

Black Disparities in Youth Incarceration

African Americans 5X More Likely than Whites to be Held

Black youth were more than five times as likely to be detained or committed compared to white youth, according to data from the Department of Justice collected in October 2015 and recently released.¹ Racial and ethnic disparities have long-plagued juvenile justice systems nationwide, and the new data show the problem is increasing. In 2001, black youth were four times as likely as whites to be incarcerated.

Juvenile facilities, including 1,800 residential treatment centers, detention centers, training schools, and juvenile jails and prisons² held 48,043 youth as of October 2015.³ Forty-four percent of these youth were African American, despite the fact that African Americans comprise only 16 percent of all youth in the United States.⁴ African American youth are more likely to be in custody than white youth in every state but one, Hawaii.

Between 2001 and 2015, overall juvenile placements fell by 54 percent. However, white youth placements have declined faster than black youth placements, resulting in a worsening of already significant racial disparity.

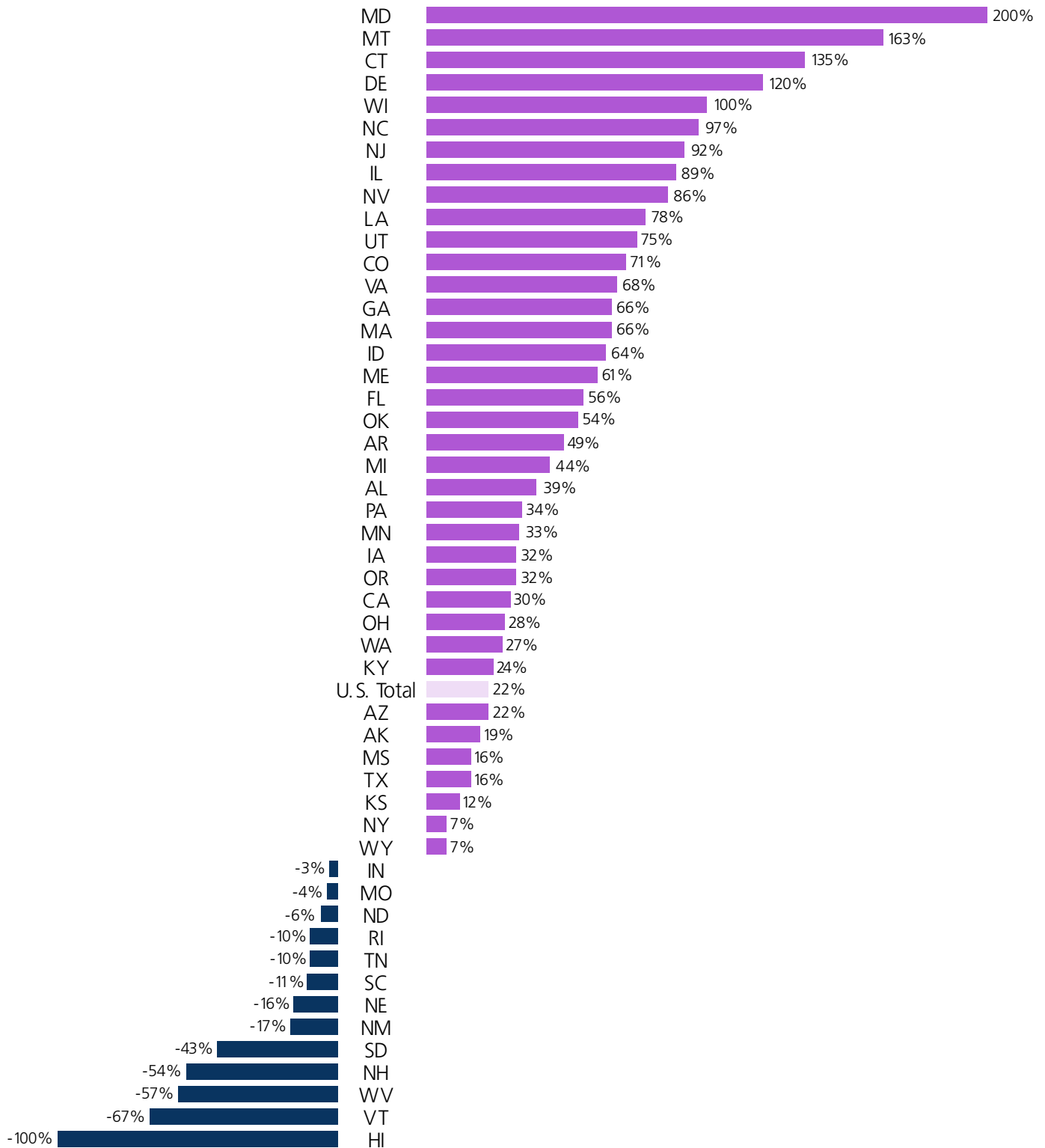
Nationally, the youth rate of incarceration was 152 per 100,000. Black youth placement rate was 433 per 100,000, compared to a white youth placement rate of 86 per 100,000. Overall, the racial disparity between black and white youth in custody increased 22 percent since 2001. Racial disparities grew in 37 states and decreased in 13.

