



**“I’m confident that  
each person who  
has been executed  
in our state  
was guilty of the  
crime committed.”**

—Governor George W. Bush



Texas politicians—many of whom take great pride in being tough on crime—spent \$2 billion over the past decade to build one of the nation’s most punishing penal systems. During the same period they increased the average prison time served from 2 years to 3.5 years. Texas leads the nation in the percentage of its adult population that it keeps in its criminal justice system (almost 5 percent), including one in three young African-American men. There are twice as

distant No. 34 in how much it invests in educational rehabilitation, ranks No. 9 in recidivism, with 41 percent of its released prisoners winding up in penal institutions again.

Texas is a leading source of guns used to commit crimes in other states. It is the nation’s leading host of gun shows, which are exempt from the federal background checks that block gun sales to felons. Texas ranks No. 22 in the rate of gun-related deaths.

Added to these hazards are those

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# PUBLIC SAFETY

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many African Americans in Texas prisons than its public universities. Texas, which leads the nation in executions, has killed about as many prisoners as the next five leading death penalty states.

This expensive penal system has failed to deliver a low crime rate. While the crime rate dropped nationwide during the 1990s, the drop in Texas was half the national average. Texas ranks No. 16 in its overall crime rate and No. 17 in its rate of violent crimes. Texas, which ranks a

that Texans encounter on their roads. Texas, which ranks No. 40 in the percentage of its federal highway funds that it spends on safety, ranks No. 1 in the total number of traffic fatalities. It ranks No. 23 in its rate of traffic fatalities and No. 11 in traffic fatalities involving alcohol. Mothers Against Drunk Driving gave Texas a C in a 1999 report card. While the state did lower its legal standard for driving while intoxicated, it does not prohibit driving with open containers.

George W. Bush played the crime

card in his first gubernatorial race in 1994, with ads that pledged to end early criminal releases. The ads implied that his incumbent was soft on crime. In fact, Ann Richards larded over the biggest prison-building binge in U.S. history. With Texas prisons 97 percent full in late 2000, the state again is speeding paroles to make room for new inmates.

Illinois' governor declared an execution moratorium when confronted with evidence that the state was not ensuring that innocent people did not reach death row. In contrast, Governor Bush, who has approved more executions than any governor in U.S. history, says, "I'm confident that each person who has been executed in our state was guilty of the crime committed." Who but a politician would make such a claim in a state that has

defended a death-row sentence for a prisoner whose appointed lawyer slept during the trial?

The gun vote is another key to Bush's 1994 defeat of Ann Richards. Bush criticized Richards for vetoing a bill to allow Texans to carry concealed weapons, a measure which he signed soon after taking office. Bush's gun records also includes:

- Signing a measure that severely limits the ability of local governments in Texas from suing gun makers to recover damages to their communities caused by guns;
- Not supporting legislation to close the loophole that allows gun shows to sell guns without screening the criminal record of the buyer; and
- Echoing the National Rifle Association's argument that no new gun-control laws are needed.



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## PUBLIC SAFETY INDICATORS

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# PUBLIC SAFETY



INDICATORS





# 1

## CRIME RATES

Although many Texas politicians pride themselves on being tough on crime, neither their words or deeds translate into a low crime rate. Measuring a combination of violent and property crimes, Texas has the 16th highest crime rate in the country. Some two-thirds of the U.S. population lives in states with a lower crime rate.

	Rank	State	Crimes Per 100,000 People
	1	Florida	7,272
	2	Arizona	7,195
	3	New Mexico	6,907
	4	Louisiana	6,449
	5	Oregon	6,270
	<b>16</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>5,481</b>
	46	Kentucky	3,127
	47	Vermont	2,828
	48	North Dakota	2,711
	49	New Hampshire	2,640
	50	West Virginia	2,469



Similar to its overall crime rate, Texas has the nation's 17th highest violent crime rate. This rate of 603 violent crimes per 100,000 people is close to the national average.

	Rank	State	Violent Crimes Per 100,000 People
	1	Florida	1,024
	2	South Carolina	990
	3	Illinois	861
	4	Louisiana	856
	5	New Mexico	853
	<b>17</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>603</b>
	46	Montana	133
	47	Maine	121
	48	Vermont	120
	49	New Hampshire	113
	50	North Dakota	87

## 2



## EXECUTIONS

Since the U.S. Supreme Court resuscitated the death penalty in 1976, 625 prisoners have been executed nationwide. Texas officiated over 34 percent of these executions. California, which executes prisoners at a slower pace, has the nation's most crowded death row, with 561 prisoners slated for execution. Texas' death row ranks No. 2, with 462 prisoners in the execution pipeline.

