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The Supreme People's Court has a memorandum with the People's Bank of China allowing the records of loan defaulters to be shared with financial institutions and other relevant parties.

The central bank's credit reference center includesw default records in credit reports on groups and individuals shared with financial institutions, thus influencing their loan decisions.

Government departments, industry associations and civil service units also have access to these reports as references for defaulters' financial and employment requests, restricting the defaulters' activity in government procurements, tenders, administrative approvals and loans until they comply with court orders and settle their obligations, the report said.

Article continues On Page 2

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Criminal Checks 'Gone Mad'

The number of volunteers forced to get criminal record checks has soared to the highest level for four years, despite government pledges to halve the amount required. An audit has shown that tens of thousands of choir members, bell ringers, flower arrangers and parents and grandparents who volunteer at schools are being forced to get Disclosure and Barring Service checks, five years after Theresa May, the Home Secretary, promised that the number would return to "common sense levels".

Those who work in more than one role involving vulnerable people are often required to have the checks carried out twice in a situation described by MPs as "bureaucracy gone mad".

Many children and youth organisations claim they struggle to fill vacan- cies because adults are too scared to volunteer for fear they will be viewed with suspicion.

Criminal record checks, introduced in the wake of the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman by school caretaker Ian Huntley in Soham in 2002, are undergone by millions of adults who work with children or vulnerable people every year.

In 2010 Mrs May announced a review after widespread concern that they were becoming too burdensome.

As a result, the Criminal Record Bureau checks were replaced with Disclosure and Barring Service checks in January 2013, which include more rigorous police screening. The Government said that the number of checks would fall by 50 per cent, from 3.7 million a year to 1.7 million a year.

However, new figures show that last year (2014-15) 4.1 million people were vetted, the highest number since 4.3 million were vetted in 2010-11, including 837,000 volunteers.

A series of Freedom of Information requests by the Manifesto Club, which campaigns for less regulation in everyday life, found that in 2014-15 there were 199 checks on volunteer bell ringers, 726 checks on choir members, 57 checks on grandparent volunteers and 23 checks on flower arrangers. There were also 24,935 checks on parent volunteers in schools and 2,312 checks on volunteers to go on school trips.
Josie Appleton, a spokesman for the Manifesto Club, said: "We are calling for people to trust more to their own judgement and what they know about people, and less to distorted and suspicious 'requirements'."

Tim Farron, the Liberal Democrat leader, said the current regime of checks was "bureaucracy gone mad" and questioned why he needed two
checks for two voluntary roles.

He told The Daily Telegraph: "Like many other volunteers, I ask myself the question 'why can't one check suffice for both roles?' "
Mr Farron added: "No one would disagree that CRB checks play a vital role in protecting the vulnerable, but this doesn't mean that the system can't be improved. Currently it is bureaucracy gone mad.

"What we have now is a system that is so inflexible that thousands of people are being forced to have multiple checks for different jobs because the checks are not transferable from one to another."

Fees for the checks have soared to a record £146.4 million in 2014-15, an 11 per cent increase on the year before and a 25 per cent increase on 2010, when the Tories first came to power.

The fee of up to £44 a time is not paid by volunteers but is an additional cost for other bodies who have to pay for checks.
A Home Office spokesman said: "We will not compromise on issues of safeguarding when it comes to the safety of children and vulnerable groups.

"DBS checks provide reassurance to those who may entrust the safety of family members to volunteers and this reported rise suggests a welcome increase in public awareness of safeguarding issues."

A Tip For Searching Courts' Online Record Databases

by BRB Public Records Blog

Be Aware Not All Courts Are Online

A surprising number of courts do not have computerized record keeping. Per the latest statistics taken from the Public Record Research System (https://www.brbpublications.com/products/Prrs.aspx), 74.5% of civil courts and 71.45% of criminal courts provide online access to an historical docket index.

Does this make you wonder about the so-called instant national background search?

Wage Violations Public Record In Colorado

Governor Hickenlooper has signed the Wage Theft Transparency Act into law, which is effective immediately. The Act makes "wage theft" violations in Colorado, including nonpayment of wages or overtime compensation, public record and subject to records requests under the Colorado Open Records Act.

The Act clarifies that information obtained by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), relating to a finding by the CDLE that an employer violated Colorado's wage laws, is not confidential and shall be released to the public or made available for use in a court proceeding, unless the director of the division makes a determination that the information includes specific information that is a trade secret.

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Taking Your Records Provider To Task

The world of criminal records is not very complex.

A person is accused, arrested, processed through a system (of some sort).

And in most places a record is kept on the actions taken by the authorities.

Certainly there is more than one way to find something out. Sometimes there are many ways to find something out.

Your dilemma is how to know what you're getting.

You ask the criminal record provider, "How do you get a record in that 'so and so' place?"

You accept a verbal or written answer to that question: "We go to the police. We go to the court. We go..we go."

Would you believe that most criminal record vendors do not go to many of the courts they say they do?

In English 'to go' is a physical action. "We go, doesn't mean the same as, like, 'we call?"

Then why do they say 'they go to the court' or 'have a researcher that goes, when in fact, they call?

Fear. Fear of losing your business. Fear of not getting the order.

Certainly there is more than one way to find something out. Sometimes there are many ways to find something out.

Ask your researcher to be up front about it. Just because they call does not make it wrong.

