

The FBI released its 2010 Preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report on Monday, May 23rd announcing that the United States experienced a 5.5 percent drop in the number of reported violent offenses and a 2.8 percent decline in the number of reported property offenses in 2010. This drop in crime came at a time when state prison populations fell from previous years and when state corrections spending grew at a much lower rate than the previous year.

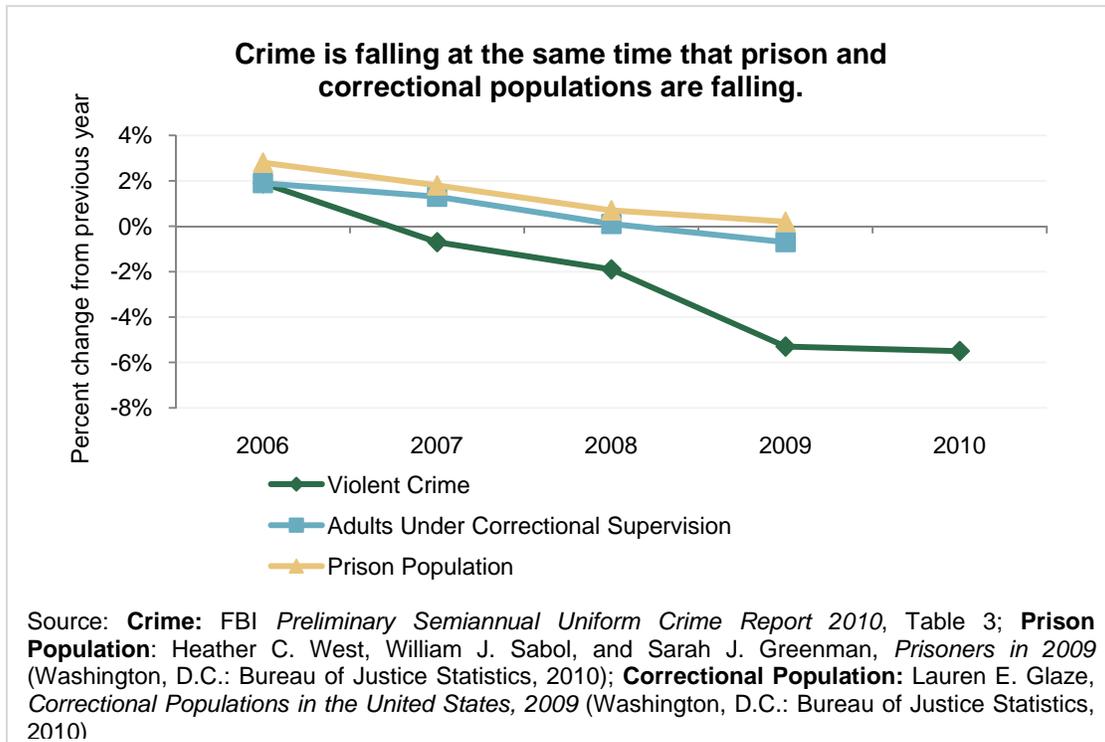
The number of violent offenses reported to law enforcement fell 5.5 percent in 2010.¹ While crime has been dropping nationally since 2007, this year's drop was the biggest yet, and the decline was spread over all regions of the United States, with the biggest decline in the South. All four of the violent crime offense categories—murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—declined nationwide compared with data from 2009.

States are curbing their spending on corrections. State spending for corrections totaled \$52.3 billion in FY2009, a 0.9 percent increase compared to the previous year; this is significantly less than the 6.5 percent increase the previous year. State corrections' spending is estimated to *decrease* by 2.8 percent in FY2010 to \$50.9 billion.² In times of budget crises states have to cut funding for almost all services, including corrections, and are seeking alternative strategies that are both effective at improving public safety and promote better life outcomes for all individuals.

Crime is going down as states are putting fewer people in prison. The number of people in prison is still growing, but at a slower rate than the last few decades.³ The number of people in state prisons fell 0.2 percent from 2008 to 2009, while the federal prison population grew 3.4 percent, for a net increase of 0.2 percent. From 2000 to 2008 the growth of the prison population (1.8 percent per year on average) was less than a third of the rate observed during the 1990s (6.5 percent per year on average). Much of this change can be attributed to a drop in the number of people admitted to prison and an increase in the number of people released.

	Percent Change (2008-2009)	Percent Change (2009-2010)
Violent Crime Total	-5.3%	-5.5%
Murder	-7.3%	-4.4%
Forcible Rape	-2.6%	-4.2%
Robbery	-8.0%	-9.5%
Aggravated Assault	-4.2%	-3.6%
Property Crime Total	-4.6%	-2.8%

Source: FBI *Preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report 2010*, Table 3



Justice Policy Institute is a national organization focused on reducing the use of incarceration and the justice system and promoting healthy, equitable and safe communities. For a more in-depth analysis of crime trends, and information on effective public safety practices, please visit our website at www.justicepolicy.org.

¹ FBI *Preliminary Semiannual Uniform Crime Report 2010*, Table 3, www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/preliminary-annual-ucr-jan-dec-2010/data-tables/table-3

² National Association of State Budget Officers, *State Expenditure Report 2009* (Washington, D.C.: 2010) www.nasbo.org

³ Heather C. West, William J. Sabol, and Sarah J. Greenman, *Prisoners in 2009* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010) <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p09.pdf>