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# Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

## Prisoners in 1992

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The number of prisoners under the jurisdiction of Federal or State correctional authorities at yearend 1992 reached a record high of 883,593. The States and the District of Columbia added 50,809 prisoners; the Federal system, 8,651. The increase for 1992 brings total growth in the prison population since 1980 to 553,772, an increase of about 168% in the 12-year period (table 1).

The 1992 growth rate (7.2%) was greater than the percentage increase recorded during 1991 (6.6%), and the number of new prisoners added during 1992 was 8,451 more than the number added during the preceding year (51,009). The 1992 increase translates into a nationwide need for approximately 1,143 prison bedspaces

per week, compared to the nearly 981 prison bedspaces per week needed in 1991.

Prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year (referred to as "sentenced prisoners") accounted for 96% of the total prison population at the end of 1992, growing by 7.3% during the year (table 2). The remaining prisoners had sentences of a year or less or were unsentenced (for example, those awaiting trial in States with combined prison-jail systems).

The number of sentenced Federal prisoners increased at a faster rate than sentenced prisoners in the States during 1992 (15.9% versus 6.8%). These annual rates of increase were higher than in 1991 when the Federal system grew 12.5%, and State systems, 6.4%.

The number of Federal prisoners with no sentences or sentences of less than a year decreased during 1992 (from 14,912 to 14,553), while the number of sentenced prisoners increased by 9,010.

Prison populations in Maine, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, and Wyoming decreased during 1992. The decrease in these 5 States totaled 1,135 inmates. The highest percentages of growth during 1992 were reported in Texas (18.4%), West Virginia (16.2%), New Hampshire (15.9%), Idaho (15.5%), and Wisconsin (15.4%). Eight States reported total prisoner population increases of 10% or more since yearend 1991.

Texas' increase of 9,501 prisoners during the year was the largest gain in the number of prisoners for any single jurisdiction, followed by California (7,688),

New York (3,874), and Michigan (2,596). Texas accounted for about 16% of the increase in prison population nationwide.

May 1993

This edition of the annual prisoner report provides some added detail on historical trends in the offense composition and criminal justice status of State prison admissions.

In 1980, about 1 of every 15 court-committed entries to State prison was an offender convicted of a drug offense. In 1990 drug offenses accounted for about 1 in 3 new commitments to State prison. Across the same period, the percentage of prison admissions entering as violators of probation or parole conditions also increased — from about 17% of all admissions in 1980 to about 30% of 1991 State prison admissions.

Together, these data translate into a 150%-increase in the number of State prisoners between 1980 and 1991, a 142%-increase in the number of court-committed admissions, and a 425%-increase in the number of admissions of conditional release violators. From 1980 to 1990 the number of drug offenders entering State prisons increased over 11-fold.

On behalf of BJS, I want to extend my appreciation to those officials in State correctional agencies who supplied the data for this report.

Lawrence A. Greenfeld  
Acting Director

**Table 1. Change in the State and Federal prison populations, 1980-92**

Year	Number of Inmates	Annual percent change	Total percent change since 1980
1980	329,821	--	--
1981	369,930	12.2%	12.2%
1982	413,806	11.9	25.5
1983	436,855	5.6	32.5
1984	462,002	5.8	40.1
1985	502,752	8.8	52.4
1986	545,378	8.5	65.4
1987	585,292	7.3	77.5
1988	631,990	8.0	91.6
1989	712,967	12.8	116.2
1990	773,124	8.4	134.4
1991	824,133	6.6	149.9
1992	883,593	7.2	167.9

Note: All counts are for December 31 of each year and may reflect revisions of previously reported numbers.  
--Not applicable.

**Table 2. Prisoners under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities, by region and jurisdiction, yearend 1991 and 1992**

