

Cultural Indicators 2006

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Founding Principles in Action



## Cultural Indicators 2006 Executive Summary

The Alabama Policy Institute is pleased to present *Cultural Indicators 2006*. This study tracks various Alabama-specific measures of societal well-being dating back to 1960, as statistics are available.

As in earlier versions of *Cultural Indicators*, chapters are devoted to understanding trends in crime, education, natality, and the family. We have also incorporated several new indicators, including birth rates, death rates and their leading causes, prison corrections costs, and others. Moreover, as before, at the end of each chapter we note the relationship between each of these variables and their effects on the family.

Some highlights of this study include:

### Vital Statistics

- In the past 20 years, Alabama's population has increased 12.8 percent, making it the 23<sup>rd</sup> largest state in the nation. During the same time, however, the national population increased 19 percent.
- Part of the reason for this below-average growth is Alabama's sub-par birth rate, which has been below the national average 17 of the past 20 years.
- Another reason for Alabama's below-average population growth has been its death rate has increased almost 10 percent since 1960, particularly among whites. Heart disease and cancer are the two primary causes of death in both Alabama and the rest of the nation.
- Alabama's teen birth rate is almost 36 percent higher than the national average. Births to unwed mothers in Alabama are up 142 percent since 1960.
- For every six births in Alabama in 2004, there was one abortion.

### Crime

- Alabama's crime rate has been above the national average since 2002. Since 1985, Alabama's crime rate has risen 4.9 percent, while the national crime rate has fallen by 23.9 percent.
- From 1985 to 2005, Alabama's violent crime rate has fallen by almost 6.6 percent. Since 1991, Alabama's violent crime rate has been about 7.1 percent below the national average.
- Except for rape and robbery, violent crime rates in Alabama have dropped in every category since 1986.
- Alabama's 2004 property crime rate was 10.4 percent higher than in 1985. Since 2000, the state's property crime rate has been about six percent above the national average.

- The average sentence of a prisoner in Alabama is 14 years 11 months, up six months since 1991.

### Education

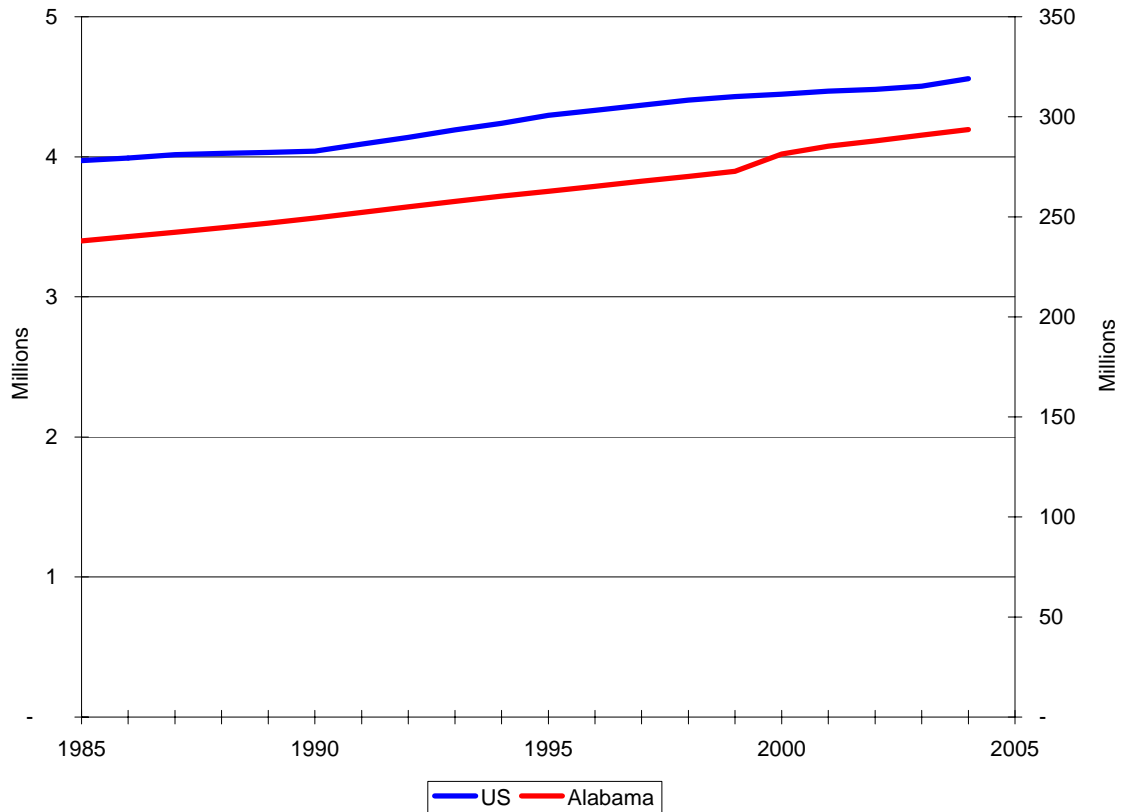
- Since 1970, the percentage of Alabama adults age 25 and older with a high school diploma has doubled, while the percentage of adults with a college degree has increased 184 percent.
- Nevertheless, Alabama ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in terms of adults age 25 or older who are high school graduates and 47<sup>th</sup> for adults holding at least a bachelor's degree.
- Since 1970, inflation-adjusted spending on public elementary and secondary education in Alabama has increased 194 percent, compared to a national increase of 146 percent. During the same time, per-student spending in Alabama increased 226 percent, compared to a national increase of 131 percent.
- In 2003, the average ACT composite score in Alabama was 20.1, the 42<sup>nd</sup> lowest rank in the nation. Of the 25 states in which the ACT is taken by the majority of students, Alabama was in 21<sup>st</sup> place.
- In 2003, fourth-grade math students in Alabama ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation in their average scores on the National Assessment of Academic Progress (NAEP). Only 19 percent were at or above proficiency, compared to a national average of 31 percent.

### Family

- In 1960, married couples comprised almost three-fourths of all households in America. By 2000, that number had fallen to 51.5 percent.
- In 2005, Alabama's marriage rate was 26.7 percent above the national average, and has been above the national average for more than 40 years.
- Minority marriage rates in Alabama have dropped 29 percent since 1999.
- In 2005, Alabama had the eighth highest divorce rate in the nation. Alabama's divorce rate has been above the national average for the past 65 years.
- Since 1970, about 24,100 families have divorced in Alabama every year, splitting the homes of almost 20,200 children annually.
- Since 1960, the national suicide rate has remained flat, but Alabama's suicide rate has increased 57.3 percent.
- The percentage of families with children in poverty has declined 11 percent since 1960.

## Vital Statistics

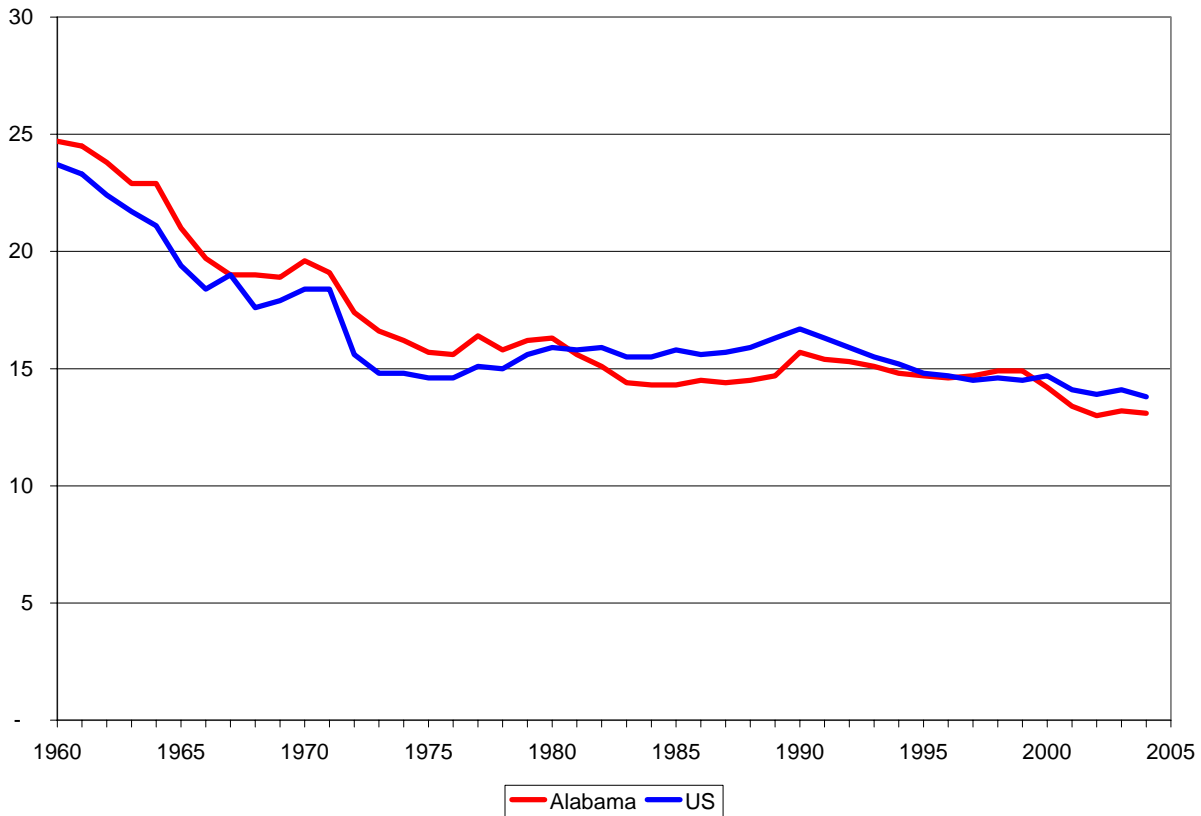
### Population



- From 1985 to 2004, Alabama's population increased 12.8 percent, from 3,973,000 to 4,557,808, making it the 23<sup>rd</sup> largest state in the Union.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the population of the entire United States increased 19 percent, from 237.9 million to about 293.6 million residents.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2004, the largest age group in Alabama was the 15-44 population (1,899,122), followed by the 45-64 group (1,128,072). About 71.4 percent of the population is white (3,234,762), while 28.6 percent is black or other (1,295,420).<sup>3</sup>
- As of 2004, Alabama has the 23<sup>rd</sup> highest population of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Its population density of 89.3 persons per square mile is slightly higher than the national average (83 persons per square mile).<sup>4</sup>
- After accounting for births and deaths, almost one quarter of the population growth in Alabama from 2000 to 2005 was the result of international migration.<sup>5</sup>

	Alabama	US
1985	3,973,000	237,923,795
1986	3,992,000	240,132,887
1987	4,015,000	242,288,918
1988	4,024,000	244,498,982
1989	4,030,000	246,819,230
1990	4,040,000	249,464,396
1991	4,090,000	252,153,092
1992	4,138,000	255,029,699
1993	4,192,000	257,782,608
1994	4,239,000	260,327,021
1995	4,297,000	262,803,276
1996	4,331,000	265,228,572
1997	4,368,000	267,783,607
1998	4,405,000	270,248,003
1999	4,430,000	272,690,813
2000	4,447,100	281,421,906
2001	4,468,000	285,317,559
2002	4,481,000	287,973,924
2003	4,504,000	290,788,976
2004	4,557,808	293,655,404

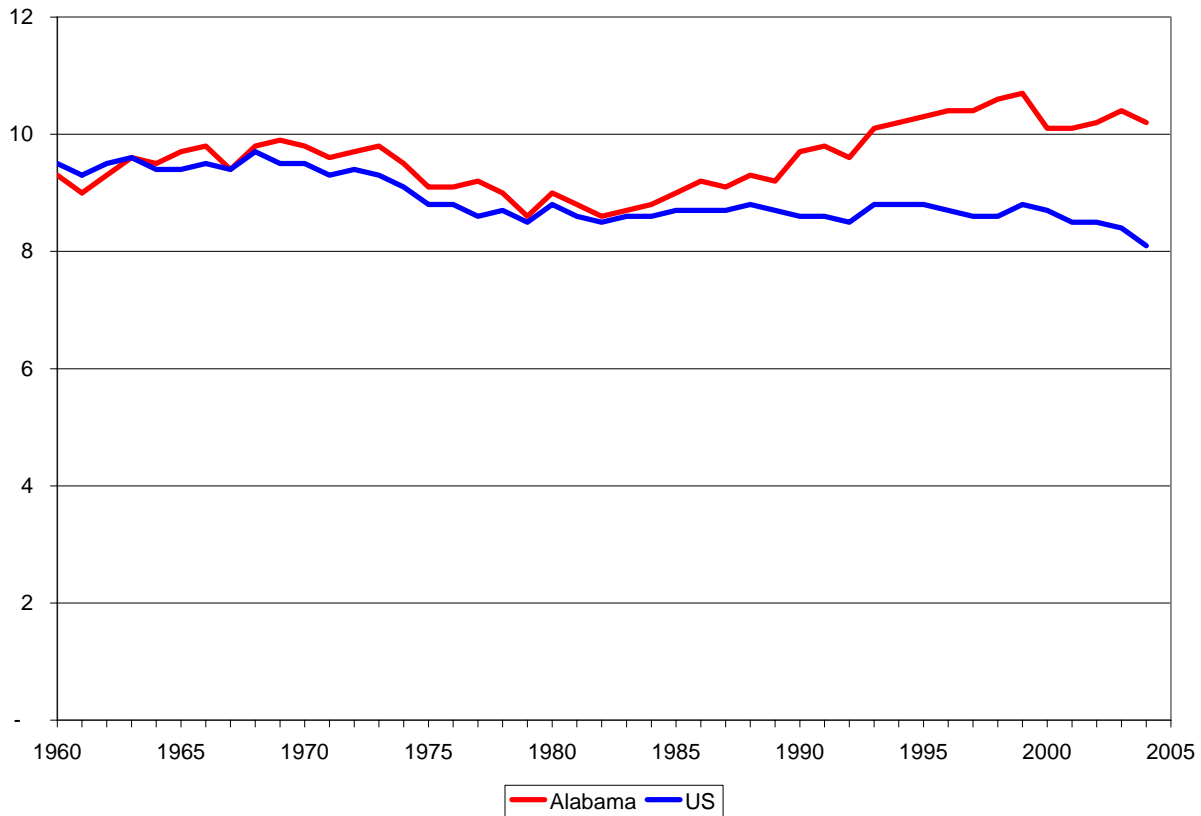
## Birth Rates



- Since 1960, Alabama's birth rate has fallen from 24.7 per 1,000 persons to 13.1 per 1,000 in 2004, a drop of 46.9 percent. Alabama's birth rate has been below the national average since 1981.
- In 2004, an estimated 82,179 pregnancies occurred in Alabama, or about 86.2 per 1,000 females age 15-44. Of these, 59,170 resulted in births; 12,865 died before birth; and 10,144 were aborted.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2004, 6,204 of these births (10.5 percent) were low-weight births (birth weights of less than 2,500 grams / 5 pounds, 8 ounces). Of these, 1,022 (16.4 percent) were to teenagers.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2002, Alabama's low-weight birth rate (9.9 percent) was the sixth highest in the nation (national average of 7.8 percent).<sup>8</sup> Since 1960, the percentage of low-weight births has risen by 19 percent.
- In 2004, Medicaid paid for approximately 46.7 percent of all births in Alabama (26,717).<sup>9</sup>

	Alabama	US
1960	24.7	23.7
1965	21.0	19.4
1970	19.6	18.4
1975	15.7	14.6
1980	16.3	15.9
1985	14.3	15.8
1990	15.7	16.7
1991	15.4	16.3
1992	15.3	15.9
1993	15.1	15.5
1994	14.8	15.2
1995	14.7	14.8
1996	14.6	14.7
1997	14.7	14.5
1998	14.9	14.6
1999	14.9	14.5
2000	14.2	14.7
2001	13.4	14.1
2002	13.0	13.9
2003	13.2	14.1
2004	13.1	13.8

