

# LWOP FACT SHEET

**More than 55,000** people are sentenced to **life without parole (LWOP)** in the United States.

Barring changes in law, they will stay in prison until they die.

55,000+



United States

1,980

European Union

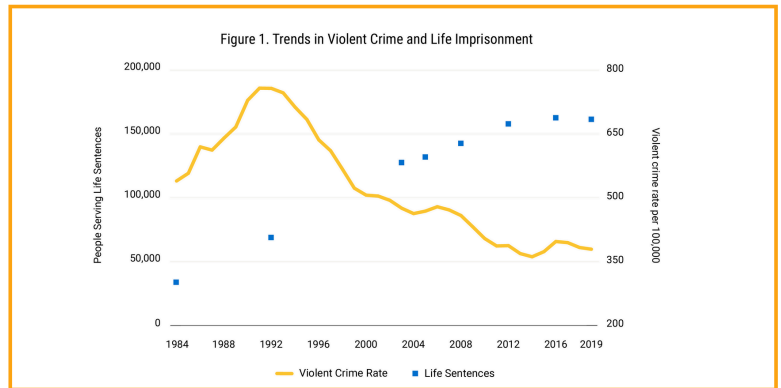
9,036

Rest of World

Despite accounting for only **4.25%** of the world's population, the **United States** holds **83%** of the world's LWOP population.

There are almost 25 times as many people sentenced to LWOP in the US alone as there are in all 44 countries in Europe combined.

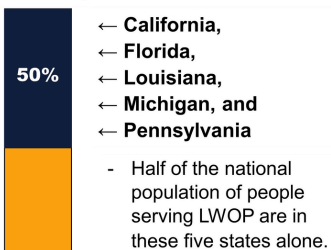
Over the last 40 years, violent **crime has dramatically decreased** in the US, but despite this, in that same period the number of **people sentenced to life in prison increased**.



Between 1992 and 2021, the LWOP population in the US rose from 12,453 to 55,945, a whopping 350% increase.

Every US state except Alaska allows LWOP sentences.

It is most prevalent in:



- ← California,
- ← Florida,
- ← Louisiana,
- ← Michigan, and
- ← Pennsylvania

- Half of the national population of people serving LWOP are in these five states alone.

## U.S.

The **United States** is the only country in the world that **sentences children to life without parole.**

LWOP sentences are **disproportionately** imposed on Blacks, Latinx individuals, and other people of color.

**55%** of those serving LWOP are **Black**.

Imprisonment is more common among individuals with less education, wealth, and income. However, racial differences in imprisonment persist regardless of socioeconomic status. In 2021, Blacks were incarcerated at a rate **five times higher** than whites, while Native Americans and Latinx individuals were imprisoned at rates 4.2 and 2.4 times higher than whites, respectively.

People who were sentenced to LWOP and later unexpectedly released are making our communities better. Researchers examined the lives of 110 people formerly sentenced to LWOP and looked at what they've been doing since release. Among other things, they found:



**94% volunteer regularly**



**84% financially assist others**



**70% have stepped into a healthy adult role in the life of a young person**

**There are effective alternatives to LWOP.**

-Until the 1970s, people with LWOP could earn their way out of prison through rehabilitation.

-An opportunity for parole is not a guarantee of release. A state can impose a sentence that ensures appropriate minimum prison time for punishment, after which a review can assess whether a person is ready for release.