Region and jurisdiction	Total			Sentenced to more than 1 year			Incarceration rate, 1992 <sup>a</sup>
	Advance 1992	Final 1991	Percent change, 1991-92	Advance 1992	Final 1991	Percent change, 1991-92	
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>883,593</b>	<b>824,133</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>846,695</b>	<b>789,349</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>Federal State</b>	<b>80,259</b>	<b>71,608</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>65,706</b>	<b>56,696</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>26</b>
	<b>803,334</b>	<b>752,525</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>780,989</b>	<b>732,653</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>138,156</b>	<b>131,866</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>133,372</b>	<b>127,450</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>259</b>
Connecticut	11,403	10,977	3.9	8,794	8,585	2.4	269
Maine	1,515	1,579	-4.1	1,488	1,558	-4.5	116
Massachusetts	10,056	9,155	9.8	9,382	8,561	9.6	156
New Hampshire	1,777	1,533	15.9	1,777	1,533	15.9	150
New Jersey	22,653	23,483	-3.5	22,653	23,483	-3.5	289
New York	61,736	57,862	6.7	61,736	57,862	6.7	340
Pennsylvania	24,974	23,388	6.8	24,966	23,386	6.8	204
Rhode Island	2,775	2,771	.1	1,709	1,749	-2.3	168
Vermont	1,267	1,118	13.3	867	733	18.3	144
<b>Midwest</b>	<b>166,339</b>	<b>155,917</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>166,042</b>	<b>155,573</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>271</b>
Illinois	31,640	29,115	8.7	31,640	29,115	8.7	267
Indiana	13,166	13,008	1.2	13,012	12,865	1.1	227
Iowa	4,518	4,145	9.0	4,518	4,145	9.0	157
Kansas	6,028	5,903	2.1	6,028	5,903	2.1	234
Michigan	39,019	36,423	7.1	39,019	36,423	7.1	414
Minnesota	3,822	3,472	10.1	3,822	3,472	10.1	84
Missouri	16,198	15,897	1.9	16,198	15,897	1.9	309
Nebraska	2,565	2,495	2.8	2,492	2,375	4.9	152
North Dakota	464	492	-5.7	415	441	-5.9	65
Ohio	38,378	35,744	7.4	38,378	35,744	7.4	346
South Dakota	1,487	1,374	8.2	1,487	1,374	8.2	206
Wisconsin	9,054	7,849	15.4	9,033	7,819	15.5	180
<b>South</b>	<b>324,454</b>	<b>301,866</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>315,280</b>	<b>292,542</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>355</b>
Alabama	17,453	16,760	4.1	16,938	16,400	3.3	404
Arkansas	8,433	7,766	8.6	8,129	7,722	5.3	332
Delaware	3,977	3,717	7.0	2,665	2,430	9.7	371
District of Col.	10,875	10,455	4.0	7,528	7,106	5.9	1,312
Florida	48,302	46,533	3.8	48,302	46,533	3.8	348
Georgia	25,290	23,644	7.0	24,848	22,910	8.5	366
Kentucky	10,364	9,799	5.8	10,364	9,799	5.8	277
Louisiana	20,810	20,003	4.0	20,603	20,003	3.0	478
Maryland	19,977	19,291	3.6	18,808	17,824	5.5	380
Mississippi	9,083	8,904	2.0	8,877	8,682	2.3	337
North Carolina	20,455	18,903	8.2	20,024	18,272	9.6	291
Oklahoma	14,821	13,340	11.1	14,821	13,340	11.1	463
South Carolina	18,643	18,269	2.0	17,612	17,208	2.4	477
Tennessee	11,849	11,474	3.3	11,849	11,474	3.3	232
Texas	61,178	51,677	18.4	61,178	51,677	18.4	348
Virginia	21,199	19,829	8.9	20,989	19,660	6.8	327
West Virginia	1,745	1,502	16.2	1,745	1,502	16.2	97
<b>West</b>	<b>174,385</b>	<b>162,876</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>166,295</b>	<b>157,088</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>298</b>
Alaska	2,865	2,706	5.9	1,944	1,840	5.7	363
Arizona	16,477	15,415	6.9	15,850	14,843	6.8	415
California	109,496	101,808	7.6	105,467	98,515	7.1	332
Colorado	8,997	8,392	7.2	8,997	8,392	7.2	266
Hawaii	2,926	2,700	8.4	1,922	1,766	8.8	164
Idaho	2,475	2,143	15.5	2,475	2,143	15.5	234
Montana	1,553	1,478	5.1	1,553	1,478	5.1	192
Nevada	6,049	5,503	9.9	6,049	5,503	9.9	461
New Mexico	3,271	3,119	4.9	3,154	3,016	4.6	197
Oregon <sup>b</sup>	6,596	6,732	-2.0	5,216	6,732	--	173
Utah	2,699	2,625	2.8	2,687	2,605	3.2	152
Washington	9,959	9,156	8.8	9,959	9,156	8.8	193
Wyoming	1,022	1,099	-7.0	1,022	1,099	-7.0	223

Note: The advance count of prisoners is conducted immediately after the calendar year ends. Prisoner counts for 1991 may differ from those reported in previous publications. Counts for 1992 are subject to revision as updated figures become available. Explanatory notes for each jurisdiction are reported in the appendix.  
--Not applicable.

<sup>a</sup>The number of prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year per 100,000 resident population.  
<sup>b</sup>Before 1992, because of their sentencing guidelines, Oregon reported all prisoners as having a sentence of more than 1 year. Comparing the number of prisoners sentenced to more than 1 year in 1992 with the counts from previous years would be inappropriate.

### Rates of incarceration increase

On December 31, 1992, the number of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 residents was 329, a new record. Twelve of the 19 jurisdictions with rates greater than the rate for the Nation were located in the South, 4 were in the West, 2 were in the Midwest, and 1 was in the Northeast.

Since 1980 the number of sentenced inmates per 100,000 residents has risen nearly 137%, from 139 to 329. During this period, per capita incarceration rates grew most rapidly in the Northeast, increasing by 198% (from 87 to 259), and the West, up by 184% (from 105 to 298). The per capita number of sentenced prisoners in the Midwest climbed 149% (from 109 to 271), and the rate rose 89% in the South (from 188 to 355). The number of sentenced Federal prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents increased 189% (from 9 to 26) over the same period.

## Prison populations in Southern States grow the fastest

Regionally, during 1992 the percentage increase in the number of sentenced prisoners was highest in the South, with a gain of 7.8% (table 3). The number of

sentenced prisoners grew by 6.7% in the Midwest, 5.9% in the West, and 4.6% in the Northeast. The sentenced Federal prison population grew by 15.9%. In 22 States and the District of Columbia the percentage change in the number of sentenced prisoners during 1992 was

higher than that of 1991. Among these jurisdictions, eight had increases of at least 10%, led by Texas (18.4%), Vermont (18.3%), West Virginia (16.2%), New Hampshire (15.9%), Wisconsin (15.5%), and Idaho (15.5%).

**Table 3. Annual change in the number of sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities, by region and jurisdiction, yearend 1986 through 1992**

