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Summary and Interpretation of the Preliminary Crime Statistics for January – June, 2006 Federal Bureau of Investigation

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The Federal Bureau of Investigation released its preliminary report regarding crime in the United States in the first six months of 2006 on December 18, 2006.

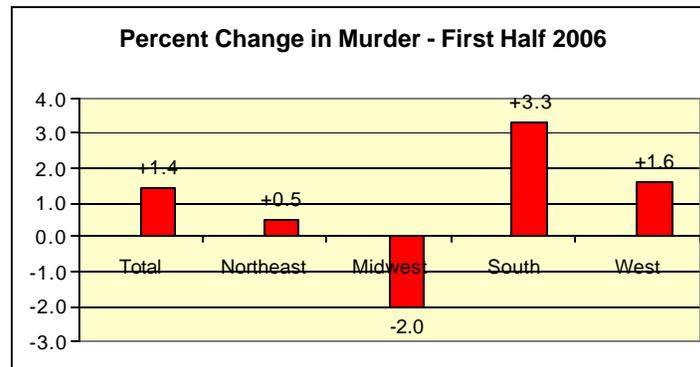
Violent Crime

Violent crime increased 3.7% across the country in the first six months of 2006 compared to the first six months of 2005. Murder was up 1.4%, robbery was up 9.7%, and aggravated assault was up 1.2%. Rape remained virtually unchanged, with a decrease of less than 0.1%. When looking at crime categories by area and population, cities with between 250,000 and 499,000 people experienced the biggest increase in violent crime, up 6.8% over the previous year. Geographically, the West reported the biggest jump in violent crime at 4.7% over the previous year. Below, the two violent crimes with the largest increases are discussed.

Murder

Murder increased 1.4% in the first six months of 2006. In cities with populations between a half million and a million, murder increased 8.4%, and in cities with populations over a million, it increased 6.7%.

By geographical region, the South experienced the greatest increase, at 3.3%. The Midwest experienced a decrease of 2%.



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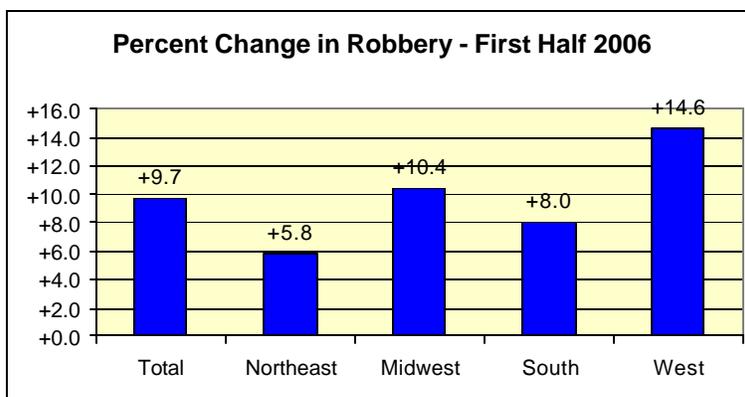
² Rosemary J. Erickson holds a Ph.D. in Sociology: Justice. She is president of Athena Research Corporation.



Robbery

Robbery increased 9.7% during the first six months of 2006 compared to the same period in 2005. When looking at robbery incidents by city size, every single grouping experienced an increase. City groupings with populations of between 10,000 to one million *all showed double digit increases*.

Geographically, the West saw the greatest increase in robberies at 14.6%. Although the Northeast experienced the smallest increase, it was still up 5.8%.



Property Crime

Property crime decreased 2.6% overall in the first half of 2006 compared to 2005. Burglary was up 1.2%, larceny/theft decreased 3.8%, and motor vehicle theft was down 2.3%. Arson, which is tracked separately from other property crimes, increased 6.8%. Comparing regions, the Midwest was the only area to report an increase (1.7%). The West showed the largest decrease, at 5.7%.

Authors' Conclusions

As predicted, violent crime is up across the country. Robbery was up almost 10% across the country and in all regions. Murder was up 1.4%, and aggravated assault up 1.2%. However, murder is up much more than that in some metropolitan areas, with some cities, such as Philadelphia, seeing an epidemic. There was some reaction from the Justice Department that the good news was that property crime was down, but that is overshadowed by the largest increases being in the more violent crimes of murder and robbery. One reason for the increase in crime continues to be the increase in the crime committing age group of 18 to 25 years of age, and this trend will continue. Another reason is that following September 11, 2001, resources have been allocated away from street crimes and focused on terrorist threats. Law enforcement agencies suffer from decreased money and manpower.

