Third *Portrait of California* Report Reveals Increase in Well-Being Across the Golden State, but Progress Excludes Black and Native American Communities

Measure of America analyzes two decades of human development in California to show changes and disparities in life expectancy, education, income, and access to housing and offers solutions to increase equity

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Today, Measure of America, a project of the Social Science Research Council, released *A Portrait of California 2021-2022: Human Development and Housing Justice,* the third study in a series on well-being in California, broken down by race, place, gender, and nativity. Using the American Human Development Index (HDI), which measures well-being using health, education, and earnings on a scale from zero to ten, the report found that the Golden State continues to outpace the US overall on key metrics. Since 2000*,* the state's HDI score has increased by 15 percent, with many (but not all) Californians living longer, earning degrees at higher rates, and making higher wages than the average American.

However, stark variation exists by demographic group and geography – resulting in drastic inequalities statewide. Asian (7.94) and white Californians (6.58) have the highest HDI scores across the major racial and ethnic groups, with Latinos (4.81), Black Californians (4.51), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders (4.20), and Native Americans (3.66) falling significantly below the statewide score (5.85). And while scores for Asian and Latino Californians have seen percent increases in the double digits over the last 20 years, well-being for Black Californians has increased only slightly and Native Americans have seen an alarming decrease.

"California has seen exciting and meaningful growth over the past decade: in the aggregate, people are living longer and healthier lives, attaining degrees at higher rates, and earning higher wages," said Kristen Lewis, Director of Measure of America. "However, that progress has bypassed too many Californians, reinforcing stubborn disparities by location, gender, race, and ethnicity that limit opportunities for millions of people – made even worse by the impacts of Covid-19. Without intentional changes, we will continue to see progress without equity."

Key findings from *A Portrait of California 2021-2022* include:
- **Well-being:** Since 2000, the HDI score for all major racial and ethnic groups has improved, except for Native Americans, whose score has decreased by 23 percent. The Latino score saw the most growth, increasing by 37 percent. Greater San Jose has the highest HDI score (8.09) of any metro area in the state, while the nearby Madera metro area has the lowest (4.17).
- **Education:** Black women outperform Black men on every measure of the Education Index, resulting in a score 15 percent higher – the largest education gap of all racial and ethnic groups. Wide gaps in education exist across metro areas, from the Hanford-Corcoran metro area, which includes Kings County in the San Joaquin Valley, where one-quarter of adults do not have a high school diploma, to the San Jose metro area, where one-quarter of adults have a graduate degree and over half have bachelor's degrees.

- **Health:** Asian Californians have the longest life expectancy (87.0 years), outliving Native Americans (71.2 years) by nearly 16 years, Pacific Islanders (72.9 years) by 14 years, Black Californians (74.1 years) by 13 years, white Californians (78.9 years) by more than eight years, and Latinos (83.4 years) by four years. More than 12 years separate the longest- and shortest-lived neighborhood clusters (Milpitas & Northeast San Jose, 87.3 years, and West San Bernardino, 75.0 years)**.**
- **Earnings:** The median earnings for men in California are over $11,000 higher than the median earnings for women ($43,938 versus $32,369), even though women over 25 are more likely to have graduated high school and earned bachelor's degrees.
- **Housing:** In California, 37 percent of Black households and 44 percent of Latino households own the home they live in, compared to 60 percent of Asian households and 63 percent of white households. Additionally, the homes owned by whites and Asians are more likely to have a higher value.

"The Portrait of California's housing focus and data insights make clear that housing underpins human, economic, and community development," said Peter Laugharn, President and CEO, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. "We must invest in affordable housing, address outdated land use policy, and ensure accountability to hold policymakers to clear benchmarks. The human development index, as highlighted in the Portrait, is one excellent way to do this."

A Portrait of California also looked at the data using California's 265 PUMAs – public use microdata areas, a Census Bureau-defined geography of at least 100,000 people – to create "apples to apples" comparisons of similarly sized populations.

The analysis found that the state can actually be sorted into "Five Californias" based on HDI score, in which residents have vastly different opportunities and outcomes:
- **One Percent:** Over 900,000 people live in "One Percent California," or PUMAs scoring above 9.00 on the HDI scale; they are located in the Bay Area and Pacific Palisades, a suburban area in Los Angeles. Median personal earnings are $82,000, with over seven in ten adults working in the highest paying occupations – management, business, science, and arts. Public schools consistently rank among the best in the country, and 84.3 percent of children aged three to four are enrolled in preschool. With a life expectancy of 86.1 years, they can expect to live five years longer than the state average.
- **Elite Enclave:** PUMAs scoring between 7.00 and 8.99 HDI are categorized as "Elite Enclave California" and make up 20.5 percent of Californians. Just 7 percent of adults lack a high school diploma and nearly six in ten hold a bachelor's degree. With an average HDI score of 8.15, the Elite Enclave index score is higher than the well-being score of every US state and each of the country's 435 congressional districts.
- **Main Street:** Over 18 million Californians – 46.4 percent of the population – make up "Main Street California." This group comprises PUMAs scoring between 5.00 and 6.99. People on the higher end of Main Street California on the HDI scale live in central San Jose and South San Francisco, San Bruno, and Brisbane, while the lower end includes West Santa Ana and parts of Richmond and San Pablo, among others.
- **Struggling:** "Struggling California" includes PUMAs scoring between 3.00 and 4.99 on the HDI scale and is home to 30.9 percent of Californians. The youth disconnection rate in Struggling California – the rate of young people aged 16-24 who are neither working nor in school – is 18.2 percent, nearly eight points above the statewide average of 10.3 percent. Only four in ten

children aged three to four are enrolled in preschool, less than half the rate of One Percent California. Two in three Struggling Californians are either Latino or Black.

- **Disenfranchised:** The share of the population living in "Disenfranchised California" – or PUMAs with HDI scores below 3.00 – dropped to 0 percent, down from 3 percent in 2014 and 5 percent in 2011.

A Portrait of California was made possible by a wide range of funders and supporters, including The California Endowment, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, NeighborWorks America, the Parkview Legacy Foundation, Philanthropy California, and United Ways of California, as well as over 25 local and regional funders.

In-detail supplements on well-being in Sonoma County, the Inland Empire, and the San Joaquin Valley will be released in the upcoming months.

About Measure of America
An initiative of the **Social Science Research Council,** Measure of America provides easy-to-use, methodologically sound tools for understanding the distribution of well-being and opportunity in America and stimulating fact-based dialogue about issues we all care about: health, education, and living standards.

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