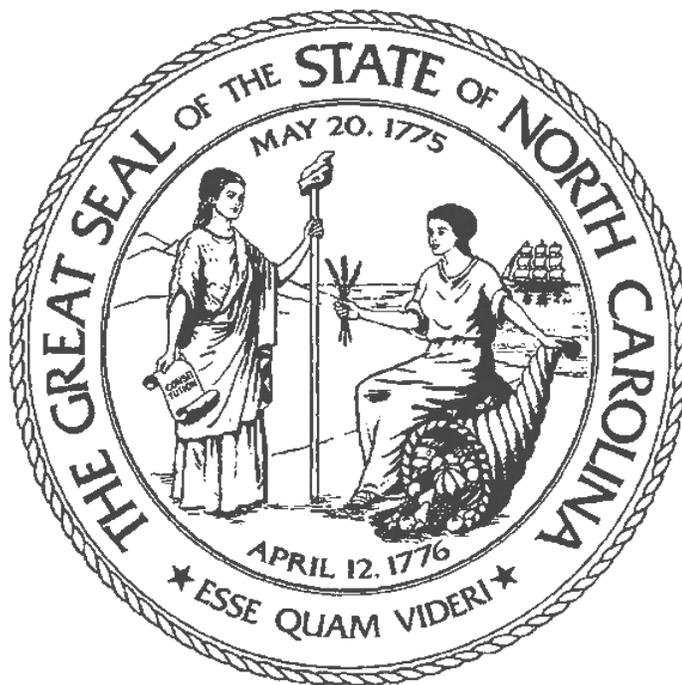


# Scorecard on Crime and Justice in North Carolina

May 2013

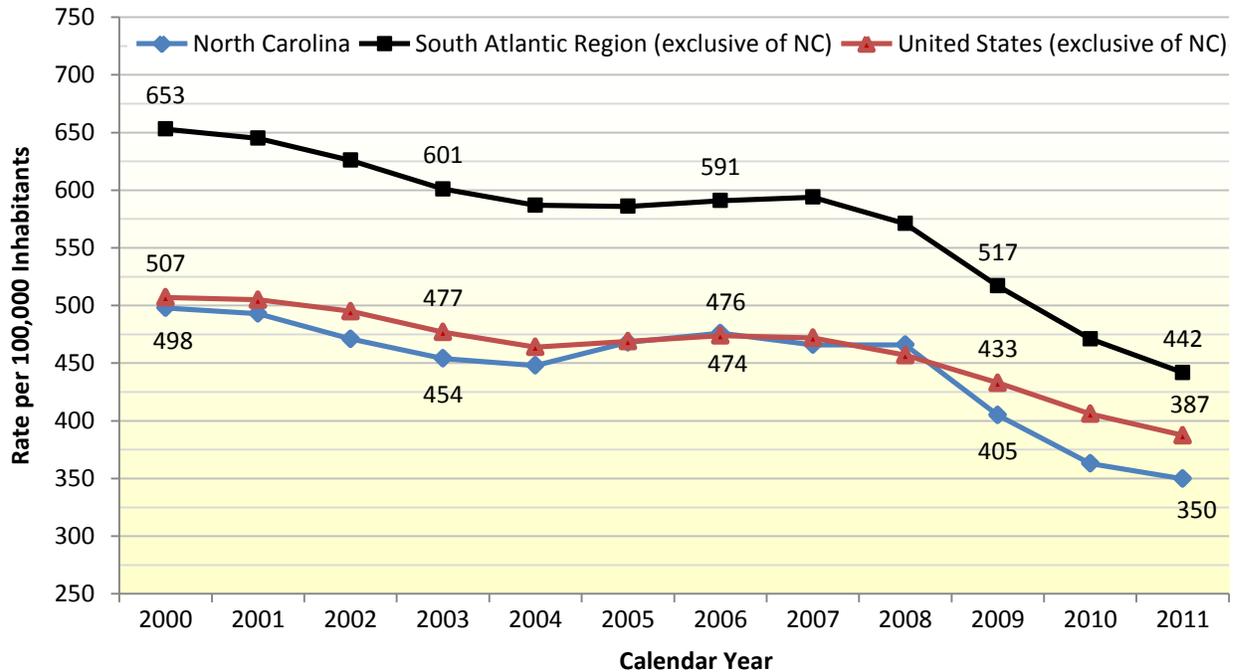


**Compiled by Justin Davis, Research Specialist  
Criminal Justice Analysis Center  
N.C. Governor's Crime Commission  
(919) 733-4564  
[www.ncgccd.org](http://www.ncgccd.org)**

This document is a compilation of criminal justice related trend data obtained from numerous sources. It was written to inform decisionmakers and the general public about recent system trends in North Carolina. The information is intended to be used as a guide to help shape better policy decisions related to the criminal justice system.

