

CALIFORNIA'S 2019 URBAN CRIME RATE FALLS TO RECORD LOW AMID LARGE-SCALE JUSTICE REFORM



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Fact Sheet

In the first six months of 2019, violent and property crime rates reached record low levels in 69 California cities¹ with populations of 100,000 or more (a combined population of over 15 million), falling 10.4 percent compared to the first half of 2010 (FBI, 2020; DOF, 2020; DOJ, 2020).² During this ten-year period, the state implemented several large-scale criminal justice reforms, including reduced penalties for certain low-level offenses and expanded parole opportunities for those in state prison (AB 109, 2011; Prop 47, 2014; Prop 57, 2016).

- **California's urban crime rate reached a record low in early 2019, falling slightly from early 2018 levels.**

Compared to the first six months of 2018, January through June 2019 saw modest declines in California's urban violent crime rate (down 2.6 percent) and property crime rate (down 0.8 percent). During this period, California cities reported decreases in all forms of crime except homicide and larceny-theft, with the largest declines in the motor vehicle theft rate (down 9.1 percent) and burglary rate (down 5.5 percent).

- **The crime rate declined by 10.4 percent from the first half of 2010 to the first half of 2019.**

California's urban crime rate declined rapidly through the 1990s and much of the 2000s (see Appendix A). In recent years, these declines have slowed and rates now hover at historically low levels. From January-June 2010 to January-June 2019, the rate of total Part I crime decreased by 10.4 percent, violent crime rates fell by 13.5 percent, and property crime rates decreased by 9.9 percent (Table 1).

Table 1. California urban crime rates*, Jan-June 2010 to Jan-June 2019

	January-June crime rates per 100,000 population										2019 rate versus:		
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2010	2014	2018
All Part I Offenses**	1,690.6	1,614.1	1,751.6	1,741.3	1,600.6	1,698.2	1,634.5	1,627.4	1,530.9	1,514.7	-10.4%	-5.4%	-1.1%
Violent Offenses**	232.7	214.6	226.1	220.0	202.1	211.1	214.7	211.1	206.7	201.3	-13.5%	-0.4%	-2.6%
Homicide	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.6	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.6	2.2	2.3	-16.6%	-1.7%	1.4%
Robbery	94.3	85.8	92.2	94.9	77.6	83.3	81.0	82.8	79.1	75.7	-19.8%	-2.5%	-4.4%
Assault	135.6	126.2	131.0	122.5	122.2	125.6	131.2	125.6	125.3	123.4	-9.0%	0.9%	-1.6%
Property Offenses	1,457.9	1,399.4	1,525.5	1,521.3	1,398.5	1,487.1	1,419.7	1,416.3	1,324.3	1,313.4	-9.9%	-6.1%	-0.8%
Burglary	314.9	303.2	335.8	329.2	282.4	265.8	246.9	232.0	213.5	201.7	-35.9%	-28.6%	-5.5%
Theft	890.4	862.7	921.1	917.2	865.9	960.5	902.2	920.5	871.8	893.8	0.4%	3.2%	2.5%
MV theft	243.3	225.7	259.1	265.9	240.0	252.6	261.0	254.2	229.7	208.6	-14.2%	-13.1%	-9.1%
Arson	9.4	7.8	9.6	8.9	10.2	8.2	9.6	9.6	9.3	9.2	-1.7%	-9.6%	-1.1%

Sources: FBI (2020); DOF (2020); DOJ (2020). Half-year crime rates are reported offenses divided by the cities' total population for that year. **Violent and total crime rates exclude rape because the definition was broadened in 2013, hindering comparisons across this period. Note: The City of Los Angeles is excluded because of substantial underreporting of Part I offenses prior to 2016. The City of Santa Ana is excluded from January-June 2019 crime rates as it did not appear in the FBI's Uniform Crime Report.

