

**Massachusetts Department of Correction
Review of Current Research - 1984**

280

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I. INTRODUCTION

During 1984, the Research Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) conducted several special research projects and produced a number of statistical reports describing the DOC prison population. This report presents a review of the research that stemmed from these projects and from annual updates. The abstracts summarize specific findings from each of the studies and statistical reports cited.

This report is divided into two sections reflecting the different areas of research conducted by the Research Unit during 1984. The first section includes abstracts of findings from special projects completed in 1984. The second section covers a series of statistical descriptions of the state prison population.

Studies summarized in the first section analyze selected prison populations or DOC sponsored programs. The first paper in this section deals with patterns of enrollment in vocational and academic education programs during incarceration in the Massachusetts Correctional Institution (MCI) at Norfolk. The second study examines the characteristics of offenders committed to county jails and houses of correction for driving while intoxicated, and assesses the impact of the 1982 drunk driving legislation on trends in commitments for this offense. The third paper in this section describes and analyzes recidivism research carried out by correctional agencies throughout the United States and Canada. The fourth study evaluates three contract drug treatment programs available to inmates at MCI-Norfolk. The final report in this first section is an analysis of the impact of proposed presumptive sentencing legislation on state and county correctional populations.

The second set of papers consists of eight statistical reports which the Research Unit produces annually. The reports present updated information on the status and characteristics of the state and county prison populations. The first in

the series of reports is a census of the prison population as of January 1, 1984. The next two reports deal with court commitments to correctional facilities during the previous year: one report presents information on commitments to the state prison system, and the other deals with commitments to county houses of correction. The three reports which follow the commitment reports document movement of the prison population during the previous year. One of the reports deals with the number and outcomes of furlough (temporary releases) granted during 1983; another describes the population released to the street in 1983; and the third documents internal movement and movement into and out of the prison system during that year. The last two reports of this set present recidivism rates for releases from DOC institutions during 1982. One paper reports recidivism rates for 1982 releases from maximum, medium and minimum security institutions, and the other details recidivism rates of 1982 releases from specific pre-release facilities. Information in each of the eight annual reports is institution-specific; that is, the data are reported by the institution where the population is resident, released from, or admitted to. Consequently, information on commitments, counts, and movements is available for the entire correctional system as well as individual institutions.

Copies of the full reports and studies may be obtained by writing to:

**Research Unit
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100 Cambridge Street, Room 2110
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II. EVALUATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES

Patterns of Enrollment in Adult Education Programs During Incarceration

#266

May 1984

Linda K. Holt

This study examines enrollment patterns in vocational and academic programs over a four month period at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution (MCI) at Norfolk. The purpose of this research was to compare offenders who participate in educational programs with those who do not and identify differences between participants who remain in programs and those who withdraw.

There were 1,196 inmates in the sample of whom 499 (42 percent) were participants in educational programs. At the end of the study period 149 (30 percent) of the 499 participants were still enrolled in courses, and 187 (37 percent) had withdrawn from courses. The most noteworthy differences were found between participants and non-participants in the adult education programs. There were no differences found between those offenders who tended to complete educational programs and those who withdrew.

The study identified six factors which distinguished participants from non-participants in the educational programs: minority status, age, type of sentence, criminal history, level of education, and recency of transfer to MCI-Norfolk. Minority offenders were more likely to participate than non-minority offenders. Moreover, minority offenders were more likely to enroll in academic courses while non-minority offenders were more likely to enroll in vocational courses. In general, participants were younger, more likely to be serving Concord sentences, and less likely to have an extensive criminal history than non-participants. Participation rates were lowest among recent transfers to the institution and among inmates who had been at MCI-Norfolk for long periods of time. Finally, offenders with less education and work experience were more likely to enroll in academic courses, while those with higher levels of schooling and training were more likely to enroll in vocational courses.

County Commitments for Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol 1976 to 1983

#267

June 1984

Lawrence T. Williams

Legislation passed in September 1982 increased the penalties for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating liquors. The act stipulated mandatory jail sentences for repeat offenders. This study examined commitments to county jails and houses of correction for driving while intoxicated (DWI) between 1976 and 1983. The purpose of the study was to gauge the impact of the new drunk driving law on county commitments and to develop a profile of convicted offenders.