**Disclaimer:** When analyzing justice-related data, it is difficult to gauge causes for annual increases or decreases. Changes in overall numbers and rates can be the result of a combination of more thorough reporting, improved enforcement and actual changes in the number of offenses committed.

Figure 1. Violent Index Crime Rates (2000-2011)



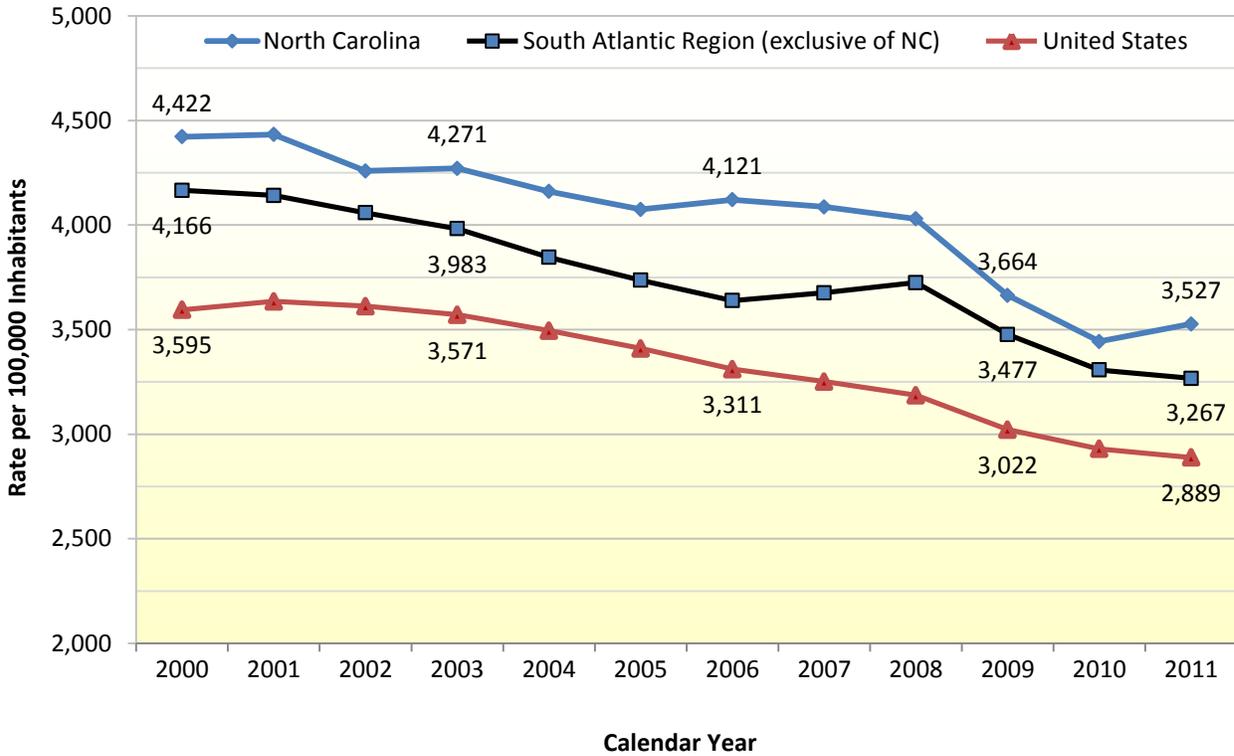
Source: United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2011*

Note: The South Atlantic region consists of DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA and WV.

**State’s violent crime rate remains lower than regional and national rates**

Violent index crimes have continued to fall throughout the nation during recent years. Since the turn of the century, North Carolina has seen roughly a 30 percent decline in violent crimes per capita, while regional and national rates have decreased by 32 percent and 24 percent respectively. For Uniform Crime Reporting purposes, violent crime is comprised of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Based on the rate of reported violent offenses for 2011, North Carolina ranked as the 24<sup>th</sup> most violent state in the nation. In terms of specific violent crimes, the state had the 15<sup>th</sup> highest reported rate for murder and non-negligent manslaughter, 42<sup>nd</sup> highest for rape, 22<sup>nd</sup> highest for robbery, and 23<sup>rd</sup> highest for aggravated assault.

