

## Drug Policy, Incarceration, and Race

**1.46 million black men out of a total voting population of 10.4 million have lost their right to vote due to felony convictions.**

Source: Thomas, P., "Study Suggests Black Male Prison Rate Impinges on Political Process," *The Washington Post* (January 30, 1997), p. A3.

**One in three black men between the ages of 20 and 29 years old is under correctional supervision or control.**

Source: Mauer, M. & Huling, T., *Young Black Americans and the Criminal Justice System: Five Years Later* (Washington, DC: The Sentencing Project, 1995).

**In 1986, before mandatory minimums for crack offenses became effective, the average federal drug offense sentence for blacks was 11% higher than for whites. Four years later following the implementation of harsher drug sentencing laws, the average federal drug offense sentence was 49% higher for blacks.**

Source: Meierhoefer, B. S., *The General Effect of Mandatory Minimum Prison Terms: A Longitudinal Study of Federal Sentences Imposed* (Washington DC: Federal Judicial Center, 1992), p. 20.

**"Expressed in terms of percentages, 10.0% of black non-Hispanic males age 25 to 29 were in prison on December 31, 2001, compared to 2.9% of Hispanic males and about 1.2% of white males in the same age group. Although incarceration rates drop with age, the percentage of black males age 45 to 54 in prison in 2001 was still nearly 2.7% -- only slightly lower than the highest rate (2.9%) among Hispanic males (age 25-29) and more than twice the highest rate (1.3%) among white males (age 30 to 34)."**

Source: Harrison, Paige M. & Allen J. Beck, PhD, US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners in 2001* (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, July 2002), p. 12.

**"The United States has the highest prison population rate in the world, some 700 per 100,000 of the national population, followed by Russia (665)... almost two thirds of countries (63%) have rates of 150 per 100,000 or below. (The United Kingdom's rate of 125 per 100,000 of the national population places it at about the mid-point in the World List. Among European Union countries its rate is the second highest, after Portugal's 130.)"**

Sources: Walmsley, Roy, "World Prison Population List (Third Edition)" (London, England, UK: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, 2002), p. 1, from the web at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/r166.pdf> last accessed Oct. 12, 2002.

**According to the US Dept. of Justice, in the United States in 2000 the incarceration rate overall was 690 inmates per 100,000 US residents. The incarceration rate for African-American women was 380 per 100,000; for African-American men, the rate was 4,848 per 100,000; the rate for Hispanic women was 119 per 100,000; for Hispanic men the rate was 1.668 per 100,000; for white women the rate was 67 per 100,000; and for white men the rate was 705 per 100,000.**

Sources: Beck, Allen J., Ph.D., Jennifer Karberg & Paige M. Harrison, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2001* (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Justice, April 2002), p. 1 & p. 12, Table 15.