Violence Against Women: The Increase of Rape in America 1990

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Violence Against Women: The Increase of Rape in America 1990

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INTRODUCTION

by Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Over the past year, the Senate Judiciary Committee has been holding hearings on the topic of violence against women in this country. We have discussed the problem at length with victims and experts, and I have tried to use these hearings to show the American people just how pervasive, devastating and immediate the problem has become.

Today, we are releasing the findings of a Majority Staff Report that reveals the extent of the rape epidemic that has spread across the country. Here are our conclusions:

* In 1990, more women were raped than in any year in United States history.

* In 1990, the number of rapes in this country reported to authorities exceeded 100,000 for the first time ever.

* There was over a 6% increase in the number of rapes last year. The increase -- 5,929 attacks -- was the largest in over a decade.

* 1990 continued a three-year trend of increases in the number of rapes. Further, the 1990 increase was nearly 3 times greater than the 1989 increase.

* Last year, over 1/2 of the states (29) set all-time records for the number and rate of rapes.

What do all of these findings tell us? This simple yet horrible fact: American women are in greater peril now from attack than they have ever been in the history of our nation.

Unfortunately, it has taken these findings to again prove that our society and our laws must be changed to address the problem that is so very real to far too many American women.

I cannot imagine what other form of proof our nation needs before it moves vigorously to right such an obvious, destructive wrong.

To address the problem, I reintroduced S.15 -- the "Violence Against Women Act" -- in this Congress. I hope this Act will serve as the cornerstone of the movement to make the United States a safer place for women. Some of its provisions include:

* Doubling penalties for rape and aggravated rape, creating new penalties for repeat sex offenders, and increasing the restitution for victims of sex crimes.

* Aiding women in prosecuting their attackers by requiring states to pay for women's medical examinations to determine if that have been raped and by extending "rape shield law" protections.

* Authorizing $300 million for beefed-up law enforcement efforts to combat sex crimes, with $100 million targeted for the 40 metropolitan areas most dangerous for women.

* Defining gender-motivated crimes as "bias" or "hate" crimes that deprive victims of their civil rights, allowing them to bring civil rights suits against their assailants.

* Creating a $20 million grant program for the neediest colleges to fund campus rape education and prevention programs and services.

Although violence against women in the United States has recently reached explosive, record-breaking levels, the problem itself is an old one. While no single law or individual program will change a problem that is so longstanding, it is my hope that a bill as comprehensive as the "Violence Against Women Act" is a positive and necessary first step.

As I release this report today -- with all of its deplorable findings -- I think about the women who have suffered and who continue to suffer, hoping for America to become a safer place. Women, like all Americans, feel it is their right to be safe, to feel secure in their homes and offices and on the streets. I agree with them.

I urge everyone to consider the findings in today's report. I urge them not to take these facts in stride, but to take them to heart.

Today's findings reveal the magnitude of the problem of violence against women. They document the spread of a rape epidemic across the country. Through S.15, the Violence Against Women Act, I hope to implement the much needed programs that will help reverse current trends. Otherwise, the raging epidemic will brutally touch the lives of hundreds of thousands more mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters... and their families.

Judiciary Committee Majority Staff Report

Violence Against Women: The Increase of Rape in America 1990

Summary of Findings

The Senate Judiciary Committee's Majority Staff has undertaken an extensive study of state and local law enforcement agencies and rape crisis centers in all 50 states to discover -- as early as possible -- the true extent of the escalating epidemic of rape. Below are the major findings:

* In 1990, more women were raped than in any year in United States history.

* In 1990, American women were more likely to be raped than ever before.

* In 1990, the number of rapes in this country reported to authorities exceeded 100,000 for the first time ever.

* There was over a 6% increase in the number of rapes last year. The increase -- 5,929 attacks -- was the largest in over a decade.

* 1990 continued a three-year trend of increases in the number of rapes. Further, the 1990 increase was nearly 3 times greater than the 1989 increase.

* Last year, over 1/2 of the states (29) set all-time records for the number and rate of rapes.

Chapter I

Women in Danger: The National Rape Epidemic

More American women were raped in 1990 than in any year in our nation's history. After contacting hundreds of state and local officials, the majority staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee has compiled the first comprehensive count of rape in 1990.

And the picture is bleak; there is an epidemic of rape spreading across the country. There were over 100,000 rapes identified by authorities last year. The majority of states set all-time rape records -- and more than 4 out of every 5 states reported increases in the number of rapes they recorded.

This chapter details the findings of our study.

The Rape Problem Is Immense... And Growing

It is easy to understand why women in this country do not feel safe. At one point, their fears were confined to dark, secluded alleys. Now women must worry about crowded offices, local restaurants, and comfortable homes. For women, there is no longer any place that they can call "secure."

The findings of this report confirm that the number and rate of rapes have increased at a truly devastating rate. In 1989, there were 94,504 rapes known to police -- at the time, a record number. In 1990, however, police identified over 100,000 rapes -- shattering the previous record.

In 1989, according to the FBI, there were 10 rapes every hour. In 1990, the "crime clock" ticked faster -- up to 12 rapes every hour, close to 300 every day.

Further, the rape rate -- the percentage of women who were raped -- rose to a record level last year. This means that in 1990, American women were more likely to be raped than ever before.

These painful facts are apparent to no one more than to women, who must daily face the prospect of being attacked. And as if these facts were not terrible enough, there is every indication that the worst is yet to come.

