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A CLOSER LOOK AT GEORGIA'S VETERAN POPULATION

The ongoing war in Iraq and Afghanistan has led to a growth in the number of veterans in the US, a group that to date has been understudied. This policy brief looks at some of the demographic characteristics of the US veteran population from 2000 and compares them to Georgia's veteran population at that time. We also consider how the characteristics of veterans moving to Georgia between 1995 and 2000 differ from non-veterans during that timeframe.

We use data from the 2000 IPUMS (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series), provided by the Census Bureau. We consider anyone who has answered yes to their veteran status to be a veteran. Moreover, a person is considered a migrant if they lived in one state in 1995 and a different state in 2000. We are unable to observe if more than one move occurred during this five-year period; in essence, we are measuring the last move of individuals.

Table I lists the characteristics of the US population aged 25 and over. We break our sample into veterans and non-veterans. As a group, veterans tend to be older, less likely to have worked in the past year, and be higher educated than non-veterans. Veterans also have a mean income of \$42,448, which is 40 percent larger than non-veteran income.

When we look at veterans who have migrated to another state between 1995 and 2000, we see that they compose only 11.3 percent of the veteran population in our sample, whereas 12.7 percent of the non-veteran population relocated to another state during this time. Regardless of veteran status, we find that migrants tend to be younger, healthier, more likely to have worked in the previous year, have a higher level of education, and wealthier. When we compare migrant veterans to non-veteran migrants, we see that the veteran group is older and significantly wealthier than their non-veteran counterparts.

Table I also breaks down this comparison by age group. We look at three age groups that roughly correspond to the age of veterans from the first Gulf War (25-35), Vietnam (50-64), and Korea/VWII (65+). Note that as we increase the age of our veteran group, the disparity in income between veterans and non-veterans grows. For the youngest group, non-veteran income is about 87 percent of veteran income. For the elderly, this falls to 53 percent. For both groups, migrants always have higher incomes.

TABLE 1. NATIONAL COMPARISON OF VETERANS TO NON-VETERANS FROM 2000 IPUMS

	<u>All ages (25+)</u>		<u>Ages 25 - 35</u>		<u>Ages 50 -64</u>		<u>Ages 65+</u>	
	OVERALL		OVERALL		OVERALL		OVERALL	
	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans
average age	50.3	59	30.5	30.7	56.2	56.5	75.4	73.9
% white	74.6	83.9	64.7	67.7	76.9	86	81.9	90
% black	10.6	9.3	13	18.4	10.2	7.7	8.9	6.1
% disabled	14.2	14.2	11.4	11	14.4	14	20.5	15.2
% working in the last year	66.8	60.3	83.8	90.4	70.1	80	14.7	23.4
% education > high school	50.1	53.5	56.9	62.2	50	59.4	29.6	43.4
average total income	30050	42448	25909	29850	32570	52118	19675	36822
total volume	96813974	22624467	17805988	1561534	24017160	8037692		
	NON-MIGRANTS		NON-MIGRANTS		NON-MIGRANTS		NON-MIGRANTS	
	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans
average age	51.2	60.5	30.8	31.4	56.2	56.4	75.4	73.9
% white	74.7	84.4	62.2	64.1	76.7	85.9	81.7	89.4
% black	10.8	9.1	14.3	20.7	10.5	7.8	9	6.2
% disabled	14.6	14.4	12.9	12.8	14.4	14	20.1	15.1
% working in the last year	65.4	58.5	81.8	87.5	70.6	80.6	14.8	23.6
% education > high school	47.5	51.6	49.3	53.4	49.1	58.4	29.1	42.7
average total income	29606	42495	23800	28486	32498	51831	19652	36691
total volume	84456698	20047347	122977700	848130	22295192	7379682	18476748	8356199
	MIGRANTS		MIGRANTS		MIGRANTS		MIGRANTS	
	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans
average age	41.1	48.1	29.7	30	55.9	56.3	75.8	73.1
% white	73.9	80.1	70.4	71.8	80	87.7	85	91.9
% black	9.1	11	10	15.6	7.2	6.1	6.3	4.1
% disabled	11.4	12.9	8.1	8.9	13.9	14.2	27.6	17.1
% working in the last year	76.9	73.7	88.1	93.8	63.9	73	11.5	20.7
% education > high school	67.4	68.2	73.8	72.8	60.9	70.2	38.3	54.6
average total income	33086	42076	30619	31473	33504	55336	20085	39129
total volume	12357276	2577120	5508288	713404	1721968	658010	1022376	475843

