Basic Statistics

- Current state and federal prison population: More than 2.3 million or 1 in 100 adults on any given day

- Annual jail population: Approximately 730,000 on any given day, or a total of 13 million people annually

- Total under correctional control (including incarceration, probation, and parole): 6.9 million or 1 in 31 adults

- Current incarceration relative to US average from 1925-1970: 5x

- Current incarceration relative to Western Europe: 6-8x

- The incarceration rate for black males is about 4,700 per 100,000, or several times the rate at which South Africa was locking up black men just before apartheid ended.

- Reduction needed to return incarceration rate to 1970 level: 80%. This means that even ending most or all prison time for non-violent drug offenses will not provide sufficient reductions in prison populations to get us back to where we were.

- U.S. share of world population of incarcerated people: 25%

- U.S. share of world population of incarcerated women: 32.2%

- Rates of drug use in black vs. white Americans: roughly equal, or slightly higher in white communities

- Rate of arrest for drug use in black vs. white Americans: more than 3x greater

It’s important to note that aggregating statistics nationally obscures the “profound variations” from one jurisdiction to another across the country, including from neighborhood to neighborhood within one city. Ultimately, the issue of mass incarceration is one that must be tackled state-by-state, as most incarcerated people are in state, not federal prisons.

12 http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5177
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16 Gottschalk, p. 121
17 https://www.themarshallproject.org/2015/03/04/how-to-cut-the-prison-population-by-50-percent
18 https://www.aclu.org/prison-crisis
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23 https://www.jtsa.edu/prebuilt/ParashahArchives/5762/bamidbar.shtml