If your record researcher can not tell you they call (or contact the court by other means: E-mail, text, snail mail, etc.) it might be time to take them to task.

Personal Data And Information Regulation

Compliancy can be be better defined.

Privacy laws cover personal data. That is information about an individual regardless of where it is stored. Many countries enacted privacy data regulations to protect the individual. Remember that, it is to protect the individual and not the government.

Data privacy and information regulation are two separate things. It is only when one lumps data privacy incorrectly with information regulation or vice-versa that confusion sets in.

Personal data is about the person. To access another's personal data what is needed is consent. That is it. There is no regulation to prevent any individual from giving you their information. There is no regulation preventing an individual to give you the right to any their information. Anywhere.

Perhaps the one issue that confuses pre-employment screeners the most is information regulation.

Information regulation is simply that - the regulation of dissemination of information by a government to whomever the regulation is directed, business or personal. That is, such as, not allowing a third party access to another's information.

The reasons for the regulations are varied. The regulations can be to protect the government, as in a dictatorship, or the government can regulate information under the pretext of protecting the individual.

Regardless, there is no regulation anywhere that prohibits an individual from allowing another the access to their information. In other words, a person can hand you any document of theirs they please. Their is no regulation anywhere barring that.

Ban The Box Will Never Work

Life in prison is meant to be difficult. But it doesn't always get better once you're out. Re-entering offenders often have a tough time finding employment, even when they are motivated and able to work. But "ban the box" – a popular policy aimed at helping ex-offenders find jobs – doesn't help many ex-offenders, and actually decreases employment for black and Hispanic men who don't have criminal records. This is a classic case of unintended consequences. We should repeal "ban the box" and focus on better alternatives.

How did we get here? Helping ex-offenders find jobs is a top policy priority for liberals and conservatives alike, for good reason. Without a stable job, it's tough to build a life free of criminal behaviors and influences. When fewer jobs are available, re-entering offenders are more likely to reoffend. This increases crime and incarceration rates, which is costly to all of us.

A major obstacle to changing this status quo is that employers are reluctant to hire individuals with criminal records, often discarding applications from anyone who has a record. You might think this is unfair to individuals with criminal records who would make good employees. Perhaps it would be better to prevent employers from asking about criminal backgrounds up front, so that everyone gets a fair chance at an interview. This is the motivation behind "ban the box" policies.

"Ban the box" forbids public and often private employers from inquiring about an applicant's criminal history until late in the hiring process. Such policies have been adopted in cities and states across the country. Late last year, President Obama even banned the box on applications for many federal government jobs. Proponents of second chances for ex-offenders have rejoiced at this apparent progress.

Here's the problem: employers still don't want to hire ex-offenders. Many ex-offenders would make good employees, and some were convicted of relatively minor crimes. But on average, ex-offenders are more likely than non-offenders to have engaged in violent, dishonest or otherwise anti-social behavior, and are more likely to engage in similar behavior in the future. (About two-thirds of released prisoners are rearrested within three years.) Employers, understandably, want to hire peaceful, honest, agreeable employees who won't be taken off the job by an arrest or conviction. But these characteristics are largely unobservable when reading through job applications. You might be able to divine some of them from an interview, but first you have to decide which applicants to consider.

To do this, an employer will "statistically discriminate," using the observable information that is most correlated with the unobservable information of interest to sort applications into "probably job-ready" and "probably not job-ready" piles. This type of discrimination is common and, in most cases, perfectly legal: For instance, employers might prefer applicants with a college degree not because of what one learns in college but because earning that degree is correlated with greater motivation, intelligence, and diligence – unobservable characteristics that make you a more productive employee. Sorting people based on whether or not they have a criminal record is far from perfect – some ex-offenders are more job-ready than others, just as some college grads are more job-ready than others. But the employer can't see which ex-offender is more job ready, only which applicants are ex-offenders. They know that the average ex-offender is less job-ready than the average non-offender, and so base their hiring decisions on that.

If you take information about criminal records away, what happens? Employers are forced to use other information that is even less perfect to guess who has a criminal record. The likelihood of having a criminal record varies substantially with demographic characteristics like race and gender. Specifically, black and Hispanic men are more likely than others to have been convicted of a crime: the most recent data suggest that a black man born in 2001 has a 32% chance of serving time in prison at some point during his lifetime, compared with 17% for Hispanic men and just 6% for white men. Employers will guess that black and Hispanic men are more likely to have been in prison, and therefore less likely to be job-ready.

