

## The Sentencing Project

---

Racial Disparities in Youth Commitments and Arrests

Author(s): Joshua Rovner

The Sentencing Project (2016)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27335>

Accessed: 11-11-2022 06:42 UTC

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*The Sentencing Project* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to this content.

# Racial Disparities in Youth Commitments and Arrests

Between 2003 and 2013 (the most recent data available), the rate of youth committed to juvenile facilities after an adjudication of delinquency fell by 47 percent.<sup>1</sup> Every state witnessed a drop in its commitment rate, including 19 states where the commitment rates fell by more than half.<sup>2</sup> Despite this remarkable achievement, the racial disparities endemic to the juvenile justice system did not improve over these same 10 years. Youth of color remain far more likely to be committed than white youth. Between 2003 and 2013, the racial gap between black and white youth in secure commitment increased by 15%.

Both white youth and youth of color attained substantially lower commitment rates over these 10 years. For white juveniles, the rate fell by 51 percent (140 to 69 per 100,000); for black juveniles, it fell 43 percent (519 to 294 per 100,000). The combined effect was to increase the commitment disparity over the decade. The commitment rate for Hispanic juveniles fell by 52 percent (230 to 111), and the commitment rate for American Indian juveniles by 28 percent (354 to 254).

As of 2013, black juveniles were more than four times as likely to be committed as white juveniles, Americans Indian juveniles were more than three times as likely, and Hispanic juveniles were 61 percent more likely.

Another measurement of disproportionate minority confinement is to compare the committed population to the population of American youth.<sup>3</sup> Slightly more than 16 percent of American youth are African American. Between 2003 and 2013, the percentage of committed juveniles who were African American grew from 38 percent to 40 percent. Roughly 56 percent of all American youth are white (non-Hispanic). Between 2003 and 2013, the percent of committed juveniles who were white fell from 39 percent to 32 percent.<sup>4</sup>

As discussed below, growing disparities in arrests have driven the commitment disparities. Between 2003 and 2013, white juveniles arrest rates (already half that of

black juveniles) fell by 49 percent while black juveniles arrest rates fell by 31 percent. While other levers in the juvenile justice system (such as processing in juvenile courts) are replete with disparate outcomes, most of those points of contact are no more disparate than they were 10 years prior. The growth in commitment disparities begins with the growth in arrest disparities.

## CURRENT RACIAL COMMITMENT DISPARITIES

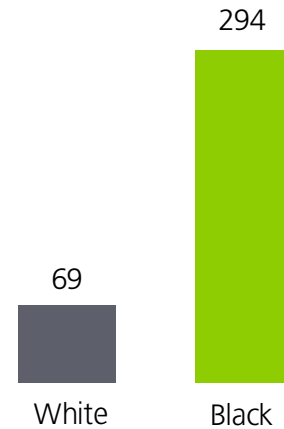
### AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMITMENT DISPARITIES, 2013

The black/white racial disparity in commitment is calculated by comparing the rate of African American commitments (the frequency of committed African American juveniles divided by the total number of African American juveniles) to the rate of white juveniles commitments.<sup>5</sup>

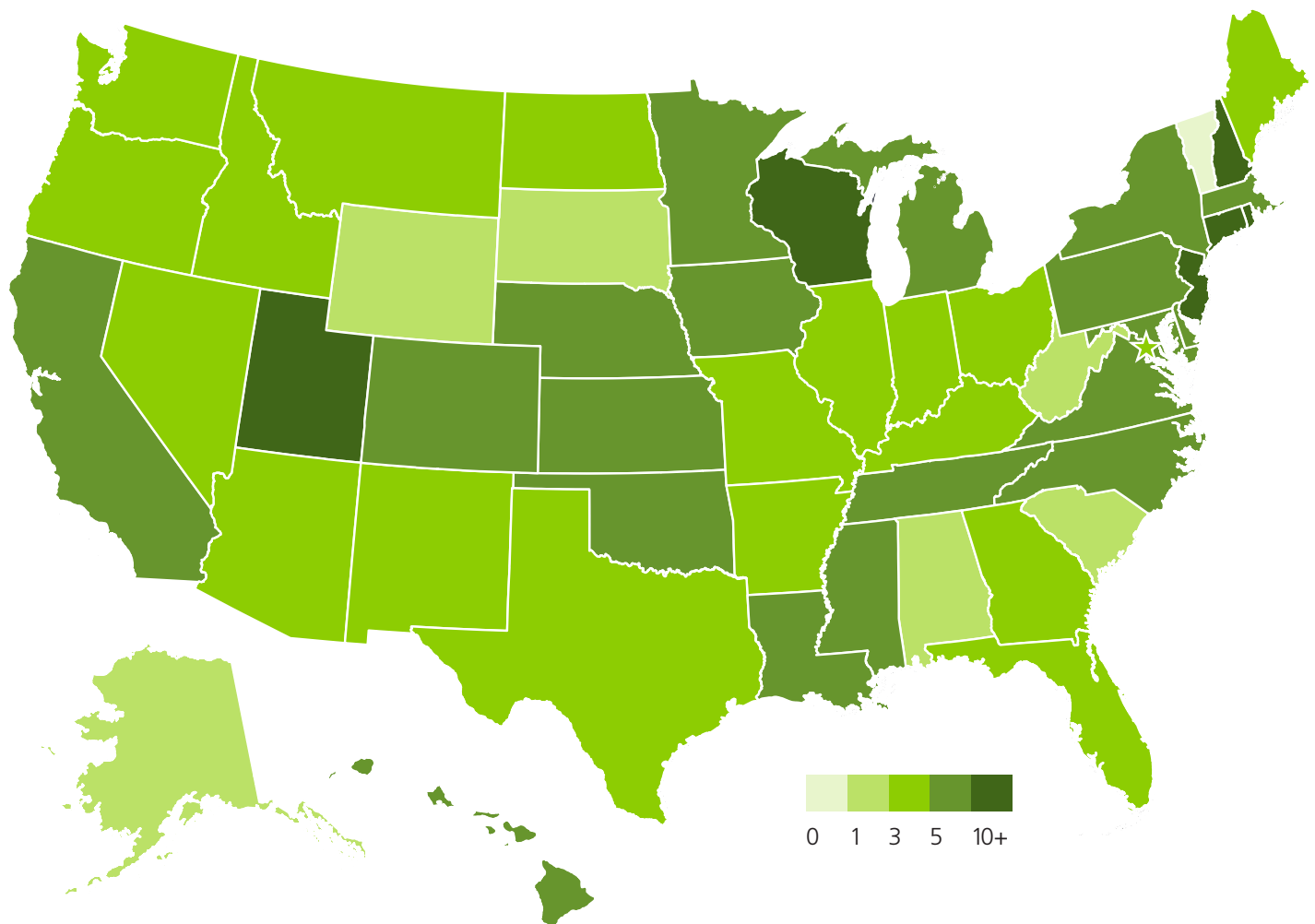
Nationwide, African American juveniles were more than four times as likely to be committed to secure placements as were white juveniles. In six states (Utah, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Rhode Island), the black/white disparity was more than ten-to-one, meaning that African American juveniles were more than 10 times as likely as white juveniles to be committed to secure facilities.