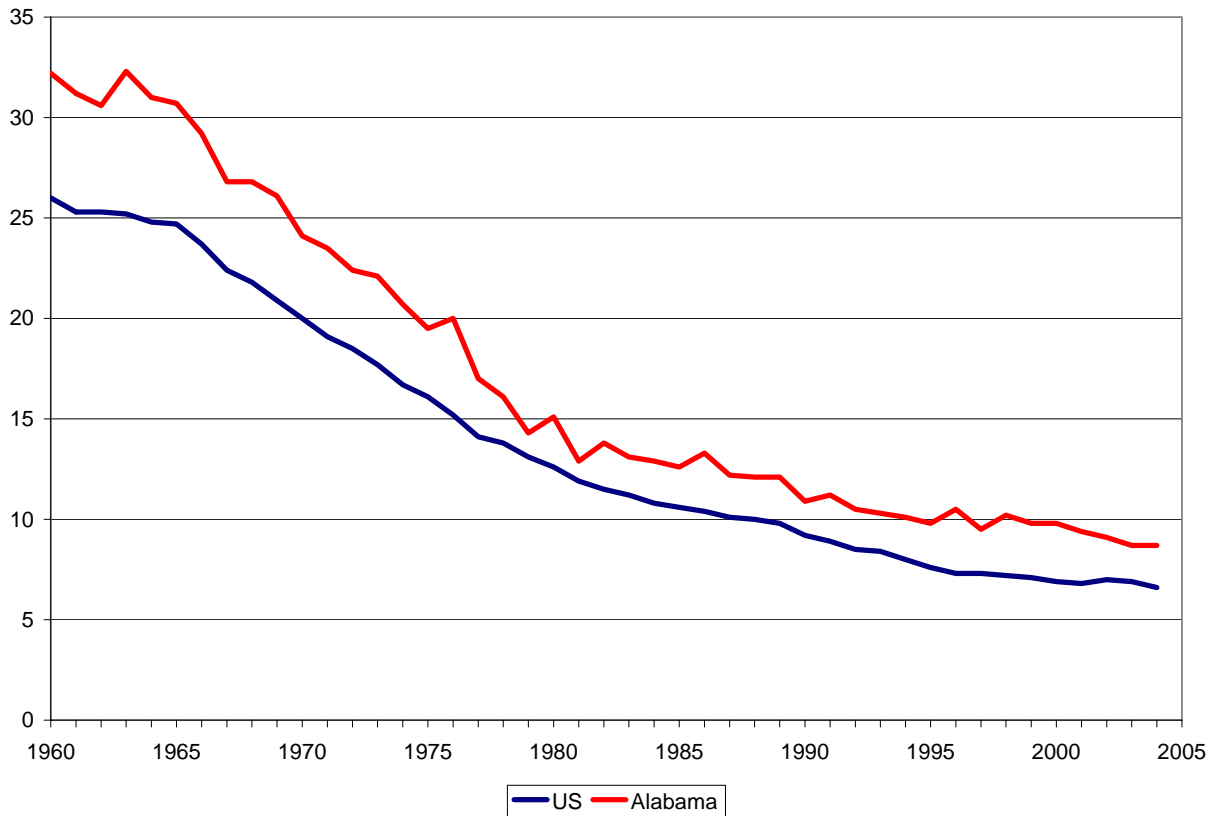
## Death Rates



- In 2004, 46,019 people died in Alabama, for an average death rate of 10.2 persons per 1,000 population.
- Since 1960, Alabama's death rate has increased 9.6 percent, from 9.3 to 10.2 deaths per 1,000 population. At the same time, the national death rate has fallen from 9.5 to 8.1 deaths per year per 1,000 population.<sup>10</sup>
- The death rate for whites in Alabama in 2004 was 24.1 percent higher than that of non-whites (10.8 versus 8.7 per 1,000 population, respectively).
- Heart disease is the primary cause of death in both Alabama and the nation as a whole. In 2003, Alabama's death rate from heart disease was 292.2 per 100,000 population, 24.1 percent higher than the national average of 235.4 per 100,000 population.<sup>11</sup>
- In 2004, the second leading cause of death in Alabama and the United States was cancer. As with heart disease, Alabama's death rate because of cancer in 2003 (217.5) was higher than that of the national average (190.7 per 100,000 population).<sup>12</sup>

	Alabama	US
1960	9.3	9.5
1965	9.7	9.4
1970	9.8	9.5
1975	9.1	8.8
1980	9.0	8.8
1985	9.0	8.7
1990	9.7	8.6
1991	9.8	8.6
1992	9.6	8.5
1993	10.1	8.8
1994	10.2	8.8
1995	10.3	8.8
1996	10.4	8.7
1997	10.4	8.6
1998	10.6	8.6
1999	10.7	8.8
2000	10.1	8.7
2001	10.1	8.5
2002	10.2	8.5
2003	10.4	8.4
2004	10.2	8.1

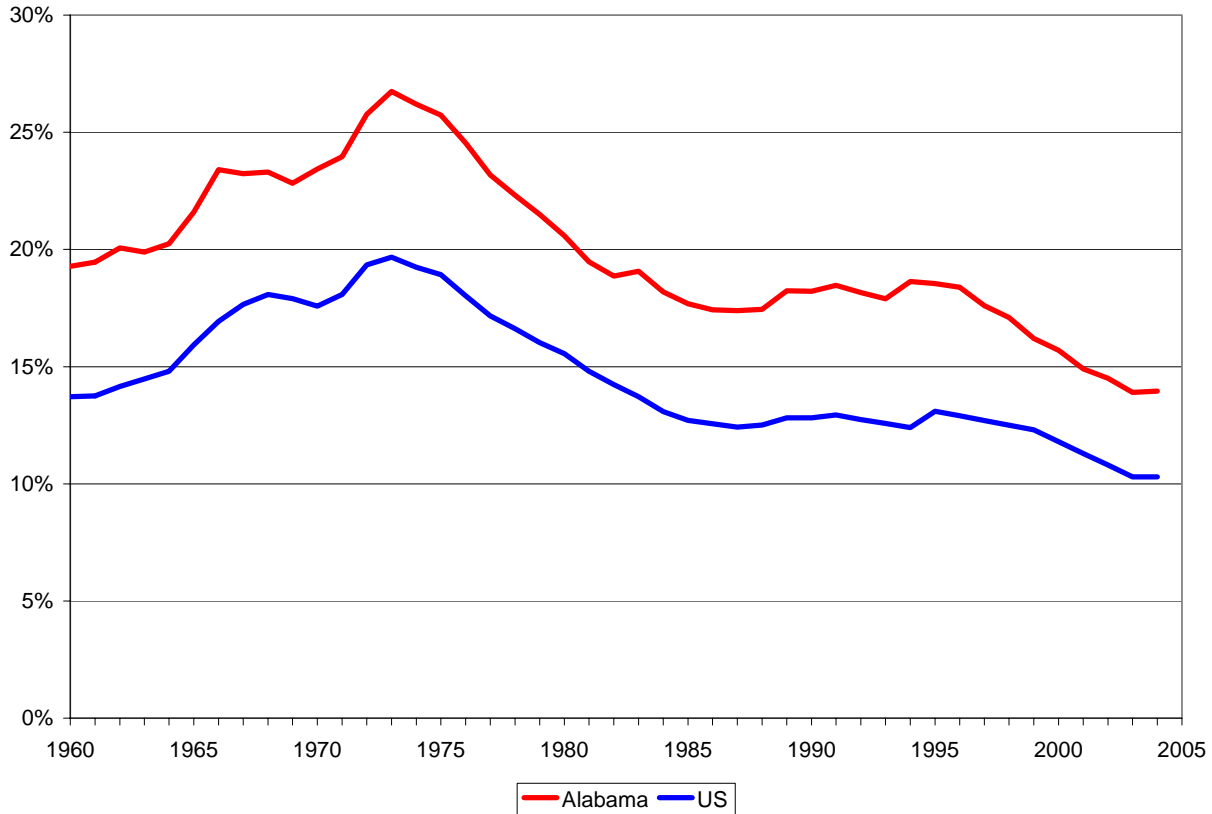
## Infant Mortality Rate



- Since 1960, infant mortality rates in Alabama and the United States have fallen 73 percent and 74.6 percent, respectively. In 1960, 32 out of every 1,000 babies born in Alabama died within their first year of life. By 2004, that number had dropped to only 8.7 of every 1,000 babies born.<sup>13</sup>
- Despite this progress, Alabama's infant mortality rate remains 2.1 percentage points above the national average. In 2002, Alabama tied with West Virginia as having the sixth highest infant mortality rate in the nation. Only the District of Columbia (11.3), Louisiana (10.3), Mississippi (10.3), Tennessee (9.4), and South Carolina (9.3) had higher rates.<sup>14</sup>
- America's still-unsatisfactory infant mortality rate is largely the product of teenage pregnancies, which are more likely to produce low-weight, at-risk babies, and a lack of adequate prenatal care. In 2004, the infant mortality rate in Alabama for babies whose mothers received inadequate prenatal care was almost 2.5 times higher than that of infants of mothers who received adequate prenatal care and manifested no known risk factors.<sup>15</sup>

	Alabama	US
1960	32.2	26.0
1965	30.7	24.7
1970	24.1	20.0
1975	19.5	16.1
1980	15.1	12.6
1985	12.6	10.6
1990	10.9	9.2
1991	11.2	8.9
1992	10.5	8.5
1993	10.3	8.4
1994	10.1	8.0
1995	9.8	7.6
1996	10.5	7.3
1997	9.5	7.3
1998	10.2	7.2
1999	9.8	7.1
2000	9.8	6.9
2001	9.4	6.8
2002	9.1	7.0
2003	8.7	6.9
2004	8.7	6.6

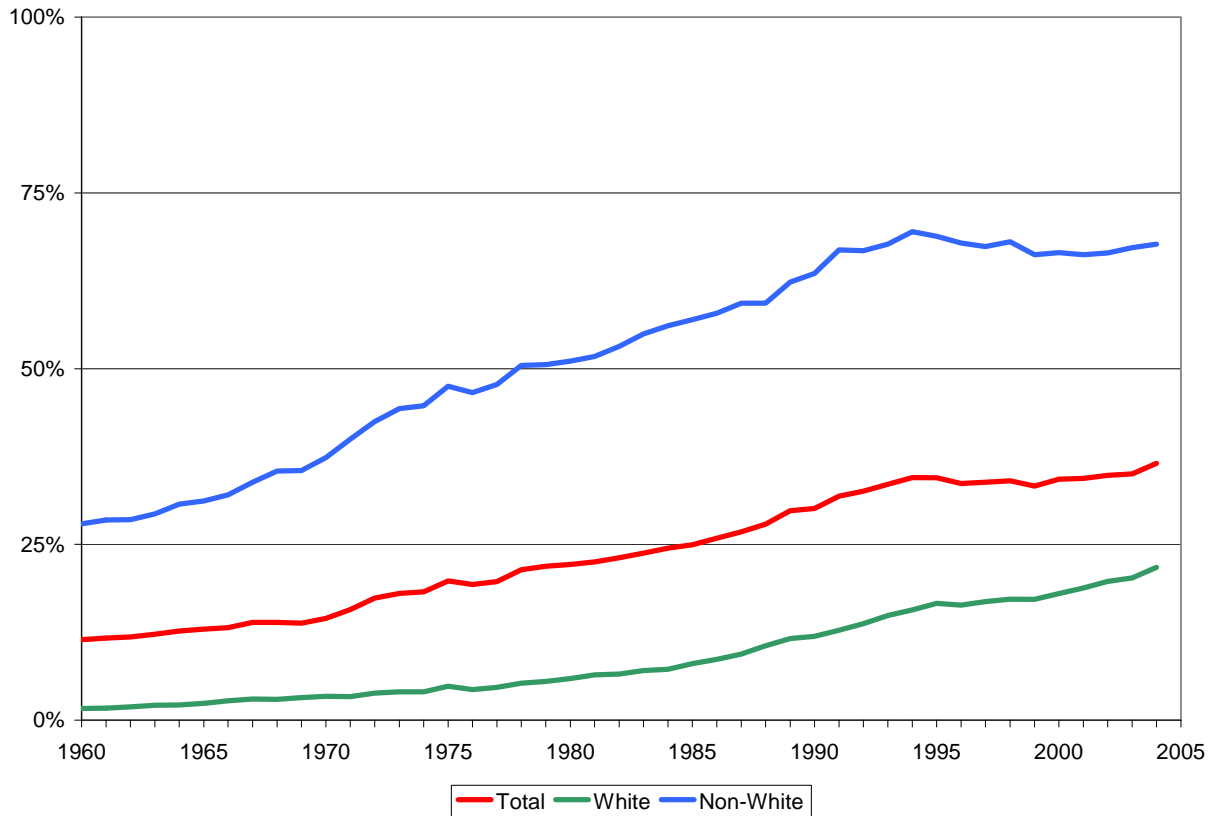
## Teen Birth Rate



- In 2004, about 14 percent of all births in Alabama were to teenage mothers, compared to about 10.3 percent nationwide. Seventy-five percent of these teen mothers were unmarried.<sup>16</sup>
- In 2002, Alabama ranked sixth among the states in the percentage of births among teenage mothers.<sup>17</sup>
- In 2004, about one in 26 females age 10 through 19 became pregnant and about one in every 38 gave birth.<sup>18</sup>
- In 1960, just 24 percent of teenage mothers in Alabama were unmarried, compared with 75 percent in 2004.<sup>19</sup> More specifically, the percentage of births to white, unmarried, teenage women has increased almost twelve-fold from 4.6 percent in 1960 to 58.9 percent in 2004.<sup>20</sup> The percentage of births to non-white, teenage, unmarried women has risen from 50.3 percent to 95.3 percent in 2004.<sup>21</sup>
- Among teenagers, pregnancy rates are highest among 18- and 19-year-olds, with one in nine becoming pregnant in 2004. Within this group, 70 percent gave birth, and 15 percent opted for an abortion.<sup>22</sup>

	Alabama	US
1960	19.3%	13.7%
1965	21.6%	15.9%
1970	23.4%	17.6%
1975	25.7%	18.9%
1980	20.6%	15.6%
1985	17.7%	12.7%
1990	18.2%	12.8%
1991	18.5%	12.9%
1992	18.2%	12.7%
1993	17.9%	12.6%
1994	18.6%	12.4%
1995	18.5%	13.1%
1996	18.4%	12.9%
1997	17.6%	12.7%
1998	17.1%	12.5%
1999	16.2%	12.3%
2000	15.7%	11.8%
2001	14.9%	11.3%
2002	14.5%	10.8%
2003	13.9%	10.3%
2004	14.0%	10.3%

