Imprisonment and Crime Rates Fell in 30 States Over 5 Years

The national imprisonment rate declined 14 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 9 percent.

Crime rates are now down in 30 states from their 2009 peaks and have stayed at levels that have not been seen since the late 1960s, even after accounting for population growth, the Pew 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.

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Note: Imprisonment and crime rates are per 100,000 adults. Imprisonment rates do not include rates calculated for states that do not report information or that have not reported information for at least one year in the past five years. Crime rates reflect the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report and are based on the best available data. Crime rates reflect the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report and are based on the best available data.