Racial disparities persist both in states with relatively large and relatively small populations of youth of color. However, it is important to note that for states with low numbers of youth of color, modest shifts in commitments among youth of color can have a dramatic impact on ratios.<sup>6</sup> Because disparity is a ratio, even a state with a relatively low rate of African American commitments (such as Connecticut) can still have significant disparities if the white commitment rate is particularly low. Data in this report list commitment rates for each racial and ethnic group along with the attendant disparity.

**Figure 1. White and Black Commitment Rates per 100,000 Youth, 2013**



**Figure 2. Black/White Racial Disparity in Commitment Rates per 100,000 Youth, 2013**



See full data in Appendix A.

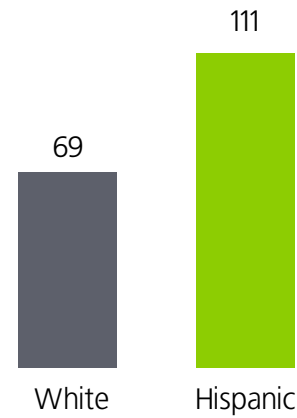
## HISPANIC COMMITMENT DISPARITIES, 2013

Nationwide, Hispanic youth were 61 percent more likely than white youth to be in placement.<sup>7</sup>

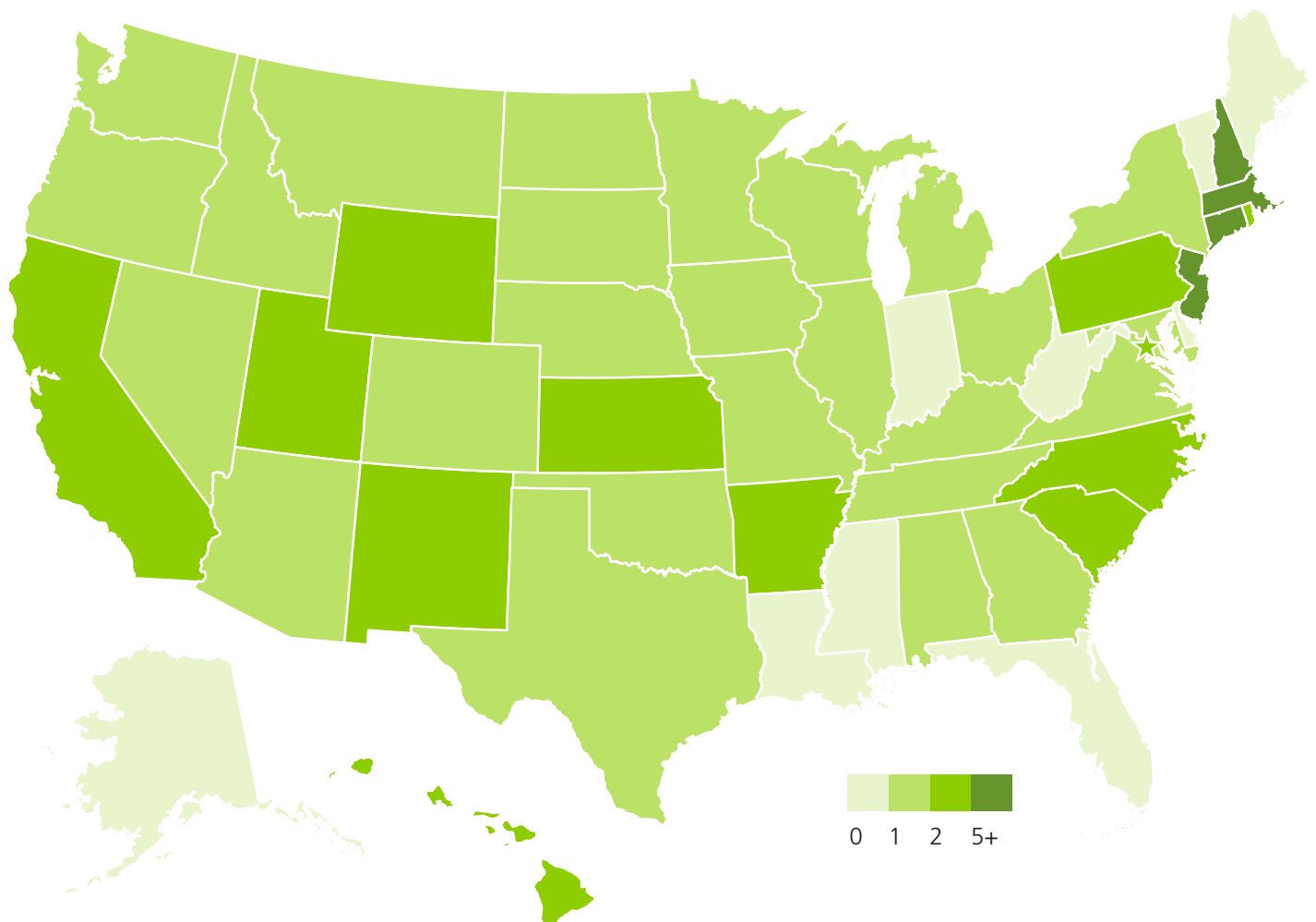
In 37 states and the District of Columbia, Hispanic youth are more likely to be committed than are white juveniles. In four states (Connecticut, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and New Jersey), the Hispanic/white disparity was more than five-to-one, meaning that Hispanic juveniles were more than five times as likely as white juveniles to be committed.

