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On Good Authority is a periodic briefing on trends and issues in criminal justice. This report was written by staff Research Analyst John Doyle. It is based on annual crime data submitted to the Illinois State Police by local law enforcement agencies as part of the Uniform Crime Reporting program.

The **Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority** is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice in Illinois. The basic functions of the Authority are criminal justice research, federal and state grants administration, and information systems development and support.

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Trends in Illinois crime: 1993-1997

In its ongoing effort to provide information regarding the nature and prevalence of crime in the state, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority collects and analyzes data from a variety of sources. This report reviews annual crime data submitted to the Illinois State Police by local law enforcement agencies as part of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program.

Highlights

Between 1993 and 1997:

- The number of violent offenses in Illinois declined 16.4 percent, compared to a 13 percent decline nationally.
 - ⇒ Murders declined by 19 percent.
 - ⇒ Criminal sexual assaults fell 14 percent.
 - ⇒ Aggravated assaults, the most frequently reported violent offense, declined 11.2 percent.

- The number of property offenses declined by 2.7 percent.
 - ⇒ Robberies saw the greatest decrease among index crimes, falling more than 25 percent.
 - ⇒ The number of thefts increased by 2.1 percent.

The crime categories

The crime data examined here are divided into two categories: violent and property offenses, which together comprise "index crimes." The violent offenses are murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property offenses are burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Between 1993 and 1997 the total number of index crimes reported to the Illinois State Police decreased by slightly more than 5 percent. The number of property offenses reported declined by 2.7 percent, and the number of violent

Crime continues to drop in 1998

Illinois State Police figures released in June show that the number of violent and property offenses have continued to decline. Comparing offenses for the first quarters of 1997 and 1998, murder and robbery were down 5.1 percent, criminal sexual assault fell by 7.9 percent, aggravated assault was down 5.4 percent, burglary was down 6.7 percent, and there were 10.2 percent fewer arsons reported.

offenses declined by 16.4 percent (Figures 1 and 2).

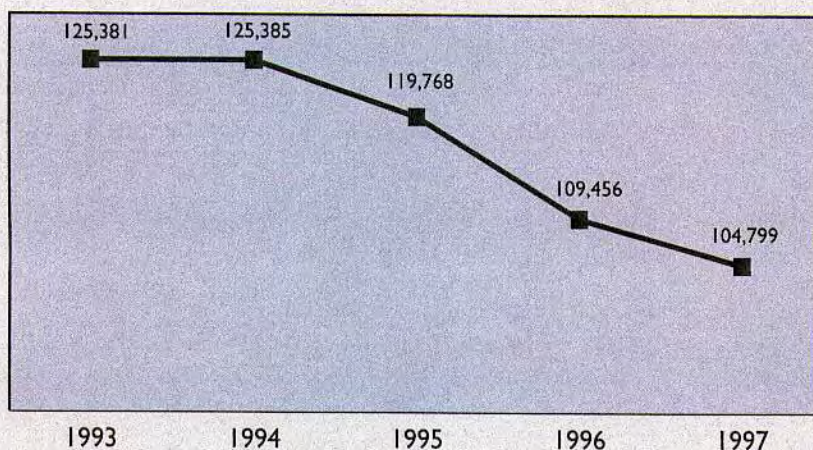
Despite an estimated 4 percent increase in Illinois' population, the violent offense rate declined from 1,072 offenses for every 100,000 persons in 1993, to 885 offenses for every 100,000

persons in 1997 (Table 1).¹

Based on the 1996 U.S. Census Bureau report, Illinois is the sixth most populous state in the nation. California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Pennsylvania are the five states with populations

greater than Illinois. Table 2 shows the 1993-1996 index offense rates for the ten highest-ranking states (based on population). Based on estimated violent crime rates, Illinois had the second highest rate in 1994, 1995, and 1996.²

Figure 1
Violent Index Offenses in Illinois



Source: Illinois State Police

Understanding Uniform Crime Reports and Crime Rates

UCR program

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program is a nationwide, cooperative statistical effort of more than 16,000 city, county, and state law enforcement agencies. These agencies report police-level data on crime that is brought to their attention to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting section.