Region and jurisdiction	Annual change						Annual percent change					
	1986-87	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
<b>U.S. total</b>	38,593	44,791	75,554	57,825	50,119	57,346	7.4%	8.0%	12.5%	8.6%	6.8%	7.3%
Federal	2,992	2,584	5,061	3,235	6,293	9,010	8.2	6.5	12.0	6.9	12.5	15.9
State	35,601	42,207	70,493	54,590	43,826	48,336	7.4	8.1	12.5	8.7	6.4	6.6
<b>Northeast</b>	8,441	7,243	14,884	9,664	8,871	5,922	10.7%	8.3%	15.7%	8.8%	7.5%	4.6%
Connecticut	311	86	1,586	1,462	814	209	7.2	1.9	33.6	23.2	10.5	2.4
Maine	(4)	(18)	212	48	120	(70)	-3	-1.5	17.4	3.4	8.1	-4.5
Massachusetts	576	483	813	631	1,099	821	10.7	8.1	12.6	8.7	13.9	9.6
New Hampshire	85	152	147	176	191	244	10.9	17.5	14.4	15.1	14.2	15.9
New Jersey <sup>a</sup>	3,949	967	2,503	1,689	2,355	(830)	32.9	6.1	14.8	8.7	11.1	-3.5
New York	2,393	3,700	6,685	3,663	2,967	3,874	6.2	9.1	15.0	7.1	5.4	6.7
Pennsylvania	1,081	1,637	2,575	1,823	1,105	1,580	7.1	10.1	14.4	8.9	5.0	6.8
Rhode Island	(16)	188	290	117	163	(40)	-1.6	19.0	24.6	8.0	10.3	-2.3
Vermont	66	48	73	55	57	134	15.0	9.5	13.2	8.8	8.4	18.3
<b>Midwest</b>	8,141	9,507	15,795	9,434	9,660	10,469	7.9%	8.6%	13.1%	6.9%	6.6%	6.7%
Illinois	394	1,231	3,631	2,804	1,599	2,525	2.0	6.2	17.2	11.3	5.8	8.7
Indiana	671	637	949	395	261	147	6.7	6.0	8.4	3.2	2.1	1.1
Iowa	74	183	550	383	178	373	2.7	6.4	18.1	10.7	4.5	9.0
Kansas	436	154	(319)	161	126	125	8.2	2.7	-5.4	2.9	2.2	2.1
Michigan	3,137	3,733	4,027	2,628	2,156	2,596	15.1	15.6	14.6	8.3	6.3	7.1
Minnesota	84	253	304	73	296	350	3.4	9.9	10.9	2.4	9.3	10.1
Missouri	1,048	819	1,745	1,022	468	301	10.2	7.2	14.3	7.3	3.1	1.9
Nebraska	9	145	170	8	103	117	.5	7.4	8.1	0.4	4.5	4.9
North Dakota	19	34	(10)	31	6	(26)	5.3	8.9	-2.4	7.7	1.4	-5.9
Ohio	1,777	2,222	4,076	1,284	3,928	2,634	7.9	9.2	15.4	4.2	12.3	7.4
South Dakota	83	(117)	236	85	33	113	7.9	-10.3	23.2	6.8	2.5	8.2
Wisconsin	409	213	436	560	506	1,214	7.2	3.5	6.9	8.3	6.9	15.5
<b>South</b>	8,823	13,143	23,669	22,448	16,590	22,738	4.3%	6.1%	10.3%	8.9%	6.0%	7.8%
Alabama	1,098	(245)	1,218	1,790	1,035	538	9.5	-1.9	9.9	13.2	6.7	3.3
Arkansas	740	520	345	172	949	407	15.7	9.6	5.8	2.6	14.1	5.3
Delaware	203	42	83	(43)	165	235	10.4	1.9	3.8	-1.9	7.4	9.7
District of Col.	827	700	421	148	95	422	17.3	12.5	6.7	2.2	1.4	5.9
Florida	132	2,321	5,285	4,414	2,151	1,769	.4	7.2	15.2	11.0	4.8	3.8
Georgia	1,874	294	1,601	1,986	1,254	1,938	11.8	1.7	8.9	10.1	5.8	8.5
Kentucky	1,149	717	1,135	734	776	565	21.7	11.1	15.9	8.9	8.6	5.8
Louisiana	1,075	867	1,015	1,342	1,708	900	7.5	5.6	6.2	7.8	9.2	3.0
Maryland	353	660	1,806	1,356	1,090	984	2.8	5.1	13.3	8.8	6.5	5.5
Mississippi	158	532	449	384	764	195	2.4	7.9	6.2	5.0	9.5	2.3
North Carolina	(255)	133	377	1,136	524	1,752	-1.6	.8	2.3	6.8	2.9	9.6
Oklahoma	(69)	809	1,160	677	1,091	1,481	-7	8.4	11.1	5.8	8.9	11.1
South Carolina	840	1,040	1,906	1,400	965	404	7.6	8.8	14.8	9.5	6.0	2.4
Tennessee	48	2,136	855	(242)	1,114	375	.6	28.0	8.7	-2.3	10.7	3.3
Texas	287	1,616	3,585	6,020	1,635	9,501	.7	4.2	8.9	13.7	3.3	18.4
Virginia	386	997	2,345	1,145	1,337	1,329	3.1	7.7	16.8	7.0	7.7	6.8
West Virginia	(23)	4	83	29	(63)	243	-1.6	.3	5.7	1.9	-4.0	16.2
<b>West</b>	10,196	12,314	16,145	13,044	8,705	9,207	10.5%	11.5%	13.5%	9.6%	5.8%	5.9%
Alaska	101	95	46	(57)	(10)	104	6.1	5.4	2.5	-3.0	-5	5.7
Arizona	1,520	1,020	1,148	1,055	1,062	1,007	16.8	9.7	9.9	8.3	7.7	6.8
California	7,087	8,968	10,558	9,784	4,393	6,952	12.3	13.8	14.3	11.6	4.7	7.1
Colorado <sup>b</sup>	869	1,070	1,232	353	676	605	20.9	21.3	20.2	4.8	8.8	7.2
Hawaii	11	(22)	242	(49)	271	156	.7	-1.4	16.0	-2.8	15.9	8.8
Idaho	(13)	149	266	111	250	332	-9	10.4	16.8	6.0	12.7	15.5
Montana	96	64	57	97	53	75	8.6	5.3	4.5	7.3	3.7	5.1
Nevada	(117)	447	231	210	557	546	-2.6	10.1	4.7	4.1	10.5	9.9
New Mexico	280	137	36	(53)	(51)	138	12.1	5.3	1.3	-1.7	-1.7	4.6
Oregon <sup>c</sup>	687	534	753	336	268	--	14.4	9.8	12.6	5.5	4.1	--
Utah	92	107	424	106	131	82	5.3	5.8	21.8	4.5	5.3	3.2
Washington	(472)	(315)	1,112	1,067	1,161	803	-7.1	-5.1	19.1	15.4	14.5	8.8
Wyoming	55	60	40	84	(56)	(77)	6.4	6.6	4.1	8.2	-5.0	-7.0

Note: Sentenced prisoners are those with sentences of more than 1 year.

( ) Indicates a decline in the number of sentenced prisoners.

--Not applicable.

<sup>a</sup>In 1987 New Jersey began to include in its jurisdiction count the number of State-sentenced prisoners held in local jails because of prison crowding.

<sup>b</sup>Colorado revised its numbers from 1985 to 1990.

<sup>c</sup>Before 1992, because of sentencing guidelines, Oregon reported all prisoners as having a sentence of more than 1 year. Comparing the sentenced prisoner count for 1992 with the counts from previous years would be inappropriate.