Four states – Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, and Missouri – had no Hispanic/white disparity while nine others – Alaska, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Vermont, and West Virginia – had higher rates of white commitments than Hispanic commitments.

**Figure 3. White and Hispanic Commitment Rates per 100,000 Youth, 2013**



**Figure 4. Hispanic/White Racial Disparity in Commitment Rates per 100,000 Youth, 2013**



See full data in Appendix B.

## AMERICAN INDIAN COMMITMENT DISPARITIES, 2013

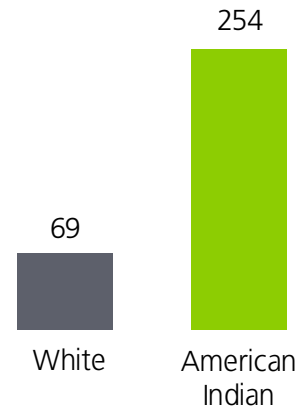
State-by-state analysis of American Indian youth is hampered by their small number and attendant small percentage of the population in many states. Roughly 90 percent of American Indian juveniles live in just 26 states. In 24 states, less than 1 percent of youth are American Indian.

Nationwide, American Indian youth were nearly four times as likely as white youth to be committed. In three states (Minnesota, Illinois and Vermont), the American Indian/white disparity is more than ten-to-one, meaning that American Indian youth are more than 10 times as likely as white juveniles to be committed.

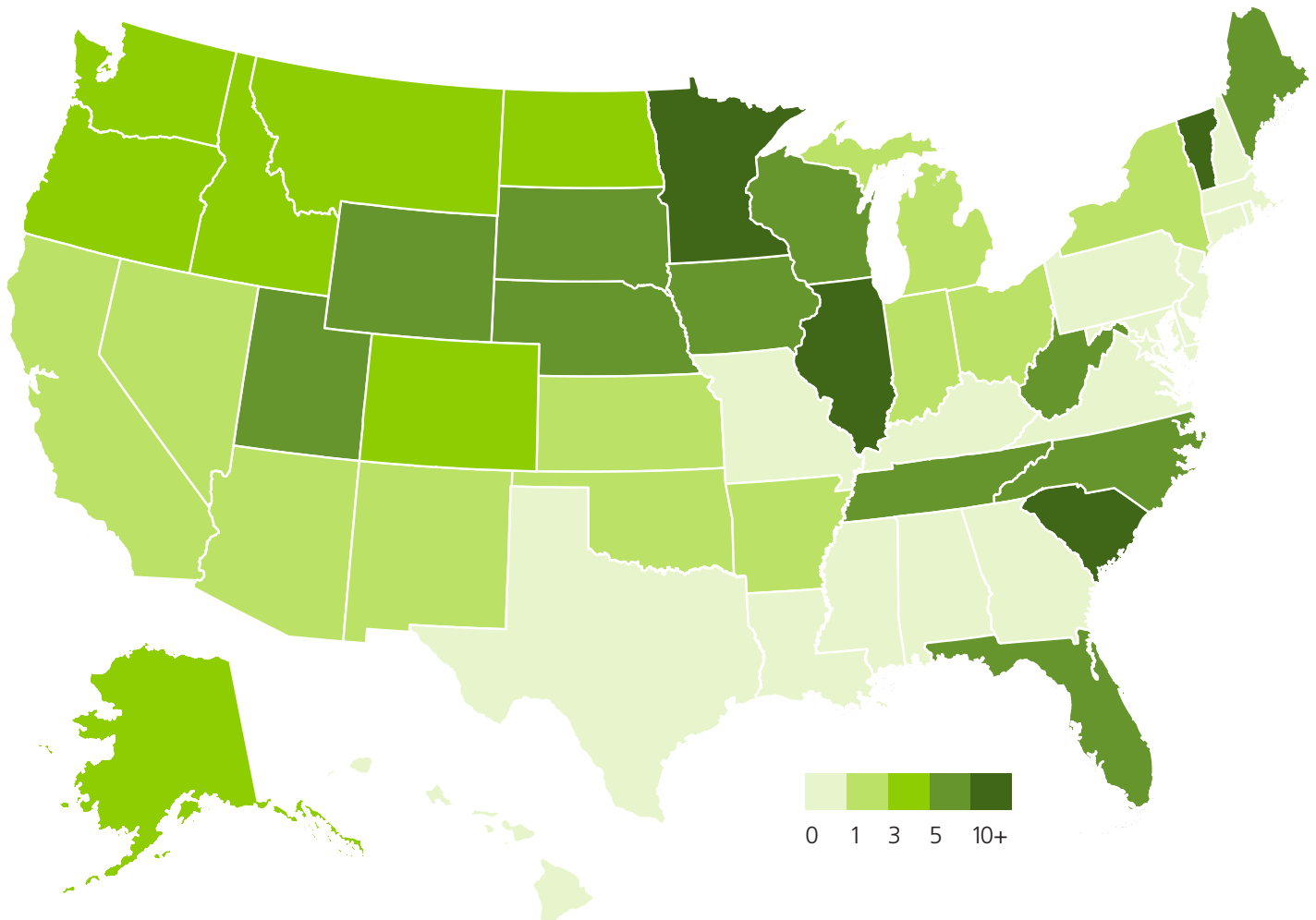
Among the 26 states with a significant proportion (more than one percent of the total population) of

American Indian youth, only New Mexico has no American Indian/white disparity.

**Figure 5. White and American Indian Commitment Rates per 100,000 Youth, 2013**



**Figure 6. American Indian/White Racial Disparity in Commitment Rates per 100,000 Youth, 2013**



See full data in Appendix C.

## COMMITMENT DISPARITIES, 2003 VERSUS 2013

Equally distressing to the existence of racial and ethnic disparities is their persistence. Under the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, since 1988 states have been required to address disparities in confinement.<sup>8</sup> Those disparities persist today, having remained constant for Hispanic youth while growing for African American and American Indian youth over this ten-year period.

