



Bureau of Justice Statistics

Data Brief

June 2010, NCJ 230189

Prisoners at Yearend 2009—Advance Counts

Heather C. West, Ph.D.
BJS Statistician

At yearend 2009, state and federal correctional authorities had jurisdiction over 1,613,656 prisoners, an increase of 0.2% (3,897 prisoners) from yearend 2008 (figure 1).^{*} This was the smallest annual increase in the current decade and continued the trend of slower growth observed in the prison population since 2006.

The number of prisoners under state jurisdiction declined by 2,941 prisoners (0.2%), the only decrease in the state prison population between 2000 and 2009; the federal prison population increased by 6,838 prisoners (3.4%) and accounted for all of the increase in the U.S. prison population; (appendix table 1).

^{*}Jurisdiction refers to prisoners under the legal authority of state or federal correctional officials, regardless of where a prisoner is held.

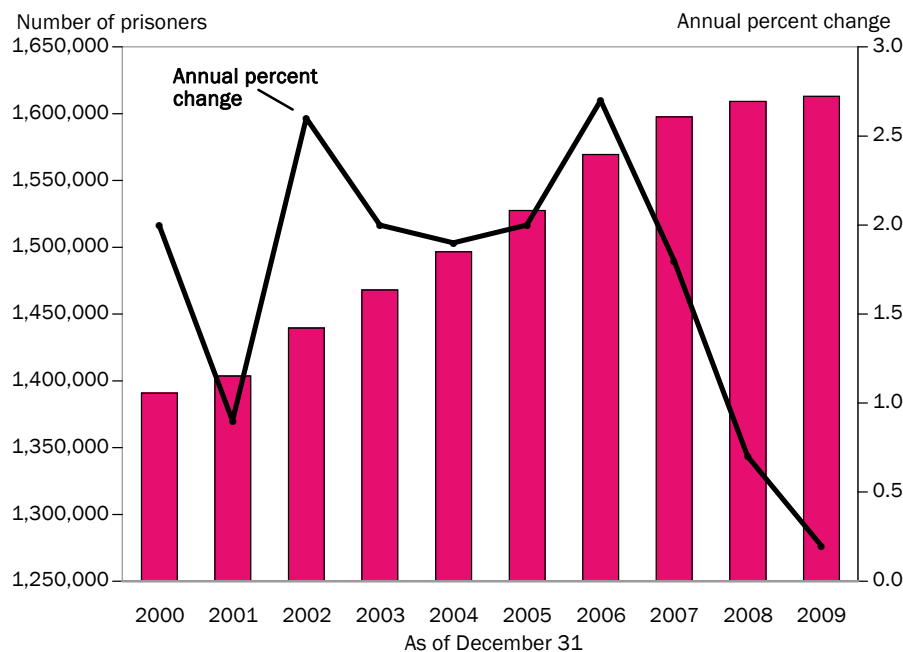
Twenty-four states reported decreases in their prison population during 2009, with a combined total decrease of 15,223 state prisoners (table 1). About three-fourths (71.7%) of this decrease resulted from declines reported in six states reporting decreases of more than 1,000 prisoners: Michigan (down 3,260), California (down 2,395), New York (down 1,660), Mississippi (down 1,272), Texas (down 1,257), and Maryland (down 1,069).

Offsetting the total decrease of 15,223 state prisoners was a total increase of 12,282 prisoners in the remaining 26 states. Five of these states reported increases of more than 1,000 prisoners and accounted for more than half (60.7%) of the total increase: Pennsylvania (up 2,214), Florida (up 1,527), Louisiana (up 1,399), Alabama (up 1,282), and Arizona (up 1,038).

The factors contributing to the yearend change will be discussed in *Prisoners in 2009*.

Figure 1.

Prisoners under state and federal jurisdiction at yearend 2000-2008, with advance counts for 2009



The drop in semi-annual change continued during 2009

During recent years, most of the annual change in the U.S. prison population has occurred over the period from December to June, with a relatively small amount of change occurring from June to December. The seasonality has been particularly marked since 2006, as the pattern of larger changes from December to June followed by smaller changes from June to December has been extremely consistent (figure 2). From 2006 to 2009, the population change from December to June accounted for over 75%, on average, of the annual change. For example, growth in the first half of 2006 accounted for 72.1% of the total year's growth (table 2). Growth in the first half of 2007 accounted for 87.2% of the overall growth. During 2008 and 2009, all of the population growth occurred in the first half of the year.

