



Department of Corrections and Community Supervision

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Return Rate for Parolees Committing New Felony Crimes Hits Historic Low

ALBANY -- A new recidivism report released today by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) shows that nine percent (9%) of ex-offenders, released in 2010, were sent back to prison based on a new felony conviction within three years of their release. The figure is the lowest since monitoring started in 1985.

The report tracked and analyzed 24,605 ex-offenders in the three years after their release, from 2011 to 2013. A total of 10,217, or 42%, of parolees were taken back into custody during that time. The majority of offenders, 7,969 (32%), violated terms of their parole. The remaining 2,248 (9%) were convicted of a new felony.

Recidivism rates have been a fixed way DOCCS has gauged the success and accountability of rehabilitating inmates. Since the 1996 cohort, the total return rate has remained stable at approximately 40 percent with the majority of offenders, taken back into custody, being violators of one or more conditions of their parole. In an important respect the number of parolees found convicted of a new offense, during their release, remains on the decline.

“The research signifies our commitment to transformation and public safety,” said Acting DOCCS Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci.

To help ensure the numbers remain low, DOCCS will use a \$370,000 grant to help boost a new program called RESET, Recidivism Elimination Supervision Enrichment Teams. The money, given by The Bureau of Justice Assistance, will go toward an initiative called “Swift and Certain” (SAC). SAC is intended to: (a) improve supervision strategies that reduce recidivism; (b) promote and increase collaboration among agencies and officials who work in community corrections and related fields; (c) enhance the offenders’ perceptions that the supervision decisions are fair, consistently applied and that the consequences are transparent; and (d) improve the outcomes of individuals participating in these initiatives.

Through a tough, smart, and fair formula for criminal justice, DOCCS works to ensure New York’s successful reentry and post-release supervision monitoring continues to help reduce crime by parolees, resulting in fewer incarcerated individuals. Since 2011 alone, New York has taken down 5,519 prison beds, closed 13 underutilized prisons, and saved taxpayers an estimated \$162 million annually.

“Watching the constant decline of ex-offenders returning to prison for new crimes is a win for all New Yorkers,” said Assistant Deputy Secretary for Public Safety, Mary Kavaney.

Incarceration programs and an evidence-based instrument tool known as COMPAS guides DOCCS’ staff to help predict future behavior based on a parolee’s needs, thus preventing future crime. COMPAS is one of many tools staff uses to make supervision decisions helping DOCCS personnel create individual discharge case plans by working with state and local governments and community organizations to

develop the transition from prison to community. Components of reentry programs include education, job readiness, community resources, housing, substance abuse, rules of post-release supervision, family reunification, health care, cognitive behavior, mental health, and personal identification.

“By determining the appropriate intensity of supervision, strictly enforcing parole conditions, and reinforcing reentry goals, the steady number of parole violator returns points out that New York’s parole staff are vigilant in their efforts to supervise parolees and maintain public safety by returning parolees to custody on parole violations before there’s an escalation of committing new crimes.” said Tom Herzog, DOCCS’ Deputy Commissioner for Community Supervision.

The [report](#), “2010 Inmate Releases - Three Year Post Release Follow-up” highlights several demographic and legal history characteristics, including:

- **Criminal History:** The overall return rate increases as the number of prior felony convictions increases.
- **Release Crimes:** Individual crimes with the highest return rates included Burglary 2nd (55%), Burglary 3rd (53%), Robbery 2nd (52%), and Possession of Stolen Property (50%). Individual crimes with the lowest return rates included Murder (13%) and Manslaughter 2nd (17%).
- **Region:** Offenders committed from Upstate Urban counties were more likely to return (49%) than offenders from Suburban New York City (41%), non-Urban Upstate counties (43%), or New York City (38%).
- **Gender:** Women had a much lower rate of return (29%) than men (42%). The difference in female and male return rates was evident for both new convictions (5% vs. 9%) and parole violation returns (24% vs. 33%).
- **Age:** Younger offenders returned to DOCCS’ custody at a higher rate than older offenders. Over half (53%) of the offenders released in 2010 who were under 21 years old returned.

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