# PLACE OF MASSACHUSETTS IN NATIONAL CRIME RATE STATISTICS FOR 1971

Tables show each state and region rank-ordered by its crime rates as published in the Uniform Crime Reports of the Federal Bureau of Investigation

Compiled by the Supervisor of Research Massachusetts Department of Correction

> John O. Boone Commissioner

Publication No. 6397 approved by Alfred C. Holland, State Purchasing Agent

## PLACE OF MASSACHUSETTS IN NATIONAL CRIME RATE STATISTICS FOR 1971

Based on the recently issued Federal Uniform Crime Reports, the Boston Globe on August 28, 1972 ran this headline: "N. E. crime up 14%, tops in U. S." The lead sentence began with the phase, "Serious crime in New England increased by 14 per cent in 1971, nearly twice the national rate of increase

There are two significant faults with these statements. First, the Federal Crime Index does not give a true picture of the amount of serious crime anywhere. What it does do is combine large numbers of less serious crimes (like stealing from autos) with small numbers of really serious crimes (like murder and rape) and by using the mixture computes an index of alleged "serious" crime. Nationwide in 1971 there were over four million more property crimes than violent crimes against persons among the seven "Index" crimes utilized by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In the Index, each property crime counts just as much as each crime against the person. Consequently, the F.B.I. Crime Index is improperly inflated with extremely large numbers of less serious crimes.

Secondly, without also reporting that New England has the lowest rates in the country for murder, rape and aggravated assault, the newspaper headline creates a false impression. A naive reader might mistakenly conclude that there was more serious crime in New England than anywhere else. This is not true.

If one is primarily concerned with sensationalism and shock tactics, then focusing on the rate of increase makes for a spicier article. However, it would have provided a more accurate, balanced picture if the news item had also called attention to the fact that, despite increases, New England continues to be the region with the lowest rates in the country for really serious crimes.

With regard to the less serious crimes against property, New England does not compare as well. And, as will be subsequently noted, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is the state which is the most responsible for clouding parts of the New England crime picture. However, although Massachusetts compares poorly with the other New England states - especially the rural states of Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire - comparison with the rest of the country has more favorable results. In fact, Massachusetts crime rates are better than the national rate for every one of the seven selected crimes except auto theft.

The remainder of this paper provides a brief explanation of Federal processing of crime figures and goes on to show in some detail how Massachusetts and New England compare with other states and regions.

The Uniform Crime Reports - 1971, issued August 29, 1972 by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, lists the rates per 100,000 inhabitants of every state and region for the following selected crimes: murder (including non-negligent manslaughter) forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny (of over \$50) and auto theft (including both unauthorized use and stealing for resale).

For many years it has been the F.B.I. practice to add together the rates of all of these seven crimes to establish a Crime Index for each area. This index is alleged to show the amount of serious crime for the area concerned. According to the F.B.I. the seven crimes selected "--- are all serious crimes either by their very nature or due to the volume in which they occur."\*

We disagree with the notion that because an offense occurs in high volume it should be considered a serious crime. If this were really true, then a traffic law violation could also be equated with any violent crime against the person.

In fact it is precisely because the crimes of burglary, larceny and auto theft are not as serious as murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault, and yet are lumped together in the same basket, that the F.B.I. Crime Index is an unsatisfactory measure of serious crime. It just does not make sense to equate a comparatively minor crime like stealing a topcoat from a car with a serious crime like murder.

As noted in our introduction, a major fault of the Crime Index is that the less serious property crimes occur much more often than the violent crimes against persons. Because a one to one equation of murder with larceny is not logical, it is obvious that overbalancing each murder with eight to ten larcenies is even more illogical. Such an imbalance results in states with low rates of violent crime but high rates of property crime being given much higher indices for serious crime than they deserve.

Because of these flaws in the F.B.I. Crime Index, we do not use it. However, since 1967 the F.B.I. has listed two sub-totals. One is the sum of the rates for the four crimes against persons and the other, the sum of the rates for the three property crimes. Although there are still marked variations in the frequency of offenses within these two categories, these variations are not so extreme. Consequently, we do use these two sub-totals in our tables.