Between 1976 and 1983 county commitments for driving under the influence increased dramatically from 46 commitments in 1976 to 2372 commitments in 1983. The greatest increase occurred between 1981 and 1982 when commitments for this offense rose 342 percent. A comparison of the first 16 months after passage of the new law with the preceding 16 months revealed an overall increase of 173 percent in DWI commitments. The increase in commitments for driving under the influence occurred across all counties although the percent change varied from one county to the next.

After passage of the new law counties not only experienced an increase in DWI commitments, but DWI offenders became an increasing percentage of all county commitments. During 1983 DWI commitments represented 25 percent of all county commitments whereas in 1980 they comprised only four percent.

Offenders committed for driving under the influence were found to be older, better educated, more likely to be married or previously married, and serve shorter sentences than other county commitments. Almost half of the DWI commitments (48 percent) received a sentence of less than one month between 1976 and 1983; during 1983 alone, 37 percent received a sentence of seven days.

A Survey of Recidivism Research in the United States and Canada

#268

July 1984

Dallas Miller

This study presents an overview of recidivism research conducted by correctional agencies and authorities throughout the United States and Canada. A survey was undertaken in order to explore the various ways recidivism research is conducted, to examine the conceptualization of recidivism, and to place the research program in Massachusetts within the context of these other efforts.

The report analyzes the research in terms of the official definition of "recidivism", the objective measures of recidivism, the source of information used by a research agency, and the population studied. Recidivism research generally focuses on repeat offenders and rates of reincarceration.

All of the 67 correctional agencies contacted responded to the survey. Twenty of the agencies conducted no recidivism research; fourteen collected data only on prior incarcerations or prior commitments to the agency; and thirty-three conducted follow-up research on returns after release from the agency. The report elaborates on the essential differences between research on returns and research on commitments and the implications of applying these two approaches. In addition, the report presents a detailed description of the research on returns.

Norfolk Drug Treatment Programs: A Process Evaluation

#276

September 1984

Ann Marie Rocheleau

This study presents the results of a process evaluation of the three drug treatment programs at MCI-Norfolk -- the SPAN, YTT and CASH programs. The results include a description of program participants, attendance levels, budget and personnel, the treatment mode, and program processes. Perception of the merits of the programs, their level of effectiveness, and their image within the prison are also examined. Finally, the report addresses the pros and cons of allowing outside, community-based drug treatment programs to provide services to inmates within the prison and discusses the likelihood of future research on the subject.

The main objective of each of the programs is to help inmates with drug-related problems and to provide support for them to become and remain drug-free. SPAN, however, places more emphasis on the re-entry services. All three programs utilize the same basic treatment mode -- the group therapy or self-help approach. The primary service to inmates is the weekly group session lasting one to two hours. SPAN and CASH provide a limited amount of individual counseling and SPAN offers re-entry services.

The three programs served only a small minority of inmates at Norfolk. Monthly attendance sheets revealed that SPAN served 128 different inmates, CASH served 15, and YTT served 30 during the 1983 calendar year. Together the 173 inmates represented seven percent of all inmates at Norfolk during 1983.

Profiles of program participants revealed that the programs attracted different types of inmates. Participants in CASH tended to be white, serving long sentences mostly for person-offenses. Most of the YTT participants were black inmates, who were somewhat older than other participants and had extensive drug and criminal histories. Participants in SPAN tended to be younger, have shorter sentences, and be within one year of their parole eligibility dates.

**An Estimate of the Impact of the Uniform Sentencing
and Correction Act on the Massachusetts
Correctional System**

May 1984

Francis J. Carney
Linda K. Holt

In March, 1984, Governor Michael S. Dukakis filed the Uniform Sentencing and Correction Act (H. 5537). A main purpose of the legislation was to promote greater uniformity in sentencing. The bill provided for recodification of offenses against the person and established a classification of crimes ranging from an A to F felony and an a and b misdemeanor. Each class of crimes was associated with a presumptive sentencing range.

The bill creates a system of negotiated programming and classification within the Department of Correction. This approach would facilitate an offender's participation in rehabilitation programs and would make more predictable his movement through the correctional system. Parole would be retained, but the authority of the Parole Board to release offenders sentenced for crimes against the person would be limited. Good conduct time would reduce a sentence by seven days for each month of time served with satisfactory behavior.

This report estimates the impact of the Governor's Uniform Sentencing bill on the prison populations in the Massachusetts Department of Correction and the county correctional system. The method used for estimating the impact of the presumptive sentencing legislation on the correctional population was to project the population over the next several years under existing sentencing statutes, and then to make another set of projections based on modified assumptions derived from the new provisions of the presumptive sentencing bill.