- **Historically low urban crime rates have persisted through an era of large-scale justice reform.**

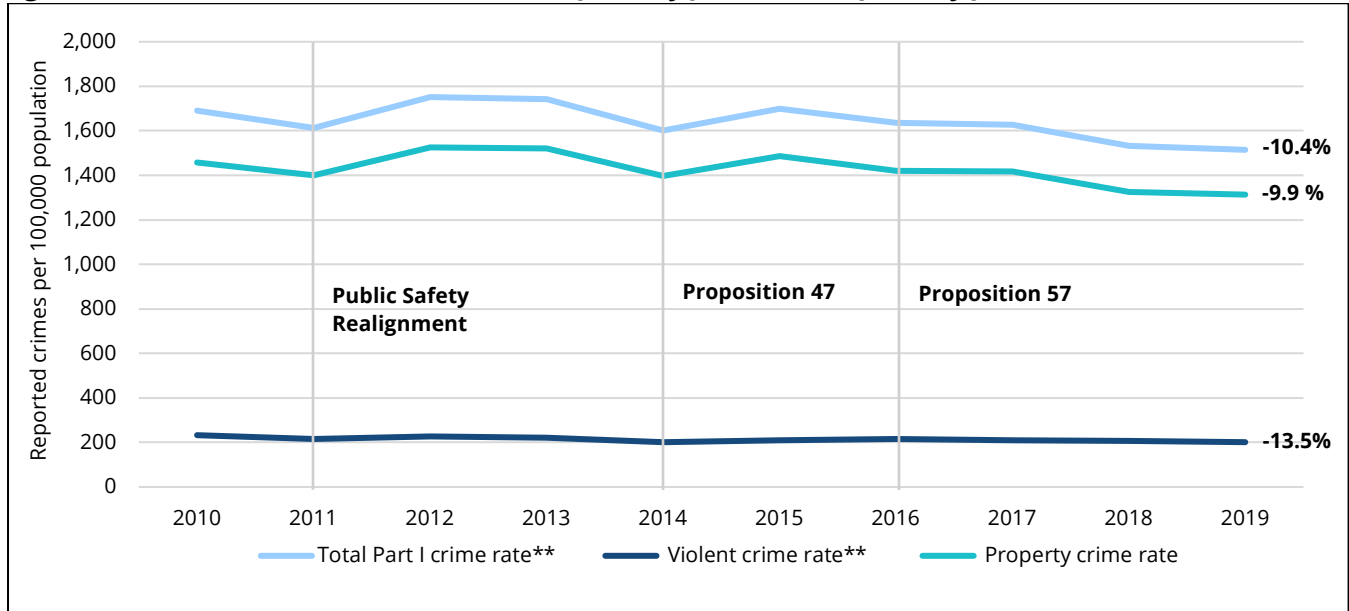
Crime rates have remained low and stable through several major criminal justice reforms, particularly Public Safety Realignment, Proposition 47, and Proposition 57. The California State Legislature passed Public Safety Realignment in 2011 to address severe prison overcrowding by shifting responsibility for individuals with nonviolent, non-sexual, and

¹The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) substantially underreported Part I offenses, especially aggravated assault and robbery, for a period prior to 2016 (Poston et al., 2015). Appendix B separately reports crime statistics for the City of Los Angeles from 2016 to 2019. This analysis otherwise excludes Los Angeles. Santa Ana is excluded from January-June 2019 city crime rates as it did not appear in the FBI's Uniform Crime Report.

²Violent and total crime rates exclude rape because the definition was broadened in 2013, hindering comparisons across this period.

non-serious convictions from the state to the counties (AB 109, 2011; Brown v. Plata, 2011). In 2014, California voters passed Proposition 47, which reduced six minor drug and property offenses from possible felonies to misdemeanors, resulting in the resentencing and release of thousands of people from jails and prisons (Prop 47, 2014). Proposition 57, passed by voters in 2016, increased opportunities for individuals in state prison to earn credit towards early parole consideration by participating in rehabilitative programs (Prop 57, 2016).

