

Background: The 2006 FBI Uniform Crime Report released on Monday, September 24 generated concerns over a slight uptick in violent crimes. The Justice Policy Institute (JPI), a Washington, DC based policy group that promotes fair and rational justice policies, cautions that a one-year change in arrests cannot be interpreted as a “trend,” and that no single factor can explain changes in arrests across the nation, or within a jurisdiction. We have assembled a couple of key findings from this new arrest survey to put the new UCR figures in their appropriate context. 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) The slight increase in violent crimes in 2006 is smaller than the increase experienced in 2005.

Rate (per 100,000)	Percent Change 2004-2005	Percent Change 2005-2006
<i>Violent Crime</i>	+1.3%	+1.0%
<i>Property Crime</i>	-2.4%	-2.8%
Murder	+2.4%	+0.8%
Robbery	+2.9%	+6.1%
Aggravated Assault	+0.9%	-1.1%
Rape	-2.1%	-3.0%

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Report, *Crime in the United States, 2005, 2006*, Table 1A.

2) Adults, not juveniles, represent 84.9 percent of all violent crime arrests—the increase in juvenile crime is only a fraction of the nation’s public safety challenges.

Adults are responsible for 90.5 percent of all murder arrests, 85.2 percent of rape arrests, 73.6 percent of robbery arrests and 86.9 percent of aggravated assault arrests. The proportion of violent crime involving juvenile arrestees has not changed much since the previous year. While the increases in juvenile arrests for robbery (+3,051) and murder (+25) are a cause for concern, these figures need to be kept in their proper context: The FBI reports that there were 1,417,745 violent crimes nationwide in 2006.¹

Adults represent 84.9 percent of all violent crime arrests.

	2005		2006	
	Juveniles	Adults	Juveniles	Adults
Murder	8.6%	93.4%	9.5%	90.5%
Rape	15.2%	84.8%	14.8%	85.2%
Robbery	23.9%	76.1%	26.4%	73.6%
Aggravated Assault	13.3%	86.7%	13.1%	86.9%
Total Arrests	15.1%	84.9%	15.1%	84.9%

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Report, *Crime in the United States, 2005, 2006*, Table 36.

The relatively small juvenile representation in the country’s violent crime data is corroborated by a 2006 study from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Violent Felons in Large Urban Counties*, which analyzes violent felony cases from jurisdictions that together accounted for half of the reported violent crime in the nation.² According to this report only 10 percent of homicide convictions, 12 percent of robbery convictions, and 4 percent of rape and assault convictions were under the age of 18.

3) Regions with the largest growth in prison populations also witnessed the largest increase in violent crimes.

The Northeast and Southern regions witnessed either a decline in crime, or small changes in their violent crime rates. These places also saw the smallest increase in their prison populations. Research suggests that the relationship between incarceration rates and crime rates is small, and some researchers believe the concentrated impact of incarceration can negatively affect public safety.

2005-2006		
	Change in Violent Crime Rate ³	Change in Prison Population ⁴
Northeast	-0.5%	+1.7%
Midwest	+1.4%	+3.0%
South ⁵	+0.9%	+1.2%
West	+1.5%	+5.4%
Total	+1.0%	+2.8%

¹ FBI Uniform Crime Reports, *Crime in the United States 2006*. www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm.

² Reaves, Brian A. 2006. *Violent felons in large urban counties*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

³ FBI Uniform Crime Reports, *Crime in the United States 2006*. Table 4. www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm.

⁴ Sabol, William J., Todd D. Minton and Paige M. Harrison. 2007. *Prison and jail inmates at midyear 2006*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

⁵ UCR data includes the District of Columbia, BJS data does not.