Figure 2. Property Index Crime Rates (2000-2011)

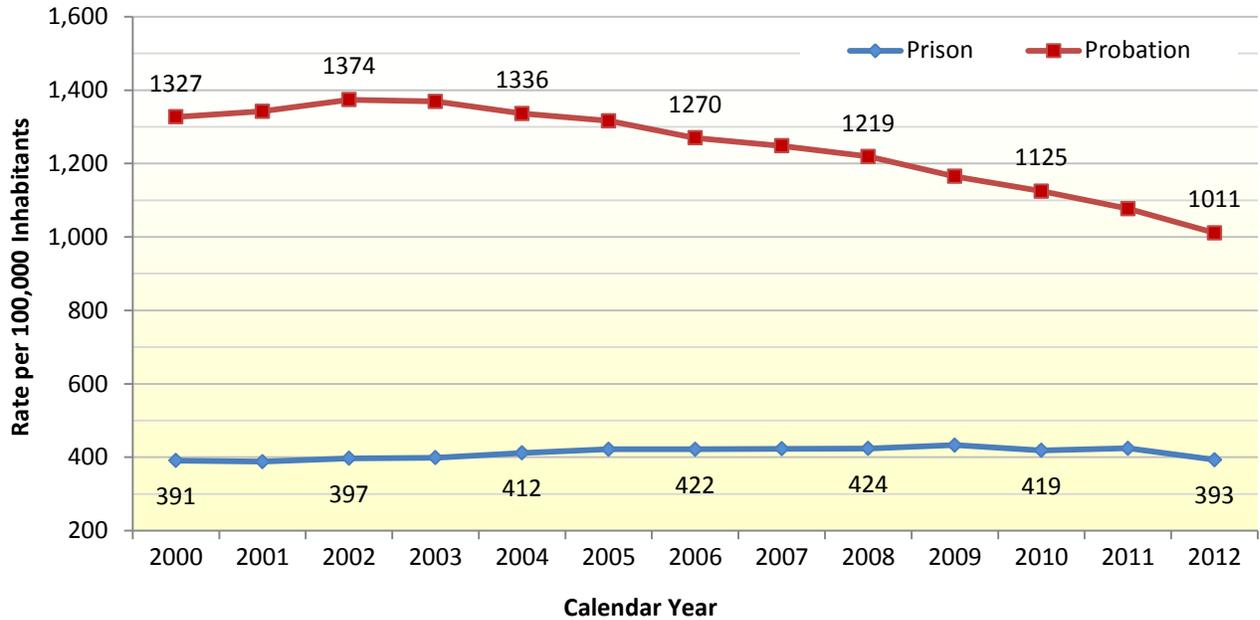


Source: United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2011*  
 Note: The South Atlantic region consists of DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA and WV.

**State’s property crime rate remains higher than regional and national rates; Slight uptick seen in most recent figures**

North Carolina’s property index crime rate has continued to remain higher than both national and regional rates. According to 2011 reported figures, the state’s rate was almost 8 percent higher than the regional rate and 22 percent more than the national rate. For Uniform Crime Reporting purposes, property index crime includes burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft. Based on the most recent figures, North Carolina experienced the 10<sup>th</sup> highest rate for property crimes per capita in the country. More specifically, the state had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate for burglary, 16<sup>th</sup> highest for larceny-theft, and 31<sup>st</sup> highest for motor vehicle thefts.

Figure 3. NC Prison and Probation Population Rates (2000-2012)



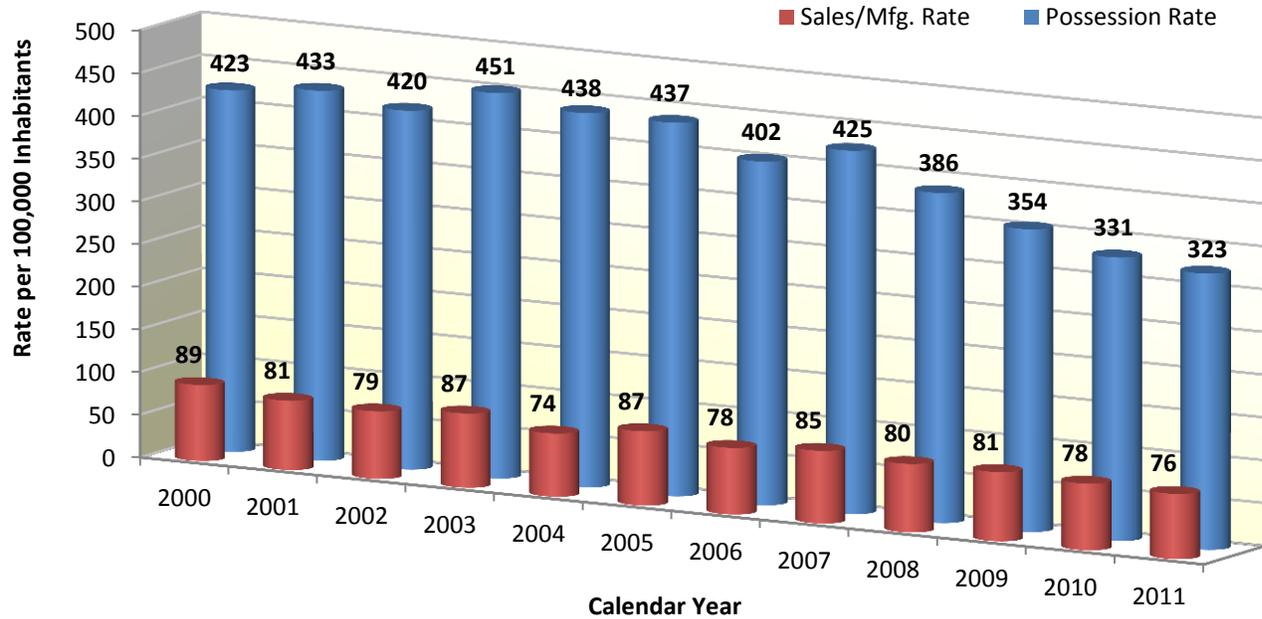
Raw Data Source: N.C. Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction, Automated System Query (A.S.Q.), Custom Offender Reports

