Legal Services for Prisoners with Children

Prisoners with Children

Facts and Figures at a Glance

- The growth of the prison system has dramatically impacted the lives of millions of children. In 1999, U.S. prisons held the parents of over 1.5 million children, an increase of over 500,000 since 1991. Mumola, C.J., "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children", *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report* (August 2000).

- The majority of women prisoners are mothers. An estimated 80,000 incarcerated mothers are parents to approximately 200,000 children under 18. African American children (7.0%) were nearly nine times more likely to have an incarcerated parent in prison than white children (0.8%). Similarly, Latino children (2.6%) were three times as likely as white children to have a parent in prison. *Amnesty International, "Not Part of My Sentence: Violations of the Human Rights of Women in Custody" (Washington, DC: Amnesty International, March 1999) and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Incarcerated Parents and Their Children (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, August 2000).*

- In California, 195,000 children have a parent in state prison and another 97,000 children have parents in county jail. The parents of 564,000 other children were on parole and probation, bringing the total number of California children with parents involved in the adult criminal justice system to 856,000. Simons, Charlene Wear, PhD., "Children of Incarcerated Parents," *California Research Bureau, Prepared At the Request of Assemblymember Kerry Mazzoni* (March 2000), p.2.

- African American children (7.0%) were nearly nine times more likely to have an incarcerated parent in prison than white children (0.8%). Similarly, Latino children (2.6%) were three times as likely as white children to have a parent in prison. "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children", *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report* (August 2000).

- Studies show that about one quarter of children remain with their fathers when the mother goes to prison, but nearly 9 out of 10 children remain with their mothers when the father is incarcerated. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Special Report: Women in Prisons,* U.S. Department of Justice, March 1990.

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