

Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

Prisoners at Midyear 1982

At midyear 1982, the total U.S. prison population reached 394,380, representing a 6-month increase of 6.9%. On an annual basis the 1982 midyear growth is equivalent to 14.3%—2 percentage points higher than in any previous year. Annual prison population growth has exceeded 10% four times since data collection began in 1926: 1927 (11.6%), 1939 (12.2%), 1975 (10.1%), and 1981 (11.8%).

Even if growth slows down considerably for the rest of the year, the prison population will exceed 400,000 during the third quarter and the 1982 increase will most likely set a new high. Should this rate of growth continue for the next two years, the U.S. prison population will exceed one-half million before the end of 1984.

Most of the 6-month increase occurred in the State prison population, which grew by 7.3%. Federal institutions registered a 3.2% increase, substantially below the 16% growth rate experienced for the entire year of 1981. Nonetheless, the continued upward trend in the Federal prison population represents the second year of reversal from the declines recorded during 1978, 1979, and 1980. Although the Federal prison population is still some 3,000 less than its previous high in 1978, it remains 4,000 more than the

This issue of the bulletin is the second in a series of reports on the Nation's prison population at mid-year. These reports are based on a quarterly prison population reporting system introduced by the bureau in 1981, because the mounting population pressures on the Nation's corrections systems required closer monitoring than annual data alone could provide. Public response to these reports indicate that the quarterly data have indeed filled an important information gap for those seeking timely data on the status of American prison populations. The quarterly data, as well as

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the more detailed statistics that are collected annually, are made possible only through the cooperation of State correctional officials throughout the country. We are grateful to them for their continued support in providing the data and the interpretive analyses presented in this bulletin.

These data are collected by the U.S. Census Bureau from the departments of corrections in the 50 States and the District of Columbia through the National Prisoner Statistics program of the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Benjamin H. Renshaw III
Acting Director

rated capacity for the Federal system. In both the Federal and State prison systems the result of this growth has been serious overcrowding.

In many States high growth has been caused by both increasing admissions and declining releases. For the Nation as a whole, the percentage increase in admissions to prison during 1981 was 5 times that of releases. Many factors underlie these changes and contribute to

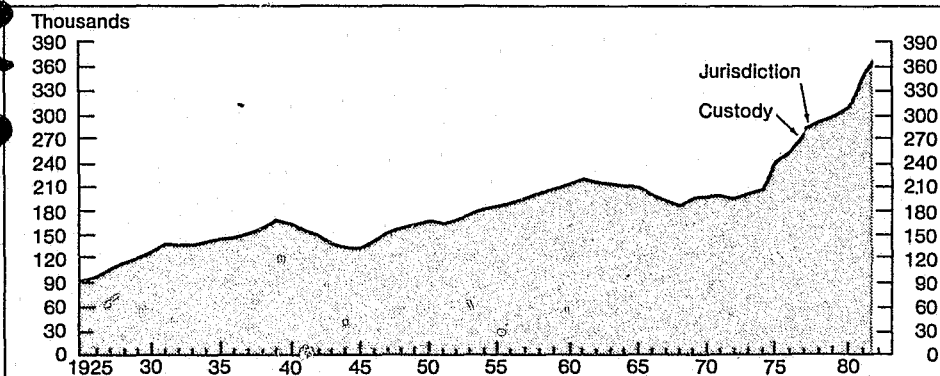
this unprecedented growth; some are readily identifiable, some less, and some the subject of disagreement concerning the impact on State correctional systems.

Increased public concern with crime during the 1970's has been reflected in the response of the courts and the legislatures to the problem. The annual growth in the prison population has consistently outpaced the annual growth in arrests in recent years. Widespread adoption of new sentencing and parole laws has lengthened prison stays. Mandatory sentencing laws have been passed in most States, determinate sentencing laws in many States, and parole has been abolished in four States. Mandatory sentencing laws require that persons, once convicted, be incarcerated for a fixed period. Determinate sentencing, while allowing for options such as probation or restitution, requires that confinement, when specified, be for a fixed term. Both types are directed at limiting discretion in the sentencing process in order to assure equity and certainty of punishment.

