

government bureaucrats are slowly losing their jobs. Similar sorts of disruption is coming to schools and universities soon.

Sometimes, technology only indirectly threatens jobs. Over the last forty years, there have been major improvements in building codes, along with serious efforts to increase the use of smoke detectors, etc. The result is that the number of major fires is at an all-time low. We simply don't need as many fire-fighters as we have.²⁵ For sentimental reasons, they all remain employed (nobody wants to lay off the heroes), but perhaps not for very long.

Besides technology, there are two other reasons why government employment will likely decline. The first is the stagnant or even declining population. From 2000 to 2010 the US population increased by only 10%, the smallest fraction in our history. Population growth looks set to decline more in the coming decade, or even go into reverse. That means fewer schools, fewer new roads, fewer prisons, and fewer government employees. Government is definitely not a growth industry.

The second reason is even more serious. Governments across the country (and for that matter, around the world) are deeply in debt. Journalist Kevin Williamson²⁶ estimates that US governments at all levels are in hock for \$300 *trillion*. That's more money than exists in the entire universe! That figure includes future social security, pension, and medical obligations, along with the usual expenses of government.

It will never all get paid. We've already seen the tip of the iceberg with the bankruptcy of Detroit, along with some cities in California. Puerto Rico and Illinois are bankrupt in every way except in name. California and New Jersey are not far behind. Many, many cities, counties, and school districts will fail financially, especially those where the population is declining.

So our advice is to just stay out of it. Avoid working for the government if you can. On the other hand, if that's what you