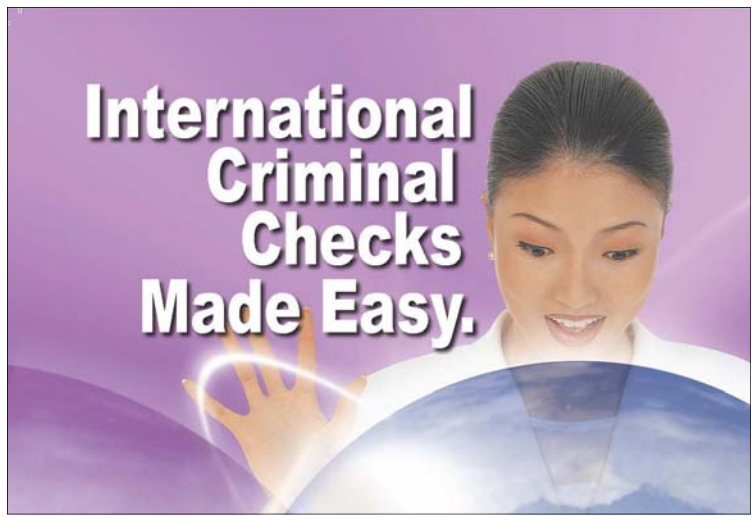
Statistically discriminating based on race and gender is, of course, unfair to the many black and Hispanic men who don't have criminal records – just as statistically discriminating based on criminal history was unfair to the ex-offenders who were more job-ready than the average.
(Discriminating based on race and gender is also illegal, but there's plenty of evidence that such discrimination occurs anyway.)
Taking information away in this context hurts more people than it helps. Just because employers can't see an applicant's criminal history doesn't mean they don't care about it. Under "ban the box", they will avoid ex-offenders by avoiding groups that are more likely to contain ex-offenders, like black and Hispanic men.

What effects has "ban the box" had so far? Two new working papers suggest that, as economic theory predicts, "ban the box" policies increase racial disparities in employment outcomes.

Amanda Agan and Sonja Starr submitted thousands of fictitious job applications before and after "ban the box" went into effect in New Jersey and New York City, randomly assigning race and criminal history to each "applicant." They then tracked the number of callbacks received. When employers asked about criminal records on the job application, they called white applicants slightly more often than identical black applicants – but that small gap became more than four times larger, and statistically significant, after "ban the box" went into effect. (White applicants with criminal records benefited the most from the policy change – they're the ones who got a chance to prove themselves in an interview, though it's unclear if they would have gotten a job offer. Employers are still allowed to check criminal records before making a final offer, so applicants could be turned away at that point.) Because of the randomization, they can attribute this effect to the removal of criminal history information from job applications.

In a separate paper, Benjamin Hansen and I exploit the variation in adoption and timing of "ban the box" policies across the country to measure the policy's net effects on the employment outcomes of young, low-skilled men. We find that black and Hispanic men without college degrees are significantly less likely to be employed after "ban the box" than before. This result is not explained by pre-existing trends in employment, and persists for several years.

Overall, the unintended consequences of "ban the box" are large, and run counter to one of its goals: reducing racial disparities in employment. For this reason, I hope jurisdictions repeal their "ban the box" laws. But I also hope this doesn't stop efforts to improve the lives of people coming out of prison. This is a group that our country has long neglected, and we should be doing much more to help them succeed. Advocates could push for policies that would provide more information to employers about ex-offenders' job-readiness, rather than taking information away. Better yet, they could help disadvantaged ex-offenders improve their job-readiness. The more employable the average ex-offender, the less cautious employers will be about hiring one.



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Record Checks For State's Citizens Only?

For Burke County Manager Bryan Steen, the public records requests were over the top.

One was from an out-of-state group asking for spreadsheets of the county's outstanding checks, with amounts, dates and check numbers. Another, from the University of Massachusetts, sought five months of county emails for an academic study. Both required days of staff time to satisfy.

"I don't think this kind of request is what our public records law is meant for," Steen emailed his state senator, Republican Warren Daniel in 2014.

Now Daniel and three fellow Senate Republicans introduced a measure that would block such requests. Senate Bill 649 would limit public records requests to North Carolina residents.

Idaho Online System Delayed

A new electronic court filing and records system won't be up and working in Canyon County in April as planned, but when it starts this October, local court employees will be ready.

Raena Bull, Canyon County's court training and development manager, said she, for one, is excited about implementing the new system, called Odyssey, despite the Idaho Supreme Court's decision to delay rolling it out in 10 counties, including Canyon.

The new system is set to replace iStars, the software that allows Idahoans access to court case information online via the Idaho Repository. While the repository is popular, receiving about 200,000 hits per day, it doesn't allow users to do things like view or file individual documents online.

With Odyssey, attorneys, judges, clients, media and any other member of the public will one day be able to view those records online. But because of a few glitches, the opportunity to view those records over the internet is taking a little longer than anticipated.

"That extra time will be used by the Supreme Court to fix bugs that came up in Twin Falls County and Ada County," Bull said.

So far, Twin Falls and Ada are the only two counties that have integrated Odyssey.

Is It A Statutory Law Crime Or A Common Law Crime?

By Dennis Kwok

The Hong Kong Department of Justice has charged some of the principal organizers and participants of the 2014 Occupy Movement with the common law crime of committing public nuisance and inciting others to do so.

Since these cases have already entered into legal proceedings, it would be inappropriate for me to discuss them publicly in detail.

However, I would like to explain to readers the fundamental difference between common law and statutory law when it comes to the offense of public nuisance, because such a difference is likely to be a major bone of contention between the prosecution and the defense in the upcoming trial, and could very much influence its outcome.

Under our current judicial system, there are two types of criminal offenses: statutory law crimes and common law crimes.

Statutory law crimes refer to criminal offenses that are clearly stipulated in written laws passed by our legislature and then codified.

One example of statutory law offenses is the receipt of unlawful benefits by public servants stipulated in the "Prevention of Bribery Ordinance", under which a person who is convicted of this offense could face a maximum penalty of one year in prison and a fine of HK$100,000.

In contrast, common law crimes largely originate from the hundreds of thousands of legal precedents made over the past several hundred years.

Rather than clearly set out in written laws, common law crimes are usually laid down by legal cases.

