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PRESS RELEASE

77% of Persons Entering State Prison in 2014 Had Been Arrested 5 or More Times

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is announcing the release of *Arrest History of Persons Admitted to State Prison in 2009 and 2014*, a cohort study of prisoners. Among persons admitted to state prison in 2014 across 34 states, 77% had five or more prior arrests in their criminal history, including the arrest that resulted in their prison sentence. A similar proportion (76%) of persons admitted to state prison in 29 states in 2009 had five or more prior arrests.

“It is noteworthy that, among persons entering prison, over three-quarters had five or more prior arrests,” said Dr. Alexis Piquero, Director of BJS.

The 369,200 persons admitted to state prison in 34 states in 2014 had an estimated 4.2 million prior arrests in their criminal histories, including the arrest that resulted in their prison sentence. In both 2009 and 2014, persons admitted to state prison had a median of nine prior arrests in their criminal histories. About 1 in 10 persons admitted in 2014 at age 24 or younger had at least one prior arrest outside of the state where they were admitted, and about 4 in 10 persons admitted at age 40 or older had at least one such arrest.

More than 1 in 4 persons admitted to state prison in 34 states in 2014 had been sentenced for a violent offense. In both the 2009 and 2014 cohorts, about 7 in 10 persons entering state prison had at least one prior arrest for a drug offense.

About half of persons admitted in 2014 were released by the end of 2015. Among these released persons, over half (59%) were arrested at least once within 2 years, including 16% for a violent offense. Forty-two percent were arrested for a public order offense within 2 years of release, making it the most common arrest offense for the 2014 admission cohort.

“Over half of persons released from state prison were rearrested within 2 years, but an arrest for a violent offense was the least common,” noted Director Piquero.

These findings are based on BJS’s first examination of prison records from the National Corrections Reporting Program in conjunction with criminal history data to analyze characteristics and arrest histories of persons admitted to state prison in the United States. They include arrests that occurred nationwide, both in the state where persons were admitted and in other states.

The BJS report [Arrest History of Persons Admitted to State Prison in 2009 and 2014](#), written by BJS Statistician Matthew R. Durose and former BJS Statistician Leonardo Antenangeli, PhD; related documents; and additional information about BJS’s statistical publications and programs are available on the BJS website at bjs.ojp.gov.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics, a division of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs, is the principal federal agency responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating reliable statistics on crime and criminal justice in the United States. Alexis R. Piquero, PhD, is the director. More information about BJS and criminal justice statistics can be found at bjs.ojp.gov.

About the Office of Justice Programs

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