



May 25/99

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Senate

Senator Wellstone; I heard your debate with Sen. Hatch over the higher rate of incarceration of black youth and a possible remedy. What truly amazed me was the tenor of the arguments which sounded like old "war on crime" polemics, infused with racist overtones, scapegoating young black males as violent predators the overriding cause for "crime in the streets."

Yes, Senator, race matters. During the "war on crime" era no attempts were made to sort out probable explanations black youth, including school juveniles, were killing each other. Stereotypic assumptions gave the answer; black youth are prone genetically? - to violence, therefore, they commit more crime and more blacks than whites, percentage wise, fill the jails. It follows, crime is a black thing.

The stats you presented show the disproportionate arrests and incarceration of black youth obviously lay bare that something is wrong. There's no argument that if one does the crime, one does the time. But is it the case that whites are excused and blacks are





Bronx, NY 10473-0963

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<sup>2</sup>  
accused. I wonder what Sen Hatch says  
about recent studies that confirmed charges  
of black profiling, DWB! by state high-  
way police.

There are folks, including President  
Clinton, working hard to make E Pluribus  
Unum a reality. But there are many more  
folks, and I would include Sen. Hatch among  
these, who talk politically correct but are  
unwilling to extend evenhanded treat-  
ment and respect to black people.

Double standard rules the day.

Cordially yours,

cc: CNN, Greta & Roger  
C-Span, Senate proceedings  
WNBC, Tom Brokaw  
Court T-V, Johnnie Cochran