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Homicide in Alaska

While the rate of homicide in the nation as a whole has remained fairly constant since 1975, in Alaska the rate per 100,000 people has fluctuated dramatically. At times it has been much higher than the overall national rate, but in recent years it has tended to be lower. Table 1 presents totals of homicides reported, rates per 100,000 and population figures for the country, Alaska, Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau. Figure 1 reveals the pattern of homicide rates since 1975 for the nation, Alaska and Anchorage.

In 1975, nationwide, 20,505 homicides (classified as murder and nonnegligent manslaughter in the FBI Uniform Crime Reports) were reported—a rate of 9.6 per 100,000 people. In the same year in Alaska, 43 homicides were reported, a rate of 12.2

per 100,000. In 1982, when 81 homicides were reported, the Alaska rate reached a high for the 1975-1995 period of 18.5. In contrast, the national rate for that year was 9.1. From 1988 through 1994 the Alaska rate fell below the national average with the lowest rate reported in 1988—5.7 per 100,000. In 1995 the Alaska rate of 9.1 was again above the national rate of 8.2.

In examining homicide rates, particularly for Alaska and its individual cities, it is important to note that fluctuations are more marked because overall totals are low. For example, in 1977, 44 murders were reported in the state. This figure results in a rate of 10.8 per 100,000. The 8 additional homicides reported in 1978 caused the rate to rise to 12.9. Nationwide, the 19,121

HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- The Bureau of Justice Statistics describes use of the death penalty in the United States (page 2).
- An international perspective on capital punishment (page 4).
- Announcing the 1998–99 Judicial Fellows Program (page 7).

murders in 1977 resulted in a rate of 8.8, while in 1978 the 19,555 homicides caused the rate to rise only to 9.0.

Please see *Homicide in Alaska*, page 6

Table 1. Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter in Alaska, 1975-1995

Number and rates per 100,000 in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Alaska overall.

Year	Anchorage			Fairbanks			Juneau			Alaska overall			Nationwide		
	Population	Murders	Rate	Population	Murders	Rate	Population	Murders	Rate	Population	Murders	Rate	Population	Murders	Rate
1975	74,596	11	14.7*	18,000	2	11.1	**	0	0.0	352,000	43	12.2	213,124,000	20,505	9.6
1976	83,429	15	18.0*	32,975	2	6.1	**	0	0.0	382,000	43	11.3	214,659,000	18,784	8.8
1977	112,956	13	11.5*	36,874	2	5.4	**	0	0.0	407,000	44	10.8	216,332,000	19,121	8.8
1978	120,348	16	13.3*	39,287	5	12.7	9,080	3	33.0*	403,000	52	12.9	218,059,000	19,555	9.0
1979	177,478	16	9.0	32,126	6	18.7	18,644	4	21.5	406,000	54	13.3	220,009,900	21,456	9.8
1980	173,992	15	8.6	**	0	0.0	19,483	1	5.1	400,142	39	9.7	225,349,264	23,044	10.2
1981	179,148	18	10.0	23,188	5	21.6	**	0	0.0	412,000	60	14.6	229,146,000	22,516	9.8
1982	190,454	22	11.6	**	0	0.0	21,326	3	14.1	438,000	81	18.5	231,534,000	21,012	9.1
1983	208,297	16	7.7	26,959	4	14.8	**	0	0.0	479,000	66	13.8	233,981,000	19,308	8.3
1984	223,316	16	7.2	28,176	3	10.6	**	0	0.0	500,000	58	11.6	236,158,000	18,692	7.9
1985	229,579	14	6.1	28,538	5	17.5	24,106	2	8.3	521,000	51	9.8	238,740,000	18,976	7.9
1986	238,235	17	7.1	27,973	5	17.9	**	0	0.0	543,000	46	8.5	241,077,000	20,613	8.6
1987	231,039	15	6.5	**	0	0.0	**	0	0.0	525,000	53	10.1	243,400,000	20,096	8.3
1988	217,429	13	6.0	67,495	1	1.5	25,689	3	11.7	513,000	29	5.7	245,807,000	20,675	8.4
1989	223,363	11	4.9	69,337	1	1.4	26,390	1	3.8	527,000	42	8.0	248,239,000	21,500	8.7
1990	226,338	10	4.4	30,843	4	13.0	26,751	2	7.5	550,043	41	7.5	248,709,873	23,438	9.4
1991	243,571	25	10.3	31,961	1	3.1	27,721	0	0.0	570,000	42	7.4	252,177,000	24,703	9.8
1992	241,565	17	7.0	32,914	2	6.1	28,547	0	0.0	587,000	44	7.5	255,082,000	23,760	9.3
1993	250,720	23	9.2	33,842	6	17.7	**	0	0.0	599,000	54	9.0	257,908,000	24,526	9.5
1994	253,667	22	8.7	34,237	4	11.7	**	0	0.0	606,000	38	6.3	260,341,000	23,305	9.0
1995	253,500	29	11.4	34,207	2	5.8	**	0	0.0	604,000	55	9.1	262,755,000	21,597	8.2

* Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau rates for 1975-1978 are based on population figures as found in *Crime in Alaska* (Alaska Criminal Justice Planning Agency, 1975-1978).

** Population figures were not given for years in which no murders or nonnegligent manslaughters were reported.

Source of data: Crime in the United States, *Uniform Crime Reports* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1975-1995).

A BJS Report

Capital Punishment in 1995

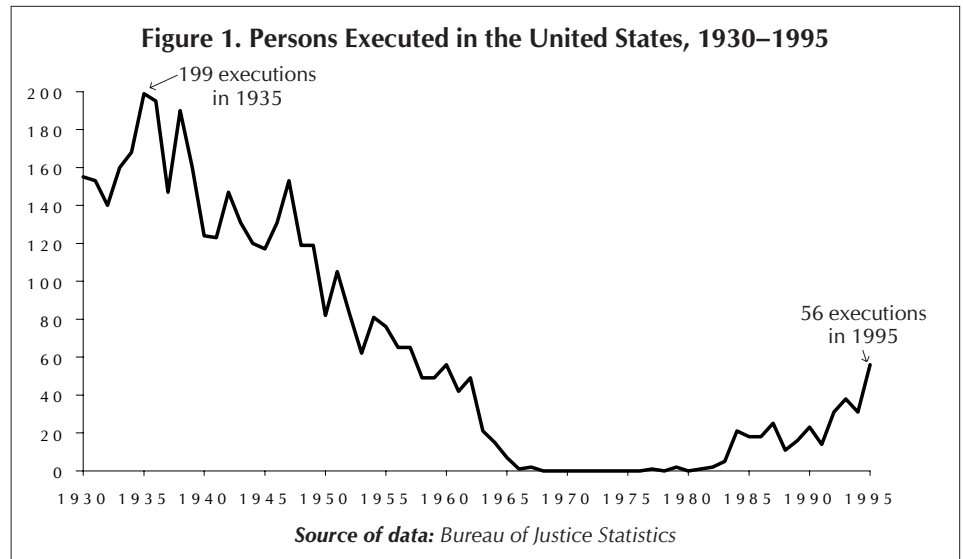
In 1995, 56 persons were executed in the United States. The number of persons executed was 25 greater than in 1994. It was the largest annual number since the 56 executed in 1960 and the 65 in 1957. The executions occurred in the following states: 19 in Texas; 6 in Missouri; 5 each in Illinois and Virginia; 3 each in Florida and Oklahoma; 2 each in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania; and 1 each in Arizona, Delaware, Louisiana, Montana, and South Carolina. All were men. Thirty of the executed prisoners were non-Hispanic whites; 22 were non-Hispanic blacks; 2, white Hispanics; 1, Asian; and 1, white with Hispanic origin not identified. Forty-nine of the executions were carried out by lethal injection and 7 by electrocution.

The prisoners executed during 1995 had been under sentence of death an average of 11 years and 2 months, about 12 months more than the average for inmates executed the previous year.

From January 1, 1977, to December 31, 1995, a total of 4,857 persons entered state and federal prisons under sentences of death, among whom 51 per cent were white, 41 per cent were black, 7 per cent were Hispanic, and 1 per cent were of other races.

During this 19-year period, a total of 313 executions took place in 26 states. Of the inmates executed, 171 were white, 120 were black, 19 were Hispanic, 2 were Native American, and 1 was Asian.

Also during 1977-95, 1,870 prisoners were removed from a death sentence as a



result of dispositions other than execution (resentencing, retrial, commutation, or death while awaiting execution). Of all persons removed from under a death sentence, 52 per cent were white, 41 per cent were black,

1 per cent were Native American, 0.5 per cent were Asian, and 5 per cent were Hispanic.

