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**“A Black American Criminal Justice Bulletin: An Updated Forecast”**

In 2011, BlackEconomics.org analyzed and forecasted out to 2050 seven important Black American economic variables in a monograph entitled [53](#): Population, employment, income, entrepreneurship, educational attainment, criminal justice, and health. This bulletin on criminal justice follows up that analysis in consideration of Black America’s future.

“Do Nothing” forecasts for criminal justice (the number of Black Americans incarcerated) from 53 are:<sup>1</sup>

	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
Incarcerated Black Americans (Thousands)	906	1,009	1,125	1,254	1,398

We obtained updated and new estimates of the number of incarcerated Black Americans in Federal, State, and local governments’ prisons and jails from the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics for 2010-2020.<sup>2</sup> We forecasted the 2020 estimate out to 2050 using the average (negative) growth rate (-1.94%) that is reflected in the annual average percentage changes for 2000-2020. The new forecasts appear below.

	2020	2030	2040	2050
Incarcerated Black American (Thousands)	581	479	393	324

Very large downward revisions are reflected in the updated forecasts when compared with the 53 forecasts. These downward revisions are the result of, *inter alia*, large declines in crime rates across the country and significant incarceration reforms over the past 20 years. The new forecasts should be substantiated if the recent trend in reduced incarcerations is sustained.

In one sense, it is favorable that fewer incarcerated Black Americans are expected in the future. However, Black America should explore the reasons for reduced incarcerations. Are the reductions reflecting a new-found spirit of justice on the part of US governments? Alternatively, because we know that US governments have broadly inflicted pain and injustices on Black Americans historically, should we view the new trend as part of a revised strategy to continue inflicting pain and injustices using a different approach? One thing is for certain: US jails and prisons harbor and breed a variety of anti-social behaviors. Therefore, we should ask: “What are the outcomes when former incarcerated persons, who have been conditioned to exhibit these anti-social behaviors, are released into Black American areas of influence?” Actually, we are already witnessing the answers to the latter question each day and, in many cases, they are not favorable.

<sup>1</sup> The “Do Nothing” forecasts assumed that Black Americans would not adopt any policies or actions to modify our 2010 modus operandi through 2050.

<sup>2</sup> Incarceration statistics are from the National Bureau of Justice Statistics; <https://bjs.ojp.gov/> (Ret. 011222).