

PLACE OF MASSACHUSETTS IN NATIONAL
CRIME RATE STATISTICS FOR 1968

Compiled from the Uniform Crime Reports
of the Federal Bureau of Investigation

by the

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The Federal Bureau of Investigation issued its Uniform Crime Reports covering the calendar year 1968 in mid-August, 1969. A section of that report, as customary, lists the rates per 100,000 inhabitants in every state and in nine regions of the United States for seven selected crimes. These crimes are:

1. Murder, including non-negligent manslaughter
2. Forcible rape
3. Robbery
4. Aggravated assault
5. Burglary
6. Larceny of over \$50
7. Auto theft, including both joyriding and stealing for resale

The figures for the quantities of crimes are based on the numbers of offenses reported to local law enforcement agencies and then voluntarily forwarded by most, but not all, of these agencies to the F.B.I.

It is additionally the practice of the F.B.I. to compute a "Crime Index" for each area of the country. This index is established by adding together the rates of all of the seven offenses. Unfortunately this index is not a valid indication of the extent of serious crime in various areas because it is heavily overweighted by the comparatively large numbers of less serious property crimes.

Of the seven selected offenses the three less serious crimes against property (burglary, larceny and auto theft) in 1968 occurred over six times as frequently as the four violent crimes against the person (murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault). To compare the frequency of just one violent offense with one property crime note that for each reported murder there are over one hundred and thirty reported burglaries. Such disparity in the frequency of different kinds of offenses results in an inappropriate total which purports to show the amount of serious crime in an area. To illustrate: An increase in a murder rate from two to four per 100,000 is actually a 100% increase in this murder rate. Yet this rate increase of two added to a total "Crime Index" (in many states the total rate is 2,000 or more) would result in an

overall crime rate increase of merely about one tenth of one percent. Because of the misleading results of such unweighted aggregation of disparate crime rates, this paper does not use the F.B.I. "Crime Index".

However, for the first time, the Uniform Crime Reports for 1968 list a subtotal for the four violent crimes against the person and a second subtotal for the three property crimes. Overweighting still exists because each crime within each sub group does not occur with the same frequency. For example, robberies and aggravated assaults each occur about twenty times as frequently as murder. Nevertheless, it makes more sense to group together crimes against the person to show a rate of violent crime and to combine property crimes in a second sub group than it does to lump these two dissimilar groups together. Consequently this year our table lists the rates for the combined four crimes against persons and the combined three crimes against property as well as the individual rates for each of the seven selected crimes.

To compare these frequencies we rank ordered the rates of every state and region for each of the crimes and for each of the two groups of crimes. The area with the lowest rate per 100,000 inhabitants was ranked number one, the next lowest rate number two and so on. Obviously this results in the state with the highest rate for any crime being ranked fiftieth at the bottom of the list for that crime. The table appended to the end of this paper shows the resulting rank order of each state as well as the rank order of each of nine regions¹ of the United States.

Comparing New England with the eight other regions of the country we see that New England still has the lowest rates for murder, forcible rape and aggravated assault but now has the next to lowest rate for robbery. With three firsts and one second for the four violent crimes against persons the New England area has by far the lowest total rate for violent crime.

1. New England	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
Middle Atlantic	New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
East North Central	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
West North Central	Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North and South Dakota
South Atlantic	Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North & South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
East South Central	Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
West South Central	Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
Mountain	Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
Pacific	Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

However, with regard to property crimes, a regional comparison is not as favorable. New England ranks fifth from lowest in burglary, third in larceny and last, or ninth, in auto theft. Although the more rural states of Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire have very low property crime rates, as well as extremely low rates for crimes against persons, the more urban states of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts all have high rates for all property crimes. Thus these states are responsible for the poorer showing of New England when comparing regional rates for property crimes.

We are informed by sociologists that urbanization increases property crime chiefly because of greater abundance and display of consumer goods and the fact that victims are more impersonalized. Apparently many people are able to rationalize that taking items from rich strangers or from large corporations is not really unethical. The following brief table comparing the rank orders of the nine regions of the United States by property crime rates as well as by percent of urban population indicates a limited correlation between these two factors.