Since 2006, the level of change during each semi-annual period (December 31 through June 30 and June 30 through December 31) has dropped. During the first half of 2006, the prison population increased by 30,306 prisoners. The prison population continued to increase during the same time period in 2007, with a smaller increase of 24,666 prisoners. This trend continued during the first half of 2008 and 2009, when the prison population increased by 12,297 prisoners and 7,719 prisoners, respectively.

Similarly, the level of semi-annual change for the second half of the year also dropped. From June 30, 2006 to December 31, 2006, the prison population increased by 11,710. During the same period in 2007, there was an increase of 3,634 prisoners. In 2008, the direction of growth in the prison population reversed, decreasing by 783 prisoners. The

Table 1.

Changes in the number of prisoners in selected jurisdictions, December 31, 2008 to December 31, 2009

	Change in number	Percent of total change
Total change	3,897	100.0%
Federal	6,838	175.5
State	-2,941	-75.5
Total change in states with increasing prison populations	12,282	100.0%
States with increases of more than 1,000 prisoners	7,460	60.7
Pennsylvania	2,214	18.0
Florida	1,527	12.4
Louisiana	1,399	11.4
Alabama	1,282	10.4
Arizona	1,038	8.5
Other states with increases	4,822	39.3
Total change in states with decreasing prison populations	-15,223	100.0%
States with decreases of more than 1,000 prisoners	-10,913	71.7
Michigan	-3,260	21.4
California	-2,395	15.7
New York	-1,660	10.9
Mississippi	-1,272	8.4
Texas	-1,257	8.2
Maryland	-1,069	7.0
Other states with decreases	-4,310	28.3

decrease of 3,822 prisoners from June 30, 2009 to December 31, 2009 was the largest drop in the last 6 months of any year from 2000 through 2009.

Smaller increases have led to slower rates of growth in the number of prisoners during these semi-annual periods. In the first half of 2006, the prison population grew at a rate of 2.0%. Over the next 3 years, growth in the prison population during the first half of the year slowed from 1.6% in 2007 to 0.8% in 2008, and 0.5% at midyear 2009. From June 30, 2005 to December 31, 2005, the prison population increased by 0.9%. During the same period in 2006 and 2007, the growth slowed to 0.8% and 0.2%, respectively. A negligible decrease in growth (783 prisoners) was observed during the last half of 2008. The growth rate continued to decrease by 0.2% during the last half of 2009, the largest decrease observed in the last 10 years.

Figure 2.

Six-month change in the number of prisoners under state and federal jurisdiction, December 1999-2009

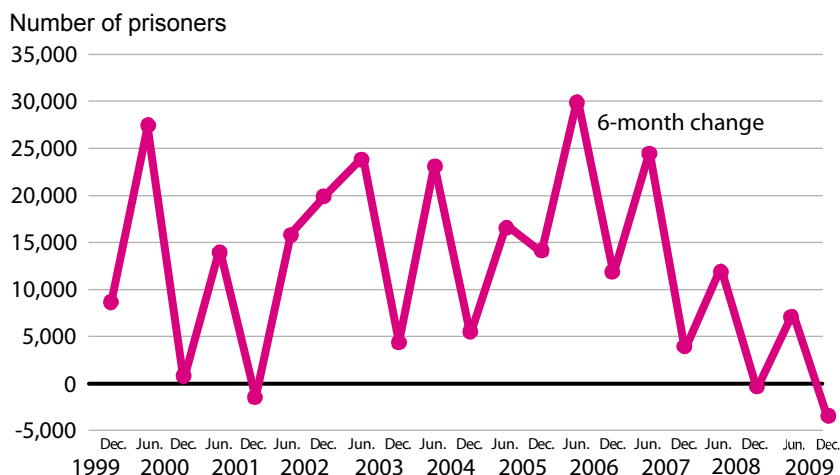


Table 2.

Change in the U.S. prison population, 2000-2009

Year	Six-month change				Annual change December through December
	First 6 months of the year (December through June)	Percent of annual change	Second 6 months of the year (June through December)	Percent of annual change	
2000	27,243	98.8%	317	1.2%	27,560
2001	14,270	111.7	-1,499	-11.7	12,771
2002	15,905	44.0	20,207	56.0	36,112
2003	24,053	84.5	4,404	15.5	28,457
2004	23,233	81.5	5,266	18.5	28,499
2005	16,866	54.7	13,963	45.3	30,829
2006	30,306	72.1	11,710	27.9	42,016
2007	24,666	87.2	3,634	12.8	28,300
2008	12,297	105.0	-783	-6.8	11,514
2009	7,719	198.1	-3,822	-98.1	3,897

Methodology

National Prisoner Statistics

Begun in 1926 under a mandate from Congress, the National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) program collects statistics on prisoners at midyear and yearend. The Census Bureau serves as the data collection agent for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). BJS depends entirely on voluntary participation by state departments of corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons for NPS data.