The number of rapes known to authorities rose over 6% last year. The increase -- 5,929 attacks -- was the largest in more than a decade. Specifically, the last time the number of rapes increased so much was back in 1979.[1]

Looking more closely at the current trend, the number of rapes known to authorities has increased every year since 1987. In 1988 the increase was 1.5%. In 1989, it was 2.2.%.

And then last year, ominously, the rate of increase jumped to 6.3%.

Thus, last year's increase was nearly 3 times greater than the 1989 increase.

Although violence against women has recently increased at shocking and historic levels, the problem of rape is not a new one. The number of rapes has been rising as long as America has been collecting data on the subject.

* Compared to 1970, women were over 2 times more likely to be raped last year.

* Compared to 1960, women were nearly 4 times more likely to be raped last year.

[1] Historical rape data provided by the FBI.

Not only is the threat of rape increasing with each passing year, but -- even more disheartening -- it is increasing faster than the threat of other crimes.

In fact, the rape rate has increased much faster than the overall crime rate -- 4 times faster over the last 10 years.

Rape Is A National Problem

This report reveals that 1990 was the worst year ever for the personal safety of American women. A detailed analysis of the data collected by the committee shows that this deplorable fact held true for every region of the country. No state or locality was immune.

Of all of the committee findings, none is more illustrative of the national rape crisis than this fact: In 1990, 29 states set records for the number of reported rapes while 27 set records for the rate of reported rapes.

In other words, more than half of the states in the country set rape-related records last year.

* The 5 states suffering the greatest number of rapes are located in every area of the country. Those states were, in order: California (12,413), Texas (8,427), Michigan (6,938), Florida (6,874), and New York (5,315).

* Every region of the country had at least one state whose rape rate increased by double-digits. A sampling of these states include: Alaska (31.4%), Colorado (26.3%), Missouri (16.9%), Virginia (16.9%), Minnesota (14.0%), and Vermont (10.7%).[2]

Moreover, every region of the country had states that set all-time records for the number and rate of rapes. Below is a sampling:

* Northeast: Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire.

* Midwest: Michigan, Indiana, and Iowa.

* South: Virginia, Tennessee, and Alabama.

* West: Washington, Utah, and Colorado.

All corners of the country -- and everywhere in between -- have been plagued by these record-breaking increases: From Washington to Florida, Arizona to New

[2] In the "Tables" at the back of this report, Utah appears near the top of the list of states with record increases in the number and rate of rapes. However, in the text of this report Utah will not appear as an example of a state experiencing abnormally high increases because, in fact, we have reason to believe that the state's increase was not as dramatic as the data suggest. The state had a reporting problem in 1989 that resulted in a low rape count. That problem has been corrected and the current (1990) tally is accurate, but the discrepancy has led to the present situation. Because no other data is available for Utah except the "faulty" 1989 and "real" 1990, we have used the data provided, but we wanted to explain the reason for its exclusion for this discussion section. (Similarly, we have reason to believe that Montana's impressive decrease is due more to reporting problems than a "real" drop in the number of rapes.)

Hampshire, and Mississippi to Minnesota.

Rape Is An American Problem

While we have surrounded ourselves in gender-specific violence, women in no other nation or culture are more likely to be raped than those around us.

In 1990, the United States led the world with its number and rate of reported rapes.[3]

No other nation is even close to the United States when it comes to the number and rate of reported rapes.

* Last year, American women were eight times more likely to be raped than were European women.

* Further, in 1990 the rape rate in the United States was 20 times higher than it was in Portugal, 26 times higher than in Japan, 15 times higher than in England, 8 times higher than in France, 23 times higher than in Italy, and 46 times higher than in Greece.

[3] United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, International Crime Rates, May 1988.

Rape Is An Underestimated Problem

These first findings from 1990, just as the FBI's annual results that will be released in August, count only those rapes known to police. Thus, the trend here is evident simply from the number of reported rapes.

What about all the rapes that police never hear about? This report provides evidence that even these are on the rise. Worse, that they are increasing faster than the number of reported rapes.[4]

Before discussing the phenomenon of rape under-reporting, it is important to note that this section in no way undermines the importance of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system, even as it regards rape. The FBI provides the only objective, national counting of the number of women raped every year.

The fact that the totals are objectively reached and uniformly gathered year-in and year-out helps policy-makers define the presence -- if not always the magnitude -- of trends in criminality.

Even so, we must keep in mind that rape is the crime least often reported to authorities. Women report being raped only 7% of the time. By comparison, the reporting rate for robbery is 53%; assault, 46%; and burglary, 53%.

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[4] This is discussed in our section on rape crisis center data.

Researchers have also discovered that young women are the least likely of all to report their rape. The most comprehensive study ever of college rape victims found that less than 5% inform police that they have been so victimized. And further, more than half of college rape victims tell no one of their plight.[5]

This issue will be discussed further in Chapter III.

Rape Data's Other Side: Unofficial Reports

To complement the rape data obtained from law enforcement authorities, the Senate Judiciary Committee contacted rape crisis centers in over half of the states in the country. The information supplied by these centers paints an even bleaker picture for American women.

* Every crisis center that provided state-wide totals reported increases in the number of rapes.

* In 2 out of every 3 cases, the state-wide rape crisis center totals showed higher -- often dramatically higher -- increases than the data provided by police.

[5] Dr. Mary Koss, testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee (August 29, 1990).

* For example, Louisiana authorities reported a 0.3% increase in the number of rapes, but that state's central rape crisis center reported a 39% increase. Similarly, Michigan authorities reported a 4.7% increase while its central crisis center claimed a 36% increase.[6]

This data is extremely important because it silences the skeptics who believe that the rising rape rates are nothing more than a function of more women reporting their rapes to police.