REGIONAL COMPARISON OF PROPERTY CRIME RATES AND URBANIZATION

RANK ORDER	PROPERTY CRIME RATE	PERCENT URBAN POPULATION*
1	East South Central (1170.0)	East South Central (48.4)
2	West North Central (1493.5)	South Atlantic (57.2)
3	West South Central (1605.2)	West North Central (58.8)
4	East North Central (1689.0)	Mountain (67.1)
5	South Atlantic (1725.0)	West South Central (67.7)
6	New England (1909.5)	East North Central (73.0)
7	Mountain (1990.7)	New England (76.4)
8	Mid-Atlantic (2256.2)	Pacific (81.1)
9	Pacific (3051.9)	Mid-Atlantic (81.4)

*Percents urban population from 1960 Census via World Almanac

The Spearman Rank Order Correlation based on the above table shows a positive correlation of .25 but this is not markedly significant. There are other factors that affect property crime rates besides degree of urbanization. One sociological view is that areas of recent urbanization often do not have as much stability -- and consequently more conflict and crime -- than older urban areas.

When we turn to examine the ranking of Massachusetts in relation to the crime rates of other states we find that for every crime but one Massachusetts has dropped below its ranking for last year. The one exception is that Massachusetts ranks fiftieth in auto theft and because it has ranked last in auto theft for each of the past five years it cannot sink any lower in rank for this offense.

In regard to murder Massachusetts ranked 13th in 1967 but dropped to 16th in 1968, in rape it dropped from 14th to 17th, in robbery it dropped from 29th to 30th, in aggravated assault it dropped from 17th to 19th, in burglary it dropped from 28th to 34th, and in larceny it dropped from 20th to 29th. For each of the four violent crimes, except robbery, and for the combination rate of all four violent crimes Massachusetts ranks better than half of the states. For each of the crimes against property and thus obviously for the aggregated rate of all three property crimes, as well as for the one violent crime of robbery, Massachusetts has a lower rank than more than half of the states.

There is a difference when we compare the Massachusetts rate with the national average rate for each crime. In this comparison we find that the Massachusetts rate is better (lower) than the United States average in each crime except auto theft.

But there is small comfort in having the Massachusetts crime rates better than the national average for all but one of seven offenses. It should! It is one of the older, more stable states in the country and has a long tradition of respect for law. The present data indicates that Massachusetts is definitely beginning to slip down from its former more favorable position. Not only has it failed to achieve a better rank in regard to a single offense, but when the 1968 rates are compared with its own rates for the previous year Massachusetts has poorer (higher) rates for all seven crimes. For example, the murder rate in 1967 was 2.8 per 100,000, but in 1968 it was 3.5 and the auto theft rate in 1967 was 667.4 but in 1968 it was 806.6! Such data is rather convincing evidence of an increasingly unfavorable crime picture in Massachusetts. To prevent further descent towards a more unsafe, crime ridden society it is essential that the appropriate authorities in Massachusetts place a much higher priority on more effective programs to reduce crime in the Commonwealth!