To obtain a comparison of Massachusetts with all other states we rank ordered all state rates for each crime. The state with the lowest rate was placed number one at the top of the list for that crime, the next lowest was located number two and so on. This of course results in the state with the highest rate for a crime being ranked fiftieth at the bottom of the column for that crime. Table I shows the resulting rank order of each state for each offense, as well as the rank of each state with regard to the total for all Crimes against Persons as well as the total for all Property Crimes. The rank order of nine regions of the United States (see Footnote 1) are also shown.
\*Uniform Crime Reports - 1971. Page 5

Region States Included New England Conn., Maine, Mass., N. H., R. I., Vermont 2. Middle Atlantic New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania East North Central 3. Ill., Ind., Mich., Ohio, Wisconsin 4. West North Central Iowa, Kans., Minn., Mo., Neb., No. & So. Dakota 5. South Atlantic Del., Fla., Ga., Md., N. & S. Car., Va., W. Va. 6. East South Central Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee 7. West South Central Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas 8. Mountain Ariz., Colo., Idaho, Mont., Nev., N. Mex., Utah, Wyo. 9. Pacific Alaska, Calif., Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

To supplement Table  $\overline{1}$  which shows rates and rank orders for only the one year of 1971, we prepared additional tables to show the changes in rates and rank orders year by year.

Table 11 shows the changes in the national rates of the United States for each crime from 1966 through 1971.

Table  $\overline{111}$  shows the changes in both rates and rank order for New England compared with the other eight regions over the same period.

Table <u>IV</u> provides a similar listing of the varied ranks and rates for Massachusetts over this same six year period.

Inspection of the regional rankings of crimes against the person in Table 1 support the statements made in the introduction that New England has the lowest rates for the specific crimes of murder, rape and aggravated assault. New England is the fourth best of the nine regions in regard to robbery. However, the ranking of the aggregate rate of all crimes against persons shows that New England has the lowest overall rate for these violent crimes.

However, with regard to crimes against property New England's rank for the aggregate of these three offenses drops to 7th. As to each individual property offense New England ranks 6th in burglary, 4th in Larceny and 9th, or last, in auto theft.

Turning to the rankings of the states in regard to the aggregate of crimes against persons we find that Massachusetts is just about at the median, ranking 25th. As to each individual crime Massachusetts ranks 16th in murder, 13th in rape, 39th in robbery and 18th in aggravated assault.

In regard to the aggregate of all three crimes against property, Massachusetts has a bad rank of 43rd. For the individual property crimes Massachusetts ranks 38th in burglary, 31st in larceny and 50th in auto theft.

Note that out of seven individual crime rankings of Massachusetts, four were below the national median. However, when a comparison is made on the basis of the national average rates Massachusetts has a rate above the national average for six crimes and is below average for only the one crime of auto theft.

Looking at Table  $\overline{11}$  showing the changes in national rates for the past six years, we see that without exception the rate for each crime has increased every year.

Viewing Table 111 showing the six year figures for New England, we see that New England has consistently been the best area in regard to the aggregate of crimes against persons, as well as the best during the entire period for the individual crimes of murder, rape and aggravated assault. New England does not rank as well in robbery (2nd to 4th place) but nevertheless, its robbery rate has always been about half as large as the national rate. However, in regard to crimes against property, New England falls back into the pack especially as regards auto theft where it has ranked 9th (last) for the past five years.

Table IV shows that Massachusetts, except for robbery, usually ranks better than the median of all states in regard to crimes against persons and for the six year period has always had a lower rate, including robbery, than the national average for all of these offenses. In regard to property crimes Massachusetts compares poorly and the trend is bad. It has dropped from 41st in 1968 to the 43rd rank in the column showing the aggregate rate totalling all three of these crimes. In regard to the individual crime of burglary, it has dropped from 32nd in 1966 to 38th in 1971. In larceny over the same period it has dropped from 24th to 31st. As regards auto theft, it could not drop any lower as it has always had the worst rate for this offense of all fifty states. It is little comfort to keep in mind that Massachusetts still has a better than average rate for all crimes except auto theft. If the trend of the last few years continues, Massachusetts may soon compare as poorly in regard to national average crime rates as it now compares in regard to rank order in property crimes.

