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NEARLY 20 PERCENT OF PRISON AND JAIL INMATES SPENT TIME IN SEGREGATION OR SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN 2011-12

WASHINGTON – Nearly 20 percent of state and federal prison inmates and 18 percent of local jail inmates had spent time in restrictive housing, including disciplinary or administrative segregation or solitary confinement in 2011–12, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. On an average day, 4.4 percent of prison inmates and 2.7 percent of jail inmates were held in restrictive housing.

In 2011–12, an estimated 10 percent of all prison inmates and 5 percent of jail inmates said they had spent 30 days or longer in restrictive housing in the past 12 months, or since arrival if less than a year. In comparison, about 3 percent of prisoners and 6 percent of jail inmates had spent less than a week in segregation or solitary confinement.

Inmates held for a violent offense other than a sex offense (25 percent in prison and 28 percent in jail) were significantly more likely than inmates held for other offenses to have spent time in restrictive housing. Also, inmates with extensive criminal histories were more likely than inmates with shorter criminal histories to have spent time in segregation or solitary confinement. Among inmates with 11 or more prior arrests, 24 percent of those in prison and 22 percent of those in jail had been in restrictive housing, compared to about 13 percent of inmates in both prison and jail who had been arrested once.

In many cases, the use of restrictive housing was related to inmate misconduct. At least three-quarters of inmates in prisons and jails who had been written up for assaulting other inmates or staff had spent time in restrictive housing. More than half of prison inmates and jail inmates who had been in a fight with staff had spent time in restrictive housing, and nearly half of prison inmates (49 percent) and 43 percent of jail inmates who had been in a fight with another inmate had spent time in restrictive housing.

Inmates who had spent time in restrictive housing were often young, lacked a high school education, or identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual. More than 30 percent of prison inmates and 25 percent of jail inmates ages 18 to 19 had spent some time in restrictive housing in the past year, compared to 20 percent or lower for prisoners age 30 or older and 19 percent or lower for jail inmates age 25 or older.

About 20 percent of prison and jail inmates who did not complete high school had spent time in restrictive housing in the past year, compared to 15 percent of inmates with a high school diploma or

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more. Lesbian, gay and bisexual inmates (28 percent in prison and 22 percent in jail) were more likely than heterosexual inmates (18 percent in prison and 17 percent in jail) to have spent some time in segregation or solitary confinement.

Use of restrictive housing was linked to inmates with mental health problems. Between 23 percent and 31 percent of prison and jail inmates with a past history of mental health problems had spent time in restrictive housing, including those who had been told they had a mental health disorder, those who were taking mental health prescription medication at the time of their current offense and those who had stayed overnight in a facility for mental health treatment prior to admission. About 14 percent of prison inmates and 12 percent of jail inmates with no past mental health problems had spent time in restrictive housing.

Nearly 30 percent of prison inmates and 22 percent of jail inmates with symptoms of serious psychological distress (SPD) had spent time in restrictive housing units in the past 12 months. Rates of SPD did not increase with the length of time inmates had been in restrictive housing. About a quarter of prison inmates and more than a third (35 percent) of jail inmates who had spent 30 days or longer in segregation or solitary confinement had SPD. Similar rates of SPD were reported among inmates who had spent only a day in restrictive housing (22 percent of prison inmates and 35 percent of jail inmates).

Other findings include—

- In 2011–12, fewer than 5 percent of inmates spent time in restrictive housing in 17 percent of prisons and 9 percent of jails. In comparison, at least 25 percent of the inmates had spent such time in 38 percent of prisons and 24 percent of jails.
- Prisons with higher rates of restrictive housing had higher levels of facility disorder, lower levels of inmate trust and confidence in staff, and higher concentrations of violent inmates (other than sex offenders) and inmates with longer criminal histories.

The report, *Use of Restrictive Housing in U.S. Prisons and Jails, 2011–12* (NCJ 249209), was written by BJS statistician Allen J. Beck. The report, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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