

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Homicides declined more than 70 percent between 1991 and 2009.
- Homicides declined more than 20 percent between 2008 and 2009.
- District 4 was the only District where the homicide rate increased over the period 2006-2009.



Brief

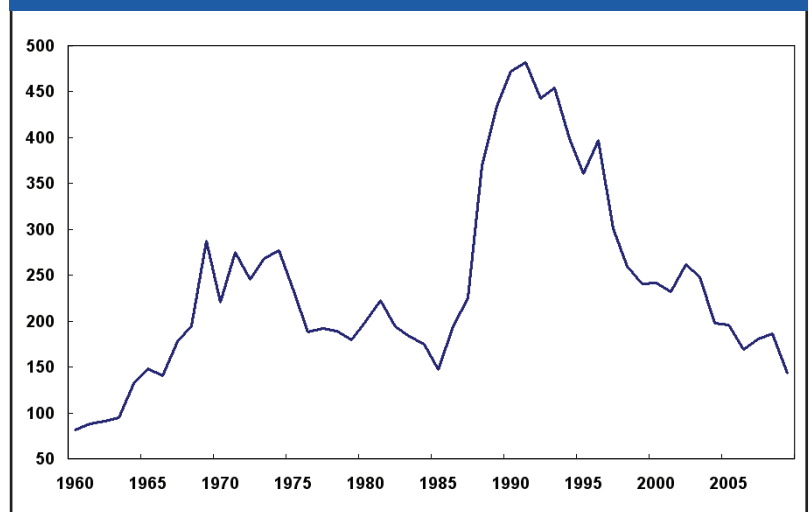
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# Homicides in the District of Columbia by Police District, 2001-2009

BY Joshua A. Markman and John K. Roman

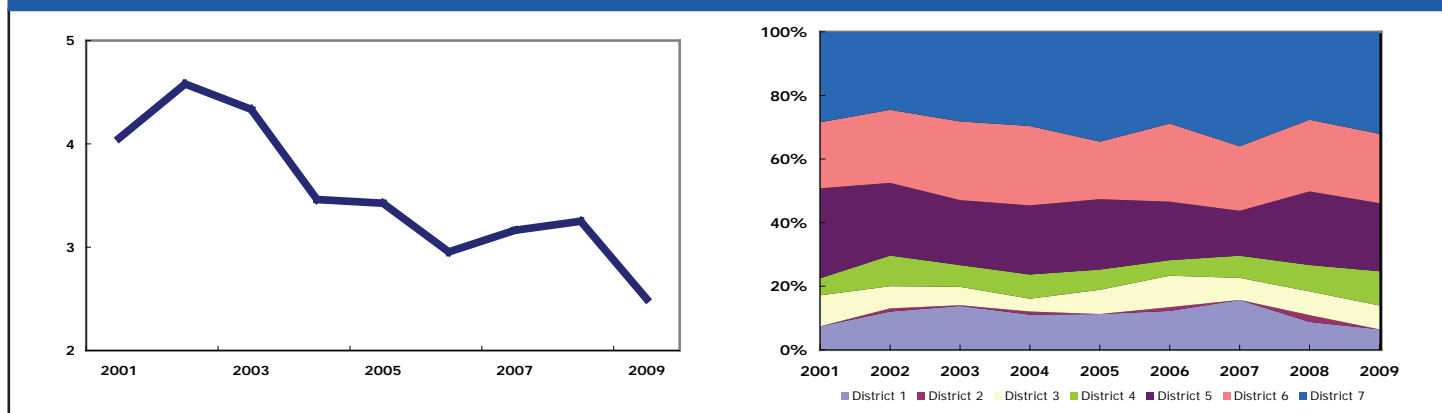
*This brief is the first in a series of briefs describing the changes in crime patterns in the District of Columbia over the last decade. This series will report on statistics for all major categories of crime.*

In 2009, the District of Columbia experienced a dramatic drop in homicides, and violent crime more broadly. Homicides decreased from 186 in 2008 to 143 in 2009, a decline of more than 20 percent. The last time the District of Columbia had fewer than 143 homicides was 1966 and the homicide rate, which incorporates District population changes, in 2009 was the lowest since 1968. Mirroring national trends, homicide in the District of Columbia has declined more than 70 percent since 1991 when there were 483 homicides at the peak of the crime wave. As has been true in many major cities, the declining homicide trend was followed by a slow increase in homicides from 2006 to 2008. While the decline in 2009 is a welcome respite from that trend, the question remains whether the drop in homicide in 2009 was the start of a new downward trend or simply an aberration. So far this year, that trend has continued: as of May 20, there have been only 34 homicides in 2010, compared with 48 on the same date in 2009.

