
Colorado

Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

*Prevention, treatment, and alternatives work
Prison should be the last resort*

Women

- ▶▶ Colorado's female incarceration rate has **grown faster** than the male incarceration rate. Between 1993 and 2003, the female incarceration rate increased twice as much as the male rate.

Source: Legislative Council Staff, *Forecasts 2003-2008* (Dec. 2003), 49.

- ▶▶ **Eighty-six percent** of women sent to Colorado's prisons in 2002 were convicted of a **non-violent offense**. The five most frequent crimes for which women were sent to prison in 2001 were:
 - ◆ drugs - 35%
 - ◆ theft - 12%
 - ◆ attempt/conspiracy/accessory to a nonviolent crime - 12%
 - ◆ escape/contraband - 10%
 - ◆ forgery - 7%

Source: Colorado Dept. of Corrections, *Statistical Report for 2002*, by Kristi Rosten (2003), 36.

- ▶▶ The United States incarcerates nearly **10 times more** women than the countries of Western Europe, despite the fact that the overall female population of the two regions is approximately the same.

Source: Amnesty International, *Not Part of My Sentence: Violations of the Human Rights of Women in Custody* (Washington, DC: Amnesty Int'l, 1999) 15.

- ▶▶ In the last ten years, the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC) has built **900 new beds** for women prisoners at a cost of \$93.8 million.

Source: Colorado Dept. of Corrections, *Statistical Report for 2002*, by Kristi Rosten (2003), 10.

- ▶▶ In Colorado, the rate of imprisonment for black women is more than twelve times the rate for white women. The rate for Latina women is nearly twice times that of white women.

Source: Colorado Dept. of Corrections, *Statistical Report for 2000*, by Kristi Rosten (2001), 80.
Census Data

- ▶▶ **A majority of women prisoners (65%) are mothers** of children under 18 years old. Studies have shown that children are greatly affected (academically, behaviorally, and socially) by the incarceration of their mother. A multi-generational impact has also been observed. National data show that foster care for a prisoner's child costs between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per year. **Children with an incarcerated mother are 5 to 6 times more likely to become incarcerated** than other children who live in poverty, but whose mothers have never been in prison. A 1998 *U.S. News and World Report* article found that 51% of girls and 24% of boys in juvenile detention in Colorado had a mother who had been or was currently incarcerated.

Sources: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children," by Christopher Mumola (2000).
Toni Locy. "Like Mother Like Daughter." *U.S. News and World Report*. October 1998
Gregory Hungerford. "The Children of Inmate Mothers in Ohio." West Virginia University. 1993.

- ▶▶ Women prisoners are three times more likely than men to be seriously mentally ill. In 2002, 42.7% of female inmates had a diagnosis of serious mental illness (compared to 13.9% of male prisoners).

Source: Colorado Dept. of Corrections, *Budget Request for FY 2004-05*, 625.