

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Global Conference calls on the United Nations to Accelerate its Prison Reform Movement

For more information, contact Charlie Sullivan, president of International C.U.R.E. at alanpogue@mac.com

The members of the 8th International Conference on Human Rights & Prison Reform Held in May 21-25 in Kigali, Rwanda declare:

WHEREAS the Rwanda experience is one of profound restorative justice and reconciliation in response to the genocide of 1994;

WHEREAS the Preamble of the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, identifies the process of restorative justice as reflected in the "virtues of their historical tradition and the values of African civilization";

WHEREAS mass incarceration has become a global pandemic;

BE IT RESOLVED

that we affirm the UN declaration of Basic Principles of the use of Restorative Justice in Criminal Matters (2002) and recommend that retributive justice policies be abolished immediately;

that we recommend that the UN strongly encourage member states to implement the Mandela Rules;

We further recommend that:

- (1) Incarceration should only be used as a last resort.
- (2) Member states abolish the use of the death penalty and life without parole immediately throughout the world.
- (3) Member states abolish the use of "virtual life without parole" which only considers the crime and not the rehabilitative record of the person during his or her incarceration.
- (4) Member States abolish long sentences, especially for young adults.

(5) Member States abolish trying juveniles in adult courts.

(6) Member States abolish the use of incarceration for noncriminal behaviors.

Finally, we strongly recommend that this theme of restorative justice permeate the upcoming Crime Commission scheduled for Kyoto, Japan, in April 2020.

*List of countries participating

Burundi, Brazil, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Hong Kong, Ivory Coast, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Poland, Rwanda, Sweden, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda, United States of America, Zambia

See attached photograph, by Alan Pogue, of the participants:



The Evolving Landscape of Crime and Incarceration

To: Interested Parties

From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research

Serious doubts about our system of mass incarceration emerge in a nationally representative survey, even in more politically conservative, rural parts of the country. Indeed, in an era of broad speculation about a growing urban-rural divide, there is general consensus between rural America, small cities and major metropolitan areas that our system of criminal justice is not working and communities should focus on priorities other than spending millions on prisons and jails.

A 40 percent plurality believe incarceration rates in their communities are too high, and a 66 percent majority would describe themselves as "concerned" if they learned incarceration rates in their community were higher than in similar communities. In rural communities, a 60 percent majority would be concerned.

Part of this movement against mass incarceration reflects competing priorities for public investment. Building prisons and jails ranks as the lowest priority when compared to investments in schools, infrastructure and health care. And a 62 percent majority agrees that building more prisons and jails is not an effective means to improve the quality of life in their community. This consensus emerges amid doubts about the equity of local criminal justice systems and their ability to fairly mete out justice—particularly to people of color or low income people. But more broadly, Americans fundamentally believe our current criminal justice system is not living up to its promise of producing safer communities. A 67 percent majority agree, "building more jails and prisons to keep more people in jail does not reduce crime," including 61 percent of rural Americans.

This memorandum summarizes the results of a national survey of 2,000 American adults taken from February 27-March 5, 2018. This survey focused heavily on rural areas, where incarceration rates tend to be much higher than in the nation's major urban areas. In order to build a robust sample of rural residents, this survey included 1,000 interviews in counties designated as rural. Sample for this survey came from three separate files from TargetSmart corresponding to three lists of counties classified as "Rural", "Small and Mid-sized Metros", and "Large Metro" with 50 percent coming from the rural list and 25 percent each from the latter two. This sample was of the general population over 18 years of age with 50% of the records being for cell phones and 50% for landline phones. During processing, the sample was clustered according to race, age, gender, and region.

