

Study: Women account for nearly one in four arrests

BY REBECCA CARROLL
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Women made up seven percent of all inmates in state and federal prisons last year and accounted for nearly one in four arrests, the government reported Sunday.

Co-author of a Bureau of Justice Statistics report Paige Harrison linked an upswing in the rate of arrest for women to their increased participation in drug crimes, violent crimes and fraud.

The number of women incarcerated in state and federal prisons in 2004 was up four percent compared with 2003, more than double the 1.8 percent increase among men, the study said. In 1995, women made up 6.1 percent of all inmates in those facilities.

"The number of incarcerated women has been growing ... due in large part to sentencing policies in the war in drugs," The Sentencing Project, a group promoting alternatives to prison, said in a statement.

The group said the number of drug offenders in prisons and jails has risen from 40,000 in 1980 to more than 450,000 today. According to FBI figures, law officers in 2004 made more arrests for drug violations than for any other offense — about 1.7 million arrests, or 12.5 percent of all arrests.

Those sentenced for drug offenses made up 55 percent of federal in-

mates in 2003, the report said.

The total number of people incarcerated grew 1.9 percent in 2004 to 2,267,787 people. That figure includes federal and state prisoners, as well as 713,990 inmates held in local jails, 15,757 prisoners in U.S. territorial prisons, 9,788 in immigration and customs facilities, 2,177 in military facilities, 1,826 in Indian Country jails and 102,338 in juvenile facilities.

The country's state and federal prison population — 1,421,911, which excludes state and federal prisoners in local jails — grew 2.6 percent in 2004, compared with an average growth of 3.4 percent a year since 1995.

Growth last year in federal prison populations was 5.5 percent, outpacing overall prisoner growth but slipping from the 7.4 average annual growth in federal prison populations since 1995. The number of inmates in state prisons rose 1.8 percent, with about half that growth in Georgia, Florida and California.

Harrison attributed some of the prison population rise to tougher sentencing policies implemented in the late 1990s. She said the average time served by prisoners today is seven months longer than it was in 1995.

"You bring more people in, you keep them longer — inevitably you're going to have growth," she said.

The Sentencing Project said the continued rise in prisoners despite falling crime rates raises questions about the country's imprisonment system. The group said the incarceration rate — 724 per 100,000 — is 25 percent higher than that of any other nation.

"Policy-makers would be wise to reconsider the wisdom of current sentencing and drug policies, both to avoid expensive incarceration costs and to invest in more productive prevention and treatment approaches to crime," Marc Mauer, the group's executive director, said in a statement.

Another group, The Justice Policy Institute in Washington, said the statistics show little relationship between prison population growth and the crime rate, which has been falling in recent years.

"The nation does not have to lock more people up to have safer communities," said Jason Ziedenberg, the institute's executive director.

About 8.4 percent of the country's black males between the ages of 25 and 29 are in state or federal prison, compared with 2.5 percent of Hispanic males and 1.2 percent of white males in the same age group, the report said.

Blacks made up an estimated 41 percent of inmates with a sentence of more than one year, the report said.

ADFC: Decision will be made Wednesday

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stop dodging around issues."

Brown suggested punishing students who are removed from home games multiple times for "unclassy" behavior by revoking their privileges to attend future home games.

The Senate Rules Committee and ADFC Senators met Friday to begin addressing the issue.

Steve McBride, associate director for Internal Operations in the University Athletics Department, said at the ADFC meeting that Athletics Department officials are concerned, but there is one main problem:

"People are not as civil as they used to be."

"Some of the people that we're hearing from are just noticing that change and not liking it, and I don't know what we can do about that because that's a lot bigger than a football game or the city of Eugene. It's society," McBride said.

McBride said alcohol fuels the problem, but said he and the Athletics Department have not figured out what to do about it.

He said that some people come to games unrealistically expecting people to always act properly, particularly when they bring young children.

"We're dealing with a much broader range of complaints than are really valid," McBride said. "Let's act like we've all been there before."

McBride suggested that students use peer pressure to discourage negative behavior in the stands.

Several Senators said a final decision will be made Wednesday evening at the Student Senate meeting.

The 11 ASPAC members will also brainstorm ideas to help eliminate the problem.

Contact the campus and federal politics reporter at nwlbur@dailymerald.com

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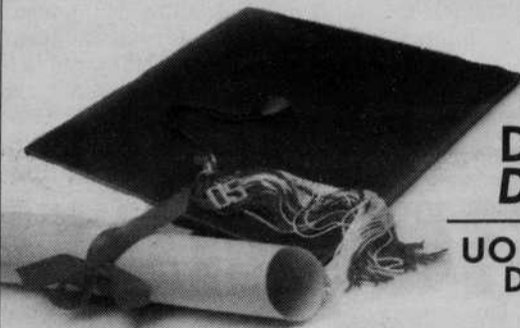
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