Figure 1. Statewide trends in urban crime*, January-June 2010 to January-June 2019



Sources: FBI (2020); DOF (2020); DOJ (2020). *Half-year crime rates are reported offenses divided by the cities' total population for that year. **Violent and total crime rates exclude rape because the definition was broadened in 2013, hindering comparisons across this period. Note: The City of Los Angeles is excluded because of substantial underreporting of Part I offenses prior to 2016. The City of Santa Ana is excluded from the 2019 calculation of city crime rates as it did not appear in the FBI's Uniform Crime Report for January-June 2019.

• **Most of California's largest cities saw declines in crime from early 2018 to early 2019.**

Crime rate trends vary considerably at the local level. For the 69 largest California cities that reported offenses in both early 2018 and early 2019 (excluding Los Angeles and Santa Ana), changes in urban crime rates ranged from a 26.6 percent decrease in Santa Clarita to a 50.2 percent rise in Santa Clara. Overall, 24 cities reported increased total crime and 45 cities showed decreases during this one-year period. For violent crime, 34 cities showed increases while 35 showed decreases; for property crime, 24 cities showed increases while 45 showed declines. Of the major cities, Oakland and San Jose reported increased violent crime, while Fresno, Long Beach, Sacramento, San Diego, and San Francisco reported declines. Fresno, Oakland, Sacramento, and San Diego reported increased property crime, while Long Beach, San Francisco, and San Jose reported declines (see Appendix C for crime rates by city).

The City of Los Angeles had decreases in violent, property, and total Part I crime rates in January-June 2019 compared to the same period in 2018. Crime figures for Los Angeles, which accounts for more than one-fifth of all Part I crimes reported statewide, are shown separately and only for 2016-2019 in Appendix B as the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) underreported offenses for a number of years prior to 2016 (Poston et al., 2015). In fact, the LAPD's substantial underreporting of Part I offenses prior to 2016 and subsequent upward correction made statewide crime rates appear artificially low prior to the adjustment, leading to misimpressions that crime rose in 2016.

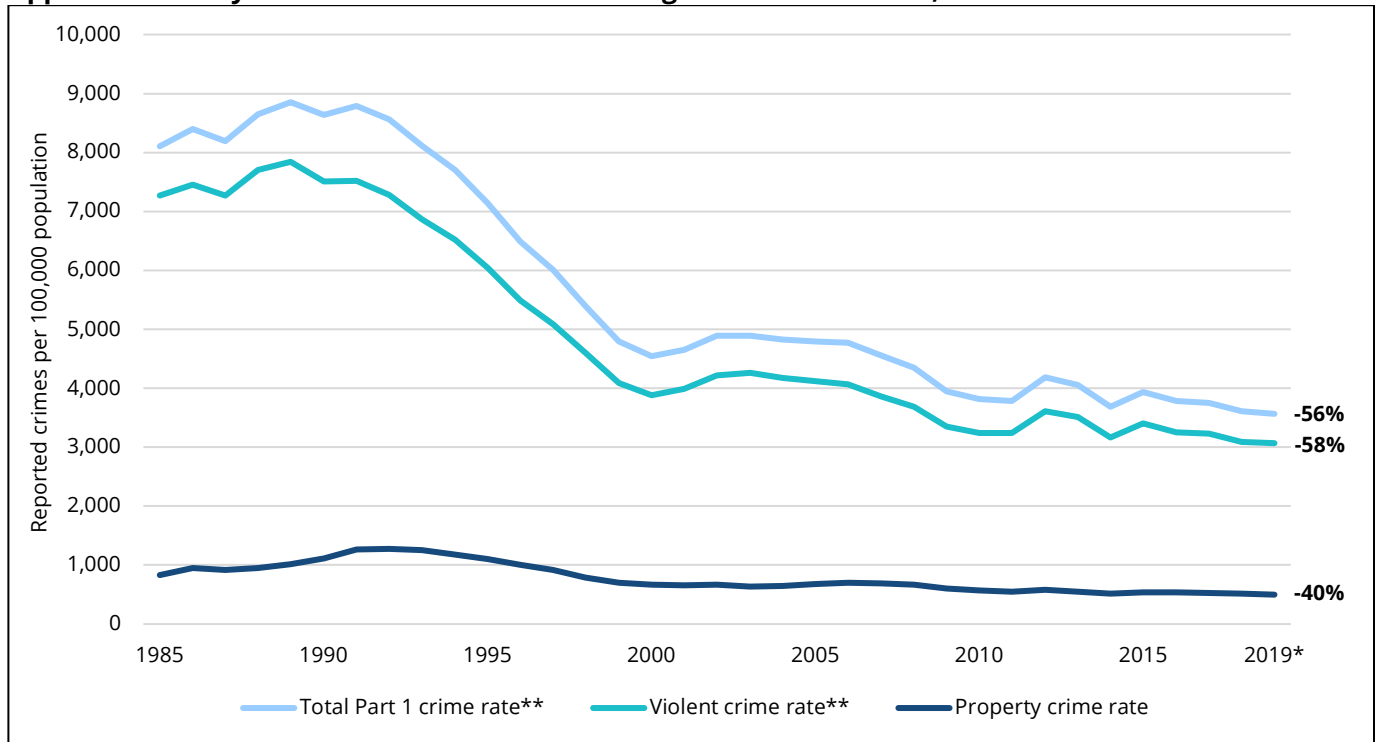
Our ten-year review of the state's crime statistics finds that, despite opposition group claims that criminal justice reforms have negatively affected public safety, crime trends have remained at historically low levels through a period of large-scale justice reform. Further, our review finds no relationship between crime and Public Safety Realignment, Proposition 47, or Proposition 57. Rather, crime rates appear to be highly localized, suggesting that differences in city- and county-level approaches to public safety, not statewide policies, are influencing overall trends (CJ CJ, 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019).

