

# Cycles of Fear and Bias in the Criminal Justice System

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## ***Pacific Standard:***

Discussions about how to reform the criminal justice system—whether through sentence-reduction proposals for low-level crimes, or limiting the use of data analysis in making sentencing decisions, or fighting voter disenfranchisement—all have one talking point in common. When an overzealous criminal justice system causes harm, it disproportionately harms minorities, because minorities are disproportionately represented at every stage of the system.

These are oft-cited statistics, and for good reason: Although black and Hispanic Americans make up only 30 percent of the general population, together they make up 58 percent of the prison population. White males in America have a one in 17 chance of going to jail during their lifetimes; for black males, it's one in three. (Those statistics originally came from The Sentencing Project, which collects and conducts research about many aspects of the criminal justice system; the organization's "racial disparity" research collection contains an embarrassment of riches.)

Read the whole story: [\*Pacific Standard\*](#)