

U.S. prison, parole population sets record

One in 32 Americans in jail or on parole in 2003

The Associated Press

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WASHINGTON - A record 6.9 million adults were incarcerated or on probation or parole last year, nearly 131,000 more than in 2002, according to a Justice Department study.

Put another way, about 3.2 percent of the adult U.S. population, or 1 in 32 adults, were incarcerated or on probation or parole at the end of last year.

A record 4.8 million adults were on probation or parole in 2003, about 73,000 more than the year before. About 70 percent of adults involved in federal, state or local corrections systems fall into this category. The states of California and Texas together accounted for about 1 million.

The number of adults on parole after serving a prison sentence rose by 3.1 percent from 2002 to 2003, to more than 774,500 people. That compares with an average annual rise of about 1.7 percent since 1995 for those on parole, a figure that has been increasing at a much slower rate than those in jails (4 percent a year), in prison (3.4 percent) and on probation (2.9 percent).

Since 1995, states around the country have increased the use of mandatory parole after prison release and cut down on use of discretionary releases overseen by parole boards, the report says.

The report, released Sunday, focused most on the characteristics of those on probation or parole. Its findings include:

- Almost half of all probationers were convicted of a felony, with 25 percent convicted of a drug violation.
- Washington state had the highest number of people on probation per 100,000 population, at 3,767. New Hampshire had the lowest rate at 426.
- Of the 2.2 million people discharged from probation in 2003, three out of five met the conditions of their supervision. Another 16 percent were jailed because of a rule violation or a new crime, with 4 percent becoming fugitives.
- About 95 percent of those on parole had been convicted of a felony.
- Of the 470,500 parolees discharged from supervision last year, 38 percent went back to jail for a new crime or a rule violation, with 9 percent becoming fugitives.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5517618/>

Something Else That Americans Can be Proud Of - 7/26/2004

Record Number of Adults on Probation or Parole in 2003

By Ernie Whiteside

Do you really think that one person in thirty-two deserved to be incarcerated, on probation or on parole?

Its time to strain your brain! These numbers don't mean we have a record number of criminals, they mean we have a record number of crimes (i.e. more rules that create criminals than ever before).

Every law that defines an offense falls into one of two categories. The first category is *mala in se*, and the second is *mala prohibita*.

A *mala in se* offense is a crime that is, by the laws of nature, a true crime. Examples of this would be, murder, rape, robbery, fraud, etc.

A *mala prohibita* offense is one that would not be an offense were it not for the legislature passing a law that makes a particular act a punishable offense. Examples of this would be, possessing or smoking marijuana, buying and selling more than 7 cars a year without a dealer's license (in California), not obeying road signs and speed limits, etc.

Most of us probably don't know anybody that has committed murder or rape. We might know someone who has committed robbery and maybe a few that have committed fraud. Still, we know over a thousand people each and the percentage of people that we know who have committed a crime, *mala in se*, is very small.

On the other hand, we all know people that have committed *mala prohibita* offenses. There are whole libraries full of law books telling Americans what we may and may not do. Can you imagine how many bureaucrats would lose their jobs if our legislatures weren't busy making all those rules? I suppose this is just one way that the Bush administration can claim that it is holding down unemployment; we put people in jail and free up their old job for someone else and at the same time we create jobs for prison administration. This is a Win-Win for bigger-better-government Republicrats and their pork-barrel buddies who contract to run the prisons.

Vote for just about any Demopublican you want, they are all in favor of more government with more rules and more violators. This isn't just good business for legislators, bureaucrats and contractors, think how much mullah is being racked in by judges, court administration and lawyers! More quality jobs for America!!!

Just a few more thoughts and I will let you go back to sleep.

What does it mean to commit a "felony"? I know a convicted felon! He was an elected county sheriff, a clean, honest family man, a church-goer and a solid citizen in his community. He had even been featured on the TV series, Cops, for an act of courage. The only thing he did wrong was to get stuck in a heated political race. The department had a "slush fund" that had been used for longer than anybody knew to buy vagrants a ticket out of town or pay off the odd informant. You might be tempted to think he got caught with his hand in the cookie jar, but not so. The rules on how to administer these funds changed during his watch and he didn't get rid of this, now illegal, fund or even know he needed to. So he is now a felon who can never get a job in his chosen profession.

Now, notice how many people are let out on parole and then reincarcerated. Can you imagine the overhead associated with the revolving door of people who are constantly before the judge. And let's not forget the added need to lawyers and program administrators, etc. It is the system made in heaven! Before a lawyer only got paid once, now they get paid over and over again as long as we keep these people moving in and out of incarceration based on rule violations (*mala prohibita* offenses).

There is only ONE political party out there that wants to get rid of most *mala prohibita* offenses, the Libertarians. It's time to take a look at them!

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