	Rank	State	No.	Share
	<b>1</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>34 %</b>
	2	Virginia	76	12 %
	3	Florida	46	7 %
	4	Missouri	42	7 %
	5	Louisiana	25	4 %
	24-26	Kentucky (tied)	2	<1 %
	24-26	Montana (tied)	2	<1 %
	24-26	Oregon (tied)	2	<1 %
	27	Colorado (tied)	1	<1 %
	28	Idaho (tied)	1	<1 %
	29	Wyoming (tied)	1	<1 %
	30	Ohio (tied)	1	<1 %

Note: The other 20 states have not executed anyone since 1976; 12 of them have no death penalty.

Only Delaware and Virginia have higher execution *rates* than Texas. All three of these states have rates that exceed one execution for every 100,000 inhabitants.

	Rank	State	Executions Per 100,000 People
	1	Delaware	1.37
	2	Virginia	1.11
	<b>3</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>1.06</b>
	4	Arkansas	.83
	5	Missouri	.76
	26	Kentucky	.05
	27	Colorado	.03
	28-29	California (tied)	.02
	28-29	Pennsylvania (tied)	.02
	30	Ohio	.01

Note: The other 20 states have not executed anyone since 1976; 12 of them have no death penalty.





# 3



## ADULTS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



Texas has more people in its criminal justice system than any other state. It is No. 1 for people on parole and for people on probation. It is No. 2 in the number of incarcerated people.

	Rank	State	People in System
	<b>1</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>759,890</b>
	2	California	674,250
	3	Florida	366,121
	4	New York	354,497
	5	Pennsylvania	267,752
	46	Maine	9,763
	47	South Dakota	8,149
	48	Alaska	7,785
	49	Wyoming	6,611
	50	North Dakota	4,353

Texas also has the nation's highest *rate* of keeping people in its criminal justice system. Almost 5 percent of Texas' adult population is in prison or on probation or parole. In part this reflects Texas' high number of drug convictions and the long terms that Texas prisoners serve (see indicator No. 5 in this section).

	Rank	State	Rate Per 100,000 Adults
	<b>1</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>4,947</b>
	2	Delaware	4,441
	3	Washington	4,059
	4	Georgia	4,022
	5	Michigan	3,208
	46	Kentucky	1,136
	47	New Hampshire	1,033
	48	Maine	957
	49	North Dakota	835
	50	West Virginia	825

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin: "Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 1999," NCJ 181643, April 2000; "Probation and Parole in the United States, 1998," NCJ 178234, August 1999.



Websites: [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pjim99/pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pjim99/pdf) and [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/ppus98.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/ppus98.htm)

## 4



## ADULT INCARCERATION



Texas ranks No. 2 in the number of adults locked up in state and local jails and prisons. This prison population approaches that of California, a state with many more people.

	Rank	State	No. of Prisoners
	1	California	239,206
	<b>2</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>204,110</b>
	3	Florida	119,679
	4	New York	104,431
	5	Georgia	74,500
	46	Alaska	2,837
	47	Maine	2,745
	48	Wyoming	2,338
	49	North Dakota	1,520
	50	Vermont	1,205

With more than 1 percent of its adult population locked up, Texas ranks No. 2 in its incarceration rate. The rate of incarceration in Texas in 1990 was less than 40 percent of what it is today. Over the ensuing decade, Texas dramatically extended prison terms and spent more than \$2 billion on new prisons to house this burgeoning prison population.

	Rank	State	Rate Per 100,000 People
	1	Louisiana	1,025
	<b>2</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>1,014</b>
	3	Georgia	956
	4	Oklahoma	825
	5	Delaware	792
	46	Hawaii	291
	47	North Dakota	239
	48	Minnesota	226
	49	Maine	220
	50	Vermont	203

5

AVERAGE PRISON TIME SERVED



Just five of the 45 states that disclosed the average amount of time that their prisoners serve had longer prison times than Texas. In 1988, the average prisoner in Texas did a little less than two years time. Today, this average Texas prison stay is 3.5 years. Hardening parole policies have extended these prison stays. Texas' approval rate for parole cases plummeted from 78 percent in 1990 to 18 percent in 1999. Parole approval rates began to rise again in 2000, as Texas prisons neared their capacities.

