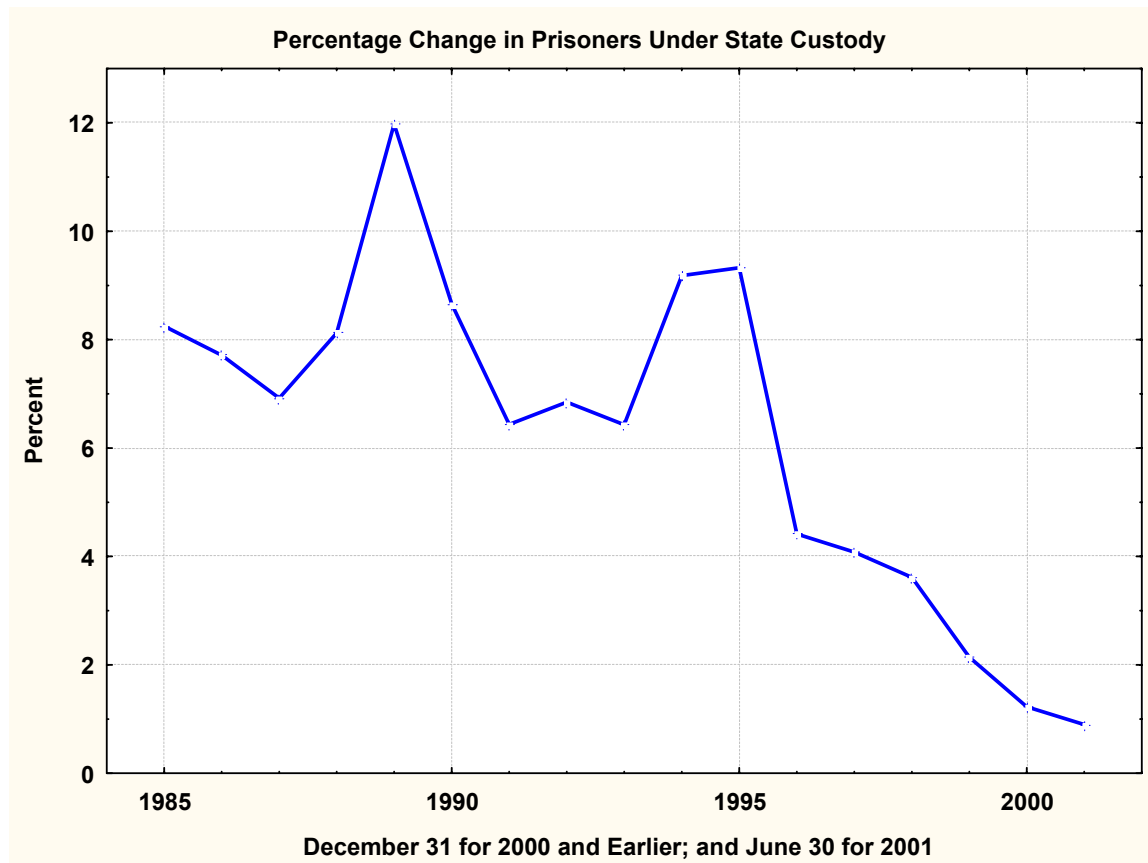


Growth in State Prison Populations Continues to Slow

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State government spending on prisons and other “correction” services accounts for about 7 percent of state general fund spending and 4 percent of total state spending, making it the 5th-largest major spending category (after K-12 education, Medicaid, higher education, and transportation). Just over a decade ago, correction spending was growing extremely rapidly (8.5 percent annual growth between 1985 and 1990, *after* adjusting for inflation and population growth), as the number of state prisoners skyrocketed and states went on a prison-building spree. Since then, fortunately for state budgets, real per-capita correction spending has slowed significantly, to 4.8 percent annually between 1990 and 1995, and further to 2.5 percent between 1995 and 1999.

Newly released data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that growth in the state prison population is continuing to slow – for the U.S. as a whole, state prison populations grew by only 0.4 percent between June 30, 2000 and June 30, 2001. The figure below shows just how sharp the slowdown has been, using annual data on prisoners in state custody.¹



While prison population growth has slowed dramatically for states as a whole, there was tremendous variation across states – Mississippi had the fastest growth, at 12.5 percent, and several other states also had rapid growth. A total of 12 states plus the District of Columbia saw a decline in their prison populations, with declines most common in the northeast.

**Change In Prisoners Under the Jurisdiction of State Correctional Authorities
June 30, 2000 to June 30, 2001**

	Percent change from 6/30/00 to 6/30/01		Percent change from 6/30/00 to 6/30/01
United States	0.4 %		
New England	(0.1)	Southeast	2.9 %
Connecticut	1.4	Alabama	5.8
Maine	(1.3)	Arkansas	6.7
Massachusetts	(3.7)	Florida	1.1
New Hampshire	3.1	Georgia	4.0
Rhode Island	(1.2)	Kentucky	(0.3)
Vermont	7.7	Louisiana	2.2
Mid-Atlantic	(4.4)	Mississippi	12.5
Delaware	1.1	North Carolina	0.2
District of Columbia	(37.2)	South Carolina	0.5
Maryland	1.1	Tennessee	2.7
New Jersey	(9.6)	Virginia	2.0
New York	(3.5)	West Virginia	8.7
Pennsylvania	1.3	Southwest	(1.2)
Great Lakes	0.9	Arizona	3.2
Illinois	1.8	New Mexico	0.2
Indiana	3.5	Oklahoma	0.6
Michigan	2.2	Texas	(2.2)
Ohio	(2.5)	Rocky Mountain	3.7
Wisconsin	0.7	Colorado	4.9
Plains	3.2	Idaho	4.1
Iowa	6.0	Montana	6.9
Kansas	(2.7)	Utah	(0.2)
Minnesota	4.7	Wyoming	(2.5)
Missouri	3.2	Far West	0.8
Nebraska	7.7	Alaska	4.3
North Dakota	7.6	California	(0.3)
South Dakota	4.0	Hawaii	7.1
		Nevada	3.7
		Oregon	7.4
		Washington	3.7

For more information, see the new Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2001* <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/pjim01.htm>, by Allen Beck, Jennifer Karberg, and Paige Harrison.

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¹ The figure is based on data for prisoners in state custody rather than prisoners under state jurisdiction – the measure that grew 0.4% - because a longer time series is readily available for prisoners under custody. Both measures of state prison population tell essentially the same story. See the BJS Bulletin for more detail on measures of prison population.