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Appendix

Appendix A. Full-year crime rates* in 14 of the largest California cities, 1985-2019



Sources: FBI (2020); DOF (2020); DOJ (2020); SAPD (2020). *Full-year figures for 2019 are based on statistics for January-June 2019 that have been pro-rated according to the share of crimes that occurred in the first half of 2018 compared to full-year 2018. **Violent and total crime rates exclude rape because the definition was broadened in 2013, hindering comparisons across this period. Note: Crime rates in this figure include all California cities with populations of 250,000 or greater in 2019, which include Anaheim, Bakersfield, Chula Vista, Fresno, Irvine, Long Beach, Oakland, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Ana, and Stockton. These 14 cities comprised nearly 40 percent of California's urban population in 2019. The City of Los Angeles is excluded because of substantial underreporting of Part I offenses prior to 2016. Crime statistics for Santa Ana were not included in the FBI's Uniform Crime Report for January-June 2019 and are based, instead, on full-year statistics reported by the Santa Ana Police Department.

Appendix B. City of Los Angeles crime rates*, January-June 2016 to January-June 2019

Year (January-June)	Rate per 100,000 population				Change 2019 vs. 2018
	2016	2017	2018	2019	
All Part I Offenses**	1,558.8	1,598.4	1,594.2	1,532.7	-3.9%
Violent Offenses**	327.5	334.2	331.5	325.2	-1.9%
Homicide	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.1	-3.8%
Robbery	124.2	128.6	127.3	118.3	-7.0%
Assault	199.9	202.1	200.9	203.8	1.4%
Property Offenses	1,231.3	1,264.2	1,262.7	1,207.5	-4.4%
Burglary	195.4	205.1	194.9	176.9	-9.2%
Theft	795.3	802.7	826.2	820.7	-0.7%
MV theft	224.5	240.2	219.4	191.7	-12.6%
Arson	16.1	16.2	22.2	18.2	-18.1%

Sources: FBI (2020); DOF (2020); DOJ (2020). *Half-year crime rates are reported offenses divided by the city's total population for that year. **Violent and total crime rates exclude rape. Note: Los Angeles underreported crimes prior to 2016.

