the home health sector as technology, home monitoring and diagnostics tools become more affordable and need calibration and servicing.
- Final thoughts. With fertility rates on the decline, public school enrolments will drop an additional 15%, and 25% of traditional 4-year colleges will no longer be viable.

What should we be thinking about here in New Castle over the next decade?

- To remain self-sufficient, we need to maintain a competitive workforce and have modern workspaces. The public will expect faster service, and more will be done online.
- Keep in regular contact with Colonial School District, and our area schools. Enrollments may fall and not every school will remain open.
- Maintain a solid rental housing code and keep up enforcement. More people are renting a place to live. Some are doing this because of limited housing inventory, affordability or because they like the convenience and flexibility.
- Invest in our New Castle Police Department and our energy and water services. These are the highest priorities, in my opinion, and serve as foundation building blocks for the long-term. People will expect fast, efficient, and reliable services, and that will set this community apart from other area communities.

In other news....

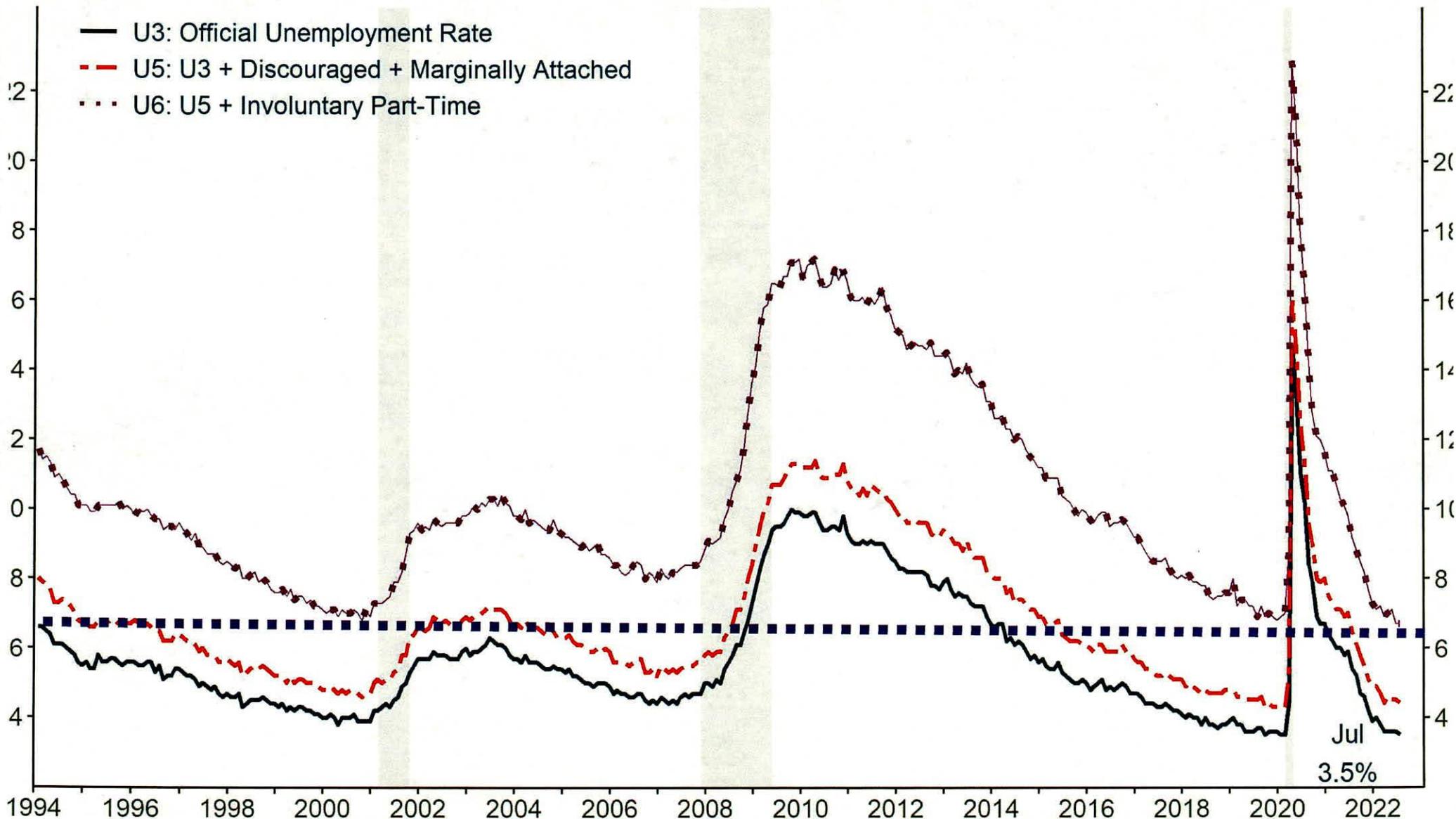
- I had the pleasure of touring The Charter School of New Castle with our State Education Secretary, Mark Holodick, last week. The school has 768 students, seen it's test scores improve, its behavioral issues decline, and enrollment increase. The school has a very diverse student population and is majority minority and draws from the surrounding area but also as far away as Newark.