Nelson N. Cochrane October 1972

## TABLE I

### STATES and REGIONS RANK ORDERED & CRIME RATES

1971 Rates per 100,000 Inhabitants

				SE	LEC	TED	CR.	IMES	3 Vs	PER	SON	/S 4	nd F	ROP	ERT	· Y			
Rank Order		CRIMES vs PERSONS		Murder non negl.		Forcible Rape		Robbery		Aggra Assa		CRIMES vs PROPERTY		Butglaty		Larc (\$50 an		Auto Theft	
		Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Atea	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate
		U.S.	392.7	U.S.	8.5	U.S.	20,3	U.S.	/87./	U.S.	/76.8	U,S.	25/4.0	U.S.	1148.3	U.5.	909.2	U.S.	456,5
	,	New Eng	2094	New Eng	2 2	New Eng	. #0	E.So.Cont.	479	New Eng.	971	FS. Fait	15350	E.So.Cant.	7439	E.So. Cent.	£974	Eso Cent	253.7
R	. 1	W.No Cent.		W. No Cant		Mid Atlani		W.No.Cent		KNo Cent				W.No. Cent		W.No.Cent.		W.No. Cent	314.2
E	3	E.So.Gent,		Maontain		W.Hs.Cant.		Mauntain		E.No.Cent				E.No. Cent.		WSa.Cent.		So.Allant	332.4
G		Montein		Pacific	7.2	ESo. Cent.	16.8	New Eng	77.8	Mid Atlant	/65,3	E.No. Cent	2328.7	W.So.Cent.	1035.5	NewEng	8/3.8	W.So.Cent.	337,8
0		W.So.Cant		E.No Cent.		£.No.Cent		V.so Cent.		Mountain				50.Atlanti		E.No.Cent.		Mountain	420.2
N	6 7	E.No. Cent. So. Allant		Mid MI. W.So.Gut		So. Atlant.		So. Atlant.		E.So.Cent				New Eng.		Mid Affant		E.No. Cant.	448.3
5	8	Pacific	- ,	So. Atl.		W.So.Cont. Mountain		Pacific ENo.Cont		W.So.Cent. Pacific	2/3.6	-		Mid Atlant. Mountain		So Atlant. Mountain		Mid Riflest Pacific	5629 63/.8
	9	Mid Atlant				Pacific		Mid. Atlant		So.Atlant.				Pacific	1794.2			NewEng	7/6.9
	,	No Dak	38(1	Vermont		No. Da.k.	. H. T				251			4, 7, 6	2200	. ·	2440		
5	2	Vermont	1	So. Dak		W. Va.		No.Dak. Vermont	7.3 9.8	No.Dak. Wisc.		Miss W.Va.		No.Dak W.Va		Miss. W. Va.		So.Dak No.Dak	83.1 86.1
Ť	_	N.Hamp.		No. Dak.		R.I.		Maine	14.4			No Dak		Miss		Maine	461.2		99.4
A	+	Maine		Lowa	1.8	Maine	7.4	N. Hamp.	16,1			So. Dak		So.Dak		Ренп.		W.Va.	110.8
T E	5	Wisc.	88.4	Maine	2.6	Wise.	7.6	So. Dak	18,2	Towa	50.8	Maine	1263.8	Iowa	531.6	Vermont	472.3	ArK.	1124
s.		So. Dak.		N. Hamp.		Н.Натр	1	Wyo.		Maine,	60.0	Ark.	1331.2	Nes.		N. Hamp.	499.2	Vernout	/39.1
		Iowa	- 1	Minn.		Iowa		Idaho		Minn	1	Vermont	/337.3	-		So Dak		Maine	/4/.5
		Idaho W.Va.	1	Neb. Utah		Conn.		Mont.		So Dak		N.Напр.	1350.1			No. Da.K.		No.Car.	149.9
		W. va. Mont		Wisc.		So.Dak Idaho		Iowa Wisc.		Utah W.Va.	1	Iowa Neb	1977.8 1437.4		6549	Tenn. A+v.	5684	Iowa Idaha	153.3 166.5
		Utah		R.I.		Vermont	1	W. Va.		Conn.		Wyo.	1548.8	l '	661.1		587.6		181.8
		Minn		Conn.		Mina.		Miss		Idaho		No.Car		N.Hamp.	669.9			N.Hamp.	184.0
		Neb	/55,8	Ore.	3,2	MASS	124	Neb.	36.0	Mont.	90.0	Penn.	1566.6	Ky.	7/9:0	So. Car.	643,3	So.Car.	210.5
	/+	Wyo.	- 1	Idaho		Penn.		A+K		Ind.	92.2			Vermont	726.0		649.7	ľ	221.2