***Declines seen in state’s recent adult correctional rates***

In 2012, North Carolina’s adult prison and probation population rates declined by 7 percent and 6 percent respectively from the previous year. According to the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)<sup>1</sup>, the state’s imprisonment rate remains below the national rate. However, one caveat to note, BJS data account for only those individuals sentenced to a year or more whom are under state or federal authority, whereas the rate portrayed in the table above accounts for all state prisoners regardless of sentence length. Recent decreases in the adult prison population rate are partly due to the creation of the Statewide Misdemeanant Confinement Program resulting from The Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA) of 2011. Before JRA became law, misdemeanants with sentences that required confinement of 91 to 180 days served time in state prison facilities. However, after legislation went into effect, these offenders now serve time in jails that have volunteered space for the program. Although these offenders serve sentences in county jails, the costs of housing and caring for is paid by a statewide fund administered by the North Carolina Sheriffs’ Association.

<sup>1</sup> Prisoners in 2011, Bureau of Justice Statistics, December 2012, NCJ 239808. Available at <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=4559>

Figure 4. Drug Arrest Rates in North Carolina (2000-2011)

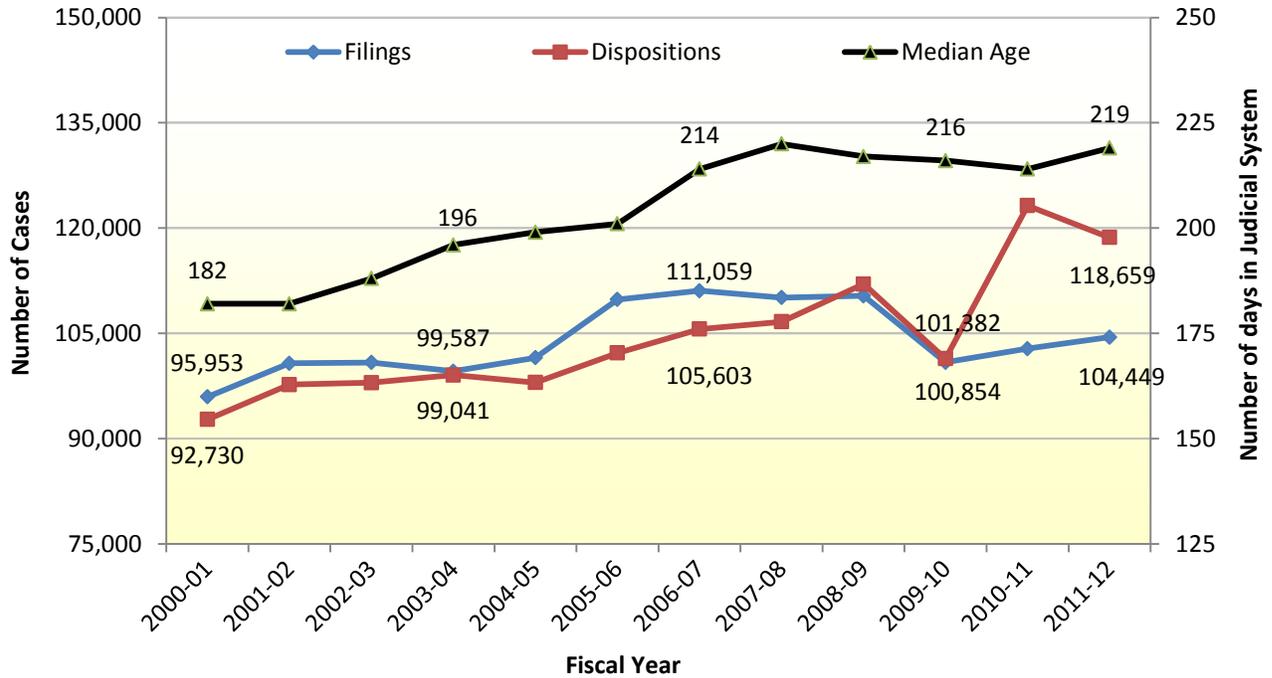


Raw Data Source: NC Department of Justice, State Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in North Carolina, 2011*

**Total drug arrest rates decline for 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year**

For a fourth consecutive year, rates for both drug possession and sales/manufacturing arrests declined in North Carolina. In fact, the 2011 possession rate of 323 arrests per 100,000 inhabitants is the lowest since 1993. Meanwhile, the sales rate has remained fairly stable over the last four years with recent meager decreases. However, a closer examination of arrest data from the past decade shows that opium/cocaine arrests were down 29 percent in 2011 when compared to 2000. The rate of marijuana arrests went relatively unchanged during the same period. While these trends are encouraging, arrests for the possession and sale of synthetic narcotics have increased tremendously. Possession arrests have more than doubled (132 percent increase) since 2000, while sales/manufacturing arrests have more than tripled (251 percent).

