



# Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

## News Release

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CARL TAYLOR  
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Mayor  
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Police Chief  
VACANT

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*Executive Director*  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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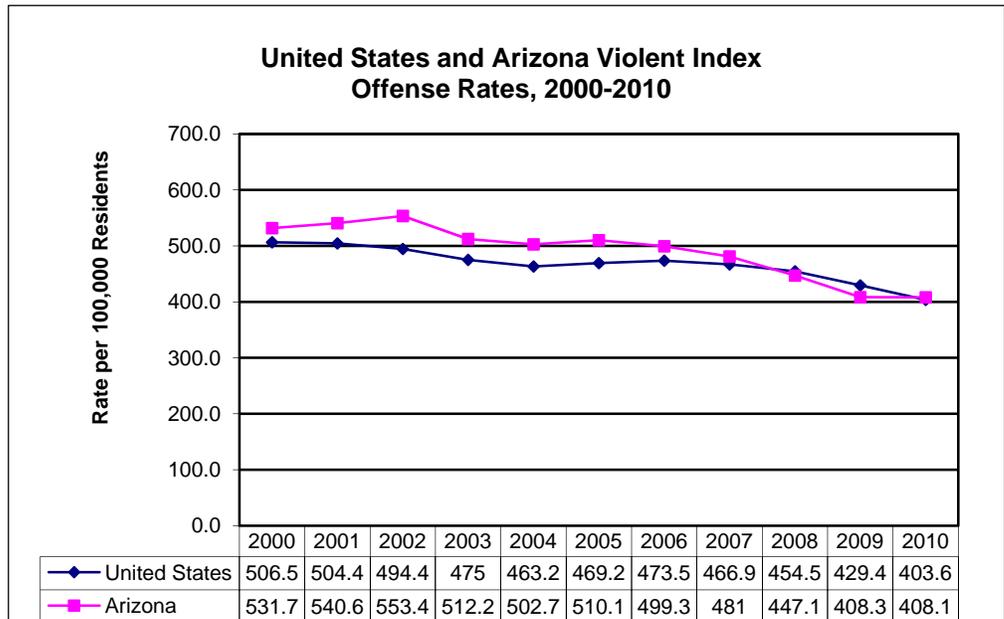
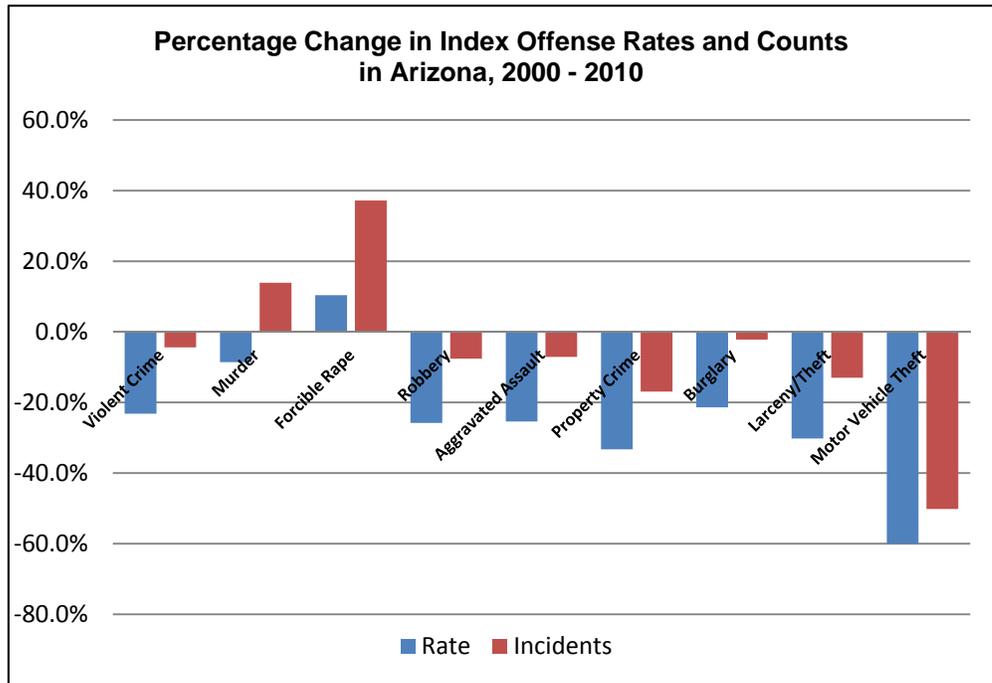
### **Arizona Crime Rates Continue to Decline**

