

Study Reveals Washington Has Highest Incarceration Rate Of Blacks

Washington State has one of the most disproportionate rates of incarceration of racial minorities in the nation, according to a new report released by the Washington Council on Crime and Delinquency. In fact, two different studies comparing incarceration rates of Blacks in all fifty states found Washington to have the highest rate in the nation. This is one finding included in the recent summary of research prepared by the Council on Crime and Delinquency, entitled "The Disproportionate Representation of Racial Minorities in the Criminal Justice System of Washington State."

Hubert Locke, dean of the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington and a member of the

Board of Directors of the Washington Council on Crime and Delinquency, presented the report's findings at a news conference on Wednesday, August 11. He explained that the report is intended to serve three functions: "First, to increase public awareness of the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic minorities in the state's criminal justice system; secondly, to promote a better understanding of this problem based on an objective summary of competent research; and finally, to offer various constructive steps which need to be taken to address the problem."

The Council on Crime and Delinquency believes that in addition to the disparities in incarceration, all stages of the criminal justice system,

including law enforcement, prosecution, defense, and sentencing, need examination in order to gain a more complete understanding of the problem. They also argue that all racial groups be considered and not focus on just one. The Council cautions those who read the report to recognize the distinction between the clear evidence of disproportionality and allegations of discrimination as the singular cause of the disparities. Larry Fehr, executive director of the Council on Crime and Delinquency, stated that "this report will serve as a catalyst to increase public awareness of this issue as well as a confirmation for the need of a thorough and objective assessment of the reasons for the disparities in this state which are not satisfactorily addressed in

he research currently available." Although the council's report summarizes the factors which have been argued to explain the disproportionality--including differences in offender and offense characteristics, socioeconomic conditions, demographic variables, and discrimination--the council found that "without a more comprehensive research project, the relative strength of these variables cannot be stated with confidence." What is known is that although racial and ethnic minorities account for approximately 11% of the Washington's population, they comprise 30% of the population in adult correctional facilities. Of the total inmate population in state facilities at the end of

1981, 20.6% were Black, 4.1% were Hispanic, and 3.9% were Native Americans. This compares to their proportion of this state's population of Black, 2.55%; Hispanic, 2.9%; and Native American, 1.47%.

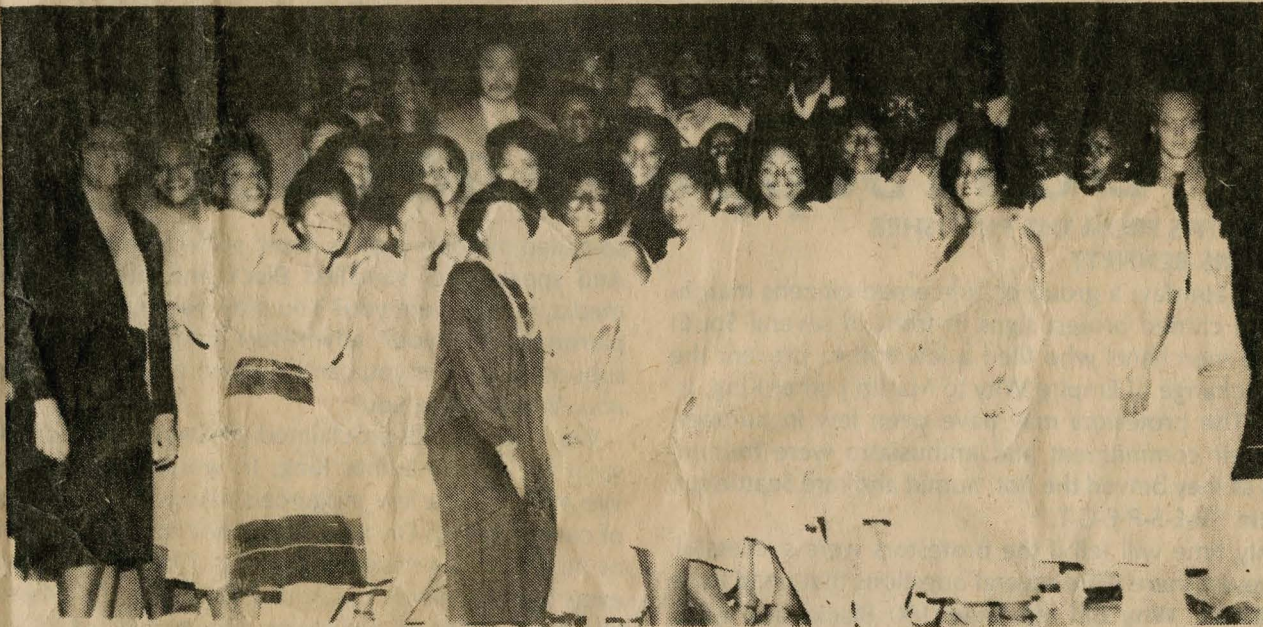
The report concludes with a 16 point "action

plan" designed to address the problem through various public education, planning/coordination, and advocacy activities. Among the actions outlined are organizing a major statewide conference on this topic, assisting and monitoring the Legislature's response to Senate Resolution

1982-197 which requires the Senate Social and Health Services Committee to present "a study to determine the underlying basis for the fact that as many as one of every 50 Blacks in Washington State at any one time is in prison," and coordinating with all criminal justice training agencies and pro-

fessional associations to increase sensitivity to this problem. The Washington Council on Crime and Delinquency is a private, non-profit statewide citizens' action group devoted to improved effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of the criminal justice system in Washington State.

Ten Year Reunion For Garfield



The Class of 1972 from Garfield High School poses for 1982 photo at the ten year reunion held recently at the Butcher Restaurant. —Staff Photo by Gillie Haynes.

Women In Unity Urges Citizens To Get Out And Vote

A survey made by the Seattle Urban League after the 1980 (Reagan) election contains some findings which should alarm all Blacks. Nationally it is estimated that 60% of the White voter age population is registered; 50% of the Black voter age is registered; and 38% of the Hispanic voter age

is registered. Among the Black voting age population in the 37th District, for every 100 people of voting age, only 50 are actually registered; and for every 50 people who are registered to vote, only 18 actually vote. For those who are unsatisfied with the priorities of the local or national

budget, unemployment, medicare, nuclear weapons, high interest rates or the high percentage of Blacks in prison, get out and vote. Don't let someone decide your destiny. Politicians listen to voters. Too many sacrifices were made by parents and grandparents to get and keep the vote. Vote for

them at every election. Women In Unity is sponsoring a Candidate's Reception on August 27 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Edgewater Inn, with food, music by Barney Hilliard, and a no-host bar. Donation is \$10. Come out and meet the candidates. When you go to the polls--be an informed voter.

Garfield High School Registration

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main office (587-3506) for an early admissions appointment. Appointments will begin Wednesday, September 1, 1982.

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