- In six states, African American youth are at least 10 times as likely to be held in placement as are white youth: New Jersey, Wisconsin, Montana, Delaware, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.
- Five states saw their racial disparity at least double: Maryland, Montana, Connecticut, Delaware, and Wisconsin.
- Three states decreased their racial disparity by at least half: Vermont, West Virginia, and New Hampshire.

Black/White Youth Placement Rate per 100,000, 2015

State	White Rate	Black Rate	B/W Racial Disparity
Alabama	97	331	3.41
Alaska	176	710	4.03
Arizona	75	277	3.69
Arkansas	93	522	5.61
California	76	711	9.36
Colorado	108	701	6.49
Connecticut	14	145	10.36
Delaware	42	505	12.02
District of Columbia	0	363	–
Florida	97	445	4.59
Georgia	42	235	5.60
Hawaii	36	0	0.00
Idaho	179	306	1.71
Illinois	44	426	9.68
Indiana	154	621	4.03
Iowa	141	1,030	7.30
Kansas	114	721	6.32
Kentucky	76	361	4.75
Louisiana	61	403	6.61
Maine	56	333	5.95
Maryland	30	238	7.93
Massachusetts	22	222	10.09
Michigan	96	479	4.99
Minnesota	75	648	8.64
Mississippi	32	131	4.09
Missouri	112	516	4.61
Montana	113	1,485	13.14
Nebraska	123	811	6.59
Nevada	131	736	5.62
New Hampshire	47	206	4.38
New Jersey	11	337	30.64
New Mexico	86	472	5.49
New York	54	305	5.65
North Carolina	22	164	7.45
North Dakota	135	683	5.06
Ohio	98	560	5.71
Oklahoma	84	516	6.14
Oregon	235	1,103	4.69
Pennsylvania	93	862	9.27
Rhode Island	97	693	7.14
South Carolina	89	242	2.72
South Dakota	162	341	2.10
Tennessee	65	195	3.00
Texas	94	417	4.44
Utah	73	606	8.30
Vermont	46	189	4.11
Virginia	59	410	6.95
Washington	88	487	5.53
West Virginia	301	566	1.88
Wisconsin	56	846	15.11
Wyoming	243	1,166	4.80
U.S. Total	86	433	5.03

Change in Black/White Racial Disparity in Youth Incarceration, 2001 vs. 2015



1 This fact sheet addresses black-white placement disparities. Fact sheets on Latino and American Indian disparities are forthcoming.
 2 Hockenberry, S., Wachter, A., & Sladky, A. (Sept. 2016). Juvenile Residential Facility Census, 2014: Selected Findings (NCJ 250123). Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/250123.pdf>
 3 Placement statistics throughout this factsheet are calculated from Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Kang, W., & Puzanchera, C. (2017). "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement." Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>
 4 Puzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2016). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2015." Online. Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>. Youth is defined as those between the ages of 10 and 17, inclusive.

