

State Reports

District of Columbia

IMPRISONMENT GROWTH AT A GLANCE

Imprisonment Rate 1977: 330	Female Imprisonment Rate 1977: 11
Imprisonment Rate 1997: 1,785	Female Imprisonment Rate 1997: 144
Total Female Sentenced Prisoners 1977:	42
Total Female Sentenced Prisoners 1997:	407
Average Annual Percent Increase 1977-1997:	17%
Percent Increase 1999-2004:	*

**After 1997, the DC prison population was counted in the Federal system.*

IMPRISONMENT IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

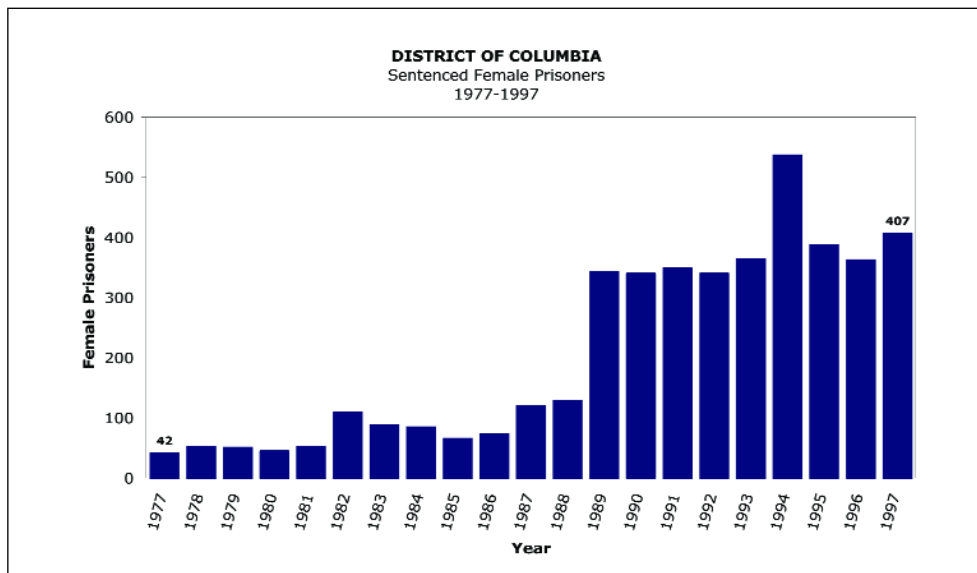
Imprisonment data for the District of Columbia are included only through 1997. In 1997, the Revitalization Act initiated the transfer of all sentenced DC prisoners to the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The transfer process, which was gradual, began in 1998 and was fully complete at the end of 2001.¹

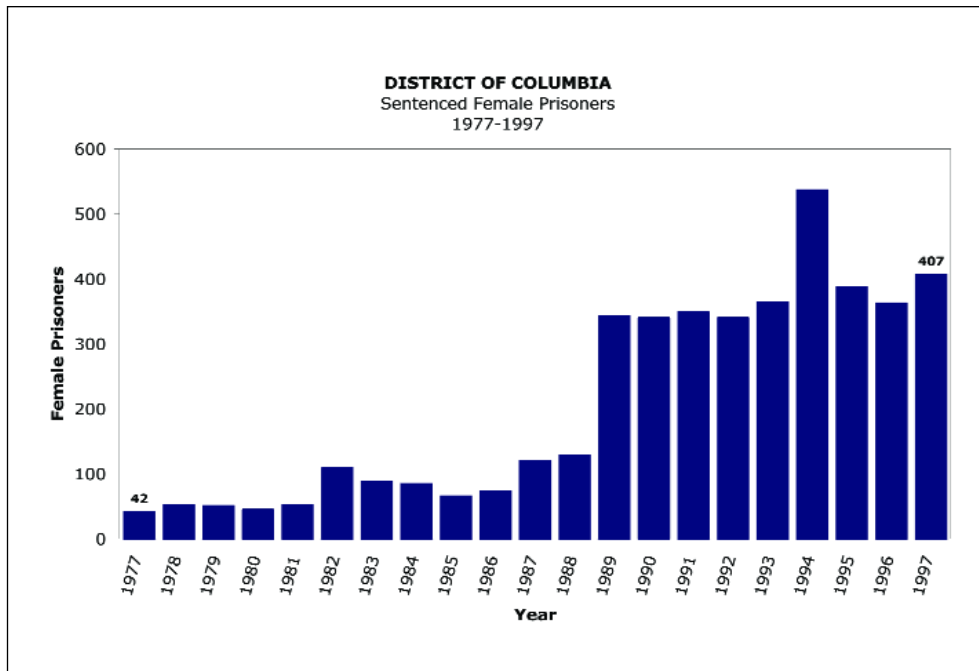
At year-end 1997, District of Columbia prisons housed 9,353 inmates serving sentences of more than one year. Of these inmates, 8,946 were male and 407 were female. In 1977, DC prisons housed 42 female inmates; by 1997, the female prison population had reached 407. The District of Columbia's female prison population was at its lowest with 42 female prisoners in 1977 and peaked at 537 female inmates in 1994.

GROWTH IN FEMALE IMPRISONMENT RATE

Between 1977 and 1997, the District of Columbia's female prison population grew by 869% with an average annual percent change of 18.4% per year.

Throughout the period from 1977 to 1997, the District of Columbia's female imprisonment rate was exceeded the average female imprisonment rate across the states. In the late 1980s, DC's female imprisonment rate increased dramatically (as did its overall imprisonment rate), so that by the early 1990s, the female imprisonment rate in DC was more than twice as high as the average across the states. The District of Columbia's imprisonment rate remained high through the beginning of the transition of sentenced DC inmates to federal custody.





MALE TO FEMALE IMPRISONMENT RATIO

The male to female imprisonment ratio indicates the number of male inmates for every female inmate. Although both female and male imprisonment rates have increased over the period of study, a shrinking ratio suggests that the number of female prisoners has increased at a faster pace. In 1977, across the states, there were an average of 26 male prisoners for every female prisoner; by 2004, this ratio had fallen to 13 male prisoners for every female prisoner. DC’s 1977 ratio was substantially higher than average with 52 male prisoners for every female prisoner. In 1997, DC’s male to female imprisonment ratio (22:1) remained higher than the average across states.