In addition to changes in sentencing, many States altered their parole policies, adopting guidelines for parole release. Some of these States have reported that after an initial period of increased releases resulting from the change in parole guidelines, there seems to have

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Number of sentenced State and Federal prisoners at yearend, 1925 - midyear 1982



Note: Before 1977, NPS reports were based on the custody population. Beginning in 1977, they were based on the jurisdiction population. Both figures are shown for 1977 to facilitate year-to-year comparison.

Figure 1

Table 1. Prisoners under jurisdiction of State and Federal correctional authorities, by region and State, yearend 1981 and first and second quarter, 1982

Region and State	Total prisoner population			Percent change from:		Number of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 population 6/30/82 ^a
	12/31/81	3/31/82	6/30/82	12/31/81 to 6/30/82	3/31/82 to 6/30/82	
United States	368,772	381,881	394,380	6.9	3.3	163
Male	353,335	365,344	377,238	6.8	3.3	321
Female	15,437	16,537	17,142	11.0	3.7	13
Federal institutions ^b	28,133	28,429	29,033	3.2	2.1	10
State institutions	340,639	353,452	365,347	7.3	3.4	153
Northeast	53,397	55,219	57,465	7.6	4.1	110
Maine	922	922	941	-5.1	2.1	72
New Hampshire	398	426	418	5.0	-1.9	44
Vermont ^c	534	590	631	18.2	6.9	88
Massachusetts	3,889	3,986	4,164	7.1	4.5	72 ^d
Rhode Island ^c	962	1,034	1,034	7.5	0.0	79
Connecticut ^c	4,647	5,015	5,351 ^e	15.1	6.7	104
New York	25,599	26,372	27,117	5.9	2.8	154
New Jersey ^f	7,011	7,158	7,698	9.8	7.5	100
Pennsylvania	9,365	9,716	10,111	8.0	4.1	85
North Central	72,348	74,185	74,891	3.5	1.0	124
Ohio	14,968	15,600	16,319	9.0	4.6	151
Indiana	8,022	8,346	8,464	5.5	1.4	147
Illinois	13,206	13,533	13,361	1.2	-1.3	106
Michigan ^g	15,157	15,336	14,935	-1.5	-2.6	163
Wisconsin ^g	4,416	4,466	4,544	2.9	1.7	96
Minnesota	2,024	2,003	2,031	0.3	1.4	50
Iowa ^h	2,670	2,769	2,774	3.9	0.2	91
Missouri	6,489	6,502	6,639	2.3	2.1	134
North Dakota ⁱ	280	351	370	32.1	5.4	44
South Dakota	693	737	742	7.1	0.7	105
Nebraska	1,653	1,665	1,707	3.3	2.5	96
Kansas	2,770	2,877	3,005	8.5	4.4	126
South	159,712	166,296	172,025	7.7	3.4	215
Delaware ^c	1,712	1,826	1,937	13.1	6.1	229
Maryland	9,335	9,831	10,377	11.2	5.6	229
District of Columbia ^c	3,479	3,610	3,790	8.9	5.0	496
Virginia	9,388	9,515	9,648	2.8	1.4	171
West Virginia	1,565	1,570	1,433	-8.4	-8.7	71
North Carolina ⁱ	15,791	16,625	16,562	4.9	-0.4	258
South Carolina	8,538	8,747	9,011	5.5	3.0	266
Georgia ⁱ	12,444	12,761	14,053	12.9	10.1	245
Florida	23,589	24,578	26,466	12.2	7.7	248
Kentucky	4,167	4,151	4,358	4.6	5.0	119
Tennessee	7,897	8,187	8,156	3.3	-0.4	176
Alabama	7,657	7,802	8,168	6.7	4.7	203
Mississippi	4,624	4,975	5,158	11.5	3.7	198
Arkansas ^j	3,328	3,483	3,607	8.4	3.6	156
Louisiana	9,415	9,798	10,084	7.1	2.9	232
Oklahoma ⁱ	5,281	5,540	5,924	12.2	6.9	189
Texas ^h	31,502	33,297	33,293	5.7	-0.0	222
West	55,182	57,752	60,966	10.5	5.6	132
Montana	831	859	875	5.3	1.9	110
Idaho	957	1,002	1,026	7.2	2.4	106
Wyoming	587	619	654	11.4	5.7	131
Colorado ^l	2,772	2,847	3,026	9.2	6.3	101
New Mexico	1,497	1,615	1,717	14.7	6.3	121
Arizona	5,223	5,451	5,641	8.0	3.5	199
Utah	1,140	1,179	1,189	4.3	0.8	76
Nevada	2,116	2,324	2,552	20.6	9.8	295
Washington	5,336	5,569	5,896	10.5	5.9	139
Oregon	3,295	3,476	3,593	9.0	3.4	135
California	29,202	30,402	32,182	10.2	5.9	126
Alaska ^{c,j}	1,019	1,142	1,297	27.3	13.6	200
Hawaii ^{c,k}	1,207	1,267	1,318	9.2	4.0	86