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Latino Disparities in Youth Incarceration

Latino Youth 65% More Likely Than Whites to be Held

Latino youth are 65 percent more likely to be detained or committed than their white peers, according to data from the Department of Justice collected in October 2015 and recently released.¹ While this disparity is concerning, the data represent a modest improvement from 2001, when Latino youth were 73 percent more likely to be in placement. The Latino disparity is smaller than that for African American youth, who are 500 percent more likely than white youth to be detained or committed.²

These data should be viewed with caution due to limitations and variation in collection of Latino data throughout the justice system.³ In some states there is likely an undercount of Latinos, who are labeled as white, reducing the reported rate of ethnic disparity. In other states, improvements in the collection of Latino data between 2001 and 2015 implies worsening ethnic disparities though actually reflecting growing accuracy of data.

Juvenile facilities, including 1,800 residential treatment centers, detention centers, training schools, and juvenile jails and prisons⁴ held 48,043 youth as of October 2015.⁵ Twenty-two percent of these youth were Latino. In 37 states Latino youth are more likely to be in custody than white youth.

Between 2001 and 2015, overall juvenile placements fell by 54 percent, including declines for whites, blacks, and Latinos. But since white placements fell to a greater degree (64 percent) than the other groups, racial and ethnic disparities increased from the start of the century even as the overall figures were declining.

Latino youth's placement rate was 142 per 100,000, 65 percent higher than white youth's placement rate of 86 per 100,000. Ethnic disparities grew in 20 states, did not change in one, and decreased in 28.⁶

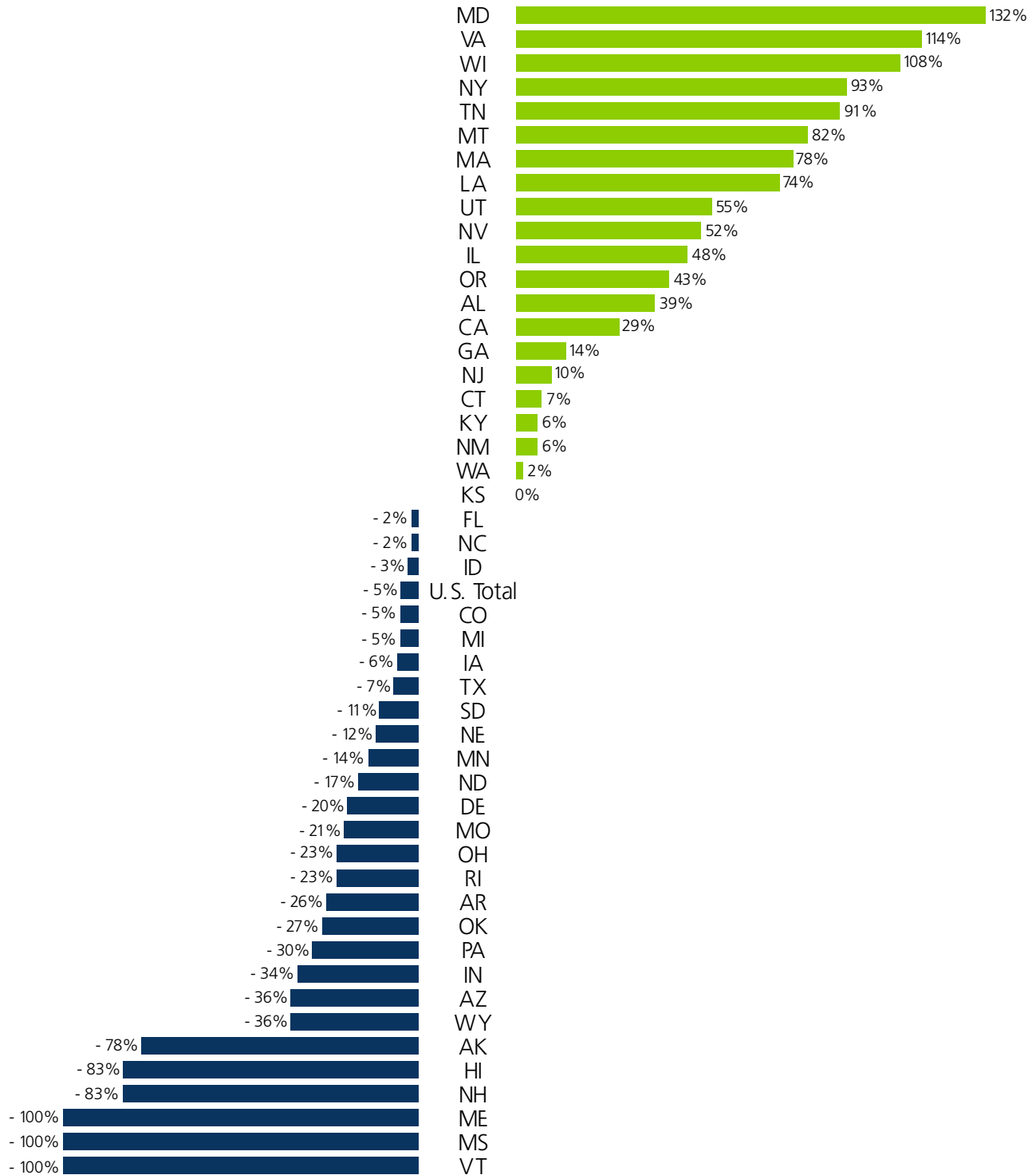
- In eight states, Latino youth are at least three times as likely to be held in placement as are white youth: Massachusetts, New Jersey, South Carolina, Montana, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Rhode Island.
- Three states saw their Latino/white disparity more than double: Maryland, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Latino/White Youth Placement Rate per 100,000 (2015)

