

The Prison Index



Get the real facts about crime and punishment in the US today!

The Prison Index: Taking the Pulse of the Crime Control Industry is the first index of statistics about our nation's criminal justice system ever published. Containing 611 facts and 17 graphs and charts, this 48-page volume presents, in black-and-white, the state of crime control in America. Below is just a sample of some of the insightful and useful information, in easy to read index form.

Felon Disenfranchisement: Jim Crow Redux

African-Americans barred from the ballot by "reason" of criminal conviction

- Percent of African-American men disenfranchised (not allowed to vote, temporarily or permanently) by a felony conviction¹: **13.1%**
- Percent of all voting age Americans disenfranchised by reason of a felony conviction²: **2.28%**
- Number of states that disenfranchise more than 10% of their African-American population⁵: **16**

Each state picks its own method of disenfranchisement

- Number of states that deny the vote, for life, to all ex-offenders in their state who have completed their sentences⁶: **8**
- Number of states that deny the vote to some or all of their citizens who have completed their sentences⁷: **15**
- Number of states that disenfranchise prisoners convicted of a felony⁸: **48**
- Number of states that disenfranchise felony probationers⁹: **29**
- Number of states that disenfranchise felons on parole¹⁰: **33**

History

- Year the Civil War ends, and the states of the former Confederacy put under military rule¹¹: **1865**
- Number of African-Americans elected to state legislatures in states of the former Confederacy, 1872¹³: **324**
- Year federal troops left the South and Reconstruction ends¹⁴: **1877**
- Year Mississippi passes constitution disenfranchising only citizens convicted of crimes thought more likely to be committed by African-Americans¹⁵: **1890**
- Number of African-Americans elected to state legislatures in states of the former Confederacy, 1900¹⁶: **0**
- Year a federal court ruled that felon disenfranchisement does not bear "the taint of historically-rooted racial discrimination"¹⁷: **1985**

Today

- Percent of voting age population that is African-American, 2000¹⁸: **11.4%**
- Percent of state legislators that are African-American, 2000¹⁹: **7.7%**

(Endnotes)

¹ Sentencing Project & Human Rights Watch, *Losing the Vote*, October 1998, p. 9.

² Uggan and Manza, *Democratic Contraction?*

American Sociological Review, Dec. 2002, Vol 67, Appendix Table A.

⁵ Calculation, *Ibid.*, p. 798.

⁶ Sentencing Project, *Felony Disenfranchisement Laws in the United States*, updated 11/02, p. 1.

⁷ Calculation, *Democratic Contraction*, p. 797

⁸ Sentencing Project, *Felony Disenfranchisement Laws in the United States*, updated 11/02, p. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3

¹¹ *World Book Encyclopedia*, 2001 Mac OS X edition.

¹³ Andrew L. Shapiro, Note: Challenging Criminal Disenfranchisement Under the Voting Rights Act: A New Strategy 103 *Yale L. J.* 537, 540-541, n. 13

Ibid., 538

¹⁴ *World Book Encyclopedia*, 2001 Mac OS X edition.

¹⁵ Shapiro, p. 540-541, n. 19-20.

¹⁶ *LR1-8* at 538

¹⁷ *Wesley v. Collins*, 605 F. Supp. 802 (M.D. Tenn. 1985)

¹⁸ Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, *Black Elected Officials: A Statistical Summary 2000*, Table 6.

¹⁹ Calculation, *Ibid.*, Table 6.

A Joint Project of The Western Prison Project and the Prison Policy Initiative

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