WORLD HEADQUARTERS
1101 18th Street, NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20005

EUROPE
2 Eastbourn Terrace
London, UK W2 6LQ

CANADA
365-1 First Canadian Place
Toronto Board of Trade Tower
Toronto, ON M5X 1C1

www.gqrr.com

Figure 2: Quality of life priorities

	Total Effective	Rural
Providing more jobs and job training	92	91
Investing more in schools and youth programs	91	88
Building and improving roads and infrastructure	88	87
(SPLIT) Strengthening community-based mental health treatment	87	86
(SPLIT) Strengthening community-based drug and alcohol treatment	85	83
Creating and maintaining parks and green space	83	74
Investing in community-based programs for violence reduction	81	78
Reducing racism and bias	77	72
Investing in arts and culture	76	63
Building more prisons and jails	35	46

Many doubts about the criminal justice system

Nearly half (49 percent) believe, "Too many people are in jail for the wrong reasons," which represents a fairly stunning indictment of our local justice systems. Doubts about the criminal justice system are articulated most vividly in terms of race and class. A 47 percent plurality disagree with the statement, "Local judges are fair to all people, regardless of background," including 63 percent of African Americans. A 55 percent majority of all respondents agree with the statement, "Our justice system discriminates against poor people." This rises to 76 percent of (self-ascribed) "lower class" people and 84 percent of African Americans surveyed.

But more fundamentally, the country has concluded that what we are doing, the system of locking a lot of people up in prisons and jails, is not working. The public does not believe that putting more people in jail reduces crime, including people in rural parts of the country.

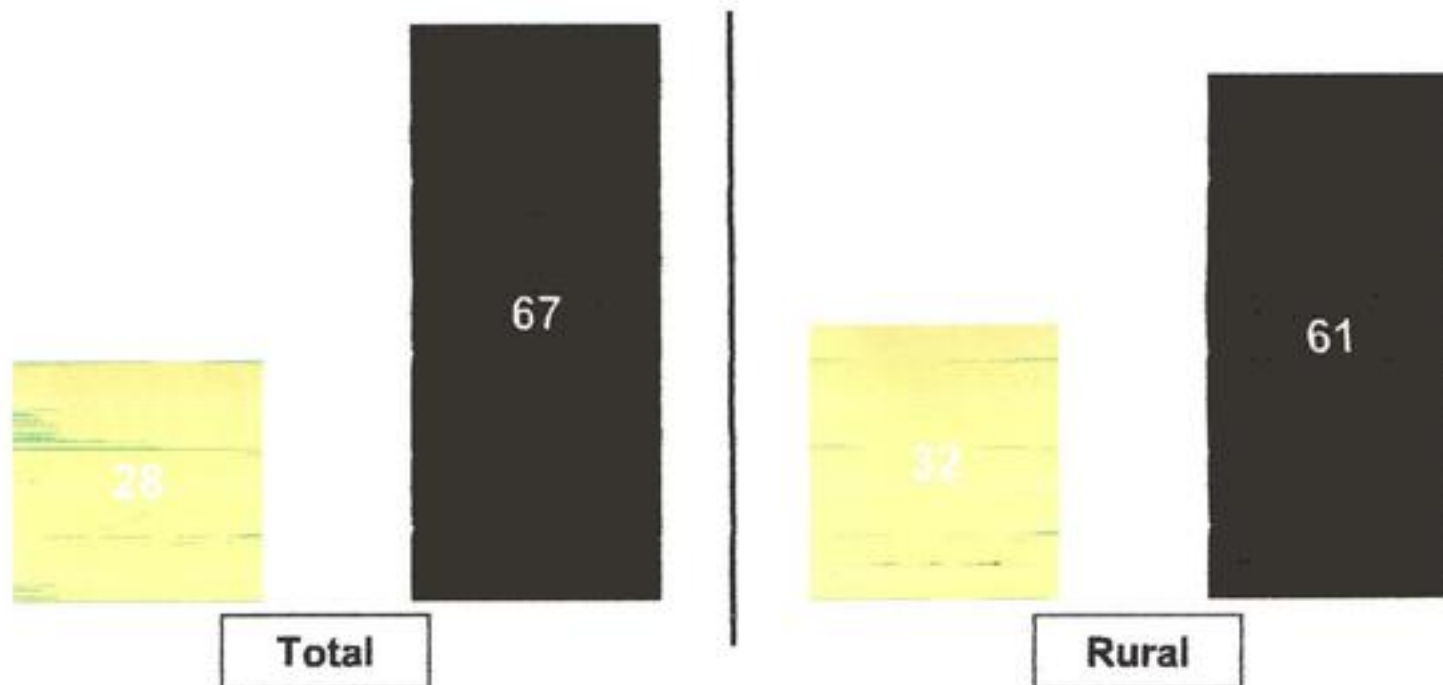
Figure 3: Building jails and prisons does not reduce crime

