

# 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 prisons<sup>2</sup> held 48,043 youth as of October 2015.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.

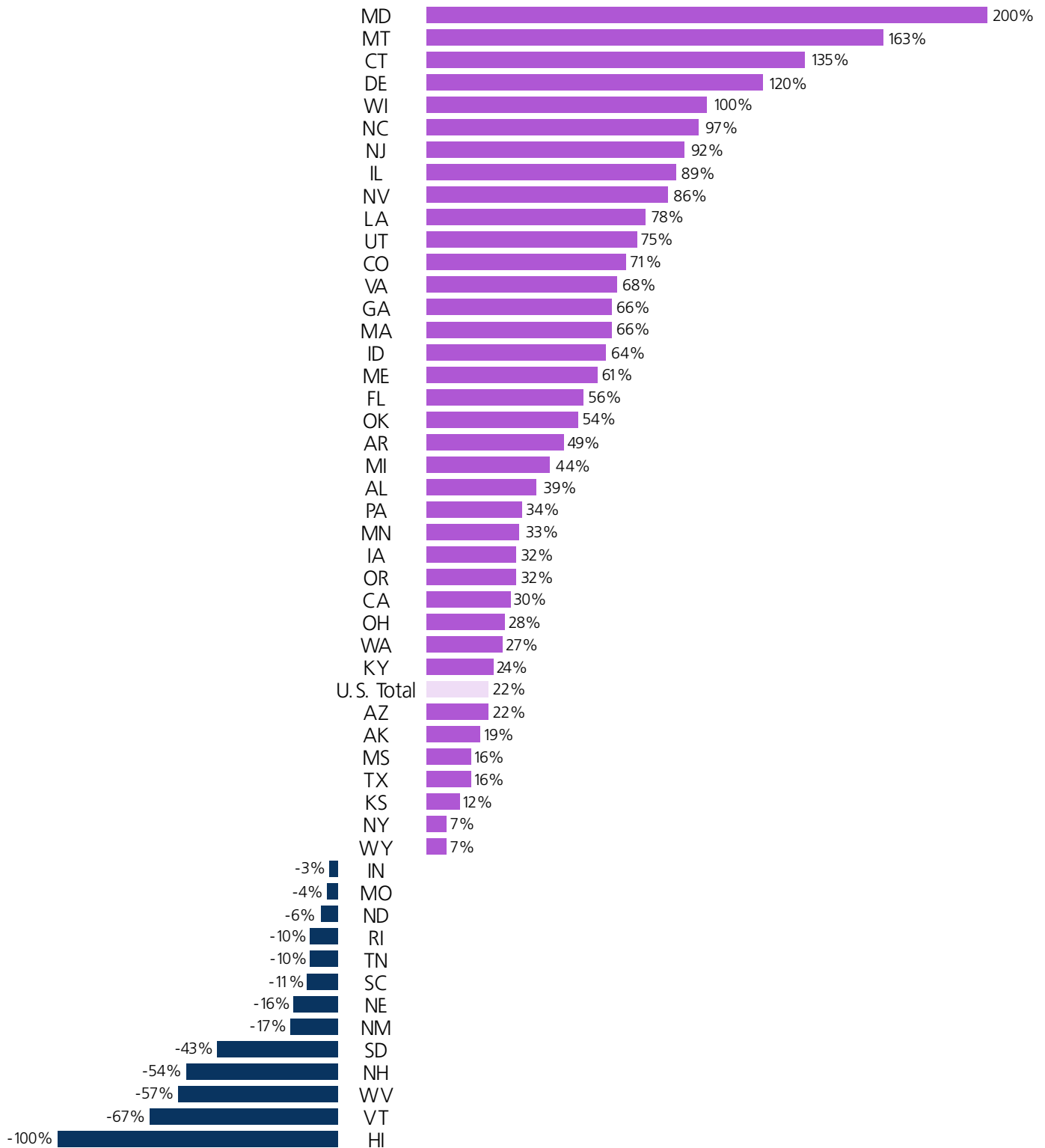
Nationally, the youth rate of incarceration was 152 per 100,000. Black youth placement rate was 433 per 100,000, compared to a white youth placement rate of 86 per 100,000. Overall, the racial disparity between black and white youth in custody increased 22 percent since 2001. Racial disparities grew 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
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>5.03</b>

## 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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