Figure 5. N.C. Superior Court Felony Caseload (FY 2000-01 through FY 2011-12)

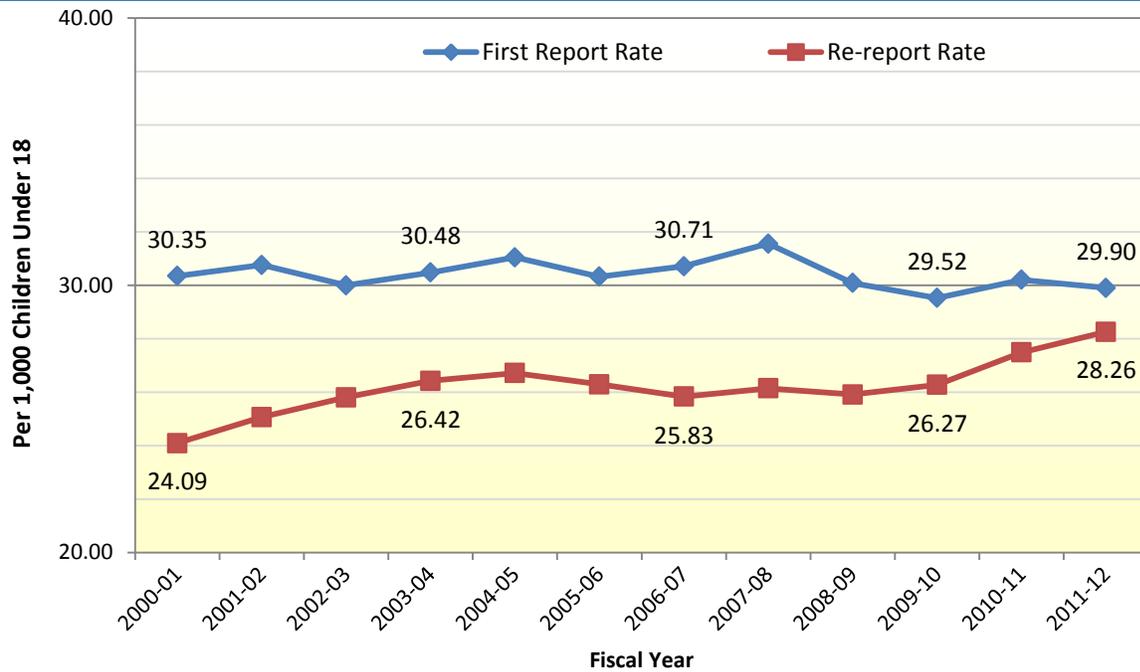


Source: NC Administrative Office of the Courts, *N.C. Judicial Branch Quick Facts 2011-12*

***Felony case dispositions outnumber filings for a fourth consecutive year; Median age of cases remains stable***

Throughout three-quarters of the last decade, it was a common occurrence for more felony cases to be filed in North Carolina Superior Court than to be disposed of in a given year. For the chart above, *dispositions* refer to the number of cases that were resolved in a given year, while *filings* represent the number of felony cases entering the system. Beginning in FY 2008-09, the trend reversed. For a fourth straight fiscal year, dispositions have outnumbered filings. In addition, the median age of felony cases, defined as the approximate number of days between the filing and disposition of a single case, has remained stable in comparison to previous years.

Figure 6. Rate of children with a report of abuse or neglect in North Carolina (FY 2000-01 through FY 2011-12)



Source: Duncan, D.F., Kum, H.C., Flair, K.A., and Stewart, C.J. (2011). Management Assistance for Child Welfare, Work First, and Food & Nutrition Services in North Carolina. Retrieved 11/4/11, from UNC-CH Jordan Institute for Families website. URL:<http://ssw.unc.edu/ma/>