Since December 31, 1986, net gains in the number of sentenced prisoners have averaged about 1,039 prisoners per week — a weekly gain of about 946 State prisoners and 94 Federal prisoners per week over the period. The largest net gains have occurred in the South (344 inmates per week) followed by the West (223), the Midwest (202), and the Northeast (176). During 1992, the average

growth in the number of sentenced State and Federal prisoners was equal to a demand for 1,103 additional bedspaces per week, about 139 more than the average weekly growth in 1991.

In 1992 the 10 States with the largest prison populations accounted for 52% of the total prison population nationwide — California, New York, and Texas

accounting for over 25% (table 4). Louisiana had the highest incarceration rate with 478 prisoners per 100,000 residents.

#### Male prisoner population grows at a faster pace

The number of male inmates (833,184) increased at a faster rate during 1992 (7.3%) than the number of female inmates

**Table 4. The prison situation among the States, yearend 1992**

10 States with the largest 1992 prison populations	Number of inmates	10 States with the highest incarceration rates, 1992*	Prisoners per 100,000 residents	10 States with the largest percent increases in prison population			
				1991-92	Percent increase	1987-92	Percent increase
California	109,496	Louisiana	478	Texas	18.4%	New Hampshire	105.0%
New York	61,736	South Carolina	477	West Virginia	18.2	Rhode Island	94.3
Texas	61,178	Oklahoma	463	New Hampshire	15.9	Colorado	87.1
Florida	48,302	Nevada	461	Idaho	15.5	Idaho	72.5
Michigan	39,019	Arizona	415	Wisconsin	15.4	Vermont	68.9
Ohio	38,378	Michigan	414	Vermont	13.3	California	63.5
Illinois	31,640	Alabama	404	Oklahoma	11.1	Michigan	63.4
Georgia	25,290	Maryland	380	Minnesota	10.1	Washington	62.4
Pennsylvania	24,974	Delaware	371	Nevada	9.9	Kentucky	61.0
New Jersey	22,653	Georgia	366	Massachusetts	9.8	Massachusetts	60.5

Note: The District of Columbia as a wholly urban jurisdiction is excluded.

\*Prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year.

**Table 5. Prisoners under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities, by sex of inmate, yearend 1991 and 1992**

	Men	Women
<b>Total</b>		
Advance 1992	833,184	50,409
Final 1991	776,550	47,583
Percent change, 1991-1992	7.3%	5.9%
<b>Sentenced to more than 1 year</b>		
Advance 1992	801,227	46,468
Final 1991	745,522	43,827
Percent change, 1991-1992	7.3%	6.0%
Incarceration rate, 1992*	636	35

\*The number of prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year per 100,000 residents on December 31, 1992.

**Table 6. Women under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities, yearend 1992**

Jurisdiction	Number of female inmates	Percent of all inmates	Percent change in female inmate population, 1991-92
<b>U.S. total</b>	50,409	5.7%	5.9%
Federal States	6,399	8.0	13.2
	44,010	5.5	5.0
<b>States with at least 500 female inmates:</b>			
California	6,747	6.2%	7.1%
New York	3,499	5.7	3.9
Florida	2,599	5.4	-1.5
Texas	2,487	4.1	-2
Ohio	2,419	6.3	5.5
Michigan	1,859	4.8	7.2
Illinois	1,456	4.6	15.8
Georgia	1,455	5.8	4.6
Oklahoma	1,400	9.5	13.3
Virginia	1,163	5.5	11.8
South Carolina	1,127	6.1	7.8
Pennsylvania	1,106	4.4	1.6
Alabama	1,101	6.3	4.4
New Jersey	1,095	4.8	-1.1
Louisiana	1,020	4.9	12.0
Arizona	1,001	6.1	6.6
Maryland	954	4.8	2.5
North Carolina	951	4.7	-6.9
Missouri	858	5.3	4.5
Indiana	720	5.5	2.0
District of Col.	720	6.6	-4.5
Connecticut	710	6.2	7.6
Washington	618	6.2	14.7
Massachusetts	567	5.6	-10.0
Mississippi	562	6.2	10.6
Kentucky	545	5.3	6.2
Colorado	527	5.9	16.3

(50,409, 5.9%) (table 5). The rate of incarceration for sentenced males (636 per 100,000 males in the resident population) was over 18 times higher than for sentenced females (35 per 100,000 females in the resident population). At the end of 1992, women accounted for 5.7% of all prisoners nationwide (table 6).

Overall, the 1992 growth rate (5.9%) for female inmates was less than the 1991 growth rate (8.4%). The growth rate declined in the Northeast, from 14.6% in 1991 to 1.7% in 1992, and in the South, from 10.0% to 3.6%. These declines in 1992 offset the higher growth rates in the Midwest and West.

	Percent increase in female inmate population	
	1991-92	1990-91
U.S. total	5.9%	8.4%
Federal State	13.2%	12.8%
	5.0%	7.8%
Northeast	1.7	14.6
Midwest	8.2	7.6
South	3.6	10.0
West	7.0	.4

In 1992, 26 States, the District of Columbia, and the Federal system had more than 500 female inmates. Among these jurisdictions, 8 had increases of at least 10%, led by Colorado's increase of 16.3% (from 453 in 1991 to 527 in 1992). The Federal prison system's increase during 1992, 745 inmates, accounted for 26.4% of the nationwide increase of 2,826.

#### Local jails held more than 18,000 because of State prison crowding

At the end of 1992, 21 jurisdictions reported a total of 18,191 State prisoners held in local jails or other facilities because of crowding in State facilities (table 7). Four States — Louisiana, New Jersey, Virginia, and Tennessee — accounted for almost 60% of the prisoners sentenced to prison but incarcerated locally. Four States — Louisiana, West Virginia, New Jersey, and Mississippi — held more than 10% of their prison population locally. Overall, 2.1% of the State prison population was confined in local jails on December 31, 1992, because of prison crowding.

