



## **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.<sup>i</sup> 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.<sup>ii</sup>
- 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.<sup>iii</sup>
- In a 2014 Florida study, 31% of girls in the juvenile justice system reported past sexual abuse.<sup>iv</sup>
- In a 2009 South Carolina study, 81% of girls in the juvenile justice system reported past sexual abuse.<sup>v</sup>
- In a 2006 Oregon study, 76% of girls in the juvenile justice system reported past sexual abuse.<sup>vi</sup>

## **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.<sup>vii</sup>
- Girls often commit these offenses in response to abuse, for example running away to escape an abusive situation at home.<sup>viii</sup>
- In 2011, girls accounted for 16% of the juvenile detention population yet nearly 40% of youth in detention for status offenses.<sup>ix</sup>

### **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.<sup>x</sup>
- 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.<sup>xi</sup>

### **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.<sup>xii</sup>
- 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**

- Black girls are 14% of the youth population, but are 33% of girls arrested.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Native American girls are 1% of the youth population, but are 3.5% of girls arrested.<sup>xiv</sup>
- 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.<sup>xv</sup>



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<sup>i</sup> 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).

<sup>ii</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>iii</sup> *Id.* at 8-9.

<sup>iv</sup> *Id.* at 10.

<sup>v</sup> *Id.* at 7.

<sup>vi</sup> *Id.*

<sup>vii</sup> *Id.* at 22.

<sup>viii</sup> *Id.*

<sup>ix</sup> *Id.*

<sup>x</sup> *Id.* at 24.

<sup>xi</sup> *Id.*

<sup>xii</sup> *Id.* at 19.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Id.* at 7.

<sup>xiv</sup> *Id.*

<sup>xv</sup> *Id.*