State	White Rate	Latino Rate	L/W Racial Disparity
Alabama	97	93	0.96
Alaska	176	46	0.26
Arizona	75	81	1.08
Arkansas	93	96	1.03
California	76	180	2.37
Colorado	108	227	2.10
Connecticut	14	47	3.36
Delaware	42	95	2.26
District of Columbia	0	0	--
Florida	97	45	0.46
Georgia	42	45	1.07
Hawaii	36	16	0.44
Idaho	179	270	1.51
Illinois	44	65	1.48
Indiana	154	143	0.93
Iowa	141	215	1.52
Kansas	114	192	1.68
Kentucky	76	55	0.72
Louisiana	61	55	0.90
Maine*	56	0	0.00
Maryland	30	52	1.73
Massachusetts	22	172	7.82
Michigan	96	134	1.40
Minnesota	75	130	1.73
Mississippi*	32	0	0.00
Missouri	112	100	0.89
Montana	113	393	3.48
Nebraska	123	335	2.72
Nevada	131	160	1.22
New Hampshire	47	93	1.98
New Jersey	11	55	5.00
New Mexico	86	204	2.37
New York	54	70	1.30
North Carolina	22	30	1.36
North Dakota	135	173	1.28
Ohio	98	109	1.11
Oklahoma	84	72	0.86
Oregon	235	330	1.40
Pennsylvania	93	312	3.35
Rhode Island	97	292	3.01
South Carolina	89	335	3.76
South Dakota	162	135	0.83
Tennessee	65	122	1.88
Texas	94	138	1.47
Utah	73	237	3.25
Vermont*	46	0	0.00
Virginia	59	143	2.42
Washington	88	136	1.55
West Virginia*	301	238	0.79
Wisconsin	56	128	2.29
Wyoming	243	297	1.22
U.S. Total	86	142	1.65

* In Maine, Mississippi, Vermont and West Virginia, Latino youth comprise less than five percent of all youth.