Statement 1

Building more jails and prisons to keep more people in jail reduces crime.

Statement 2

Building more jails and prisons to keep more people in jail does not reduce crime.



Reassessing mass incarceration

As a result of these complementary trends in thinking, the public is beginning to turn on mass incarceration, *particularly in their community*. A 40 percent plurality believe up front that the level of incarceration is too high in their communities, and just 9 percent believe we should be putting more people in jails and prisons. But an impressive 66 percent would be concerned—52 percent very concerned—if they learned that their community has a higher rate of incarceration than similar communities in their state. A 60 percent majority of rural residents concur and 45 percent of rural residents would be very concerned if they learned their communities had higher rates of incarceration than other communities.

Moreover, the public rewards candidates for public office who advocate for their desire for a different path. This survey asked reactions to a hypothetical candidate with the following views:

Brad Johnson says our county has one of the highest incarceration rates in the state, and that our rate is much higher than the national average. Rather than burdening taxpayers with the cost of unnecessary incarceration, Mr. Johnson wants to invest in treatment options for people suffering from addiction, and create educational and economic opportunities.

A 71 percent majority find this candidate appealing, including 68 percent of rural residents.

Conclusion

For decades, this country spent billions on a system that led to one of the highest incarceration rates in the world without seeing the promised result in reduced crime. More and more Americans are waking up to these facts, seeking policy alternatives and better investments of their money than in prisons and jails.

Mississippi profile



26,000 people from Mississippi are behind bars today

How many people are locked up in Mississippi and where?

26,000 people in Mississippi are locked up in various kinds of facilities



Youth 240
Indian Country 50
Federal Prisons 1,700

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Sources and data notes: See <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/50statepie.html>