In 1995 eight jurisdictions did not specify a minimum age for which the death penalty

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Prisoners Under Sentence of Death, 1995

Characteristics	Yearend	Admissions	Removals
Number of prisoners	3,054	310	161
Sex			
Male	98.4%	98.1%	99.4%
Female	1.6	1.9	0.6
Race			
White	56.6%	54.2%	56.5%
Black	41.7	44.5	41.0
Other*	1.6	1.3	2.5
Hispanic origin			
Hispanic	8.5%	9.3%	8.6%
Non-Hispanic	91.5	90.7	91.4
Education			
8th grade or less	14.7%	12.1%	21.8%
9th-11th grades	37.2	41.5	42.3
High school graduate/GED	37.8	35.5	26.8
Any college	10.3	10.9	9.2
Median	11th grade	11th grade	11th grade
Marital status			
Married	25.6%	20.4%	31.5%
Divorced/separated	21.6	22.6	19.2
Widowed	2.5	2.6	2.1
Never married	50.3	54.4	47.3

Note: Calculations are based on those cases for which data were reported.

Missing data by category were as follows:

	Yearend	Admissions	Removals
Hispanic origin	257	29	10
Education	422	62	19
Marital status	247	36	15

* At yearend 1995, "other" consisted of 24 Native Americans, 17 Asians, and 8 self-identified Hispanics. During 1995, 4 Asians were admitted; 2 Native Americans and 2 Asians were removed.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

Table 1. Status of the Death Penalty, December 31, 1995

Executions during 1995	Number of prisoners under sentence of death
Texas 19	California 420
Missouri 6	Texas 404
Illinois 5	Florida 362
Virginia 5	Pennsylvania 196
Florida 3	Ohio 155
Oklahoma 3	Illinois 154
Alabama 2	Alabama 143
Arkansas 2	North Carolina 139
Georgia 2	Oklahoma 129
North Carolina 2	Arizona 117
Pennsylvania 2	Georgia 98
Arizona 1	Tennessee 96
Delaware 1	Missouri 92
Louisiana 1	22 other jurisdictions 549
Montana 1	
South Carolina 1	
Total 56	Total 3,054

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

could be imposed. In some states the minimum age was set forth in the statutes that determine the age at which a juvenile may be transferred to criminal court for trial as an adult. Thirteen states and the federal system required a minimum age of 18; one state, age 19. Sixteen states indicated an age of eligibility between 14 and 17.

The preceding article was derived from Bureau of Justice Statistics report "Capital Punishment 1995," NCJ-162043. Copies of the entire report may be obtained from the Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Unit or on the World Wide Web from the Bureau of Justice Statistics web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>.

Capital Offenses, by State, 1995

Alabama. Intentional murder with 18 aggravating factors (13A-5-40).

Arizona. First-degree murder accompanied by at least 1 of 10 aggravating factors.

Arkansas. Capital murder with a finding of at least 1 of 9 aggravating circumstances (Ark. Code Ann. 5-10-101); treason.

California. First-degree murder with special circumstances; train wrecking; treason; perjury causing execution.

Colorado. First-degree murder with at least 1 of 13 aggravating factors; treason. Capital sentencing excludes persons determined to be mentally retarded.

Connecticut. Capital felony with 9 categories of aggravated homicide (C.G.S. 53a-54b).

Delaware. First-degree murder with aggravating circumstances.

Florida. First-degree murder; felony murder; capital drug-trafficking.

Georgia. Murder; kidnaping with bodily injury or ransom where the victim dies; aircraft hijacking; treason.

Idaho. First-degree murder; aggravated kidnaping.

Illinois. First-degree murder with 1 of 15 aggravating circumstances.

Indiana. Murder with 14 aggravating circumstances. Capital sentencing excludes persons determined to be mentally retarded.

Kansas. Capital murder with 7 aggravating circumstances. Capital sentencing excludes persons determined to be mentally retarded.

Kentucky. Murder with aggravating factors; kidnaping with aggravating factors.

Louisiana. First-degree murder; aggravated rape of victim under age 12; treason (La. R.S. 14:30, 14:42, and 14:113).

Maryland. First-degree murder, either premeditated or during the commission of a felony, provided that certain death eligibility requirements are satisfied.

Mississippi. Capital murder; capital rape; aircraft piracy.

Missouri. First-degree murder (565.020 RSMO).