Change in Latino/White Racial Disparity in Youth Incarceration, 2001 vs. 2015



¹ This Fact Sheet addresses Latino-white placement disparities. Fact sheets on African American and Native youth disparities are available at www.sentencingproject.org

² Rovner, J. (2017, September 12). Black Disparities in Youth Incarceration. Retrieved from <http://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/black-disparities-youth-incarceration/>

³ Eppler-Epstein, S., Gurvis, A., & King, R. (2016, December 13). The Alarming Lack of Data on Latinos in the Criminal Justice System. Retrieved from <http://apps.urban.org/features/latino-criminal-justice-data/>

⁴ Hockenberry, S., Wachter, A., & Sladky, A. (Sept. 2016). Juvenile Residential Facility Census, 2014: Selected Findings (NCJ 250123). Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/250123.pdf>

⁵ Placement statistics throughout this factsheet are calculated from Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Kang, W., & Puzanchera, C. (2017). "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement." Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>

⁶ Due to inconsistent data from South Carolina in 2001, that state is not counted in this analysis.

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Native Disparities in Youth Incarceration

Native Youth 3X More Likely than Whites to be Held

Native youth¹ were three times as likely to be incarcerated as white youth, according to data collected in October 2015 by the Department of Justice and recently released. The disparity has increased since 2001 when Native youth were roughly two-and-a-half times as likely to be detained or committed to juvenile facilities.²

The disparities in Native youth confinement have long plagued juvenile justice systems nationwide, but worsened as overall juvenile placements have fallen. Juvenile facilities, including 1,800 residential treatment centers, detention centers, training schools, and juvenile jails and prisons³ held 48,043 youth as of October 2015.⁴

The small numbers of Native persons in many states can either mask or exaggerate the existence of their placement disparities;⁵ 41 states have fewer than 10,000 Native youth residents.⁶ To overcome this analytical challenge, this fact sheet reports on regions' Native-to-white disparities as well as those states in which Native youth comprise at least 1.5 percent of all youth, plus California, which has more than 20,000 Native youth.

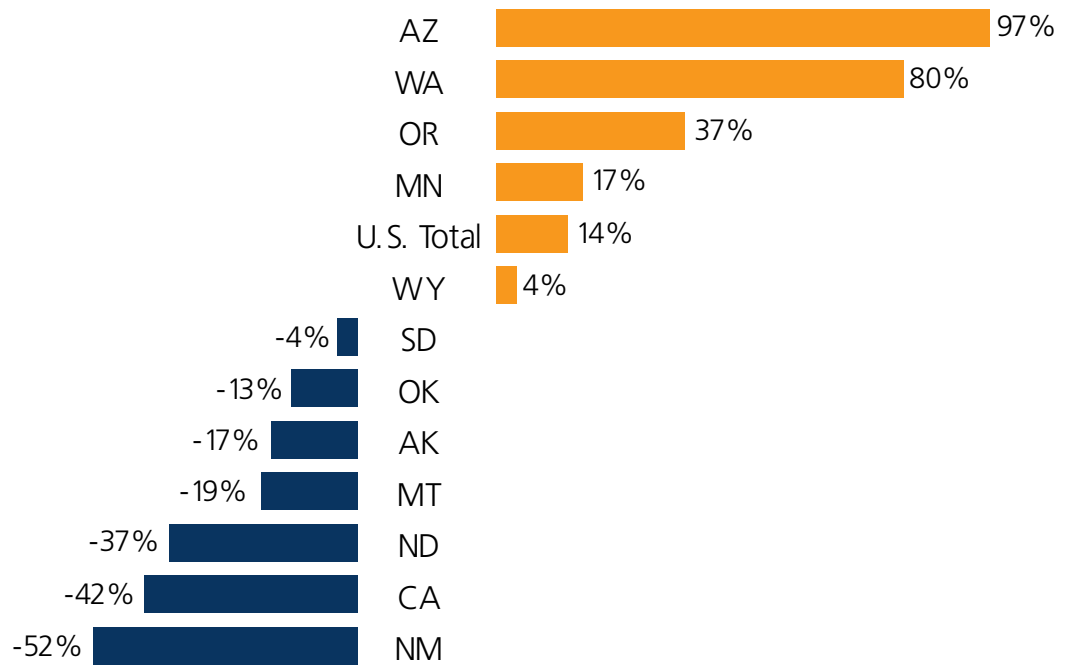
Between 2001 and 2015, overall juvenile placements fell by 54 percent, including declines for whites, blacks, Latinos, and Native youth. But since white placements fell to a greater degree (64 percent) than the other groups, racial and ethnic disparities increased from the start of the century even as the overall figures were declining.