NOTE: Prisoner counts may differ from those reported in previous publications and are subject to revision as updated figures become available.

^aUnpublished Bureau of the Census estimates for the resident population on December 31, 1981, were used to calculate rates of incarceration. Sentenced prisoners are defined as those serving sentences of more than one year.

^bFederal Bureau of Prisons data include the following number of persons held under jurisdiction of the Immigration and

Naturalization Service: 1,921 on 12/31/81; 2,062 on 3/31/82; and 1,925 on 6/30/82. First quarter 1982 figure is actually for 2/28/82.

^cFigures include both jail and prison inmates; jails and prisons are combined into one system.

^dMassachusetts cannot distinguish inmates by sentence length; therefore, the incarceration rate is based on the total prisoner population.

^eConnecticut's midyear figure includes State prison inmates in hospitals; such inmates were excluded from earlier counts.

^fFigures for Georgia and New Jersey exclude State prisoners held in local jails. Michigan's and Wisconsin's latest population counts are dated 2/28/82 and 5/31/82. Iowa's and Texas' population counts are for prisoners in custody only.

^gThe following population counts are estimates: North Dakota, 3/31; Colorado, 6/30; and North Carolina and Oklahoma, both 3/31 and 6/30.

^hPopulation counts for 6/30 for Arkansas and Alaska are estimates.

ⁱPopulation count for 3/31 for Hawaii is an estimate.

Table 2. Change in total prison population, 1974 - midyear 1982

Year	Number	Percent change
1974	229,721	
1975	253,816	10.5
1976	278,000	9.5
1977 (custody)	291,667	4.9
1977 (jurisdiction)	300,024	NA
1978	307,276	2.4
1979	314,457	2.3
1980	329,821	4.9
1981	368,772	11.8
1982 midyear	394,380	6.9 (6 mos.)

NOTE: Before 1977, NPS reports were based on the custody population. Beginning in 1977, they were based on the jurisdiction population. Both figures are shown for 1977 to facilitate year-to-year comparison.

NA Not applicable.

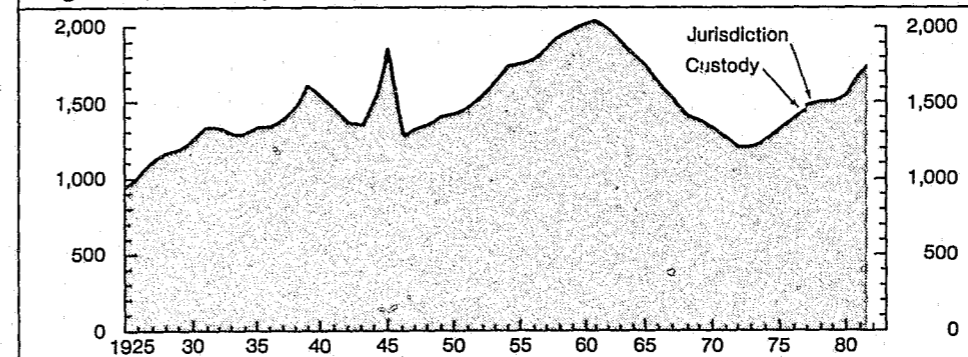
been a "piling-up" effect as persons with longer sentences accumulate in prison.

Several States also mentioned new and tougher laws on drunk driving as a contributing factor in the growth of their prison populations.

Economic conditions were cited by some States as playing a role in the increase in commitments, especially for property offenses. Other States, with combined jail/prison systems, noted a significant rise in the number of persons unable to make bail.