## RACIAL DISPARITIES GREW NATIONALLY, BUT NOT IN ALL STATES

### TRENDS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN TO WHITE COMMITMENT DISPARITIES

In 2003, African American youth were 3.7 times as likely as white youth to be committed; by 2013, that ratio had grown to 4.3, a 15 percent increase in the disparity. Between 2003 and 2013, 33 states and the District of Columbia had higher black/white commitment disparities than 10 years before, and 17 states saw decreases or no changes.

### TRENDS IN HISPANIC TO WHITE COMMITMENT DISPARITIES

In 2003, Hispanic youth were 61 percent more likely than white youth to be committed; by 2013, that ratio was unchanged. Four states – Alaska, Maine, Mississippi, and Vermont – had no Hispanic youth in commitment as of the day of the one-day census in 2013. In nine other states – Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, and West Virginia – Hispanic youth were less likely or equally likely to be committed as were white youth.

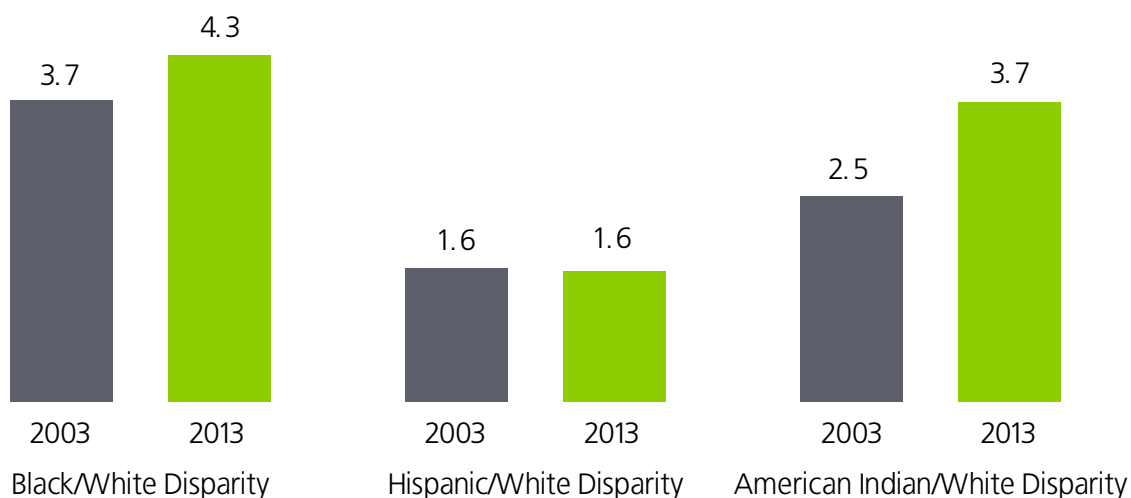
Between 2003 and 2013, 26 states and the District of Columbia saw increases in their Hispanic/white commitment disparity; 6 states saw no change, and 18 states had a decreased disparity.

### TRENDS IN AMERICAN INDIAN TO WHITE COMMITMENT DISPARITIES

In 2003, American Indian youth were two-and-a-half times (2.5) as likely as white youth to be committed; by 2013, that ratio increased by nearly 50 percent to 3.7. Seventeen states had no American Indian youth in commitment as of the day of the one-day census in 2013 and thus no disparity. In Texas and New Mexico, American Indian youth were less likely or equally likely to be committed as were white youth.

Between 2003 and 2013, 28 states had increasing American Indian/white disparities; 22 states and the District of Columbia saw decreases or no changes.

Figure 7. Changes in U.S. Youth Commitment Disparities, 2003-2013



## OVERVIEW OF DISPARITY CHANGES, 2003-2013

Fourteen states saw increased racial and ethnic disparities between white juveniles and three minority groups: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. Only four states, Idaho, Missouri, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania, decreased their disparities among all three.

## DISPARITY AT THE POINT OF ARREST FEEDS COMMITMENT DISPARITIES

Juvenile arrest rates fell 34 percent from 2003 to 2013 with roughly equivalent drops across major categories of offenses. This drop partly explains the 47 percent decrease in juvenile commitments: with fewer juveniles being arrested, fewer were on a path that could lead to secure placement in juvenile facilities. That the drop in commitments outpaced the drop in arrests suggests the impact of policy and practice initiatives; arrests that would have led to incarceration in earlier years may have been resulted in diversion to alternatives such as probation, counseling, or low-level sanctions in the form of community service.

Despite few differences in delinquent behaviors or status offending, African American juveniles throughout this period have much more likely to be arrested; moreover, the significant arrest disparity grew by 24 percent.<sup>9</sup> Researchers have found few group differences between youth of color and white youth regarding the most common categories of youth arrests.<sup>10</sup> While behavioral differences exist, black and white youth are roughly as likely to get into fights, carry weapons, steal property, use and sell illicit substances, and commit status offenses, like skipping school.<sup>11</sup> Those similarities are not reflected in arrest rates; black teenagers are far more likely than their white peers to be arrested across a range of offenses, a vital step toward creating the difference in commitments. Black youth are more likely than their white peers to commit violent offenses<sup>12</sup>, but those offenses comprise less than 5 percent of all juvenile arrests. Their infrequency

Table 1. Changes in Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Youth Commitments, 2003-2013