Simply put, under the common law system, when a judge rules on a case, his or her ruling will automatically become the law that governs all similar cases that follow.

Some better known examples of common law crimes include misconduct in public office, conspiracy to defraud and public nuisance.

Except for those that are stipulated otherwise, a person convicted of any common law crime in Hong Kong could face a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment and a fine under the existing Criminal Procedure Ordinance.

The common law crime of public nuisance is in fact an ancient offense that dates back to as early as the 14th-century England, when the whole idea of statutory law was still very much in its infancy.

Since common law is made by judges in legal cases, it is often relatively ambiguous and abstract compared to statutory law, and legal precedents are often incomprehensible to the layman, leading to confusion and misinterpretation.

In order to enable the public to understand exactly what kinds of acts would constitute criminal offenses, authorities in many common law jurisdictions including Britain, Australia and Hong Kong have been taking great pains to legislate against common law crimes in the form of statutory law over the years.

For example, some criminal offenses that used to be common law crimes, such as rape, have become statutory law crimes today.

As far as public nuisance is concerned, it has also been made a statutory law crime under Article 4A of the current Summary Offenses Ordinance, under which those who are convicted could face a maximum penalty of three months' imprisonment and a fine of HK$5,000.

However, while public nuisance has already become a statutory law crime, it hasn't been erased from the common law system in Hong Kong.

In other words, public nuisance remains a criminal offense that co-exists in both of our common law and statutory law systems.

As such, when the Department of Justice is pressing public nuisance charges against somebody, it can either bring the charge as a statutory law crime or a common law crime.

The latter could lead to heavier sentence and is less subject to the time limit for pressing charges, though these are not the appropriate reasons for bringing the charge as a common law crime.

Yet under most circumstances, the court tends to accept charges brought in the form of statutory law crimes rather than common law crimes, because of the unambiguous nature of the statutory law.

In fact, the justice department rarely sued anybody for public nuisance as a common law crime in the past.

One example is a case back in 2008, in which an expatriate, who climbed up the Tsing Ma Bridge to protest against China's human rights record, was found guilty of the common law crime of public nuisance.

As we can see, whether the court would accept the charges of public nuisance brought against Occupy Movement activists as a common law crime would to a significant extent determine how the whole trial will play out.

China Credit Reports

The Supreme People's Court has a memorandum with the People's Bank of China allowing the records of loan defaulters to be shared with financial institutions and other relevant parties.

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Federal Criminal Prosecutions Fall

After peaking in 2011, the number of federal criminal prosecutions has declined for five consecutive years and is now at its lowest level in nearly two decades, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of new data from the federal court system. The decline comes as Attorney General Jeff Sessions has indicated that the Justice Department will reverse the trend and ramp up criminal prosecutions in the years ahead.

Federal prosecutors filed criminal charges against 77,152 defendants in fiscal year 2016, according to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. That's a decline of 25% since fiscal 2011, when 102,617 defendants were charged, and marks the lowest yearly total since 1997. The data count all defendants charged in U.S. district courts with felonies and serious misdemeanors, as well as some defendants charged with petty offenses. They exclude defendants whose cases were handled by magistrate judges.

Prosecutions for drug, immigration and property offenses – the three most common categories of crime charged by the federal government – all have declined over the past five years. The Justice Department filed drug charges against 24,638 defendants in 2016, down 23% from 2011. It filed immigration charges against 20,762 defendants, down 26%. And it charged 10,712 people with property offenses such as fraud and embezzlement, a 39% decline.

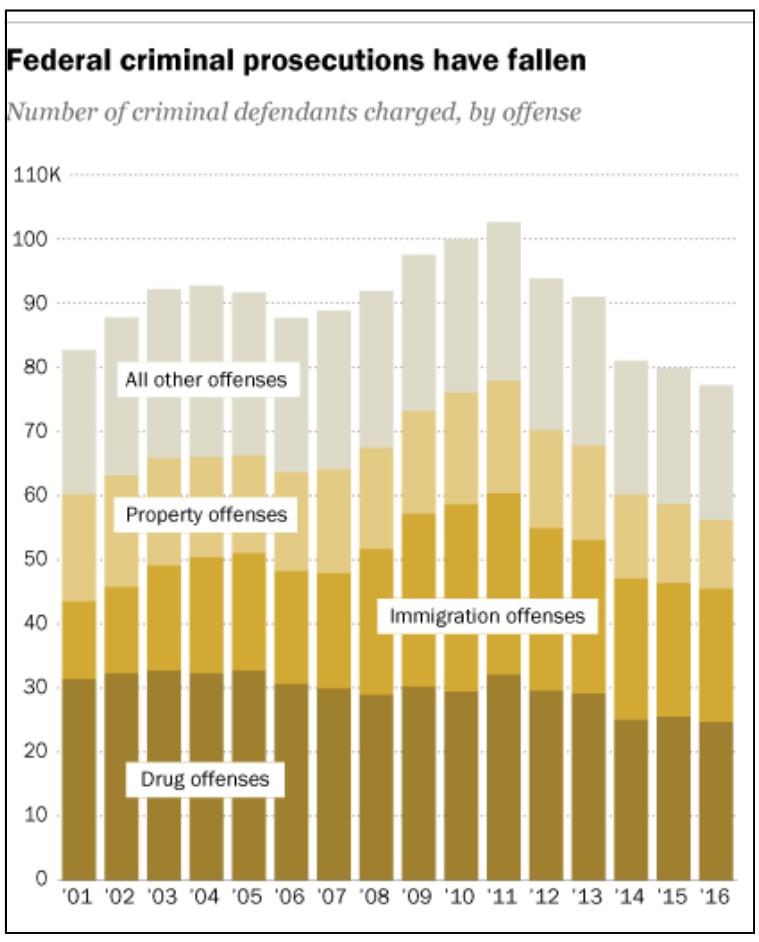
However, prosecutions for other, less frequently charged crime types have increased slightly. For example, prosecutors charged 8,576 defendants with gun crimes in 2016, a 3% increase over 2011 (and a 9% single-year increase over 2015). And they charged 2,897 people with violent crimes such as murder, robbery and assault, a 4% increase from five years earlier.