#### Prison capacity estimates are difficult to compare

The extent of crowding in the Nation's prisons is difficult to determine precisely because of the absence of uniform measures for defining capacity. A wide variety of capacity measures is in use among the 52 reporting jurisdictions because capacity may reflect both available space to house inmates and the ability to staff and operate an institution. To estimate the capacity of the Nation's prisons, jurisdictions were asked to supply up to three measures for yearend 1992 — rated, operational, and design

capacities. These measures were defined as follows:

*Rated capacity* is the number of beds or inmates assigned by a rating official to institutions within the jurisdiction.

*Operational capacity* is the number of inmates that can be accommodated based on a facility's staff, existing programs, and services.

*Design capacity* is the number of inmates that planners or architects intended for the facility.

**Table 7. State prisoners held in local jails because of prison crowding, by State, yearend 1991 and 1992**

States housing prisoners in local jails	Prisoners held in local jails			
	Number		As a percent of all prisoners	
	1992	1991	1992	1991
U.S. total	18,191	18,304	2.1%	2.2%
Alabama	966	1,310	5.5	7.8
Arizona*	95	49	.6	.3
Arkansas	496	87	5.9	1.1
Colorado	537	81	6.0	1.0
District of Columbia	310	...	2.8	...
Idaho*	192	103	7.8	4.6
Indiana*	779	711	5.6	5.2
Kentucky	574	866	5.5%	8.8%
Louisiana	4,621	5,028	22.2	25.1
Maine	...	2	...	.1
Massachusetts*	957	833	8.7	8.3
Mississippi	958	847	10.6	9.5
New Jersey	2,986	3,523	13.2	15.0
Oklahoma*	471	434	3.1	3.2
South Carolina	420	418	2.3%	2.3%
Tennessee	1,120	2,018	9.5	17.6
Utah	108	96	4.0	3.7
Vermont	18	23	1.4	2.1
Virginia	1,983	1,510	9.4	7.6
West Virginia*	381	287	17.9	16.0
Wisconsin	219	78	2.4	1.0

Note: Some States did not report a significant number of State inmates held in local jails because of crowded State facilities. The extent of underreporting could not be estimated.

\*For States not including jail backups in their jurisdiction counts, the percentage of jurisdiction population was calculated using the total number of States inmates in jail and prison. Idaho excluded the jail backups from their population count in 1991 but not in 1992. ... Data not available.

Of the 52 reporting jurisdictions, 38 supplied rated capacities, 42 provided operational capacities, and 35 submitted design capacities (table 8). As a result, estimates of total capacity and measures of the relationship to population are based

on the highest and lowest capacity figures provided. (Twenty-four jurisdictions reported 1 capacity measure or gave the same figure for each capacity measure they reported.)

### Most jurisdictions are operating above capacity

Prisons generally require reserve capacity to operate efficiently. Prison dormitories and cells need to be maintained and repaired periodically, special housing is needed for protective custody and disciplinary cases, and space may be needed to cope with emergencies. At the end of 1992, 11 States reported they were operating at 95% or below their highest capacity. Forty-three jurisdictions and the Federal prison system reported operating at 100% or more of their lowest capacity.

At the end of 1992, the Federal system was estimated to be operating at 37% over capacity. State prisons were estimated to be operating at 118% of their highest capacities and 131% of their lowest capacities (table 9).

**Table 8. Reported Federal and State prison capacities, yearend 1992**

Region and jurisdiction	Rated capacity	Operational capacity	Design capacity	Population <sup>a</sup> as a percent of	
				Highest capacity	Lowest capacity
Federal <sup>b</sup>	52,757	...	...	137%	137%
<b>Northeast</b>					
Connecticut	10,093	11,102	...	103%	113%
Maine	1,353	1,353	1,353	112	112
Massachusetts	...	...	6,999	144	144
New Hampshire	1,358	1,576	1,162	113	153
New Jersey	...	...	14,980	131	131
New York	60,054	57,005	49,543	103	125
Pennsylvania	...	...	16,713	149	149
Rhode Island	3,292	3,292	3,292	84	84
Vermont	847	852	647	147	193
<b>Midwest</b>					
Illinois	24,562	24,562	20,818	129%	152%
Indiana	11,983	13,817	...	95	110
Iowa	3,265	3,265	3,265	138	138
Kansas	8,621	...	...	91	91
Michigan	27,086	...	...	144	144
Minnesota	3,678	3,678	3,678	104	104
Missouri	15,630	16,187	...	100	104
Nebraska	...	...	1,706	150	150
North Dakota	...	576	576	81	81
Ohio	...	...	21,738	177	177
South Dakota	1,189	1,130	1,189	125	132
Wisconsin	6,342	6,342	6,342	139	139
<b>South</b>					
Alabama	14,788	14,788	14,788	111%	111%
Arkansas	...	7,614	...	104	104
Delaware	4,009	3,987	2,928	99	136
District of Col.	11,087	11,087	8,746	95	121
Florida	49,939	55,100	37,887	88	127
Georgia	...	25,252	...	100	100
Kentucky	9,119	8,923	...	107	110
Louisiana	17,131	17,131	17,131	95	95
Maryland	...	19,804	12,856	101	155
Mississippi	8,557	9,083	9,007	89	95
North Carolina	17,913	20,900	...	98	114
Oklahoma	9,130	12,451	...	119	162
South Carolina	16,216	16,216	12,527	112	145
Tennessee	11,119	10,837	11,463	94	99
Texas	57,455	54,459	...	106	112
Virginia	13,852	13,852	13,852	139	139
West Virginia	1,680	1,745	1,730	100	104
<b>West</b>					
Alaska	2,472	...	...	116%	116%
Arizona	...	15,520	...	106	106
California	...	...	57,367	191	191
Colorado	...	7,496	6,136	113	138
Hawaii	...	2,382	1,566	123	187
Idaho	2,015	2,158	...	106	113
Montana	1,160	1,465	1,160	106	134
Nevada	5,743	5,743	4,770	105	127
New Mexico	3,427	3,290	3,443	95	99
Oregon	...	6,557	...	101	101
Utah	3,184	2,897	...	81	89
Washington	6,190	7,779	7,779	128	161
Wyoming	977	977	977	105	105

... Data not available.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes inmates who had been sentenced to State prison but were held in local jails because of crowding and who were included in the total prisoner count.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes prisoners housed in contract or other non-Federal facilities.