Montana. Capital murder with aggravating circumstances.

Nebraska. First-degree murder.

Nevada. First-degree murder with 10 aggravating circumstances.

New Hampshire. Capital murder.

New Jersey. Purposeful or knowing murder; contract murder; murder or solicitation thereof by a leader of a narcotics trafficking network.

New Mexico. First-degree murder (Section 30-2-1 A, NMSA).

New York. First-degree murder with 1 of 10 aggravating factors. Capital sentencing excludes persons determined to be mentally retarded.

North Carolina. First-degree murder (N.C.G.S. 14-17).

Ohio. Aggravated murder with 1 of 8 aggravating circumstances (O.R.C. secs. 2929.01, 2903.01, 2929.04).

Oklahoma. First-degree murder in conjunction with a finding of at least 1 of 8 statutorily defined aggravating circumstances.

Oregon. Aggravated murder (ORS 163.095).

Pennsylvania. First-degree murder with 16 aggravating circumstances.

South Carolina. Murder 1 of 10 aggravating circumstances.

South Dakota. First-degree murder with 1 of 10 aggravating circumstances.

Tennessee. First-degree murder.

Texas. Criminal homicide with 1 of 8 aggravating circumstances.

Utah. Aggravated murder; aggravated assault by a prisoner serving a life sentence if serious bodily injury is intentionally caused (76-5-202, Utah Code Annotated).

Virginia. First-degree murder with 1 of 9 aggravating circumstances.

Washington. Aggravated first-degree murder.

Wyoming. First-degree murder.

Recent BJS Reports

In addition to the report summarized in the accompanying article, the following recent studies and reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics are available from the Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Unit or on the World Wide Web at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/> or <http://www.ncjrs.org/>:

"Felony Sentences in State Courts, 1994," data from a biannual survey by the National Judiciary Reporting Program, NCJ-163391.

"Lifetime Likelihood of Going to State or Federal Prison," estimates of lifetime chances of being incarcerated derived from standards lifetable techniques, NCJ-160092.

"Female Victims of Violent Crime," data on the incidence of violence against women derived from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the Uniform Crime Reporting system, NCJ-162602.

"Prosecutors in State Courts, 1994," analysis of data from a national biannual survey, NCJ-151656.

"Changes in Criminal Victimization, 1994-95," analysis of data from the National Crime Victimization Survey, NCJ-162032.

"Juvenile Delinquents in the Federal Criminal Justice System," analysis of data on juveniles charged or prosecuted in 1995 in the federal system, NCJ-163066.

"Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 1996," summary data on incarceration in state and federal prisons, NCJ-162843.

"Presale Firearm Checks," data on background checks since the enactment of the Brady Bill, NCJ-162787.

"Campus Law Enforcement Agencies, 1995," an examination of crime and law enforcement at colleges and universities throughout the country, NCJ-161137.

The Death Penalty: An International Perspective

According to Amnesty International, during 1995 at least 2,931 individuals were executed throughout the world and 4,165 sentenced to death. These figures include only those known to Amnesty International; the actual figures are probably higher. Three countries were responsible for 86 per cent of the executions: China, 2,535; Saudi Arabia, 192; and Nigeria, over 100.

Since 1990, five countries are known to have executed individuals who were younger than 18 at the time of the crime: Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Yemen. The largest number of known executions of juvenile offenders was in the United States — 6 since 1990.

According to Amnesty International, over half the nations in the world have now

abolished the death penalty in law or practice. By October 1996, 58 countries and territories had abolished the death penalty completely, and 15 had abolished it for all but exceptional crimes such as certain crimes committed during time of war. Twenty-six countries retained the death penalty in law but had not invoked it for the past ten years or had made an international commitment

Table 1. Countries Which Have Abolished the Death Penalty, 1996

Countries and territories whose laws do not provide for the death penalty for any crime (58 countries).

