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CRIME AND IMPRISONMENT: HOW TO REDUCE BOTH

TALLAHASSEE, FLA—In a study published in *Criminology & Public Policy* (CPP) [Volume 10, Issue 1], researchers found that by increasing the perceived certainty of punishment, the United States can experience reductions in both crime and imprisonment. Professors Steven Durlauf of the University of Wisconsin and Daniel Nagin of Carnegie Mellon University frame their research findings within deterrence theory. The authors argue that the perceived certainty of punishment can be realized by increasing the presence of law enforcement officers, or by **allocating existing officers in ways that heighten the perceived risk of apprehension**. Also important is the need to use police officers more effectively to make the risks of crime more clear and the consequences of criminal activity faster and more certain.

Regarding the policy implications suggested by these findings, Professors Durlauf and Nagin suggest that the United States can reduce crime by shortening prison sentences and using the money saved to support more and better policing. To do so, former New York City and Los Angeles police chief, William Bratton, believes that fundamental changes are needed in police training to assist officers in moving from their traditional role of law enforcement to other more effective crime control methods. Former Attorney General of the United States, Dick Thornburgh, notes the importance of increasing police presence in high crime neighborhoods as a method to reduce crime. Thornburgh also believes that changes in our current mandatory sentencing guidelines can be helpful in reducing both crime and imprisonment. Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs, Laurie Robinson, highlights the importance of collaboration between researchers and practitioners to help policy makers develop efficient and cost-effective criminal justice policies and practices. Further, Additionally, Robinson indicates that the research findings provided by Durlauf and Nagin provide a good starting point for developing a federal research agenda on criminal justice policy and practice. Bratton, Thornburgh, and Robinson are among the 16 analysts who commented on Durlauf and Nagin's manuscript.

Criminology & Public Policy, the American Society of Criminology, and the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) will hold a Congressional luncheon on February 15, 2011 in Washington, DC to present the findings from this study to members of Congress.