**Table 9. Population as a percent of reported capacity for State prisons, 1987-92**

	State prisons
Highest capacity	667,300
Lowest capacity	601,352
<b>Net change in capacity, 1991-92</b>	
Highest	20,140
Lowest	28,865
<b>Population as a percent of capacity<sup>a</sup></b>	
<b>Highest</b>	
1987	105%
1988	107
1989	107
1990	115
1991	116
1992	118
<b>Lowest</b>	
1987	120%
1988	123
1989	127
1990	127
1991	131
1992	131

Note: States were asked to report their rated, operational, and design capacities. Tabulations reflect the highest and lowest of the 3 capacities reported for 1987 to 1992.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes inmates who had been sentenced to State prison but were held in local jails because of crowding and who were included in the total prisoner count.

## Rise in prison population linked to changes in prison admissions

Underlying the dramatic growth in the State prison population during the 1980's were changes in the composition of prison admissions. Since 1977 the relative sizes of the two principal sources of admissions to prison, court commitments and returned conditional release violators, have changed. Court commitments account for a decreasing share of all prison admissions: 68.0% in 1991, down from 84.3% in 1977 (table 10). As a percentage of all admissions, those returning to prison after a conditional release more than doubled, from 14.5% to 30.5%. These conditional release violators had originally left prison as parolees, mandatory releases, and other types of releases involving community supervision.

The absolute number of conditional release violators returned to prison grew 7-fold, from 19,617 in 1977 to 142,100 in 1991, while the number of new court commitments nearly tripled, from 114,230 to 317,237. Overall, the increase in the number of conditional release violators accounted for more than a third of the growth in the total admissions to State prisons.

## An increasing percentage of court commitments sentenced for drug offenses

In 1990, the latest year for which data are available, the number of new court commitments for drug offenses reached a record high, an estimated 103,800 (figure 1). For the first time, the number of persons admitted for drug offenses was greater than the number admitted for property offenses (102,400), violent offenses (87,200), or public-order offenses (26,200). An estimated 32.1% of all new court commitments in 1990 were drug offenders, up from 11.5% in 1977 (figure 2). In 1990 an estimated 31.7% were property offenders; 27.0%, violent offenders; and 8.1%, public-order offenders. The increase in drug offenders admitted to prison accounted for more than 40% of the total growth in new court commitments since 1977.

Table 10. Admissions to State prisons, by type of admission, 1977-91

Year	All admissions <sup>a</sup>	Percent of all admissions		
		New court commitments	Probation/parole violators	Other <sup>b</sup>
1977	135,526	84.3%	14.5%	1.2%
1978	137,315	82.2	16.3	1.5
1979	147,150	80.5	16.5	3.1
1980	159,286	82.4	17.0	.6
1981	187,113	79.7	18.2	2.1
1982	203,269	81.0	18.0	1.0
1983	221,180	78.3	19.4	2.2
1984	218,280	76.5	22.7	.8
1985	240,598	76.1	23.4	.5
1986	273,402	74.4	25.2	.5
1987	307,519	73.4	26.2	.2
1988	347,028	70.7	28.4	.9
1989	423,897	70.3	28.4	1.3
1990	460,739	70.1	29.1	.8
1991	466,285	68.0	30.5	1.5

Note: Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes escapees and AWOLs returned and transfers from other jurisdictions.

<sup>b</sup>Includes returns from appeal or bond and other admissions.

Number of new court commitments, by offense and year of admission

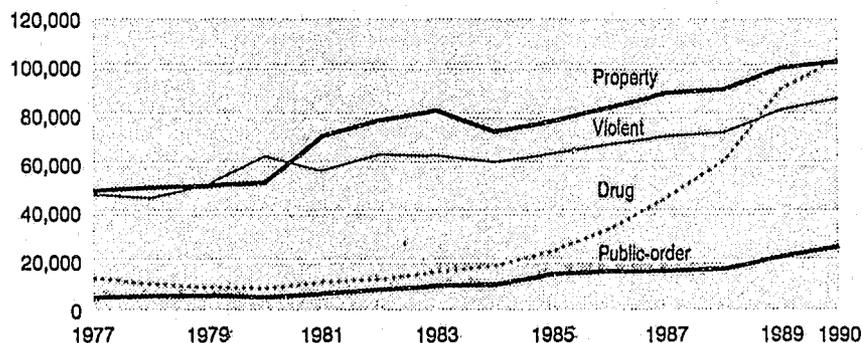


Fig. 1

Percent of new court commitments, by offense and year of admission

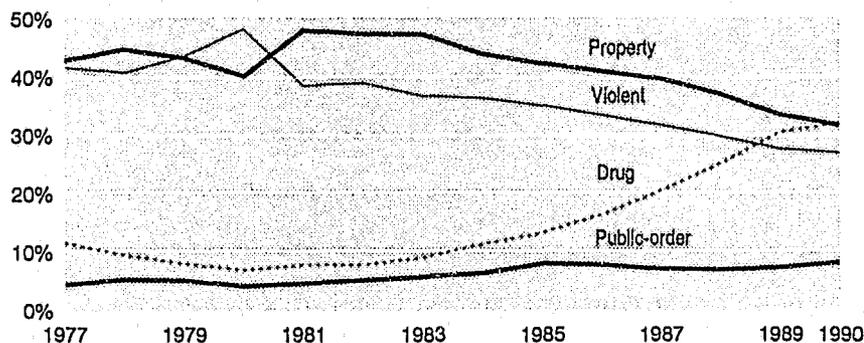


Fig. 2

Growth in the number of persons arrested for drug law violations and an increase in the rate of incarceration for drug offenses account for the change in the prison offense distribution. Between 1977 and 1990, the estimated number of adult arrests for drug law violations increased by 104.4%, from 493,300 to 1,008,300 (table 11). Compounding the impact of more drug arrests, the rate of drug offenders sent to State prison rose from 27 per 1,000 adult arrests for drug violations in 1977 to 103 admissions per 1,000 in 1990.

