

Racial Impact for H.F. 1199: Domestic Assaults added to List of Crimes of Violence

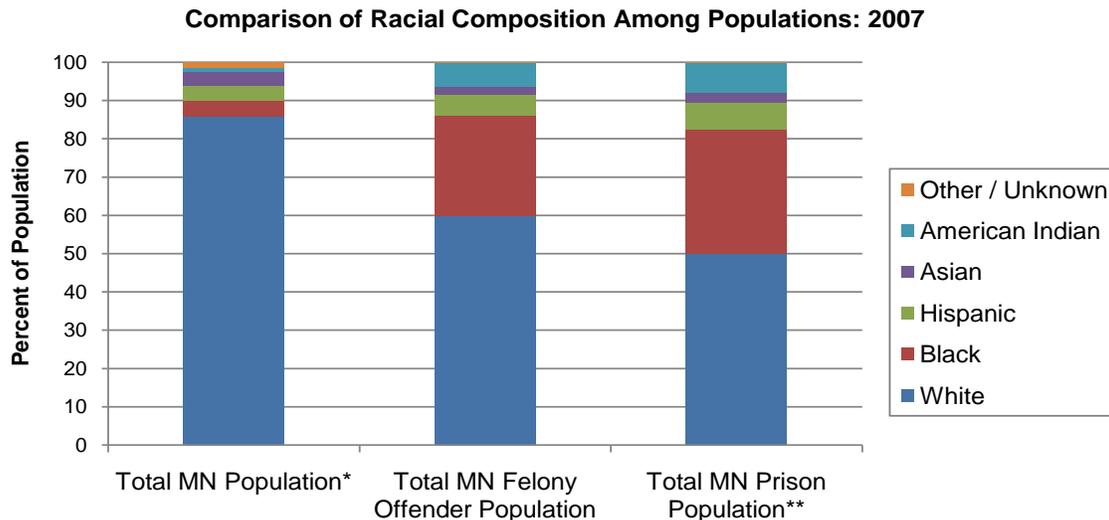
Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission
March 18, 2009

By providing the following information on race, MSGC seeks to enrich the discussion on how minorities in Minnesota are affected by changes in sentencing policy. If a significant racial disparity can be predicted before a bill is passed, it may be possible to consider alternatives that enhance public safety without creating additional disparity in Minnesota's criminal justice system. Just as with the Commission's fiscal impact notes, the agency does not intend to comment on whether or not a particular bill should be enacted. Rather, it is setting out facts that may be useful to the Legislature, whose members frequently express concerns about the disparity between the number of minorities in our population and the number in our prisons.

According to the U.S. Census population estimates for 2007 (the most current estimates available at this time), almost 86 percent of Minnesota's population is white. The composition of the remaining 14 percent is as follows: 4.3 percent black; 4.0 percent Hispanic; 3.5 percent Asian; 1.1 percent American Indian; and roughly one percent who identify themselves with two or more races.

In contrast, MSGC monitoring data shows the following racial make-up of the 2007 felony offender population: 59.9 percent white; 26.1 percent black; 6.3 percent American Indian; 5.6 percent Hispanic; 2.1 percent Asian, and .03 percent unknown/other.

According to the Minnesota Department of Corrections, the racial composition of the prisons on July 1, 2007 was as follows: 49.9 percent white; 32.6 percent black; 8.0 percent American Indian; 7.1 percent Hispanic; 2.3 percent Asian; and .05 percent unknown/other.



* Source for "Total MN Population": [U.S. Census Bureau 2007 Population Estimates.](#)

** Source for "Total MN Prison Population": [MN Department of Corrections Adult Inmate Profile: 7/1/07.](#)

The expansion of the list of crimes of violence could increase racial disparity in prison populations, due to a higher percentage of black offenders being sentenced for these offenses. Of the offenders projected to be sentenced for the offenses added to the list of crimes of violence in 2007, 46% were white and 38% were black; in 2007, 60% of all felony offenders sentenced were white and 26% were black.