

Bobbie Walthall

From: Randall Weinkauf <parishpastor@ilcandusc.org>
Sent: Tuesday, December 18, 2018 10:57 AM
To: Bobbie Walthall
Subject: Sending to City Commission
Attachments: Exploding Jail Population & A Request for City Leadership.pdf

Hello, Bobbie,

Please include the following message and the attached factsheet for the City Commission meeting tonight.

Dear Mayor and City Commissioners,

People of color are highly over-represented inside our jail compared to their white counterparts, and distinguishing between the incarceration of Latinx members and whites is not even tracked. For these reasons, we applaud the effort to analyze our local criminal system actors for racial bias.

That being said, we are ignoring a major systemic problem staring us in the face: the number of people we put behind bars has exploded at a rate *many times over* the growth of our general population. The County Commission has rejected a full comprehensive study by an outside independent agency to understand the driving factors behind the radical increase in people behind bars. Therefore, we come to you seeking leadership.

Given:

- That Lawrence citizens will be the ones largely on the hook to pay the long-term sales tax and looming property tax commitments being discussed by the County Commission to expand the jail;
- The skyrocketing costs to the city for reimbursing the County for housing inmates will likely be alleviated beyond the costs of analysis;
- The massive, human toll of over-incarceration felt particularly among the poor;
- The analyst to conduct the racial bias study has stated, "my analysis will have no bearing on the jail population"
- Other jurisdictions have successfully reduced the overuse of their jails and taken a multi-pronged, cross-agency approach to reform...

We request the Lawrence City Commission will—in addition to a minority representation study—partner with the County Commission to jointly hire a [John D & Catherine T MacArthur's Safety and Justice Challenge](#) consultant to determine how to safely lower our jail population.

The total approximate cost is said to range between \$125,000 – 140,000 total, and take 7 - 9 months to complete. Again, by understanding why we are suddenly locking up so many people, we hope to follow other jurisdictions who have successfully reduced the overuse of their jails and taken a multi-pronged, cross-agency approach to reform.

