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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
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GROWTH IN THE TOTAL CORRECTIONAL POPULATION DURING 2008 WAS THE SLOWEST IN EIGHT YEARS

WASHINGTON – At yearend 2008, 7.3 million men and women were under correctional supervision, including 70 percent (about 5.1 million) who were supervised in the community on probation or parole and 30 percent (about 2.3 million) who were held in the custody of prisons or jails, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. The correctional population increased by 0.5 percent during 2008, about a third of the average annual rate of growth since 2000 (1.6 percent), and the increase in the number under correctional supervision (33,900 offenders) was the smallest annual increase in the population since 2000.

State and federal correctional authorities had jurisdiction or legal authority over more than 1.6 million prisoners at the end of 2008, the equivalent of about one in every 198 persons in the U.S. Growth in the prison population slowed to 0.8 percent during 2008, the smallest annual rate of growth since 2000. Prison populations declined in 20 states during 2008, led by New York (down 2,273), Georgia (down 1,537), and Michigan (down 1,495) with the largest absolute decreases.

Prison population growth slowed in 2008, as the number admitted into prison decreased (down 0.5 percent) while the number released from prison increased (2.0 percent). The decline in prison admissions was led by a decrease in new court commitments into state prisons (down 0.5 percent), while the growth in releases was led by increases in the number of prisoners released unconditionally (8 percent) through an expiration of their terms, a commutation, or other unconditional releases.

The decline in the growth of the prison population that occurred during 2008 continues a declining trend in its rate of growth. From 2000 to 2008, the prison population increased an average of 1.8 percent annually, less than a third of the average annual rate during the 1990s (6.5 percent). Slower growth in the prison population since 2000 has been associated with a decrease (down about 18,400) in the number of sentenced black prisoners, lowering the imprisonment rates for blacks to 3,161 men and 149 women per 100,000 in the U.S. resident black population.

The equivalent of about one in every 45 adults was under community supervision at yearend 2008. Among offenders supervised in the community, probationers (4,270,917) represented the majority (84 percent) of this population at yearend 2008 while parolees (828,169) accounted for a smaller share (16 percent). The probation population increased 0.9 percent (36,446 probationers) in 2008. Growth in

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the probation population slowed in recent years to an average of 0.7 percent annually between 2003 and 2008 from an average of 2.5 percent annually between 2000 and 2003.

Probation exits (2.4 percent) grew at a faster average annual rate than probation entries (1.5 percent) between 2006 and 2008, and the average annual rate of growth in the population slowed (0.7 percent). The exit rate for all probationers increased from 53 per 100 probationers in 2006 to 55 per 100 in 2008. The increase in the exit rate for all probationers was associated with an increase in the percentage of probationers who either completed their full-term probation sentence or received an early discharge between 2006 (58 percent) and 2008 (63 percent).

In 2008, the parole population increased by 6,992 parolees. Growth in the parole population during 2008 (0.9 percent) slowed to about a third of the average annual rate between 2005 and 2007 (2.6 percent), the fastest period of growth in the parole population since 2000. Parole exits (5.6 percent) grew at a faster rate than parole entries (2.1 percent) in 2008, and growth in the population slowed during the year. The exit rate for all parolees increased from 67 per 100 parolees in 2007 to 70 per 100 in 2008. The increase in the parole exit rate during the last year was associated with an increase in the percentage of parolees who either completed their full-term parole sentence or received an early discharge, from 46 percent in 2007 to 49 percent in 2008.

The report, *Prisoners in 2008* (NCJ-228417), was written by BJS statisticians William J. Sabol, Ph.D., Heather C. West, Ph.D., and BJS intern Matthew Cooper, and the report, *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2008* (NCJ-228230), was written by BJS statisticians Lauren E. Glaze and Thomas P. Bonczar. Following publication, *Prisoners in 2008* can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/p08.htm> and *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2008* can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/ppus08.htm>.

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical reports and programs, please visit the BJS Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has five component bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office for Victims of Crime. In addition, OJP has two program offices: the Community Capacity Development Office, which incorporates the Weed and Seed strategy, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.