Movie night returns to Battery Park this Saturday night..

- The movie starts at 7:30, so plan on arriving by 7:15. Many thanks to Harvey Hannah, McConnell Development, The Farmers Market and New Castle Insurance for sponsoring this event. It is free to all. The movie is Forrest Gump.

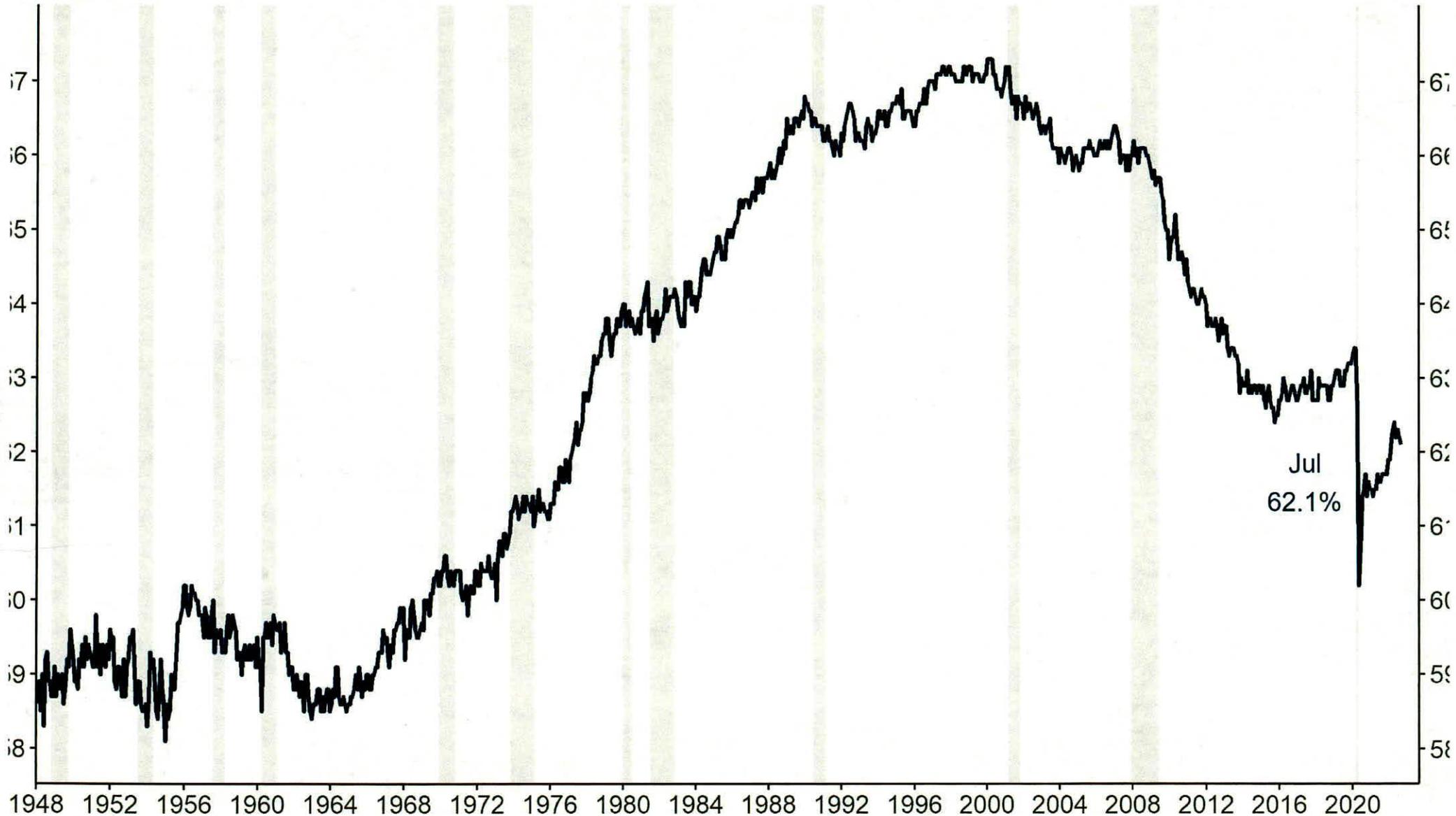
Measures of Labor Utilization

Percent



Labor Force Participation