	1	Conn.		Wash.		Miss.		No.Cor.		Penn.	101.4		1631.8			No.Car	6.58,6		222.0
		Kans.		<u>MASS</u>		Wyo.		Ala.		Neb.	/03.2		/663.3		741.8		660.4		240.6
		R.I. Hawaii		Mont Kans.	1	Neb. Mont	. 1	Okla. Utah.		Ohio MASS	108.7 109.6	-	1700.9 1746.5		752.3 778.3		687.9	Kans.	243.8 254.6
	- 1	Ky.		Wyo.		N.Cat		So Car		Havaii	116,1		1769.7		810.5	1	688/3		2.78.3
	20	Wash.	236.4	Hawaii	5.3	N.Jers.	14.5	Kans.		Wyo.	1/7.4		1844.4		836.7	Iowa.	693.0	Va.	2942
	- 1	Ind.	237.8			Utah	14:6	Alaska	67.1	Wash.	/21.6	Ok/a.	18499	Alaska	848.6	Va.	739.8	Ga.	301,8
		A+K.	240.7			ı≺y.		Cann.	3	NJers.	121.8		1879.2		881.7		752.4		303.5
		Okla. Penn.	250.5 259.2		6.1	Kans.		Minn.	1	Kans.	/27.8		/#88.3		883.7		754.8		3283
		MASS	266.0		į	Okla. Ark.		Ky. R.I.	94.9	R.I. Ky	129.2 131.9		/909.9 2040.8		888.4 900.1		777.6 780.9		332,3 343,1
:	26	Miss	276.3	Okla.	6.5	N. York	17.2	Tenn.	86,5	Va.	150.4	Ind.	2069.0	Tenn	901.4	Tex.	781.2	Wash.	344.3
	27	Va.	280.7	Colo.	6.5	So. Car.	/7.3	Hawaii	93.0	Ore.	157.7		21025		911.9		785.4		36/.0
				Ariz.		Hawaii		Wash.		Nev.	162.9		2136.8		914.7		788.4		362.7
		Ohio Sa Carr		Ohio Cal	- 1	Indiana		N.Mex.	/00.9		164.5		2181.5	So.Car.	915.9	_	793,3		369.0
	١	So Car.	3/0.7		_	Wash.	17.7		1	OKIA.	168.0		2325./		932.6		836.1		383,6
			311.4		. 1	Tenn Del		Ga. Ore,	104.2 110.4		171.7 187.9	1	2352.6 2375.3		1050.7 1084.2	i"	896.6 912.0		392.7 401.7
			340.9			Ohio		Ariz.	113.3		93.8		2457.6		1097.4			N.Mex	746.
	34	Alaska	355.3	N.York		Ala.	19.0	Tex.	/22.0		196.8	1	2524.6		1122.5		978.0		4508
	- 1		362.2		10.5			Ind.	122.8	•		N.Jers.	2715.5	Mo.	1/67.1	Idako	979.9	III.	475.8
	- 1		369.2		10.5			Colo.	134.9		200.7		2769.2		1175.0		1111.3		484.2
			372.2		10.9			La. Penn.	135,1		2.07.3		2888.9		/215.3		1119.9		496.4
			372.3 373.3		11.1		1	MASS.	138.4	19165. 50, Car.	212.0		2891.2 3054.8		339.8  340.7	l .	//32.2 //51.8		497.9 502.2
		-	373.6			Tex.		Del.	144.1		1			N.Mex.	/352.0		1153.4		5221
			379.6		11.4			Ohio	/63.7				3/09.2		1390,5	i .	//77.2		526
			386,5 L			Md.		Nev.		N.York	223.8		31525		/3928		1189.5		56K
	- 1		400.6 413.1			N.Hex. Mo.	,	Mo. Flæ.	179.7	Haska N.Mex.	231.3		3221.2 3228.2		1431.4 1435.9		1222.6 1246.4		567.3 580.1
	- 1		467.9			Nev.		N.Jers	220.0		238.9		3338,4		/437.1		1297.0		584:
٠,	46	Cal.	518.6	9/as ka	13.4	Mich	26.7	Cal.	235.5	La.	243.2	Mich.	3431.0	Colo.	/450.0	Hawaji	/334.0	Nev:	606.
ı	47	Flav.	547.9	Miss,	1	Atiz.	29.9	ΣH.	258,1	Ariz.	250.7	Calo.	3439.0	Ne.y.	/505.9	Nev.	1358.6		685.
		Mich .	574.6	Ala .		Cal.	36.1	Md.	325.4		259.9		3470.8		16 78.4		/#20.2		713.9
,		Md. i V.York	621.4 778.7	60 Ca. Sa <i>Can</i>		Colo. Alaska	38.4	Mich. N.York	330.1 527.8		302.1 319.7		3491.4 4142.7		1686.7 1939.8		1424.2 1489.1		979.