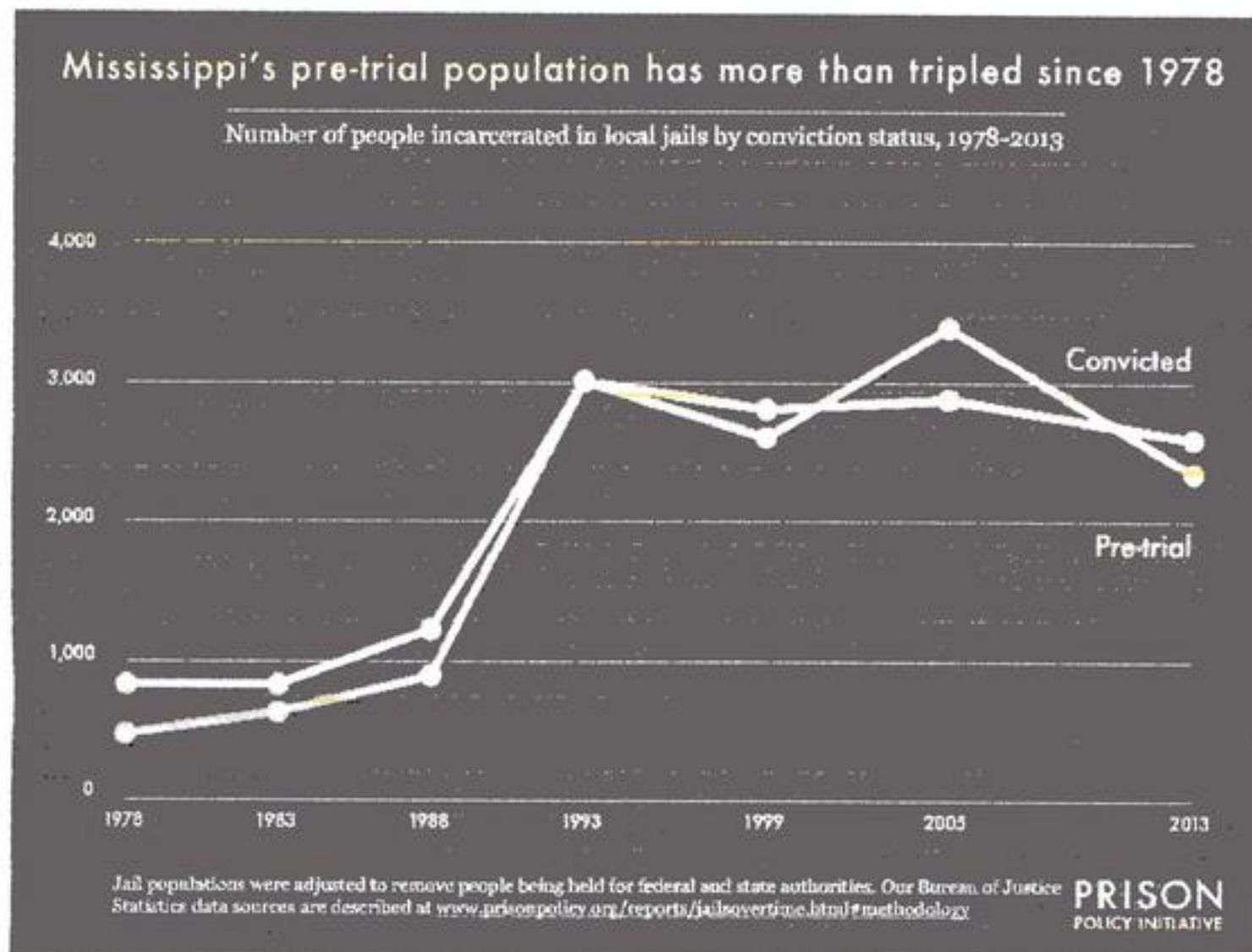
Rates of imprisonment have grown dramatically in the last 40 years



More than half of the people held in jails in Mississippi are held for federal or state agencies, primarily the state prison system. To avoid counting them twice, this population is not included in the yellow jails line. For annual counts of people in jails held for federal or state authorizes in Mississippi, see our table "[Jail and prison incarcerated populations by state over time.](#)"