Because the rape crisis center data is independent of official rape reporting trends and because the data indicate that the rape rate is rising at a pace even greater than that suggested by the Uniform Crime Reporting system, we know that the surging epidemic is real.

Conclusion

Today, as never before, women in the United States are forced to live in fear. This report shows just how "real" that fear is. Knowing that 1 in 5 women will be raped at some point in their lives, each women must ask herself -- every day of her life -- "will it be me?" and "if so, will it happen today?"

[6] Although the rape crisis centers provide strong data, their information does raise certain statistical issues that will be addressed in Chapter III.

That these questions must prey daily on the minds of American women is intolerable. Sweeping, comprehensive changes must be made in our laws and society that will allow the women of this country to live in peace.

Chapter II

The Violence Against Women Act: A Response to the Epidemic

The findings released in today's report prove -- once again -- that violence against women is a serious problem in the United States. More than that, the findings reveal an epidemic fueled by accelerating rape rates. It should be plain to everyone that something must be done to stop this senseless, gender-motivated violence.

We cannot permit hundreds of thousands more women to be raped before we undertake such changes. We should not wait for more years of record rape totals to make the point any clearer.

This chapter offers a comprehensive plan to attack the epidemic of rape.

On January 14, 1991, Judiciary Committee Chairman Joseph R. Biden, Jr. introduced the "Violence Against Women Act" (S.15) in the 102nd Congress. This legislation can be the cornerstone of an effort to make America a safer nation for women.

The discussion below will summarize the three titles of the "Violence Against Women Act" that concern themselves primarily with rape.[7]

Safe Streets For Women

Title I seeks to make the streets safer for America's women -- and make the court system harsher on America's rapists.

The Act achieves this purpose with a variety of measures. It creates new penalties for rape and increases the severity of those penalties already on the books.

* The Act doubles penalties for rape and aggravated rape prosecuted in federal courts, creates new penalties for repeat sex offenders, and increases restitution to the victims of sex crimes.

[7] The Violence Against Women Act also deals with domestic violence -- but, given the focus of this report, only the rape-related titles are discussed.

Current penalties for rape are out of line with the heinousness of the crime: the punishment must be made to fit the offense. Under current sentencing law, robbers are treated more severely; kidnappers are treated twice as severely; even many drug offenders receive stiffer sentences. Indeed, the basic penalty for non-aggravated rape is 1/3 lower than the average robber's sentence.[8] Such a pattern cannot be justified in light of the respective severity of these offenses.

The Act further hopes to deter rapists by encouraging women to prosecute their attackers. The encouragement comes in many forms, from educating women about their rights, to helping them prove their case, to making rape trials more bearable.

On August 29, 1990, the Judiciary Committee held a hearing at which rape survivors spoke of their "second victimization" -- the injuries they sustained at the hands of society and in our courtrooms.

There is no reason for women to have to endure more hurt from "the system" then they did from their original attackers. Perhaps the most widely known example of this problem is the story of Marla Hanson, who testified at the August hearing that "[I]t never occurred to me to blame myself for my own attack; that is, until the courts, the press and society began to insinuate and to question if I were the architect of my own

[8] Sentencing data provided by the United States Sentencing Commission.

suffering."[9]

* The Act requires states to pay for women's medical examinations to determine if they have been raped; extends "rape shield law" protection to civil cases; authorizes $65 million in funds for rape prevention and education; and bars the use of women's clothing to claim, at trial, that the victim incited or invited sexual assault.

The Act seeks to make the streets safer by boosting law enforcement efforts to prevent rape and creating more secure public environments.

* The Act authorizes $300 million for law enforcement efforts to combat sex crimes, with $100 million targeted for the 40 metropolitan areas most dangerous for women. Further, the Act creates special units of police, prosecutors, and victim advocates to fight crime against women.

* And for a more secure public environment, the "Violence Against Women Act" funds increased lighting and camera surveillance at bus stops, bus stations, subways, and parking lots adjacent to public transit facilities.

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[9] Ms. Marla Hanson, testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee (August 29, 1990).

The Act also targets $25 million in existing park funds for increased lighting, emergency telephones, and police.

Safe Campuses for Women

Women between the ages of 18 and 24 are among those most likely to be raped. And a large portion of these young women are in college. To specifically address the needs of college women, the "Violence Against Women Act" takes several important and necessary steps.

* First, it creates a $20 million grant program for colleges to fund campus rape education and prevention programs and services.

At a 1990 Judiciary Committee hearing, several college women described their experiences of having been raped. One thing that linked all of their testimonies was the idea that they had not expected it to happen and that they had not been aware of precautionary measures they might have taken to avoid being victimized.

The rape education and prevention measures contained in the "Violence Against Women Act" aim at correcting this problem by teaching women how to minimize their chances of being raped -- and what to do if threatened by attack.

* Second, the Act requires grantee colleges to disclose to rape survivors the outcome of college disciplinary proceedings against their attackers.

This way the women who have been attacked can be sure that justice is served. The survivors will know what measures their school has taken against their attacker and they can seek other judicial remedies if they are not satisfied.

* Third, it strengthens campus security by requiring colleges to report not only rape but all forms of sexual assault.

Although Congress passed a measure last year requiring colleges to report crime statistics, more must be done to assure a full disclosure of violence on campus. This provision closes a loophole in reporting laws that has for a long time masked the true extent of the problem of violence against women on America's college campuses. As it stands, colleges hope to avoid the "bad public relations" that accompanies admitting that serious crimes occur on their campuses.

* And fourth, the Act requires grantee colleges to expressly bar sexual assault as a violation of student disciplinary codes.

