**Racial Disparities**

Following national trends, data shows those convicted of cannabis crimes in Minnesota are disproportionally black.

Black conviction rates for cannabis-related crimes triple their representation by percentage in Minnesota, while white convictions for those crimes are disproportionally less compared to their population, according to Minnesota Supreme Court data.

The data was requested, obtained and shared with the Star Tribune by Kurtis Hanna, a local cannabis activist with the nonprofit Sensible Minnesota. The Star Tribune worked with Hanna on obtaining and analyzing additional related cannabis case data from public records.

Whites and blacks aged 18 to 25 use pot at roughly the same rates, according to the ACLU, but nationally, the 7 million arrests made nationally between 2001 and 2010 are hardly proportional, with blacks being four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession, and nearly 8 times more likely in Minnesota.

We will run our own analysis and come up with our own rates for comparison with the ACLU data.

Blacks comprised 17.6 percent of the 17,167 Minnesota cannabis convictions across a 2010-2013 timespan and comprised a similar number of cases overall, according to court data, while the census shows they only represent 5.7 percent of the state population. About 87 percent of those convictions were felonies.

Whites, however, while comprising 81.9 percent of Minnesota’s adult population, were only 56.1 percent of cannabis convictions and 57.3 percent of all cases. About 73 percent of those cannabis convictions were felonies.

Native Americans, while comprising 1.3 percent of Minnesota’s population, represented 5.7 percent of cannabis convictions over the time period.

Pacific Islanders and Hispanics were roughly proportional to their populations of about .1 and 5 percent respectively while Asians and multiracial individuals were underrepresented among cannabis convictions.

Since the statistic is self-reported, the race of about 12 percent of all those convicted were either ambiguous, unknown, the individual refused to identify or the information was simply unavailable.

While the court data covers misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor and felony convictions, petty misdemeanors are tracked separately without reporting race. Between 2010 and 2013, about 18,563 petty misdemeanor citations were issued, primarily for possession and small sales of marijuana.

**Ramping Enforcement**

Cannabis-related cases and convictions have ramped up across Minnesota, according to Minnesota Supreme Court data spanning 2010-2013.

Felony cases for cannabis-related crimes steadily increased by 31.1 percent over the time period, while convictions in those cases saw a 20.4 percent increase.

Meanwhile, the number of misdemeanor cases increased by 13.1 percent over the time period but gradually slowed down, while convictions in those cases dropped by 31 percent.

Petty misdemeanor citations for possessing or selling small amounts of marijuana rose by 10.3 percent over the time period, with a spike between 2011 and 2012.

The percent change in arrests for various police departments across Minnesota has increased as well. The Minneapolis Police Department, after a dip in arrests following 2010 stepped up enforcement by 13.2 percent between 2012 and 2013.

The Hennepin County Sheriff, meanwhile, saw a 83.1 percent increase in arrests over the four years, while the Duluth Police Department increased enforcement by 156.5 percent with significant gains each year. The Minnesota State Patrol also brought a 55.6 percent increase in cannabis cases.

Across the river, the trends have been less consistent with the Ramsey County Sheriff seeing a 24.5 percent increase in cannabis-related cases while the St. Paul Police Department saw a 15.5 percent drop off.