***But the actual number of crimes continues to impact the capacity of Arizona's criminal justice system***

*Phoenix, Ariz. (Oct. 11, 2011)*— A new report from the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission's (ACJC) Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), *Arizona Crime Trends: A System Review*, indicates that Arizona's crime rates have declined significantly over the past decade but the actual number of crimes has continued to impact Arizona's criminal justice system. This paradox is the result of Arizona's rapidly increasing population. From 2000 to 2010 Arizona's population increased by nearly 24.6 percent, from 5.1 million to 6.4 million people. As Arizona grows there is an increased burden on the state's criminal justice system even in light of improvements in public safety in terms of crime rates, measured as the number of crimes per 100,000 residents. The crime indices used in this report are the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Crime Index for violent and property crimes, a national model used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to capture state-by-state reported data. UCR violent crime covers murder, rape, aggravated assault and robbery and UCR property crime is defined as burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft.

*Arizona Crime Trends: A System Review* reports trends in the state and includes a comparison to the national trends. From 2000 to 2010, both Arizona and the nation experienced significant decreases in the violent offense rate. For much of the decade, Arizona's overall crime rates were above those of the national average. However, by the end of the decade, the state's rates were on par with the national average.

*Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System in Arizona*

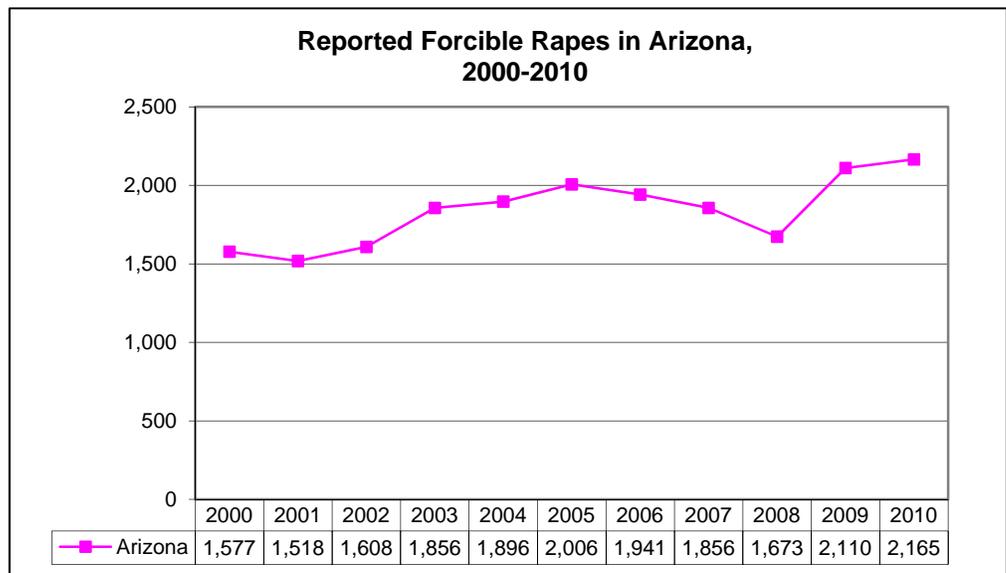


### Violent Index Offenses

The Crime Index for violent crime includes murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. The **number** of violent index offenses reported to the police in Arizona in 2010 was 4.4 percent lower than in 2000 and 15.6 percent lower than the decade high in 2006. But because of the increase in the population of Arizona, from 2000 to 2010 the violent index offense **rate** decreased by 23.2 percent. However, there is one