	Rank	State	Months in Prison
	1	West Virginia	62
	2	Pennsylvania	55
	3	Idaho	44
	4-5	New Mexico	43
	4-5	South Carolina	43
	6-7	Tennessee (tied)	42
	<b>6-7</b>	<b>Texas (tied)</b>	<b>42</b>
	41	Oregon	17
	42	Maryland	16
	43	South Dakota	15
	44	Vermont	12
	45	Delaware	8



Note: Five states did not provide data.

## 6

## RECIDIVISM RATE



Texas ranks No. 9 among the 39 states that provided recidivism data. For every 100 people released from Texas prisons, 41 will wind up in penal institutions again.

	Rank	State	Recidivism
	1	Utah	67 %
	2	California	58 %
	3-4	Delaware (tied)	57 %
	3-4	Rhode Island (tied)	57 %
	5	Louisiana	50 %
	<b>9</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>41 %</b>
	35-36	Iowa (tied)	15 %
	36-36	Michigan (tied)	15 %
	37	Missouri	14 %
	38	Kansas	12 %
	39	Montana	11 %



Note: Eleven states did not provide data.

7

MONEY SPENT PER PRISONER



Texas ranks No. 39 out of the 45 states that provided data on how much money they spend per prisoner. Texas invests relatively little money in prisoner education. It also rates low in money spent on prisoner food and health care. The salaries of Texas corrections officers rank 45th in the nation. This has left state prisons dangerously understaffed.

	Rank	State	Daily Spending Per Prisoner
	1	Alaska	\$98
	2	Rhode Island	\$96
	3	Minnesota	\$85
	4	Massachusetts	\$84
	5	New York	\$79
	<b>39</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>\$39</b>
	41-42	South Carolina (tied)	\$38
	41-42	Arkansas (tied)	\$38
	43	Missouri	\$35
	44	South Dakota	\$32
	45	Louisiana	\$30



Note: Five states did not provide spending data.

## 8

## PRISONERS IN EDUCATIONAL REHABILITATION



Texas ranks No. 34 among the 40 states that provided data on prisoner participation in educational and vocational rehabilitation programs. Compared with the rest of the population, prisoners tend to have low levels of education and job skills. Advocates of rehabilitation programs argue that they deter recidivism—the likelihood that prisoners who serve their terms will commit new crimes and return to prison.



	Rank	State	Percentage
	1	Missouri	68 %
	2	Utah	42 %
	3	New York	40 %
	4	New Hampshire	32 %
	5	South Carolina	30 %
	<b>34</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>8 %</b>
	36	North Carolina	7 %
	37	North Dakota	6 %
	38-39	Nebraska (tied)	5 %
	38-39	Mississippi (tied)	5 %
	40	Vermont	3 %

Note: 10 states did not provide data.

## 1

## NUMBER OF GUN RETAILERS

Texas has many more registered gun retailers than any other state. It ranks No. 30 in the number of gun retailers per 100,000 people. Some 62 percent of the U.S. population lives in states with a lower rate of gun retailers per 100,000 people.



	Rank	State	Gun Retailers
	1	Texas	6,492
	2	California	4,046
	3	Pennsylvania	3,597
	4	Michigan	3,373
	5	Florida	3,152
	46	New Jersey	499
	47	Vermont	485
	48	Hawaii	149
	49	Delaware	136
	50	Rhode Island	130

## 2

## NUMBER OF GUN SHOWS



Texas is the nation's No. 1 gun show host, averaging well over one gun show a day. Texas has almost twice as many gun bazaars as No. 2-rated Pennsylvania. Gun shows shoot a loophole in gun-control laws because they are exempt from federal requirements that ordinarily mandate criminal background checks on gun buyers.



	Rank	State	Annual Gun Shows
	<b>1</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>472</b>
	2	Pennsylvania	250
	3	Florida	224
	4	Illinois	203
	5	California	188
	46	North Dakota	7
	47	Rhode Island	5
	48	Alaska	4
	49	Vermont	3
	50	Hawaii	0





## 3

## FIREARM DEATHS

Texas ranked No. 2 in the total number of annual firearm deaths in 1996. Nationally, suicides account for 53 percent of gun deaths, homicides claim 42 percent and the remainder are due to accidents or undetermined circumstances. Texas gun deaths follow a similar pattern.