It was estimated that the peak population under presumptive sentencing would be 509 inmates higher than the peak population under existing sentencing statutes.

This impact analysis has become an ongoing enterprise in order to account for current population figures as these data become available and to account for revisions to the presumptive sentencing legislation as they are proposed.

III. ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORTS

**A Statistical Description of Residents of the
Massachusetts Correctional Institutions
on January 1, 1984**

#269

July 1984

Linda K. Holt

This report is a census of the population in state correctional facilities in the Department of Correction (DOC) on January 1, 1984. The report contains information on present offense, personal background, criminal history, and furlough participation of the residents. The statistics are presented in two sections: the first section describes the DOC population in facilities with no pre-release component and the second section describes the DOC population in facilities with a pre-release component.

There were 4,482 individuals incarcerated in the state correctional system on January 1, 1984. This represents a three percent increase over the population on January 1, 1983. Of these residents, 677 (15 percent) were in maximum security institutions, 2584 (58 percent) in medium security institutions, and 1221 (27 percent) in minimum security institutions or pre-release centers. The majority (69 percent) were serving Walpole (prison) sentences with a median minimum sentence of nine years; 26 percent were serving Concord (reformatory) sentences with a median maximum sentence of 10 years; and five percent were sentenced to Framingham. More of the Framingham residents were serving time for county sentences (48 percent) than for prison sentences (33 percent). There were 615 (14 percent) lifers in the 1984 census.

Residents were most likely to be serving sentences for offenses against the person (63 percent) or property offenses (16 percent). The most frequently committed offense was armed robbery (24 percent).

The population was predominately male (95 percent), white (66 percent), and single (63 percent). The median age at incarceration was 25 years old and the median education level was tenth grade. Twenty-five percent had a history of commitments to a juvenile authority and 55 percent had at least one prior incarceration as an adult.

A minority of the population (28 percent) participated in the furlough program during their current commitment. Of the furlough participants, only four percent (54 individuals) had furlough escapes during the current commitment.

**1983 Court Commitments to the Massachusetts
Department of Correction**

#270

August 1984

Linda K. Holt

This report is a statistical description of individuals committed by the courts to a term of incarcerations in the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) during 1983. The report includes all new court commitments as well as incarcerations which began as new sentences during the year (forthwith and from-and-after sentences). If an individual was committed to DOC more than once during 1983, each commitment was counted as a separate event and, hence, a separate case. The report presents information on present offense, personal characteristics, and criminal history of admissions from the courts.

The 2,035 commitments in 1983 represent a two percent increase over the 2,003 commitments in 1982. There were 755 commitments to Walpole, 646 commitments to Concord, and 634 commitments to Framingham. Overall there was a four percent decline in male commitments to Walpole and Concord and a 15 percent increase in female commitments to Framingham between 1982 and 1983.

The median minimum sentence for Walpole commitments was six years; the median maximum sentence for Concord commitments was ten years; and the median sentence for Framingham commitments was less than one year. Sentence lengths were similar to those in 1982. Offenses against the person and sex offenses accounted for 50 percent of all commitments. Armed robbery was the single most common offense. The proportion of commitments for drug offenses decreased between 1982 and 1983.

The majority of commitments were white (69 percent); 66 percent were single; 44 percent came from the Boston SMSA; most had limited work experience concentrated in the areas of manual labor and services; and 28 percent had a self-reported history of drug use. The median education level was eleventh grade and median age at commitment was 25 years, the same as prior years. Fifty-four percent were serving their first adult incarceration.

**Commitments to Massachusetts County Facilities
During 1983**

#265

May 1984

Lawrence T. Williams

This report presents a description of the population committed to Massachusetts county facilities (jails and houses of correction) during 1983. The report includes information on operating expenditures and average yearly population of the county correctional systems as well as commitment figures, offense and sentence information, and personal characteristics of the commitments. With the exception of Deer Island; and Charles Street Jail--the Suffolk County house of correction and jail, respectively--the statistics reported for a county combine the house of correction and jail figures. Due to the small number of offenders sentenced to jails, most of the county figures reflect house of correction commitments. All information in the paper is reported by the county facility receiving the commitments.