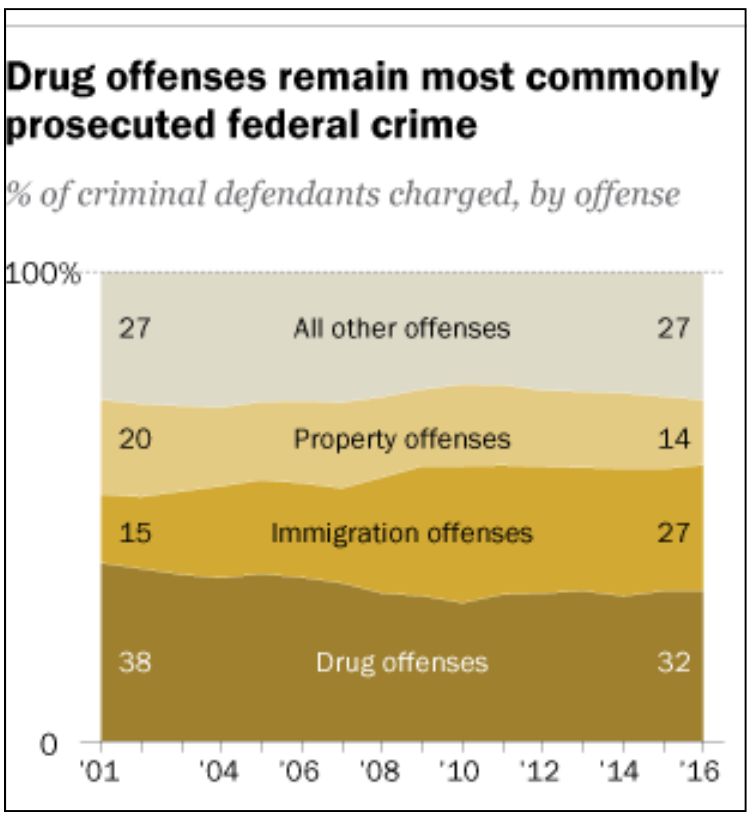
Several factors may play a role in the decline in federal prosecutions in recent years. One notable shift came in 2013, when then-Attorney General Eric Holder directed federal prosecutors to ensure that each case they bring "serves a substantial federal interest." In a speech announcing the policy change, Holder said prosecutors "cannot – and should not – bring every case or charge every defendant who stands accused of violating federal law."

Sessions, who took office as attorney general in February, has indicated that the Justice Department will take a different approach under his leadership. In particular, he has pushed to increase prosecutions for drug- and gun-related offenses as part of a broader plan to reduce violent crime, which rose nationally in 2015 and in the first half of 2016, according to the FBI. (Despite these increases, violent crime remains far below the levels recorded in the 1990s.)

Traditionally, the federal government has played a relatively small role in prosecuting violent crime, which is more commonly handled by states and localities. This distinction is evident in the different compositions of the federal and state prison populations: While 53% of all sentenced state prisoners are serving time for violent crimes, the same is true for just 7% of sentenced federal inmates, according to the most recent data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics. In absolute numbers, that works out to about 700,000 state prisoners serving time for violent crimes, compared with only about 14,000 federal prisoners incarcerated for violent offenses.

Since 2001, the Justice Department's prosecution priorities have changed. Immigration offenses, for instance, comprised just 15% of all prosecutions in 2001; by 2016, they accounted for 27%. During the same period, drug crimes fell from 38% to 32% of all prosecutions, while property crimes declined from 20% to 14%.





Such revisions by the Justice Department are not unusual. In 2013, for example, after two states legalized the recreational use of marijuana, the department announced new charging priorities for offenses involving the drug, which remains illegal under federal law. Federal marijuana prosecutions fell to 5,158 in 2016, down 39% from five years earlier.

It's important to note that the data used in this analysis only count the number of defendants who are prosecuted each year. They do not reflect the number of defendants who are found guilty or sentenced to prison. These figures also include a small number of defendants whose cases did not reach federal court through a new prosecution, but through other means, such as a retrial.

To avoid double-counting defendants who may be charged with more than one type of crime, the data published by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts count defendants by their most serious offense. A defendant charged with a gun crime and a drug crime, for example, is counted under the more serious of the two offenses, as determined by the maximum potential sentence for each crime.

Rate Of Americans Turned Away At The Border Surges

The rate at which Americans were denied entrance into Canada across the U.S.-Canadian border surged over 31 percent last year, with 30,233 U.S. citizens being turned away throughout 2016, Canada Border Services Agency figures stated. That's up from 23,052 stops the year before – and just 7,509 in 2014.