Civil Rights For Women

Perhaps one of the most far-reaching titles of the Act, Title III allows women to seek justice and vindication by exercising their civil rights.

* The Act defines gender-motivated crimes as "bias" or "hate" crimes. This definition opens the door to civil rights suits that women can bring against their attackers.

At the June 20, 1990 Senate Judiciary hearing on violence against women, a noted lawyer in the field of civil rights abuses testified that violence motivated by gender "is not merely an individual crime or a personal injury, but is a form of discrimination."[10]

The "Violence Against Women Act" seizes on this idea in its effort to bring justice to the women, like rape victims, who are victimized simply because they are women.

* Furthermore, this title extends "civil rights" protection to all gender-motivated crimes by making gender-based assaults a violation of federal civil rights laws.

This provision holds a three-fold advantage for rape victims. It allows the victims another legal "tool" with which to seek justice; it makes proving an offense easier; and, it places the victims in the federal court system where judges are "insulated from local

[10] Written testimony of Helen Neuborne, submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee (June 20, 1990).

political pressures and the power to screen out jurors who harbor irrational prejudices against, for example, rape victims."[11]

Conclusion

This section has briefly discussed the relevant titles of S.15, Senator Biden's "Violence Against Women Act." Together, the titles form a comprehensive and progressive plan to help end the brutality women are now forced to endure.

The Congress should pass, and the President should sign, the "Violence Against Women Act." It is a needed first step in an effort to make America safer for women and to arrest the rape epidemic outlined in this report.

[11] Report on the Violence Against Women Act of 1990, Report No. 101-545, p. 42.

Chapter III

Measuring the Epidemic: The Report's Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used to compile this report. It should be noted straight away that, in essence, we have merely replicated the methodology used by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) program.

The data presented in this report, just as those the FBI releases annually, are not the result of some tangled, complicated methodology. Rather, the final count is simply that -- a count of the number of rapes reported to police departments around the country. Thus, the strength of this report's findings lies in the fact they are based on a census, not a survey.

What Does This Data Tell Us?

It is worth noting at the outset that it would be impossible at this point to know the exact number of rapes that police reported last year. In fact, the tabulations continue to change even after the FBI publishes its findings in August. Still, although the exact number of reported rapes is elusive, we believe that our extensive information-gathering and analysis has yielded a very close estimate.

The findings of this report -- by replicating the FBI's methodology -- represent the closest and, yet, most conservative estimate of the number of rapes known to police in 1990.

Where Did It Come From?

The data presented in this report comes from two sources. The first source -- and by far the largest one employed here -- is state and local law enforcement agencies.

In the majority of states, local law enforcement offices pass on their annual crime counts to a centralized crime data collection centers which, in turn, pass their information on to the FBI. In the states that do not have such centers, localities submit their data directly to the FBI.[12] 1990 rape data had been collected and tabulated and was available at the state level in over 1/2 (27) of the states we contacted.

[12] There are only eight states that do not have centralized crime data collection centers.

When state-level data was not available, we relied on city- level law enforcement agencies. By contacting vast numbers of cities -- over 200 total -- we gained a highly accurate picture of the number of reported rapes in each of these states.

The second source of data is rape crisis centers. The Committee contacted numerous of these centers around the country to find out how many more (or less) women reported to them of being raped.

Because the data collection techniques varied between the centers -- with some counting the number of hotline calls, others counting the number women who "walk in," and still others counting only the number of women who receive rape crisis counselling -- the information obtained was used to verify the trends described by state and local law enforcement data rather than as a wholly independent basis for estimating the number of women raped in a given state. In other words, the rape crisis centers served as an separate check on the trends and data obtained from law enforcement agencies.

How Accurate Is It?

In essence, the numbers presented here represent completely objective information: a simple counting of the number of rapes reported to police.

One caveat should be noted: in its report, Crime in the United States, the FBI must correct the raw data to account for non-reporting agencies. For instance, if 95% of

the agencies in a given state report their rape data to federal authorities, the FBI will add to that data its estimate of the number of rapes that occurred in the remaining 5% of the state's agencies. The sum of the two figures -- the 95% known plus the 5% estimated -- will yield the official rape total for the state.

To take a concrete example, in 1989, police agencies covering 87.9% of the rural population eventually reported crime data to the FBI. The remaining 12.1% had to be estimated by the FBI to yield the rural crime total.

What Does It Count?

This report, like the FBI's, counts the number of rapes known to police. The information comes from state and local law enforcement agencies and, so, by definition, the police must be informed of a rape for it to be tabulated in our final count. Also, like the FBI, we include reports of attempted rapes in our count of total "rapes."[13]

Further, this report's definition of rape is the same as the one relied on by the FBI -- "carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will." The point of this report is to show the rate of change in the number of rapes reported between 1989 and 1990. To do this, we need to use the same, standard UCR definition or else our findings would not be directly comparable to the UCR data. While other national surveys and

[13] The Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) publishes annually its National Crime Survey. In it, the BJS makes a distinction between rapes and attempted rapes and calculates them separately before adding them together for a final "rape total." As noted (here and below), however, the UCR makes no such distinction and, therefore, neither do we for the purposes of this report.

reports may employ a more enlightened and complete definition of rape, we have replicated the FBI's methodology.

What Does It Not Count?

As with any census, there are a few gaps in the data collection process. Basically, our report misses the data from three areas: 1) Police who do not report their rape data to state collection centers, 2) Police who do report their rape data to the state centers, but belatedly, and 3) Localities missed in our polling of states whose collection centers either were not prepared to release data or were non-existent, as is the case in eight states.

