

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

Vol. 44-A, No. 12

PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504

December 2019

LOTS AND LOTS OF NUMBERS ABOUT PEOPLE LOCKED UP

The United States continues to incarcerate its residents at a rate 5 to 10 times higher than other industrialized countries according to government figures from April 2019. There were 2.27 million people in U.S. jails and prisons in 2017, which was a 500% increase since 1977. The imprisoned people in the U.S. are held in 1,719 state prisons, 109 federal prisons, 1,772 juvenile facilities, 3,163 local jails, 80 jails on recognized Native American land as well as in military prisons, immigration detention facilities (!), civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals and prisons in U.S. Territories. We are just going to try to share numbers here and not even ask: WHY? As you read through this, you will notice that numbers cited do not always agree with each other. They are calculated different ways at somewhat different times. The message they present, however, is extremely clear.

In 2017, the incarceration *RATE* for the U.S. as a whole, was calculated to be 719 people out of every 100,000. For Texas then, it was 780 out of 100,000. In 2018, the NUMBER of people imprisoned in Texas is given as 250,000, of which 163,000 were said to be in state prisons. In 2019, Texas was said to lead the country in incarceration growth. This is attributed to pre-trial policies. Texas incarceration RATES in 2010 by ethnicity are listed as: 2,855 Black, per 100,000 people in the population as a whole; 972 Hispanic and 768 "white."

In 2018 in California, 241,000 were reported to be imprisoned. And again, pre-trial policies have driven recent jail growth in California. In 2010, by ethnicity, the incarceration rate for Black is listed at 3,036 per 100,000 people, for American Indian/Alaska Native as 996, for Hispanics as 757 and for "white" as 453. As of January 2018, California is reported to have an incarceration rate of 331 per 100,000 residents. This is the 18th lowest incarceration rate in the country. It is a total of 120,340 people in state prisons. These are the two states with the highest

prison populations. Some number of other states have higher incarceration *RATES*.

Those with the highest incarceration RATES currently include: Oklahoma (currently reported to have the highest incarceration rate, at 1,310 per 100,000), Louisiana (760 per 100,000), Delaware, Mississippi (624 per 100,000), Arizona (in 2016, 790 per 100,000), Arkansas (in 2016, 800 of every 100,000), Alabama (in 2016, 840 of every 100,000), Missouri, Georgia (in 2016, 880 of every 100,000), Alaska (at 800 per 100,000) and Texas (at 1,050 of every 100,000).

Massachusetts is currently the state with the lowest incarceration *RATE*, at 360 per 100,000). The other two with the lowest rates are Minnesota and Maine (both at 380 per 100,000).

The Meaning of Guantánamo

In 2018, U.S. taxpayers paid \$540 million to keep Guantánamo open. The last figure we have seen for how many people are held prisoner there is: 40. Joe Biden has even called it: "an advertisement for creating terror." We've heard very little talk about Guantánamo recently because the public has been led to believe that the U.S. is no longer involved in the detention of so-called terrorism suspects.

The reality is that someone is running prisons that the U.S. no longer maintains in countries like Iraq and Syria and in place like Afghanistan. In fact, the U.S. is now relying on "partner governments" running these prisons and holding suspects. These prisons are ones in which torture and abuse are widespread. Iraq and Syria are filled with sprawling prisons. Some of them include children of families who have been accused of involvement in ISIS. So, although the discussion about U.S. imprisonment of foreign nationals has been limited to Guantánamo--and small numbers of imprisoned people, it is, in fact, much bigger and worse than that.

ON THE WAY TO SOLITARY

In Washington state recently, new prisoners in solitary received a flyer with advice such as: "go on a picnic..." which officials called "well intentioned."

Informe de la ONU sobre niñas y niños

Un informe de la ONU denuncia que, en el mundo, más de 7 millones de niñas y niños se encuentran privados de libertad: desde los centros de detención infantiles en las frontera entre México y Estados Unidos hasta las niñas y niños de los combatientes de ISIS que están desaparecidos por lo menos 410.000 de esas niñas y niños se encuentran en cárceles y prisiones donde la violencia es "endémica". Hay un aumento dramático en la cantidad de niñas y niños detenidos en el marco de conflictos armados.

DETENTION AT THE U.S. MEXICAN BORDER

There are very small children who are separated from their families at this border--a violation of international law. Sometimes the families have been deported back to Central America or Mexico and the children are still kept in the U.S. This is clearly inhuman treatment, as well as unlawful, both to the children, but also to the families. The latest figure is 76,000 children detained in the U.S. in 2019. This is the country with the highest number of children held in migration detention in the world.

To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us up to 12 self-addressed, stamped envelopes--with the CPR return address in the upper left-hand corner.

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests in order for us to have our *only* permanent mailing list--the one for our January holiday/new calendar--be as accurate as possible.

NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS; to maintain our best possible access to all of our prison-based readers, please do NOT mark envelopes addressed to us as "Legal Mail."

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons project for posting our Newsletter on-line for free downloading and distribution. All issues since 2009 are at: www.realcostofprisons.org--this is a GREAT site! To all: Thank you for your support!

Lynchings Sent a Message: Stay in Line

According to the NAACP, 4,743 people were lynched in the United States from 1882 to 1968. Of that number, 3,446 were Black. The National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery Alabama, which opened in April 2018, is the first comprehensive U.S. memorial dedicated to thousands of African American victims of decades of racial terror lynchings following the collapse of Reconstruction, between 1877 and 1950.

AN EPIDEMIC OF POWER

At least 1 in 4 women face sexual harassment/assault at work--because of gender, race, ethnicity, unstable economics or immigration status. A private home is one of the most vulnerable places we can work. Domestic workers are regularly and frequently groped by their bosses, who also expose themselves, and we are asked for/demanded to allow sexual contact. So we flee, and the cycle continues....
Resource: National Domestic Workers Alliance, 45 Broadway, New York NY 10006, 646-360-5806.

Youth Confinement

In 2018, on any given day, nearly 53,000 youth are held in facilities away from home as a result of juvenile or police, court or detention facility involvement. Nearly one in 10 is held in an adult jail or prison. Thousands of youths are held before they've been officially found "delinquent"--many for non-violent, low-level charges--even for behaviors that aren't "criminal violations." The problems of the police, court and penal system are mirrored in the juvenile system: racial disparities, punitive conditions, pretrial detention and "over" criminalization, specifically of poverty.

There are, of course, a highly disproportionate number of young people of color detained. Only 14% of all youth under 18 in the U.S. are Black, but 43% of young men and 34% of young women in juvenile facilities are Black. Excluding youth held in Indian country facilities, American Indians make up 3% of female youth and 1.5% of male youth in juvenile facilities, in spite of making up less than 1% of all youth nationally.

The number of youth detained in New Mexico has decreased 95% over the last decade; counties with juvenile facilities spend far more than those without, even at a rate of \$185/day/person. The facility in Santa Fe often houses fewer than 10/day.

The Crime of Being Poor

Jail for nonpayment of fines is by far the most expensive method of enforcing collections and generates little to no revenue. A county in New Mexico had a net loss of \$316,000 collecting fees and fines. A new study commented that "the burden of fees and fines falls largely on the poor, like a regressive tax."

Resource: Brennan Center for Justice, NYU School of Law, 120 Broadway -- Suite 1750, New York NY 10271.