

Latino Disparities in Youth Incarceration

Latino Youth 65% More Likely Than Whites to be Held

Latino youth are 65 percent more likely to be detained or committed than their white peers, according to data from the Department of Justice collected in October 2015 and recently released.¹ While this disparity is concerning, the data represent a modest improvement from 2001, when Latino youth were 73 percent more likely to be in placement. The Latino disparity is smaller than that for African American youth, who are 500 percent more likely than white youth to be detained or committed.²

These data should be viewed with caution due to limitations and variation in collection of Latino data throughout the justice system.³ In some states there is likely an undercount of Latinos, who are labeled as white, reducing the reported rate of ethnic disparity. In other states, improvements in the collection of Latino data between 2001 and 2015 implies worsening ethnic disparities though actually reflecting growing accuracy of data.

Juvenile facilities, including 1,800 residential treatment centers, detention centers, training schools, and juvenile jails and prisons⁴ held 48,043 youth as of October 2015.⁵ Twenty-two percent of these youth were Latino. In 37 states Latino youth are more likely to be in custody than white youth.

Between 2001 and 2015, overall juvenile placements fell by 54 percent, including declines for whites, blacks, and Latinos. But since white placements fell to a greater degree (64 percent) than the other groups, racial and ethnic disparities increased from the start of the century even as the overall figures were declining.

Latino youth's placement rate was 142 per 100,000, 65 percent higher than white youth's placement rate of 86 per 100,000. Ethnic disparities grew in 20 states, did not change in one, and decreased in 28.⁶

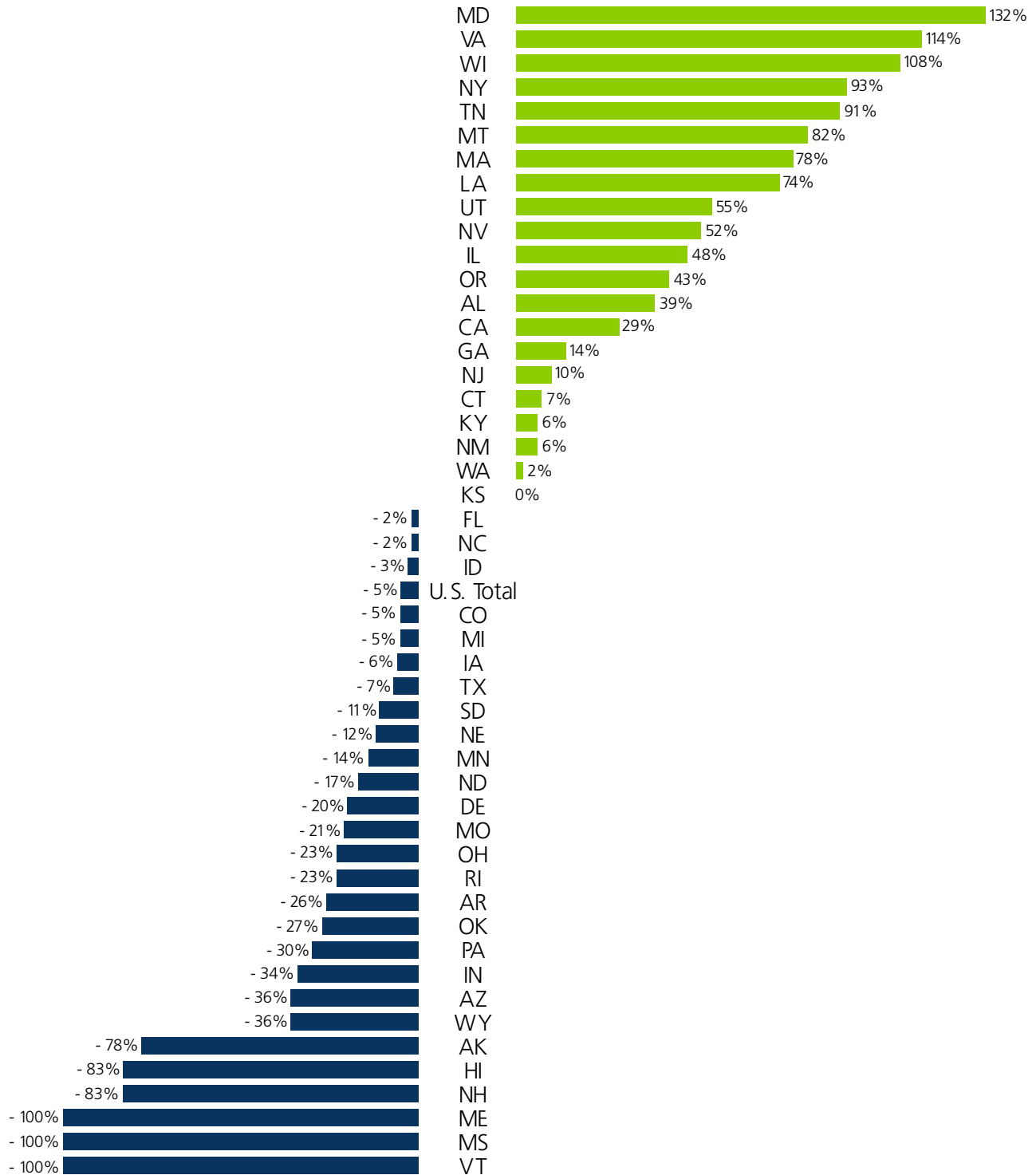
- In eight states, Latino youth are at least three times as likely to be held in placement as are white youth: Massachusetts, New Jersey, South Carolina, Montana, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Rhode Island.
- Three states saw their Latino/white disparity more than double: Maryland, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Latino/White Youth Placement Rate per 100,000 (2015)

