# **United States Crime Analysis Report (1979–2023)**

## **Introduction**

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of criminal activity in the United States from 1979 through 2023. It covers total and per-capita crime trends, compares state-level data, and highlights key patterns between violent and property crimes. The study also examines national decline trajectories and top crime categories, forming the foundation for future economic correlation analysis.

## **1. Peak Crime Years**

The early 1990s marked the highest levels of crime in modern U.S. history:

* 1992 was the peak year for violent crime with 1,932,274 incidents.
* In 1991, property crime was recorded at 12,961,116 incidents.
* Combined, both property and violent crimes totaled 14,872,883 in 1991.
* Crime remained historically elevated between 1990 and 1996.

By 1994, violent crime had already begun to decline, signaling a long-term downtrend.

This period represents a turning point, after which national crime rates entered a multi-decade decline.

## **2. National Crime Decline (1991–2023)**

Between 1991 and 2023, the United States experienced a dramatic reduction in reported crime:

* Total crime fell by approximately 48.4%, dropping from 14.8 million in 1991 to 7.6 million in 2023.
* Property crime dropped by 50.48%, from 12.96 million to 6.42 million.
* Violent crime decreased by 34.42%, from 1.91 million to 1.25 million.

These declines occurred even as the U.S. population increased significantly, meaning crime per capita fell even more sharply.

## **3. Crime Rate Per 100,000 People (2023)**

Based on national totals for 2023:

* Total crime rate: approximately 2.2%
* Property crime rate: approximately 2.0%
* Violent crime rate: approximately 0.2%

These percentages reflect the ratio of incidents to the total population and confirm a substantial nationwide improvement in public safety.

## **4. Per-Capita Crime Rate Drop (1991–2023 Averages)**

Average state-level crime rates also show consistent decreases between 1991 and 2023:

* Property crime dropped from 4.776% to 1.871% — a 60.83% decrease.
* Total crime dropped from 5.372% to 2.234% — a 58.41% decrease.
* Violent crime dropped from 0.5952% to 0.3636% — a 38.91% decrease.

This steady decline occurred in nearly all states, regardless of political control or geographic region.

## **5. Highest Crime States (1979–2023)**

The five states with the highest number of total crimes over the 45-year span were also the most populous:

* California  
  + Total crimes: 66,599,673
  + Cumulative population: 1,500,346,170
  + Crime-to-population ratio: 4.44%
* Texas  
  + Total crimes: 46,554,855
  + Population: 977,551,007
  + Ratio: 4.76%
* Florida  
  + Total crimes: 37,630,162
  + Population: 725,546,055
  + Ratio: 5.19%
* New York  
  + Total crimes: 31,403,745
  + Population: 843,569,171
  + Ratio: 3.72%
* Illinois  
  + Total crimes: 22,681,040
  + Population: 549,885,463
  + Ratio: 4.12%

These states maintained a consistent crime-to-population ratio between 3.7% and 5.2%, suggesting a high but proportionate volume of crime.

**District of Columbia**

* Total crimes: 2,150,000
* Cumulative population: 27,600,000
* Crime-to-population ratio: 7.8%  
  + Property crimes: 1,700,000 (6.16%)
  + Violent crimes: 400,000 (1.45%)  
     This makes DC the highest in the nation by crime-to-population ratio, with a much greater likelihood of experiencing reported crime compared to any state.

## **6. Lowest Crime States (1979–2023)**

By contrast, the five states with the lowest total crime volumes also had smaller populations:

* North Dakota  
  + Total crimes: 747,716
  + Population: 29,764,927
  + Ratio: 2.51%
* Wyoming  
  + Total crimes: 770,799
  + Population: 23,346,506
  + Ratio: 3.30%
* Vermont  
  + Total crimes: 782,123
  + Population: 26,649,459
  + Ratio: 2.94%
* South Dakota  
  + Total crimes: 859,892
  + Population: 34,858,725
  + Ratio: 2.47%
* Alaska  
  + Total crimes: 1,245,528
  + Population: 28,133,020
  + Ratio: 4.42%

Despite Alaska’s high crime-to-population ratio, the other four states consistently stayed between 2.4% and 3.3%, showing significantly lower crime density.

## **7. Property Crime vs. Violent Crime (Key States)**

The data shows that property crime vastly outpaces violent crime in every major state analyzed:

* California:  
  + Property crimes: 56,857,429
  + Violent crimes: 9,742,244
  + Property crimes are 483.7% more frequent
* New York:  
  + Property crimes: 25,912,281
  + Violent crimes: 5,491,464
  + Property crimes are 372.0% more frequent
* Florida:  
  + Property crimes: 32,467,814
  + Violent crimes: 5,162,348
  + Property crimes are 528.9% more frequent
* Texas:  
  + Property crimes: 41,403,221
  + Violent crimes: 5,151,634
  + Property crimes are 703.5% more frequent

These disparities highlight how most crime in the U.S. is non-violent in nature, primarily involving theft, burglary, or vehicle-related incidents.

## **8. Total Crimes by Type (1979–2023)**

The most common types of crime across the nation are overwhelmingly property-based:

* Larceny: 300,122,525 incidents
* Burglary: 105,391,108 incidents
* Motor vehicle theft: 50,070,081 incidents
* Robbery: 20,031,836 incidents
* Rape (legacy definition): 3,477,001 incidents
* Rape (revised definition): 1,447,857 incidents
* Homicide: 844,649 incidents

Larceny alone accounts for nearly half of all recorded crime during this period.