## Births to Unwed Mothers

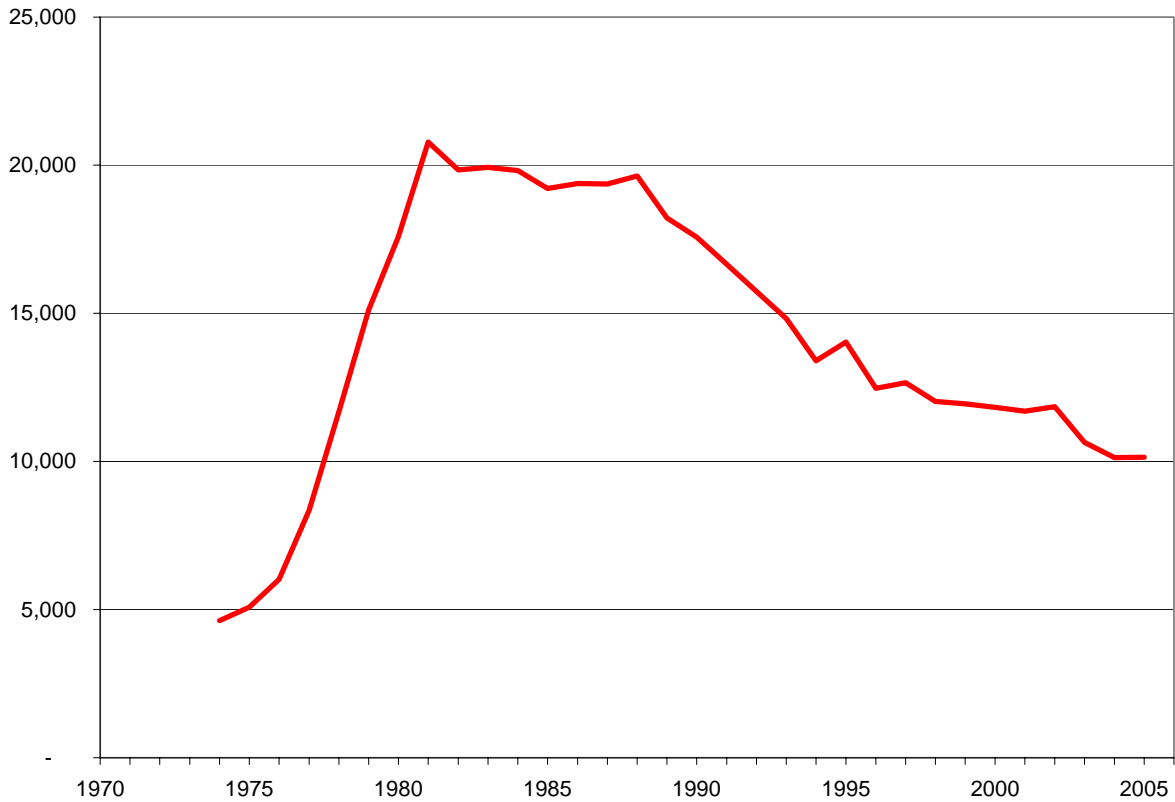


- In 1960, 1.7 percent of births to white women in Alabama were out of wedlock. That amount increased to 21.7 percent in 2004, a rise of 1,186 percent.<sup>23</sup> The percent of births to unwed non-white women has leveled out after growing for more than 30 years. In 2004, 67.7 percent of all children born to non-white females were born out of wedlock, compared to 27.9 percent in 1960, a 142 percent increase.<sup>24</sup>
- Since 1960, out-of-wedlock births as a percentage of all births in Alabama have increased by 219 percent. In 1960, only 11.6 percent of all births were out of wedlock, but by 1998, more than 36.5 percent of all births were to unmarried mothers.<sup>25</sup>

Table 6: Births to Unmarried Women as a Percentage of All Births in Alabama, by Race, 1960-2004

	Total	Race of Mother	
		White	Non-White
1960	11.5%	1.7%	27.9%
1965	12.7%	2.4%	31.2%
1970	14.5%	3.4%	37.3%
1975	19.8%	4.8%	47.5%
1980	22.1%	5.9%	51.1%
1985	24.9%	8.0%	56.9%
1990	30.1%	11.9%	63.5%
1991	31.9%	12.8%	66.9%
1992	32.6%	13.7%	66.8%
1993	33.5%	14.9%	67.7%
1994	34.5%	15.7%	69.5%
1995	34.5%	16.6%	68.8%
1996	33.7%	16.4%	67.9%
1997	33.9%	16.9%	67.4%
1998	34.1%	17.2%	68.1%
1999	33.3%	17.2%	66.2%
2000	34.3%	18.0%	66.5%
2001	34.4%	18.8%	66.2%
2002	34.8%	19.7%	66.5%
2003	35.0%	20.2%	67.2%
2004	36.5%	21.7%	67.7%

## Abortion Rate



- In 2004, there was approximately one abortion for every six live births in Alabama. Of the 10,144 abortions performed on residents in 2004, 18 percent were to teenagers.<sup>26</sup>
- About one half of all unintended pregnancies end in abortion. Nationwide, about 82 percent of all abortions are to unmarried women.<sup>27</sup>
- While the exact number of abortions performed in Alabama prior to their legalization in 1973 is unknown, more than 452,000 abortions have been performed in the state since the *Roe. v. Wade* decision. This total is greater than the combined populations of Decatur, Gadsden, and Tuscaloosa.
- Nationally, an estimated 1.29 million abortions were performed in 2002, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>28</sup> In Alabama, the abortion rate (10.6 per 1,000 women) is about one-half that of the national average (20.8).<sup>29</sup>
- Most of these figures come from the Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York, which gathers voluntary reports from abortion providers. The numbers of abortions performed in Alabama from 1986 to 1991 are estimates because it was not until 1992 that the state law required full reporting from the providers of abortion services.

Abortions	
1973	4,630
1975	6,020
1980	20,780
1985	19,380
1990	16,655
1991	15,737
1992	14,820
1993	13,398
1994	14,028
1995	12,474
1996	12,652
1997	12,026
1998	11,949
1999	11,827
2000	11,695
2001	11,852
2002	10,648
2003	10,130
2004	10,144

## Points to Consider

- Never-married, divorced, or separated adults have a higher mortality risk than those who are married. An examination of mortality data from 1986 to 1987 found that never-married adults have nearly twice the mortality risk of those who are married. Those who are divorced or separated run a mortality risk more than 50 percent higher than those who are married.<sup>30</sup>
- There is a strong association between father absence and whether adolescent girls will be sexually active and become pregnant as teenagers. A 2003 study following community samples of girls from age five to age eighteen in the United States and New Zealand found that teen pregnancies were seven to eight times greater among girls whose fathers were absent early in their childhoods and two to three times higher among those whose fathers were not present later in their childhood. These results remained significant even when differences in family background were controlled for.<sup>31</sup>
- Girls who begin sexual activity at an earlier age are far more likely to have abortions. According to a sample of 10,000 women ages 15 to 44 who participated in the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, nearly 30 percent of girls who became sexually active at age 13 or 14 had had an abortion, while only 12 percent of those who began sexual activity at 21 or 22 had had an abortion.<sup>32</sup>

## **Crime in Alabama and the United States**

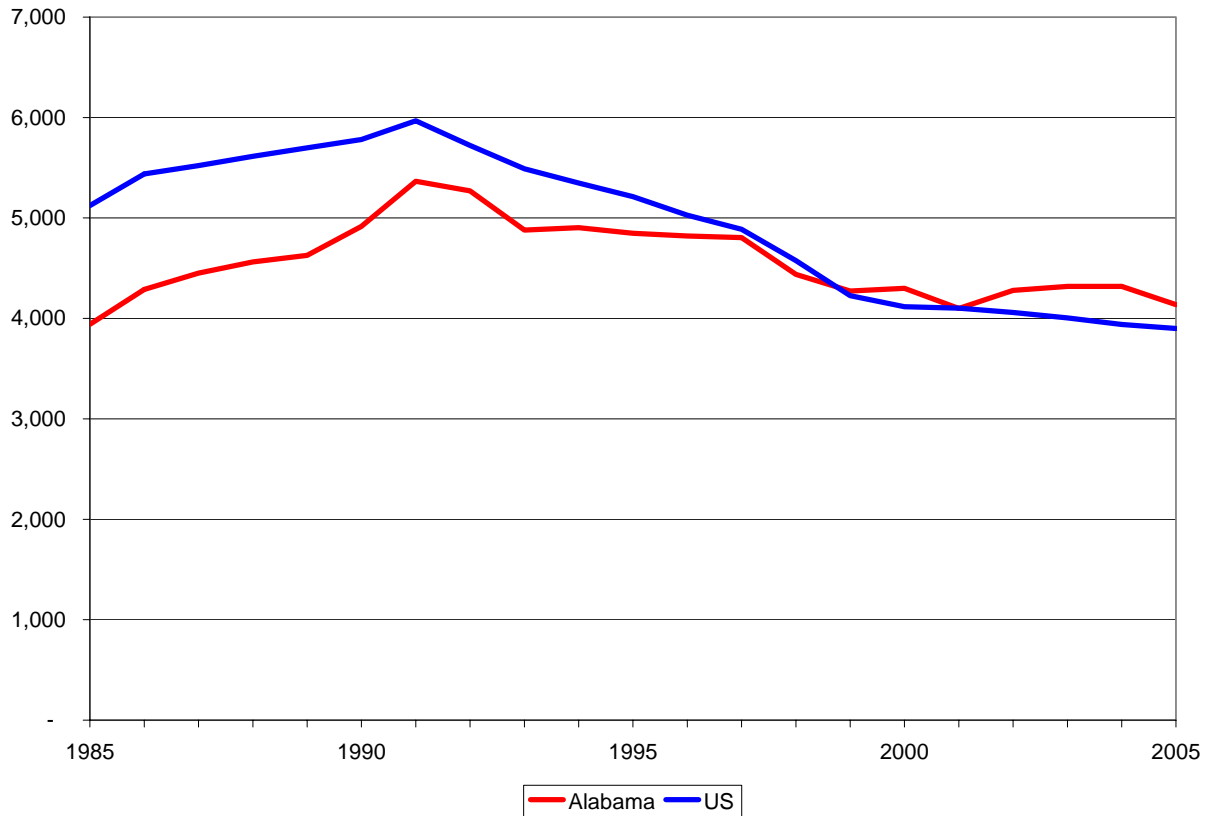
### Understanding the Crime Index

- Alabama's annual crime rate is computed using the FBI's Uniform Crime Index (UCI), which includes reported crimes in the following seven "Part I" Offense categories: murder, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Of these, homicide, rape, robbery and assault are classified as "violent crimes," while burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft are considered "property crimes."
- The totals of each of these specific crimes are summed and then divided by the state's population. This number is then multiplied by 100,000 to show the rate of all Part I crimes per 100,000 residents. Using the UCI, states can identify crime trends as a proportion of the total population and compare themselves to trends and averages in other states, as well as to national averages.
- Other offenses, known as "Part II" Offenses, include simple assault, arson, drug-related offenses, vandalism, fraud, embezzlement, and many other crimes. These crimes are not included in Part I Offenses because they often go undetected until an arrest is made.<sup>33</sup> Arrest data alone suggest that if Part II Offenses were ever added to the Crime Index, the number of reported crimes would increase significantly. In 2001, for example, 168,942 persons were arrested for Part II offenses.<sup>34</sup>

### Crime and the Economy

- A 2002 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research examining the drop in crime in New York City from 1992-99 found the best predictor of crime reduction to be higher arrest rates and not an improvement in the economy. The study found that, while a single point decline in the jobless rate might reduce burglaries by 2.2 percent, a 10 percent increase in the number of arrests of burglars resulted in a drop in the number of burglaries by 2.7 to 3.2 percent. Also, increasing the minimum wage 10 percent reduced robberies 3.4 to 3.7 percent, but arresting 10 percent more robbers reduced the number of robberies 5.7 to 5.9 percent.<sup>35</sup>

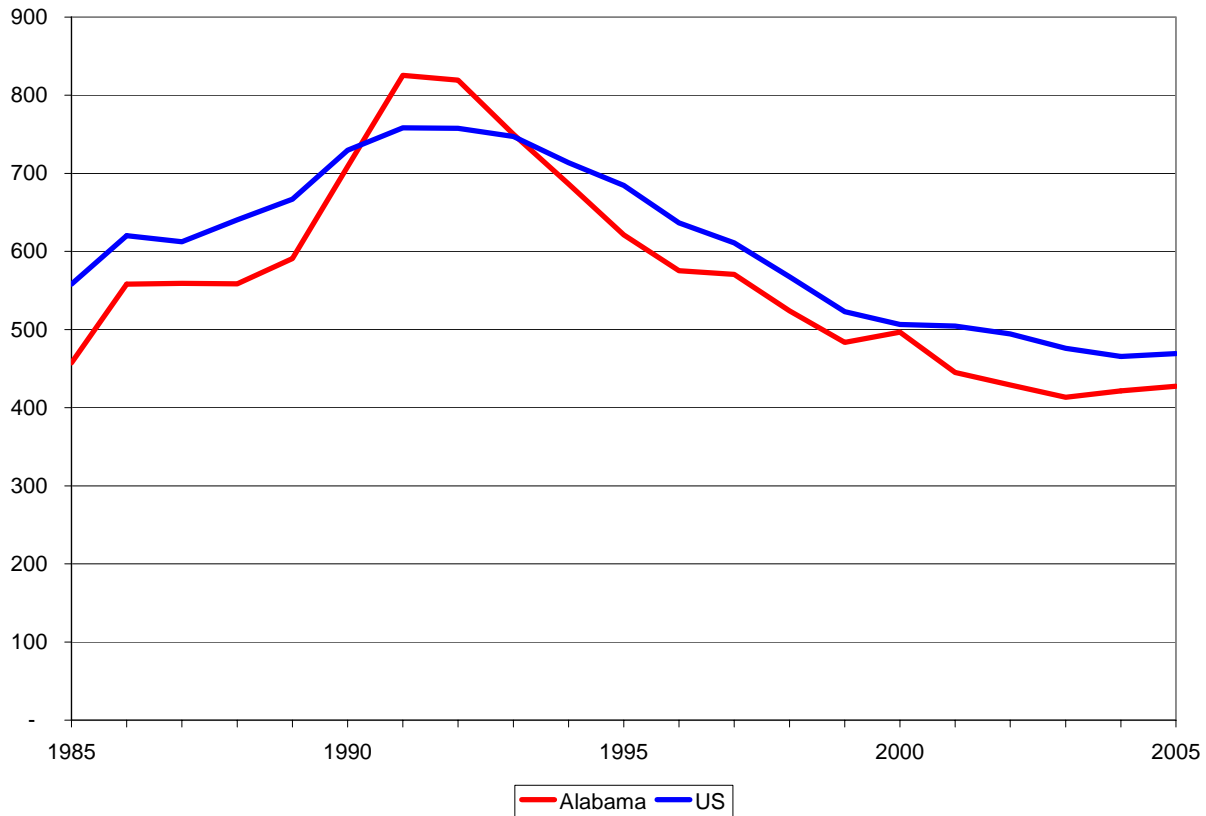
## Crime Rates



- From 1985 to 2005, the national crime rate fell by 23.9 percent. At the same time, the population of the United States grew by approximately 24.2 percent. The total number of crimes committed in the nation has fallen by more than six percent since 1985 and has remained below 12 million for the past seven years.<sup>36</sup>
- At the same time, Alabama's crime rate increased by 4.9 percent, while its population grew by approximately 14.7 percent. The total number of crimes committed in Alabama from 1985 to 2005 has increased by about 19.0 percent.<sup>37</sup>
- While Alabama's portion of the overall national population declined from 1.7 percent to 1.5 percent in the last 20 years, its share of all crimes committed in the United States has risen, from about 1.3 percent in 1985 to about 1.6 percent in 2005.<sup>38</sup>
- From 1985 to 1999, Alabama's crime rate remained below the national average. Since 1999, Alabama has been above the national average most years.<sup>39</sup>

	Alabama	US
1985	3,942.1	5,123.9
1986	4,288.4	5,439.8
1987	4,451.4	5,522.2
1988	4,561.7	5,612.6
1989	4,627.8	5,697.9
1990	4,915.2	5,781.7
1991	5,365.6	5,965.6
1992	5,268.1	5,723.0
1993	4,878.8	5,490.0
1994	4,903.0	5,346.5
1995	4,848.1	5,211.5
1996	4,820.1	5,026.3
1997	4,804.6	4,887.1
1998	4,438.0	4,576.4
1999	4,272.1	4,227.1
2000	4,298.1	4,114.9
2001	4,097.6	4,103.3
2002	4,278.5	4,059.8
2003	4,317.8	4,004.5
2004	4,317.7	3,938.7
2005	4,136.9	3,899.0