**Figure 1. Citywide Homicides, 1960-2009**

Among crime statistics, homicide trends are uniquely unstable, and thus forecasting future homicide rates is risky. However, given the overall homicide decline, it is fair to ask whether the entire city has experienced a decline or whether the trend has been localized in select police districts. This brief examines police district trends in homicide for the past nine years to answer this question.<sup>1</sup> In general, six of the seven police districts follow the city-wide pattern.<sup>2</sup> The exception is District 4, where there has been a steady, but small, increase in homicides throughout the period from 9 in 2006 to 17 in 2008 and again in 2009. Because its homicide rates are steady while the remaining districts show declines, District 4 is encompassing a larger percentage of the city's overall homicide numbers.

Figure 2. Citywide Homicide Rate per 10,000 and Percent of Citywide Homicide Rate by Police District (2001-2009)



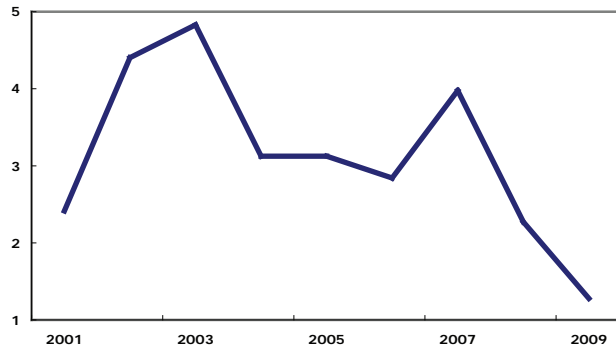
However, this trend hides some interesting variation in homicide patterns by police district.<sup>3</sup> Most police districts experienced modest declines in homicide from 2006 to 2009. In District 5, the homicide rate was the same in both years, though it did decline from 2008 to 2009 after an uptick from 2007 to 2008. In Districts 1, 2, and 3, where homicide is rare, it became even rarer, with homicides declining in District 1 from 2.8 to 1.2, in District 2 from 0.27 to zero, and from 2.28 to 1.49 in District 3. District 7, which has the highest homicide rate of any police district, experienced a 5 percent decline. Similar to District 5, which saw an uptick in crime in 2007, District 7's crime rate declined 30 percent from 2007 to 2009. We also note the pattern of homicide across police districts. In 2006, slightly more than half of homicides (50.9 percent) in the District of Columbia occurred in Districts 6 and 7. In 2009, despite a large overall reduction in homicide, that figure was almost identical (51.7 percent). By contrast, District 4 accounted for just more than 5 percent of all D.C. homicides in 2006, a share that increased to almost 12 percent in 2009. Two other police districts also had an increasing share of D.C. homicides. Despite no change in the number of homicides in District 5, the share of D.C. homicides increased from 14 to 17 percent. District 7, despite a decline in homicides from 44 to 42, experienced a larger share of D.C. homicides in 2009 (29 percent) than in 2006 (26 percent). Overall, District 7 had the highest homicide rate with Districts 5 and 6 each also having a rate double that of the next closest police district.

<sup>1</sup>In 2009, there was one homicide not assigned to a District. Because it could not be attributed to a specific District, this homicide was omitted from the analysis.

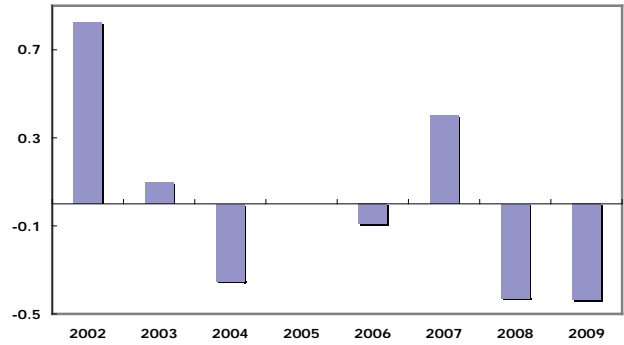
<sup>2</sup>In this paper we report the number of homicides in Districts per 10,000 to develop the rate. Police District populations vary, thus using a standardized rate allows for comparison across Districts.

<sup>3</sup>All Police District figures were generated by the District of Columbia Crime Policy Institute using Metropolitan Police Department data for years 2001 - 2009. Data used in the analysis are available at [data.dc.gov](http://data.dc.gov).

