

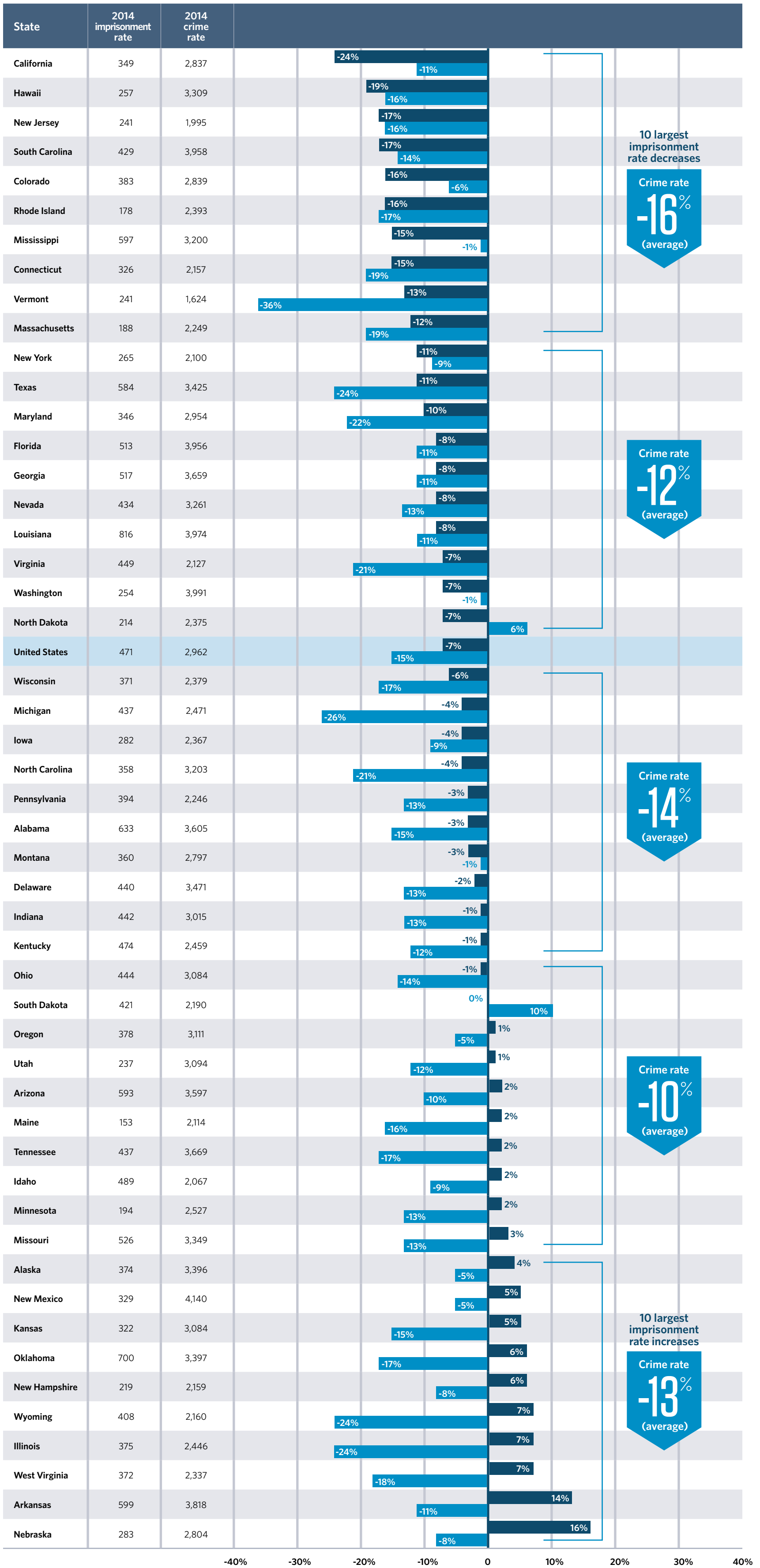


Imprisonment and Crime Rates Fell in 30 States Over 5 Years

The national imprisonment rate declined 1 percent while violent and property crime rates fell 1 percent and 5 percent, respectively, from 2013 to 2014, according to statistics released in September by the U.S. Department of Justice. From 2009 to 2014, the nation's imprisonment rate fell 7 percent and the total crime rate declined 15 percent.

Crime rates are now about half of their 1991 peaks and have fallen to levels not seen since the late 1960s. Experts attribute the decline to myriad factors, including better policing, the waning of the crack cocaine epidemic, reduced use of cash in favor of electronic payments, and the spread of car theft prevention devices and other anti-crime technologies. Although increased imprisonment of dangerous offenders has also played a role, an analysis of the most recent five-year data finds no clear causal relationship between higher incarceration and lower crime. On the contrary, 30 states have reduced both rates at the same time.

■ Change in imprisonment rate, 2009-14 ■ Change in crime rate, 2009-14



Notes: Imprisonment and crime rates are per 100,000 residents. Imprisonment rates count inmates sentenced to more than a year in prison and do not reflect total offender populations, which can be significantly higher in states with unified correctional systems that include prisons and jails. The U.S. imprisonment rate includes federal prisoners and excludes those held in local jails. Crime rates reflect Part I offenses as defined by the FBI's Uniform Crime Report and combine violent and property crimes; 2014 violent crime rates use a revised (not legacy) definition of rape.

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners series, 2009-14 (imprisonment data); FBI, Crime in the United States series, 2009-14 (crime data)

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