The first area of missed data concerns the local law enforcement agencies that do not report their data to state crime information centers. The crux of the problem is this -- even in the states with operational UCR reporting systems, often localities provide their data on a volunteer basis. So, while most localities report, there are also some that do not. This results in a number of missed rapes, even though they were reported to police at the local level.

To generate its final national tally of rapes (and all other crimes), the FBI estimates the rape totals of the localities that did not pass along their data to the state level and adds these estimates to the number received from the states to determine a "grand total."

Because the FBI adds these estimates to the state data, its "grand total" is usually larger than the figure initially given to them by the states.[14] Basically, if any agency or part of an agency in a state does not report its data, assuming that their is some measure of crime in that agency, the FBI's "grand total" -- which adds the crimes estimated for non-reporting jurisdictions -- will be higher than the state's original, incomplete reported number of crimes.

To ensure that our estimate would be conservative, we considered the state-wide data we gathered to be the total for each state. In other words, the rapes that went unreported to the states were also not counted in this report.[15]

The second area of missed data concerns late reporting. Some localities volunteer their data to the state data collection centers but do not deliver their results until after the FBI's state reporting deadline. The FBI publishes its Crime in the United States in August and even then there are still reports trickling in.

This problem was particularly evident when we contacted states to find their 1989 and 1990 rape totals. Some states provided 1989 figures that differed from those appearing in the 1989 UCR report. The reason: The states had recalculated their rape

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[14] Of course, this would not be true when fully 100% of a state's metropolitan, suburban, and rural agencies report their data to the FBI. In 1989, there were 10 states, including the District if Columbia, that provided the FBI with 100% of their agencies' data.

[15] This point applies only to those states that provided state-level data.

totals to account for late-arriving information. For example, the UCR claims that South Carolina reported 1,632 rapes in 1989, but the state now says that there were actually 1,649. This example is not as dramatic as some others, but it illustrates the point nonetheless.

There are two points to be made about this problem:

First, to ensure a uniform statistical foundation for all states when figuring rape increases or decreases, we used the 1989 rape totals listed in the UCR.

Second, in the interest of generating a conservative estimate, we did not add to the 1990 state-wide data to compensate for late-arriving crime reports.

The third area of missed data are those suburban and rural areas of the country in states that did not report data to us. The majority of states (26) reported state-level data. For the remaining states, we contacted over 200 cities.

The cities we contacted represent all of the 24 states' major metropolitan areas, and, thus, we accounted for a high percentage of each state's crime totals. For instance, in 1989, Omaha accounted for 49% of the rapes reported in all of Nebraska. In addition, Lincoln, North Platte, and Grand Island, accounted for another 27% of the rapes reported. So, we have an actual count from jurisdictions that reported most (76%) of

the rapes known to police in Nebraska in 1989.

Using this method, we were able to contact enough cities so that we received actual counts for the areas that account for an average of 60% of each state's reported rape totals from 1989.[16]

The fewer the number of large metropolitan areas in a state, the more cities we had to contact to reach a strong percentage of the previous year's reported rapes. The lowest percentage contacted was 29% (Mississippi) and the highest was 87% (Hawaii).

An issue arose over how to measure the number of rapes that were reported to police yet not known to us -- meaning the rapes reported to police in localities we did not contact. As mentioned above, the FBI faces this challenge every year. And they answer the challenge by extrapolating a "grand total" for each state based on a very complicated set of statistical assumptions.

Ultimately -- again in the spirit of producing a conservative estimate -- we decided to apply no increase to these remaining agencies, despite every indication that these areas experienced increases in their numbers of reported rapes.[17]

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[16] The percentages are based on comparing the number of 1989 reported rapes in the contacted cities with the 1989 UCR reported rape total for the state.

[17] According to the 1990 6-month figures released by the FBI in October, reported rapes in suburban areas increased by 7% on average while they increased by 5% in rural areas. Also, the FBI category of "other cities" -- those with fewer than 50,000 population -- reported increases of 15% on average.

So. to take Nebraska as an example again, we contacted the cities that account for 76% of the rapes in that state. Then, to derive a state total, we used the 1990 data for these contacted areas plus the 1989 rape data for the non-reporting ("non-contacted") agencies.[18]

Silent Data: Unreported Rapes

When counting the number of women raped last year, the one set of data that was necessarily missing was the massive number of rapes undiscovered by the authorities. This set of "silent data" by far accounts for the vast majority of rapes that occur each year in this country.

Experts provide numerous reasons why women do not report their rapes.

Dr. Mary Koss, who testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee last August, has shown that 1 in 5 women will be raped at some point in their lives. This is the "lifetime statistic."

But what about the chance of being raped in any given year? This is how the government measures the problem. For instance, the FBI's Crime in the United States measures the annual incidence, not the lifetime incidence, of rape. And another

[18] Footnote 17 explains why 1989 rape data is almost certain to be lower than 1990 rape data. In addition to the telling 6-month FBI figures, cities that we contacted around the country confirmed that, even at the year's end, 1990 rape totals were significantly higher.

Department of Justice unit, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), also publishes its findings (the National Crime Survey) according to annual incidence rates.

It is important to note that even the Administration believes that the FBI and BJS undercount the number of rapes. The BJS's latest National Crime Survey finds that the rape total is 127,000 -- and that was back in 1988.[19] The Survey has extensive methodological flaws that all, including BJS, agree result in a severe undercounting of victims.

In fact, one noted researcher estimates that the BJS incidence figure is low by a factor of 15.[20]

In other words, as many as 2 million women are raped each year when non-reporting is taken into account.