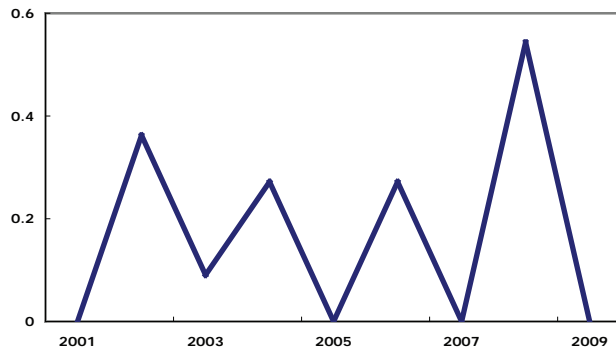
**Table 3a: Homicide Rate in District 1 per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



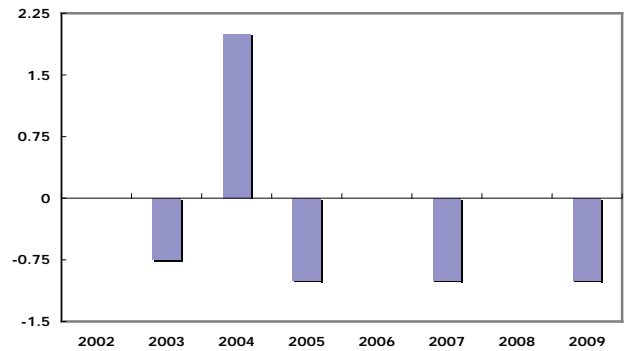
**Table 3b: District 1 Percent Change in Homicide Rate per 10,000 (2002 - 2009)**



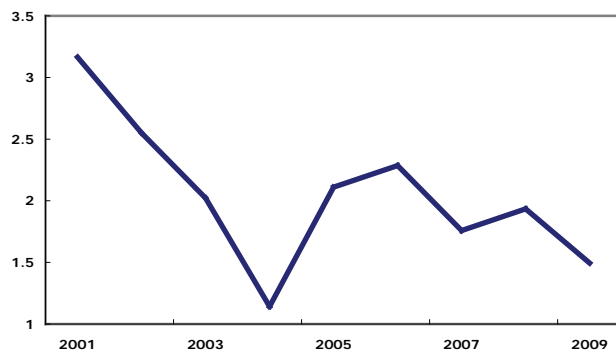
**Table 4a: Homicide Rate in District 2 per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



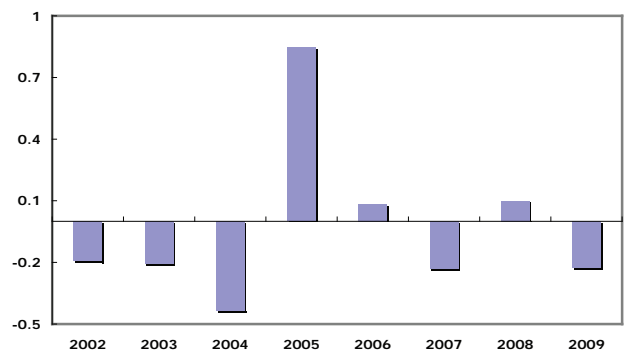
**Table 4b: District 2 Percent Change in Homicide Rate per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



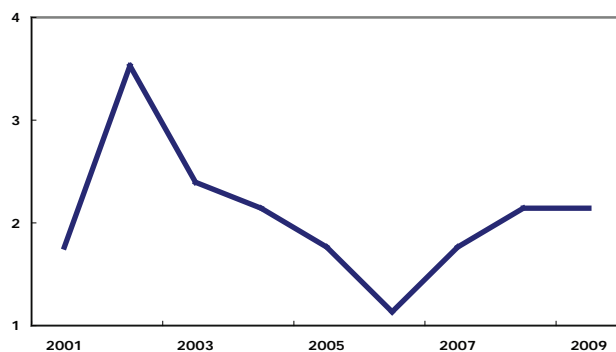
**Table 5a: Homicide Rate in District 3 per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



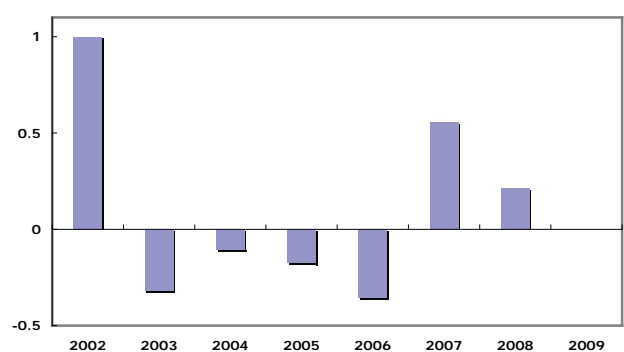
**Table 5b: District 3 Percent Change in Homicide Rate per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



