

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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## ACTUALLY, WE ARE MORE THE SAME, BUT:

### Disparities in Youth Incarceration Rates

The following are comparisons of African American, Native American, and Latin@ youth incarceration rates compared to those of "white" youth. They are all based on U.S. "Department of Justice" statistics from 2015, the most recent available. They are listed in the order of magnitude of difference from "white" rates. Nationally counting all ethnic groups, the youth rate of incarceration was 152 people out of every 100,000 people. However, the "white" youth incarceration rate was 86 per every 100,000 people. As of October 2015, there were a total of 48,043 incarcerated youth in the U.S.

Overall, the racial disparity between Black and "white" incarcerated youth increased 22% since 2001. The Black youth incarceration rate was 433 young people out of every 100,000--44% of the total although only 16% of all U.S. youth. In six states, African American youth are at least 10 times as likely to be incarcerated as are "white" youth: Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey and Wisconsin.

The Native American youth incarceration rate nationally was 261 per 100,000. Native youth are three times more likely than "white" youth to be incarcerated, a 14% increase since 2001.

Latin@ youth are 65% more likely to be incarcerated than "white" youth; in 2001 they were 73% more likely. In 2015, the Latin@ youth incarceration rate was 142 per 100,000. However, there are many variations in the collection of Latin@ data which probably lead to considerable statistical inaccuracies. At least 22% of incarcerated youth are Latin@. In eight states, Latin@ youth are at least three times as likely to be incarcerated as are "white" youth, in: CT, MA, MT, NJ, PA, RI, SC and UT.

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According to *Democracy Now!*, a U.S. Sentencing Commission study has found that African American men receive sentences 20% longer than "white" men for similar convictions. The sentencing disparity has increased over the last two decades.

### THE NATION GOT "NICER"

"Whiteness" is at the root of the war on (street) drugs, and anti-blackness ensures that black and brown people in the United States continue to be criminalized in occupied communities according to Michelle Alexander at the opening of the 2017 International Drug Policy Reform Conference. "Try to imagine that all of the new, legal drug empires that are being launched were being led by young black men with wild Afros and tattoos, rather than hipster white men with cute ponytails and beards...."

"Throughout our nation's history, there has always been fierce, overwhelming backlash against even the appearance of great racial progress--Always. Mainstream media is and has always been complicit. Media injustice leads to both the erasure and criminalization of marginalized communities. The white male face of drug users and abusers in this current opioid epidemic made it possible for mainstream white voters to feel a new kind of empathy that had been lacking. The color of drug users and dealers got whiter in the public imagination, and so we, as a nation, got nicer."

This country owes an insurmountable debt not only to Black people in the U.S., but also to Black people around the world who have been victims of the United States' war on the most vulnerable and targeted communities among us. One example is all these people who in the past were arrested for marijuana, and now, with its legal status changing, only the white people are making money off it. You cannot repair the harm caused by marijuana prohibition if you don't want to repair the harm associated with why there are Black people on this continent in the first place.

The Drug Policy Alliance (131 West 33rd Street - 15th Floor, New York NY 10001) continues its unwavering commitment to reframing dangerous narratives around the drug war and to fighting for justice, healing, and policies for the millions of us--both in this nation and around the world--who have been the most adversely affected.

## La Conferencia de la ONU

sobre Cambio Climático en Bonn, Alemania

El cambio climático y la contaminación ambiental no es una única causa del impacto del huracanes.. No se trata solo del las emisiones de carbono. No se trata solo del carbón. Es todo. Se trata de la energía nuclear. Se trata de la forma en que estamos esparciendo la guerra por todo el planeta y destruyéndolo. Se trata de la forma en que nuestro sistema económico está trabajando para el beneficio de unos pocos.

En el Caribe, acabamos de ser golpeados por dos huracanes de gran magnitud, y hemos tenido una actividad inusualmente alta de huracanes. Y mientras nosotros nos enfrentamos a los efectos del cambio climático, las decisiones que están causando esos efectos se están tomando aquí en Bonn.

Estamos vivéndolo, sufriendo y muriendo debido a ello en este momento. Estamos sin electricidad, sin forma de comunicarnos, sin agua potable. Nuestra economía se está colapsando debido a eso. Expertos en temas sanitarios afirman que el enorme daño provocado por la tormenta en el sistema de agua potable está amenazando con provocar una crisis sanitaria.

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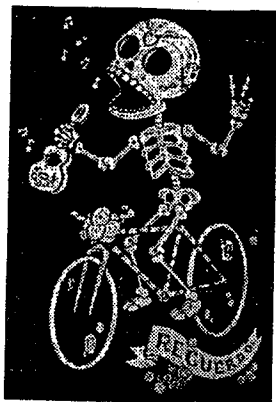
To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us up to 12 self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address).

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests in order for us to maintain the mailing list for the upcoming January holiday card/new calendar as accurately as we can.

Also, note that the only address to be sure to reach us at is: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. Some resource address listings are incorrect in this regard.

And still: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS; for our protection, please do not mark envelopes addressed to us as "Legal Mail."

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our Newsletter free on-line for downloading and free distribution. It is at:  
[realcostofprisonsproject.org/html--this is a GREAT site!](http://realcostofprisonsproject.org/html--this is a GREAT site!)



## KEY DRIVERS

The great majority of incarceration occurs at the local and state level. The latest available data states that about 87% of those imprisoned in the U.S. are held in state prisons. Which leaves 13% of the total in federal prisons.

Local prosecutors, as we know, are very powerful in these systems. They alone, as we know, get to choose what charges to bring against anyone arrested--and so effectively decide who goes to prison and who doesn't, and for how long.

More than 90% of criminal cases are resolved through plea agreements. For the period from 1994 to 2008, reported violent and property crime fell, and arrests for almost all crimes also fell. But the number of felony cases filed in courts went up. This is although nationally, these is less "crime" now as compared to the 1990s.

In fact, a considerably higher percentage of cases filed in courts are civil, rather than criminal (in New Mexico it was 74% in fiscal year 2017), but they do not result in imprisonment.

## War Against the Poor Writ Large

The mass redistribution of income in the U.S. began in its present exaggerated form of tax-cut based policy, in the 1980s, when Ronald Reagan was in office. It was at a time when the U.S. was still "in control of the recycling of global profits and surpluses." It could accurately be described then as the engine of growth internationally." The tax cuts in this country were fueling demand for the net exports of Japan, Germany, Holland and later of China.

But after the economic collapse of 2008, the U.S. did not have that capacity anymore. And China now owns a large chunk of the U.S. public debt and has stabilized U.S. capitalism to a very large extent. So, our current economic policy of boosting the budget deficit by lining the pockets of the rich, while continuing to stagnate the income of the middle class and the working class as well as antagonizing the main U.S. creditors could not be a more catastrophic one.

The current U.S. economic policy is a war waged against the poorest, the weakest, and the most disenfranchised of us.

**Resource:** Former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis, author of *Adults in the Room: My Battle with the European and American Deep Establishment*.

El afirma que los puertorriqueños merecen salir de la "cárcel de la deuda permanente."