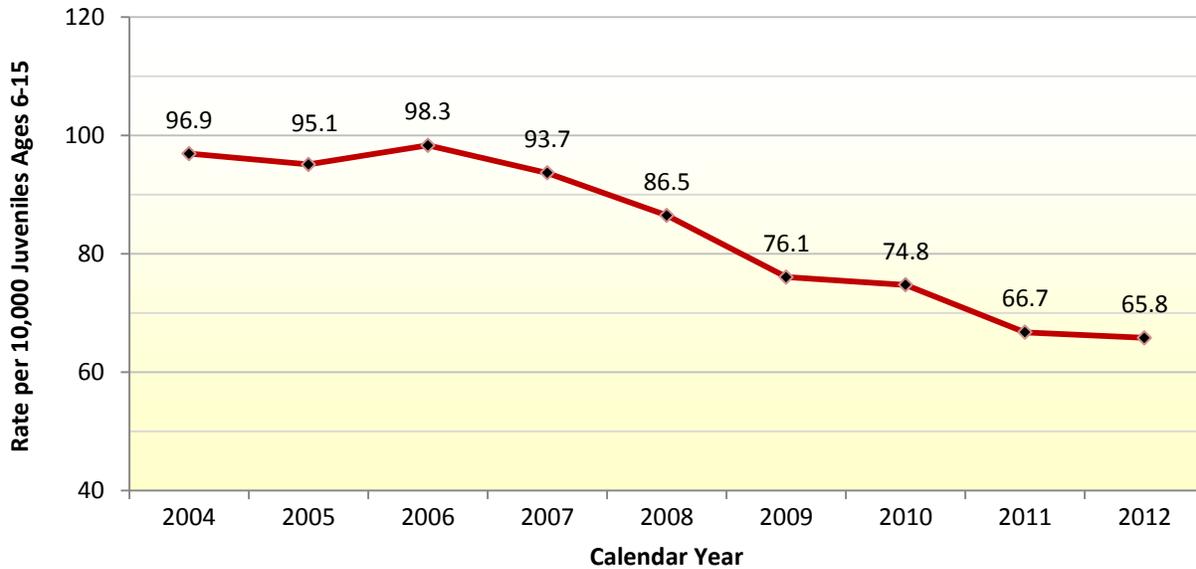
**Number of abused and neglected children remains stable during last four years**

Based on reported figures, annually, about five percent of the youth population is subject to child abuse and/or neglect. In fact, on average, each year three percent of children are reported as abused and/or neglected for the first time ever. Meanwhile, re-reported children represent about 2.8 percent of the overall child population.<sup>2</sup> As these numbers may be surprising, consider that researchers suggest that official statistics and actual abuse counts often differ greatly with many factors affecting both initial reporting and re-reporting.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For Figure 6, the number of unique children reported does not capture the number of occurrences experienced by a particular child nor whether reports were substantiated or not. Rather, it solely captures the number of children who were reported at least once in a given fiscal year.

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert, R., Widom, C.S., Browne, K., Fergusson, D., Webb, E. & Janson, S. (3 January, 2009). Burden and consequences of child maltreatment in high-income countries. *The Lancet*, 373(9657), Pages 68-81. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(08)61706-7

Figure 7. Rate of serious and violent juvenile crime complaints in North Carolina (2004-2012)

