



**City  
of**

**Milwaukee**

**FACT SHEET  
LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU**

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**HOMICIDE: RACIAL AND GENDER DISPARITIES IN  
VICTIMIZATION, PERPETRATION AND SENTENCING**

Between the years 1981 and 2003 there were 1,680 deaths of black males in Wisconsin by homicide and legal intervention.<sup>i</sup>

- During this same period, 1,480 white males, 832 white females and 375 black females were killed in Wisconsin by homicide or legal intervention.

The annual rate of death of black males in Wisconsin due to homicide and legal intervention is 47.94 per 100,000 black males in the population or approximately 1 of every 100 in the course of a 20-year period.

- This rate is more than 18 times the rate of 2.63/100,000 for white males, nearly 6 times the rate of 8.48/100,000 for black females, and nearly 36 times the rate for white females.

The rate of death of black males due to homicide and legal intervention in Wisconsin is 32.1% higher than the national rate of 36.29/100,000.

The rate of death of white males due to homicide and legal intervention in Wisconsin is 55.1% lower than the national rate of 5.86/100,000.

54.9%% of Wisconsin deaths due to homicide and legal intervention were residents of Milwaukee County and over 90% occurred in the City of Milwaukee.<sup>ii</sup> Of these:

- 92.4% of Wisconsin deaths of black males involved residents of Milwaukee County and more than 90% occurred in the City of Milwaukee.
- 61.9% of Wisconsin deaths of white males involved residents of Milwaukee County and more than 80% occurred in the City of Milwaukee.

Where the race of a criminal homicide perpetrator is known, it is estimated that 94% of suspects in the homicide of blacks are also black., and 86% of suspects in the homicide of whites are also white.<sup>iii</sup>

Wisconsin was ranked fifth highest of the 50 states in a study of racial disparity in rates of incarceration with blacks incarcerated at nearly 12 times the rate of whites.<sup>iv</sup>

A review of 32 studies examining state-level sentencing data concluded that there was evidence of direct racial discrimination that contributes to racial disparities in sentencing. Few studies have examined sentencing disparities in homicide cases outside the context of death penalty decisions in capital cases.<sup>v</sup>

Racial disparity in criminal justice in Wisconsin has been examined by the Wisconsin Sentencing Commission, but not in the context of homicide, increased risk of homicide victimization of released prisoners, or unequal sentencing in homicide cases based upon race and gender of victims and perpetrators.<sup>vi</sup>

LRB06191  
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4/28/2006

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<sup>i</sup> <http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate.html>; The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS), accessed April 26, 2006.

<sup>ii</sup> [http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/wish/main/InjuryMortality/InjuryMortality\\_home.htm](http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/wish/main/InjuryMortality/InjuryMortality_home.htm); Wisconsin Interactive Statistics for Health, accessed April 25, 2006.

<sup>iii</sup> Homicide Trends in the United States – Trends by Race, 1976-2002; Bureau of Justice Statistics, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/race.htm>, accessed April 27, 2006.

<sup>iv</sup> *Racial Disparity in Sentencing: A Review of the Literature*. The Sentencing Project, January, 2005; <http://www.nicic.org/Library/020314>, accessed April 26, 2006.

<sup>v</sup> *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2001*, U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, April 2002. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/pjim01.htm>, accessed April 28, 2006.

<sup>vi</sup> Racial Disparities in Criminal Justice in Wisconsin: A Presentation to the Sentencing Commission, Dr. Pamela Oliver. <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~oliver/RACIAL/Reports/SentencingComm2004.pdf> accessed April 28, 2006.