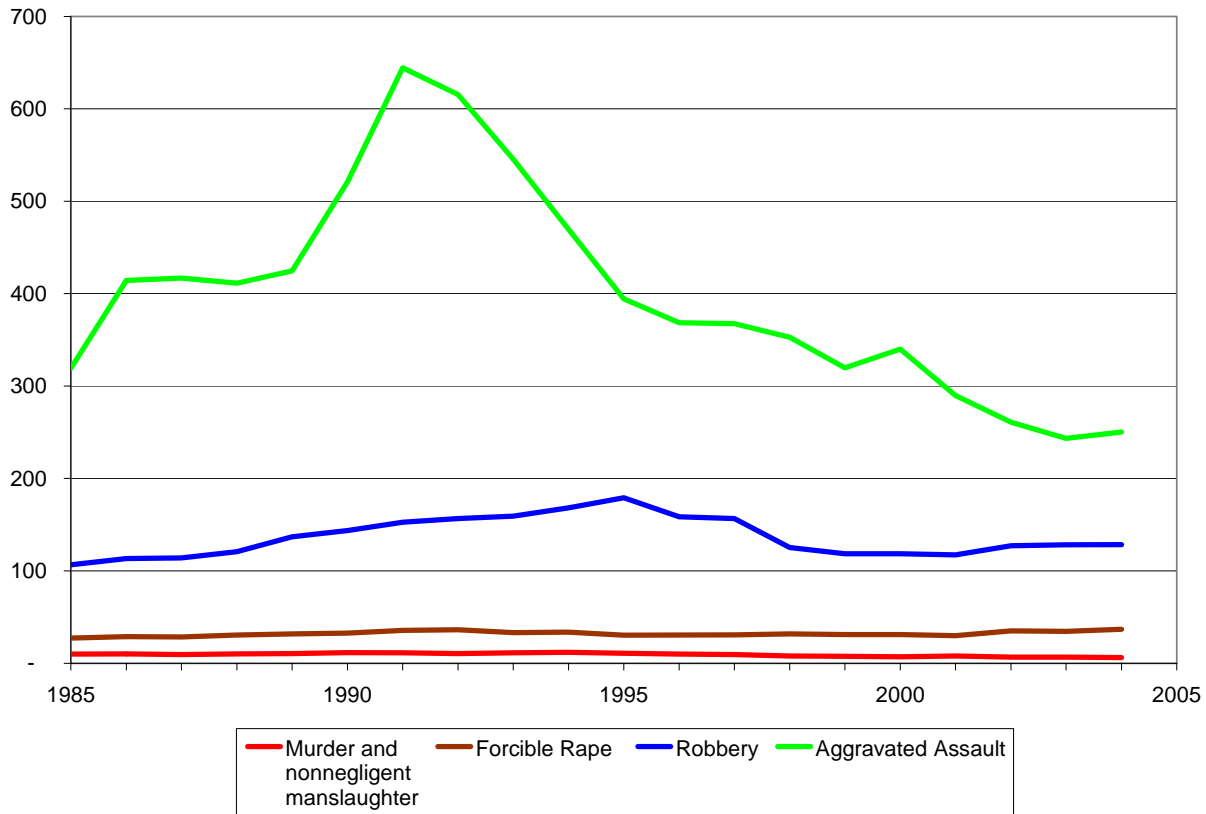
## Violent Crime



- In 2005, Alabama's violent crime rate was about 8.8 percent below the national average. From 1991 to 1993, Alabama's violent crime rate was above the national average. Since then, it has averaged 7.1 percent below national levels.<sup>40</sup>
- In 2005, approximately 19,486 violent crimes were committed in Alabama, or about 5.9 percent more than were committed in 1985. This number of crimes is about 350 more than the 19,101 committed in 2004.<sup>41</sup>
- Since 1985, Alabama's violent crime rate has fallen by about 6.5 percent. The national violent crime rate, though, has declined by approximately 15.9 percent.<sup>42</sup>
- In 1985, violent crimes constituted about 11.6 percent of all crimes committed in Alabama. In 2005, about 10.3 percent of all crimes committed were of a violent nature.<sup>43</sup>

	Alabama	US
1985	457.5	558.1
1986	558.0	620.1
1987	559.2	612.5
1988	558.6	640.6
1989	590.8	666.9
1990	708.6	729.6
1991	825.4	758.2
1992	819.3	757.7
1993	750.0	747.1
1994	686.3	713.6
1995	621.0	684.5
1996	575.3	636.6
1997	570.8	611.0
1998	523.9	567.6
1999	483.5	523.0
2000	496.6	506.5
2001	445.2	504.4
2002	429.2	494.4
2003	413.3	475.8
2004	421.6	465.5
2005	427.5	469.2

## Violent Crime Trends, by Type

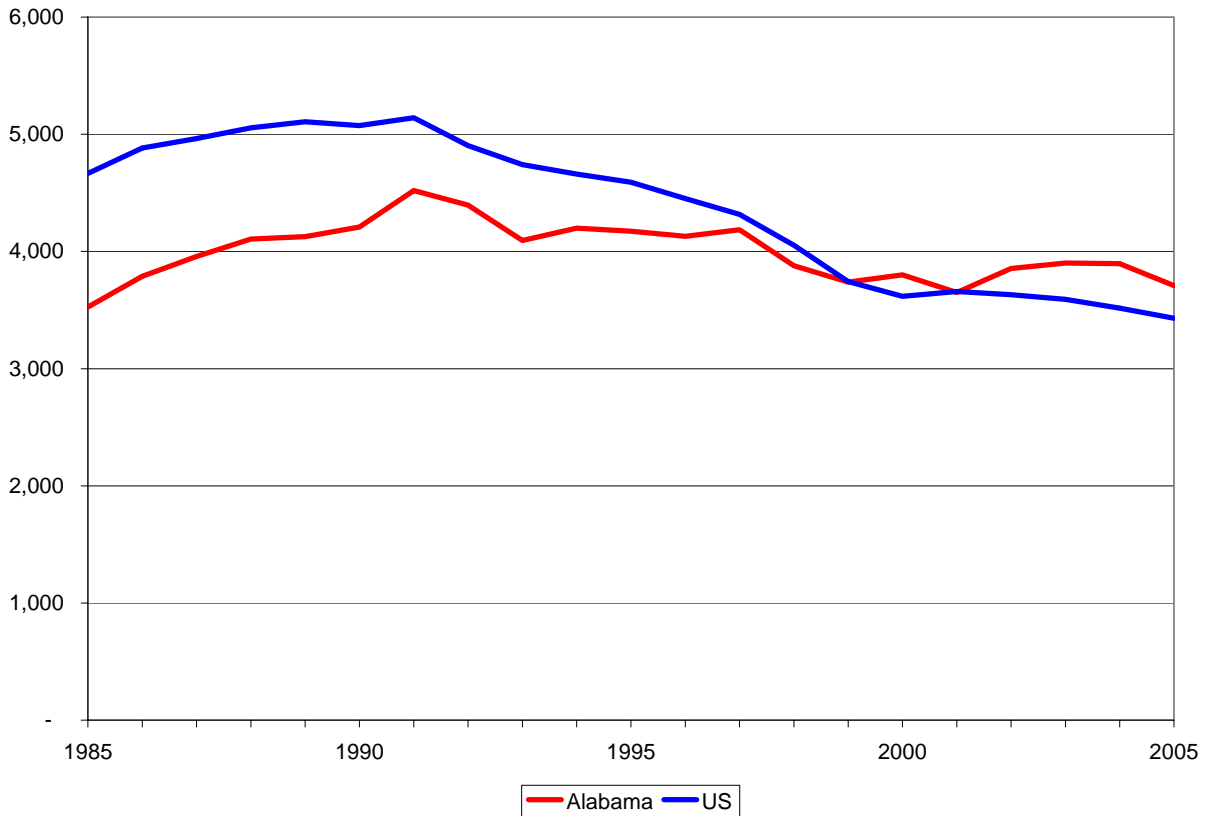


The numbers of every category of violent crime in the United States continue to fall from their highs in the early 1990s. Except for rape and robbery, Alabama has also witnessed a drop in violent crime rates. Since 1986:

- the murder rate fell by 28.4 percent in Alabama and 34.9 percent in the U.S.,
- the rate of rapes rose by 15.3 percent in Alabama but fell by 16.8 percent nationwide,
- the robbery rate rose by 19.2 percent in Alabama but fell by 37.7 percent in the U.S., and
- the assault rate fell by 39.1 percent in Alabama and by 16.2 percent in the U.S.<sup>44</sup>

	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault
1985	10.0	27.2	106.6	319.3
1986	10.2	28.8	113.3	414.2
1987	9.5	28.3	114.1	416.8
1988	10.1	30.5	120.8	411.4
1989	10.4	31.7	136.8	424.7
1990	11.6	32.6	143.7	520.8
1991	11.5	35.6	152.7	644.2
1992	10.5	36.3	156.6	615.4
1993	11.3	33.1	159.2	545.5
1994	11.8	33.7	168.2	469.3
1995	10.8	30.4	179.1	394.3
1996	10.0	30.7	158.6	368.4
1997	9.5	30.8	156.7	367.4
1998	7.8	31.7	125.3	352.8
1999	7.7	31.2	118.5	319.6
2000	7.1	31.0	118.5	340.0
2001	7.8	29.9	117.2	289.8
2002	6.6	35.0	127.2	260.9
2003	6.6	34.7	128.3	243.5
2004	6.2	36.8	128.5	250.2
2005	7.3	33.2	135.0	252.0

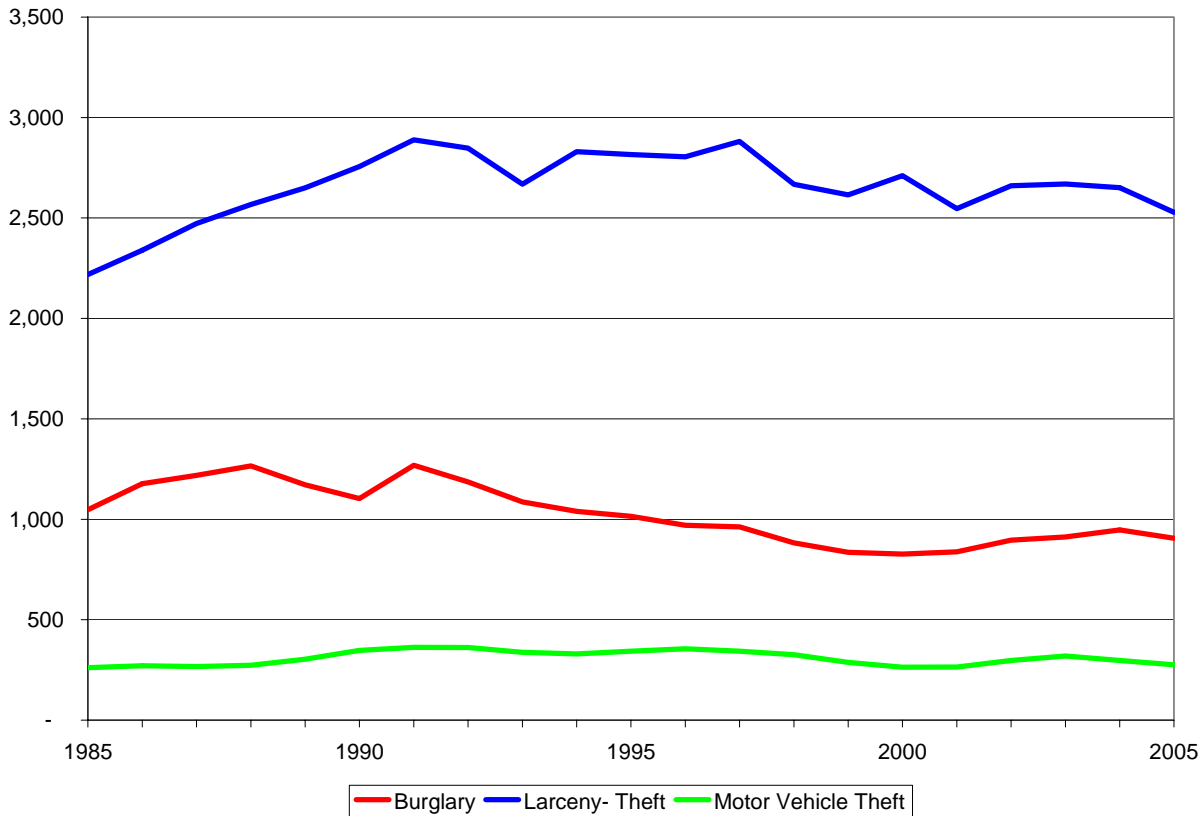
## Property Crime



- In 2005, Alabama’s property crime rate was about 8.1 percent above the national average. From 1985 to 1999, Alabama’s property crime rate remained below the national average. Since then, it has remained, on average, about 6.4 percent above national levels.<sup>45</sup>
- In 2005, approximately 169,064 property crimes were committed in Alabama, or about 20.7 percent more than were committed in 1985.
- As a whole, Alabama’s property crime rate has risen by about 5.2 percent since 1985. The national property crime rate, though, has declined by approximately 26.5 percent.

	Alabama	US
1985	3,526.7	4,666.4
1986	3,787.3	4,881.8
1987	3,958.1	4,963.0
1988	4,105.6	5,054.0
1989	4,125.2	5,107.1
1990	4,207.3	5,073.1
1991	4,520.3	5,140.2
1992	4,394.3	4,903.7
1993	4,093.5	4,740.0
1994	4,199.5	4,660.2
1995	4,172.5	4,590.5
1996	4,130.2	4,451.0
1997	4,186.3	4,316.3
1998	3,877.2	4,052.5
1999	3,739.3	3,743.6
2000	3,801.6	3,618.3
2001	3,649.1	3,658.1
2002	3,854.0	3,630.6
2003	3,901.7	3,591.2
2004	3,896.2	3,517.1
2005	3,709.3	3,429.8

## Property Crime Trends, by Type

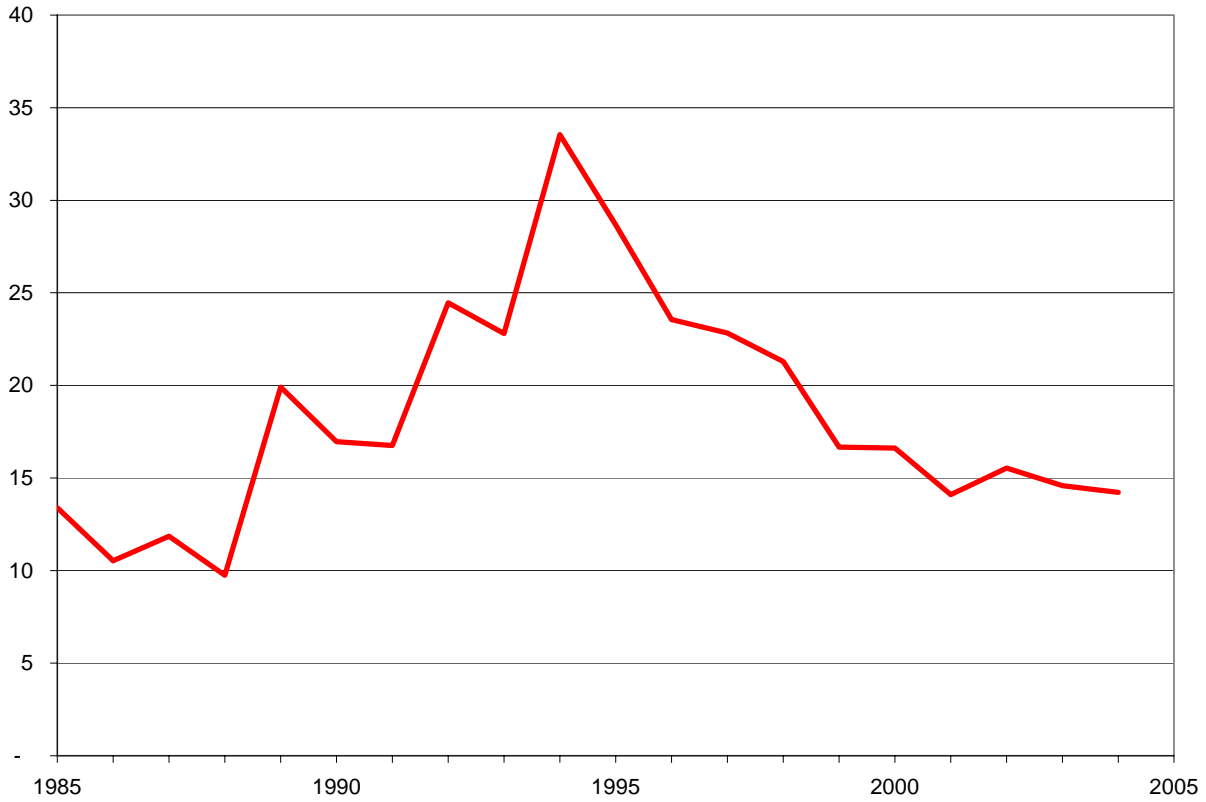


The rates of all types of property crimes in the United States have fallen significantly since 1986. During the same time, Alabama's burglary rates have fallen, but larceny-thefts have risen and motor vehicle thefts are about the same. From 1986 to 2005:

- the rate of burglaries fell by 23.1 percent in Alabama and by 46.2 percent in the U.S.,
- the rate of larceny-thefts rose by 8.1 percent in Alabama, but fell by 24.3 percent nationwide, and
- the rate of motor vehicle thefts rose by 1.8 percent in Alabama, but fell by 18.3 percent in the U.S.<sup>46</sup>

	Burglary	Larceny- Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
1985	1,047.4	2,217.7	261.6
1986	1,176.7	2,339.6	271.1
1987	1,218.6	2,472.2	267.3
1988	1,265.4	2,566.7	273.5
1989	1,171.8	2,649.4	303.9
1990	1,103.6	2,755.8	347.8
1991	1,268.3	2,888.8	363.3
1992	1,185.4	2,846.8	362.1
1993	1,087.3	2,668.8	337.4
1994	1,039.5	2,829.7	330.3
1995	1,014.3	2,815.2	343.1
1996	970.6	2,804.7	354.9
1997	962.3	2,881.1	342.9
1998	883.4	2,667.6	326.2
1999	836.5	2,614.9	287.9
2000	827.6	2,710.5	263.5
2001	837.9	2,546.7	264.5
2002	895.5	2,660.6	297.9
2003	912.6	2,669.8	319.2
2004	947.4	2,650.9	297.9
2005	905.4	2,528.0	275.9

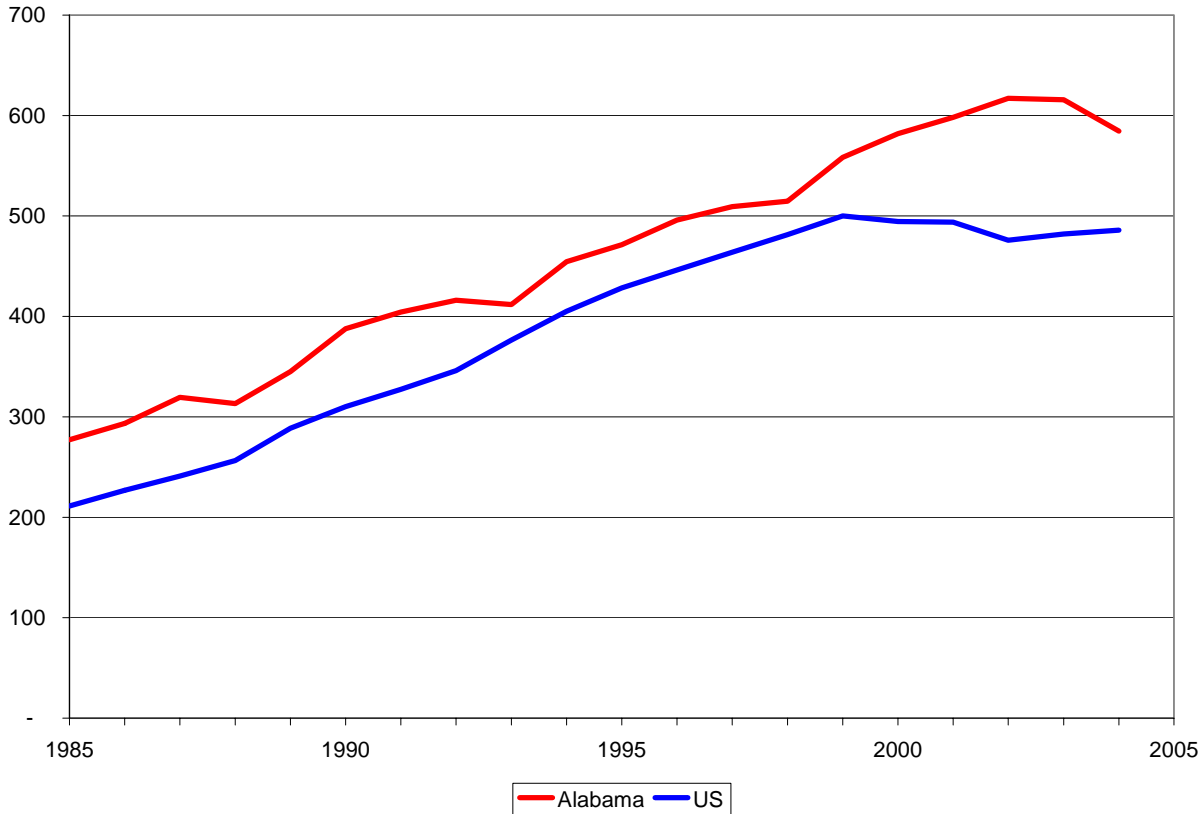
## Juvenile Violent Crime



- From 1985 to 2005, the rate of juvenile arrests in Alabama for violent crimes—murder, rape, robbery, and assault—increased 11.1 percent. In raw numbers, the total number of arrests of juveniles for violent crimes has increased 28 percent since 1985.
- In 2005, 10.5 percent of all juvenile arrests were for assault, 6.7 percent were for robbery, 0.6 percent were for rape, and 0.5 percent were for murder.
- Since 1985, the percentage of all arrests in Alabama of juveniles for violent crimes has remained flat. In 1985, 10.2 percent of all persons arrested for violent crimes were juveniles, and in 2005, 10.3 percent were.<sup>47</sup>

	Arrests	Arrest Rates
1985	532	13.4
1986	420	10.5
1987	476	11.9
1988	392	9.7
1989	802	19.9
1990	685	17.0
1991	685	16.7
1992	1,012	24.5
1993	956	22.8
1994	1,422	33.5
1995	1,232	28.7
1996	1,020	23.6
1997	997	22.8
1998	938	21.3
1999	738	16.7
2000	739	16.6
2001	630	14.1
2002	696	15.5
2003	657	14.6
2004	644	14.2
2005	681	14.9

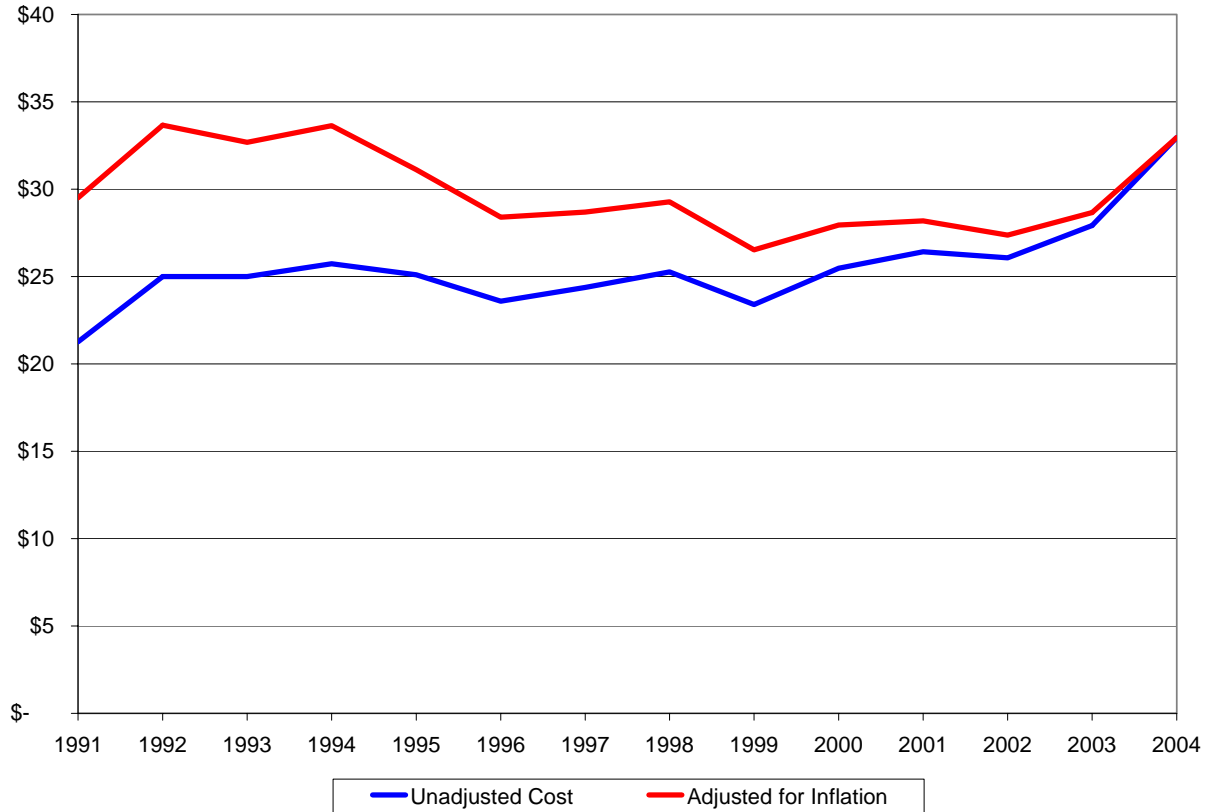
## Prison Population



- Since 1991, Alabama's adult prison population has increased 60 percent. At the same time, the U.S. adult prison population has risen 73.6 percent.<sup>48</sup>
- In 2004, about 0.58 percent of Alabama's population was in a state or federal prison, compared to about 0.49 percent of the national population.<sup>49</sup> Alabama's incarceration rate is the sixth highest in the nation.
- In 1991, 25 percent of the criminals in Alabama's prisons (4,119 prisoners) were held under the Habitual Offender Act. In 2004, that number had increased to 29 percent (7,689 prisoners).
- In 2004, 42.8 percent of Alabama's prisoners (11,333 prisoners) were serving time for violent offenses, up from 39.3 percent (10,182 prisoners) in 2000.<sup>50</sup>
- The average sentence for a prisoner in the state of Alabama is 14 years 11 months, up from 14 years five months in 1991.<sup>51</sup>

	Prisoners	Prisoner Rate	
		Alabama	US
1985	11,015	277.2	211.2
1986	11,710	293.3	227.0
1987	12,827	319.5	241.2
1988	12,610	313.4	256.7
1989	13,907	345.1	288.6
1990	15,665	387.7	310.2
1991	16,544	404.5	327.4
1992	17,222	416.2	346.0
1993	17,267	411.9	376.5
1994	19,269	454.6	405.1
1995	20,248	471.2	428.4
1996	21,476	495.9	446.2
1997	22,243	509.2	463.9
1998	22,670	514.6	481.3
1999	24,733	558.3	500.1
2000	25,873	581.8	494.4
2001	26,729	598.2	493.7
2002	27,656	617.2	476.0
2003	27,727	615.6	482.0
2004	26,473	584.4	486.0

## The Cost of Corrections



- In 2004, Alabama taxpayers spent \$12,030 per inmate in the state's prison system, up from \$10,190 in 2003. After adjusting for inflation, the state cost per inmate has risen only 11.7 percent since 1991.<sup>52</sup>
- Although the cost of building and maintaining prisons is high, the cost of not doing so appears to be even higher. A 1996 study of 12 states forced by court orders to reduce levels of imprisonment found that incarcerating one additional prisoner reduces the number of crimes by about 15 per year, the majority of them property crimes, and yields a social benefit of at least \$53,900 annually.

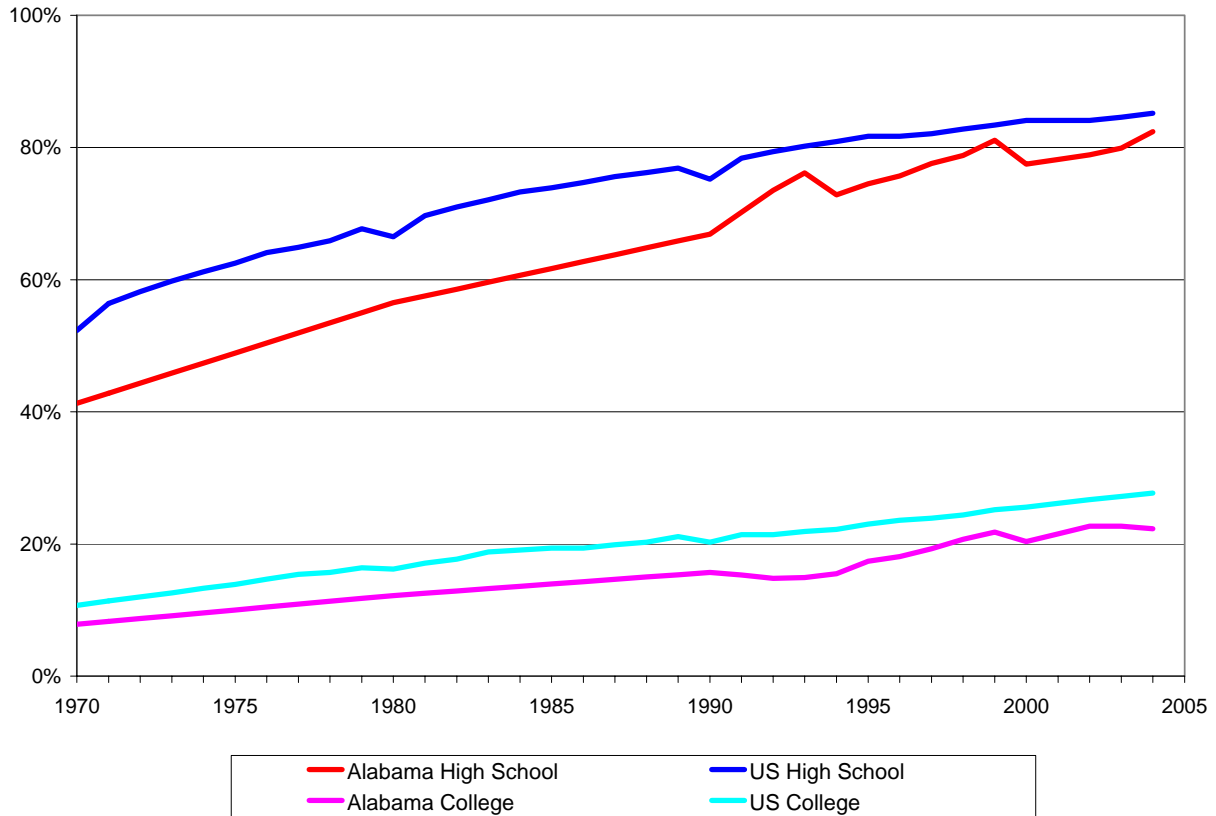
	Unadjusted Cost	Adjusted for Inflation
1991	\$ 21.27	\$ 29.50
1992	\$ 25.00	\$ 33.66
1993	\$ 25.00	\$ 32.68
1994	\$ 25.73	\$ 33.64
1995	\$ 25.10	\$ 31.11
1996	\$ 23.58	\$ 28.39
1997	\$ 24.37	\$ 28.68
1998	\$ 25.26	\$ 29.27
1999	\$ 23.40	\$ 26.53
2000	\$ 25.47	\$ 27.94
2001	\$ 26.42	\$ 28.18
2002	\$ 26.07	\$ 27.37
2003	\$ 27.92	\$ 28.66
2004	\$ 32.96	\$ 32.96

## Points to Consider

- An examination of 1990 census data and homicide data for the city of St. Louis found that the most significant predictors of homicide in a community were economic disadvantage, the percentage of children who were not living with both parents, and the percentage of residents who were African American.<sup>53</sup>
- Using data from the U.S. Department of Justice's 1999 National Crime Victimization Survey, researchers at the Heritage Foundation found that mothers who have never been married experienced violent crime at almost three times the rate of mothers who had ever been married.<sup>54</sup>
- According to a 2000 study of 264 rural counties across the South and Midwest, rates of juvenile delinquency were not a product of poverty or unemployment, but the rate of family disruption in the community. Having a mother and father were especially critical to the system of "relationships that brought formal and informal controls to bear on the behavior of children."<sup>55</sup>
- Family dissolution, through either divorce or illegitimacy, correlates with mugging, violence against strangers, auto theft, burglary, and other crimes. Data from several hundred communities in Great Britain shows that two-parent households provide increased supervision not only for their own children and property but also for general activities in the neighborhood. Particularly in low-income neighborhoods with few social ties, pronounced family dissolution helps to foster street-corner teen groups that, in turn, lead to increased delinquency and, ultimately, to a pattern of adult crime.<sup>56</sup>