State	B:W	H:W	AI:W
<b>United States</b>	<b>+15%</b>	<b>-2%</b>	<b>46%</b>
Alabama	+75%	+7%	Unchanged
Alaska	+106%	Unchanged	+44%
Arizona	+68%	+11%	+190%
Arkansas	+20%	+80%	—
California	+30%	+26%	-10%
Colorado	+48%	+14%	+19%
Connecticut	+320%	+365%	-100%
Delaware	-13%	-68%	Unchanged
Dist. of Columbia	+513%	+394%	Unchanged
Florida	+25%	+62%	+1,227%
Georgia	+36%	-23%	-100%
Hawaii	-58%	+12%	Unchanged
Idaho	-12%	-28%	-24%
Illinois	-16%	+74%	+1,079%
Indiana	-12%	-19%	+37%
Iowa	+8%	Unchanged	+64%
Kansas	+12%	+44%	+60%
Kentucky	-23%	+194%	Unchanged
Louisiana	+51%	-37%	-100%
Maine	+255%	-100%	+46%
Maryland	+66%	+4%	-100%
Massachusetts	+33%	+46%	-100%
Michigan	+73%	+5%	+7%
Minnesota	+45%	-18%	+56%
Mississippi	+79%	-100%	-100%
Missouri	-7%	-28%	-100%
Montana	+26%	-20%	+13%
Nebraska	+5%	-8%	-21%
Nevada	+47%	+37%	+7%
New Hampshire	+897%	+517%	Unchanged
New Jersey	+50%	+53%	-100%
New Mexico	-41%	-6%	-51%
New York	+4%	-24%	+83%
North Carolina	+189%	+292%	+225%
North Dakota	-6%	-53%	-8%
Ohio	+8%	+14%	+169%
Oklahoma	+105%	+27%	+9%
Oregon	Unchanged	+45%	+73%
Pennsylvania	-2%	-1%	-100%
Rhode Island	+52%	+211%	-100%
South Carolina	-23%	+1,149%	—
South Dakota	-29%	-50%	+15%
Tennessee	+55%	+59%	—
Texas	+4%	-15%	-40%
Utah	+879%	+79%	+205%
Vermont	Unchanged	Unchanged	—
Virginia	+28%	-22%	Unchanged
Washington	+1%	+72%	+50%
West Virginia	-20%	-70%	+24%
Wisconsin	+82%	+83%	+93%
Wyoming	-72%	+13%	+102%

See full data in Appendix D.<sup>13</sup>



means that differences in violent offending do not explain the scope of racial disparities in commitments.

Juvenile placement ought to be reserved for those who pose the greatest risk to public safety, but national data show confinement is still used for less serious offenses. In 2003, 76 percent of all committed juveniles had been adjudicated on a nonviolent offense; by 2013, that proportion had barely changed and is now 74 percent.<sup>14</sup>

The Relative Rate Index (RRI), a formula that OJJDP uses, is one method of tracking disparity. It is a ratio of the rate of minority juvenile interaction with the justice system at a particular contact point as compared with white juveniles' contact. An RRI for arrest of 2.0 means that the minority in question is twice as likely as a white youth to be arrested whereas an RRI of 1.0 would reflect no disproportionate minority contact. Table 2 shows that black youth are 2.3 times as likely to be arrested as white youth for all delinquent offenses.<sup>15</sup> They are disproportionately arrested for all major offense categories.

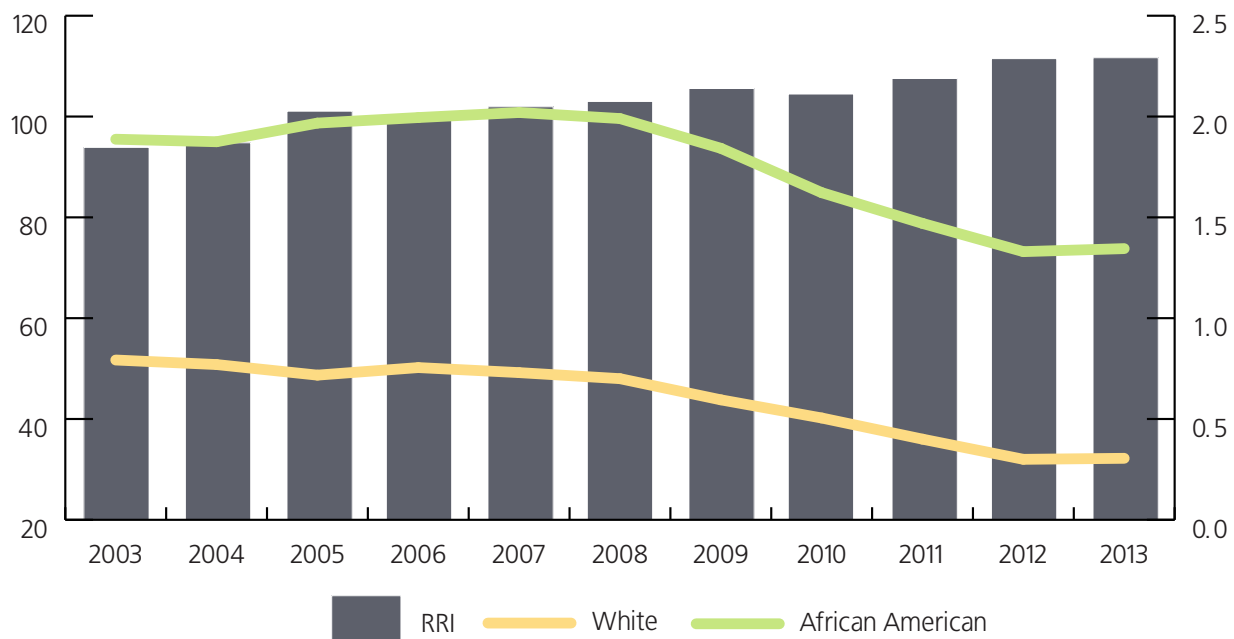
Such disparities in arrest have grown worse over this 10 year period. The RRI of 2.3 for arrest disparities in 2013 was 1.8 ten years prior.

**Table 2. Arrest Rate (per 100,000 Juveniles), 2013**

	White	Black	RRI
<b>All delinquent offenses</b>	<b>32.2</b>	<b>73.8</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Person	5.1	18.3	3.6
Violent offenses	1.1	5.8	5.3
Simple assault	4.0	12.5	3.1
Property offenses	9.3	23.5	2.5
Property crime index	7.1	19.4	2.7
Other property	2.2	4.1	1.9
Drug law violations	4.1	6.0	1.5
Public order offenses	13.6	26.0	1.9

Racial disparities grow with almost every step of the juvenile justice system but start with arrests. Among those juveniles who are arrested, black youth are more likely to have their cases referred to juvenile court. Among those cases referred to court, black youth are more likely to have their cases heard (and not diverted pre-adjudication). Among those cases that are adjudicated, black youth are less likely to receive probation and more likely to be committed to secure placement in a juvenile facility. The arrest disparity is the entrance to a maze with fewer exits for African American youth than their white peers.

**Figure 8. Black/White Youth Arrest Disparities, 2003-2013**





## THE CENTRALITY OF DISPARITY AT THE POINT OF ARREST TO COMMITMENT DISPARITIES

Racial and ethnic disparities are a pervasive attribute of the juvenile justice system. Along with disparities in which youth get transferred to the adult system, commitments are the residue of disparities that grow at each stage of the justice system.