In 1972 Illinois instituted mandatory UCR reporting on a statewide basis. Since then, every law enforcement agency in the state has been required to report crime data monthly to the Illinois State Police (ISP). ISP creates and maintains computer files of the Illinois UCR data and supplies this information to the FBI for use in compiling national crime statistics.

After reviewing the index crime data received from local agencies, the Illinois State Police submits this data to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Section. The FBI then uses this data, along with data reported by the other states, to publish *Crime in the United States* on an annual basis.

Crime index

The Crime Index consists of eight crime categories that, when taken together, provide some indication of how much serious crime has occurred in a jurisdiction, region, or state. Each of the eight offenses is called an "index crime." There are four violent index crimes – murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault – and four property index crimes – burglary,

larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. In most research, violent crime is analyzed separately from property crime.

Crime rates

Raw crime figures are useful for many purposes, such as for looking at the number of offenses in a single jurisdiction. However, raw numbers are not standardized against the population at risk. In other words, they do not reveal whether a higher amount of crime in one jurisdiction compared with another is a function of the greater number of people who live there. A "crime rate" on the other hand, does provide this type of information. Crime rates are usually calculated as a rate per 100,000 population. The denominator for calculating a crime rate is the "population at risk." In the case of this report, statewide population figures were used.

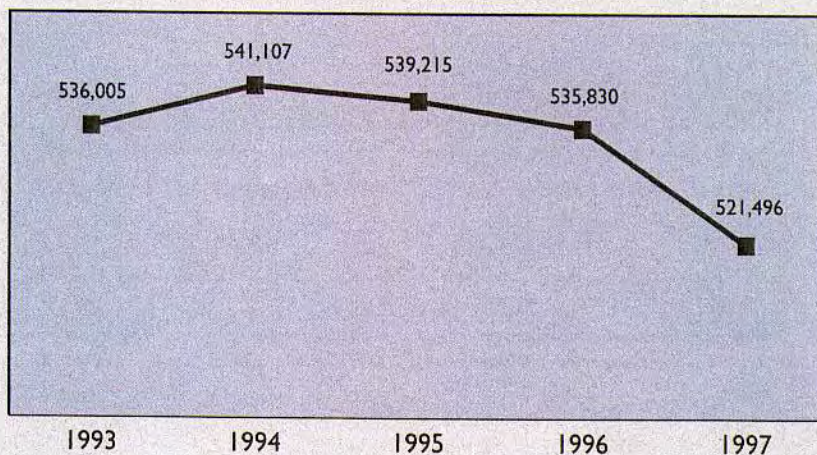
$$\frac{\text{Number of offenses} \times 100,000}{\text{Statewide population}} = \text{Offense rate per } 100,000 \text{ population}$$

Florida had the highest violent crime rate throughout the four-year period.

Nationally, the violent offense rate decreased 15 percent between 1993 and 1996 (the most recent national figures available). In Illinois, the decrease was 13.8 percent. The largest decrease in the violent offense rate was reported in New York (32 percent). Michigan and California both reported decreases of 20 percent, and Texas, Ohio, and New Jersey each reported 15 percent declines.

New York and California experienced the greatest decrease in property offense rates between 1993 and 1996.