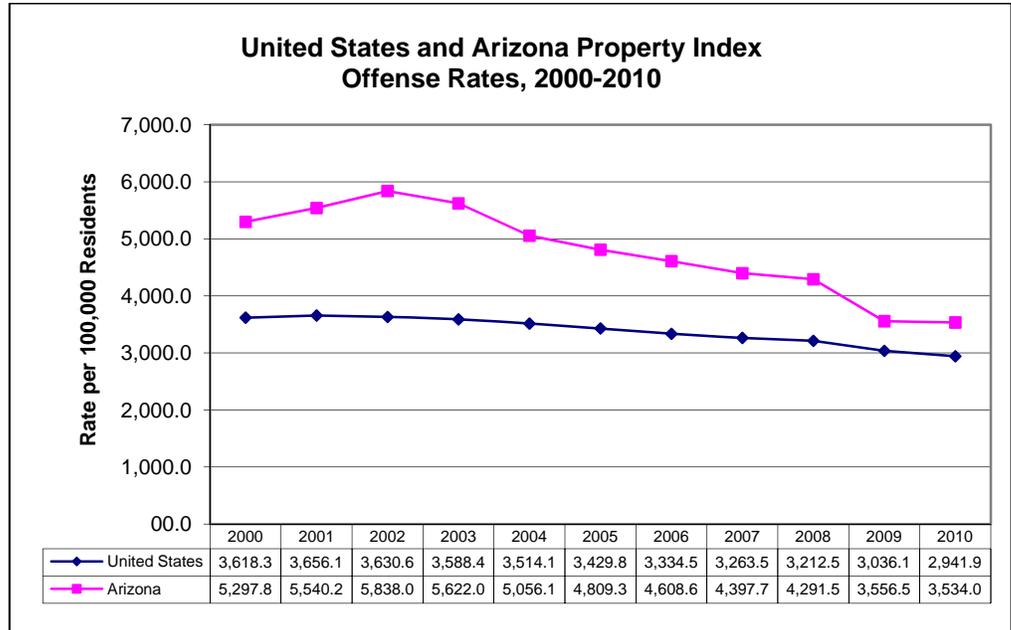
violent crime with a noticeable increase: forcible rape. During the same time that the number and rate of violent index offenses reported to the police has decreased, the number and rate of forcible rape in Arizona has increased. From 2000 to 2010, the number of forcible rapes reported to the police increased 37.3 percent. Also, Arizona’s murder rates remain above the national average. Throughout the time period examined, the murder rates for Arizona were higher than the nation’s. In 2009 the difference between the nation’s murder offense rate and Arizona’s was smaller than at any other time from 2000 to 2010, but the state’s murder rate jumped in 2010.

“Arizona has experienced dramatic declines in the number and rate of most violent and property crimes since 2002, but we should be very concerned about a more recent increase in the rate and number of forcible rapes and murders in Arizona,” said Phillip Stevenson, director of ACJC’s Statistical Analysis Center.

