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EYE ON THE NEWS

IN DEFENSE OF HOUSING

SINGLE FAMILY HOMES ARE THE BACKBONE OF AMERICAN ASPIRATIONS – SO WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE OPPOSE THEM?

Joel Kotkin and Wendell Cox

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Economy, finance, and budgets

California

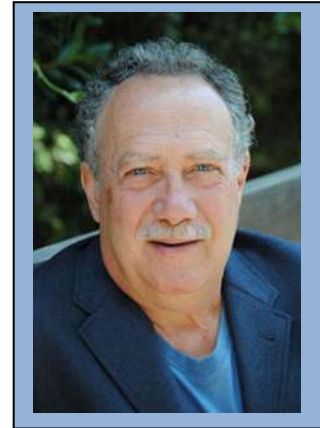
A critical component in the rise of market-oriented democracy in the modern era has been the dispersion of property ownership among middle-income households—not just in the United States but also in countries like Holland, Canada, and Australia, where it was closely linked with greater civil and economic freedom. In its early days, this dispersion was largely rural, but after the Second World War, it took on a largely suburban emphasis in the U.S., including within the extended metro regions of traditional cities like New York and Los Angeles. American homeownership soared between 1940 and 1962, from 44 percent to 63 percent.

Today, the aspiration of regular people to own homes—arguably one of the greatest achievements of postwar democracy—is fading. But the dilution of this key aspect of the American dream is not the result of market conditions or changing preferences, but rather the concerted effort of planners and pundits. California offers the most striking example. Housing affordability was once a hallmark of life in the Golden State, but over the past three decades, and particularly since the imposition of draconian climate policies, stringent land-use regulations have driven up land prices so much that middle-income, single-family housing is now virtually impossible to build, helping make prices of existing homes prohibitive. Median house prices in the state’s coastal metropolitan areas (Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, and San Jose)...

Read the entire article at: <https://www.city-journal.org/single-family-housing-opposition>

Joel Kotkin

Described by the *New York Times* as “America’s uber-geographer,” Joel Kotkin is an internationally-recognized authority on global, economic, political and social trends. He authored [*The Human City: Urbanism for the Rest of Us*](#) in 2016 and co-edited, with MIT’s Alan Berger, the 2018 collection [*Infinite Suburbia*](#).



Kotkin is the Presidential Fellow in Urban Futures at Chapman University in Orange, California and executive director of the Houston-based [*Center for Opportunity Urbanism*](#). He is senior advisor to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute and executive editor of the widely read website www.newgeography.com. A regular contributor to *City Journal*, the Daily Beast, and Real Clear Politics, he also writes a weekly column for Digital First Media, which owns numerous daily newspapers in the greater Los Angeles region.

Kotkin is the author of seven previously published books, including [*The New Class Conflict*](#), which describes the changing dynamics of class in America. His other books include [*The Next Hundred Million: America in 2050*](#), which explores how the nation will evolve in the next four decades. [*The City: A Global History*](#) and [*Tribes: How Race, Religion and Identity Are Reshaping the Global Economy*](#), were also published in numerous languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, German, and Arabic.

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