	Rank	State	Annual Gun Deaths
	1	California	4,088
	<b>2</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>2,616</b>
	3	Florida	2,074
	4	New York	1,428
	5	Illinois	1,418
	46	South Dakota	83
	47	Vermont	56
	48	North Dakota	55
	49	Rhode Island	52
	50	Hawaii	48

Texas ranked No. 22 in the *rate* of firearm deaths per 100,000 people in 1996.

	Rank	State	Gun Deaths Per 100,000 People
	1	Louisiana	25
	2	Nevada	22
	3-4	Alaska (tied)	21
	3-4	Mississippi (tied)	21
	5	Alabama	20
	<b>22</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>14</b>
	46	Iowa	7
	47	New Jersey	6
	48	Rhode Island	5
	49-50	Hawaii (tied)	4
	49-50	Massachusetts (tied)	4

## 4

## FIREARM HOMICIDES

Texas ranked No. 2 after California in the total number of firearm-related homicides in 1996.

Rank	State	Annual Gun Homicides
1	California	2,202
<b>2</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>1,055</b>
3	Illinois	894
4	New York	892
5	Florida	770
46-47	Wyoming (tied)	13
46-47	New Hampshire (tied)	13
48	North Dakota	8
49	Vermont	5
50	South Dakota	4

Texas ranked No. 18 in its *rate* of firearm-related homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 1996. This rate is close to the national average.



Rank	State	Gun Homicides Per 100,000 People
1	Louisiana	15.7
2	Maryland	10.4
3	Mississippi	10.2
4	Alabama	9.6
5	Nevada	9.0
<b>18</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>5.8</b>
46	North Dakota	1.3
47	Maine	1.2
48	New Hampshire	1.0
49	Vermont	0.9
50	South Dakota	0.6

## 5

## RECOVERED GUNS USED IN CRIMES



Texas ranks No. 3 in the total number of crime-linked guns that federal, state and local authorities recover each year. It ranks No. 10 in the *rate* of crime-linked guns recovered per 100,000 people.



	Rank	State	Guns Recovered Per Year
	1	Illinois	23,174
	2	California	16,839
	<b>3</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>16,807</b>
	4	Tennessee	13,208
	5	New York	10,596
	46	North Dakota	106
	47	Nebraska	102
	48	South Dakota	98
	49	Vermont	70
	50	New Hampshire	67

## 6

## GUNS USED FOR CRIMES IN OTHER STATES





Texas ranks among the top five states in the sale of guns that get used to commit crimes in other states. Federal data identify Texas as the selling place of 3,540 guns used to commit crimes in other states from 1995 through 1998. Only three states supplied more firearms used in out-of-state crimes during this period, with Ohio tying Texas. These figures lend credence to critics who have argued that Texas is a major supplier of guns to criminals. Texas leads the nation in gun shows, where guns are sold without background checks.

	Rank	State	No. of Guns
	1	Florida	7,793
	2	Virginia	5,188
	3	Georgia	4,617
	4-5	Ohio (tied)	3,540
	<b>4-5</b>	<b>Texas (tied)</b>	<b>3,540</b>
	46	South Dakota	148
	47	Wyoming	95
	48	Rhode Island	73
	49	Hawaii	68
	50	North Dakota	66

## 7

## REGISTERED MACHINE GUNS

Texas is by far the national leader in the total number of registered machine guns. It is comparable to the national average, however, in the number of registered machine guns *per person*.



	Rank	State	Machine Guns
	1	Texas	18,919
	2	Florida	14,602
	3	California	14,326
	4	Connecticut	14,266
	5	Virginia	13,591
	46	North Dakota	998
	47	Vermont	989
	48	Rhode Island	390
	49	Hawaii	246
	50	Delaware	147

## 1

## FEDERAL HIGHWAY FUNDS SPENT ON SAFETY





Texas ranks well below most other states in the per capita amount of federal highway dollars that it spends on public safety programs. Instead, Texas invests a relatively high share of its federal highway funds in new roads. (See "Land Use & Transportation" in the Environment chapter of this report).

	Rank	State	Average Annual Spending Per Capita, 1990-1999
	1	Vermont	\$15.17
	2	Washington	\$13.21
	3	Alaska	\$11.79
	4	Montana	\$10.45
	5	Connecticut	\$8.99
	<b>40</b>	<b>Texas</b>	\$1.87
	46	Idaho	\$1.44
	47-48	Arizona (tied)	\$1.10
	47-48	South Carolina (tied)	\$1.10
	49	New Hampshire	\$0.80
	50	Massachusetts	\$0.48



## 2

## TRAFFIC FATALITIES

Texas, which invests heavily in new roads at the expense of traffic safety, ranked No. 1 in 1998 traffic fatalities, surpassing California, which has many more people.