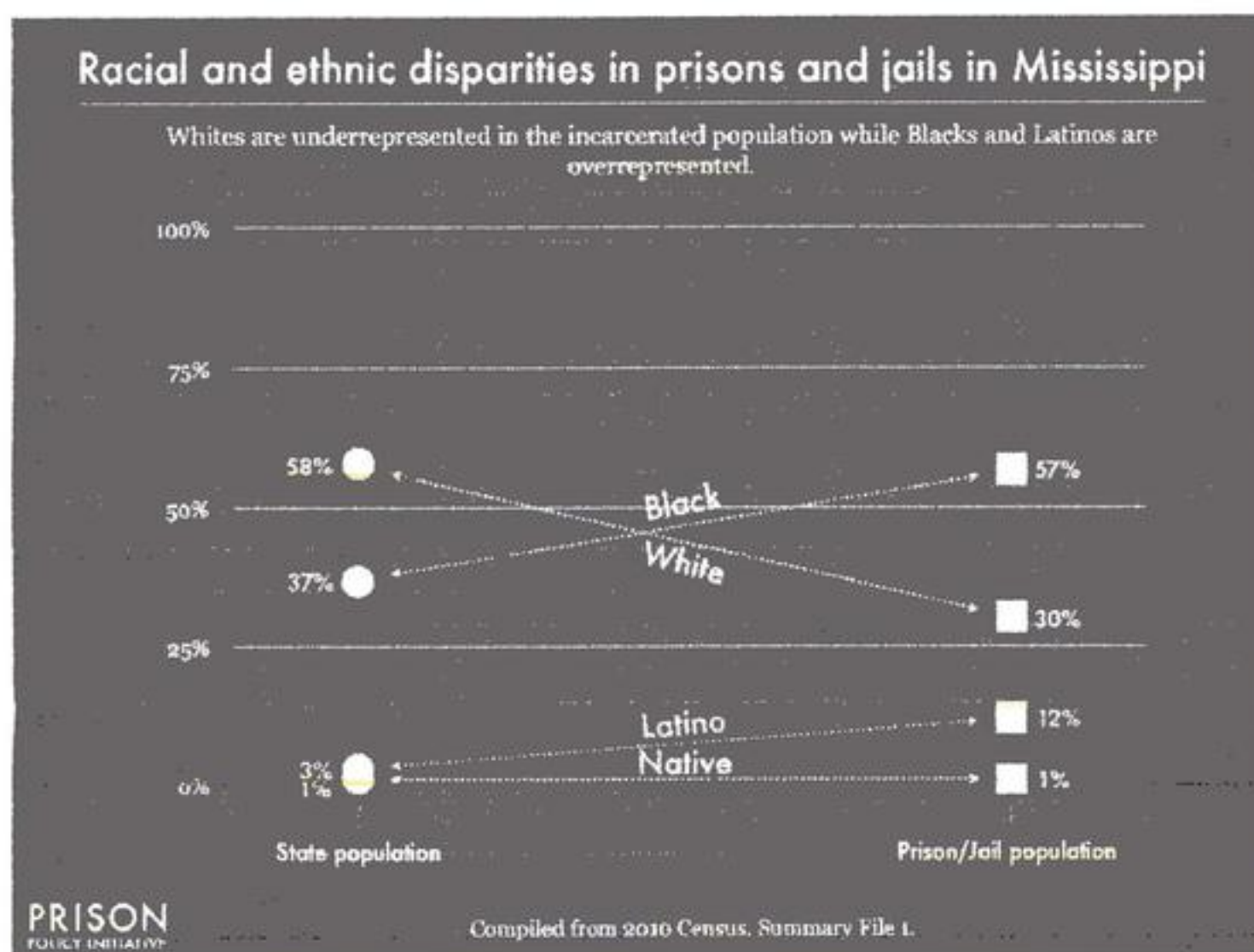
Also see these Mississippi graphs:

- [total numbers](#) rather than rates.
- Women's prisons: [Incarceration Rates](#) | [Total Population](#)
- Men's prisons: [Incarceration Rates](#) | [Total Population](#)



This graph excludes people held for state or federal authorities from the total count of people held in Mississippi jails. Because a tremendous proportion (48%) of the population in Mississippi's jails is held for the state prison system, this graph likely overstates the convicted population and understates the pre-trial population.