Appendix C. Part I crime rates and rate changes, Jan-June 2019 vs. Jan-June 2018

California cities with populations larger than 100,000 that reported offenses in both 2019 and 2018	Change in offense rate, 2019 vs. 2018			Jan-June 2019 reported offense rate		
	Total Part I*	Violent*	Property	Total Part I*	Violent*	Property
Anaheim	-6.1%	-12.0%	-5.4%	1,287.9	124.6734	1,163.2
Antioch	8.5%	0.6%	9.9%	1,691.8	230.0243	1,461.8
Bakersfield	-8.4%	-6.4%	-8.6%	2,212.2	206.8287	2,005.3
Berkeley	6.1%	7.1%	6.0%	2,464.2	209.1982	2,255.0
Burbank	-5.5%	-34.3%	-2.9%	1,327.0	75.5059	1,251.5
Carlsbad	-0.7%	5.1%	-1.2%	1,019.6	87.6424	932.0
Chula Vista	-2.9%	2.0%	-3.9%	824.6	138.1668	686.4
Clovis	-12.3%	17.3%	-14.2%	1,044.4	85.4679	958.9
Concord	3.3%	-7.6%	4.4%	1,900.9	156.2873	1,744.6
Corona	14.9%	-6.6%	16.3%	1,131.5	55.9188	1,075.5
Costa Mesa	-2.4%	-13.6%	-1.6%	1,754.3	101.8734	1,652.4
Daly City	22.2%	0.9%	25.0%	916.4	87.9749	828.4
Downey	-1.1%	-2.8%	-0.9%	1,320.4	141.8415	1,178.5
El Cajon	-1.4%	12.5%	-4.1%	1,310.2	241.5711	1,068.6
El Monte	-26.4%	-27.8%	-26.2%	883.1	104.9452	778.1
Elk Grove	3.8%	-16.2%	7.0%	792.4	88.4930	703.9
Escondido	-9.1%	13.7%	-12.6%	944.1	155.8214	788.3
Fairfield	3.9%	-31.5%	9.9%	1,730.3	166.4547	1,563.8
Fontana	-7.7%	-2.9%	-8.6%	878.0	140.9859	737.0
Fremont	-5.6%	-24.0%	-3.8%	1,075.1	79.5589	995.6
Fresno	0.2%	-6.3%	1.2%	1,913.6	245.9552	1,667.7
Fullerton	-14.6%	-23.5%	-13.9%	1,211.3	78.4182	1,132.9
Garden Grove	-8.6%	-8.9%	-8.5%	1,222.9	123.8903	1,099.0
Glendale	13.8%	51.1%	12.1%	868.7	49.4466	819.3
Hayward	-3.4%	-14.2%	-2.2%	1,654.6	148.6518	1,506.0
Huntington Beach	4.9%	-21.5%	7.4%	1,067.4	68.7079	998.7
Inglewood	-14.0%	0.2%	-17.3%	1,305.2	286.0976	1,019.1
Irvine	11.2%	1.1%	11.6%	702.7	22.1269	680.6
Jurupa Valley	-9.7%	16.4%	-12.1%	1,306.5	140.1456	1,166.3
Lancaster	-4.9%	22.7%	-12.8%	1,418.3	408.4057	1,009.9
Long Beach	-10.8%	-34.5%	-4.5%	1,422.3	219.3624	1,202.9
Modesto	-6.3%	-8.0%	-6.0%	2,153.8	394.9796	1,758.8
Moreno Valley	-7.2%	-0.8%	-8.1%	1,493.5	182.4318	1,311.1
Murrieta	8.7%	-43.7%	12.2%	656.9	21.1640	635.8
Norwalk	-20.1%	-7.3%	-22.7%	953.7	186.4273	767.3
Oakland	10.2%	1.6%	12.2%	3,383.0	579.3526	2,803.7
Oceanside	-2.1%	-0.4%	-2.4%	1,177.4	155.0379	1,022.4
Ontario	-11.9%	4.6%	-13.6%	1,324.4	154.2621	1,170.1
Orange	-16.0%	-10.4%	-16.4%	792.6	57.1667	735.4

