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JAIL POPULATION INCREASES AFTER THREE YEARS OF DECLINE

WASHINGTON – The U.S. jail population increased after three consecutive years of decline, the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. The number of inmates confined in county and city jails increased by 1.2 percent, from 735,601 at midyear 2011 to 744,524 at midyear 2012.

Local jails, unlike prisons, are confinement facilities mainly operated by a local law enforcement agency. Jails typically hold inmates while they await court action or serve a sentence of one year or less.

Most of the population increase occurred in California’s jails, due to the Public Safety Realignment (PSR). The PSR is designed to reduce the overcrowding in California’s prisons by placing new nonviolent, nonserious, nonsex offenders under the jurisdiction of local jails. California’s jail population increased during 2012 by an estimated 7,600 inmates, after record-low jail populations between yearend 2010 and yearend 2011.

The jail incarceration rate—the confined population per 100,000 U.S. residents—remained stable between 2011 (236 per 100,000) and 2012 (237 per 100,000). This rate is down from a high of 259 in 2007.

The largest jail jurisdictions (those with an average daily population of 1,000 or more inmates) accounted for about 91 percent (8,090) of the increase in the jail inmate population. The largest jails held nearly half of the jail population at midyear 2012, but accounted for less than 10 percent of all jail jurisdictions nationwide.

Jails operated at 84 percent of capacity at midyear 2012, the lowest percentage since 1984. Rated capacity in jails reached 886,947 at midyear 2012. From 2011 to 2012, rated capacity increased by 0.8 percent, which was nearly a third of the average annual increase each year (2.4 percent) between 2000 and 2011.

(MORE)

Local jails admitted an estimated 11.6 million inmates during the 12 months ending midyear 2012, similar to the 11.8 million inmates admitted in 2011 but down from 13.6 million in 2008. The number of persons admitted in 2012 was about 16 times the size of the average daily population (735,983) at midyear 2012.

Small jail jurisdictions holding fewer than 50 inmates accounted for seven percent of all admissions. The number of inmates admitted to these facilities was about 35 times the size of their average daily population between 2011 and 2012. These small jurisdictions also experienced a turnover rate of 131 percent, compared to a 50 percent turnover rate in large jail jurisdictions.

Overall, males accounted for 87 percent of the jail population at midyear 2012. Whites accounted for 46 percent of inmates, while blacks represented 37 percent and Hispanics represented 15 percent. About 5,400 juveniles were held in local jails (less than 1 percent of the confined population).

At midyear 2012, about 6 in 10 inmates were not convicted but were in jail awaiting court action on a current charge—a rate unchanged since 2005. About 4 in 10 inmates were sentenced offenders or convicted offenders awaiting sentencing.

The report, *Jail Inmates at Midyear, 2012 – Statistical Tables* (NCJ 241264), was written by BJS statistician Todd Minton. The reports, related documents and additional information about BJS statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.