People of color are overrepresented in prisons and jails

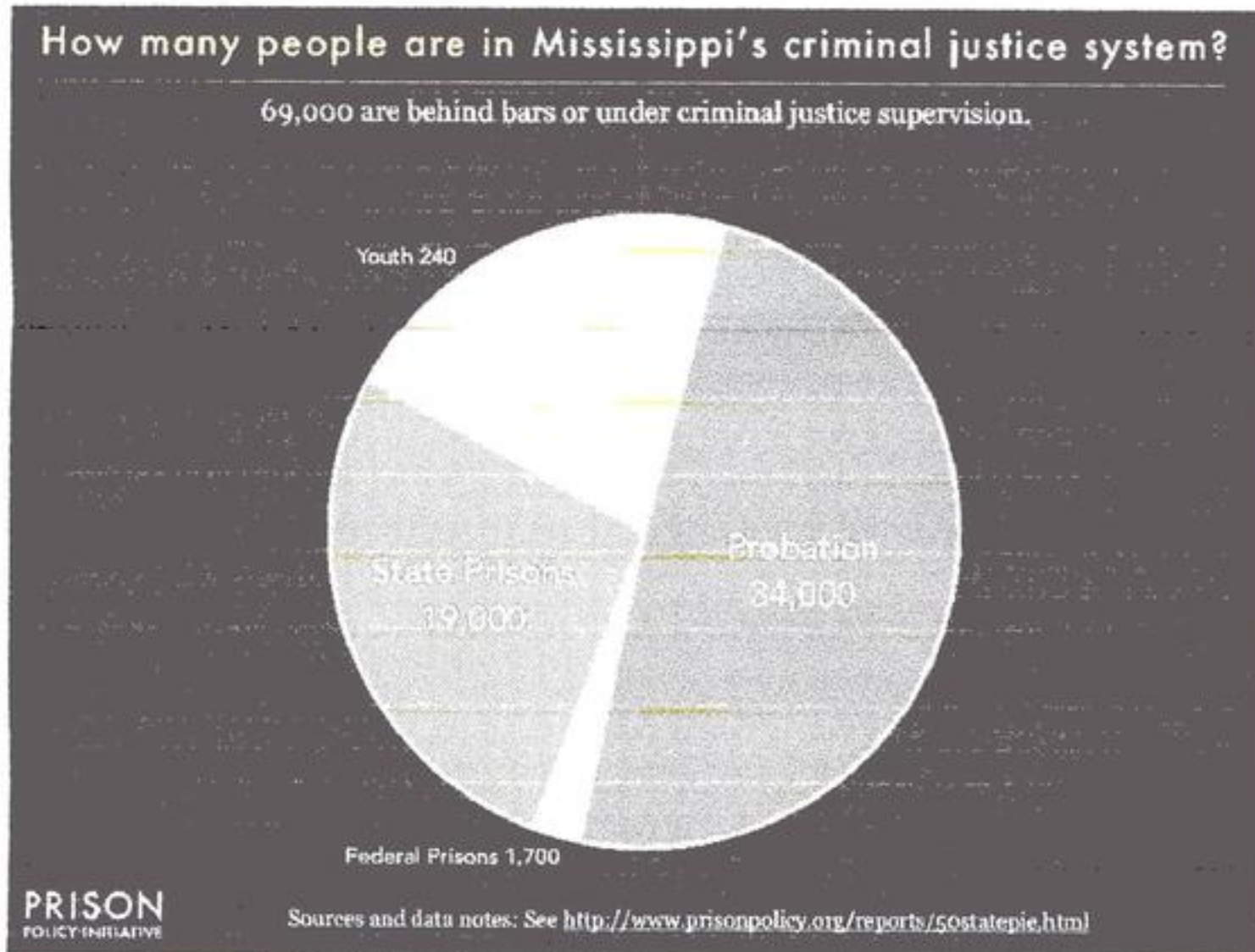


See also our detailed graphs about [Whites](#), [Hispanics](#), and [Blacks](#) in Mississippi prisons and jails.

The relatively high proportion of Hispanics incarcerated in Mississippi is due largely to the Adams County Correctional Center, a Corrections Corporation of

American facility that contracts with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to hold immigration detainees.

Mississippi's criminal justice system is more than just its prisons and jails



Our other articles about Mississippi

- Despite court stay, Mississippi sets new phone rates in accordance with FCC order by Alison Walsh, March 23, 2016
- From the Prison Gerrymandering Blog: Mississippi Attorney General: Census should change prison count, by Peter Wagner, November 12, 2009
- How does the Mississippi incarceration rate measure up in the global context?

Other resources

- Research on Mississippi in our Research Clearinghouse