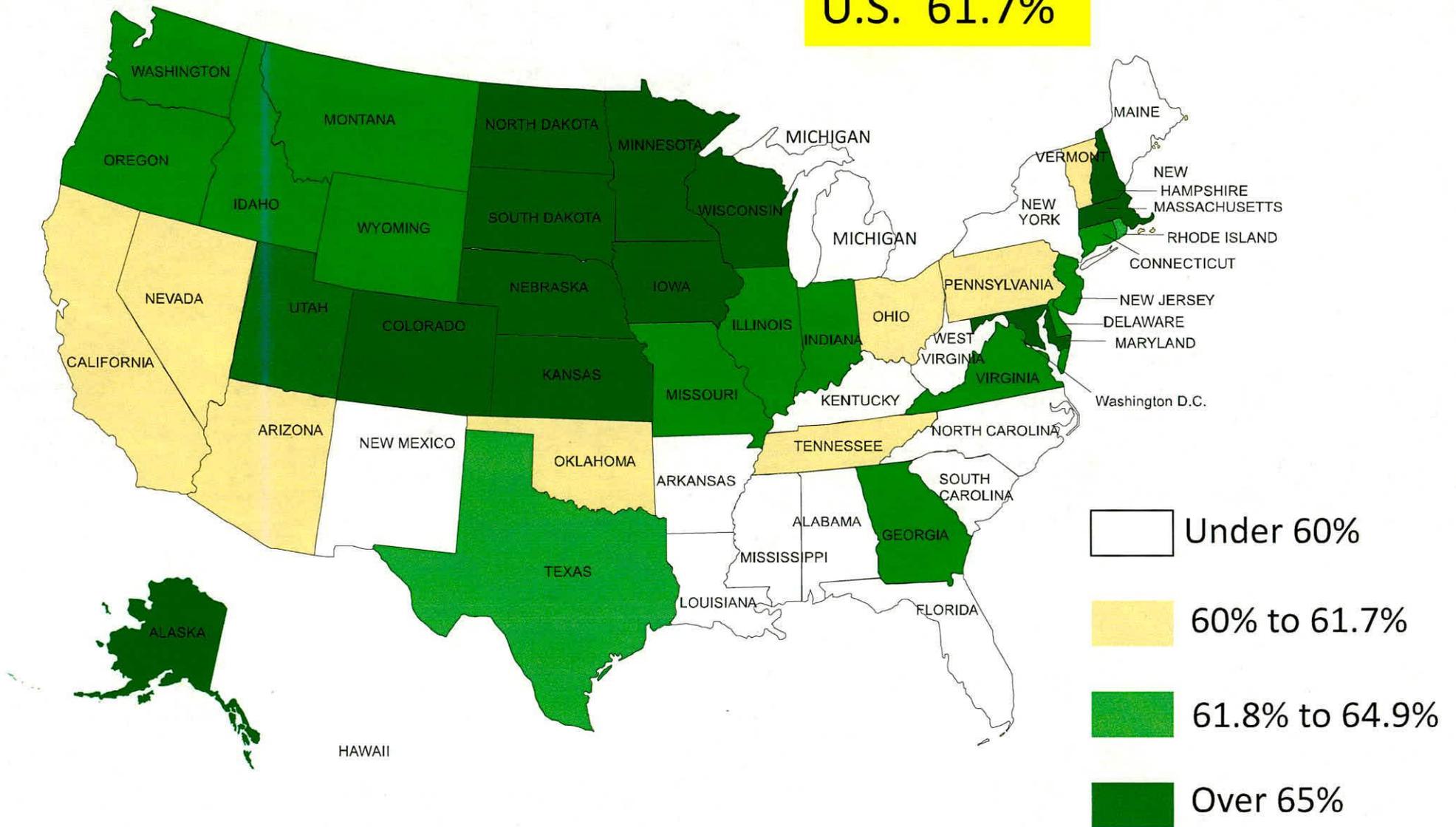
Percent



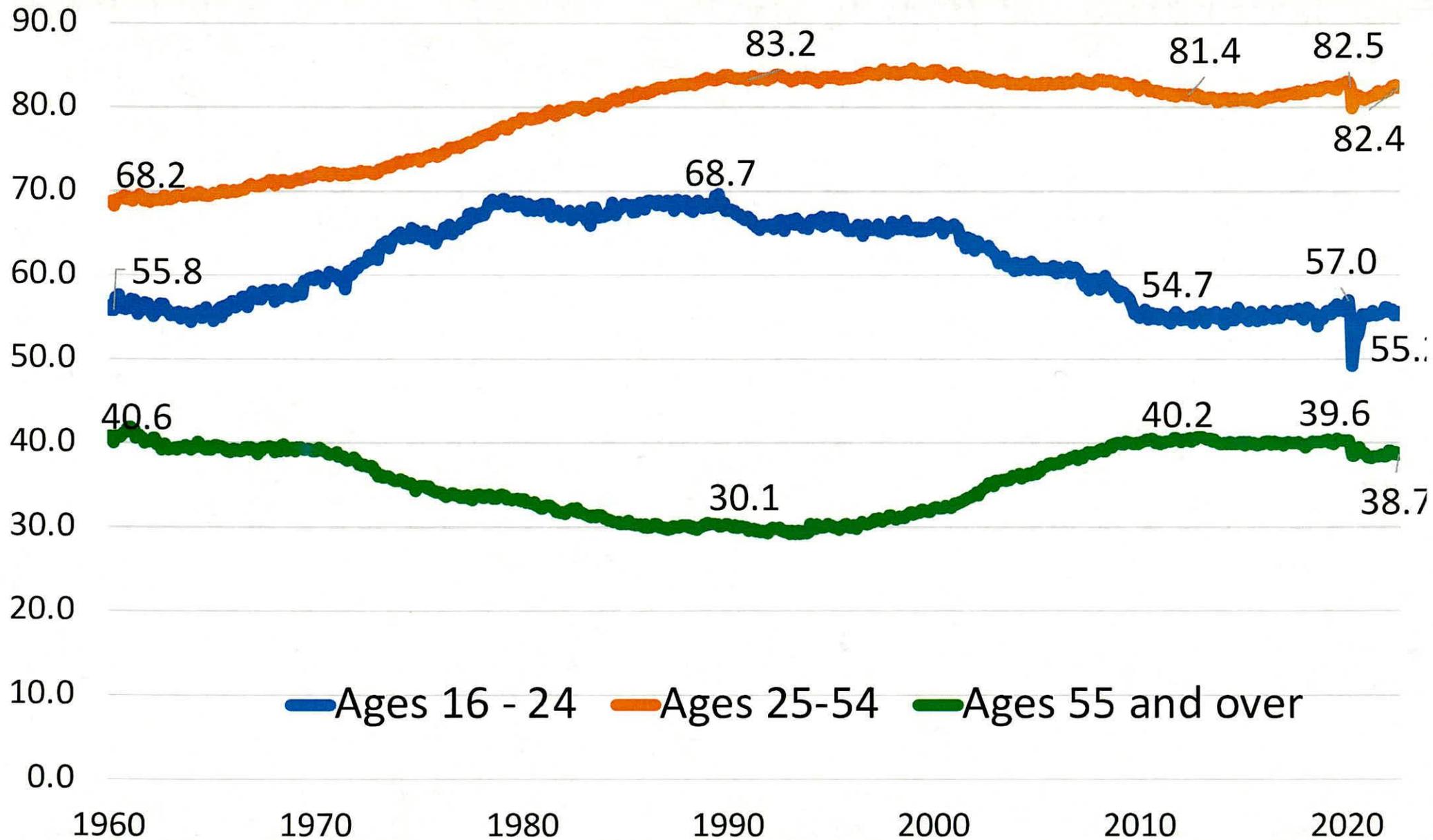
Jul
62.1%

Labor Force Participation Rate 2021