**The number of arrests and the probability of incarceration increased, 1977 to 1990**

Growth in the prison population was not solely the result of more commitments of drug offenders. Between 1977 and 1990 the number of persons admitted to prison for selected serious offenses, such as murder, nonnegligent manslaughter, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and burglary, also rose by more than 50,000.

Regardless of the type of offense, the number of adults arrested and the ratio of prison admissions to arrests increased between 1977 and 1990. The total number of arrests for serious crimes rose by 48.8%, from 592,400 to 881,300, while the ratio of prison admissions to adult arrests for these crimes increased from 121 commitments per 1,000 arrests to 143 (table 12). Although the prison commitment ratio was higher in 1990 than in 1977, it changed from year-to-year: increasing from 1978 to 1984, fluctuating between 1985 and 1988, and then increasing after 1988.

Although the number of persons admitted to prison grew for each of the five selected serious offenses, increases in the number arrested for aggravated assault and in the probability of incarceration for burglary accounted for much of the total growth.

Growth in the number of arrests for aggravated assault accounted for more than two-thirds of the total increase in arrests for serious crimes. In 1990 an estimated 410,800 adults were arrested for aggravated assault, up from 209,300 in 1977. When combined with an increase in the probability of going to prison from 32 per 1,000 arrests to 56 per 1,000, aggravated assault accounted for nearly a third of the total increase in prison admissions for serious offenses.

An increase in the prison admissions to arrest ratio for burglary accounted for an additional 24% of the total increase in prison admissions for serious offenses. While the annual number of adults arrested for burglary grew by 42,000 between 1977 and 1990, the number of admissions to prison per 1,000 arrests increased from 115 to 160. At least 13,000 more admissions to prison for burglary occurred in 1990 than in 1977 because of the higher rate of imprisonment.

**Table 11. Estimated number of adult arrests for selected serious offenses and drug offenses, 1977-90**

Year	Number of adult arrests for selected serious offenses					Number of adult arrests for drug offenses	
	All	Murder <sup>a</sup>	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault		Burglary
1977	592,400	17,600	24,300	93,000	209,300	248,200	493,300
1978	616,600	18,000	24,900	98,300	227,600	247,600	480,000
1979	632,400	17,800	26,500	96,400	233,100	258,600	435,600
1980	666,500	18,200	26,700	102,200	236,600	282,800	471,200
1981	697,800	19,600	27,000	109,800	243,700	297,700	466,100
1982	754,700	19,900	28,700	116,000	271,800	318,300	584,900
1983	709,800	18,800	29,100	107,800	280,300	293,600	583,500
1984	679,100	16,500	31,000	103,200	260,400	268,000	623,700
1985	689,300	16,800	31,900	102,600	263,300	274,700	716,600
1986	757,500	17,500	31,400	113,000	308,800	288,800	742,700
1987	749,600	17,400	30,600	107,200	307,300	287,100	849,600
1988	840,800	19,500	33,000	116,500	363,600	308,000	1,050,500
1989	897,400	19,600	33,100	127,100	398,200	319,400	1,247,700
1990	881,300	19,800	33,300	127,300	410,800	290,100	1,008,300

<sup>a</sup>Includes nonnegligent manslaughter.

Source: FBI, *Crime in the United States*, 1978-91.

**Table 12. Court commitments to State prisons, relative to adult arrests for selected offenses, 1977-90**

Year	Number of court commitments for selected serious offenses per 1,000 arrests for same offenses					Drug offenses per 1,000 arrests for drug offenses
	All <sup>a</sup>	Murder <sup>b</sup>	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Burglary	
1977	121	403	263	32	115	27
1978	112	411	216	37	108	22
1979	117	478	235	39	105	22
1980	128	621	245	45	107	19
1981	133	386	257	42	136	25
1982	134	573	239	44	135	22
1983	144	468	237	47	154	27
1984	134	364	257	44	138	30
1985	141	488	238	47	141	34
1986	136	497	225	44	143	45
1987	143	517	238	48	145	54
1988	130	441	225	45	139	59
1989	134	454	234	48	146	73
1990	143	460	233	56	160	103

Note: The ratio is the estimated number of new court commitments to State prison per 1,000 estimated adult arrests for each offense category. The number of arrests was estimated from *Crime in the United States*, (FBI, 1978-91).

<sup>a</sup>Includes rape and sexual assault.  
<sup>b</sup>Includes nonnegligent manslaughter.

## Methodological note

This Bulletin is based upon an advance count of prisoners conducted for the National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) program immediately after the end of each calendar year. A detailed, final count containing any revisions to the jurisdictions' advance count will be published later.

## Explanatory notes

**Alabama.** Capacity in community programs is not included in the reported capacity figures.

**Alaska.** Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include, therefore, both jail and prison populations.

**Arizona.** Population counts are based on custody data. Population counts exclude 95 males housed in local jails because of crowding.

**California.** Population counts are based on custody data.

**Colorado.** Population counts for "Inmates with over 1 year maximum sentence" include an undetermined number of "Inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less."

**Connecticut.** Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include, therefore, both jail and prison populations.

**Delaware.** Population counts are based on custody data. Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include, therefore, both jail and prison populations.

**District of Columbia.** Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include, therefore, both jail and prison populations.

**Federal Bureau of Prisons.** The rated capacity of Federal facilities on December 31, 1992, 52,757 inmates, did not include 8,188 contract beds.

**Florida.** Population counts are based on custody data. Population counts for "Inmates with over 1 year maximum sentence" include an undetermined number of "Inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less."

**Georgia.** Population counts are based on custody data. Population counts exclude an undetermined number of inmates housed in local jails solely to ease crowding; these inmates awaited pick-up.

**Hawaii.** Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include, therefore, both jail and prison populations. Capacities of female facilities are included in those reported for male facilities.

**Idaho.** Population counts are from December 30, 1992.

**Illinois.** Population counts are based on custody data. Population counts for "Inmates with over 1 year maximum sentence" include an undetermined number of "Inmates with sentence of 1 year or less."

**Indiana.** Population counts are based on custody data and exclude 761 male and 18 female inmates housed in local jails because of crowding.

**Iowa.** Population counts are based on custody data.

**Maryland.** While population totals are actual manual counts, breakdowns for sentence length are estimates based on the actual sentence length data from Maryland's automated system.

