

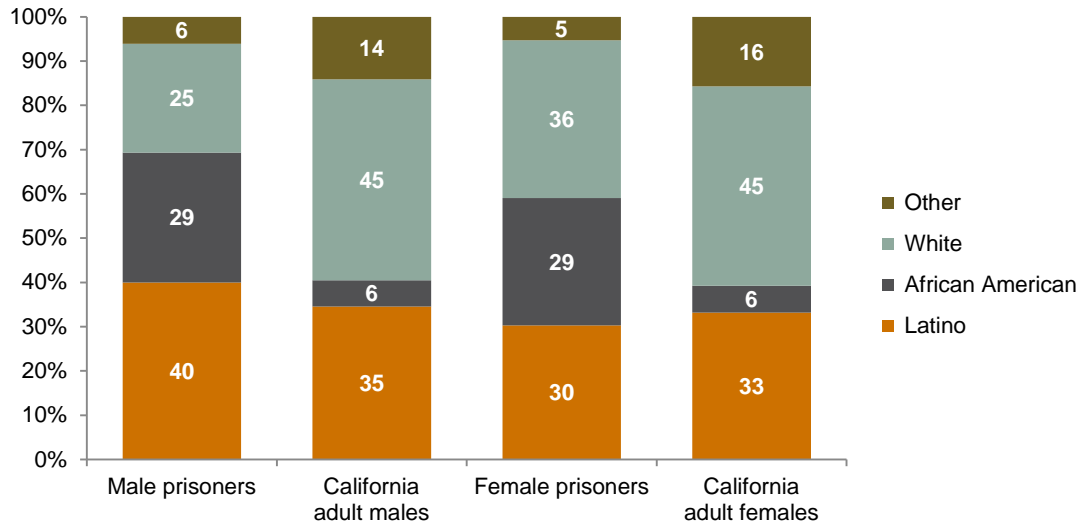
CALIFORNIA'S CHANGING PRISON POPULATION

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- ▶ **The state prison population has stabilized in the past five years, but the system is still overcrowded.**
Between 1990 and 2005, California's prison population increased by 73%—nearly three times faster than the general adult population. At the end of 2010, California state prisons held about 163,000 adults, down from a peak of 172,000 in 2006. Even so, California penal institutions are operating at 175% of their design capacity, prompting the Supreme Court to order the transfer or release of more than 30,000 prisoners within two years.
- ▶ **Approximately 595 adults per 100,000 in California are in state prison.**
Incarceration rates have followed a similar trajectory, increasing from 443 per 100,000 adults in 1990 to a peak of 673 in 1998, then declining to the current rate of 595. California's incarceration rate ranks 18th among all states.
- ▶ **The prison population is aging.**
In 1990, 20% of prisoners were under age 25; by 2010, only 13% were under age 25. During this same period, the share of prisoners age 50 and older grew from 4% to 17%. There are at least two reasons for this: the state's overall population is aging and more older adults are new admissions to prison.
- ▶ **Women constitute only 6% of the prison population and they differ from men by offense type.**
A majority of men are imprisoned for violent crimes (60% at year-end 2010). Women prisoners' offense types are more evenly distributed between violent crimes (39%), property crimes (34%), and drug crimes (22%).
- ▶ **African Americans are dramatically more likely to be imprisoned than other groups.**
African Americans make up 6% of the adult population but 29% of both the male and female prison population. Among male prisoners, 40% are Latino, 25% are non-Hispanic white, and 6% are of some other race. In 2010, African American men were incarcerated at a rate of 5,525 per 100,000, compared to 1,146 for Latinos, 671 for non-Hispanic whites, and 43 for Asians. Among women, African Americans were incarcerated at a rate of 342 per 100,000, compared to 57 for Latinas, 66 for non-Hispanic whites, and 5 for Asians.
- ▶ **The foreign-born are less likely to be imprisoned than the native-born.**
The foreign-born make up 36% of the state's adult population, and 16% of the prison population; incarceration rates are much lower for foreign-born adults (258 per 100,000) than for U.S.-born adults (815 per 100,000).
- ▶ **Inland and poorer areas of the state are disproportionately represented in the prison system.**
The Far North, San Joaquin Valley, and Inland Empire regions of the state have the highest incarceration rates: 792, 785, and 762 per 100,000 residents, respectively. Rates are much lower for wealthier coastal regions: 336 for the Bay Area and 389 for the South Coast (Orange and Ventura Counties).
- ▶ **A majority of prisoners (58%) are serving time for violent crimes.**
Due in part to Proposition 36, which mandates treatment instead of incarceration for some drug felons, the number of prisoners serving time for drug offenses has dropped since 2000. Meanwhile, the number of people incarcerated for violent crimes has continued to rise over the past 20 years, so that violent criminals are now a majority of the prison population.
- ▶ **Most prisoners serve fixed-term sentences, but the number of "strikers" has become significant.**
Fifty-five percent of prisoners are serving fixed-term, or "determinate" sentences; 15% are serving life sentences; and another 3% are serving life without parole. There are 18 women and 683 men (0.4%) on death row. The share of state prisoners sentenced under the Three Strikes law (since 1994) is significant: 5% are "third strikers," serving 25 years to life, and 21% are "second strikers" who must serve twice the normal sentence for a second felony conviction.