Because there is such an enormous discrepancy between the number of rapes reported to police and the number that researchers claim actually occur, we emphasize that our findings represent no more than the number of "offenses known to authorities."

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[19] Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sourcebook on Criminal Justice Statistics, 1989, Table 3.2, p. 221.

[20] Dr. Mary Koss, testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee (August 29, 1990).

Tables and Charts

Table 1

NUMBER OF REPORTED RAPES IN 1990
(by alphabet)

State	Number	Increase
Alabama	1,369	7%
Alaska	387	31%
Arizona	1,480	15%
Arkansas	969	5%
California	12,413	4%
Colorado	1,518	26%
Connecticut	897	1%
Delaware	520	-9%
District of Columbia	303	63%
Florida	6,874	9%
Georgia	3,610	15%
Hawaii	530	7%
Idaho	272	15%
Illinois	4,128	-1%
Indiana	1,931	7%
Iowa	483	5%
Kansas	1,004	10%
Kentucky	968	6%
Louisiana	1,680	0%
Maine	163	-29%
Maryland	2,184	23%
Massachusetts	1,983	5%
Michigan	6,938	5%
Minnesota	1,553	14%
Mississippi	1,044	3%
Missouri	1,822	15%
Montana	150	4%
Nebraska	426	12%
Nevada	771	16%
New Hampshire	348	6%
New Jersey	2,358	-4%
New Mexico	772	10%
New York	5,315	1%
North Carolina	2,093	7%
North Dakota	81	4%
Ohio	5,038	3%
Oklahoma	1,328	10%
Oregon	1,330	1%
Pennsylvania	3,044	3%
Rhode Island	245	-8%
South Carolina	1,840	13%
South Dakota	225	-2%
Tennessee	2,424	7%
Texas	8,427	6%
Utah	636	30%
Vermont	145	11%
Virginia	1,915	17%
Washington	2,948	0%
West Virginia	420	21%
Wisconsin	1,019	3%
Wyoming	132	-2%
TOTAL	100,433	8%

Table 2

NUMBER OF REPORTED RAPES IN 1990
(by number)

State	Number	Increase
California	12,413	4%
Texas	8,427	6%
Michigan	6,938	5%
Florida	6,874	9%
New York	5,315	1%
Ohio	5,038	3%
Illinois	4,128	-1%
Georgia	3,610	15%
Pennsylvania	3,044	3%
Washington	2,948	0%
Tennessee	2,424	7%
New Jersey	2,358	-4%
Maryland	2,184	23%
North Carolina	2,093	7%
Massachusetts	1,983	5%
Indiana	1,931	7%
Virginia	1,915	17%
South Carolina	1,840	13%
Missouri	1,822	15%
Louisiana	1,680	0%
Minnesota	1,553	14%
Colorado	1,518	26%
Arizona	1,480	15%
Alabama	1,369	7%
Oregon	1,330	1%
Oklahoma	1,328	10%
Mississippi	1,044	3%
Wisconsin	1,019	3%
Kansas	1,004	10%
Arkansas	969	5%
Kentucky	968	6%
Connecticut	897	1%
New Mexico	772	10%
Nevada	771	16%
Utah	636	30%
Hawaii	530	7%
Delaware	520	-9%
Iowa	483	5%
Nebraska	426	12%
West Virginia	420	21%
Alaska	367	31%
New Hampshire	348	6%
District of Columbia	303	63%
Idaho	272	15%
Rhode Island	245	-8%
South Dakota	225	-2%
Maine	163	-29%
Montana	150	4%
Vermont	145	11%
Wyoming	132	-2%
North Dakota	81	4%
TOTAL	100,433	6%

Table 3

NUMBER OF REPORTED RAPES IN 1990
(by increase)

State	Number	Increase
District of Columbia	303	63%
Alaska	367	31%
Utah	636	30%
Colorado	1,518	26%
Maryland	2,184	23%
West Virginia	420	21%
Virginia	1,915	17%
Nevada	771	16%
Idaho	272	15%
Arizona	1,480	15%
Missouri	1,822	15%
Georgia	3,610	15%
Minnesota	1,553	14%
South Carolina	1,840	13%
Nebraska	426	12%
Vermont	145	11%
New Mexico	772	10%
Oklahoma	1,328	10%
Kansas	1,004	10%
Florida	6,874	9%
Alabama	1,369	7%
Hawaii	530	7%
Indiana	1,931	7%
Tennessee	2,424	7%
North Carolina	2,093	7%
New Hampshire	348	6%
Texas	8,427	6%
Kentucky	968	6%
Massachusetts	1,983	5%
Iowa	483	5%
Arkansas	969	5%
Michigan	6,938	5%
Montana	150	4%
North Dakota	81	4%
California	12,413	4%
Ohio	5,038	3%
Mississippi	1,044	3%
Pennsylvania	3,044	3%
Wisconsin	1,019	3%
New York	5,315	1%
Oregon	1,330	1%
Connecticut	897	1%
Louisiana	1,680	0%
Washington	2,948	0%
Illinois	4,128	-1%
Wyoming	132	-2%
South Dakota	225	-2%
New Jersey	2,358	-4%
Rhode Island	245	-8%
Delaware	520	-9%
Maine	163	-29%
TOTAL	100,433	6%