California cities with populations larger than 100,000 that reported offenses in both 2019 and 2018	Change in offense rate, 2019 vs. 2018			Jan-June 2019 reported offense rate		
	Total Part I*	Violent*	Property	Total Part I*	Violent*	Property
Oxnard	-11.9%	-14.4%	-11.5%	1,265.5	161.5216	1,104.0
Palmdale	-7.4%	0.3%	-9.3%	889.4	192.5830	696.8
Pasadena	-0.4%	42.0%	-6.7%	1,148.2	210.5090	937.7
Pomona	-9.7%	0.9%	-11.5%	1,630.5	260.5145	1,370.0
Rialto	12.8%	3.0%	14.2%	1,726.5	209.7491	1,516.7
Richmond	-1.5%	2.9%	-2.5%	2,325.3	463.6169	1,861.7
Riverside	-10.9%	10.8%	-13.9%	1,628.2	247.1800	1,381.0
Roseville	-17.9%	-23.7%	-17.5%	1,119.3	61.5856	1,057.7
Sacramento	1.9%	-4.3%	3.1%	1,884.2	296.5531	1,587.7
Salinas	-6.5%	-10.0%	-5.8%	1,494.5	238.9479	1,255.6
San Bernardino	-2.0%	-3.3%	-1.6%	2,601.3	589.3273	2,012.0
San Diego	2.8%	-1.5%	3.6%	1,119.1	161.5546	957.5
San Francisco	-7.2%	-11.8%	-6.7%	2,797.0	287.8255	2,509.2
San Jose	-3.0%	5.8%	-4.3%	1,386.1	184.6494	1,201.5
San Mateo	-1.6%	-11.6%	-0.3%	1,138.9	109.9742	1,029.0
Santa Clara	50.2%	19.5%	51.6%	1,983.4	71.4746	1,911.9
Santa Clarita	-26.6%	-38.6%	-25.3%	503.0	42.1819	460.8
Santa Rosa	-5.6%	12.9%	-9.2%	1,001.6	196.4413	805.1
Simi Valley	-26.3%	-23.7%	-26.6%	512.9	50.8942	462.0
Stockton	10.1%	8.7%	10.6%	2,686.7	676.3377	2,010.4
Sunnyvale	28.2%	16.0%	29.1%	1,132.0	70.0663	1,061.9
Temecula	4.1%	30.1%	2.8%	1,286.2	74.6754	1,211.5
Thousand Oaks	4.5%	-25.9%	6.1%	599.0	21.6121	577.4
Torrance	4.8%	19.8%	3.6%	1,046.9	91.1829	955.7
Vacaville	6.5%	12.6%	5.8%	1,321.8	138.6541	1,183.1
Vallejo	6.8%	0.3%	8.2%	2,210.9	362.2097	1,848.7
Ventura	-8.6%	8.7%	-10.5%	1,615.1	189.5165	1,425.5
Visalia	-10.0%	18.9%	-12.3%	1,482.6	149.0518	1,333.5
Vista	-3.0%	26.6%	-8.4%	828.5	166.6879	661.8
West Covina	-3.5%	5.2%	-4.3%	1,233.9	117.4664	1,116.4
Total, 69 cities	-1.1%	-2.6%	-0.8%	1,514.7	201.3	1,313.4

Sources: FBI (2020); DOF (2020). *Violent and total crime rates exclude rape. Note: Santa Ana is excluded from this table for failing to report in 2019. Los Angeles is excluded from this table, and reported separately in Appendix B, for underreporting offenses for several years prior to 2016.

Please note: Jurisdictions submit their data to the official statewide or national databases maintained by appointed governmental bodies. While every effort is made to review data for accuracy and to correct information upon revision, CJCJ cannot be responsible for data reporting errors made at the county, state, or national level.

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