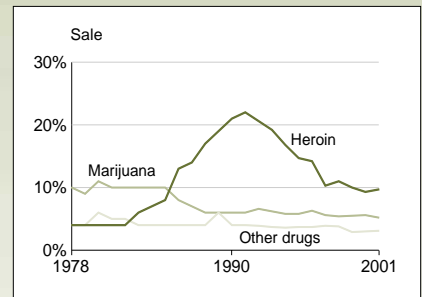
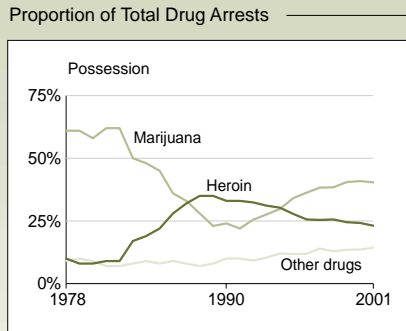
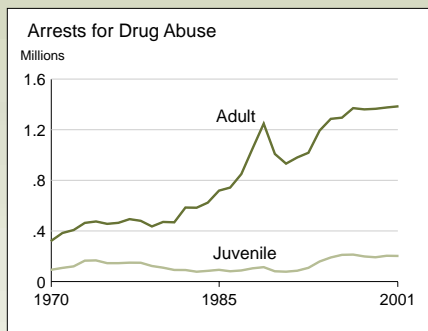


FELONY

What have been the trends in drug arrests?



Source: Uniform Crime Reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1978-2001.

Arrests for drug crimes have increased steadily for adults during the past 30 years.

Drug arrests are more likely to involve possession than sale. Arrests for drug possession are now more likely to involve marijuana.

Arrests for drug sales are generally decreasing.

Felony Filing Rates in Unified and General Jurisdiction Courts in 43 States, 1999-2001

State	Filings per 100,000 Population			Percent Growth 1999-2001
	1999	2000	2001	
Unified Courts				
North Dakota	653	701	801	23%
District of Columbia	2,288	1,802	2,605	14
Iowa	657	697	745	13
Wisconsin	504	529	557	11
Minnesota	449	453	492	10
Illinois	751	782	813	8
Missouri	1,043	1,050	1,072	3
Puerto Rico	956	928	961	1
South Dakota	636	669	638	0
Connecticut	1,055	991	986	-7
California	743	705	688	-7
Kansas	716	641	626	-13
General Jurisdiction Courts				
Ohio	592	607	676	14
New Mexico	841	857	958	14
New Hampshire	558	541	629	13
Louisiana	1,102	1,199	1,210	10
Arkansas	1,753	1,830	1,891	8
Indiana	918	911	987	8
Virginia	1,405	1,496	1,505	7
Nebraska	426	447	454	7
West Virginia	263	240	280	6
Rhode Island	499	530	528	6
Pennsylvania*	1,293	1,322	1,365	6
Washington	660	673	691	5
Maryland	1,272	1,277	1,330	5
Kentucky	550	545	564	3
Arizona	801	784	819	2
Hawaii	368	354	373	1
Idaho	802	779	810	1
Texas	677	711	681	0
New Jersey	603	547	604	0
Tennessee	1,128	1,091	1,100	-2
North Carolina	1,235	1,163	1,172	-5
Vermont	558	566	529	-5
Georgia	943	903	887	-6
Florida	1,304	1,213	1,213	-7
Alaska	502	523	467	-7
Utah	791	791	723	-9
Colorado	916	832	834	-9
Oregon	1,130	1,044	1,028	-9
New York	305	284	276	-9
Alabama	992	780	794	-20
Massachusetts	143	79	79	-45

*Pennsylvania general jurisdiction caseload is based upon preliminary figures provided by the PA AOC.

Felony filing rates varied from a high of 2,605 in the District of Columbia to a low of 79 in Massachusetts

The previous table displays felony filings per 100,000 population as well as the growth in felony filings from 1999 to 2001. Felony filing rates either remained constant or decreased in 18 states. Massachusetts' reported drop of 45 percent is due, in large part, to changes in its case management system in late 1999. The previous system counted every case that went to a grand jury as a filing; the new system counts filings for only those cases returned by a grand jury. Eight states reported increases equal to or less than 5 percent, otherwise growth was moderate for the remaining 17 states that reported.

States in which all or most of the felony caseload is handled in the general jurisdiction court (e.g., Arkansas and Maryland) report the highest numbers of population-adjusted filings, while states that have one or more limited jurisdiction courts with concurrent felony jurisdiction (e.g., Hawaii and New York) report much smaller numbers of felony filings per 100,000 population. The manner in which felony cases are counted also affects the size of the caseload. States that count a case at arraignment (e.g., Vermont and Ohio), rather than at the filing of an information/indictment, report a smaller felony caseload. Lower population-adjusted felony filing rates are also evident for states that count one or more defendants involved in a single incident as one case (e.g., New York and Wyoming) rather than counting each defendant as a case. At the other extreme, states that count each charge as a case, such as Virginia, have higher population-adjusted felony filing rates.

Clearance rates fell in most general jurisdiction courts between 1999 and 2001

The adjacent table shows clearance rates in general jurisdiction courts in 37 states for the period 1999 to 2001. The three-year measure smoothes yearly fluctuations and provides a more representative clearance rate. Eleven states had clearance rates exceeding 100 percent from 1999 to 2001, likely indicating reductions in pending caseloads. Timely felony case processing continues to be a serious challenge for courts since 26 of 37 states were unable to dispose of as many cases as were filed in the three-year period.

It seems reasonable to speculate that higher clearance rates are related to decreased caseload growth. For example, Alabama, with a high three-year clearance rate of 105, experienced one of the largest declines in population-adjusted filings (from the previous table). Of the remaining 10 states with three-year clearance rates of over 100 percent, four witnessed declines in felony filing rates over the three-year period. At the other end of the spectrum, North Dakota, which has a relatively low three-year clearance rate, experienced the highest growth in filings per 100,000 population.

Felony Clearance Rates in Unified and General Jurisdiction Courts in 37 States, 1999-2001

State	Clearance Rates			1999-2001
	1999	2000	2001	
Unified Courts				
Wisconsin	104%	105%	103%	104%
District of Columbia	102	103	99	101
Iowa	93	108	97	99
Puerto Rico	96	105	96	99
Minnesota	90	94	95	93
Illinois	94	94	90	93
Missouri	98	92	88	92
North Dakota	92	92	87	90
California	85	84	81	83
Connecticut	86	89	86	87
General Jurisdiction Courts				
New York	108	108	105	107
Rhode Island	117	100	104	106
Utah	100	105	114	106
Massachusetts	105	114	98	105
Alabama	108	106	100	105
Texas	103	102	102	102
New Jersey	105	102	98	102
Georgia	96	107	102	102
Indiana	104	101	99	101
Oregon	101	99	98	99
Pennsylvania*	98	99	101	99
Tennessee	98	100	99	99
Ohio	98	99	96	98
Vermont	102	91	101	98
Virginia	99	95	99	98
Idaho	98	98	95	97
West Virginia	100	100	91	97
North Carolina	96	98	97	97
Maryland	100	96	95	96
Arkansas	97	94	96	96
Arizona	100	90	95	95
Kentucky	94	96	90	93
New Mexico	91	94	93	93
Hawaii	97	97	83	93
New Hampshire	86	99	88	91
Washington	90	89	89	89
Florida	83	82	90	85

*Pennsylvania general jurisdiction caseload is based upon preliminary figures provided by the PA AOC.