## Education

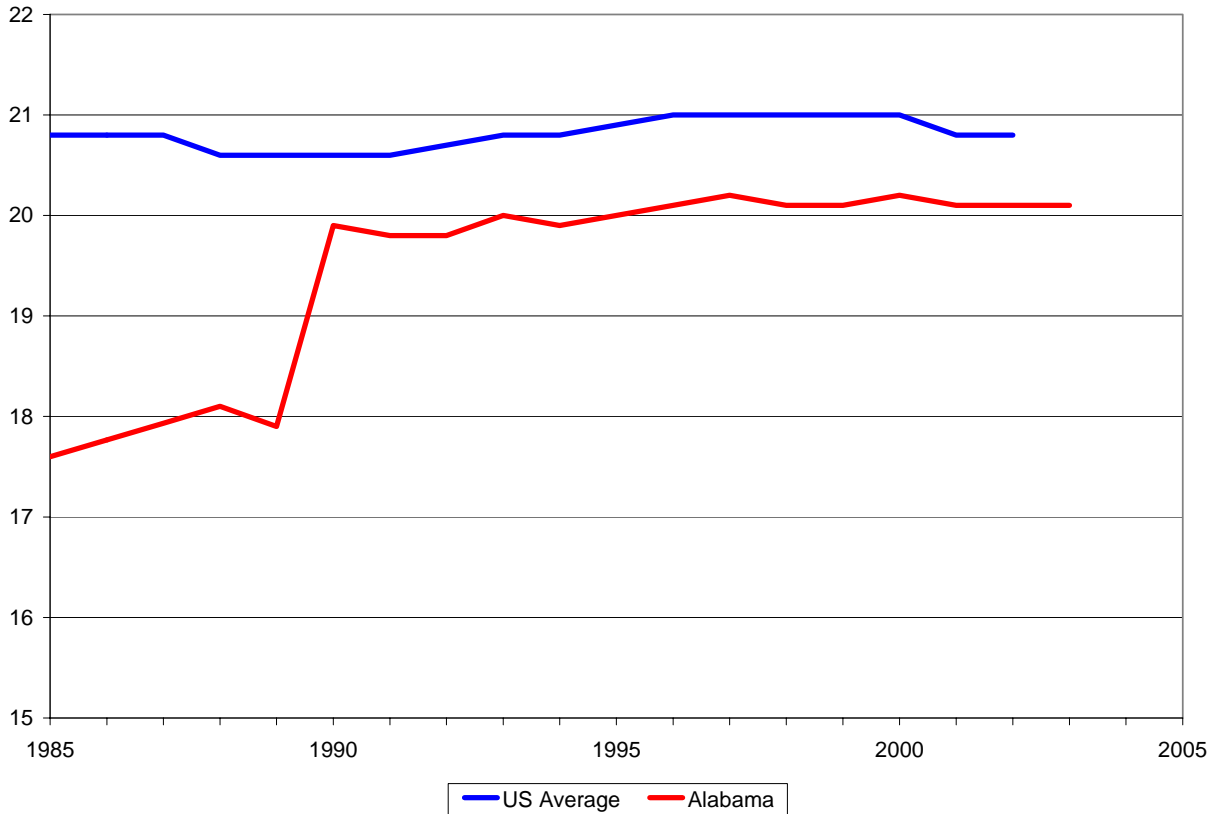
### Academic Achievement



- Since 1970, the percentage of Alabamians age 25 and older with a high school diploma has doubled, while the percentage of adults with a college degree has risen 184 percent.
- Yet, in 2004, Alabama ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> in the percentage of adults ages 25 and older with high school diplomas and 47<sup>th</sup> for adults holding at least a bachelors' degree.<sup>57</sup>
- The fewer degrees an adult holds, the less their earning potential. According to the Census Bureau, a high school diploma raises personal income by \$8,450 and a bachelor's degree by \$23,900.<sup>58</sup>

	Adults with High School Diploma		Adults with College Diploma	
	Alabama	US	Alabama	US
1970	41.3%	52.3%	7.8%	10.7%
1975	42.8%	62.5%	8.3%	13.9%
1980	56.5%	66.5%	12.2%	16.2%
1985	57.5%	73.9%	12.6%	19.4%
1990	66.9%	75.2%	15.7%	20.3%
1991	70.2%	78.4%	15.3%	21.4%
1992	73.5%	79.4%	14.8%	21.4%
1993	76.2%	80.2%	14.9%	21.9%
1994	72.9%	80.9%	15.5%	22.2%
1995	74.5%	81.7%	17.4%	23.0%
1996	75.7%	81.7%	18.1%	23.6%
1997	77.6%	82.1%	19.3%	23.9%
1998	78.8%	82.8%	20.7%	24.4%
1999	81.1%	83.4%	21.8%	25.2%
2000	77.5%	84.1%	20.4%	25.6%
2001	78.2%	84.1%	21.6%	26.2%
2002	78.9%	84.1%	22.7%	26.7%
2003	79.9%	84.6%	22.7%	27.2%
2004	82.4%	85.2%	22.3%	27.7%

## ACT Scores



- In 2003, 73 percent of all high school graduates in Alabama took the ACT. Of these, the average composite score was 20.1, the 42<sup>nd</sup> lowest rank in the nation.<sup>59</sup> Of the 25 states in which most students take the ACT, Alabama was in 21<sup>st</sup> place.<sup>60</sup>
- Sixty-five percent of Alabama high school students taking the ACT in 2003 were core course completers—that is, they had taken at least four years of English and three years of math (algebra and higher), social sciences, and natural sciences. Of these, their composite average was 21.0, compared to a national average of 21.8 for core course completers and an 18.3 for Alabama students who were not core course completers.<sup>61</sup>
- Since 1990, Alabama students' scores on the Enhanced ACT have been stagnant, with students typically scoring about eight tenths of a point below the national average.<sup>62</sup>

	Alabama	US
1990	19.9	20.6
1991	19.8	20.6
1992	19.8	20.6
1993	20.0	20.7
1994	19.9	20.8
1995	20.0	20.8
1996	20.1	20.9
1997	20.2	21.0
1998	20.1	21.0
1999	20.1	21.0
2000	20.2	21.0
2001	20.1	21.0
2002	20.1	20.8
2003	20.1	20.8

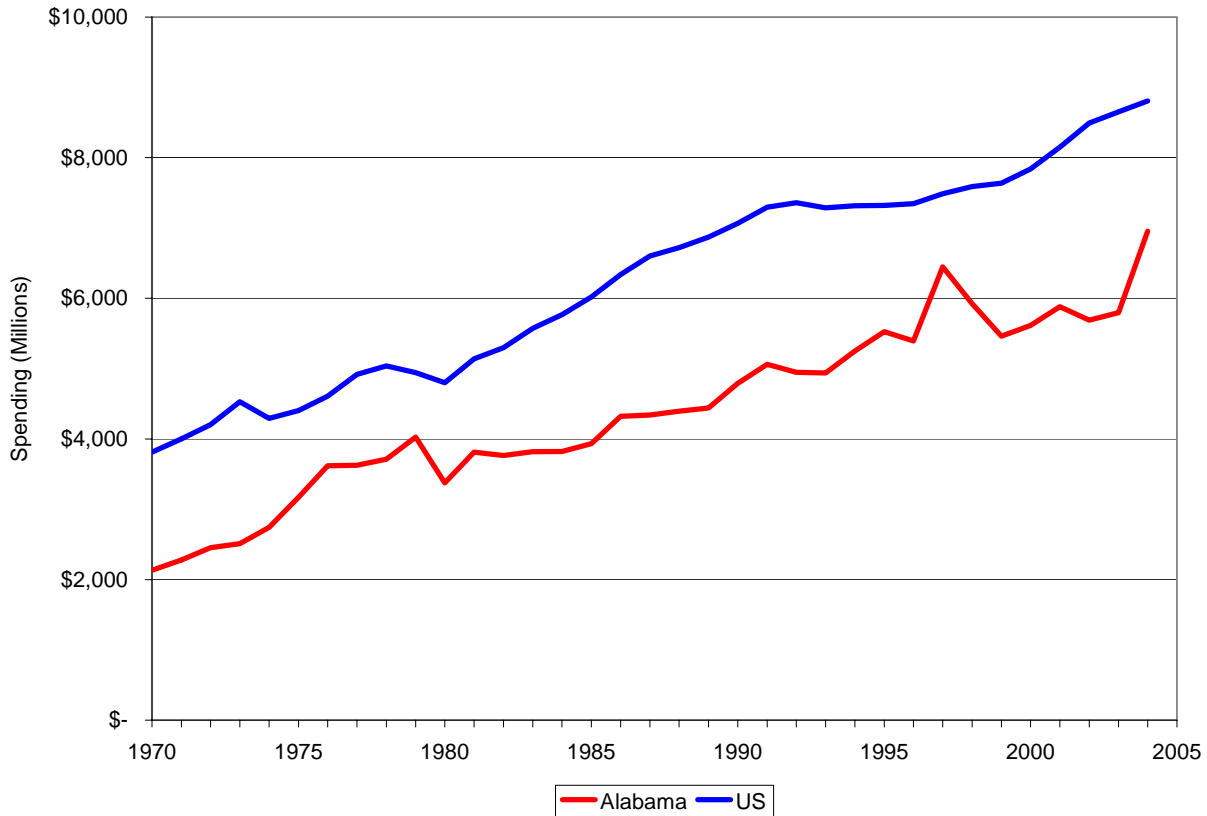
## NAEP Test Scores

	Mathematics				Reading			
	4th Grade		8th Grade		4th Grade		8th Grade	
	Alabama	US	Alabama	US	Alabama	US	Alabama	US
1996	212	222	257	271	—	—	—	—
1998	—	—	—	—	211	213	255	261
2000	218	226	262	274	—	—	—	—
2002	—	—	—	—	207	217	253	263
2003	223	234	262	276	207	216	253	261

Since 1969, the National Assessment of Academic Progress (NAEP) has been mandated by Congress to monitor the knowledge, skills, and performance of the nation's school children. One form of recent monitoring has been national, standardized tests in mathematics, science, reading, geography, and other subjects. In 2003, all 50 states and the District of Columbia participated in the mathematics and reading exams.<sup>63</sup>

- NAEP uses a scale of 0 to 500 for its mathematics and reading tests. In 2003, Alabama's eighth-grade students ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation with an average score of 262, with only 16 percent at or above proficiency. By comparison, the national average was 276, with 27 percent at or above proficiency.<sup>64</sup>
- During the same year, fourth-grade students in Alabama ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation with an average NAEP score of 223, with 19 percent at or above proficiency. This average compares to a national average of 234, with 31 percent at or above proficiency.<sup>65</sup>
- In reading, Alabama's eighth graders ranked 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation with an average NAEP score of 253. Twenty-two percent of Alabama's eighth-grade students scored at or above proficiency level. By comparison, the national average was 261, with 30 percent scoring at or above proficiency.<sup>66</sup>
- In 2003, Alabama's fourth-grade students ranked 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation with an average NAEP score of 207 and 22 percent at or above proficiency. This average compares to a national average of 216, with 30 percent at or above proficiency.<sup>67</sup>

## K-12 Spending



- Expenditures for public primary and secondary education in America rose to \$397 billion for the 2004 school year.<sup>68</sup>
- Despite occasional proration and other income shortfalls, Alabama's public elementary and secondary schools have received a substantial increase in revenue over the past 35 years. From 1970 to 2004, real (inflation-adjusted) spending on public education in Alabama increased 194 percent, compared to a 146-percent increase for the nation as a whole.<sup>69</sup>
- Spending per student also has increased. Since 1970, per-student spending on public elementary and secondary education in Alabama has increased 226 percent, compared to a national increase of 131 percent.<sup>70</sup>
- Since 1970, Alabama's per-pupil expenditures have risen from about 56 percent of the national average to about 79 percent of the national average.

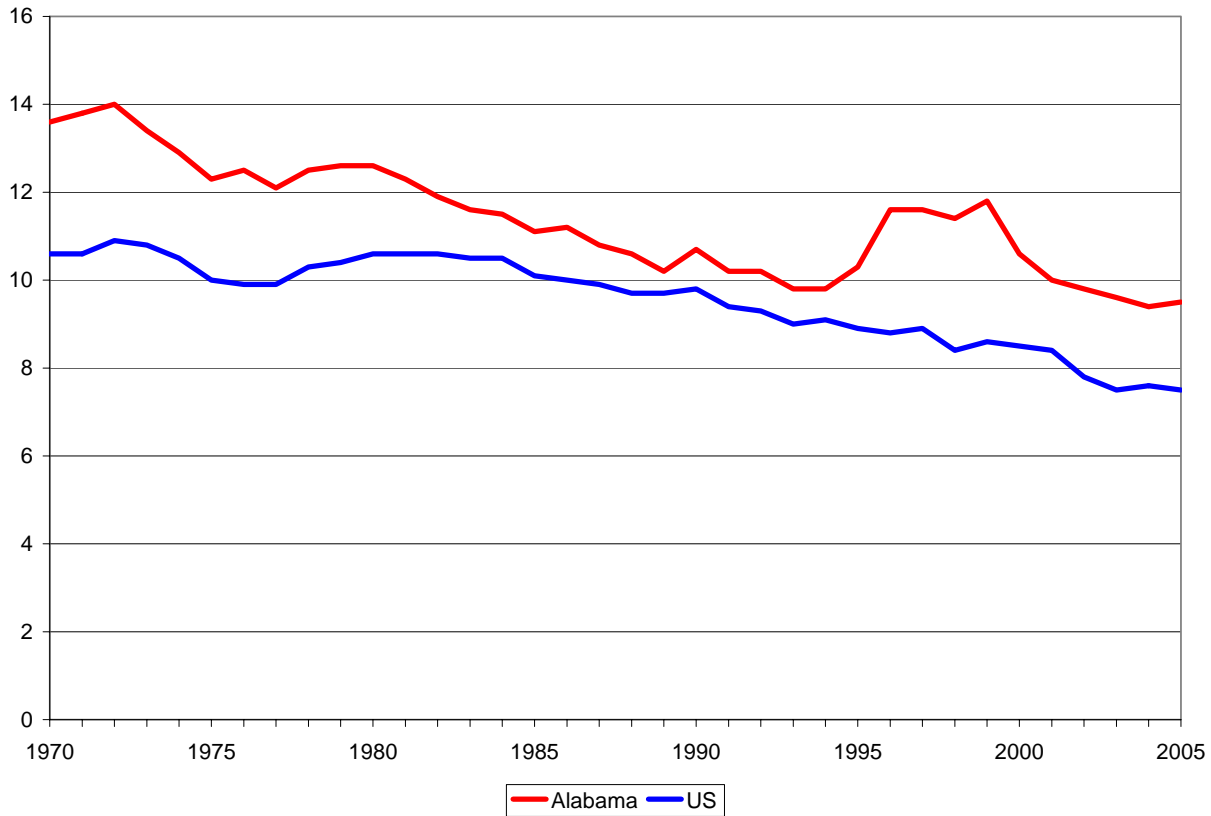
	Alabama		US	
1970	\$	2,132	\$	3,812
1975	\$	3,171	\$	4,403
1980	\$	3,375	\$	4,800
1985	\$	3,934	\$	6,020
1990	\$	4,790	\$	7,067
1991	\$	5,060	\$	7,297
1992	\$	4,948	\$	7,359
1993	\$	4,940	\$	7,287
1994	\$	5,250	\$	7,317
1995	\$	5,526	\$	7,322
1996	\$	5,392	\$	7,348
1997	\$	6,447	\$	7,485
1998	\$	5,922	\$	7,588
1999	\$	5,463	\$	7,635
2000	\$	5,614	\$	7,839
2001	\$	5,879	\$	8,149
2002	\$	5,690	\$	8,492
2003	\$	5,796	\$	8,652
2004	\$	6,953	\$	8,807