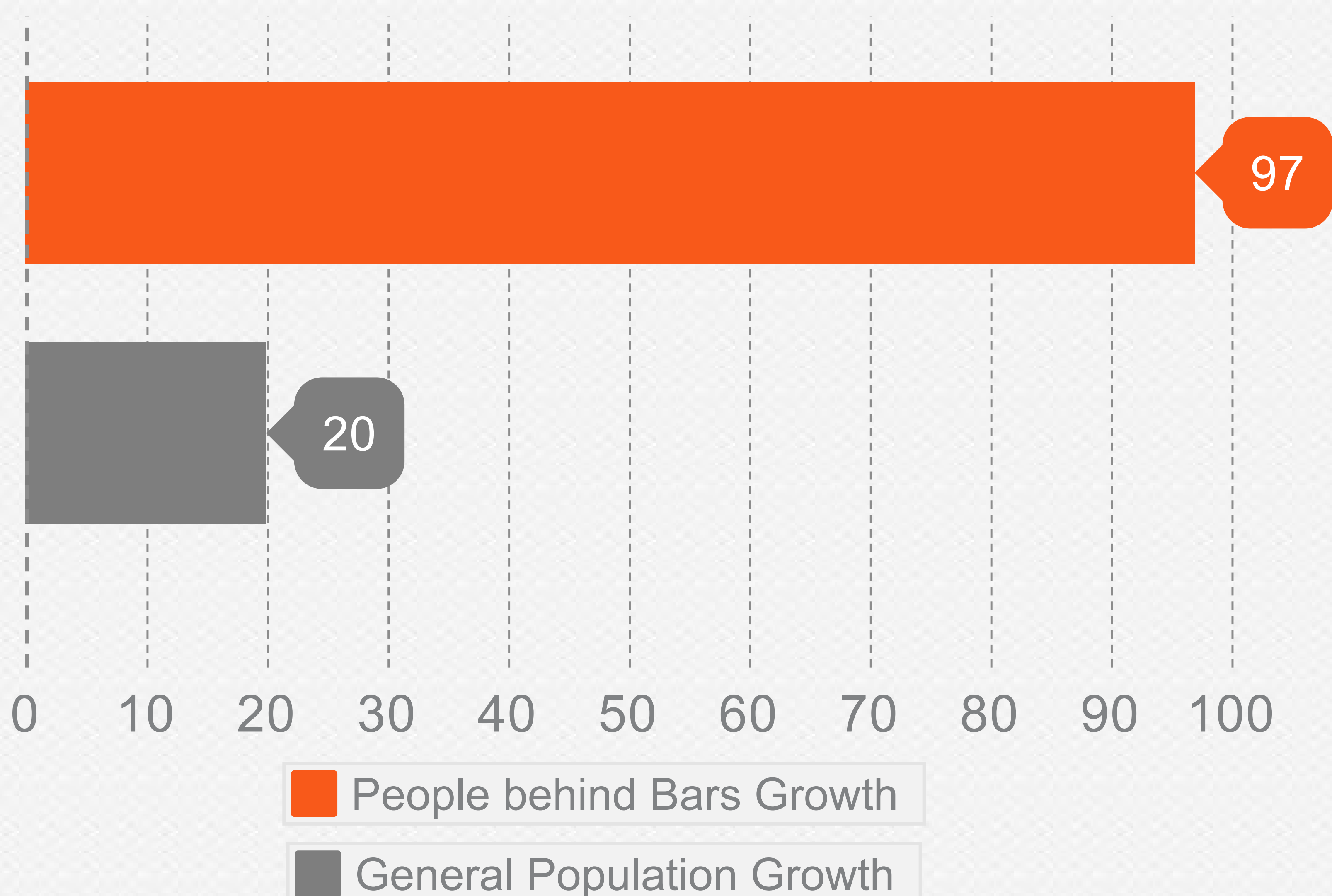
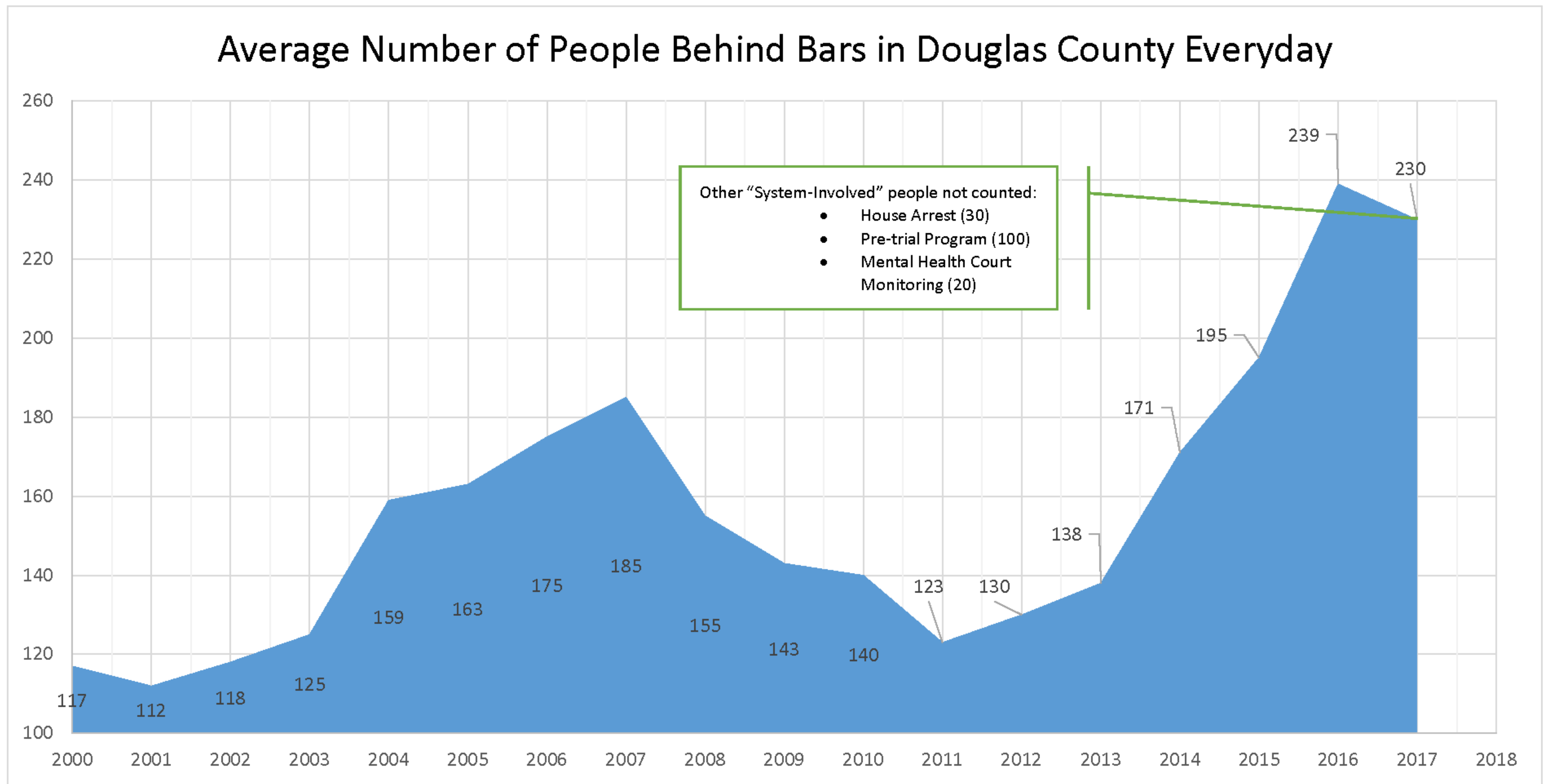
Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Rev. Randy Weinkauf