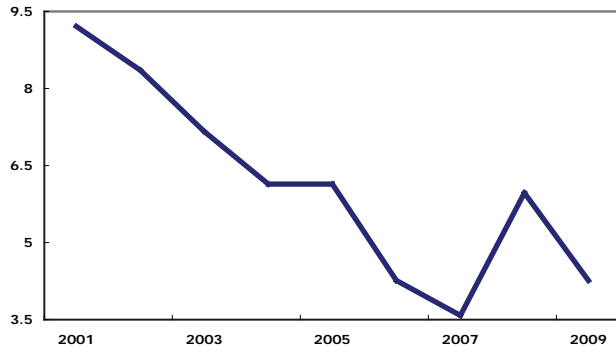
**Table 6a: Homicide Rate in District 4 per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



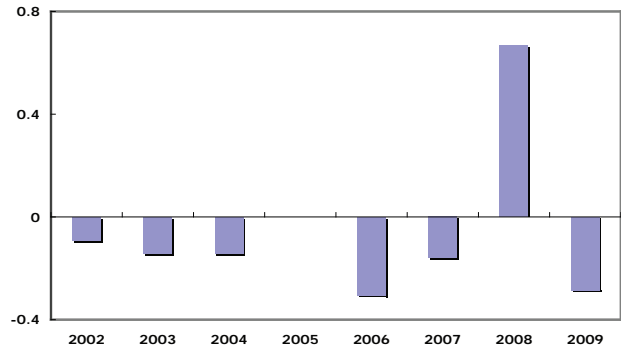
**Table 6b: District 4 Percent Change in Homicide Rate per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



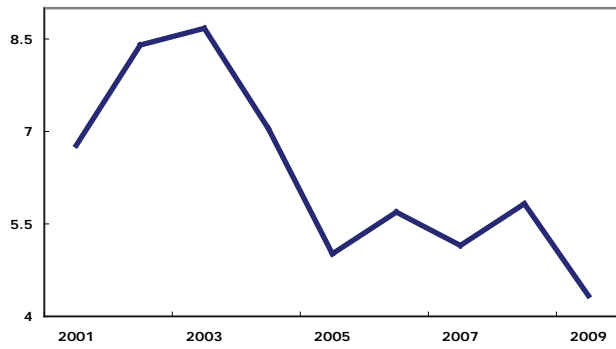
**Table 7a: Homicide Rate in District 5 per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



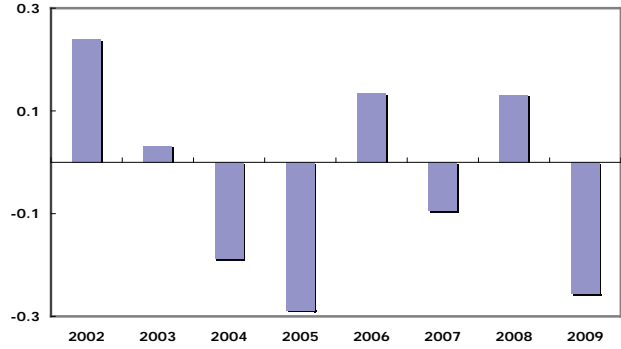
**Table 7b: District 5 Percent Change in Homicide Rate per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



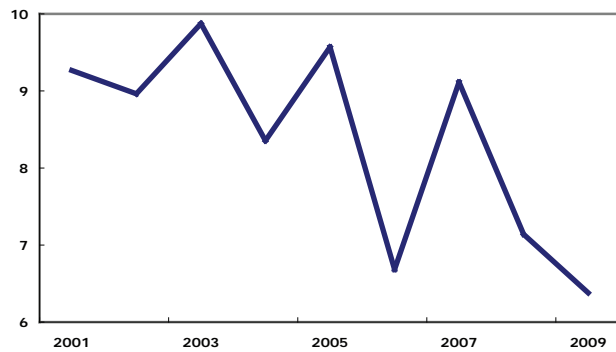
**Table 8a: Homicide Rate in District 6 per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



**Table 8b: District 6 Percent Change in Homicide Rate per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



**Table 9a: Homicide Rate in District 7 per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**



**Table 9b: District 7 Percent Change in Homicide Rate per 10,000 (2001 - 2009)**