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF GEORGIA'S VETERANS TO NON-VETERANS FROM 2000 IPUMS

	<u>All ages (25+)</u>		<u>Ages 25 - 35</u>		<u>Ages 50 -64</u>		<u>Ages 65+</u>	
	OVERALL		OVERALL		OVERALL		OVERALL	
	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans
average age	48.2	55.7	30.3	30.6	56.1	56.2	75	73.3
% white	68.6	74.8	59.9	51.9	72.3	81.6	75.3	86.1
% black	24.9	22.2	28.7	41.5	23	15.9	22	12.4
% disabled	15.2	15.8	11.3	10.8	16.4	15.2	24.6	18.7
% working in the last year	69.3	66.3	85	90.3	68	80.4	15	24.1
% education > high school	48	54.4	56.7	63.2	43.4	58.4	26.1	42
average total income	29654	43820	29080	30999	30991	54800	18005	36912
total volume	2717853	644784	612578	64679	655242	233286	441323	36912
	IN-MIGRANTS		IN-MIGRANTS		IN-MIGRANTS		IN-MIGRANTS	
	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans
average age	39.5	44.8	29.6	30	55.4	55.8	75.6	73
% white	62.8	64.8	58.4	53.3	68.8	82.6	71.1	83.7
% black	22.8	28.6	25.6	37.7	18.5	13.6	20.2	14.1
% disabled	11.4	12.5	8.7	8.3	14.5	14.2	33.1	21.9
% working in the last year	80.2	80.4	89.1	93.4	65.8	76.9	12.6	20.8
% education > HS	67.8	70.1	73.1	73.1	59.6	71.6	33.9	51.3
average total income	33641	44115	30263	33509	35012	60823	18055	36866
total volume	532914	106047	255867	33398	63899	24025	31960	12100
	OUT-MIGRANTS		OUT-MIGRANTS		OUT-MIGRANTS		OUT-MIGRANTS	
	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans	non-veterans	veterans
average age	39.8	44.5	30	30	55.6	55.8	76.1	73.2
% white	72	71.7	68.2	64.8	81.1	84.1	82.1	91.7
% black	16.8	20	19.3	25.8	10	8.6	11.9	4.4
% disabled	11.8	12.2	8.4	10.6	14.1	11.6	35.1	16.2
% working in the last year	79.2	81.1	87.7	95	66.2	77.9	10.4	21.7
% education > HS	69.8	72.1	74.9	74.4	60.6	76.8	37.1	57.7
average total income	34365	43730	30486	31884	35352	62338	18880	38142
total volume	341766	81884	159732	27905	43407	18863	19294	8995

Note also that across the age groups, veterans are more likely to have worked in the past year and have higher educational attainment than non-veterans. The difference in education achievement is most pronounced for elderly veterans, who also suffer less from disabilities than their non-veteran counterparts.

Table 2 performs the same exercise for Georgia. In-migrants are those who have moved into Georgia between 1995 and 2000. As seen in Table 2, in-migrants outnumber out-migrants (i.e. those who have moved out of the state during the same period). Overall, Georgia's veterans are more disabled than both non-veterans in Georgia and the national average for veterans. Georgia's veterans are more likely to have worked in the past year than their national counterparts, although they still work less than Georgia's remaining population. Veterans in Georgia have incomes that are 3 percent higher than the national average for veterans and 48 percent higher than non-veteran incomes in Georgia.¹

During the 1995-2000 period, Georgia experienced a net gain of approximately 24,000 veterans, compared to a gain of 191,000 non-veterans. While accounting for 19 percent of Georgia's population aged 25 and over and 16.6 percent of all migrants in this age group moving to Georgia, veterans account for only 11 percent of Georgia's net in-migrants for this population. Veterans who relocate to Georgia have an average income of \$44,115, which is 25 percent higher than non-veteran migrants. The veterans who move to Georgia have higher incomes than those who leave, whereas we witness the opposite pattern for non-veterans. Veterans who move to Georgia also tend to be more disabled, more educated and more likely to have worked last year than non-veterans.

When we explore breakdowns by age, we see that most of Georgia's in-migrants come from the youngest age group (age 25-35). In fact, the number of in-migrants (and out-migrants) of this age group is equal to the total number of in-migrants (and out-migrants) over the age of 50. We also see that young veterans in Georgia are different than those in other age groups. Younger veterans tend to be less disabled, more likely to be working and have higher educational achievement. Young veterans who move to Georgia are less disabled, less educated and less likely to be working than those young veterans who leave the state.

The most striking differential is in income. Young veterans moving into the state have \$3,000 more in income than their non-veteran counterparts. This amount grows to \$25,000 for veterans aged 50-64 and shrinks to \$16,000 for elderly veterans. For the young, veterans leaving the state have

about \$1,500 less in income than those entering the state; older veterans have \$1,500 more. The difference for non-veteran movers is never more than \$800. If we multiply the mean income of veteran migrants by the volume of veteran migrants, we find that the net in-migration of veterans accounts for an increase in state income of \$1.1 billion. By comparison, the net in-migration of non-veterans increases state income by \$7.3 billion. Thus, while accounting for 11 percent of Georgia's net in-migration population, veterans account for 15 percent of the associated increase in income.

In conclusion, the largest difference between Georgia's veteran and non-veteran population appears to be income, with veterans on average having an income that is 48 percent greater than for non-veterans. Moreover, Georgia's veterans tend to be more affluent than the national average. In exchange for this higher income level, Georgia is attracting less educated veterans compared to those leaving the state. As we look at older veterans, we see that Georgia is also attracting more disabled veterans than those leaving the state.

With a new generation of veterans currently being created in the U.S., Georgia's veteran population appears likely to grow along with the rest of the state's population. Georgia should prepare to support this and other burgeoning population groups.

NOTES

1. Note that when we use data from the American Community Survey (ACS) in 2005, these patterns remain, with veterans having \$45,710 in income on average and non-veterans having \$30,330 in income on average. We focus on the 2000 Census data because information on migration is much better in the IPUMS than the ACS.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

This policy brief is one of a series of reports and policy briefs that explores Georgia's fiscal, economic and demographic features. The demographic reports will consider many different sub-populations. The well being of the state depends on the well being of its residents, so it is important to understand the economic and social conditions of population. The best way to do that is to consider each sub-population.

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