During 1983 9,617 individuals were committed to county facilities. This represents a 13 percent increase over the number of commitments in 1982. Nearly half of the commitments (47 percent) were sentenced to three institutions -- Billerica (19 percent), Worcester (16 percent), and Springfield (12 percent). Most of the commitments (92 percent) were sentenced from District Courts. The majority of individuals (88 percent) were committed for property and other non-person offenses. Commitments for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated increased by 82 percent from 1982 to 1983. Sixty-five percent of those committed to county facilities were sentenced to serve three months or less, including commitments in lieu of fines.

The median age of those committed in 1983 was 25 years old, and the median grade completed in school was the eleventh grade. Almost all of the commitments were male, and the majority were single (68 percent).

**Population Movements in the Massachusetts
Department of Correction During 1983**

#271

September 1984

Patricia Tobin

The annual movement report is a compilation of all admissions and releases into and out of Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) facilities during 1983. The report presents information on types of admissions and releases including: new court commitments, paroles, returns on parole violation, discharges, escapes, deaths, transfers to other correctional facilities both within the state and outside of the state, and trips to hospitals and courts. The statistics on various types of movement are summarized by specific institution or institutional group.

At the beginning of 1983 the population in custody of the Massachusetts Department of Correction was 4473; at the end of 1983 the population count had risen to 4605, an increase of 132 individuals or three percent during the year. There was a total of 23,844 moves during 1983; admissions were only slightly greater than the number of releases that year. The average number of moves per inmate was three. Inter-institutional transfers comprised the majority of admissions and releases during the year.

There was a total of 11,988 admission movements of all types into institutions during 1983. This represented a six percent increase over such movements in 1982. The breakdown by specific type of move indicates that increases occurred among institutional transfers (eight percent), individuals received on a from and after sentence (79 percent), and returns from escape (18 percent); decreases occurred among returns on parole violations (five percent). New court commitments remained about the same in 1983 and 1982.

There were 11,856 movements out of DOC institutions during 1983, an 11 percent increase from the previous year. Much of the increase in releases can be attributed to relatively more paroles to the street which increased by 47 percent in one year from 957 paroles in 1982 to 1,406 in 1983. The number of escapes decreased from 275 escapes in 1982 to 257 in 1983, a decrease of six percent. Other types of releases remained stable over the two year period.

**A Statistical Description of Releases from
the Massachusetts Correction Institutions During 1983**

#273

November 1984

Ann Marie Rocheleau

This report presents a statistical description of the characteristics of individuals released to the street from facilities of the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) during 1983. The tables contain information on the nature of the commitment offense, personal background characteristics, criminal history, furlough program participation, and release characteristics for all individuals released to the street from Massachusetts correctional facilities. Only those individuals who were released to the street by authority of the Parole Board, by expiration of sentence or by discharge are included in the report. Individuals who were released more than once during 1983 are treated as multiple cases.

During 1983 there were 1,976 individuals released to the street from DOC facilities. This represents an increase of 37 percent over the number released in 1982. Walpole commitments represented 29 percent of all releases; Concord commitments represented 42 percent of all releases; and Framingham commitments represented 29 percent of all releases. Almost three-fourths of the releases were male and over one-fourth were female. Thirty-one percent of the releases were black and 68 percent were white. Overall, 52 percent of the releases had prior incarcerations in a state or county institution as an adult.

The report presents many of the statistics by the sex of the released offenders because males and females were found to differ on most release characteristics. These differences can be largely attributed to the type of sentences served. Eighty-six percent of the females released were serving county sentences, and 13 percent were serving state sentences. Almost all of the males released were serving state sentences. Among males, 62 percent were released from minimum security and pre-release centers, and 38 percent were released from higher security institutions. Among females, 12 percent were released from lower security, and 88 percent were released from secure institutions. The majority of men tended to be released by parole (84 percent), while the majority of women tended to be released by expiration of sentence or good conduct discharge (63 percent). A greater proportion of men (20 percent) than women (four percent) were released following a return on a parole violation.

1983 Yearly Statistical Report of the Furlough Program

#272

October 1984

Patricia Tobin

The furlough program has been in operation in the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) since November 6, 1972. This report presents a statistical description of the number, distribution, and outcomes of the furloughs granted in 1983, and a trend analysis of participation in the furlough program since its inception. The analysis is divided into two sections. The first section contains relevant furlough statistics for 1983. The second section presents a brief overview of the furlough program and provides comparisons of furlough characteristics over a 10 to 12 year period.