Country	Date of last execution	Date abolished for ordinary crimes	Date abolished for all crimes	Country	Date of last execution	Date abolished for ordinary crimes	Date abolished for all crimes
Andorra	1943		1990	Macedonia			
Angola			1992	Marshall Islands	****		
Australia	1967	1984	1985	Mauritius	1987		1995
Austria	1950	1950	1968	Micronesia (Federated States)			
Belgium	1950		1996	Moldova			1995
Cambodia			1989	Monaco	1847		1962
Cape Verde	1835		1981	Mozambique	1986		1990
Columbia	1909		1910	Namibia	1988 *		1990
Costa Rica			1877	Netherlands	1952	1870	1982
Croatia			1990	New Zealand	1957	1961	1989
Czech Republic			1990 **	Nicaragua	1930		1979
Denmark	1950	1933	1978	Norway	1948	1905	1979
Dominican Republic			1966	Palau			
Ecuador			1906	Panama	1903 *		
Finland	1944	1949	1972	Portugal	1849 *	1867	1976
France	1977		1981	Romania	1989		1989
Germany	1949 ***		1949/1987 ***	San Marino	1468 *	1848	1865
Greece	1972		1993	Sao Tome and Principe	****		1990
Guinea-Bissau	1986 *		1993	Slovak Republic			1990 **
Haiti	1972 *		1987	Slovenia			1989
Honduras	1940		1956	Solomon Islands	****	1966	
Hong Kong	1966		1993	Spain	1975	1978	1995
Hungary	1988		1990	Sweden	1910	1921	1972
Iceland	1830		1928	Switzerland	1944	1942	1992
Ireland	1954		1990	Tuvalu	****		
Italy	1947	1947	1994	Uruguay			1907
Kiribati	****			Vanuatu	****		
Liechtenstein	1785		1987	Vatican City State			1969
Luxembourg	1979		1979	Venezuela			1863

Countries whose laws provide for the death penalty only for exceptional crimes, such as crimes under military law or crimes committed in exceptional circumstances such as wartime (15 countries).

Country	Date of last execution	Date abolished for ordinary crimes	Country	Date of last execution	Date abolished for ordinary crimes
Argentina		1984	Mexico	1937	
Brazil	1855	1979	Nepal	1979	1990
Canada	1962	1976	Paraguay	1928	1992
Cyprus	1962	1983	Peru	1979	1979
El Salvador	1973 *	1979	Seychelles	****	
Fiji	1964	1954	South Africa	1991	1995
Israel	1962	1971	United Kingdom	1964	1973
Malta	1943				

* Date of last known execution.

** The last execution in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic took place in 1988; the death penalty was abolished there in 1990. On January 1, 1993 the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic divided into two states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

*** The last execution in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) took place in 1949; the death penalty was abolished there in 1949. The date of the last execution in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) is not known; the death penalty was abolished there in 1987. The FRG and the GDR were unified in October 1990.

**** No executions since independence.

Table 2. Countries Which Retain the Death Penalty, 1996

Countries and territories which retain the death penalty for ordinary crimes.

* Afghanistan	** Djibouti ^c	* Lebanon	* Sierra Leone
** Albania ^a	* Domenica	* Lesotho	* Singapore
* Algeria	* Egypt	* Liberia	* Somalia
* Antigua and Barbuda	* Equatorial Guinea	* Libya	** Sri Lanka (1976)
* Armenia	* Eritrea	* Lithuania	* Sudan
* Azerbaijan	* Estonia	** Madagascar (1958) ^b	** Suriname (1982)
* Bahamas	* Ethiopia	* Malawi	* Swaziland
* Bahrain	* Gabon	* Malaysia	* Syria
* Bangladesh	** Gambia (1981)	** Maldives (1952) ^b	* Tadjikistan
* Barbados	* Georgia	** Mali (1980)	* Taiwan (Republic of China)
* Belarus	* Ghana	* Mauritania	* Tanzania
* Belize	* Grenada	* Mongolia	* Thailand
* Benin	* Guatemala	* Morocco	** Togo
** Bermuda (1977)	* Guinea	* Myanmar	** Tonga (1982)
** Bhutan (1964) ^b	* Guyana	** Nauruc	* Trinidad and Tobago
** Bolivia (1974)	* India	** Niger (1976) ^b	* Tunisia
* Bosnia-Herzegovina	* Indonesia	* Nigeria	** Turkey (1984)
* Botswana	* Iran	* Oman	* Turkmenistan
** Brunei Darussalam (1957)	* Iraq	* Pakistan	* Uganda
* Bulgaria	* Jamaica	** Papua New Guinea (1950)	* Ukraine
* Burkina Faso	* Japan	** Philippines (1976)	* United Arab Emirates
** Burundi (1982)	* Jordan	* Poland	* United States of America
* Cameroon	* Kazakhstan	* Qatar	* Uzbekistan
** Central African Republic (1981)	* Kenya	* Russia	* Vietnam
* Chad	* Korea, Democratic Republic of (North Korea)	** Rwanda (1982)	** Western Samoa ^c
* Chile	* Korea, Republic of (South Korea)	* Saint Christopher and Nevis	* Yemen
* China, People's Republic of	* Kuwait	* Saint Lucia	* Yugoslavia, Federal Republic of
* Comoros	* Kyrgyzstan	* Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	* Zaire
** Congo (1982)	* Laos	* Saudi Arabia	* Zambia
** Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	* Latvia	** Senegal (1967)	* Zimbabwe
* Cuba			