Taken from UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS-1971 Issued Aug 29.1972 by the Federal Bureau as Tovesticatio

Table by Nelson N. Cacheane Hose And Correction

### TABLE II CRIME RATES of the UNITED STATES from 1966 through 1971

AREA	TOTAL CRIMES VS PERSONS	MURDER	RAPE	ROBBERY	ASSAULT	TOTAL CRIMES	BURGLARY	LARCENY	AUTO THEFT
YEAR	Rate	Rata	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
UNITED STATES 1966	2152	5.6	/2.9	78.3	118.4	1440.8	699.6	456.8	284. 4
U.S. 1967	249.9	6.1	/3.7	102.1	128.0	1671.7	811.5	529.2	331.0
U.S. 1968	294.6	6.8	15.5	/3/.0	141.3	1.940.2	915.1	636.0	389.1
U.S. 1969	324.4	7.2	18.1	147.4	151.8	2146.7	965.6	749.3	431.8
U.S. 1970	360.0	7.8	18.3	171.5	162.4	2380.5	1067.7	859.4	453.5
U.S. 1971	392.7	8.5	20.3	/87./	176.8	2514.0	1148.3	909,2	456.5

FOOTNOTE Rates for all three tables are per 100,000 inhabitants

#### TABLE III CRIME RATES of NEW ENGLAND from 1966 through 1971

AREA and		L CRIMES PERSONS	CI MITABER   WODE   PARREDV   "***********************************				AL CRIMES ROPERTY	вυ	RGLARY	LARCENY		RUTO THEFT						
YEAR	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Renk	ik Rate	l Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate
1966 1966	/	88.9	1	2./	I	5.9	1	30.7	1	50,1	_	/30/.7	3	576.2	3	336.2	8	389.3
N.E. 1967	/	103,8	,	2.4	1	6.3	1	37.0	1	58,1	-	1507.1	3	663.4	2	373.2	9	471.5
N.E. 1968	/	/3/.6	/	2.9	1	7.9	2	52,6	1	68.2	6	1909.5	3	831.0	3	512.6	9	565.9
N.E. 1969	1	152.2	1	3.0	1	8.8	2	65.6	1	74.8	6	2166.9	6	920.5	4	637.0	9	609.4
N.E. 1970	′	170.7	1	3.1	1	9.7	2	74.2	1	83.6	6	2383.1	5	1013.6	3	727.+	9	642.1
N.E. 1971	1	209.#	/	3,2	1	20.3	4	97.8	1	97.3	7	2658.8	6	1/28.0	+	8/3.8	9	716.9

FOOTNOTE 1 Indicates rank among 9 regions

- Indicates rank order not computed

#### TABLE IV CRIME RATES of MASSACHUSETTS from 1966 through 1971

AREA and		TOTAL CRIMES VS PERSONS		URDER	RAPE		ROBBERY		AGGRAVATED ASSAULT		TOTAL CRIMES				LARCENY		AUTO THEFT	
YEAR	Rank	Rate	Rank Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rask	Rate	2 Rank	Rate	2 Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank 2	Rate
MASSACHUSETTS 1966	-	115.3	/3	2.4	10	6.4	32	46.0	15	60,5	-	1539.0	32	619.0	24	368,2	50	551.8
MASS, 1967	-	127.6	13	2.8	14	7.6	29	52.0	17	65.2	-	1735.2	28	675.5	20	392.3	50	667.4
MRSS, 1968	20	164.0	16	3,5	16	9.5	30	74.3	18	76.7	41	2220.6	33	868.3	29	545.7	50	806.6
MASS. 1969	2.3	187.9	16	3.5	13	10.8	33	90.6	17	82.9	38	2552.3	36	1032.6	27	661.0	50	858.8
MASS. 1970	20	202.9	/3	3.5	18	12.0	32	99.5	16	87.9	4/	280/./	.37	//34./	27	788.9	50	878.1
MASS. 1971	25	266.0	16	3.8	/3	12.4	39	140.1	18	109.6	₩3	322/.2	38	/339.8	31	896.6	50	984.4

FOOTNOTES 2 Indicates rank among 50 states

- Indicates rank order not computed