

Racial Disparity and Bail Reform in the U.S. Correctional System

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The US correctional policies have been the victim of most things, including bail reform and, most importantly, racial inequity, which will be touched on next in the piece. Racial disparity has also been proven to be an issue of concern, with Black Americans being imprisoned more than White Americans. It is both the outcome of discriminatory policing and sentencing policies, but also of system-wide discrimination in criminal justice (Miller, 2024). The blacks are arrested, convicted, and spend more time in jail than the whites.

Another factor that should be of concern is Bail reform. According to the cash bail system, in which one has to pay bail in order to go out, it affects low-income defendants who lack money, and they usually are the minority (Hanser, 2023). Most cannot afford bail, which extends their time in jail, even for lesser offenses, because wealthy individuals evade arrest altogether. It creates a cycle of poverty-prison that is disproportionate against people of color.

An example is a 2019 news report involving the mental health unit of the Harris County jail in Houston, Texas. The bail reform was administered to limit overcrowding (Hergert, 2025). Nevertheless, the media distorted the effects of the reform to associate it with the rise in crime, thus misleading the general population about the positive effects of the reform (texascje.org, 2021). It highlights the power of the media in shaping people's views on corrections and justice reforms.

Media tremendously shapes the way people view, and good media coverage needs to happen with the concerns. To have a fairer correctional system, racial disparity and bail reform are necessary.

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