The continued growth of the population group most prison prone, 20-29-year-old males, has been a major factor in the growth of the prison population. During the 1970's, this component of the U.S. population grew by more than 35%, even faster than in the 1960's, as the "baby-boom" generation born between the mid-1940's and the mid-1960's reached their twenties. Had incarceration rates for this group remained constant, its mere size would have increased the prison rolls. But, in fact, the rate of incarceration for males in this age group

Sentenced State and Federal prisoners per 100,000 U.S. male population age 20-29, 1925 - midyear 1982



Note: Before 1977, NPS reports were based on the custody population; beginning in 1977, they were based on the jurisdiction population. Both figures are shown for 1977 to facilitate year-to-year comparison.

Figure 2

Table 3. The prison situation at midyear 1982

States with 10,000 or more prisoners	States with increases of 10% or more since 1981	States with increases of 500 or more since 1981	States with incarceration rates of 200 or more per 100,000 U.S. population
Texas 33,293	North Dakota 32.1	California 2,980	Nevada 295
California 32,182	Alaska 27.3	Florida 2,877	South Carolina 266
New York 27,117	Nevada 20.6	Texas 1,791	North Carolina 258
Florida 26,466	Vermont 18.2	Georgia 1,609	Florida 248
North Carolina 16,562	Connecticut 15.1	New York 1,518	Georgia 245
Ohio 16,319	New Mexico 14.7	Ohio 1,351	Delaware 229
Michigan 14,935	Delaware 13.1	Maryland 1,042	Maryland 229
Georgia 14,053	Georgia 12.9	North Carolina 771	Louisiana 232
Illinois 13,361	Florida 12.2	Pennsylvania 746	Texas 222
Maryland 10,377	Oklahoma 12.2	Connecticut 704	Alabama 203
Pennsylvania 10,111	Mississippi 11.5	New Jersey 687	Alaska 200
Louisiana 10,084	Wyoming 11.4	Louisiana 669	
	Maryland 11.2	Oklahoma 643	
	Washington 10.5	Washington 560	
	California 10.2	Mississippi 534	
		Alabama 511	

NOTE: The District of Columbia, as a wholly urban area, is excluded from the list of States with high incarceration rates. Alaska's and Delaware's rates are based on a combined jail/prison population.

has grown steadily since 1972 and even more sharply since 1980.¹

As a result of these factors impacting on prison populations, in several States new bed space expected to relieve existing overcrowding served only to absorb some of the inflow, leaving conditions as crowded or more crowded than before.

Texas, California, New York, and Florida all had prison populations exceeding 25,000 at midyear 1982. These four States alone accounted for one-third of all State prisoners. Texas, with a 6-month increase of 5.7%, continued to experience severe pressure on its prison capacity despite almost stabilized growth in the second quarter. California, with a 10.2% half-year increase, enacted a mandatory sentencing law for violent

¹Incarceration rates are based only on those prisoners sentenced to more than a year to minimize differences between States with combined jail-prison systems and those without such systems.

offenders in 1980, which California officials say is affecting prison growth now. New York also attributed its 5.9% increase partially to mandatory sentencing, as well as to increased prosecutorial attention to felony cases. Florida, with a 12.2% increase for the 6-month period, cited increased admissions and declining paroles, due in part to unemployment in the State.

Georgia, although ranking eighth in overall size of prison population, added more than 1,600 prisoners to its rolls, the highest increase after California, Florida, and Texas.

In addition to California, three States with prison populations of more than 10,000 had 6-month growth rates of more

Table 4. Women in State and Federal institutions, 1974 - midyear 1982

Year	Number	Percent change	Percent of prison population
1974	8,091		3.5
1975	9,667	19.5	3.8
1976	11,170	15.5	4.0
1977 (custody)	12,041	7.8	4.1
1977 (jurisdiction)	12,279	NA	4.1
1978	12,746	3.8	4.2
1979	12,995	2.0	4.3
1980	13,420	3.3	4.1
1981	15,437	15.0	4.2
1982 midyear	17,142	11.0 (6 mos.)	4.4

NOTE: Before 1977, NPS reports were based on the custody population. Beginning in 1977, they were based on the jurisdiction population. Both figures are shown for 1977 to facilitate year-to-year comparison.