## **9. Key Patterns and Insights**

* Most crime in America is property-related, not violent.
* High-crime states fall between 4% and 5.2% crime-to-population ratios.
* Low-crime states generally stay between 2.4% and 3.3%.
* Crime rates have dropped significantly since the 1990s despite population growth.
* The ratio of property to violent crime remains consistent across states, usually 4 to 7 times higher.
* Larceny and burglary dominate the landscape, making up the largest share of offenses.
* Alaska is a unique outlier — low in total volume but high in per-capita crime rate.

## **Overall Summary**

The national crime landscape in the United States has undergone a significant transformation since its peak in the early 1990s. Total crime volumes, violent offenses, and property crimes have all sharply declined over the past three decades, despite a consistent rise in population. From 1991 to 2023, the nation saw nearly a 50% reduction in overall crime, with property crimes falling even more sharply than violent ones. These improvements reflect broad national changes in policing strategy, economic conditions, and possibly demographic or social trends. Notably, the crime rate per 100,000 people has fallen across every major category, reinforcing that the reduction in crime is not simply a byproduct of population growth.

When viewed across states, a pattern emerges: high-crime states like California, Texas, and Florida all maintain crime-to-population ratios between 4% and 5.2%, while low-crime states such as North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont range between 2.4% and 3.3%. Additionally, property crime consistently dwarfs violent crime in every state analyzed — typically by a factor of 4 to 7 times. Larceny, burglary, and vehicle theft collectively dominate all crime categories by volume. These findings suggest that while violent crime often garners the most public attention, theft-related offenses drive the bulk of criminal activity. As we prepare to analyze economic and demographic variables in future sections, these foundational patterns establish a clear baseline of national safety improvements and consistent cross-state trends in criminal behavior.

## **Future Considerations**

The next section of this report will focus on economic correlation:

* Comparison between state-level income and crime levels
* Potential relationships with education, employment, and housing
* Future analysis may also explore urban vs. rural crime rates, racial disparities, and policing strategies over time.

## **Executive Summary**

This report provides a thorough analysis of criminal activity in the United States from 1979 to 2023, covering both violent and property crime trends at the national and state levels. Crime rates in the United States reached their highest recorded levels during the early 1990s. In 1991, the combined total of property and violent crimes peaked at nearly 14.9 million offenses, with violent crime remaining exceptionally high from 1991 to 1993—each year recording close to 1.9 million violent incidents, the highest sustained period in the report’s history. After 1994, both violent and property crime began a sustained and significant decline.

Between 1991 and 2023, the United States experienced a dramatic reduction in reported crime. Total crime fell by approximately 48%, dropping from 14.8 million incidents in 1991 to 7.6 million in 2023. Property crime declined by 50.5%, while violent crime decreased by 34.4%. These improvements occurred even as the U.S. population continued to grow, further lowering the per-capita crime rate nationwide. By 2023, national crime rates reached historic lows, with the total crime rate at roughly 2.2%, property crime at about 2.0%, and violent crime just 0.2%. These figures confirm a substantial and sustained improvement in public safety across the country.

State-level averages mirrored the national trend, with nearly all states showing consistent decreases in crime rates between 1991 and 2023. Property crime dropped by 60.8%, total crime by 58.4%, and violent crime by 38.9%, reflecting widespread reductions not confined to any one region or context.

California recorded the highest total number of crimes during the period analyzed, followed by Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois. When comparing crime-to-population ratios, Florida led the top five states, followed by Texas, California, Illinois, and New York. This ranking highlights Florida’s higher crime risk relative to its population, despite California having the highest overall volume. The District of Columbia stood out with the highest crime-to-population ratio in the nation, making it the area with the greatest likelihood of experiencing a reported crime—significantly above both national and state averages.

In contrast, states with the lowest total crime volumes—such as North Dakota, Wyoming, Vermont, South Dakota, and Alaska—had much smaller populations and maintained lower crime-to-population ratios, with the exception of Alaska, which had a higher ratio despite a lower total volume.

Across every major state analyzed, property crime far outpaced violent crime. For example, in California, property crime was nearly five times more frequent than violent crime, while in Texas it was over seven times higher. This pattern held true nationwide, emphasizing that the majority of crime incidents in the U.S. are non-violent and primarily involve theft, burglary, or vehicle-related offenses. Property crimes dominate the national landscape, with larceny alone accounting for nearly half of all recorded crime during the period studied. Burglary and motor vehicle theft were also among the most common offenses, followed by robbery, rape, and homicide.

Several clear patterns emerge: most crime is property-related rather than violent, and high-crime states have crime-to-population ratios between 4% and 5.2%, while low-crime states generally fall between 2.4% and 3.3%. The ratio of property to violent crime remains consistent—typically four to seven times higher for property offenses. Alaska stands out as a unique outlier, with high per-capita crime despite lower total volume.

The U.S. crime landscape has transformed dramatically since the early 1990s, with sharp declines in both violent and property offenses despite steady population growth. These improvements reflect changes in policing, economic conditions, and broader social factors. Going forward, further analysis will focus on economic and demographic correlations—such as income, education, employment, and urban versus rural differences—to better understand the drivers behind these long-term shifts.