Nelson N. Cochrane
Supervisor of Research
September, 1969

STATES and REGIONS RANK ORDERED by CRIME RATES

1968 Rates per 100,000 inhabitants

SELECTED CRIMES vs PERSONS and vs PROPERTY

Rank Order	CRIMES vs PERSONS		Murder and non-neglig. mansl		Forcible Rape		Robbery		Aggravated Assault		CRIMES vs PROPERTY		Burglary		Larceny (#50 and over)		Auto Theft	
	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate	Area	Rate
	U.S.	294.6	U.S.	6.8	U.S.	15.5	U.S.	131.0	U.S.	141.3	U.S.	1940.2	U.S.	915.1	U.S.	636.9		
REGIONS	1 N.Eng	131.6	N.Eng	2.9	N.Eng	7.9	E.S.Cent	49.9	N.Eng	68.2	E.S.Cent	1170.0	E.S.Cent	570.9	E.S.Cent	377.0	E.S.Cent	222.2
	2 E.So.Cent	196.5	W.N.Cent	4.3	E.S.Cent	10.4	N.Eng	52.6	W.N.Cent	80.6	W.N.Cent	1493.5	W.N.Cent	705.9	W.N.Cent	486.9	W.S.Cent	265.3
	3 Mntn	202.9	Mntn	4.9	Mid Atl	12.0	Mntn	65.2	Mntn	115.4	W.S.Cent	1605.2	E.N.Cent	752.2	N.Eng	512.6	W.N.Cent	300.7
	4 W.N.Cent	177.7	Mid Atl	5.4	W.N.Cent	13.5	W.S.Cent	74.5	E.N.Cent	120.7	E.N.Cent	1689.0	W.S.Cent	807.7	W.S.Cent	532.2	So. Atl	305.1
	5 W.S.Cent	259.0	Pacific	5.4	W.S.Cent	15.3	W.N.Cent	79.3	E.S.Cent	126.4	S. Atl	1725.0	N.Eng	831.0	So. Atl	541.7	Mntn	330.6
	6 E.N.Cent	291.5	E.N.Cent	6.1	S. Atl	15.8	So. Atl	126.7	Mid Atl	133.9	N.Eng	1909.5	So. Atl	878.1	E.N.Cent	547.0	E.N.Cent	389.9
	7 Mid Atl	362.6	W.S.Cent	9.6	E.N.Cent	16.0	E.N.Cent	148.6	W.S.Cent	159.7	Mntn	1990.7	Mntn	883.7	Mid Atl	765.7	Mid Atl	476.6
	8 Pacific	365.3	E.S.Cent	9.8	Mntn	17.5	Pacific	164.6	Pacific	168.8	Mid Atl	2256.2	Mid Atl	1023.0	Mntn	776.3	Pacific	547.3
	9 So. Atl	369.3	So. Atl	11.0	Pacific	26.5	Mid Atl	211.3	So. Atl	215.9	Pacific	3051.9	Pacific	1491.2	Pacific	1013.5	N.Eng	565.9
STATES	1 No. Dak	27.7	N. Dak	1.1	N.Hamp	2.7	N. Dak	5.8	N. Dak	16.2	Miss	566.5	N. Dak	239.0	Vermt	168.0	Miss	72.0
	2 Vermont	37.2	N. Hamp	1.4	R.I.	3.7	Vermt	6.2	Vermt	21.1	N. Dak	606.4	Miss	313.7	Miss	180.7	N. Dak	80.6
	3 N.Hamp	39.7	Iowa	1.7	W. Va	4.4	Maine	8.8	N.Hamp	25.4	W. Va	678.0	W. Va	349.8	W. Va	236.3	Vermt	85.8
	4 Maine	60.3	Wisc	2.2	N. Dak	4.6	N.Hamp	10.3	Iowa	35.0	Vermt	749.8	N.H.	371.1	Maine	250.7	W. Va	92.0
	5 Iowa	68.5	Minn	2.2	Wisc	6.2	Idaho	11.8	Wisc	39.2	N.H.	767.7	S. Dak	430.1	N.H.	255.3	Ark	94.2