State	White Rate	Latino Rate	L/W Racial Disparity
Alabama	97	93	0.96
Alaska	176	46	0.26
Arizona	75	81	1.08
Arkansas	93	96	1.03
California	76	180	2.37
Colorado	108	227	2.10
Connecticut	14	47	3.36
Delaware	42	95	2.26
District of Columbia	0	0	--
Florida	97	45	0.46
Georgia	42	45	1.07
Hawaii	36	16	0.44
Idaho	179	270	1.51
Illinois	44	65	1.48
Indiana	154	143	0.93
Iowa	141	215	1.52
Kansas	114	192	1.68
Kentucky	76	55	0.72
Louisiana	61	55	0.90
Maine*	56	0	0.00
Maryland	30	52	1.73
Massachusetts	22	172	7.82
Michigan	96	134	1.40
Minnesota	75	130	1.73
Mississippi*	32	0	0.00
Missouri	112	100	0.89
Montana	113	393	3.48
Nebraska	123	335	2.72
Nevada	131	160	1.22
New Hampshire	47	93	1.98
New Jersey	11	55	5.00
New Mexico	86	204	2.37
New York	54	70	1.30
North Carolina	22	30	1.36
North Dakota	135	173	1.28
Ohio	98	109	1.11
Oklahoma	84	72	0.86
Oregon	235	330	1.40
Pennsylvania	93	312	3.35
Rhode Island	97	292	3.01
South Carolina	89	335	3.76
South Dakota	162	135	0.83
Tennessee	65	122	1.88
Texas	94	138	1.47
Utah	73	237	3.25
Vermont*	46	0	0.00
Virginia	59	143	2.42
Washington	88	136	1.55
West Virginia*	301	238	0.79
Wisconsin	56	128	2.29
Wyoming	243	297	1.22
U.S. Total	86	142	1.65

* In Maine, Mississippi, Vermont and West Virginia, Latino youth comprise less than five percent of all youth.

Change in Latino/White Racial Disparity in Youth Incarceration, 2001 vs. 2015



¹ This Fact Sheet addresses Latino-white placement disparities. Fact sheets on African American and Native youth disparities are available at www.sentencingproject.org

² Rovner, J. (2017, September 12). Black Disparities in Youth Incarceration. Retrieved from <http://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/black-disparities-youth-incarceration/>

³ Eppler-Epstein, S., Gurvis, A., & King, R. (2016, December 13). The Alarming Lack of Data on Latinos in the Criminal Justice System. Retrieved from <http://apps.urban.org/features/latino-criminal-justice-data/>

⁴ Hockenberry, S., Wachter, A., & Sladky, A. (Sept. 2016). Juvenile Residential Facility Census, 2014: Selected Findings (NCJ 250123). Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/250123.pdf>

⁵ Placement statistics throughout this factsheet are calculated from Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Kang, W., & Puzanchera, C. (2017). "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement." Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>

⁶ Due to inconsistent data from South Carolina in 2001, that state is not counted in this analysis.

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