

# Latino Youth Incarceration

## Latino Youth 25% More Likely to Be Incarcerated Than White Peers

Following decades-long declines, incarceration disparities between Latino youth and their white peers recently increased. As of 2023, the most recent year for which data are available, Latino youth were 25% more likely to be placed (i.e., detained or committed) in juvenile facilities as their white peers.<sup>1</sup>

Juvenile facilities held 29,314 youth as of October 2023. This includes placement in one of our nation's 1,277 detention centers, residential treatment centers, group homes, and youth prisons.<sup>2</sup> These numbers do not include the 437 people under age 18 in adult prisons at year-end 2022 or the estimated 2,000 people under 18 in adult jails at midyear 2023.<sup>3</sup>

- Nationally, the youth placement rate was 87 per 100,000 youth.
- Latino youth were placed at a rate of 65 per 100,000, compared to the white youth rate of 52 per 100,000.

Among the 48 states and the District of Columbia with a population of at least 5,000 Latino youth between ages 10 and 17, a cutoff that allows for meaningful comparisons, Latino youth were at least twice as likely to be in custody than white youth in 11 states.

Over the last 10 years for which there are data, juvenile placements fell 46%. During this same period, Latino-white ethnic disparities in youth incarceration grew more than 10% in 15 states and decreased by at least 10% in 29 states and the District of Columbia. Other trends during this period include:

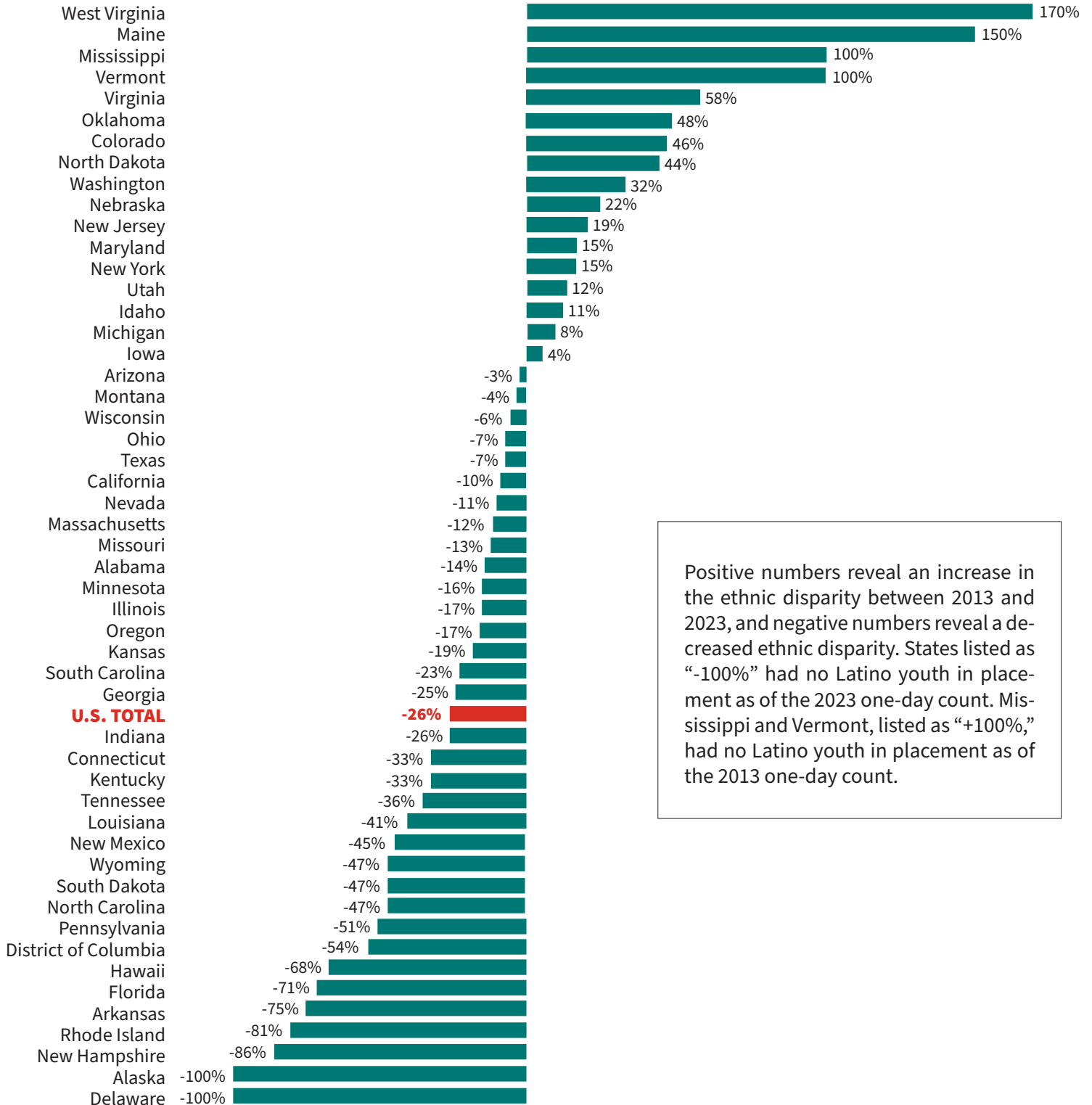
- Mississippi and West Virginia saw their ethnic disparity at least double.
- Delaware, Alaska, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, District of Columbia, and Pennsylvania decreased their ethnic disparity by at least half.

