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**THE KENTUCKY CRIME ESTIMATION PROGRAM:
1986-1987 CRIME RATES AND PUBLIC OPINION**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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URBAN STUDIES CENTER
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THE MISSION

The Kentucky Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) was established in 1984 as a centralized clearinghouse for criminal justice statistics. A major objective of SAC is to gather concrete data about the criminal justice system in Kentucky and to disseminate that data statewide. With this information, policymakers will be better able to make criminal justice decisions.

THE STAFF

Co-Directors: C. Bruce Traugher
Office of the Attorney General
Commonwealth of Kentucky

Knowlton W. Johnson, Ph.D.
Urban Studies Center
College of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville

Manager: Jack B. Ellis

University Faculty: Gordon S. Bonham, Ph.D.
Gennaro F. Vito, Ph.D.

Researcher: Patricia Hardyman

THE CENTER

The Kentucky Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center is housed in the Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of Kentucky, and operated by the Urban Studies Center--the policy research component of the College of Urban and Public Affairs--in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

SAC is available to assist you in meeting your data and information needs. For more information, contact:

Mr. Jack B. Ellis
Urban Studies Center
College of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky 40292
(502) 588-6626

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prepared by

Knowlton W. Johnson, Ph.D.
Patricia L. Hardyman, M.S.

Urban Studies Center
College of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville

for
Kentucky Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center

David L. Armstrong
Attorney General

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AUTHORS' NOTES

Dr. Knowlton Johnson, project director, was responsible for overseeing the entire project. He directed the design of the Crime Estimation (CREST) model, construction of the survey instrument, selection of the sample, and preparation of this report. Ms. Patricia Hardyman was responsible for setting up the CREST database, conducting the preliminary analysis, and taking the lead in writing subsections of the report.

The authors would like to express a special appreciation to Ms. Sandy Cleary, who conducted the telephone interviews for the project. We also appreciate the assistance of Jack Ellis, Linda Burgess, Ted Koebel, Gordon Bonham, Lynne Wilson, Nancy Roseberry, Nina Henderson, Monica Bowles, and Elizabeth Jones.

This report is a product of the Kentucky Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center.

Co-Directors

Knowlton W. Johnson
Urban Studies Center

C. Bruce Traughber
Office of the Kentucky Attorney General

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In establishing the Kentucky Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) in 1984, Attorney General David Armstrong made a statement of commitment to crime victims by approving, as one of the SAC's long-term goals, an increase in the amount of Kentucky-specific data that could be useful in responding to the needs of Kentuckians whose lives had been touched by crime.

In an effort to achieve this goal, a Crime Estimation (CREST) program was implemented, along with other victim research projects, to provide continuously updated crime information for policymakers at the state and local levels of government. This program consists of two components: (1) a victimization database developed and maintained through a continuous survey of a random sample of housing units and individuals in Kentucky, and (2) a multifaceted diffusion strategy for stimulating use of victimization data.

During the past year the SAC staff has focused on developing the victimization database from which annual (calendar year) crime estimates can be derived; these estimates concern the incidence of crime in Kentucky (including reported and unreported crime), the mental health of crime victims, and information about government and citizen initiatives to prevent and control crime. Additional statewide estimates that reflect Kentuckians' awareness of, opinions about, and behaviors relating to special public safety issues such as child abuse, drug abuse, and prison reform will be available each year. Illustrative results that were drawn from the first year of data are as follows:

- o Statewide estimates of crime for 1986 indicate that approximately 27 percent of Kentucky households were affected by crime. A household offense (e.g., breaking and entering, attempted breaking and entering, car theft, theft of car parts, or theft from the property or buildings surrounding the home) was experienced by 21 percent. Five percent of Kentucky households were affected by a violent crime and 4 percent, by a personal property crime.

