As a percent of total establishments, *births* have exceeded *deaths* in each quarter from the first quarter of 2002 through the fourth quarter of 2006.

The birth rate has declined from representing 3.27 percent of all establishments in third quarter 2005 to 2.89 percent in December 2007.
FIGURE 12 Quarterly number of births and deaths as a percent of total establishments

NOTE: Based on preliminary research data. Shaded area represents recession from March 2001–November 2001 as defined by National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).