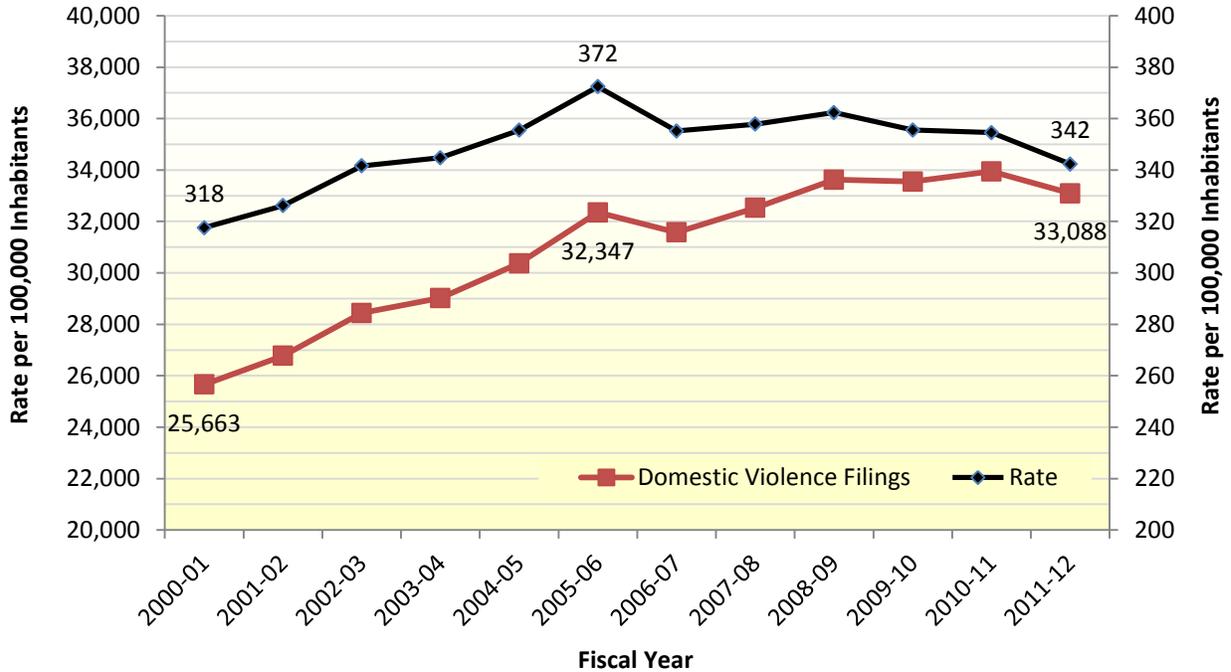


Raw Data Source: NC Department of Public Safety, Division of Juvenile Justice, *2012 County Databook*

***Violent and serious juvenile crime complaints continue to fall for sixth consecutive year***

The latest data on violent and serious juvenile crime indicate the rate of complaints has declined once again from previous years. A delinquent juvenile is any juvenile who, while at least 6 years of age but not yet 16, commits an offense that would be a crime under state law or under an ordinance of local government, including violation of the motor vehicle laws, if committed by an adult. Violent and serious crime complaints have fallen by about one-third (33.1 percent) over the past five years. More specifically, in 2004 there were 8.77 violent crime complaints per 10,000 juveniles versus 6.37 complaints last year. For complaints regarding a serious crime, offenses classified as felony F through I and A1 Misdemeanors, there was a 32.6 percent decline during the period. These recent declines have likely occurred as a result of the state’s juvenile justice reform efforts that occurred in the early-mid 2000s and have led to a handful of juvenile facility closures in recent years.

**Figure 8. Domestic Violence Protective Orders Filed in N.C. District Courts (FY 2000-01 through FY 2010-11)**

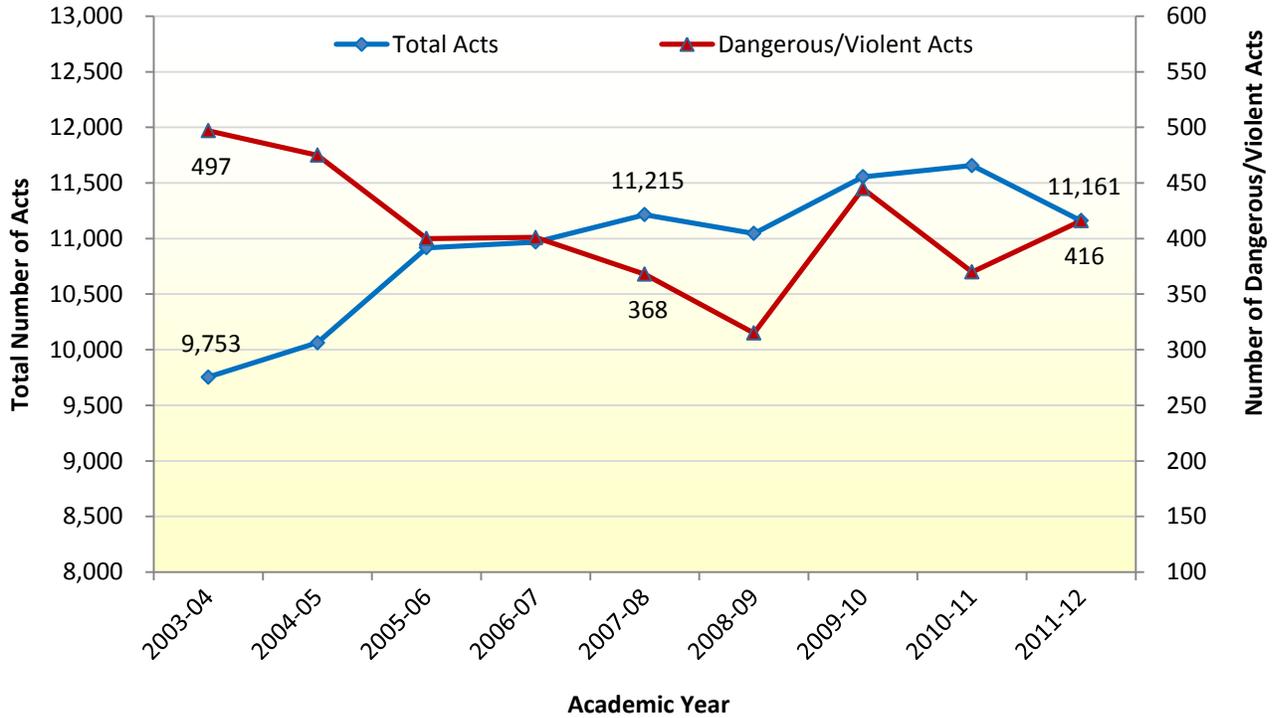


Raw Data Source: NC Administrative Office of the Courts, Data request on April 25, 2013

***Rate of domestic violence protective orders filed reaches lowest mark since FY 2002-03***

Both the number and rate of domestic violence protective orders filed in district courts across North Carolina were slightly down last fiscal year. After seeing increases throughout the first half of the last decade, filings have leveled off since FY 2005-06. There has been a small uptick in the number of filings since then. However, after accounting for population growth, the rate has actually decreased by 8 percent.

