



WHAT IS THE SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE?

For girls, one of the main predictors of entry into the juvenile justice system is sexual abuse.ⁱ The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline is a term used to describe the pathways of gendered violence that lead girls into the juvenile justice system.

GIRLS IN THE SYSTEM ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Rates of sexual abuse are more than 4 times higher for girls in the system than for boys.ⁱⁱ
- Girls in the juvenile justice system are nearly 2 times as likely as boys to report having experienced 5 or more forms of abuse and trauma.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In a 2014 Florida study, 31% of girls in the juvenile justice system reported past sexual abuse.^{iv}
- In a 2009 South Carolina study, 81% of girls in the juvenile justice system reported past sexual abuse.^v
- In a 2006 Oregon study, 76% of girls in the juvenile justice system reported past sexual abuse.^{vi}

HOW DOES SEXUAL ABUSE PUSH GIRLS INTO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM?

Arrest for Status Offenses

- Status offenses are acts which are only unlawful when committed by youth, such as running away and truancy.^{vii}
- Girls often commit these offenses in response to abuse, for example running away to escape an abusive situation at home.^{viii}
- In 2011, girls accounted for 16% of the juvenile detention population yet nearly 40% of youth in detention for status offenses.^{ix}

Dual-System/Crossover Youth

- Dual-system or crossover youth refers to youth who have had involvement in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.^x
- Girls are 20% to 25% of the juvenile justice population, but 33% to 50% of all children involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.^{xi}

Arrest of Child Sex Trafficking Victims

- Girls are routinely arrested for prostitution, even though they are legally incapable of consenting to sex and even though federal law defines them as victims of human trafficking.^{xii}
- Trafficked girls also become involved in the juvenile justice system for offenses other than prostitution that are committed as a direct result of their exploitation.

GIRLS OF COLOR ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY THE SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE

- African-American girls are 14% of the youth population, but are 33% of girls arrested.^{xiii}
- Native American girls are 1% of the youth population, but are 3.5% of girls arrested.^{xiv}
- Latina girls are confined at a rate of 47 per 100,000 compared to non-Hispanic, white girls who are confined at a rate 37 per 100,000.^{xv}



ⁱ Rebecca Epstein, Lindsay Rosenthal, Malika Saada Saar, & Yasmin Vafa, Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, Ms. Foundation for Women & Rights4Girls, [*The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story*](#) (2015).

ⁱⁱ *Id.* at 8.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Id.* at 8-9.

^{iv} *Id.* at 10.

^v *Id.* at 7.

^{vi} *Id.*

^{vii} *Id.* at 22.

^{viii} *Id.*

^{ix} *Id.*

^x *Id.* at 24.

^{xi} *Id.*

^{xii} *Id.* at 19.

^{xiii} *Id.* at 7.

^{xiv} *Id.*

^{xv} *Id.*