The trend, first reported Wednesday by Canadian newspaper La Presse, doesn't indicate instability or a lack of cooperation across the neighboring nations; in fact, it may actually show the opposite.

The U.S. and Canada stepped up its sharing of national security information, criminal records and other data under former President Barack Obama's administration. The new efforts to increase bilateral security measures likely equipped the Canadian border services agency with new tools to prevent a range of Americans from entering the nation.

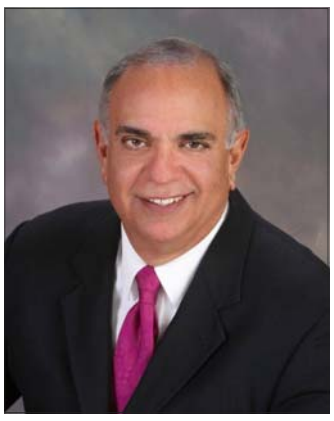
That could mean Canada is now able to turn away dangerous convicted felons, Americans charged with crimes avoiding court dates and other citizens attempting to cross the border illegally more than ever before.

The rate at which Canadians have been denied entry at U.S. checkpoints along the border has remained consistent with typical statistics in recent years. More than 28,000 people were refused entry from the U.S. last year, while 27,311 were turned away in 2015.

Les Rosen's Corner

A monthly column

By Lester Rosen, Attorney at Law



Swiss - U.S. Privacy Shield Self Certification Now Available

By Thomas ahearn

On April 12, 2017, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce announced that the newly launched Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework is accepting self-certifications to provide companies a mechanism to comply with Swiss data protection requirements when transferring personal data from Switzerland to the United States in support of transatlantic commerce.

"The Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework supports U.S. economic growth by ensuring that Swiss and American businesses can transfer data and deliver innovative online products and services under enhanced data protection," U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross stated in the announcement. "We look forward to working with our Swiss counterparts as we implement the Framework together."

Organizations that intend to self-certify to the Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework should review the requirements in their entirety and update their privacy policies to align with the Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield Requirements before submitting a self-certification to ITA. The Privacy Principles apply immediately upon certification.

Beginning on April 12, 2017, organizations that have already self-certified to the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework can log into to their Privacy Shield account and click on "self-certify" to add the Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework. Organizations will pay a fee to self-certify to the Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework.

Kenya Enhances Record Check

Kenya's National Police say there has been an increase of applications especially from aspirants aspiring for various political seats ahead of the August 8 elections.

"The National Police Service wishes to inform aspirants and members of the public that all applicants are issued with the document irrespective whether they are convicted, acquitted, dismissed, discharged or have cases pending in court," said Inspector General of police Joseph Boinnet.

He said the certificate will demonstrate the status of the applicant by indicating specific criminal records established or nil established as shown by samples taken.

The police boss said in a statement by his spokesman George Kinoti if an applicant had cases he or she was acquitted by a court of law or appealed successfully that criminal record is expunged from the criminal database.

"However, if convicted of the same, the record is kept for 20 years before it is expunged unless the offence charged with fall under robbery, murder, treason, murder, rape and offences related to drugs," he added.

Authorities have digitized the system of application and hence increased efficiency and shortened the period of issuance of the document.

After one has applied, he or she can visit Directorate of Criminal Investigations headquarters or Huduma Centres for finger prints taking. This will take at least three days to process before the applicant receives the document in his or her email provided.

Key Findings About Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory with its own constitution and government (though the extent of the island's legal independence from the United States has been the subject of debate). Island residents elect their own governor and members to the island's legislature, but they may not vote in U.S. general elections for president and they do not have a voting member of Congress.

Here are answers to some key questions about Puerto Rico based on previously published Pew Research Center reports.

How many people live in Puerto Rico?

The population of the island was 3.4 million in 2016, down from a peak of more than 3.8 million in 2004. It is projected to decline in the coming decades, to about 3 million in 2050.
Puerto Rico's population has grown steadily since at least the 1700s, and it increased each decade between 1910 (1.1 million) to 2000 (3.8 million). The population grew even during the Great Migration that occurred after World War II and into the 1960s, when hundreds of thousands left the island for the mainland.

Why is Puerto Rico's population declining?

A decadelong economic recession has contributed to a historic number of people leaving Puerto Rico for the U.S. mainland. Between 2005 and 2015, Puerto Rico had a net loss of about 446,000 people to the mainland, with job-related (40%) and family or household reasons (39%) cited as primary causes among a plurality of those leaving.

Puerto Rico's population losses have affected nearly every county, or municipio, on the island. The population of San Juan, Puerto Rico's capital and largest metro area, declined by 40,000 people (-10%) between 2005 and 2015, to 355,000, by far the largest numeric drop of any municipio.

