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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
Contact: Sheila Jerusalem (202) 307-0703
After hours: (202) 616-3227

PRISON POPULATION DECLINED IN 26 STATES DURING 2011

WASHINGTON – Twenty-six state departments of corrections reported decreases in their prison population during 2011, the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reported today. California reported the largest decline (down 15,493), while New Jersey, New York, Michigan, Florida, and Texas each had population decreases of more than 1,000 prisoners in 2011.

Among states that had increases in their prison populations, Tennessee and Kentucky both added more than 1,000 inmates in 2011.

During 2011, the total U.S. prison population declined for the second consecutive year, to under 1.6 million inmates or 15,023 fewer inmates than in 2010. This represents a 0.9 percent decrease in the total prison population.

The overall decline in 2011 was due to the decrease in state prisoners, down 21,614 prisoners or 1.5 percent from 2010. The reduction in California’s prison population under the Public Safety Realignment policy accounted for 72 percent of the total decrease in state prisoners. The federal prison population offset the decline in the states with an increase of 6,591 prisoners (up 3.1 percent) from 2010 to 2011.

As in 2010, prison releases in 2011 (688,384) exceeded prison admissions (668,800). Admissions to federal prisons increased 12 percent (up 6,513 inmates) in 2011 while state prison admissions decreased 6.4 percent (down 41,511 inmates) from 2010. The number of admissions to state prisons (608,166) fell to its lowest level since 2001. Sixty-three percent (26,340 admissions) of the decrease in state prison admissions between 2010 and 2011 was due to fewer parole violators being reincarcerated.

In 2011 the U.S. imprisonment rate dropped to 492 inmates per 100,000 residents, continuing a decline since 2007, when the imprisonment rates peaked at 506 inmates per 100,000 residents. The national imprisonment rate for males (932 per 100,000 male U.S. residents) was over 14 times the imprisonment rate for females (65 per 100,000 female U.S. residents).

The percentage of all prisoners housed in private prison facilities increased slightly, from 7.9 percent in 2010 to 8.2 percent in 2011. States housed 6.7 percent of all inmates in private facilities in 2011, a

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decrease of 1,720 inmates from 2010. The federal Bureau of Prisons held 18 percent (38,546 inmates) of its population in private facilities in 2011, an increase of 4,716 prisoners from 2010.

In 2010 (the most recent data available) 53 percent of sentenced state prisoners were serving time for a violent offense, 18 percent for property offenses, 17 percent for drug crimes and 10 percent for public order offenses, such as weapons, drunk driving, commercialized vice and court offenses.

An estimated 188,200 sentenced state prisoners (14 percent) were serving time for murder or manslaughter in 2010, while 160,800 offenders were incarcerated for rape and other sexual assaults. Between 2000 and 2010, the estimated number of state prisoners sentenced for any violent offense increased by 99,400 inmates, or 16 percent (from 625,600 prisoners in 2000 to 725,000 in 2010).

Inmates sentenced for drug offenses comprised 48 percent (94,600 inmates) of the sentenced federal prison population in 2011, while 7.6 percent of federal prisoners were held for violent offenses. An estimated 11 percent (22,100 inmates) were serving time in federal prison for immigration offenses.

Approximately 61 percent of sentenced state and federal prisoners in 2011 were age 39 or younger. States held 1,790 inmates under age 18 in custody at yearend 2011 (0.1 percent of the total state prison custody population), down from 2,295 at midyear 2010.

About half (52 percent) of non-Hispanic white male prisoners were age 39 or younger, compared to 63 percent of non-Hispanic black and 68 percent of Hispanic male prisoners. White and black female inmates age 39 or younger comprised 60 percent of each racial group in 2011, compared to 67 percent of Hispanic females.

The report, *Prisoners in 2011* (NCJ 239808), was written by BJS statisticians E. Ann Carson and William J. Sabol. The report, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 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>.