* Most of these countries and territories (95 in number) are known to have carried out executions in the past 10 years. On some countries Amnesty International is unable to ascertain whether or not executions have taken place. Several countries have carried out executions in the past 10 years but have since instituted national moratoria on executions.

** Amnesty International considers these countries (26 in number) to be "abolitionist de facto" because they have not executed anyone during the past 10 or more years or have made an international commitment not to carry out executions. The date of last execution is given in parentheses, if available.

a. Preparatory to Albania's joining the Council of Europe, in a declaration signed on June 29, 1995, Pjeter Arbnori, President of the Albanian Republic, said he was willing to commit his country "to put into place a moratorium on executions until [the] total abolition of capital punishment."

b. Date of last known execution.

c. No executions since independence.

Source of data: Amnesty International, "The Death Penalty: List of Abolitionist and Retentionist Countries," October 1996

not to carry out executions. In October 1996, 95 countries retained and continued to use the death penalty.

Since 1985 over 25 countries have legally abolished the death penalty or, having abolished it previously for ordinary crimes, have now revoked it for all crimes. Over the same

period four countries reintroduced capital punishment, but one of these four again abolished it.

Several international treaties prohibit the execution of anyone who was younger than 18 at the time of the offense: the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights; the American Convention on Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. More than 100 countries have specifically prohibited the execution of juveniles or have signed one of these treaties, indicating acceptance of the prohibition.

Table 3. International Treaties on the Death Penalty, 1996

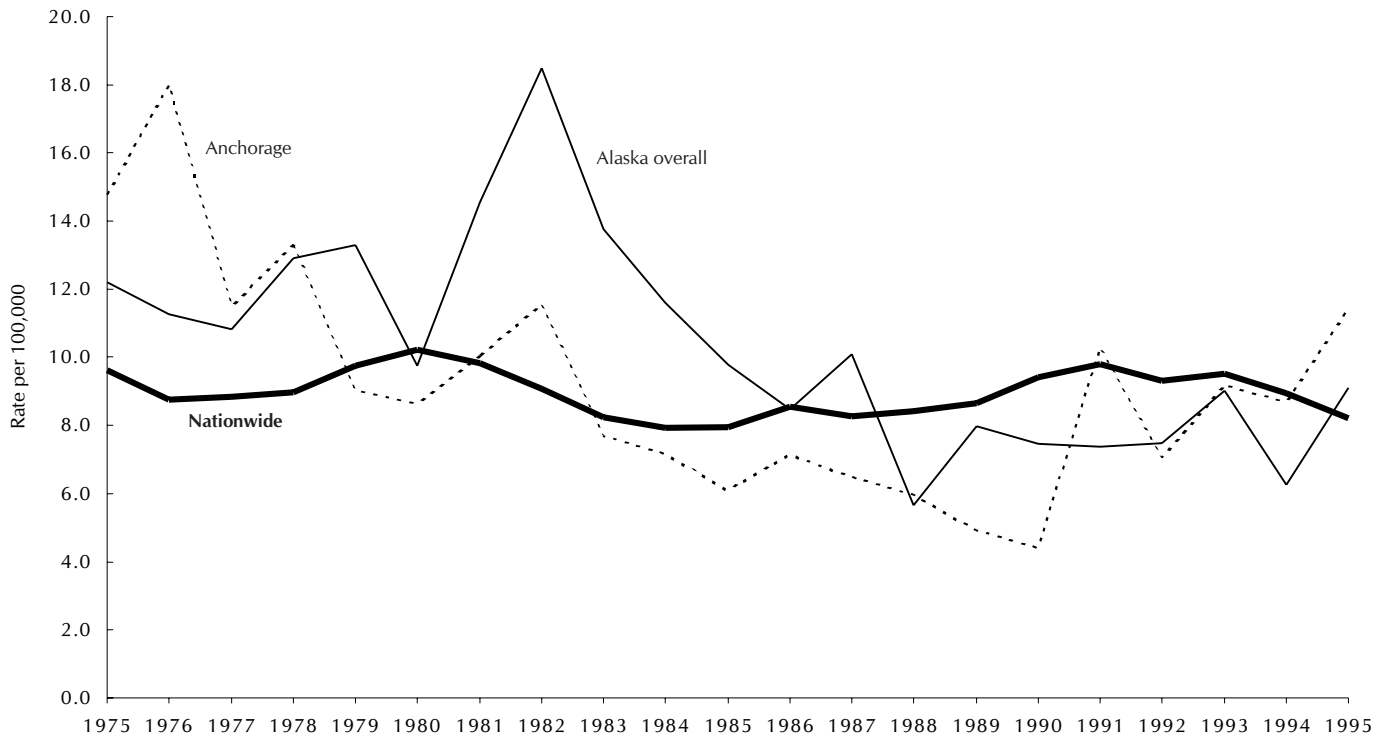
Parties and unratified signatories to anti-death penalty treaties as of January 1, 1996.