Figure 9. Reported Acts of School Crime and Violence in North Carolina Public Schools (2003-04 through 2011-12)



Source: NC Department of Instruction, *Annual Report on School Crime and Violence, 2011-12*

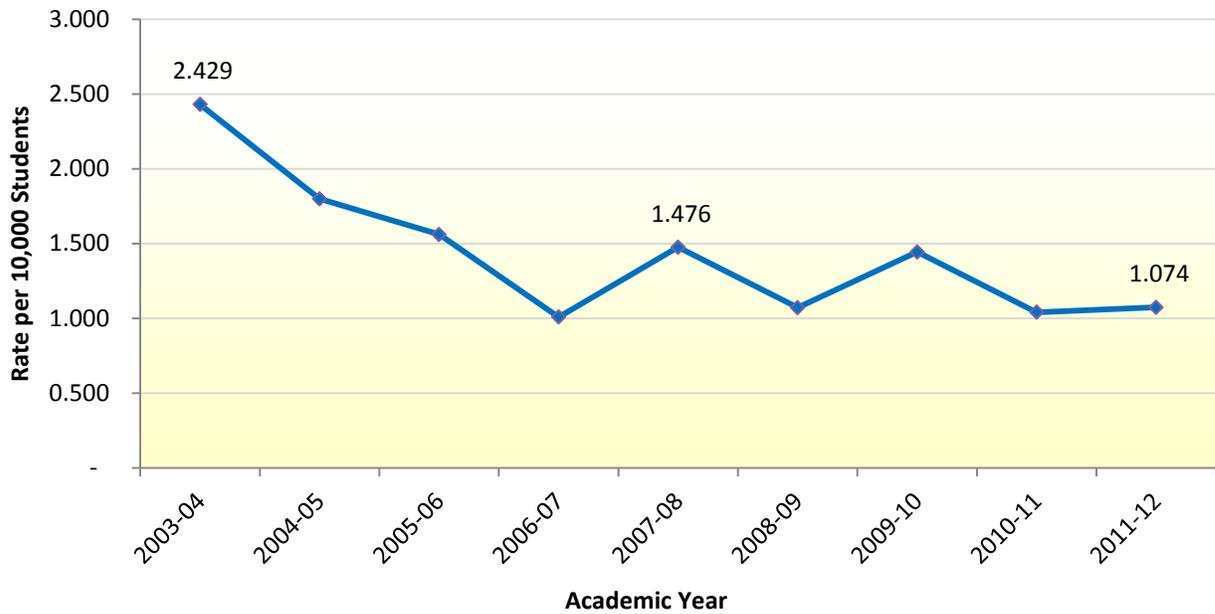
Note: As of reporting year 2010-11, "Robbery without a Weapon" is no longer considered a reportable act. Therefore, offenses occurring in years prior to the change have been deducted from aggregate counts to ensure an accurate comparison between years.

### **Reported acts of crime and violence down 4.3 percent from previous year**

The latest figures on school crime show that the number of reported acts of crime and violence in North Carolina public schools is more than four percent lower than the previous year. However, despite the drop in overall reported acts, there was a 12 percent increase in the number of reported acts classified as dangerous and violent.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The State Board of Education considers nine acts as dangerous and violent to include homicide, assault resulting in serious bodily injury, assault involving the use of a weapon, rape, sexual offense, sexual assault, kidnapping, robbery with a dangerous weapon, and taking indecent liberties with a minor. For a definition of all reported incidents and acts, go to <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/research/discipline/offenses/>

Figure 10. North Carolina public school student victimization rate for dangerous and violent acts (2003-04 through 2011-12)



Raw Data Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, *Annual Report on School Crime and Violence, 2011-12*

### Rate of victimization for violence against students has decreased

Fortunately, over the past eight reporting years, dangerous and violent crime has comprised only 3.8 percent of total reports in schools. As seen in Figure 10, the rate of victimization for violence against students has decreased throughout the years. In fact, since school year 2005-06, the victimization rate has not surpassed 1.5 dangerous/violent acts per 10,000 students. With the recently created North Carolina Center for Safer Schools, there is great potential that school crime reports will either stabilize or decrease in the near future. The Center for Safer Schools serves as a clearinghouse for school safety information and customer service for schools, law enforcement, youth-serving agencies, juvenile justice officials, community leaders, policymakers, parents and students. It is currently housed in the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

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