	Rank	State	Annual Fatalities
	<b>1</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>3,577</b>
	2	California	3,494
	3	Florida	2,824
	4	North Carolina	1,596
	5	Georgia	1,569
	46	Delaware	115
	47	Vermont	104
	48	North Dakota	92
	49	Rhode Island	74
	50	Alaska	71



Texas ranks No. 23 in traffic fatalities per 100,000 people. Some 62 percent of the U.S. population lives in states that enjoy a lower traffic fatality rate than Texas. Texas planning and investment priorities encourage automobile-driven urban sprawl. Such development relies on lengthy car commutes and expands urban traffic onto once-rural roads that were not designed for high-volume, high-speed traffic.

	Rank	State	Fatalities Per 100,000 People
	1	Mississippi	34.5
	2	Wyoming	32.1
	3	Montana	27.0
	4	South Carolina	26.1
	5	Arkansas	24.6
	<b>23</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>18.2</b>
	46	Connecticut	10.1
	47	New Jersey	9.2
	48	New York	8.3
	49	Rhode Island	7.5
	50	Massachusetts	6.6



## 3

## ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC FATALITIES

Texas leads the nation in alcohol-related traffic fatalities, even out-drinking and driving California.

Rank	State	Annual Fatalities
 <b>1</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>1,792</b>
2	California	1,324
3	Florida	925
4	Pennsylvania	619
5	Illinois	599
46	Delaware	45
47	North Dakota	44
48	Vermont	38
 49	Rhode Island	35
50	Arkansas	31

Just 10 states have a higher *rate* of alcohol-related traffic deaths.

Rank	State	Annual Fatalities Per 100,000 People
 1	Wyoming	14.2
2	Mississippi	12.8
3	Montana	11.8
4	New Mexico	11.1
5	Nevada	10.2
11-12	Arizona (tied)	9.1
<b>11-12</b>	<b>Texas (tied)</b>	<b>9.1</b>
46	Rhode Island	3.5
47	New Jersey	3.3
48	Massachusetts	3.1
 49	Utah	2.4
50	New York	2.0



# 4

## SPEEDING-RELATED TRAFFIC FATALITIES



Texas is No. 1 in the *number* of speeding-related traffic fatalities.

	Rank	State	Annual Fatalities
	<b>1</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>1,378</b>
	2	California	1,145
	3	Florida	612
	4	North Carolina	554
	5	Pennsylvania	504
	46	Hawaii	45
	47	New Hampshire	39
	48	Rhode Island	33
	49	Arkansas	23
	50	Delaware	22



Texas ranks No. 15 in its *rate* of speeding deaths per 100,000 people.

	Rank	State	Annual Fatalities Per 100,000 People
	1	Wyoming	15.0
	2	Montana	12.8
	3	South Carolina	12.3
	4	Oklahoma	9.3
	5	South Dakota	9.0
	<b>15</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>7.0</b>
	46	Connecticut	2.8
	47	Massachusetts	2.4
	48	New York	2.2
	49	Iowa	2.1
	50	New Jersey	0.9



## 5

## ROAD-RAGE TRAFFIC FATALITIES

Texas ranks No. 2 in the total *number* of deaths resulting from aggressive driving. Aggressive driving includes speeding, tailgating, weaving, failure to yield and running traffic lights.

	Rank	State	Annual Fatalities
	1	California	2,582
	<b>2</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>1,901</b>
	3	Florida	1,679
	4	North Carolina	909
	5	Pennsylvania	802
	46	Delaware	55
	47-48	Vermont (tied)	48
	47-48	New Hampshire (tied)	48
	49	Alaska	38
	50	Rhode Island	31

Texas ranks No. 15 in its *rate* of aggressive-driving fatalities.

	Rank	State	Annual Fatalities Per 100,000 People
	1	South Carolina	15.1
	2	Wyoming	13.9
	3-4	Alabama (tied)	13.7
	3-4	Kansas (tied)	13.7
	5	Oklahoma	13.6
	<b>15</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>9.9</b>
	46-47	New Jersey (tied)	4.1
	46-47	New Hampshire (tied)	4.1
	48	New York	3.7
	49	Massachusetts	3.3
	50	Rhode Island	3.1