

Status of Women Symposium 2019: Women and the Criminal Justice System

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Acknowledgements

CSN Women's Alliance

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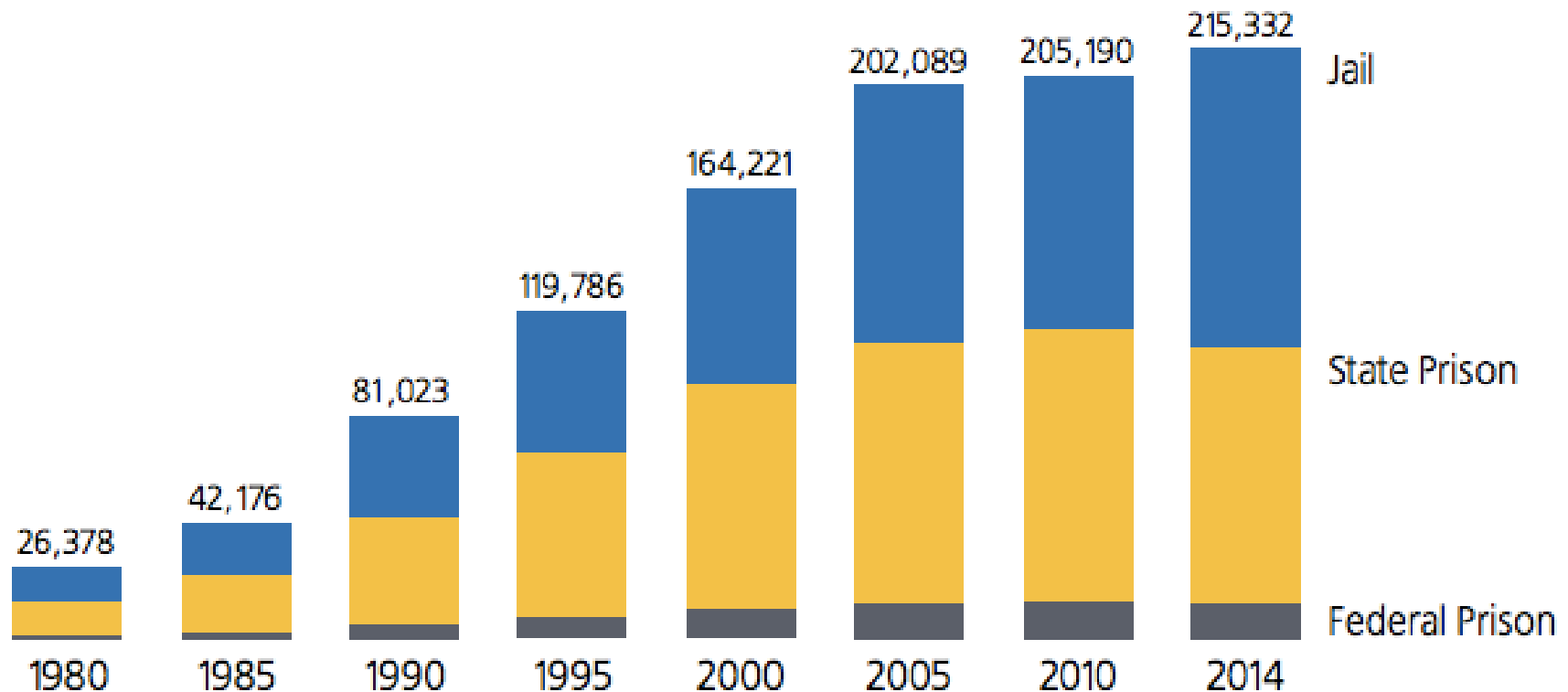


System-impacted women and families



700% Increase in Incarceration in U.S.

Rise in Women's Incarceration, 1980-2014



Sources: *Historical Corrections Statistics in the United States, 1850-1984*. (1986); *Prison and Jail Inmates Series*. (1997-2014) Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics; *Prisoners in 2014*. (2015). Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

The growing number of women in U.S. jails

 = 1,000 women in jail



1970



2014



Vera Institute Report: Growing Number of Women in Jails

 Women of color  White women



Property
offenses



32%

Drug
offenses



29%

Public order
offenses



21%

Nevada is no different: Growth in women's imprisonment far outpaces men's

- In Nevada, men's jail incarceration rate grew by 25% between 1970 and 2015.
- In Nevada, women's jail incarceration rate grew by 220% between 1970 and 2015.

Potential reasons for women's increase?

