



The Florida Drug Treatment Initiative

How many people will the Florida Drug Treatment Initiative affect?

It is estimated that 10,000 Florida citizens will receive drug treatment instead of being incarcerated *each year* if the initiative is enacted by voters.¹

How does Florida deal with drug possession offenders now?

In calendar year 2000, Florida law enforcement officers made nearly 100,000 arrests of adults for drug possession.² Of these, almost 36,000 were for a felony charge of possessing hard drugs like cocaine and heroin.³

In fiscal year 2000,⁴ more than 20,000 people were convicted on felony possession charges. Of these:

- 84 percent had no criminal history of violence⁵
- 47 percent were sentenced to jail or prison⁶
- more than half were granted probation, often without any certified or court-monitored drug treatment program⁷

¹ In fiscal year 2000, at least 10,184 people were given a sentence of incarceration in Florida on a charge of drug possession. The Florida Department of Corrections reports that 7,828 drug possession offenders were given a jail sentence, while 2,356 entered state prison, in fiscal year 2000. The figures for jail sentences are known to be low estimates. See notes 5-7 below for details.

² Estimated number of possession arrests in Florida in 2000 was 97,505. Data reported by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, in *Crime in Florida: 2000 Uniform Crime Report*, indicate there were 116,912 “drug arrests” in calendar year 2000, including arrests for drug offenses more serious than possession. The FBI estimates that in Florida (and other Southern states), 83.4 percent of drug arrests are for possession (in *Crime in the United States – 1999*).

³ *Ibid.* Estimate by FBI of all drug arrests in Florida that were for hard-drug possession, a felony, is 30.6 percent, or 35,775 arrests. In Florida, “purchase” of drugs for personal use is also a crime – this is considered a possession offense for purposes of this chart.

⁴ Fiscal year 2000 was July 1, 1999 – June 30, 2000.

⁵ Florida Department of Corrections, Bureau of Research and Data Analysis, “Number of Prior Violent Offenses: Offenders Sentenced for a Drug Possession or Purchase Offense,” May 24, 2001.

⁶ *Ibid.* At least 10,184 people were given a prison or jail sentence for drug possession, out of 21,547 people for whom sentences were recorded, for a total of 47 percent. Of these, 7,828 received a jail sentence, while Department of Corrections admissions data indicate 2,356 entered prison. Note: The authors warn that jail data are incomplete, representing about 70 percent of all cases, due to under-reporting by the counties. The actual number is certainly higher.

⁷ *Ibid.* Actual figures were 11,272 granted probation out of 21,547 separate offenders tracked. Probation with drug treatment, such as in a drug court setting, is available to a small portion of offenders.