International Treaty	Sponsoring body	State parties to the treaty	States which have signed but not yet ratified
Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty	United Nations	Australia, Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Romania, Seychelles, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, Venezuela	Belgium, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua
Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the abolition of the death penalty	Council of Europe	Andorra, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland	Belgium, Estonia, Greece
Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty	Organization of American States	Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela	Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua

Source of data: Amnesty International, "Abolition of the Death Penalty Worldwide: Developments in 1995," July 1996; Amnesty International, Death Penalty News, June 1996

Figure 1. Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter in Anchorage, Alaska, and the Nation, 1975-1995

Rates per 100,000 in Anchorage, Alaska overall, and nationwide.



Anchorage rates for 1975-1978 are based on population figures as found in *Crime in Alaska* (Alaska Criminal Justice Planning Agency, 1975-1978).

Source of data: Crime in the United States, *Uniform Crime Reports* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1975-1995)

Homicide in Alaska
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The rates for homicide in Anchorage also fluctuated dramatically between 1975 and 1995, from a high of 13.3 per 100,00 in 1978 when 16 murders were reported to a low of 4.4 in 1991 with 10 homicides reported. Like the rates for Alaska as a whole, Anchorage rates have been both higher and lower than the national rates, but as Figure

1 reveals, the pattern for the Anchorage homicide rate shows an overall decline over the twenty years for which data are presented.

According to Alaska Department of Public Safety figures, murder is the least common of violent crimes. Over the ten years from 1986 through 1995, murder ranged from a low 0.8 per cent of all violent crime in 1994 to a high of 2.2 per cent in 1987.

Murder Victim-Offender Relationship

Murder by a stranger is not as frequent an occurrence as is commonly believed. As Table 2 shows, homicides in which the victim is known to the offender are, in general, much more common in Alaska than homicides committed by strangers. For all ten years for which data are presented, murders committed by family members or acquaintances, when the relationship of the victim to the offender could be determined, outnumber those committed by strangers. Even if it were assumed that all cases in which the victim-offender relationship is not reported were, in fact, murders by strangers, only in one year—1994—would stranger murders outnumber those committed by family members or acquaintances.

Murder Weapons

Handguns or other firearms were the most common murder weapons over the period from 1986 through 1995. In 1986, firearms totaled 69.4 per cent of murder weapons; in 1987, 61 per cent; in 1988, 62 per cent; in 1989, 61 per cent; in 1990, 51 per cent; in 1991, 44.5 per cent; in 1992, 61.3 per cent; in 1993, 48.3 per cent; in 1994, 64.9 per cent; and in 1995, 56 per cent.

Table 2. Relationship of Victim to Offender for Murders and Nonnegligent Manslaughters in Alaska, 1986-1995

	Family member		Outside family but known to victim		Stranger		Relationship unknown		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1986	6	12.2%	27	55.1%	6	12.2%	10	20.4%	49
1987	11	21.6	31	60.8	3	5.9	6	11.8	51
1988	9	27.3	18	54.5	3	9.1	3	9.1	33
1989	12	27.9	21	48.8	8	18.6	2	4.7	43
1990	11	29.7	18	48.6	6	16.2	2	5.4	37
1991	11	24.4	21	46.7	8	17.8	5	11.1	45
1992	6	13.6	22	50.0	5	11.4	11	25.0	44
1993	6	11.5	22	42.3	10	19.2	14	26.9	52
1994	2	5.4	15	40.5	11	29.7	9	24.3	37
1995	10	18.2	25	45.5	10	18.2	10	18.2	55

Row percentages.