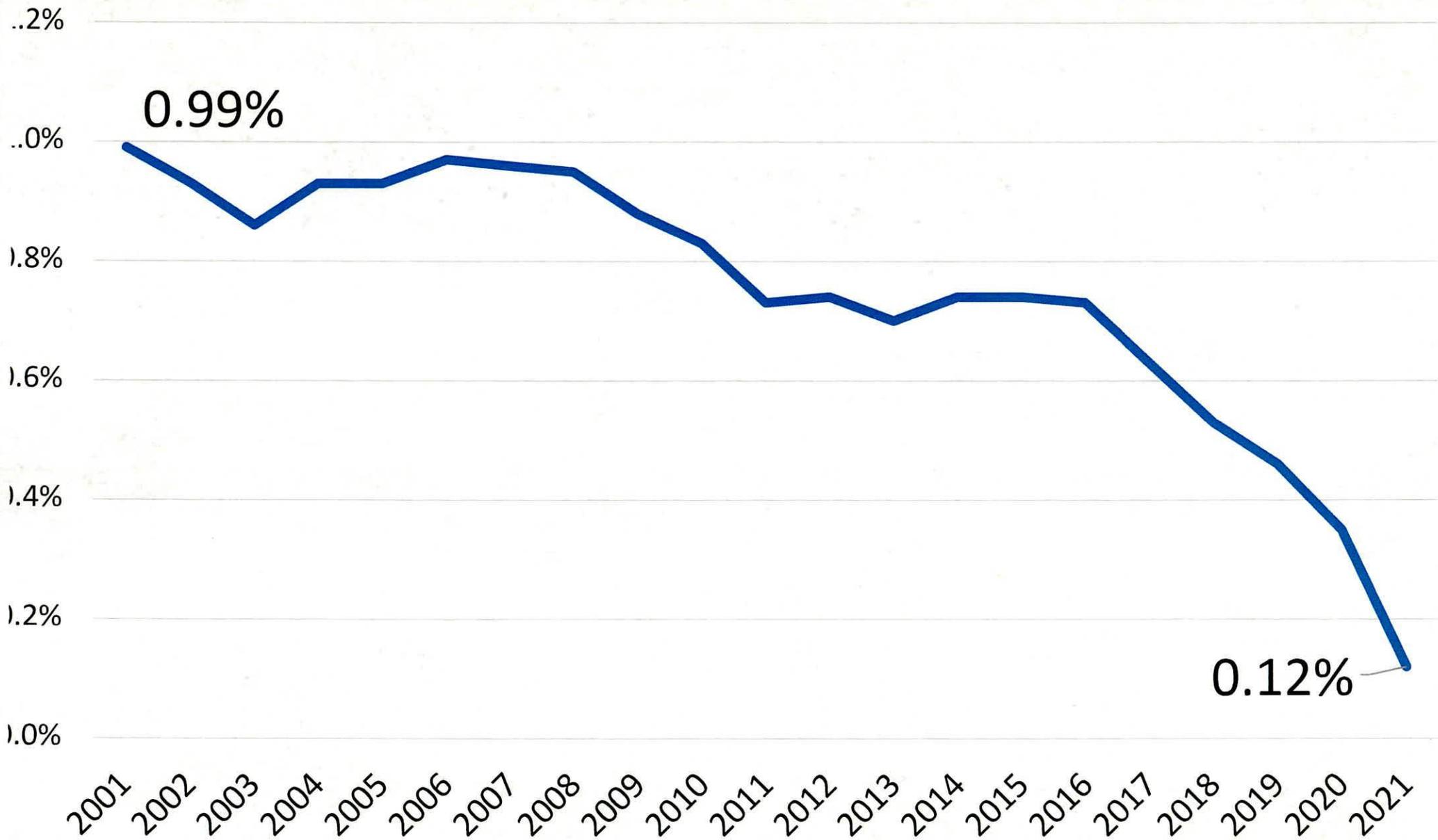
U.S. 61.7%



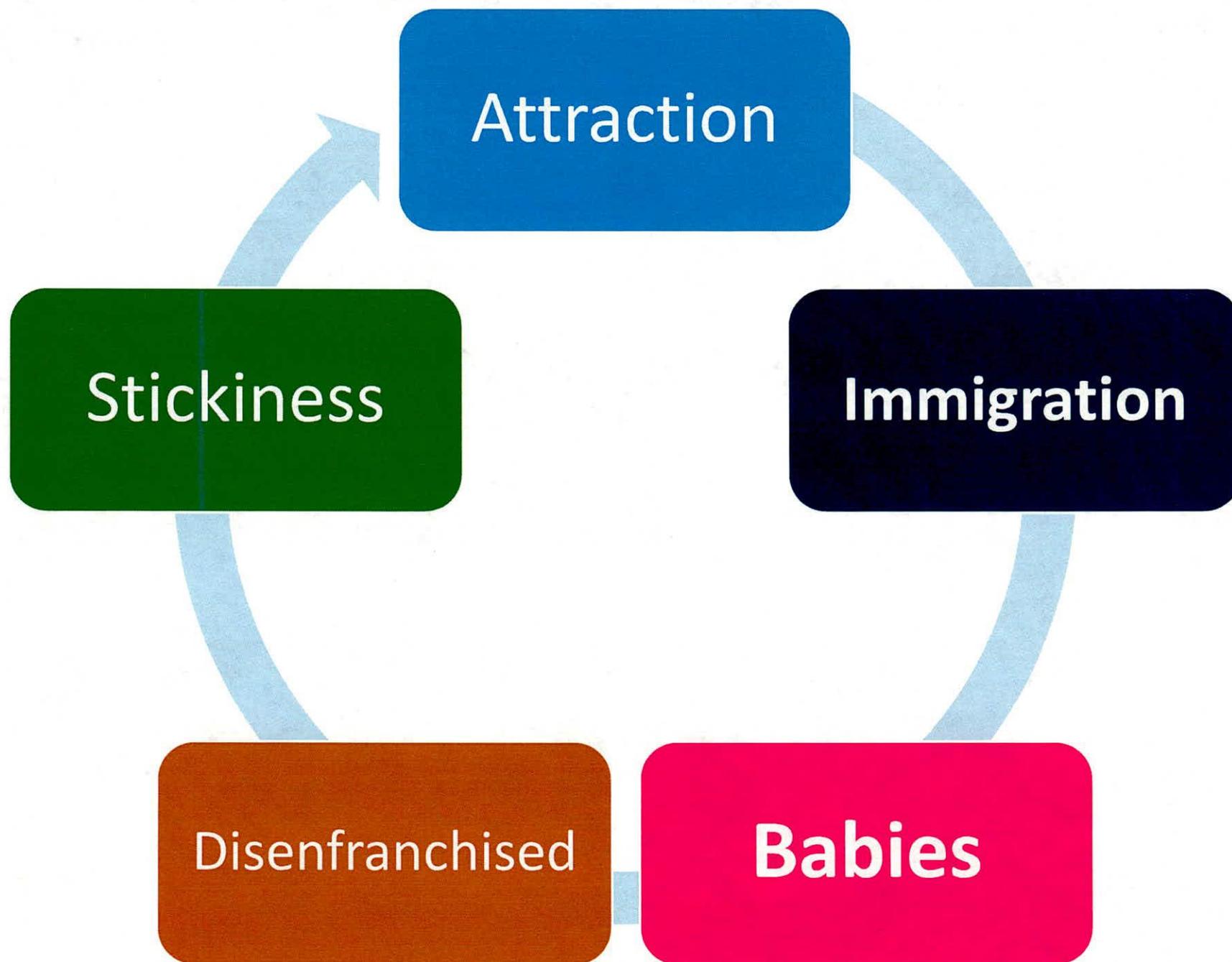
US Labor Force Participation Rate 1960 -2022