*Data from multiple sources indicate that women and girls are **not** committing more crimes than they ever were before.*

- > Changing tide of correctional philosophies to more punitive policies over the last 40 years
- > “War on drugs” and arrest and charging practices with lower-level offenses
- > Decades of compounded statewide neglect in mental health, addiction, housing, and trauma-responsive services
- > Opioid crisis

Who plays a role in the increase? (and decrease)?

- > Police who choose to arrest, release, or book into jail
- > Prosecutors who determine whether to charge or divert
- > Judges who decide to hold or release pending case resolution
- > Court actors (pre-trial services, defense counsel, clerks) whose action or inaction can accelerate or delay outcomes
- > Community corrections officers who choose how to respond to technical violations

Solutions



U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Briefing on Women in Prison



Gender-Responsive Strategies

- > Intentionally uses research on gendered experiences to direct policies, programs, and procedures for women.
- > Goal is to produce favorable outcomes by tailoring supervision and services to women's needs and strengths, by starting from a framework that **gender matters.**



Women's Risk and Needs Assessment (WRNA)

Charged with answering these questions:

If we started with women in mind, what criminogenic needs would risk assessments measure?

Are gender-neutral (male-based) assessments missing salient criminogenic needs for women?

Risk Factors Predictive for Women

Depression/Anxiety
Symptoms

Psychosis

Anger

Unsafe Housing

Unhealthy Intimate
Relationships

Child Abuse

Adult Abuse

Parental Stress

Strengths Predictive for Women

Self-efficacy

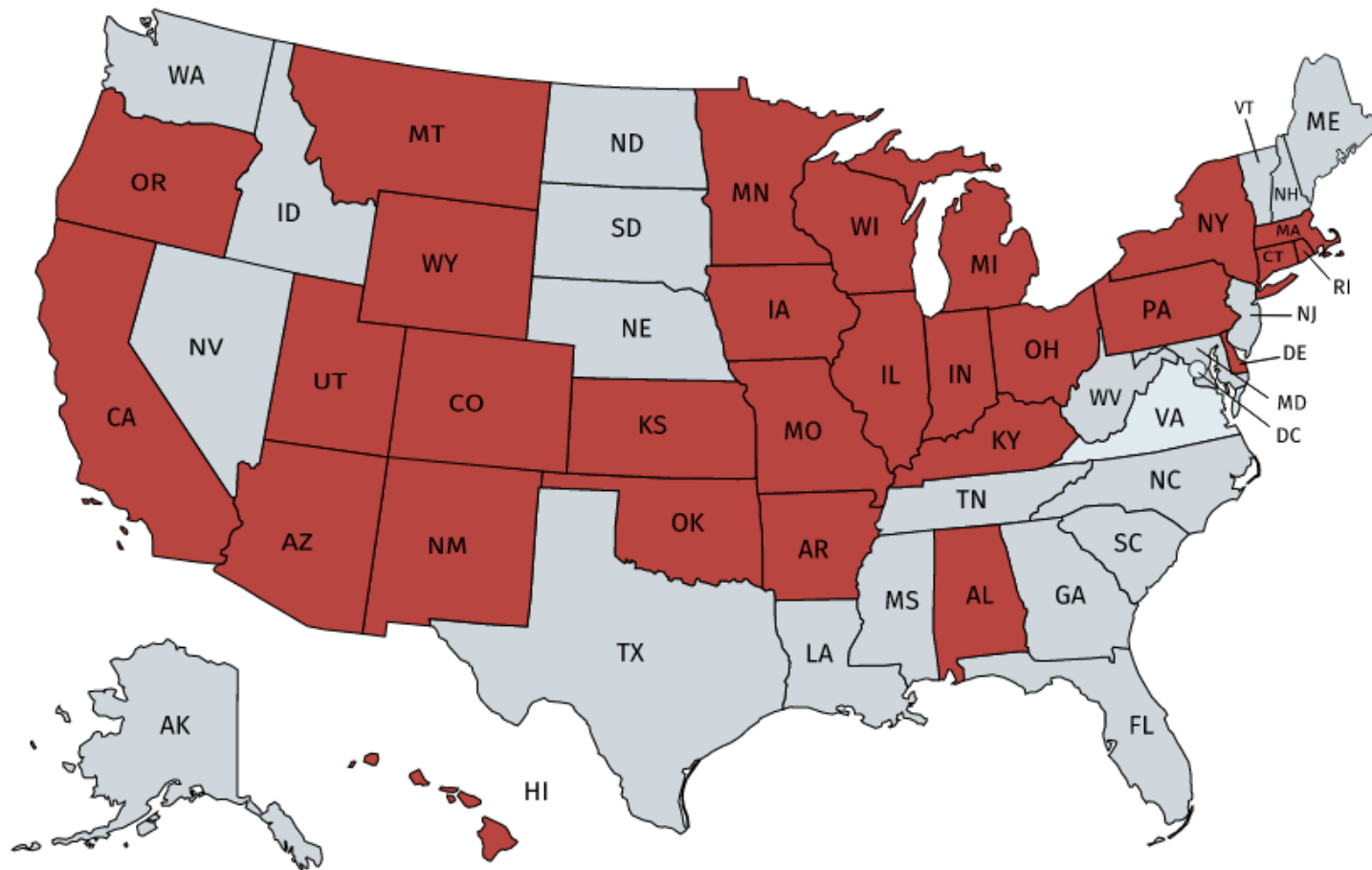
Family Support

Educational Assets

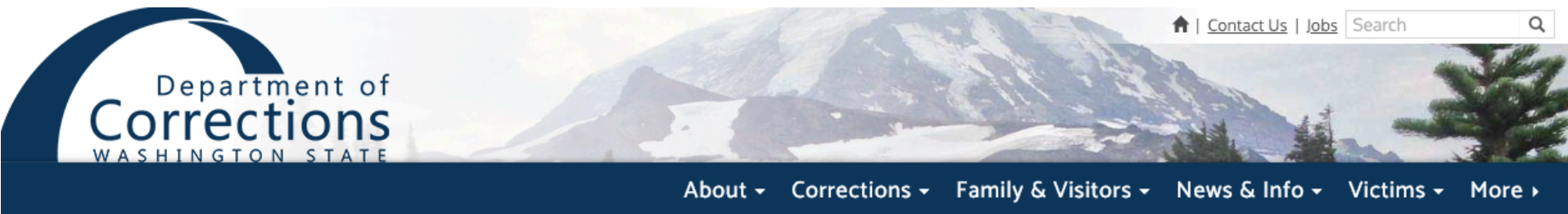
Parental Involvement



WRNA Implementation Sites



Washington State: Parenting Sentencing Alternative



Home > Corrections > Hearings & Sentencing > Sentencing Alternatives

Corrections

+ Expand All - Collapse All

- Community Reentry ▾
- Hearings & Sentencing ▾
 - Home Hearings & Sentencing Home
 - > End of Sentence Review ▾
 - > Hearings ▾
 - > ISRB Review Board ▾
 - > Sentencing ▾
- Incarceration ▾
- Prison Rape Elimination Act ▾
- Programs ▾
- Services ▾

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Parenting Sentencing Alternative (PSA)