NA Not applicable.

Table 5. Quarterly growth rate in State and Federal institutions during 1982

Period	All prisoners	Sentenced to	
		More than 1 year	1 year or less or unsentenced
First quarter	3.6%	3.2%	11.7%
Second quarter	3.3	2.9	10.0
First 6 months	6.9	6.2	22.8

than 10%: Georgia (12.9%), Florida (12.2%), and Maryland (11.2%). All three States also had incarceration rates higher than 200 prisoners per 100,000 population, while California's rate was 126. Five States with inmate populations in the 2,000-10,000 range had growth rates above 10% in the first half year: Nevada (20.6%), Connecticut (15.1%), Oklahoma (12.2%), Mississippi (11.5%), and Washington (10.5%). Also among the States with the highest percentage increases for the first 6 months of 1982 were several with relatively small (under 2,000) prison populations: North Dakota (32.1%), Alaska (27.3%), Vermont (18.2%), New Mexico (14.7%), Delaware (13.1%), and Wyoming (11.4%).

North Dakota, the State with the highest percentage increase during the first half of 1982, also has the lowest incarceration rate, 44 per 100,000. At the end of June, the State confined only 370 inmates. Nonetheless that figure has doubled during the past 2 1/2 years. North Dakota officials have pointed to stricter parole policies and enhanced drug enforcement as contributing factors. Nevada—the State with the highest incarceration rate, 295 per 100,000, and the third highest rate of increase—has enlarged its prison population by 2/3 during the past 2 1/2 years. Nevada

officials point to a 1980 law increasing the minimum amount of time all prisoners must serve as a major cause.

Three States—Maine, Michigan, and West Virginia—had a net decline in prisoners for the 6 months, but none of the three showed decreases in both quarters of 1982. Maine's decline of 5% took place entirely in the first quarter, while Michigan's and West Virginia's populations declined only in the second quarter. Michigan was under a court order to reduce its population because of overcrowding. West Virginia increased the number of prisoners paroled and those released by court.

The growth recorded during 1981 among women prisoners was surpassed during the first half of 1982. The 11% increase registered for women by midyear was almost twice that for men. Since 1974, the number of women in the Nation's prisons has more than doubled, while that of men increased by 70%. Yet, the proportion of prisoners who are women remained relatively stable at about 4%, and their rate of incarceration is only a fraction of that for men: 13 vs. 321 per 100,000 U.S. population.

Although unsentenced persons and those with sentences of one year or less comprised only 5% of the prison population, the growth in this component is taxing many facilities.² The short-sentence/no-sentence group increased by 22.8% in the first 6 months of 1982, compared to a 6.2% increase for those with longer sentences. Their increase was particularly high in a few jurisdictions, including Alaska, Delaware,

²Unsentenced persons may be incarcerated under various conditions. In combined prison/jail systems, they are usually awaiting trial. California has a large number of civil commitments to correctional facilities for narcotics addicts. Other miscellaneous reasons include safekeeping and presentence evaluation and such confinements are usually for brief periods of time.

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and the District of Columbia, which operate combined jail/prison systems. In Vermont, also with a combined system, pretrial inmates who could not make bail contributed to the increase.

Further reading

A final report on the prison population at yearend 1981 will be published in the spring of 1983. To obtain the final 1980 report, NCJ-80520, or other National Prisoner Statistics bulletins, or to be added to the bulletin or corrections mailing lists, write to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, User Services Dept. 2, Box 6000, Rockville, Md. 20850. Other NPS bulletins include—

- Prisoners in 1981, 5/82, NCJ-82262;
- Death-row Prisoners 1981, 7/82, NCJ-83191;
- Prisons and Prisoners, 1/82, NCJ-80697;
- Veterans in Prison, 10/81, NCJ-79232.

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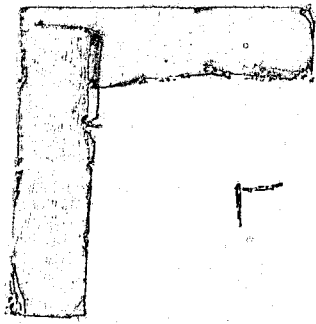
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