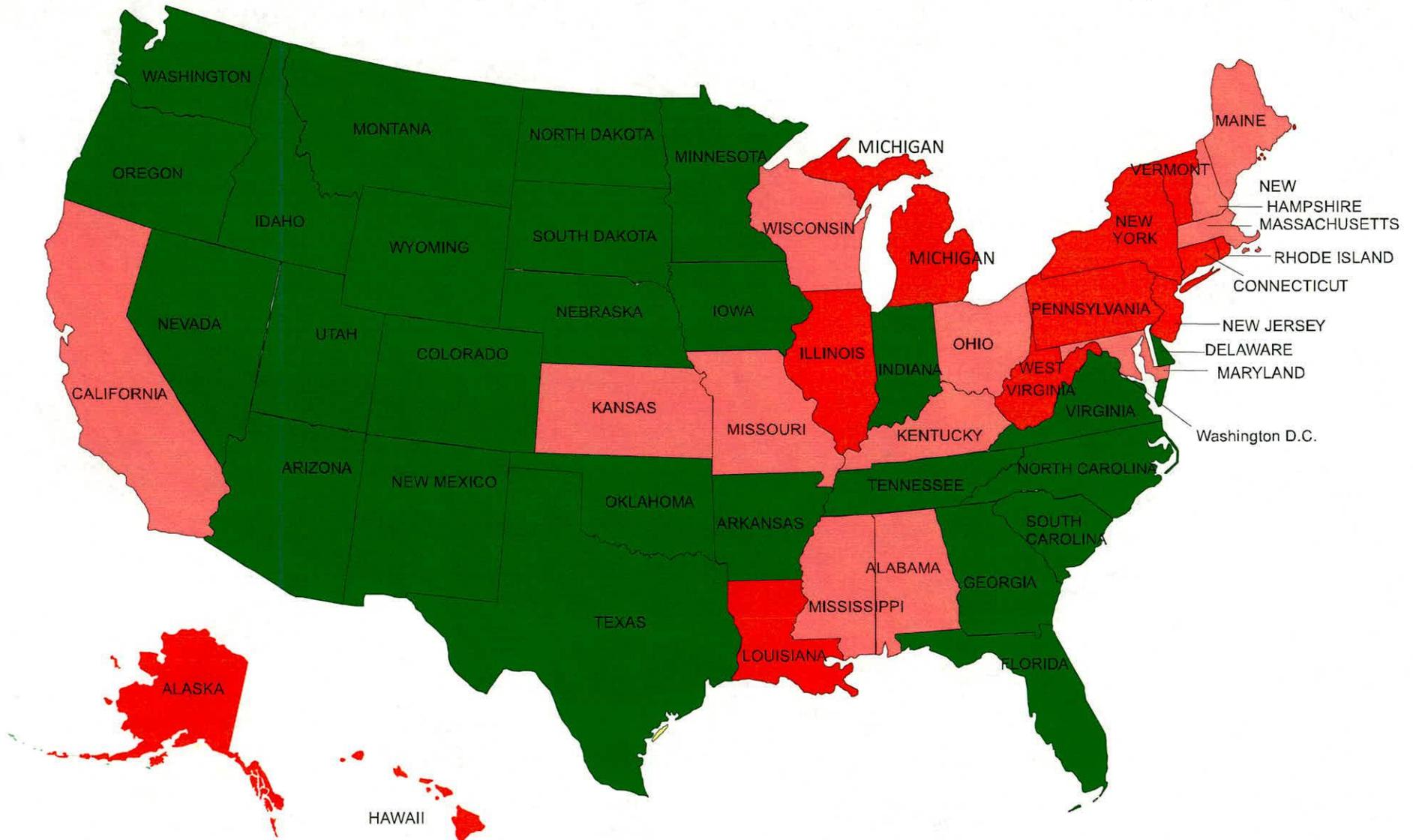
U.S. Annual Percentage Population Growth



5 Ways to Increase Labor Force



Projected Population Change 2021–2031 Ages 25-64



■ Growing population ■ Under 4% population loss ■ Over 4% population loss