Source of data: Crime Reported in Alaska, *Uniform Crime Reporting*, Alaska Department of Public Safety, 1985-1995

Table 3. Leading Causes of Death in the U.S., with Alaska Comparisons, 1994

Ranking	Alaska		United States				
	Rate per 100,000	Per cent	Rate per 100,000	Per cent			
1	2	Heart disease	534	91.3	21.7%	281.6	32.1%
2	1	Cancer	566	96.8	23.0	206.0	23.5
3	5	Cerebrovascular diseases	123	21.0	5.0	59.2	6.8
4	6	Chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and allied conditions	97	16.6	3.9	39.1	4.5
5	3	Accidents and adverse effects	319	54.6	13.0	34.6	3.9
6	7	Pneumonia and influenza	53	9.1	2.2	31.5	3.6
7	8	Diabetes mellitus	50	8.6	2.0	21.2	2.4
8	13	Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection	21	3.6	0.9	16.1	1.8
9	4	Suicide	148	25.3	6.0	12.4	1.4
10	10	Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	42	7.2	1.7	9.9	1.1
11	9	Homicide and legal intervention	47	8.0	1.9	9.1	1.0
12	11	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis	26	4.4	1.1	9.1	1.0
13	17	Septicemia	12	2.1	0.5	7.6	0.9
14	15	Atherosclerosis	19	3.3	0.8	6.9	0.8
15	13	Perinatal period conditions	21	3.6	0.9	5.4	0.6
—	—	All other causes	382	54.3	15.5	127.2	14.5
—	—	All causes	2,460	420.8		876.9	

Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Source: Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics, 1994 Annual Report

Homicide as a Cause of Death

Looking at homicide in the context of all causes of death also reveals its relative infrequency. According to figures reported by the Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics, in 1994—the last year for which data have been assembled—homicide ranked as the ninth most frequent cause of death in Alaska, while in the U.S. as a whole it was the eleventh most frequent (Table 3). In comparison, suicide was the fourth most frequent

cause of death in Alaska (ninth in the U.S.) in 1994, and accidents ranked third (fifth in U.S.).

Cancer and heart disease, which claimed 534 and 566 victims respectively, were the first and second leading causes of death in Alaska in 1994. Three hundred nineteen people died as the result of accidents and 148 individuals committed suicide.

Table 4 presents the various subdivisions of the overall category of accidents. The numbers included in these subcategories reveal that several types of accidental death—motor vehicle accidents, drowning, and

Table 4. Causes of Death by Accidents and Adverse Effects in Alaska, 1994

Cause of death	Number of deaths
Motor vehicle	104
Other road vehicle	2
Water transport—drowning	31
Water transport—other	11
Non-transport—drowning	37
Air transport	43
Poisoning	33
Complications resulting from medical procedure	3
Falls	24
Fire/burns	30
Environmental factors—heat	2
Environmental factors—cold	23
Environmental factors—other	3
Suffocation	14
Firearms	9
All other accidents	18
Total	387

Source: Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics, 1994 Annual Report



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air transport accidents—were also more frequent in Alaska in 1994 than death by homicide.

1998–99 Judicial Fellows Program

The Judicial Fellows Commission has opened its application process for the 1998–99 Judicial Fellows Program. The Program, established in 1973 and patterned after the White House and Congressional Fellowships, seeks individuals from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds who are interested in the administration of justice and who show promise of making a contribution to the judiciary.

Up to four Fellows will be chosen to spend a year, beginning in late August or early September 1998, in Washington, D.C. at the Supreme Court of the United States, the Federal Judicial Center, the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, or the United States Sentencing Commission. Candidates must be familiar with the federal judicial system and have at

least one postgraduate degree and two or more years of successful professional experience. Fellowship stipends are based on salaries for comparable government work and on individual salary histories, but will not exceed the GS 15, step 3 level, presently \$78,857.

Information about the program is available from:

Vanessa M. Yarnell
Administrative Director
Judicial Fellows Program
Supreme Court of the United States
Room 5
Washington, DC 20543
(202) 479-3415

The application deadline is November 15, 1997.

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