Nationally, the youth rate of incarceration was 152 per 100,000. Native youths' placement rate was 261 per 100,000, compared to a white youths' placement rate of 86 per 100,000. Native youth are three times more likely than white youth to be in custody, a 14 percent increase since 2001.

Native/White Youth Placement Rate per 100,000 (2015)

Region of Offense • Plus selected states	White Rate	Native Rate	N/W Racial Disparity
New England: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT	33	118	3.55
Middle Atlantic: NJ, NY, PA	61	170	2.81
East North Central: IN, IL, MI, OH, WI	89	213	2.38
West North Central: IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD	104	417	4.00
• <i>Minnesota</i>	75	899	11.99
• <i>North Dakota</i>	135	590	4.37
• <i>South Dakota</i>	162	727	4.50
South Atlantic: DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV	41	48	1.16
East South Central: AL, KY, MS, TN	71	38	0.53
West South Central: AR, LA, OK, TX	88	114	1.30
• <i>Oklahoma</i>	84	119	1.41
Mountain: AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY	83	148	1.78
• <i>Arizona</i>	75	144	1.92
• <i>Montana</i>	113	270	2.39
• <i>New Mexico</i>	86	64	0.74
• <i>Wyoming</i>	243	614	2.52
Pacific: AK, CA, HI, OR, WA	102	386	3.79
• <i>Alaska</i>	176	459	2.60
• <i>California</i>	76	196	2.59
• <i>Oregon</i>	235	776	3.30
• <i>Washington</i>	88	430	4.87
U.S. Total	86	261	3.03

Change in Native/White Racial Disparity in Youth Incarceration in Select States, 2001 vs. 2015



- The West North Central region (Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota) has both the highest placement rate for Native youth and also the largest disparity in Native-to-white placements. Native youth in those states are four times as likely to be detained or committed as are white youth; nevertheless, this marks a 14 percent reduction from 2001.
- Native youth are nearly four times as likely to be detained or committed in the Pacific region. This represents a 10 percent increase from the disparity rate in 2001.
- In five states, more than 500 out of every 100,000 Native youth are in placement: Minnesota, Oregon, South Dakota, Wyoming, and North Dakota.⁷
- The Native-to-white disparity in Arizona doubled from 2001 to 2015; Native youth are now twice as likely to be held there as are white youth.

¹ Due to OJJDP's definitions, for the purposes of this fact sheet, all "Native youth" are by definition non-Hispanic. The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement categorizes Hispanic youth, who may be of any race, separately from non-Hispanic white, black, American Indian, and Asian youth. In other words, "White youth" are non-Hispanic white, and "Native youth" are non-Hispanic Native. See: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/asp/glossary.asp#Race>.

² Fact sheets on African American and Latino disparities are available at www.sentencingproject.org.

³ Hockenberry, S., Wachter, A., & Sladky, A. (Sept. 2016). Juvenile Residential Facility Census, 2014: Selected Findings (NCJ 250123). Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/250123.pdf>

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⁵ For example, New Hampshire, which is 94 percent white, recorded three Native youth in placement in 2015 out of roughly 500 Native youth total – an exceptionally high rate that would fall precipitously were just one fewer Native youth in placement.

⁶ The population counts for non-Hispanic white and Native youth, found at Puzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2016). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2015." Online. Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/> were used to create regional totals. The population of youth begins at age 10 and ends at each state's age of majority for its juvenile courts in 2001 and 2015. In general, this includes 10- to 17-year olds.

⁷ West Virginia, Nebraska and New Hampshire, also have a Native youth incarceration rate over 500. They are not included in this list because each state has less than 1.5 percent Native youth.