## Points to Consider

- A 2005 survey of the literature by University of Chicago professor Barbara Schneider and her associates for the Alabama Policy Institute (API) found that most children in non-intact families are at an educational and social disadvantage, as compared to children in traditional families.<sup>71</sup>
- In his book *Maximizing Intelligence*, David J. Armor notes that in 1994 half of all mothers who had their first child when they were 18 or younger never finished high school and only about 10 percent had any education beyond high school. About 75 percent of these teen mothers were also single parents and had household incomes of less than \$20,000 a year. By comparison, 75 percent of women who had delayed having her first child until her late twenties were married and living with her husband, 70 percent had attended college, and more than 50 percent lived in households making at least \$35,000 a year.<sup>72</sup>
- Armor also found that when the NAEP scores of eighth graders in mathematics averaged 100, children from homes with a single mother averaged 97, those from single father homes averaged 96, and those from homes with neither biological parent averaged 92. By comparison, those who came from homes with both biological parents scored 103 on average.<sup>73</sup>

## Family

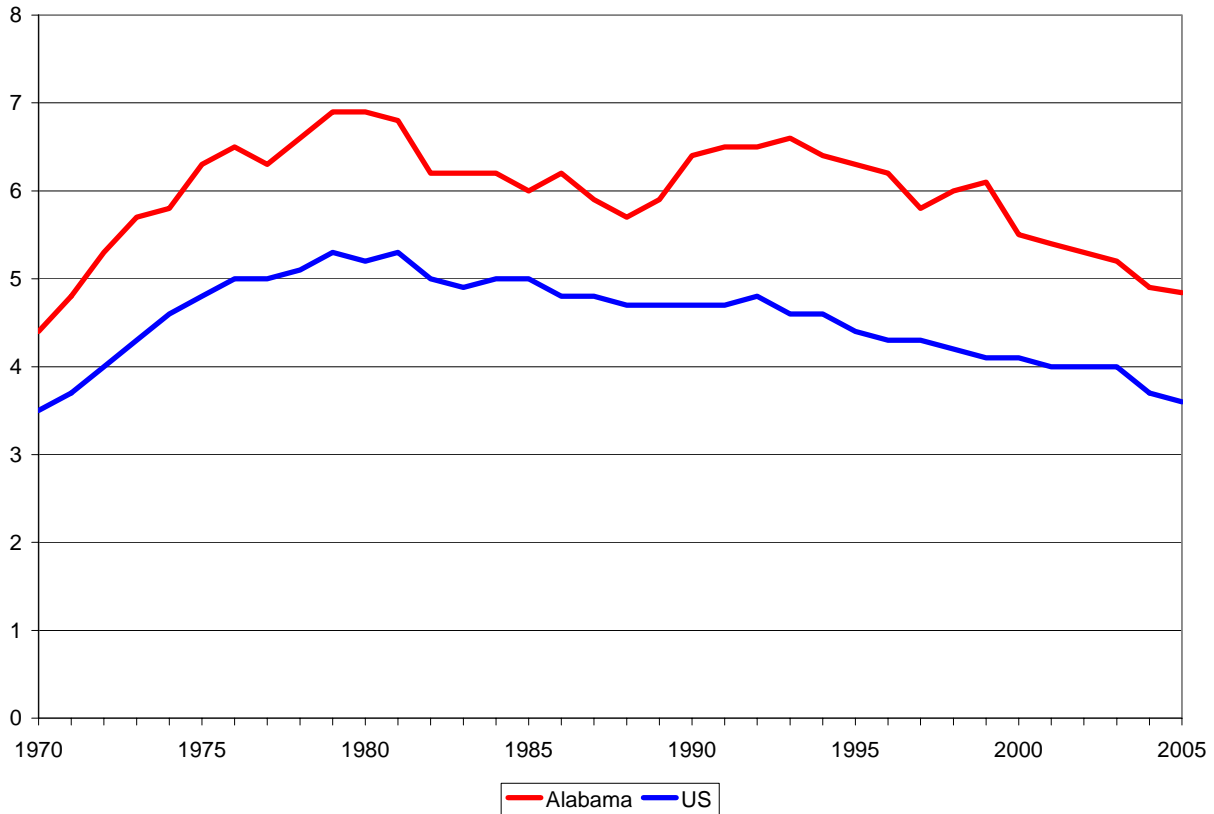
### Marriage



- Alabama's marriage rate in 2005 was 26.7 percent above the national average, more than its post-World War II average of 20 percent above the national average. Still, as recently as 1999, Alabama's marriage rate was 37 percent higher than the national average.<sup>74</sup>
- In 2005, Alabama's marriage rate 9.5 of marriages per 1,000 persons was the sixth highest in the nation.<sup>75</sup>
- There were 43,308 marriages in Alabama in 2005, the third-lowest since 1995. Part of this decrease appears to be due to a 29 percent drop in the marriage rate among minority Americans from 1999 to 2004 after a 46 percent increase among minority marriage rates from 1990 to 1999.<sup>76</sup>
- Nationally, the marriage rate decline has affected how the "traditional" American family is defined. In 1960, married couples made up about 75 percent of all households. By 2000, that number had fallen to 51.5 percent.<sup>77</sup>

	Alabama	US
1970	13.6	10.6
1975	12.3	10.0
1980	12.6	10.6
1985	11.1	10.1
1990	10.7	9.8
1991	10.2	9.4
1992	10.2	9.3
1993	9.8	9.0
1994	9.8	9.1
1995	10.3	8.9
1996	11.6	8.8
1997	11.6	8.9
1998	11.4	8.4
1999	11.8	8.6
2000	10.6	8.5
2001	10.0	8.4
2002	9.8	7.8
2003	9.6	7.5
2004	9.4	7.6
2005	9.5	7.5

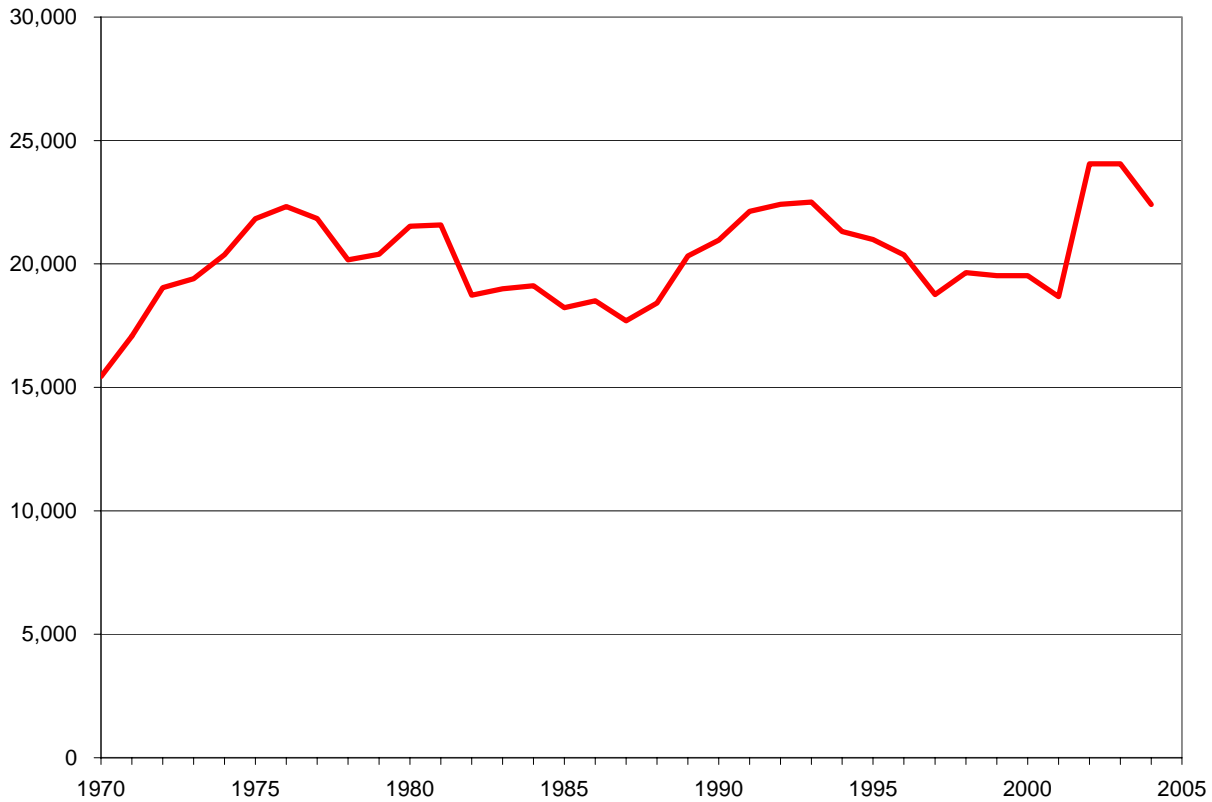
## Divorce



- Despite its location in the Bible Belt, Alabama’s divorce rate has remained above the national average for 60 years. In 2005, the state’s divorce rate was 33 percent higher than the national average, giving Alabama the dubious honor of having the eighth highest divorce rate in the nation.<sup>78</sup>
- Between 1970 and 1980, Alabama’s divorce rate increased from 4.4 to 6.9 divorces per 1,000 persons, before a long, slow descent to 4.8 divorces per 1,000 in 2005.<sup>79</sup>
- In 2005, 22,076 divorces were granted in Alabama, down slightly from 22,405 in 2004.<sup>80</sup> More than 95 percent of these divorces were on the grounds of incompatibility, also known as “no-fault divorce.”

	Alabama	US
1970	4.4	3.5
1975	6.3	4.6
1980	6.9	5.2
1985	6.0	5.0
1990	6.4	4.7
1991	6.5	4.7
1992	6.5	4.8
1993	6.6	4.6
1994	6.4	4.6
1995	6.3	4.4
1996	6.2	4.3
1997	5.8	4.3
1998	6.0	4.2
1999	6.1	4.1
2000	5.5	4.1
2001	5.4	4.0
2002	5.3	4.0
2003	5.2	4.0
2004	4.9	3.7
2005	4.8	3.6

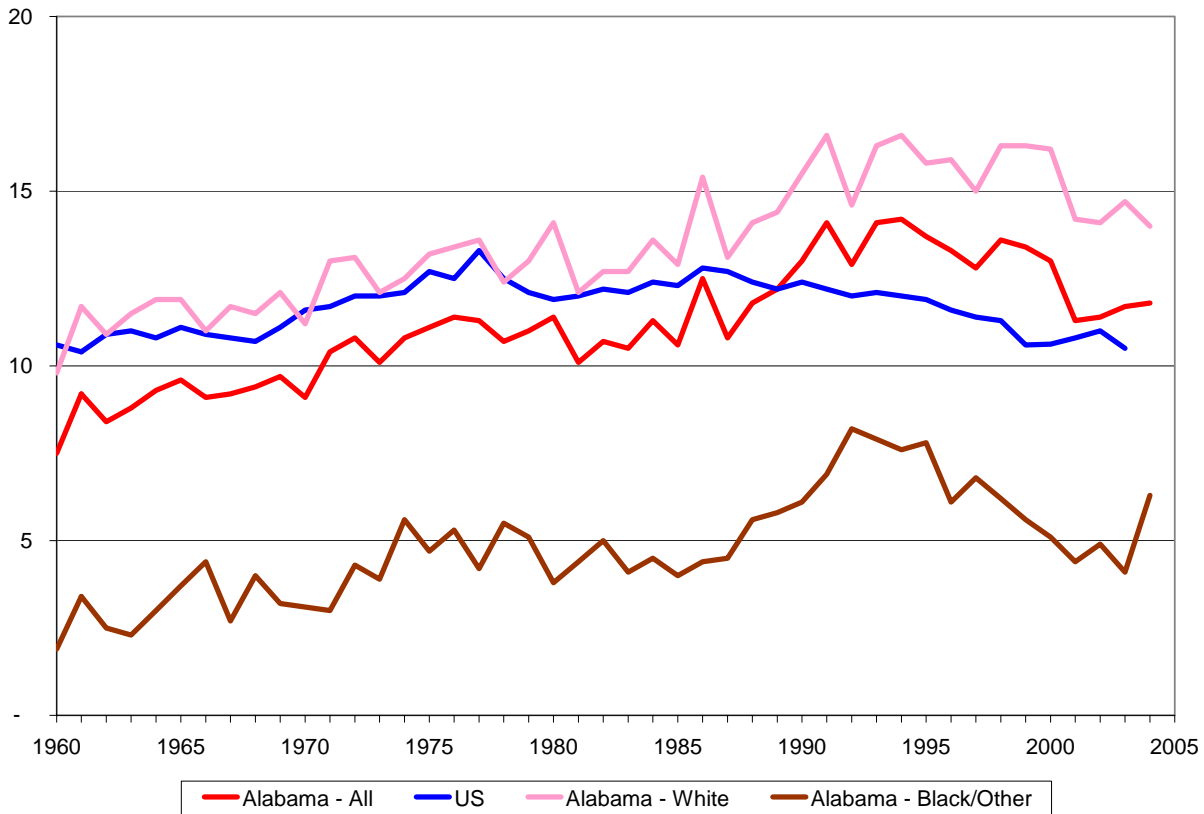
## Children Affected by Divorce



- As the number of divorces has increased, so has the number of children involved. Since 1970, about 24,100 couples have divorced in Alabama every year, splitting the homes of about 20,200 children annually. If none of these divorces had involved a second divorce for one of the parents, more than 708,000 children in Alabama have been directly affected by divorce since 1970.<sup>81</sup>
- According to the 1993 *Report of the National Commission on America's Urban Families*, the number of children living with a divorced parent increased 352 percent from 1960 to 1990.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, 60 percent of the 1.2 million divorces granted each year nationwide involve parents with children under the age of 18.<sup>83</sup>
- In 2004, the API and the National Fatherhood Initiative sponsored a telephone survey of 403 Alabama residents ages 18 and older. Fifty-five percent of respondents *disagreed* with the statement, "It should be harder for parents of children under age 18 to get a divorce than it is for couples who do not have children."<sup>84</sup>

1970	15,437
1975	21,830
1980	21,528
1985	18,229
1990	20,962
1991	22,128
1992	22,416
1993	22,503
1994	21,315
1995	20,990
1996	20,366
1997	18,761
1998	19,649
1999	19,527
2000	19,521
2001	18,674
2002	24,059
2003	24,059
2004	22,405