There are sharp limitations to this level of analysis: while the National Disproportionate Minority Contact Databook<sup>16</sup> aggregates data for African American youth, white youth, Asian youth and American Indian youth, there are no Hispanic-specific data for disparities at points of contact other than pre- and post-adjudication placements. Moreover, the black/white disparity is probably understated. Because most Hispanic youth are white, Hispanic youth in contact with the justice system are mostly categorized as white, increasing the number of white youth and artificially decreasing the disparity between white and black youth.

While disparities in arrests have grown increased, the data also reveal the existence of disparities at other points of contact with the juvenile justice system (see Table 3). Black youth are more likely to be arrested, and are then treated with disproportionate harshness as they go deeper into the juvenile justice system.

The 2013 disparities, shown in Table 3, look largely similar to the 2003 disparities with two exceptions: arrests and the decision to commit.

- In 2013, African American youth were 129 percent more likely to be arrested than white youth. That reflects an increase from 2003, when African American youth were 85 percent more likely to be arrested than white youth.
- Among youth adjudicated delinquent, black youth were 19 percent more likely to be committed – an increase from the 13 percent disparity in 2003.

The pattern is clear: while disparities pervade the juvenile justice system, it is the disparities at the front of the system – arrests – are both where disparities are largest and the point at the system at which disparities grew between 2003 and 2013.

**Table 3. Youth Outcomes by Race, 2013**

	Black juveniles	White juveniles
Out of every 10,000 teenagers	738 arrests	322 arrests
Out of every 1,000 arrests	934 referrals to juvenile court	806 cases referrals to juvenile court
Out of every 1,000 arrests	217 diverted away from formal court processing	298 diverted away from formal court processing
Out of every 1,000 cases referred to juvenile court	249 detained prior to adjudication	186 detained prior to adjudication
Out of every 1,000 cases tried in juvenile court	511 adjudicated delinquent	518 adjudicated delinquent
Out of every 1,000 juveniles adjudicated delinquent	611 received probation	648 received probation
Out of every 1,000 juveniles adjudicated delinquent	272 commitments	228 commitments

## CONCLUSION

The existence of racial and ethnic disparities is a disturbing feature of the juvenile justice system. Over the 10-year period in this report, disparities for African American youth and American Indian youth have grown even as overall indicators, such as total arrests and the total numbers of youth in placement, have fallen. These trends suggest that the successful reforms that have led to fewer overall arrests and fewer commitments have not been shared equally among all youth and, in fact, are benefiting white youth the most.

Further study is needed to discern the extent to which growing arrest disparities reflect disparate treatment of youth of color within localities or whether they reflect changing standards in different geographic regions within a state. Racially and ethnicity segregated housing mean that, in most states, youth of color are concentrated in cities and inner suburbs while white youth are more likely to live in suburbs and rural areas.

As such, an increased racial disparity might reflect sharply decreased arrests in rural counties and a smaller decrease in urbanized counties. What is clear, however, is that states should not ignore the ways that disparate arrest rates impact the deep end of the system.

Along with policing reform to respond to youthful behavioral issues without relying on high levels of arrests of youth of color, other actors in the juvenile justice system can decrease racial disparities in commitments. Prosecutors' and judges' decisions have not caused the increase in commitment disparities, but they also have not mitigated them.

The public and policymakers can celebrate the sharp drops in overall juvenile incarceration and a falling arrest rate. However, it is clear that these changes are not impacting communities of color at the same pace as white communities.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Kang, W., & Puzzanchera, C. (2015). "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement." Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>
- 2 The District of Columbia's commitment rate increased during these ten years.
- 3 Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2015). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2014." Online. Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>. Juveniles are between 10 and 17 years of age.
- 4 The remaining commitments were Hispanic, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other.
- 5 Calculations on racial and ethnic disparities are derived from data provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention on a nationwide and statewide level. This report does not attempt to show county-by-county differences in commitments and arrests, an important issue to explore. As states vary in their racial and ethnic disparities, so too do regions within states.
- 6 For example, New Hampshire's African American commitment rate (1,846 per 100,000 African American juveniles) is derived from just 21 committed juveniles who were African American.
- 7 Data accuracy for Hispanic juveniles is considered to have improved over time, but some caution is warranted.
- 8 In 1992, this law was expanded to require that measurements of disparity be taken at *all* points of contact in the system rather than just the point of confinement.
- 9 Puzzanchera, C. and Hockenberry, S. (2015).
- 10 Lauritsen, J.L. (2005). Racial and ethnic differences in juvenile offending. In D.F. Hawkins and K. Kempf-Leonard (Eds.), *Our Children, Their Children: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Differences in Juvenile Justice* (pp. 83-104). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- 11 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/yrbs](http://www.cdc.gov/yrbs). Accessed on January 26, 2016.
- 12 Lauritsen, J.L. (2005).
- 13 OJJDP data for Hispanic commitments in New Mexico in 2003 may be in error. The 2003 New Mexico disparity is based on the author's calculation on the assumption that New Mexico's Hispanic youth were miscategorized as "other" in the 2003 data set.
- 14 Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Kang, W., & Puzzanchera, C. (2015). "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement." Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>
- 15 Puzzanchera, C. and Hockenberry, S. (2015).
- 16 Puzzanchera, C. and Hockenberry, S. (2015).