Table 4

REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF RAPES

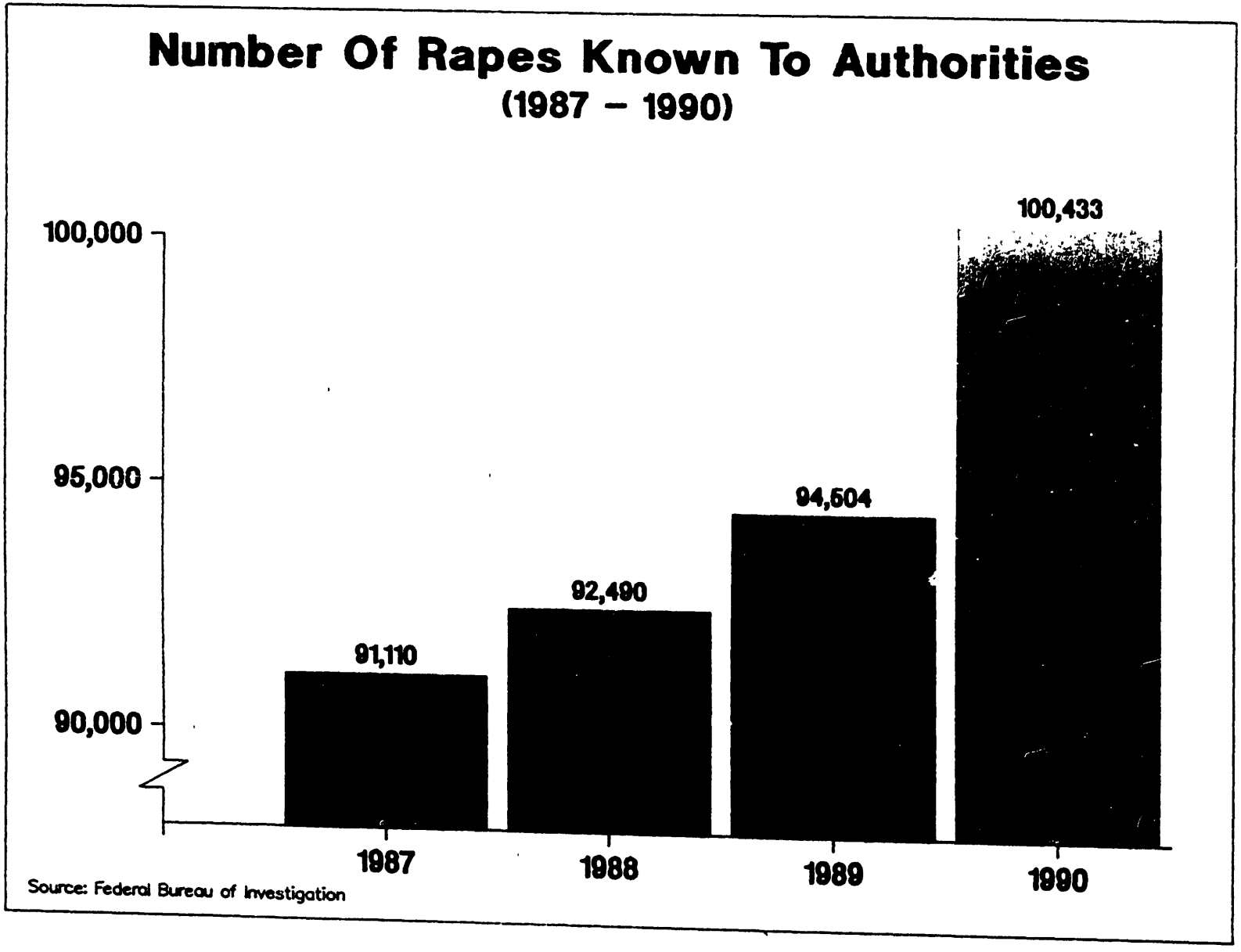
Northeast	1989 Number	1990 Number	Increase
Connecticut	892	897	
Maine	229	163	
Massachusetts	1,881	1,983	
New Hampshire	327	348	
New Jersey	2,449	2,358	
New York	5,242	5,315	
Pennsylvania	2,963	3,044	
Rhode Island	266	245	
Vermont	131	145	
Subtotal	14,380	14,498	1%
Midwest			
Illinois	4,161	4,128	
Indiana	1,804	1,931	
Iowa	459	483	
Kansas	917	1,004	
Michigan	6,624	6,938	
Minnesota	1,363	1,553	
Missouri	1,587	1,822	
Nebraska	381	426	
North Dakota	78	81	
Ohio	4,872	5,038	
South Dakota	229	225	
Wisconsin	993	1,019	
Subtotal	23,468	24,648	5%
South			
Alabama	1,276	1,369	
Arkansas	924	969	
Delaware	569	520	
District of Columbia	186	303	
Florida	6,299	6,874	
Georgia	3,150	3,610	
Kentucky	917	968	
Louisiana	1,675	1,680	
Maryland	1,783	2,184	
Mississippi	1,017	1,044	
North Carolina	1,964	2,093	
Oklahoma	1,209	1,328	
South Carolina	1,632	1,840	
Tennessee	2,270	2,424	
Texas	7,951	8,427	
Virginia	1,638	1,915	
West Virginia	347	420	
Subtotal	34,807	37,968	9%
West			
Alaska	279	367	
Arizona	1,286	1,480	
California	11,966	12,413	
Colorado	1,202	1,518	
Hawaii	496	530	
Idaho	236	272	
Montana	145	150	
Nevada	662	771	
New Mexico	702	772	
Oregon	1,314	1,330	
Utah	489	636	
Washington	2,938	2,948	
Wyoming	134	132	
Subtotal	21,849	23,319	7%
GRAND TOTAL	**94,504**	**100,433**	**6%**