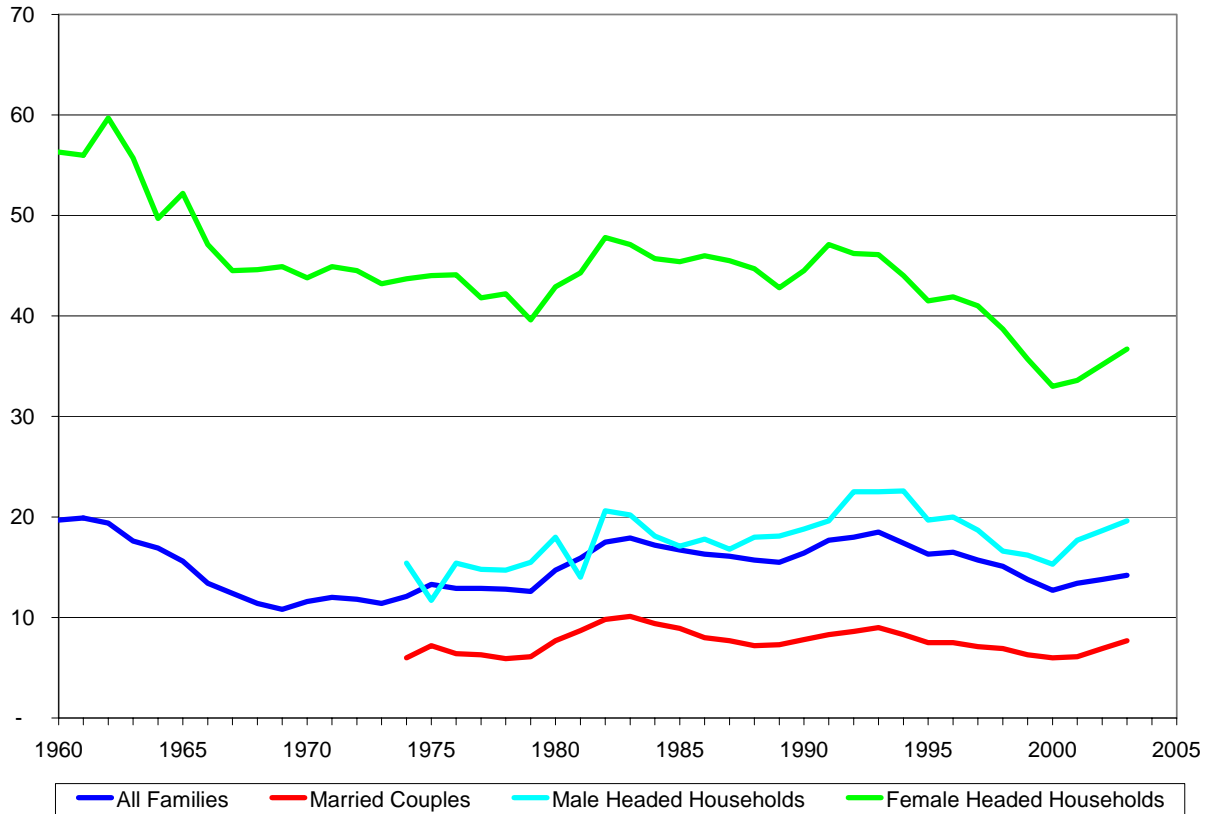
## Suicide



- While the national suicide rate has been flat since 1960, Alabama's suicide rate has risen 57.3 percent. Alabama's 2004 suicide rate of 11.8 per 100,000 residents is lower than its peak of 14.2 in 1994.<sup>85</sup>
- White males are still the most likely to commit suicide, both nationally and in Alabama. Since 1960, however, suicide rates among minorities in Alabama have tripled.<sup>86</sup>
- In 2002, suicide was the third leading cause of death for 15- to 24-year-olds, next to accidents and homicide. Among 25- to 44-year-olds, suicide was the second leading cause of death.<sup>87</sup>

	Average		Alabama, by Race	
	Alabama	US	White	Black / Other
1960	7.5	10.6	9.8	1.9
1965	11.1	11.1	11.9	3.7
1970	9.1	11.6	11.2	3.1
1975	11.1	12.7	13.2	4.7
1980	11.4	11.9	14.1	3.8
1985	10.6	12.3	12.9	4.0
1990	13.0	12.4	15.5	6.1
1991	14.1	12.2	16.6	6.9
1992	12.9	12.0	14.6	8.2
1993	14.1	12.1	16.3	7.9
1994	14.2	12.0	16.6	7.6
1995	13.7	11.9	15.8	7.8
1996	13.3	11.6	15.9	6.1
1997	12.8	11.4	15.0	6.8
1998	13.6	11.3	16.3	6.2
1999	13.4	10.6	16.3	5.6
2000	13.0	10.6	16.2	5.1
2001	11.3	10.8	14.2	4.4
2002	11.4	11.0	14.1	4.9
2003	11.7	10.5	14.7	4.1
2004	11.8	N/A	14.0	6.3

## Families in Poverty

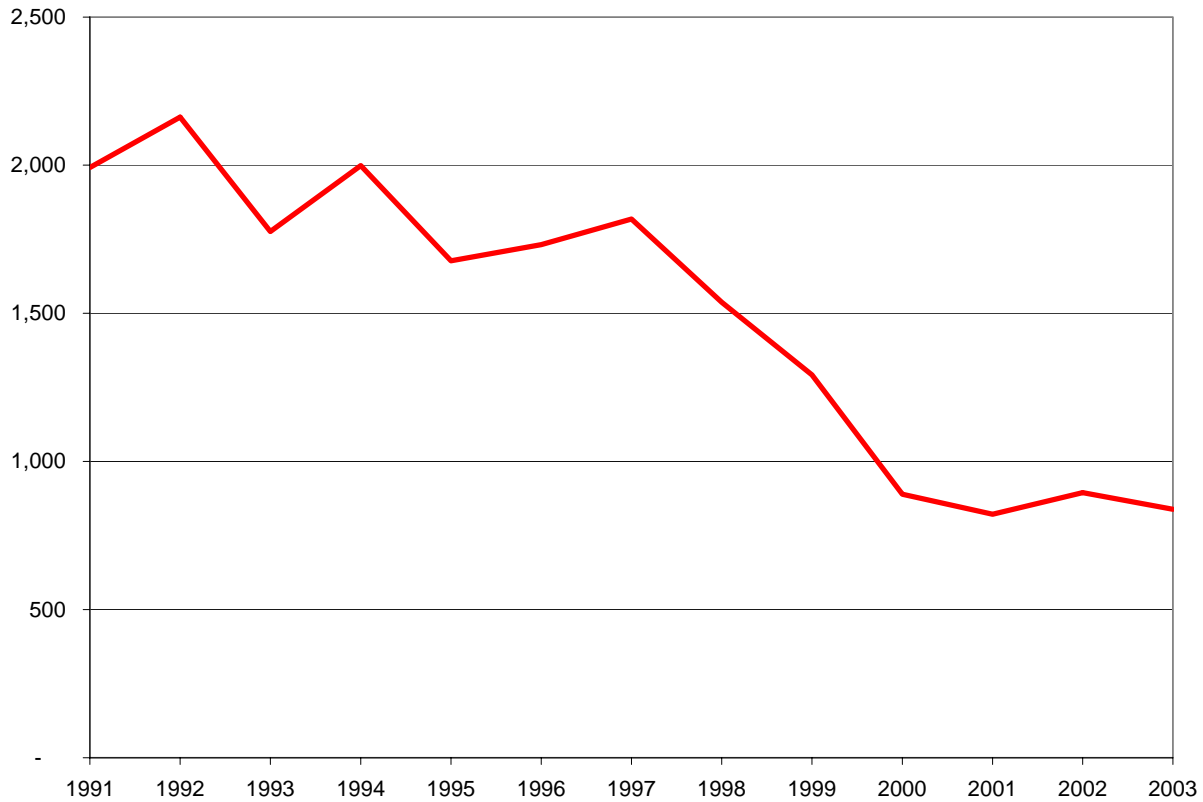


- The percentage of families with children in poverty has declined 11 percent since 1960. Nevertheless, almost one in six families with children lived at or below the poverty line in 2004.
- Marital status is a significant predictor of whether a family is in poverty. Compared to married couples with children, female-headed households are more than four times as likely to live in poverty. This statistic holds true even when controlling for the education of the mother.<sup>88</sup>
- The Census Bureau updates its estimates of poverty annually using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The Bureau's official definition of poverty counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits, such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps.<sup>89</sup>

Table 23: Percent of US Families with Children Living Below Poverty Level, 1960-2003

Year	All Families	Married Couples	Male Headed Households	Female Headed Households
1960	19.7	—	—	56.3
1965	15.6	—	—	52.2
1970	11.6	—	—	43.8
1975	13.3	7.2	11.7	44.0
1980	14.7	7.7	18.0	42.9
1985	16.7	8.9	17.1	45.4
1990	16.4	7.8	18.8	44.5
1991	17.7	8.3	19.6	47.1
1992	18.0	8.6	22.5	46.2
1993	18.5	9.0	22.5	46.1
1994	17.4	8.3	22.6	44.0
1995	16.3	7.5	19.7	41.5
1996	16.5	7.5	20.0	41.9
1997	15.7	7.1	18.7	41.0
1998	15.1	6.9	16.6	38.7
1999	13.8	6.3	16.2	35.7
2000	12.7	6.0	15.3	33.0
2001	13.4	6.1	17.7	33.6
2002	13.8	6.9	18.7	35.2
2003	14.2	7.7	19.6	36.7

## Child Abuse

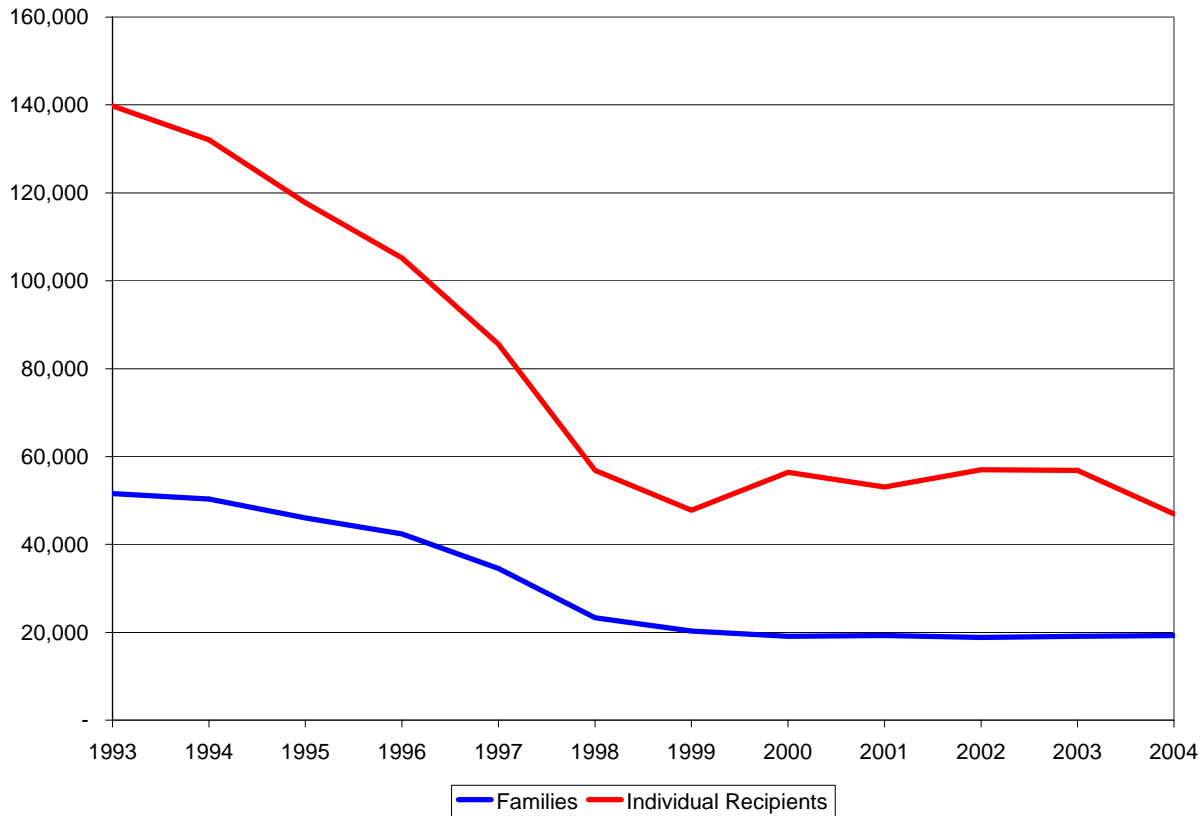


- A total of 18,015 cases of child abuse involving 29,679 children were reported in Alabama in 2003, about 20 percent fewer than in 2002.<sup>90</sup>
- In 2003, about one of every 119 children in Alabama was the subject of a substantiated report of abuse or neglect, or the child was at risk of such an incident. The national average is 1 in 92.<sup>91</sup>
- Not every report of child abuse or neglect is authentic. Each report must be investigated to determine whether enough evidence exists to conclude that maltreatment occurred.<sup>92</sup> Of the cases reported in 2003 involving more than 29,600 children, cases involving 9,290 children—31 percent—were substantiated.<sup>93</sup>

Table 24: Child Abuse Data for Alabama, 1991-2003

	Youth Population	Reports	Subject to Investigation	Number of Victims	Victim Rate
1991	1,071,000	28,462	43,969	21,334	1,992.0
1992	1,076,000	28,311	43,246	23,265	2,162.2
1993	1,077,000	26,758	40,388	19,130	1,776.2
1994	1,080,000	26,515	40,164	21,591	1,999.2
1995	1,080,145	25,704	38,559	18,120	1,677.6
1996	1,076,436	39,361	39,361	18,640	1,731.6
1997	1,071,708	25,626	37,873	19,489	1,818.5
1998	1,084,135	24,413	35,912	16,668	1,537.4
1999	1,066,177	23,189	36,276	13,773	1,291.8
2000	1,123,422	21,965	32,655	9,990	889.2
2001	1,123,000	20,325	29,911	9,229	821.8
2002	1,107,108	20,544	32,682	9,903	894.5
2003	1,107,973	18,015	29,679	9,290	838.5

## Welfare Caseloads



- Since the 1996 Welfare Reform Act (TANF, or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) began, the number of families and individuals on Alabama's welfare rolls has dropped by 54.6 percent and 55.4 percent, respectively.<sup>94</sup>
- From fiscal years 1996 to 2001, the monthly national average number of TANF recipients was 5.4 million, or 56 percent lower than the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) caseload in 1996. From its peak of 14.4 million in March 1994, the number of recipients dropped by 63.2 percent to 5.3 million in September 2001. Over three-fourths of the reduction in the national average monthly number of recipients since March 1994 occurred following TANF's beginning.<sup>95</sup>

Year	Families	Individual Recipients
1993	51,559	139,752
1994	50,340	132,067
1995	46,030	117,734
1996	42,393	105,204
1997	34,519	85,552
1998	23,309	56,853
1999	20,268	47,768
2000	19,083	56,408
2001	19,262	53,052
2002	18,832	57,015
2003	19,069	56,856
2004	19,266	46,914

## Points to Consider

- Women who are or have ever been married are less likely to be poor than their peers who have never married—regardless of race, family disadvantage, non-marital birth status, or high-school dropout status. Their poverty rate is about one-third lower than that experienced by women who have never married. The harmful effect associated with a disadvantaged family background is completely offset by marrying and staying married.<sup>96</sup>
- Because married couples with children are at substantially less risk of being in poverty than single parents, an increase in marriage rates should result in a significant reduction in the state's poverty rate for families with children.
- According to data taken from the 1995 round of the National Survey of Family Growth, women whose parents divorced were more likely to cohabit before marriage, while those whose parents both divorced and remarried were more likely to become pregnant out of wedlock.<sup>97</sup>
- Cohabitation now precedes over half of all first marriages, as compared to only 11 percent of marriages in 1970.<sup>98</sup> Sixty-two percent of men and women ages 20-29 agree that living together with someone before marriage is a good way to avoid an eventual divorce.<sup>99</sup>
- Unfortunately, it is rare that cohabitation prior to marriage avoids eventual divorce. In fact, no positive contribution of cohabitation on subsequent marriage has ever been found.<sup>100</sup> From 1990 to 1999, the proportion of cohabiting couples who go on to marry decreased from 57 percent to 44 percent.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, cohabiting couples who eventually marry are about 46 percent more likely to divorce than marriages not preceded by cohabitation.<sup>102</sup>
- In America, 24 million children (34 percent) live absent their biological father,<sup>103</sup> making the United States the world leader in fatherless families.<sup>104</sup> Among teens, only 67 percent live with their biological fathers, compared with 91 percent who live with their biological mothers. In urban areas, the percentage of teens that live with their biological fathers drops to only 57 percent.<sup>105</sup>
- Marital status is the strongest predictor of father absence. Compared to children born within marriage, children born to cohabiting parents are three times more likely to experience father absence, and children born to unmarried, non-cohabiting parents are four times as likely to have an absent father.<sup>106</sup>
- Of the 72 million children under 18 years old living in the United States in 2000, 69 percent (49.8 million) lived with both parents, 27 percent (19.2 million) were living with a single parent, and four percent (3 million) lived with neither parent.<sup>107</sup>

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