From January 1, 1983 to December 31, 1983 a total of 6,710 furloughs were granted. The actual number of individuals furloughed was 1,295. For every 1,000 furloughs granted, three ended in escape (a resident failing to return to a correctional facility within two hours of the appointed time of return). Twenty individuals--less than two percent of the population furloughed -- were declared on furlough escape in 1983.

A total of 88,523 furloughs have been granted between the inception of the program and the end of 1983. During that period 606 of those furloughs resulted in escapes, yielding an overall furlough escape rate of 0.7 percent or 7 escapes per 1,000 furloughs. Since the inception of the furlough program a gradual decline has occurred in the actual number of furloughs granted, the number of individuals furloughed, and the percentage of the released population participating in the furlough program prior to release. In addition, the escape rate had shown a parallel decline during the same period. The decline in furloughs and escape rates suggests that greater selectivity may have been exercised in the granting of furloughs thereby reducing the likelihood of escape. While 1983 showed a slight upturn in each of the furlough statistics, the difference between the 1982 and 1983 rates is not great enough to signal a reversal in furlough trends.

**Statistical Tables Describing the Background
Characteristics and Recidivism Rates for Releases
from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions During 1982**

#274

December 1984

Lawrence T. Williams

This report is the first of a two-part series on the recidivism rates of offenders released to the street from Massachusetts correctional institutions (MCI) in 1982. The second report in the series is report #275. For purposes of this report, all drug contract programs and pre-release facilities are collapsed into the category "pre-release." A description of released offenders and recidivism rates are available for: men released from MCI-Walpole, MCI-Concord, North Central Correctional Institution, MCI-Norfolk, Southeastern Correctional Center, Bay State Correctional Center, MCI-Plymouth and MCI-Warwick; and women released from MCI-Framingham.

A total of 1,221 offenders (918 males and 303 females) were released from all correctional facilities in 1982. Seventy-five percent were paroled and the remainder were discharged. Of those released, 467 men and 255 women were released from the secure institutions listed above.

Information in this report includes statistics on recidivism rates cross-tabulated by characteristics of release, present offense, personal background, criminal history, furlough participation, and release follow-up for the 1982 release population. A recidivist is defined as any offender who returns to a state or federal correctional institution or to a house of correction or jail for 30 days or more. Parole violators as well as offenders sentenced for new crimes are included in this definition of a recidivist. The recidivism rate (RR) represents the percentage of released offenders who have been reincarcerated within a year of release.

For 1982 releases the overall recidivism rate was 23 percent, slightly less than the rate for 1981 releases (24 percent). The rate varied by the institution of release, ranging from 41 percent from maximum security facilities to 17 percent from minimum security facilities.

**Statistical Tables Describing the Background
Characteristics and Recidivism Rates for
Releases from Massachusetts Pre-Release
Facilities During 1982**

#275

December 1984

Lawrence T. Williams

This report is the second of a two part series on the recidivism rates of offenders released to the street from the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) in 1982. The companion report is #274. For purposes of this report various state and contract pre-release facilities are identified and all higher security institutions are collapsed into the "non-pre-release" category. A description of released offenders and recidivism rates are available for offenders released from three contract drug rehabilitation programs (Meridan House, Boston VA Hospital and Third Nail) and twelve pre-release centers: 577 House, 699 House (Coolidge II), Temporary Housing Project, MCI-Shirley, Boston State Pre-Release, Coolidge House, Brooke House (men and women), South Middlesex Pre-Release, Park Drive Pre-Release, MCI-Lancaster (men and women), Hillside House and Norfolk Pre-Release.

A total of 1,221 offenders (918 males and 303 females) were released from all correctional facilities in 1982. Seventy-five percent were paroled and the remainder were discharged. Of those released, 451 men and 48 women were released from the pre-release centers listed above.

Information in this report includes statistics on recidivism rates cross tabulated by characteristics of release, present offense, personal background, criminal history, furlough participation, and release follow-up for the 1982 release population. A recidivist is defined as any offender who returns to a state or federal prison or to a house of correction or jail for 30 days or more. Parole violators as well as offenders sentenced for new crimes are included as recidivists under this definition. The recidivism rate (RR) represents the percentage of released offenders who have been reincarcerated within a year of release.

Among the 1982 releases the overall recidivism rate was 23 percent. For pre-release centers the overall rate was 17 percent, but the rate varied from 15 percent for state pre-release centers to 20 percent for contract pre-release facilities.