	6 Idaho	73.5	Idaho	2.3	Maine	6.7	Wyo	12.4	Maine	41.8	Maine	831.2	Maine	452.4	N. Dak	286.7	S. Dak	103.5
	7 Wisc	80.7	Nebr	2.3	Iowa	6.8	Miss	13.2	Minn	45.9	S. Dak	893.5	Idaho	470.6	Penn	299.2	Idaho	118.2
	8 Hawaii	85.1	R.I.	2.4	Hawaii	7.2	Mont	18.2	Idaho	51.1	N. Car	1001.4	Iowa	474.1	S. Dak	359.8	Maine	128.1
	9 So. Dak	85.7	Conn	2.5	Mont	7.2	S. Dak	19.3	Hawaii	52.4	Ark	1021.6	Vermt	496.0	N. Car	364.3	Wyo	136.8
	10 Mont	88.0	Vermt	2.6	Nebr	7.2	Hawaii	22.6	S. Dak	52.4	Iowa	1069.9	N. Car	499.4	S. Car	371.2	N. Car	137.6
11 Wyo	88.3	Hawaii	2.8	Vermt	7.3	Iowa	25.0	Mont	59.3	Idaho	1074.3	Wisc	503.8	Tenn	390.3	N.H.	141.3	
12 W. Va	108.5	Utah	2.9	Miss	7.6	W. Va	25.5	Wyo	60.6	Penn	1126.3	Nebr	507.4	Nebr	391.6	Iowa	164.6	
13 Utah	116.2	Maine	3.0	Conn	8.0	Wisc	33.1	Utah	68.5	Wisc	1164.8	Ark	514.0	Ark	413.4	Alab	170.7	
14 Conn	129.3	Ore	3.2	Idaho	8.4	Utah	33.7	W. Va	73.2	S. Car	1177.0	Ky	522.5	Alab	420.4	S. Car	176.2	
15 R.I.	137.3	Mont	3.3	Wyo	8.9	N. Car	35.3	Penn	73.5	Nebr	1201.5	Wyo	545.1	Iowa	431.2	Mont	198.4	
16 Minn	140.2	MASS	3.5	MASS	9.5	Ark	39.6	Conn	73.7	Alab	1208.6	Penn	551.2	Ga	447.5	Wisc	204.1	
17 Miss	145.0	Wash	3.6	Penn	9.7	Alab	41.0	Del	75.7	Wyo	1257.8	Mont	567.8	Va	449.3	Kans	205.5	
18 Nebr	146.3	Kans	3.7	S. Dak	10.2	S. Car	42.8	MASS	76.7	Ky	1309.8	Kans	615.6	Ky	455.1	Okla	212.2	
19 Kans	150.4	S. Dak	3.8	Ky	10.2	Conn	45.0	Ind	78.0	Mont	1315.3	Alab	617.5	Wisc	456.9	Ga	236.4	
20 MASS	164.0	Penn	4.0	Minn	10.9	Kans	47.5	Ohio	80.7	Kans	1329.9	S. Car	629.6	Ohio	479.4	Va	248.5	
21 Ky	164.7	Ind	4.7	N. Car	11.0	Ga	47.5	R.I.	81.9	Ga	1344.7	Ohio	659.4	Idaho	485.5	Utah	255.2	
22 Penn	170.4	N. Jer	5.1	Utah	11.1	Okla	48.5	Ky	85.4	Tenn	1377.5	Ga	660.8	Ill	492.0	Tenn	267.4	
23 Okla	173.2	Ohio	5.3	Alab	11.1	R.I.	49.3	Kans	85.8	Va	1390.5	La	678.0	Ill	508.7	Ore	270.6	
24 Alask	175.5	Colo	5.4	N. Jer	11.3	N. Mex	49.5	Nebr	87.3	Okla	1435.5	Okla	683.6	La	510.5	Penn	275.8	
25 Ind	194.4	W. Va	5.5	Tenn	11.6	Nebr	49.6	Alask	90.6	La	1471.1	Okla	689.8	Mo	513.3	La	282.6	
26 Ore	197.0	Nev	5.5	Ohio	12.4	Alask	52.7	Wash	93.7	Ohio	1519.9	Ind	691.0	Del	576.1	Wash	297.1	
27 Del	197.8	Calif	6.0	Del	12.7	Ky	60.1	N. Jer	96.1	Ind	1610.2	Va	692.7	Ind	526.9	Nebr	302.4	
28 Ohio	200.4	N. Mex	6.2	Kans	13.2	Va	63.5	Ore	100.0	Ill	1616.6	Tenn	719.7	Okla	533.5	Tex	302.9	