**Massachusetts.** Population counts are based on custody data as of January 1, 1993. Population counts exclude 957 male inmates housed in local jails because of crowding. Population totals are actual counts; however, the totals by sex are estimates believed to be within 0.1% of the actual counts.

**Michigan.** Population counts are based on custody data. Capacity figures exclude the capacities of the Community Residential Program. Population totals are estimates believed to be accurate within 5% of the actual numbers.

**New Jersey.** Each capacity figure includes 788 beds in county facilities.

**North Carolina.** While population totals are actual counts, the breakdowns for sentence length are estimates believed to be accurate to within 1% of the actual counts. Population counts exclude inmates housed in county jails for which the State government had parole authority. These inmates are not under the jurisdiction of the North Carolina Division of Prisons.

**Ohio.** Population counts for "Inmates with over 1 year maximum sentence" include an undetermined number of "Inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less."

**Oklahoma.** Population counts for "Inmates with over 1 year maximum sentence" include an undetermined number of "Inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less." Population counts exclude 442 male and 29 female inmates housed in local jails because of crowding.

**Rhode Island.** Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include, therefore, both jail and prison populations. Populations of inmates given partially suspended sentences (part served in prison and part on probation) are included with the "Inmates with over 1 year maximum sentence" only if the prison portion of the sentence exceeds 1 year. As a result, the "Inmates with over 1 year maximum sentence" populations are understated and the "Inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less" are overstated.

**Tennessee.** Population counts for "Inmates with over 1 year maximum sentence" include an undetermined number of "Inmates with a sentence of 1 year or less." Population counts include 1,064 male and 56 female inmates housed in local jails because of crowding and exclude 2,680 felons sentenced to serve their time in local jails. The State pays to house these 2,680 felons, but the local court maintains jurisdiction.

**Texas.** Population counts are based on custody data.

**Vermont.** Prisons and jails form an almost completely integrated system. However, some county and municipal authorities do operate "local lockups." NPS data include both jail and prison populations. The capacity figures exclude 18 male inmates housed in "local lockups."

**Washington.** Capacity figures exclude State work release facilities which housed 785 male and 169 female inmates on December 31, 1992. State pre-release and work release facilities have beds reserved for 336 male State inmates and 90 female State inmates. The remaining capacity of these facilities is for parolees, probationers, and offenders serving partial confinement sentences.

**West Virginia.** Population counts exclude 362 male and 19 female inmates housed in local jails because of crowding.

**Wyoming.** The male operational capacity figure is the absolute total bed space available to Wyoming's Department of Corrections, and it includes 150 bed spaces in community centers not designated as exclusively male or female.

**Appendix table 1. New court commitments to State prisons, by type of offense, 1977-90**

Most serious offense	Percent admitted to State prison													
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Violent offenses	41.6%	40.7%	43.6%	48.2%	38.5%	39.0%	36.8%	36.4%	35.1%	33.5%	31.7%	29.9%	27.6%	27.0%
Murder*	6.2	6.6	7.2	8.6	5.1	6.9	5.1	3.6	4.5	4.3	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.8
Sexual assault	4.0	4.5	5.2	6.3	4.3	4.3	6.0	6.0	7.4	6.9	7.0	6.2	5.5	5.6
Robbery	21.5	18.8	19.2	19.1	18.9	16.8	14.7	15.9	13.3	12.5	11.3	10.7	10.0	9.2
Aggravated assault	6.0	7.5	7.7	8.1	6.9	7.2	7.1	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.6	6.7	6.4	7.1
Property offenses	42.9	44.7	43.3	40.1	48.0	47.4	47.4	44.0	42.4	41.0	39.6	37.1	33.5	31.7
Burglary	25.0	23.7	23.0	23.0	27.2	26.1	26.1	22.2	21.2	20.3	18.5	17.5	15.6	14.4
Drug offenses	11.5	9.4	7.9	6.8	7.7	7.7	9.0	11.2	13.2	16.3	20.4	25.1	30.5	32.1
Public-order offenses	4.4	5.2	5.1	4.0	4.5	5.1	5.7	6.3	7.9	7.8	7.0	6.9	7.3	8.1
Other	.1	...	...	...	1.3	1.0	1.1	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.0	1.0	1.1

\*Includes nonnegligent manslaughter. The number of nonnegligent manslaughters was estimated for 1977-84.

... Data not available.

Sources: National Prisoner Statistics and National Corrections Reporting Program.

**Appendix table 2. Estimated number of new court commitments to State prison, by selected serious offenses and drug offenses, 1977-90**

Year	Admissions to State prison directly from court						
	All offenses <sup>a</sup>	Selected serious offenses					Drug offenses
	Murder <sup>b</sup>	Sexual assault	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Burglary		
1977	114,230	7,100	4,600	24,600	6,800	28,600	13,000
1978	112,874	7,400	5,100	21,200	8,500	26,800	10,600
1979	118,428	8,500	6,200	22,700	9,100	27,200	9,400
1980	131,215	11,000	8,300	25,000	10,600	30,200	9,000
1981	149,186	7,800	6,400	28,200	10,300	40,600	11,500
1982	164,648	11,400	7,100	27,700	11,900	43,000	12,700
1983	173,289	8,800	10,400	25,500	12,300	45,200	15,500
1984	166,927	6,000	10,000	26,500	11,500	37,100	18,700
1985	183,131	8,200	13,600	24,400	12,500	38,900	24,200
1986	203,315	8,700	14,000	25,400	13,600	41,300	33,100
1987	225,627	9,000	15,800	25,500	14,900	41,700	46,000
1988	245,310	8,600	15,200	26,200	16,400	42,900	61,600
1989	297,827	8,900	16,400	29,800	19,100	46,500	90,800
1990	323,069	9,100	18,100	29,700	22,800	46,500	103,600

Note: For each year the number of new court commitments by selected serious offenses was estimated by multiplying the percentage distribution of offenses in States reporting the most serious offense (appendix table 1) by the total number of new court commitments to State prison nationwide.

<sup>a</sup>Represents the total number of new court commitments to State prison nationwide.  
<sup>b</sup>Includes nonnegligent manslaughter. The number of nonnegligent manslaughters was estimated for 1977-84.

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