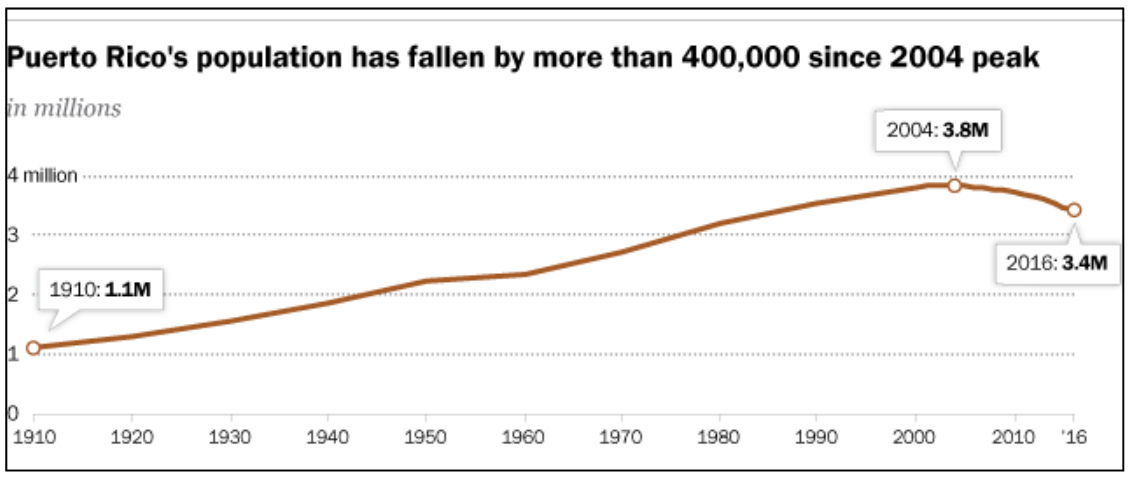
Many people who leave Puerto Rico move to Florida, where the population of Hispanics of Puerto Rican origin surpassed 1 million in 2014. In recent years, more than a third of people who moved to the mainland from Puerto Rico settled in Florida.

How do Puerto Ricans on the island differ demographically from Puerto Ricans on the mainland?

Hispanics of Puerto Rican origin living on the island have a lower median household income and a higher child poverty rate than Hispanics of Puerto Rican origin living on the U.S. mainland, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of 2015 Census Bureau data.

The median age of Puerto Ricans on the island was 40 in 2015, compared with 46 for the island-born living on the mainland. By comparison, the median age was only 22 for Puerto Rican-origin Hispanics born and living on the mainland.

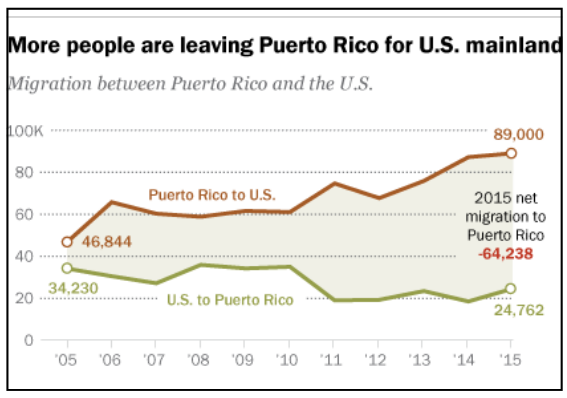
The median household income of Puerto Ricans living on the island was $18,626 in 2015. It was more than twice as high among Puerto Ricans born and living on the mainland ($47,000) and island-born Puerto Ricans living on the mainland ($33,300).



There are some differences on educational attainment between Puerto Ricans on the island and the mainland. Nearly half (48%) of Puerto Ricans living on the island had at least some college education in 2015, a similar share (55%) to that of Puerto Ricans born and living on the mainland. Among island-born Puerto Ricans living on the mainland, 43% had some college education or more.

Puerto Ricans are overwhelmingly Christian. A majority (56%) of Puerto Ricans living on the island identified as Catholic in a 2014 Pew Research Center survey of religion in Latin America. And 33% identified as Protestants, among whom roughly half (48%) also identified as born-again Christians.

Among island-born Puerto Ricans living on the mainland, about half (53%) identified as Catholic in a separate 2013 survey of U.S. Hispanics. Three-in-ten identified as Protestant, most of whom (62%) say they are born-again or evangelical.



About four-in-ten Puerto Ricans born on the mainland (42%) identified as Catholic, while 30% said they were Protestant. Among these mainland-born Protestants, 80% identified as born-again.

How do the views of Puerto Ricans on the island and those on the mainland differ?

Pew Research Center surveys have found some notable differences in public opinion on social issues between Puerto Ricans living on the island and those living on the mainland. Puerto Ricans on the island, for example, are more likely to oppose abortion than those on the mainland. Our surveys found that roughly three-quarters (77%) of Puerto Ricans living on the island said that abortion should be illegal in all or most cases, compared with half (50%) of island-born Puerto Ricans living on the mainland and 42% of Puerto Ricans born and living on the mainland.

When it comes to same-sex marriage, 55% of Puerto Ricans on the island said that same-sex couples should not be allowed to legally wed, a higher share than among island-born Puerto Ricans living on the mainland (40%) and Puerto Ricans born and living on the mainland (29%).

Plead Your Case Online

The pioneering digital tribunal thought to be the model for England and Wales's online court (OC) will begin resolving small claims disputes worth under about £3,000 on 1 June, it has emerged.

British Columbia's civil resolution tribunal (CRT) launched in Canada last summer when it started hearing condominium 'strata' claims – housing disputes relating to the common parts of apartment blocks.

The CRT claims to be "the first online tribunal in the world that is integrated into the public justice system".

It offers free self-help information pathways and tools that can be used to help people better understand the issues and explore early resolution options.