In 2010, [Substitute Senate Bill \(SSB\) 6639](#) created two Parenting Sentencing Alternatives to prison confinement for some nonviolent inmates who have minor children. The judicial sentencing alternative is referred to as the Family & Offender Sentencing Alternative (FOSA) and the partial confinement program is referred to as the Community Parenting Alternative (CPA).

- [Family and Offender Sentencing Alternative \(FOSA\)](#)
- [Community Parenting Alternative \(CPA\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Contact PSA Staff](#)

Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 6639 was supported by the Department of Corrections (DOC) in partnership with the [Department of Social and Health Services \(DSHS\)](#). The legislation requires DOC and DCYF [Children Administration](#) to work together on shared cases. Each PSA participant under DOC jurisdiction must sign releases of information to be eligible.

Why did the legislature create parenting sentencing alternatives?

Research shows children of incarcerated parents are significantly more likely to end up in the criminal justice system themselves. The focus of the legislation is the child(ren), family, and the importance of maintaining the family bond so that participants under DOC jurisdiction can be productive contributors in their families and communities. The goal of these programs is to help stop the cycle of criminal activity.

Downsizing the Women's Prison Population in Nevada

Successful downsizing and justice reinvestment strategies will require wider investment in:

- > System-impacted women and their families
- > Alternatives to incarceration designed for women & girls
- > Gender-responsive risk/needs instrument statewide, such as the Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA)
- > Gender-responsive curricula and trauma-informed practices
- > Gender-responsive supervision, especially among jails, probation, and parole
- > Education of judges and other key stakeholders



Women and girls are not the vectors of violence we need to be afraid of, they are the victims of violence we need to be in care of.

Additional Resources

**National Resource Center for Justice Involved
Women**

www.cjinvolvedwomen.org

**National Institute of Corrections
Women Offender Initiative**

www.nicic.gov/womenoffenders

Questions? Comments?



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