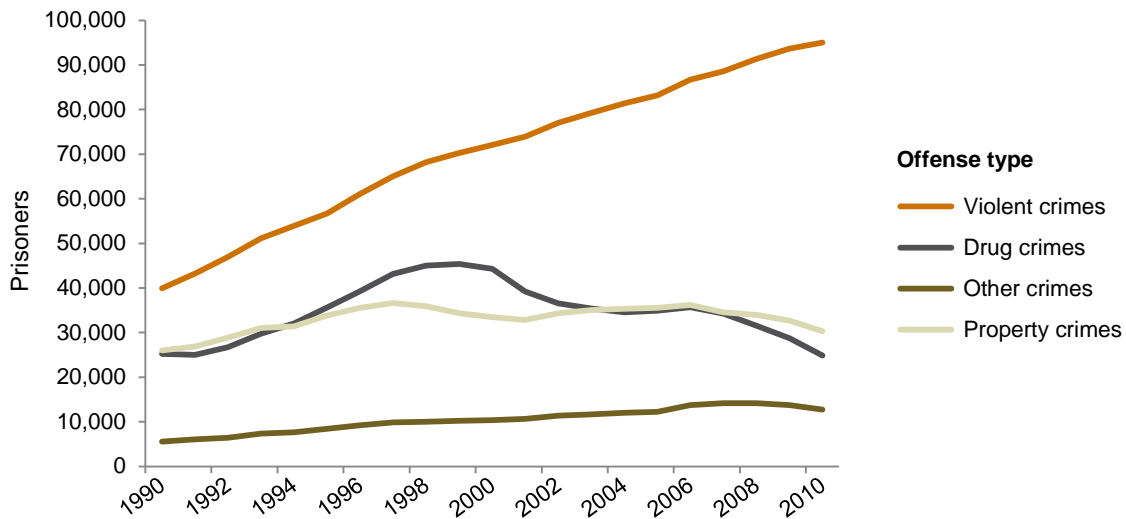


Three out of four male California state prisoners are nonwhite



Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation data, 2010; Census Bureau data, 2010.

Drug-related incarceration has declined since 2000 but the number of violent criminals in prison has increased steadily



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation data, 1990–2010.

Sources/Notes: Incarceration rates are the number of state prisoners per 100,000 adults in the comparable general population. The rates presented here are age-adjusted and use CDCR data from March 31, 2010, in the numerator and Census Bureau data from April 1, 2010, in the denominator. State incarceration rate rankings come from Bureau of Justice Statistics data from midyear 2009. All other figures are from CDCR data at year-end, 1990–2010.

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