Table 5

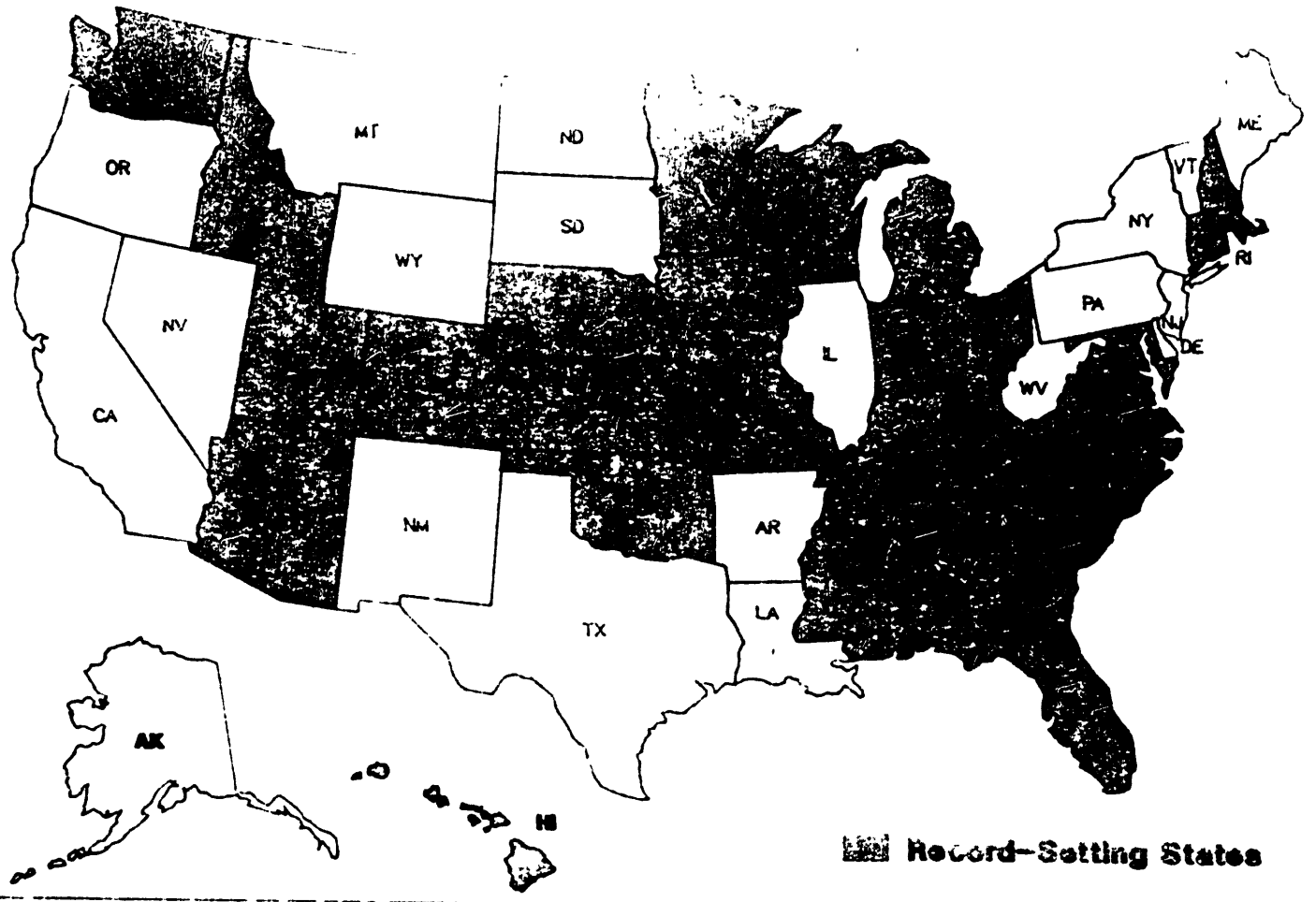
NUMBER OF RAPES -- 29 NEW STATE RECORDS IN 1990

State	Old Record Number	New 1990 Record Number	Increase
Hawaii	393	530	34.9%
Utah	489	636	30.1%
Virginia	1,638	1,915	16.9%
Idaho	236	272	15.3%
Georgia	3,150	3,610	14.6%
South Carolina	1,632	1,840	12.7%
Maryland	1,944	2,184	12.3%
Missouri	1,638	1,822	11.2%
Nebraska	385	426	10.6%
Kansas	917	1,004	9.5%
Florida	6,299	6,874	9.1%
Minnesota	1,439	1,553	7.9%
Alabama	1,276	1,369	7.3%
Indiana	1,808	1,931	6.8%
Tennessee	2,270	2,424	6.8%
North Carolina	1,964	2,093	6.6%
New Hampshire	327	348	6.4%
Kentucky	917	968	5.6%
Massachusetts	1,881	1,983	5.4%
Iowa	459	483	5.2%
Michigan	6,624	6,938	4.7%
Ohio	4,872	5,038	3.4%
Mississippi	1,017	1,044	2.7%
Wisconsin	993	1,019	2.6%
Arizona	1,458	1,480	1.5%
Oklahoma	1,315	1,328	1.0%
Connecticut	892	897	0.6%
Colorado	1,510	1,518	0.5%
Washington	2,938	2,948	0.3%

TOTAL NUMBER OF NEW STATE RECORDS = 29


Number Of Rapes Known To Authorities
(1987 – 1990)
100,000
95,000
90,000
91,110
92,490
94,504
100,433
1987
1988
1989
1990
Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation

Number Of Rapes: 29 Record–Setting States In 1990



Number Of Rapes: Percent Increases In 1990