Latino youth were at least three times as likely to be held in placement as white youth in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Utah, and South Carolina.

Latino/White Youth Placement Rates per 100,000: 2023			
	Latino rate	White rate	L/W Disparity
Alabama	54	87	0.62
Alaska	-	179	N/A
Arizona	51	42	1.21
Arkansas	46	95	0.48
California	69	33	2.09
Colorado	96	47	2.04
Connecticut	23	5	4.60
Delaware	-	33	N/A
District of Columbia	132	94	1.40
Florida	16	72	0.22
Georgia	32	36	0.89
Hawaii	14	17	0.82
Idaho	135	98	1.38
Illinois	26	18	1.44
Indiana	58	90	0.64
Iowa	85	49	1.73
Kansas	82	56	1.46
Kentucky	49	60	0.82
Louisiana	27	51	0.53
Maryland	26	12	2.17
Massachusetts	79	15	5.27
Michigan	51	40	1.28
Minnesota	39	32	1.22
Mississippi	84	36	2.33
Missouri	70	75	0.93
Montana	123	65	1.89
Nebraska	143	60	2.38
Nevada	91	95	0.96
New Hampshire	33	24	1.38
New Jersey	35	6	5.83
New Mexico	94	114	0.82
New York	40	21	1.90
North Carolina	19	18	1.06
North Dakota	56	19	2.95
Ohio	96	77	1.25
Oklahoma	52	30	1.73
Oregon	162	137	1.18
Pennsylvania	68	44	1.55
Rhode Island	46	73	0.63
South Carolina	185	54	3.43
South Dakota	40	54	0.74
Tennessee	17	21	0.81
Texas	81	63	1.29
Utah	127	33	3.85
Virginia	73	39	1.87
Washington	89	46	1.93
West Virginia	216	225	0.96
Wisconsin	56	31	1.81
Wyoming	129	129	1.00
<b>U.S. TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1.25</b>

The table to the right and the figure below are limited to the 48 states and the District of Columbia with at least 5,000 Latino residents between 10- and 17-years old. Numbers in the third column reveal the extent to which Latino youth are incarcerated relative to white youth. For example, in Arizona, Latino youth are 21% more likely to be held in a juvenile facility as their white peers. A number less than 1 reflects a reverse disparity, wherein white youth are more likely to be in placement than their Latino peers.

## Change in Latino/White Youth Placement Disparity: 2013 to 2023



Positive numbers reveal an increase in the ethnic disparity between 2013 and 2023, and negative numbers reveal a decreased ethnic disparity. States listed as “-100%” had no Latino youth in placement as of the 2023 one-day count. Mississippi and Vermont, listed as “+100%,” had no Latino youth in placement as of the 2013 one-day count.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, T.J., and Kang, W. (2025). [Easy access to the census of juveniles in residential placement](#). National Center for Juvenile Justice.

<sup>2</sup> Puzzanchera, C., Hockenberry, S., Sladky, T.J., and Kang, W. (2024). [Juvenile residential facility census databook](#). National Center for Juvenile Justice.

<sup>3</sup> Carson, E.A., and Kluckow, R. [Prisoners in 2022 – Statistical tables](#) (Table 15). Bureau of Justice Statistics. Zeng, Z. (2025). [Jail inmates in 2023 - Statistical tables](#) (Table 4). Bureau of Justice Statistics.



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The Sentencing Project advocates for effective and humane responses to crime that minimize imprisonment and criminalization of youth and adults by promoting racial, ethnic, economic, and gender justice.