## APPENDIX A.

### Black and White Commitment Rates per 100,000, 2013

State	Black	White	B:W Ratio
Utah*	1,846	54	34.2
New Hampshire*	818	26	31.5
New Jersey	243	10	24.3
Connecticut	169	7	24.1
Wisconsin	631	42	15.0
Rhode Island	649	62	10.5
Minnesota	548	58	9.4
Pennsylvania	682	80	8.5
Massachusetts	116	14	8.3
North Carolina	108	14	7.7
California	365	50	7.3
Oklahoma	277	39	7.1
Kansas	739	112	6.6
Hawaii*	77	12	6.4
Colorado	595	95	6.3
Virginia	342	57	6.0
Mississippi	83	14	5.9
Louisiana	261	45	5.8
Iowa	688	120	5.7
Delaware	240	42	5.7
Michigan	396	72	5.5
Nebraska	451	84	5.4
New York	249	47	5.3
Tennessee	173	33	5.2
Maryland	159	31	5.1
North Dakota*	727	149	4.9
Maine*	413	87	4.7
Ohio	308	65	4.7
Georgia	160	34	4.7
United States	294	69	4.3
Arkansas	337	80	4.2
Washington	297	72	4.1
Texas	250	63	4.0
Nevada	381	98	3.9
Arizona	193	52	3.7
Kentucky	324	89	3.6
Illinois	156	43	3.6
Dist. of Columbia	336	96	3.5
Oregon*	697	200	3.5
Montana*	227	66	3.4
Idaho*	524	155	3.4
Florida	241	72	3.3
Missouri	351	105	3.3
New Mexico*	241	78	3.1
Indiana	296	98	3.0
West Virginia	463	154	3.0
South Dakota*	475	167	2.8
Alabama	180	64	2.8
South Carolina	171	71	2.4
Alaska	206	91	2.3
Wyoming*	276	213	1.3
Vermont*	0	16	—

\* Less than four percent are African American

## APPENDIX B.

### Hispanic and White Commitment Rates per 100,000, 2013

State	Hispanic	White	H:W Ratio
Connecticut	73	7	10.4
New Hampshire	228	26	8.8
Massachusetts	97	14	6.9
New Jersey	54	10	5.4
South Carolina	309	71	4.4
Hawaii	49	12	4.1
Dist. of Columbia	374	96	3.9
Pennsylvania	282	80	3.5
Utah	169	54	3.1
California	131	50	2.6
Rhode Island	158	62	2.5
Arkansas	178	80	2.2
Kansas	242	112	2.2
North Carolina	30	14	2.1
New Mexico	156	78	2.0
Wyoming	425	213	2.0
Wisconsin	80	42	1.9
Minnesota	106	58	1.8
Iowa	219	120	1.8
Illinois	78	43	1.8
Maryland	56	31	1.8
Nebraska	151	84	1.8
Montana	117	66	1.8
Washington	123	72	1.7
Tennessee	55	33	1.7
United States	111	69	1.6
Oregon	308	200	1.5
New York	71	47	1.5
Ohio	98	65	1.5
North Dakota	219	149	1.5
Arizona	76	52	1.5
Colorado	129	95	1.4
South Dakota	221	167	1.3
Texas	83	63	1.3
Nevada	125	98	1.3
Idaho	192	155	1.2
Oklahoma	47	39	1.2
Virginia	67	57	1.2
Alabama	69	64	1.1
Missouri	110	105	1.0
Kentucky	91	89	1.0
Michigan	73	72	1.0
Georgia	34	34	1.0
Indiana	82	98	0.8
Florida	60	72	0.8
Louisiana	30	45	0.7
Delaware	26	42	0.6
West Virginia*	92	154	0.6
Mississippi*	0	14	—
Maine*	0	87	—
Alaska	0	91	—
Vermont*	0	16	—

\* Less than four percent of youth are Hispanic.

## APPENDIX C.

### American Indian and White Commitment Rates per 100,000, 2013

State	American Indian	White	N:W Ratio
Vermont**	1,010	16	63.1
Minnesota*	903	58	15.6
Illinois**	628	43	14.6
South Carolina**	830	71	11.7
Wisconsin*	386	42	9.2
Florida**	646	72	9.0
Iowa**	866	120	7.2
Nebraska*	596	84	7.1
West Virginia**	1,017	154	6.6
Utah*	348	54	6.4
South Dakota	1,041	167	6.2
Maine*	529	87	6.1
North Carolina*	82	14	5.9
Tennessee**	174	33	5.3
Wyoming*	1,113	213	5.2
North Dakota	732	149	4.9
Washington*	311	72	4.3
Oregon*	841	200	4.2
United States	254	69	3.7
Montana	218	66	3.3
Alaska	288	91	3.2
Idaho*	461	155	3.0
Colorado*	281	95	3.0
Kansas*	328	112	2.9
Arizona	113	52	2.2
Nevada*	198	98	2.0
New York*	93	47	2.0
California*	95	50	1.9
Oklahoma	68	39	1.7
Michigan*	117	72	1.6
Ohio**	100	65	1.5
Indiana**	149	98	1.5
Arkansas*	104	80	1.3
New Mexico	76	78	1.0
Texas*	33	63	0.5
Connecticut**	0	7	—
New Hampshire**	0	26	—
Massachusetts**	0	14	—
New Jersey**	0	10	—
Hawaii**	0	12	—
Dist. of Columbia**	0	96	—
Pennsylvania**	0	80	—
Rhode Island*	0	62	—
Maryland**	0	31	—
Virginia**	0	57	—
Alabama**	0	64	—
Missouri**	0	105	—
Kentucky**	0	89	—
Georgia**	0	34	—
Louisiana*	0	45	—
Delaware**	0	42	—
Mississippi**	0	14	—