Those who cannot resolve their dispute on their own can apply to the CRT for help – creating a resolution with the others involved or getting a binding, expert decision from a tribunal member.

Initially the cap on the value of mandatory small claims will be set at C$5,000 (£2,980) and eventually this will rise to C$25,000. Claims covered include contracts, debts, personal injury, personal property, and consumer issues.

At the same time, the British Columbia provincial court – the first level of trial court, which hears criminal, criminal youth, family, child protection, small claims, and traffic cases – will have the cap on its jurisdiction for small claims cases raised from C$25,000 to C$35,000.

Cases of C$5,000 or less may still be referred to the provincial court on occasion, including where one of the parties files a notice of objection to a CRT decision, or where a party asks to have the CRT order enforced in the higher court.

The tribunal, whose adjudications are equivalent to court orders, can be accessed via smartphones, laptops and tablets 24/7, with telephone and mail services for those without internet access.

Shannon Salter, the CRT's chair, told Legal Futures that the CRT had recently completed public consultations on the small claims rules, the Solution Explorer for small claims, and some technology improvements.

She said: "The public feedback has been very positive, and we are incorporating changes where necessary. There has been a strong take up of online services, with only two participants in 280 cases requesting not to use email. We have accommodated those requests."

She explained that claims under C$5,000 represented about 40% of the total small claims filed in British Columbia last year, adding: "Between 40-45% of participants use the CRT outside of typical court registry hours, mostly on weekday evenings and weekends."

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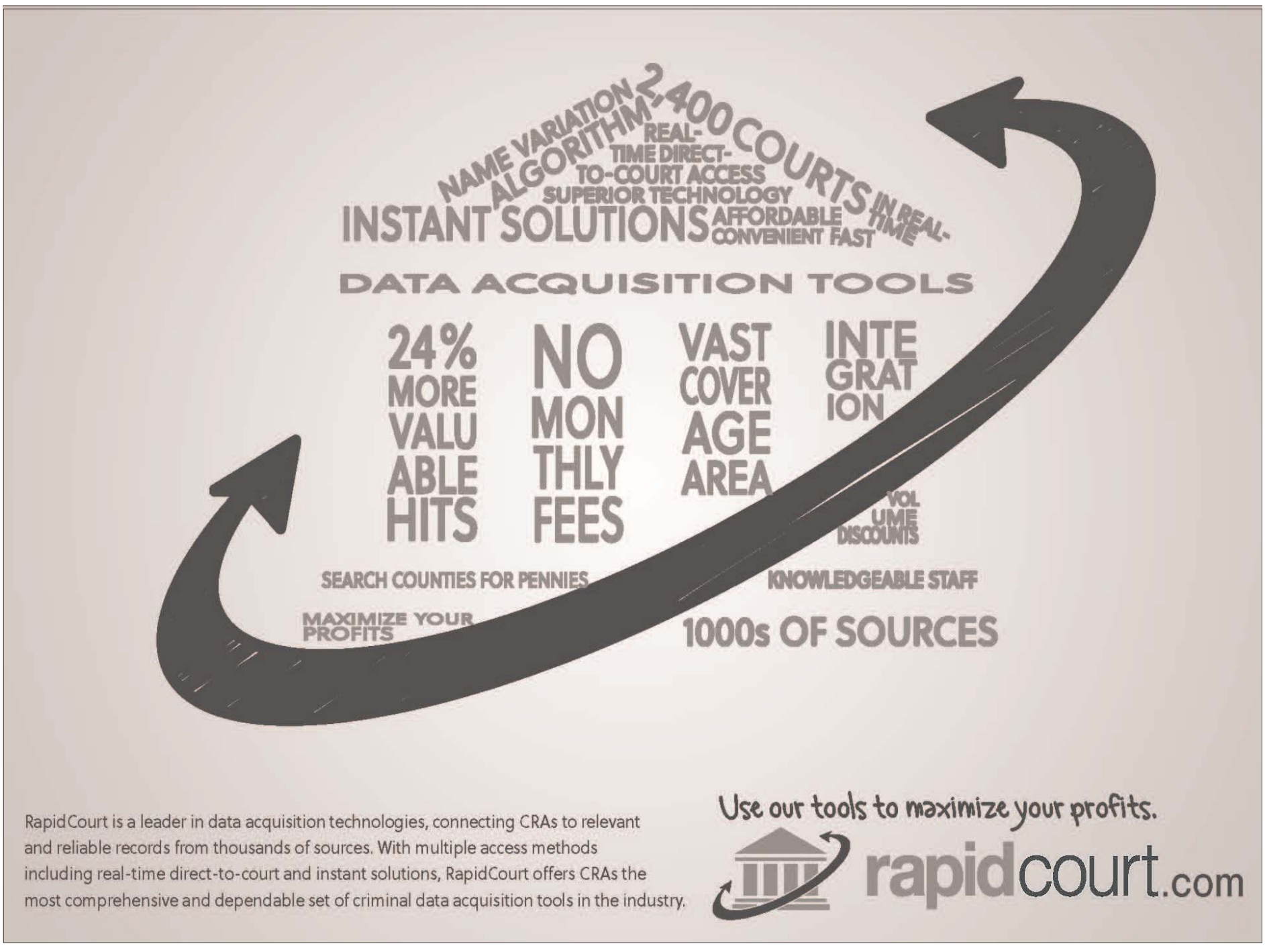

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