



The United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, with 2.3 million Americans behind bars, a 300 percent increase since 1980, the report states. This country has more inmates than the top 35 European countries combined.

While the costs of housing prisoners -- \$50 billion annually for state correctional costs alone -- should be enough to cause us to rethink our way of doing things, the overall societal and human costs should be even more convincing.

The study shows that "One in 87 working-aged white men is in prison or jail, compared with 1 in 36 Hispanic men and 1 in 12 African-American men. More young (20-34) African-American men without a high school diploma or GED are currently behind bars (37 percent) than employed (26 percent)."

Perhaps most disturbing is the 2.7 million American children who have a parent behind bars, a massive increase from 25 years ago when 1 in 125 kids had an incarcerated parent compared to 1 in 28 today. And, "two-thirds of these children's parents were incarcerated for non-violent offenses," the report says.

"One in 9 African-American children (11.4 percent), 1 in 28 Hispanic children (3.5 percent) and 1 in 57 white children (1.8 percent) have an incarcerated parent," according to Collateral Costs.

[More...](#)