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ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION AT JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES ROSE BETWEEN 2011 AND 2012

WASHINGTON – Juvenile correctional administrators reported 865 allegations of sexual victimization in state facilities and 613 in local and private facilities during 2012, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. This was a significant increase over the 735 allegations in state facilities (up 18 percent) and 382 in local and private facilities (up 60 percent) reported in 2011.

Relative to the decline in the number of youth in state juvenile systems (from 38,580 at yearend 2006 to 19,095 at yearend 2012), the rate of allegations of sexual victimization more than doubled, from 19 per 1,000 youth held in state facilities in 2005 to 47 per 1,000 in 2012. Based on 2-year rolling averages, the rate in local and private facilities was 14 per 1,000 youth in 2012, up from 7 in 2010.

From 2007 to 2012, nearly 9,500 allegations were reported by juvenile correctional administrators in state systems, facilities in Indian country and locally or privately operated facilities. This number included 2,750 allegations of nonconsensual sexual acts, 2,463 allegations of abusive sexual contact, 3,617 allegations of staff sexual misconduct, and 664 allegations of staff sexual harassment. More than half (55 percent) of the allegations involved youth-on-youth sexual victimization and 45 percent involved staff-on-youth victimization.

Upon investigation, 1,686 of the allegations (18 percent) were substantiated, including 25 percent of youth-on-youth allegations and 10 percent of staff-on-youth allegations. The majority of sexual victimization allegations were unsubstantiated (i.e., the evidence was insufficient to determine whether the alleged incident occurred) including 53 percent of youth-on-youth and 49 percent of staff-on-youth allegations.

Based on substantiated incidents only, the rates of sexual victimization were significantly higher in state juvenile systems (5.9 per 1,000 youth) than in locally or privately operated facilities (2.3 per 1,000) between 2007 and 2012.

Across all facilities, about three-quarters (76 percent) of substantiated incidents involved youth-on-youth sexual victimizations. Less than a fifth (18 percent) were nonconsensual sexual acts between youth, involving force or threat of force and penetration. More than a third (35 percent) were abusive sexual

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contacts, involving unwanted touching for sexual gratification. A fifth (20 percent) were determined to

be voluntary; however, the youth could not legally consent.

Staff sexual misconduct, including any act of a sexual nature directed by staff toward a juvenile, accounted for 21 percent of all substantiated incidents, while staff sexual harassment, including repeated verbal statements of a sexual nature to a juvenile, accounted for 6 percent.

In nearly 64 percent of the substantiated incidents of staff sexual misconduct, investigators determined that the sexual contact with the youth “appeared to be willing.” These incidents were considered an abuse of power, with an unknown level of coercion, and were illegal.

Other findings include—

- Victims were physically injured in 5 percent of the substantiated incidents of youth-on-youth sexual victimization. None of the victims sustained physical injuries from staff-on-youth sexual misconduct.
- Nearly half (47 percent) of victims of youth-on-youth sexual victimization were age 15 or younger, while less than a third (30 percent) of youth in juvenile facilities were this age.
- Females accounted for 64 percent of perpetrators of staff sexual misconduct, while males accounted for 69 percent of perpetrators of staff sexual harassment.
- Legal sanctions (including referral to law enforcement, arrest, referral for prosecution or a new sentence) were imposed on perpetrators in 54 percent of incidents of youth-on-youth nonconsensual acts and 23 percent of abusive sexual contacts.
- The most commonly imposed sanctions for staff sexual misconduct were loss of job (in 92 percent of the incidents) and arrest or referral for prosecutions (51 percent).
- Counseling or mental health treatment was provided in about half of all substantiated youth-on-youth incidents and 42 percent of staff-on-youth victimizations.

The companion reports, *Sexual Victimization Reported by Juvenile Correctional Authorities, 2007–12* (NCJ 249145) and *Survey of Sexual Violence in Juvenile Correctional Facilities, 2007–12 - Statistical Tables* (NCJ 249143), were written by BJS Statisticians Allen J. Beck and Ramona R. Rantala. The reports, related documents and additional information about BJS’s statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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