The NPS distinguishes between inmates in custody and prisoners under jurisdiction. To have custody of an inmate, a state or the Federal Bureau of Prisons must hold that inmate in one of its facilities. To have jurisdiction over a prisoner, a state or the Federal Bureau of Prisons must have legal authority over the prisoner. Some states are unable to provide counts that distinguish between custody and jurisdiction.

The NPS jurisdiction counts include prisoners serving a sentence within a jurisdiction's facilities including prisons, penitentiaries, correctional facilities, halfway houses, boot camps, farms, training or treatment centers, and hospitals. They include prisoners who are—

- temporarily absent (less than 30 days), out to court, or on work release
- housed in privately operated facilities, local jails, other state or federal facilities
- serving concurrent sentences for more than one correctional authority.

The NPS custody counts include all inmates held within a respondent's facilities including inmates housed for other correctional facilities. The custody counts exclude inmates held in local jails and in other jurisdictions. With a few exceptions, the NPS custody counts exclude inmates held in private facilities.

Additionally, NPS data include counts of inmates in combined jail-prison systems in Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

States and the Federal Bureau of Prisons have the ability to update data submitted the previous year. This report provides updates for midyear and yearend 2008 counts.

The District of Columbia (D.C.) became a jail-only jurisdiction by yearend 2001, when the Federal Bureau of Prisons assumed responsibility for housing all sentenced felons from D.C. Selected previously published prisoner counts and percent population change statistics include D.C. jail inmates for 2001, the last year of collection. See notes in tables for additional information.

Additional information about the NPS data collection instrument is available on the BJS Website at <<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov>>.

Definitions

Average annual change—the arithmetic average (mean) annual change across a specific time period.

Jurisdiction—the number of prisoners under the legal authority of state or federal correctional officials, regardless of where the prisoners are held. For example, state-sentenced prisoners held in local jails are under the jurisdiction of state correctional authorities.

Prisons—compared to jail facilities, prisons are longer-term facilities run by a state or the federal government and typically hold prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year. However, sentence length may vary by state. Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, Delaware, Alaska, and Hawaii operate integrated systems which combine prisons and jails.

Prisoners—individuals under the legal authority (jurisdiction) of state and federal correctional officials.

NPS jurisdiction notes

Alaska—Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison popula-

NPS jurisdiction notes

Alaska—Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations housed in-state and out-of-state. Jurisdictional counts exclude inmates held in local jails that are operated by communities.

Arizona—Population counts are based on custody data and inmates in contracted beds.

California—Jurisdiction counts include felons and unsentenced inmates who are temporarily absent, e.g., housed in local jails, hospitals, etc. This definition is comparable to the 1998 NPS 1b definition.

Colorado—Counts include 222 male and 10 female inmates in the Youthful Offender System, which was established primarily for violent juvenile offenders.

Connecticut—Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

Delaware—Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

Georgia—Counts are based on custody data.

Hawaii—Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

Iowa—Population counts are based on custody data. The jurisdiction count for December 31, 2009 is not comparable to previous years due to a change in measurement. As of 2009, the Iowa Department of Corrections began including the Operating While Intoxicated population, prisoners on work release, and prisoners in violation of their sentence.

Oklahoma—Population counts for inmates with sentences of less than 1 year consist mainly of offenders ordered by the court to the Delayed Sentencing Program for Young Adults pursuant to 22 O.S. 996 through 996.3.

Oregon—Counts include an undetermined number of inmates with sentences of 1 year or less. County authorities retain jurisdiction over the majority of these types of inmates.

Rhode Island—Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

Vermont—Prisons and jails form one integrated system. All NPS data include jail and prison populations.

Appendix Table 1.

Prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities, by jurisdiction,
December 31, 2000 and 2008, with advanced counts for 2009

Region and jurisdiction	Number of prisoners			Average annual change, 2000-2008	Percent change, 2008-2009
	12/31/2000	12/31/2008	12/31/2009		
U.S. total^a	1,391,261	1,609,759	1,613,656	1.8%	0.2%
Federal	145,416	201,280	208,118	4.1	3.4
State	1,245,845	1,408,479	1,405,538	1.5	-0.2
Northeast	174,826	178,642	177,361	0.3%	-0.7%
Connecticut ^a	18,355	20,661	19,716	1.5	-4.6
Maine	1,679	2,195	2,206	3.4	0.5
Massachusetts	10,722	11,408	11,316	0.8	-0.8
New Hampshire	2,257	2,702	2,731	2.3	1.1
New Jersey	29,784	25,953	25,382	-1.7	-2.2
New York	70,199	60,347	58,687	-1.9	-2.8
Pennsylvania	36,847	49,215	51,429	3.7	4.5
Rhode Island ^a	3,286	4,045	3,674	2.6	-9.2
Vermont ^a	1,697	2,116	2,220	2.8	4.9
Midwest	237,378	264,314	261,603	1.4%	-1.0%
Illinois	45,281	45,474	45,161	0.1	-0.7
Indiana	20,125	28,322	28,808	4.4	1.7
Iowa ^b	7,955	8,766	8,813	1.2	:
Kansas	8,344	8,539	8,641	0.3	1.2
Michigan	47,718	48,738	45,478	0.3	-6.7
Minnesota	6,238	9,910	9,986	6.0	0.8
Missouri	27,543	30,186	30,563	1.2	1.2
Nebraska	3,895	4,520	4,474	1.9	-1.0
North Dakota	1,076	1,452	1,486	3.8	2.3
Ohio	45,833	51,686	51,606	1.5	-0.2
South Dakota	2,616	3,342	3,434	3.1	2.8
Wisconsin	20,754	23,379	23,153	1.5	-1.0
South	561,214	647,312	649,451	1.8%	0.3%
Alabama	26,332	30,508	31,790	1.9	4.2
Arkansas	11,915	14,716	15,208	2.7	3.3
Delaware ^a	6,921	7,075	6,794	0.3	-4.0
District of Columbia	7,456	~	~	:	:
Florida	71,319	102,388	103,915	4.6	1.5
Georgia ^b	44,232	52,719	53,371	2.2	1.2
Kentucky	14,919	21,706	21,638	4.8	-0.3
Louisiana	35,207	38,381	39,780	1.1	3.6
Maryland	23,538	23,324	22,255	-0.1	-4.6
Mississippi	20,241	22,754	21,482	1.5	-5.6
North Carolina	31,266	39,482	39,860	3.0	1.0
Oklahoma	23,181	25,864	26,397	1.4	2.1
South Carolina	21,778	24,326	24,288	1.4	-0.2
Tennessee	22,166	27,228	26,965	2.6	-1.0
Texas	166,719	172,506	171,249	0.4	-0.7
Virginia	30,168	38,276	38,092	3.0	-0.5
West Virginia	3,856	6,059	6,367	5.8	5.1
West	272,427	318,211	317,123	2.0%	-0.3%
Alaska ^a	4,173	5,014	5,285	2.3	5.4
Arizona ^b	26,510	39,589	40,627	5.1	2.6
California	163,001	173,670	171,275	0.8	-1.4
Colorado	16,833	23,274	22,795	4.1	-2.1
Hawaii ^a	5,053	5,955	5,891	2.1	-1.1
Idaho	5,535	7,290	7,400	3.5	1.5
Montana	3,105	3,545	3,605	1.7	1.7
Nevada	10,063	12,743	12,482	3.0	-2.0
New Mexico	5,342	6,402	6,519	2.3	1.8
Oregon	10,580	14,167	14,403	3.7	1.7
Utah	5,637	6,552	6,533	1.9	-0.3
Washington	14,915	17,926	18,233	2.3	1.7
Wyoming	1,680	2,084	2,075	2.7	-0.4

~Not applicable. As of December 31, 2001, sentenced felons from the District of Columbia were the responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

: Not calculated.

^aPrisons and jails form one integrated system. Data include total jail and prison populations.

^bPrison population based on custody counts.

^cData for 2008 and 2009 are not comparable. See *Jurisdiction* notes.

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Statistics



PRESORTED STANDARD
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
DOJ/BJJS
Permit No. G-91

Washington, DC 20531

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Michael D. Sinclair is acting director.

This Crime Data Brief was written by Heather C. West, Ph.D. Todd Minton, Sheri Simmons, and Tracy Snell verified the report.

Joshua Giunta carried out the data collection and processing under the supervision of Steve Simoncini, Governments Division, Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Catherine Bird and Jill Duncan edited the report, Tina Dorsey produced the report, and Jayne Robinson prepared the report for final printing under the supervision of Doris J. James.

June 2010, NCJ 230189

This report in portable document format and in ASCII and its related statistical data and tables are available at the BJS World Wide Web Internet site: <<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=2272>>.

Office of Justice Programs

Innovation • Partnerships • Safer Neighborhoods
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>