Justice Matters Co-President

INCARCERATION EXPLOSION

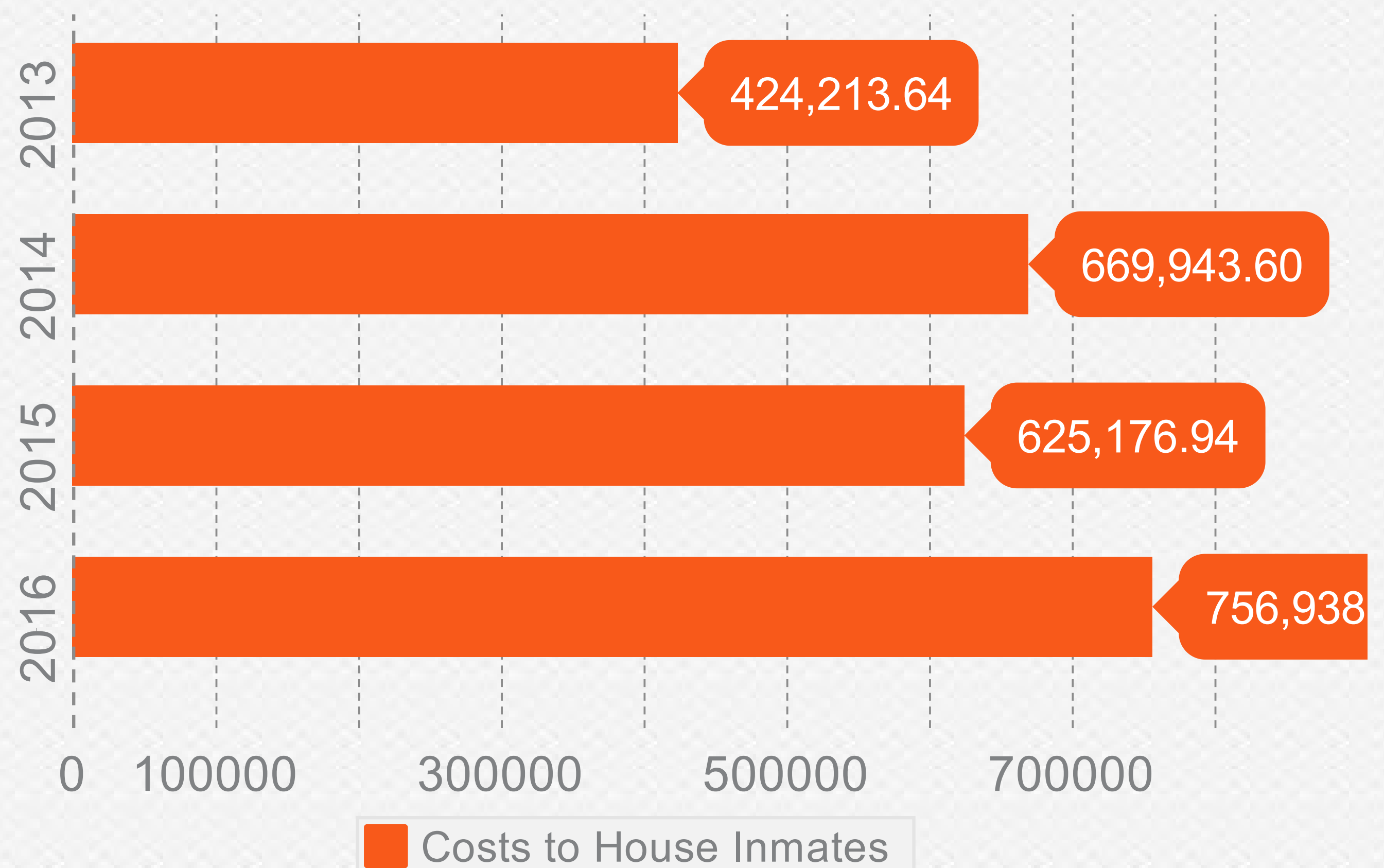
an unexplained phenomenon that occurred just recently



Percentage Growth in People Behind Bars vs Growth in County Population from 2000-16

Although the jail falls under County jurisdiction, the city is required to reimburse the Sheriff for any referrals from the Lawrence Police Department.

In other words, the city too pays the price for exploding numbers behind bars.



Exploding Jail Population = Growing Tax Burden for Lawrence

Seeking Leadership from the Lawrence City Commission

The Lawrence City Government is considering an \$84,000 payment to conduct a joint study of racial bias in our local criminal justice system. As important as it is to understand the driving forces behind over-representation among people of color in our criminal justice system, it is also critically important to understand why our general jail population is exploding.

While State and Federal statutes and regulations influence the Douglas County's justice system, our jail's population is largely a manifestation of *local policies and procedures*.

The number of individuals who enter jail and for how long is influenced at six key decision points:

- Arrest
- Pretrial Release (includes bail & assignment of counsel)
- Charge
- Case-Processing
- Disposition and Sentencing and
- Post-conviction including Community Corrections & Reentry

Key decision-makers across these points include law enforcement; the courts, judges, and court services; prosecutors; public defenders; community supervision agencies; and others. Inflated jail populations are often the result of policies and practices related to several, if not all, of these decision points.

BOTTOMLINE:

- Given the long-term sales tax and looming property tax commitments being discussed by the County Commission which will affect all Lawrence citizens;
- Given the skyrocketing costs to the city for reimbursing the County for housing inmates;
- Given the human toll of over-incarceration;

We request the Lawrence City Commission will - in addition to a minority representation study - partner with the County Commission to jointly hire a John D & Catherine T MacArthur's Safety and Justice Challenge consultant to determine how to safely lower our jail population. The total approximate cost is said to range between \$125,000 - 140,000 total, and take 7 - 9 months to complete.

By understanding why we are suddenly locking up so many people, we hope to follow other jurisdictions who have successfully reduced the overuse of their jails and taken a multi-pronged, cross-agency approach to reform.