\* Less than 4 percent American Indian

\*\*Less than 1 percent American Indian

## APPENDIX D.

### Changes in Black to White Commitment Disparities, 2003 to 2013

State	2003 black/white disparity	2013 black/white disparity	Change
New Hampshire*	3.2	31.5	897%
Utah*	3.5	34.2	879%
Dist. of Columbia	0.6	3.5	513%
Connecticut	5.7	24.1	320%
Maine*	1.3	4.7	255%
North Carolina	2.7	7.7	189%
Alaska	1.1	2.3	106%
Oklahoma	3.5	7.1	105%
Wisconsin	8.2	15.0	82%
Mississippi	3.3	5.9	79%
Alabama	1.6	2.8	75%
Michigan	3.2	5.5	73%
Arizona	2.2	3.7	68%
Maryland	3.1	5.1	66%
Tennessee	3.4	5.2	55%
Rhode Island	6.9	10.5	52%
Louisiana	3.8	5.8	51%
New Jersey	16.2	24.3	50%
Colorado	4.2	6.3	48%
Nevada	2.6	3.9	47%
Minnesota	6.5	9.4	45%
Georgia	3.5	4.7	36%
Massachusetts	6.2	8.3	33%
California	5.6	7.3	30%
Virginia	4.7	6.0	28%
Montana*	2.7	3.4	26%
Florida	2.7	3.3	25%
Arkansas	3.5	4.2	20%
<b>United States</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>15%</b>
Kansas	5.9	6.6	12%
Iowa	5.3	5.7	8%
Ohio	4.4	4.7	8%
Nebraska	5.1	5.4	5%
New York	5.1	5.3	4%
Texas	3.8	4.0	4%
Washington	4.1	4.1	1%
Oregon*	3.5	3.5	0%
Vermont*	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
Pennsylvania	8.7	8.5	-2%
North Dakota*	5.2	4.9	-6%
Missouri	3.6	3.3	-7%
Idaho*	3.8	3.4	-12%
Indiana	3.4	3.0	-12%
Delaware	6.6	5.7	-13%
Illinois	4.3	3.6	-16%
West Virginia	3.8	3.0	-20%
Kentucky	4.7	3.6	-23%
South Carolina	3.1	2.4	-23%
South Dakota*	4.0	2.8	-29%
New Mexico*	5.3	3.1	-41%
Hawaii*	15.3	6.4	-58%
Wyoming*	4.7	1.3	-72%

\* Less than 4 percent African American.

## Changes in Hispanic to White Commitment Disparities, 2003 to 2013

State	2003 Hispanic/white disparity	2013 Hispanic/white disparity	Change
South Carolina	0.3	4.4	1,149%
New Hampshire	1.4	8.8	517%
Dist. of Columbia	0.8	3.9	394%
Connecticut	2.2	10.4	365%
North Carolina	0.5	2.1	292%
Rhode Island	0.8	2.5	211%
Kentucky	0.3	1.0	194%
Wisconsin	1.0	1.9	83%
Arkansas	1.2	2.2	80%
Utah	1.8	3.1	79%
Illinois	1.0	1.8	74%
Washington	1.0	1.7	72%
Florida	0.5	0.8	62%
Tennessee	1.1	1.7	59%
New Jersey	3.5	5.4	53%
Massachusetts	4.8	6.9	46%
Oregon	1.1	1.5	45%
Kansas	1.5	2.2	44%
Nevada	0.9	1.3	37%
Oklahoma	1.0	1.2	27%
California	2.1	2.6	26%
Ohio	1.3	1.5	14%
Colorado	1.2	1.4	14%
Wyoming	1.8	2.0	13%
Hawaii	3.6	4.1	12%
Arizona	1.3	1.5	11%
Alabama	1.0	1.1	7%
Michigan	1.0	1.0	5%
Maryland	1.7	1.8	4%
Iowa	1.8	1.8	0%
Alaska	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
Vermont*	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
Pennsylvania	3.5	3.5	-1%
<b>United States</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>-2%</b>
New Mexico <sup>1</sup>	2.1	2.0	-6%
Nebraska	2.0	1.8	-8%
Texas	1.5	1.3	-15%
Minnesota	2.2	1.8	-18%
Indiana	1.0	0.8	-19%
Montana	2.2	1.8	-20%
Virginia	1.5	1.2	-22%
Georgia	1.3	1.0	-23%
New York	2.0	1.5	-24%
Idaho	1.7	1.2	-28%
Missouri	1.4	1.0	-28%
Louisiana	1.1	0.7	-37%
South Dakota	2.7	1.3	-50%
North Dakota	3.1	1.5	-53%
Delaware	1.9	0.6	-68%
West Virginia*	2.0	0.6	-70%
Mississippi*	0.9	0.0	-100%
Maine*	1.4	0.0	-100%

\* Less than 4 percent Hispanic.



## Changes in American Indian to White Commitment Disparities, 2003 to 2013

State	2003 American Indian/ white disparity	2013 American Indian/ white disparity	Change
Vermont**	0.0	63.1	—
South Carolina**	0.0	11.7	—
Tennessee**	0.0	5.3	—
Arkansas*	0.0	1.3	—
Florida**	0.7	9.0	1,227%
Illinois**	1.2	14.6	1,079%
North Carolina*	1.8	5.9	225%
Utah*	2.1	6.4	205%
Arizona	0.8	2.2	190%
Ohio**	0.6	1.5	169%
Wyoming*	2.6	5.2	102%
Wisconsin*	4.8	9.2	93%
New York*	1.1	2.0	83%
Oregon*	2.4	4.2	73%
Iowa**	4.4	7.2	64%
Kansas*	1.8	2.9	60%
Minnesota*	10.0	15.6	56%
Washington*	2.9	4.3	50%
Maine*	4.2	6.1	46%
<b>United States</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>46%</b>
Alaska	2.2	3.2	44%
Indiana**	1.1	1.5	37%
West Virginia**	5.3	6.6	24%
Colorado*	2.5	3.0	19%
South Dakota*	5.4	6.2	15%
Montana	2.9	3.3	13%
Oklahoma	1.6	1.7	9%
Nevada*	1.9	2.0	7%
Michigan*	1.5	1.6	7%
Alabama**	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
Delaware**	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
Dist. of Columbia**	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
Hawaii**	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
Kentucky**	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
New Hampshire**	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
Virginia**	0.0	0.0	Unchanged
North Dakota	5.4	4.9	-8%
California*	2.1	1.9	-10%
Nebraska*	9.0	7.1	-21%
Idaho*	3.9	3.0	-24%
Texas*	0.9	0.5	-40%
New Mexico	2.0	1.0	-51%
Connecticut**	7.3	0.0	-100%
Georgia**	1.6	0.0	-100%
Louisiana*	2.1	0.0	-100%
Maryland**	2.4	0.0	-100%
Massachusetts**	2.5	0.0	-100%
Mississippi**	2.7	0.0	-100%
Missouri**	0.7	0.0	-100%
New Jersey**	5.9	0.0	-100%
Pennsylvania**	2.5	0.0	-100%
Rhode Island*	3.5	0.0	-100%

\* Less than 4 percent American Indian

\*\* Less than 1 percent American Indian

This briefing paper was written by Joshua Rovner, State Advocacy Associate at The Sentencing Project. Published April 2016.

The Sentencing Project works for a fair and effective U.S. justice system by promoting reforms in sentencing policy, addressing unjust racial disparities and practices, and advocating for alternatives to incarceration.