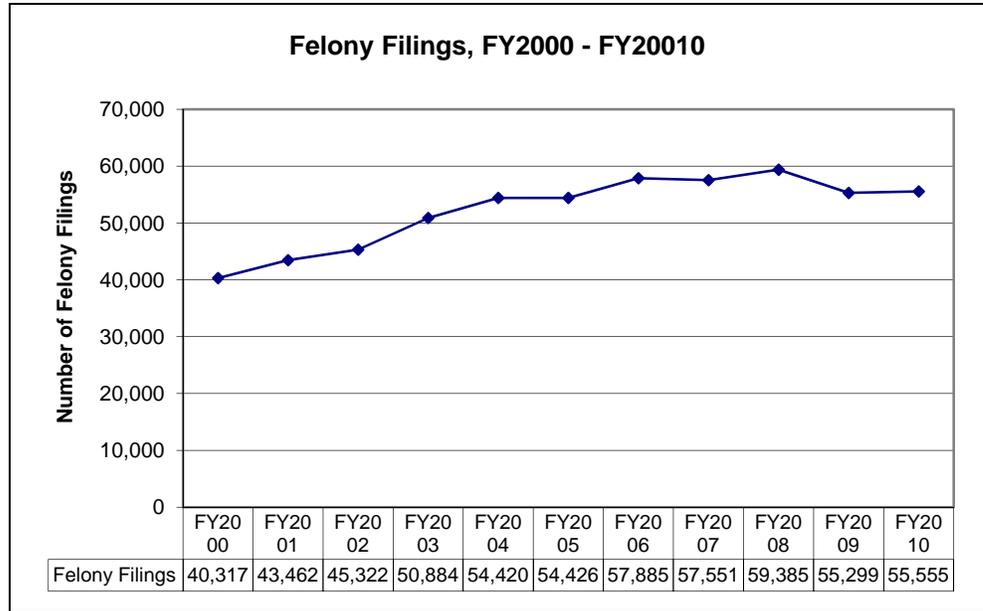


**Property Index Offenses**

The UCR program’s property crime index is comprised of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson (this report does not include arson data because of variability in reporting across jurisdictions and states). From 2000 to 2010, the property index offense rate decreased significantly nationally and in Arizona. During the time period examined, the property index offense rate decreased 33.3 percent in Arizona and 18.7 percent in the United States. The number of property index offenses reported to the police in Arizona was 16.9 percent lower in 2010 than in 2000 and 29.0 percent lower than the decade high in 2002.



In Arizona and other states that are experiencing dramatic population growth, jurisdictions can experience improvements in public safety as measured by decreasing crime rates, while at the same time having to address an additional burden on the criminal justice system because of increases in the number of crimes that are occurring. Even when crime rates are down, increases in the number of crimes committed in a community affects a law enforcement agency’s ability to police its jurisdiction, the courts’ ability to adjudicate alleged offenders, probation’s ability to effectively supervise offenders in the community, and the correctional system’s ability to house and rehabilitate incarcerated offenders. The number of felony filings filed in Superior Courts illustrated this point. From 2000 to 2010, the number of felony case filings increased by 37.8 percent, from 40,317 felony filings in 2000 to 55,555 in 2010.



“It’s important to remember that although we are encouraged to see Arizona’s crime rates declining, the number of crimes reported indicate that the workload on Arizona criminal justice agencies are not declining,” said ACJC Executive Director John Blackburn Jr.

This edition of *Arizona Crime Trends: A System Review* included up to 11 years of data from law enforcement, the courts, corrections, and the juvenile justice system to give readers an overview of crime and criminal and juvenile justice system activity from 2000 to 2010 in Arizona. The information in this report was compiled and analyzed by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission’s SAC unit and was the result of the collaborative efforts of researchers from several agencies within the criminal justice system in Arizona. They include the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections, Arizona Department of Corrections and Arizona Department of Public Safety. For more information about this report and its findings, please contact ACJC Public Affairs Officer Mary Marshall at 602-364-1156. The report is available on the ACJC web site at [www.azcjc.gov](http://www.azcjc.gov).

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**About the ACJC**

*The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission is a statutorily authorized entity mandated to carry out various coordinating, monitoring and reporting functions regarding the administration and management of criminal justice programs in Arizona. In accordance with statutory guidelines, the Commission is comprised of 19 Commissioners who represent various elements of the criminal justice system in Arizona. Five of the 19 Commission members are agency heads, while the other 14 are appointed by the Governor to serve for two-year terms. ACJC was created in 1982 to serve as a resource and service organization for Arizona's 480*

*criminal justice agencies on a myriad of issues ranging from drugs, gangs, victim compensation and assistance to criminal record improvement initiatives. The ACJC works on behalf of the criminal justice agencies in Arizona to facilitate information and data exchange among statewide agencies by: establishing and maintaining criminal justice information archives; monitoring new and continuing legislation relating to criminal justice issues; and gathering information and research on existing criminal justice programs.*