

Reflection on My Real Life Question:  
Where should I live: Los Angeles or San Antonio?

I chose to answer the question “Where should I live?” because I am seriously considering a move out of state. Over the past few years, life in Southern California has become increasingly difficult. First, it is incredibly expensive to live here – I pay close to \$2000.00 a month for mortgage. I know from research that Los Angeles is one of the most expensive places to live in the nation. Secondly, I struggle with the wide range of people that don’t share my political and religious beliefs. California is a very liberal state – and I am fairly conservative both politically and religiously. I often feel as though my vote doesn’t count in California. Because of these reasons, I have begun to seek outside of the Los Angeles area – and California – for a place to live.

I decided specifically to look at two options – staying in the Los Angeles area and moving to San Antonio, TX. I chose San Antonio as my second option because it is the first place outside of my hometown in which I felt at home. In looking at the city of San Antonio, I found many positives. The first had to do with cost of living. In terms of home prices, I could buy a three bedroom, two bathroom house for less than \$100,000. Along with housing prices, gas prices and food prices are significantly cheaper as well. I was also happy with the fact that Texas does not require residents to pay state income taxes and car registrations are less than \$60.00. Another benefit of living in San Antonio is how close it is to my best friend in Houston and the political and religious environment agrees more with my personal philosophy. The crime rate is also much lower in San Antonio than it is in Los Angeles. On the negative side of things, I’d be moving far away from my family, having to buy a new house, and find a new job. On the topic of a job, even if I found a teaching job in the highest paying school district in San Antonio, I’d be taking close to a \$2000.00 a month pay cut. The attractions in San Antonio – while there are several – cannot hope to compete with those offered in the Los Angeles area. The weather, as well, is more prone to extremes – hot in the summer and cold in the winter – than Southern California.

Los Angeles has a variety of positives, as well. First, I already live here, so I’m established with a home and a job. My family also lives here. My job here pays very well, and I have great benefits and a fantastic working environment. To start over would be difficult and has many potential problems. The other great thing about Southern California is the variety of things to do. Within two hours of my home, I can go to three major zoos, five theme parks, several different beaches, and all of the major So Cal mountain resorts. That doesn’t even include things like clubs, piers (like Santa Monica & Venice), aquariums, and sporting venues (there are, professionally & locally, 2 basketball teams, 3 baseball teams, a football team, 3 soccer teams, and 2 hockey teams). The weather here can’t be beat – it is never really too hot or too cold. There are, however, several negatives about living in Southern California. The cost of living, for example, is extremely high. My mortgage for a two bedroom, one bathroom condo is nearly \$2000.00 a month – not including my Homeowner’s Association dues. I will never be able to afford an actual house in this area. The taxes – both income and sales

– are much higher than they are in Texas. Not only that, but my car registration costs about three times as much as it would in Texas. Gas and food are also nearly double the price in Texas. Another problem with this area is that while my family is close, my closest friend, who lives in Houston, TX, is not. Along with that, I find that I am far in the minority in my political and religious beliefs – and I often feel like my vote doesn't count here.

After careful consideration of my choices, I think that San Antonio is a better fit for me. Despite the pay cut I'd be taking, the difference in cost of living is such that I'd be spending close to \$3500.00 less a month, assuming I leave California debt free. Since I'd only be taking a \$2000.00 a month pay cut, I'd actually feel like I was getting a \$1500.00 a month pay raise! Although San Antonio does not have the attraction offered by Los Angeles, it does have its own charm and does boast some theme parks and other things to do. The River Walk is unlike anything I've seen in Southern California. Along with that, there are two theme parks in San Antonio – Sea World and Six Flags. Though there is less to do, I feel like there is enough to justify the move. Besides, who says I would never visit California again? The political and religious climate are also big reasons for moving. I feel like I could make a difference in Texas – that people will listen to me and my vote would actually count! The weather issue concerned me until I realized that – although San Antonio was prone to more extremes in temperatures – the annual average temperatures of Los Angeles and San Antonio were only three degrees different! Overall, I could buy more for less and be less politically frustrated in San Antonio – and my parents would probably retire there eventually, causing my family to be there, too.

There are people for whom Los Angeles is a better fit. People who have liberal political beliefs would feel overwhelmed and angry in a city like San Antonio. Likewise, people who depend on outdoor activities such as surfing or skiing would be unhappy there. Because of the nearness of the movie industry, anyone working in that field would be much better off living in Los Angeles. Los Angeles and Southern California are great places to live – just not for me.