Figure 2
Property Index Offenses in Illinois



Source: Illinois State Police

Table I
Number and Rate of Reported
Index Offenses in Illinois

VIOLENT INDEX CRIMES	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Percent Change In the Rate Per 100,000
	Number (Rate per 100,000)	Number (Rate per 100,000)	Number (Rate per 100,000)	Number (Rate per 100,000)	Number (Rate per 100,000)	
Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter	1,357 (11.60)	1,383 (11.77)	1,225 (10.36)	1,170 (9.88)	1,096 (9.25)	-20.2%
Criminal Sexual Assault	7,620 (65.14)	7,610 (64.75)	7,234 (61.15)	6,746 (56.94)	6,578 (55.52)	-14.7%
Robbery	44,390 (379.50)	43,085 (366.62)	39,194 (331.31)	35,302 (297.98)	33,181 (280.08)	-26.1%
Aggravated Assault	72,014 (615.66)	73,307 (623.78)	72,115 (609.59)	66,238 (559.11)	63,944 (539.75)	-12.3%
TOTAL	125,381 (1,071.91)	125,385 (1,066.92)	119,768 (1,012.41)	109,456 (923.91)	104,799 (884.60)	-17.4%
PROPERTY INDEX CRIMES						
Burglary	118,566 (1,013.64)	114,485 (974.17)	107,202 (906.19)	106,230 (896.68)	103,550 (874.06)	-13.7%
Larceny/Theft	346,517 (2,962.44)	354,832 (3,019.33)	366,194 (3,095.47)	365,859 (3,088.20)	358,383 (3,025.09)	2.1%
Motor Vehicle Theft ¹	67,353 (575.81)	68,198 (580.31)	62,286 (526.51)	57,880 (488.56)	55,927 (472.08)	-18.0%
Arson	3,569 (30.51)	3,592 (30.57)	3,533 (29.86)	3,861 (32.59)	3,636 (30.69)	0.5%
TOTAL	536,005 (4,582.41)	541,107 (4,604.38)	539,215 (4,558.03)	535,830 (4,506.04)	521,496 (4,401.92)	-3.9%

Source: Illinois State Police (ISP) and ICJIA calculations using ISP and U.S. Census Bureau data.

Property offense rates were down 23.9 percent in New York, 19.2 percent in California, 10.7 percent in Texas, 9.7 percent in Florida, 8.9 percent in New Jersey, 3.8 percent in Michigan, and 1.2 percent in Illinois. Property offense rates increased slightly in three states: Pennsylvania (3.7 percent), Georgia (3.6 percent) and Ohio (1.1 percent). ■

Notes:

1. According to the most recent estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, Illinois' population increased 4 percent between 1990 and 1997, from 11,430,602 to 11,895,849.

2. Illinois did not submit complete data to the FBI Uniform Crime Division for the years 1993-1997. Consequently, the FBI estimated Illinois' index crime rates.

Table 2
Violent Offense Rates in the 10 Largest States

State	1996 Estimated Population	1993 Viol. Index Offense Rate	1994 Viol. Index Offense Rate	1995 Viol. Index Offense Rate	1996 Viol. Index Offense Rate	Percent Change
California	(31,857,646)	1,077.8	1013.0	966.0	862.7	-19.9%
Texas	(19,091,207)	762.1	706.5	663.9	644.4	-15.4%
New York	(18,134,226)	1,073.5	965.6	841.9	727.0	-32.2%
Florida	(14,418,917)	1,206.0	1,146.8	1,071.0	1051.0	-12.8%
Pennsylvania	(12,040,084)	417.5	426.7	427.3	432.5	3.5%
Illinois	(11,845,316)	1,071.91	1,066.92	1,012.41	923.91	-13.8%
Ohio	(11,162,797)	504.1	485.8	482.5	428.7	-14.9%
Michigan	9,730,925)	791.5	766.1	687.8	635.3	-19.7%
New Jersey	(8,001,850)	626.9	614.2	599.8	531.5	-15.2%
Georgia	(7,334,274)	723.1	667.7	657.1	638.7	-11.6%

Source: Illinois State Police and ICJIA calculations using ISP and U.S. Census Bureau data. Violent index offense rates for the states (other than Illinois) were taken from *Crime in the United States*, which is published each year by the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Section. State populations were taken from the 1996 U.S. Census Bureau intercensal population estimates.

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