29 Wash	212.8	Wyo	6.3	Ind	13.2	Tenn	71.2	Okla	103.1	Utah	1700.0	Utah	741.3	MASS	545.7	Fla	319.9	
30 Ga	215.8	Ariz	6.3	Ga	13.5	MASS	74.3	Nev	112.6	Minn	1728.9	Alask	747.3	Mont	549.1	N. Mex	321.9	
31 So. Car	216.6	Okla	6.4	N. Y.	13.7	Ore	76.5	Miss	114.3	Del	1745.7	Minn	801.8	Tex	561.1	Ky	332.2	
32 Ark	216.7	N. Y.	6.5	Va	14.0	Minn	81.2	Tenn	129.0	Tex	1796.8	Del	820.4	Wyo	575.9	Minn	351.1	
33 Tenn	220.5	Mich	7.3	S. Car	14.3	Tex	81.4	Colo	135.0	Mo	1936.4	MASS	868.3	Miss	576.1	Conn	376.1	
34 Alab	232.4	Del	7.7	Tex	14.6	Penn	83.2	Ga	141.0	Conn	1947.5	Colo	917.0	Conn	606.9	Ohio	380.2	
35 Va	235.5	Ark	8.1	Okla	15.2	Ariz	86.7	Mo	143.2	Alask	2008.3	N. Mex	925.7	R.I.	646.9	Ind	392.3	
36 N. Jer	236.1	Ill	8.1	La	16.4	La	90.3	S. Car	146.0	Ore	2034.1	Tex	932.7	N. Jer	671.1	Del	409.2	
37 N. Mex	240.9	Va	8.3	Ill	16.4	Colo	96.5	Va	149.7	N. Mex	2101.4	Ore	945.1	Utah	703.5	Colo	420.6	
38 Colo	260.0	Tenn	8.7	Wash	17.1	Wash	98.4	Ark	151.7	Colo	2138.3	Conn	964.4	Mich	753.0	Ariz	421.2	
39 Ariz	263.6	Mo	8.8	Ore	17.2	Ind	98.5	Ariz	151.9	Wash	2160.3	Mo	976.6	Md	764.5	Mich	425.5	
40 Tex	267.6	Ky	8.9	Ark	17.3	Del	101.7	Tex	160.9	N. Jer	2201.5	N. Jer	1011.9	Alask	778.7	Ill	441.0	
41 Nev	278.4	Md	9.3	Nev	17.4	Ohio	102.0	N. Mex	164.7	MASS	2220.6	Wash	1019.5	Hawaii	796.1	Mo	446.4	
42 La	314.6	La	9.5	Fla	18.1	N. Jer	123.6	Alab	168.5	Mich	2284.6	R.I.	1089.6	W. Va	800.7	Nev	449.7	
43 Mo	328.9	N. Car	9.7	Ariz	18.7	Nev	142.8	Mich	168.9	Fla	2448.4	Mich	1106.0	Colo	801.5	Alask	482.3	
44 No. Car	344.3	Miss	9.9	N. Mex	20.5	Mo	153.6	Ill	172.0	R.I.	2502.0	Ariz	1167.4	Ore	818.5	Hawaii	505.8	
45 Ill	408.8	Alask	10.5	Alask	21.7	Fla	159.9	N. Y.	187.6	Ariz	2524.9	Nev	1282.1	Wash	843.7	N. Jer	518.5	
46 Mich	413.3	Tex	10.6	Mo	23.3	Calif	192.5	Calif	194.6	Hawaii	2665.7	Md	1301.2	N. Mex	853.8	N. Y.	571.7	
47 Calif	422.9	Alab	11.8	Md	26.0	Mich	210.7	La	198.4	Md	2670.6	Fla	1327.0	Ariz	936.3	Md	605.0	
48 Fla	453.1	Fla	11.9	Colo	26.1	Ill	211.5	Fla	263.3	Nev	2742.4	N. Y.	1332.4	Nev	1010.6	Calif	621.4	
49 N. Y.	536.3	S. Car	13.6	Mich	26.5	Md	275.6	N. Car	288.4	N. Y.	3088.4	Hawaii	1363.8	Calif	1075.0	R.I.	765.5	
50 Md	623.0	Ga	13.9	Calif	29.9	N. Y.	328.4	Md	312.9	Calif	3340.9	Calif	1644.5	N. Y.	1104.2	MASS	806.6	