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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
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GROWTH IN PRISON AND JAIL POPULATIONS SLOWING: 16 States Report Declines in the Number of Prisoners

WASHINGTON – As of June 30, 2008, state and federal correctional authorities had jurisdiction or legal authority over 1,610,584 prisoners. Additionally, 785,556 inmates were held in custody in local jails, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, announced today.

During the six months ending June 30, 2008, the prison population increased by 0.8 percent, compared to 1.6 percent during the same period in 2007. The local jail population increased by 0.7 percent during the 12-month period ending June 30, 2008, accounting for the slowest growth in 27 years.

Sixteen states reported decreases in their prison populations. California (down 962 prisoners) and Kentucky (down 847) reported the largest decreases since yearend 2007.

While the prison populations in the remaining 34 states increased, growth slowed in 18 of these states. For these 18 states, prison populations increased by 1.6 percent in the first half of 2008 as compared to the increase of 3.1 percent in the first half of 2007. Minnesota experienced the largest growth rate (up 5.2 percent) in the first six months of 2008, followed by Maine (up 4.6 percent) and Rhode Island and South Carolina (both up 4.3 percent).

The federal prison system added 1,524 prisoners in the first six months of 2008, reaching a total of 201,142 prisoners. The 0.8 percent growth represented the smallest increase in the first six months since 1993 (when BJS began collecting data at midyear).

State and federal prisoners in private facilities increased 6.8 percent during the 12-month period, reaching 126,249 at midyear 2008. The federal system (32,712), Texas (19,851), and Florida (9,026) reported the largest number of prisoners in private facilities.

As of June 30, 2008, over 2.3 million inmates, or one in every 131 U.S. residents, were held in custody in state or federal prisons or in local jails, regardless of sentence length or conviction status. Since yearend 2000, the nation's prison and jail custody populations have increased by 373,502 inmates (or 19 percent).

(MORE)

Over one-third of inmates held in custody at midyear 2008 were in local jails. More than half (52 percent) were housed in the 180 largest jail facilities, with average daily populations of 1,000 inmates or more. Overall, an estimated 13.6 million inmates were admitted to local jails during the 12-month period ending June 30, 2008.

Local jails operated at about 95 percent of their rated capacity as of June 30, 2008. During the preceding 12 months, the nation's jail capacity increased by 14,911 beds, while the number of inmates increased by 5,382 persons.

Almost two-thirds (63 percent) of all jail inmates were awaiting court action or had not been convicted of their current charge, up from 56 percent in 2000. Based on jail jurisdictions that reported data, non-U.S. citizens made up 9.0 percent of their total jail population in 2008, up from 7.7 percent in 2007 and 6.1 percent in 2000.

Among inmates held in custody in prisons or jails, black males were incarcerated at 6.6 times the rate of white males. One in 21 black males was incarcerated at midyear 2008, compared to one in 138 white males. At midyear 2008, black males (846,000) outnumbered white males (712,500) and Hispanic males (427,000) among inmates in prisons and jails. About 37 percent of all male inmates at midyear 2008 were black, down 41 percent from midyear 2000.

Female incarceration rates were substantially lower than male incarceration rates at every age. Black females (with an incarceration rate of 349 per 100,000) were more than twice as likely as Hispanic females (147 per 100,000) and over 3.5 times more likely than white females (93 per 100,000) to have been in prison or jail on June 30, 2008. An estimated 207,700 women were held in prison or jails at midyear 2008, up 33 percent since midyear 2000.

The accompanying standardized tables, *Prison Inmates at Midyear 2008 – Statistical Tables* (NCJ 225619) and *Jail Inmates at Midyear 2008 – Statistical Tables* (NCJ 225709), were prepared by BJS statisticians Heather C. West, Todd D. Minton, and William J. Sabol. Following publication, the tables can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/pim08st.htm> and <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/jim08st.htm>.

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical reports and programs, please visit the BJS Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has five component bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office for Victims of Crime. In addition, OJP has two program offices: the Community Capacity Development Office, which incorporates the Weed and Seed strategy, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.

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