- Respondents in households touched by crime were significantly more depressed than were respondents of nonvictimized households. The type of crime (property versus violent), however, did not make a statistical difference in the amount of depression experienced.
- Fear of being a crime victim is real in Kentucky; 58 percent were fearful of being burglarized and 38 percent expressed fear of being robbed and physically assaulted when they are away from home; 14 percent stated that they do not walk alone during the night; 7 percent reported being afraid of being attacked or assaulted by a relative, a neighbor, or an acquaintance. Respondents who experienced a crime, regardless of the type of crime, exhibited higher levels of fear of crime.
- Citizens of Kentucky are taking the initiative in varying degrees to protect themselves, but they do not necessarily use the services of formal crime-prevention programs: 88 percent ask friends and neighbors to keep an eye on their homes when away, but only 4 percent have participated in police-sponsored Neighborhood Watch programs; 41 percent mark their belongings, but only 17 percent have engraved their valuables through Operation Identification; and 15 percent have antiburglary decals, 10 percent of whom have obtained these decals through Operation Identification, which is the primary dissemination source for them.
- Many Kentuckians consider child abuse to be very much a problem (42%) or somewhat a problem (36%); 39 percent of the respondents think that child abuse is more prevalent today than it was five years ago.
- Over one third of the citizens (37%) are aware that they can contribute to Child Victims Trust Fund by checking a box on their state income tax forms; respondents were not asked whether they had contributed to the fund; however, few (18%) could give a reason why citizens should not contribute to this fund.
- Approximately 37 percent of the respondents with children reported that their children have participated in an educational program for

preventing child sexual abuse; most of these programs (96%) were sponsored by the school system.

- Approximately two thirds of the parents (66%) have received literature on child sexual abuse disseminated through educational programs attended by their children. Sixty-four percent found the literature to be helpful for increasing their child's safety.
- When asked whether they would spend more, less, or the same amount of money on the arrest and prosecution of various drug offenders, the majority of respondents indicated they would spend more money to enforce drug laws. Citizens were most willing to increase the level of funding to arrest and prosecute distributors of cocaine (84%), distributors of narcotics (79%), and drunk drivers (72%). The only deviation from this trend (and it was slight) was in support for the enforcement of laws pertaining to use of marijuana; only 48 percent of the citizens said they would spend more money on users of marijuana. The same percentage of respondents (48%) indicated that they would spend the same amount of money to arrest and prosecute users of marijuana.
- Citizens were greatly concerned about the potential risk to their community posed by the sentencing of offenders to home confinement; 95 percent were either very or somewhat concerned for their safety. However, 90 percent of the respondents supported the use of home confinement in Kentucky.
- Nearly half (46%) of the respondents said that the sentences imposed by the Kentucky Parole Board were too lenient. Another 26 percent believed that the Board was generally fair. Twenty-eight percent did not know whether the Kentucky Parole Board was too harsh, too lenient, or generally fair.
- Over half (57%) of the Kentucky citizens polled favored the death penalty for certain crimes; however, almost a third (30%) of the respondents were undecided about whether they approved of the death penalty.

These illustrative results reveal the type of information available through the CREST database. The CREST program will maximize

the use of victimization research through two types of diffusion and utilization services: widespread dissemination and on-site research assistance. For example, in addition to circulating newsletters and reports, updates of findings will be released to selected news media across the Commonwealth. Technical assistance will be available to groups who express interest in victimization project development, implementation, and/or evaluation.

In sum, the Kentucky SAC has developed a victimization database from which crime estimates and crime-prevention strategies can be monitored and utilization services can be provided. The CREST program should significantly contribute to the store of policy-relevant information that will be available on an ongoing basis in Kentucky to help citizens whose lives have been touched by crime.

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OVERVIEW OF CREST PRESENTATION

I. Background and Purpose

II. The CREST Database

1. Criminal Victimization
2. Mental Health
3. Government and Citizen Initiatives to Combat Crime
4. Special Public Safety Issues

III. Development of the CREST Database

1. Methodology
2. Sample Profile
3. Illustrative Results
 - 3.1 Criminal Victimization
 - 3.2 Mental Health
 - 3.3 Crime Prevention Strategies
 - 3.4 Special Public Safety Issues:
 - 3.4a Child Sexual Abuse
 - 3.4b Monies for Drug Enforcement
 - 3.4c Home Confinement
 - 3.4d Kentucky Parole Board Sentences
 - 3.4e Death Penalty

IV. The Diffusion and Utilization Strategy

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Chief Aide
County Judge Executive's Office
Jefferson County

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DHB Consulting
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