INCARCERATION AMONG NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS: FINDINGS FROM MARYLAND RESEARCH

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INCARCERATION & PARENTING:

- At the end of last year, a record 7 million people in prison/jail, on probation or on parole.

- Nationally 2.2 million were in prison or jail.

- Drug offenses account for 49% of total prison population growth.

- The vast majority of prisoners are male. At least three-fifths of them are parents.
MARYLAND’S STUDY

- Goal is to examine current & historical incarceration among Maryland child support obligors.

- Initial report focuses on:
  - Prevalence
  - Case characteristics
  - Arrears
  - Payment patterns

- Also in presentation:
  - Types of offenses
  - Employment histories
METHOD

- Random sample of 2,375 NCPs with an active child support case in Maryland in September 2004.

- 95% confidence level and a ±2% error rate.

- Child support data from Child Support Enforcement System (CSES)

- Employment data from Maryland Unemployment Insurance wage records (MABS)
METHOD

- Data on incarceration in Maryland prisons & the Baltimore City Detention Center - extract file developed by the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services specifically for this study.*

- Covers a ten year period (10/94-9/04)

- Underestimates because data does not include information on county jails in Maryland’s 23 counties.

- Because we don’t have data from the county jails, Baltimore City looks “worse” and the 23 counties look “better”.

*Research Disclaimer: Data was supplied for this study by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. Although the Department is unable to certify the accuracy and completeness of the data with regard to each subject of this Study, the researchers have nonetheless made every attempt to accurately and appropriately interpret the data supplied.
Currently & previously incarcerated individuals account for 13% of Maryland’s child support obligors & 16% of its cases.
Jurisdictional Differences

Incarceration is more common among Baltimore City cases.

Note: Because we don’t have data from the county jails, the All DPSCS comparison overstates the differences between Baltimore City & the 23 counties. The Division of Corrections comparison is a more accurate estimate of those geographic differences.
CASE TYPE DIFFERENCES

Incarceration is twice as common among current & former TANF cases.

- **Never TANF**: 2.4% (Currently incarcerated), 7.9% (Previously incarcerated)
- **Former TANF**: 3.7% (Currently incarcerated), 18.3% (Previously incarcerated)
- **Current TANF**: 7.4% (Currently incarcerated), 21.5% (Previously incarcerated)
Cases with a currently incarcerated obligor are more likely to require establishment.

- Never Incarcerated: 14.3% Arrears Only, 58.7% Current Order, 27.1% Establishment
- Previously Incarcerated: 18.3% Arrears Only, 57.7% Current Order, 24.0% Establishment
- Currently Incarcerated: 11.8% Arrears Only, 41.2% Current Order, 47.1% Establishment
ORDER AMOUNT DIFFERENCES

Currently & previously incarcerated obligors have lower orders for current support than never incarcerated obligors.

![Bar chart showing monthly support ordered amount for different statuses.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Monthly Support Ordered Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Incarcerated</td>
<td>$378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously Incarcerated</td>
<td>$278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Incarcerated</td>
<td>$257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHILD SUPPORT DEBT

Previously & currently incarcerated obligors are more likely to owe arrears and have higher average child support debts.

- Never Incarcerated: 82.1% with Arrears, Mean: $9,392.05
- Previously Incarcerated: 96.8% with Arrears, Mean: $17,254.71
- Currently Incarcerated: 100.0% with Arrears, Mean: $22,047.68

*Excludes cases needing establishment.
Previously & currently incarcerated obligors are two times more likely to owe arrears to the state than those who’ve never been incarcerated.
INCARCERATION & TOTAL ARREARS

At least one-quarter of arrears owed on Maryland cases are owed by previously & currently incarcerated obligors. Two-fifths of Baltimore City arrears are owed by obligors who are or have been incarcerated.

Note: Because we do not have data from the county jails, the differences between Baltimore City and the state as a whole are overestimates.
ARREARS ACCUMULATION

On average, an estimated two-fifths of previously & currently incarcerated obligors’ arrears accumulated while they were in prison.

Estimated Average Percent of Arrears Accumulated
Types of Offenses

Four out of five NCPs with an incarceration history have been convicted of a drug offense, theft, and/or assault.

Note: Each currently or formerly incarcerated individual can be convicted of multiple offenses. However, they are counted only once for each type. Percentages across categories will sum to more than 100%.
EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- Majority of obligors have worked in a UI-covered job in the previous ten years.

- Difference in the percent of time employed.

![Employment History Chart]

Never incarcerated: 54%
Previously incarcerated: 38%
Currently incarcerated: 25%
EARNINGS HISTORY

NCPs with an incarceration history earned about half as much per quarter, on average, as those who have not been incarcerated. 

Average Quarterly Earnings in the Previous Ten Years***

- Currently incarcerated: $2,124
- Previously incarcerated: $2,598
- Never incarcerated: $5,094
In the previous 10 years, NCPs with an incarceration history earned, in total, only 25% to 37% of what never incarcerated NCPs earned.
EMPLOYMENT IN THE PRIOR YEAR

In the previous year, about half of all obligors. Those with an incarceration history earned significantly less.

- Never Incarcerated: 47.9% employed, average total earnings $22,583
- Previously Incarcerated: 49.6% employed, average total earnings $12,664
CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS AFTER RELEASE

Previously incarcerated obligors are less likely to pay support & pay less than never incarcerated obligors. However, most still pay something.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Paid 10/03-9/04</th>
<th>Previously Incarcerated</th>
<th>Never Incarcerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% paying any support***</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount paid (mean)***</td>
<td>$2,210.78</td>
<td>$3,918.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of current support paid (mean)***</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05 **p< .01 ***p < .001
CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

- Significant overlap among incarceration, child support, & welfare programs points to wisdom of policy and program attention.

- Incarceration may be an issue in all areas: order establishment; order modification; payments after release; arrears.

- Collaboration and education are very important, as well as reentry and employment programs.
THANK YOU!

To obtain a copy of the full report visit our website:

http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu

For more information on this study, please send an e-mail:

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