2008 Legislative Mini-Forums

What are the factors influencing Prison and Jail Populations?

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February 6, 2008
Background

- The Maine Justice Policy Center conducts independent analyses of crime and justice data.
- This research is based primarily on data provided by the Maine Department of Corrections information system (CORIS).
Current Situation about Maine’s Corrections population

- Lowest prison incarceration rate in the nation
- Prisons are over capacity by 300 prisoners
- In-house jail population has increased 89 percent in the last ten years
Five factors influencing prison and jail numbers

- Reentry Practices
- Probation Violations
- Pretrial Practices
- Sentencing Practices
- State Crime Rates
Reentry Practices

- 98 percent of prison inmates will be released from prison.
- Almost two thirds of the prison population (10/15/2007) have a sentence of 3 years or less.
- A sample of 400 MDOC inmates found 81% with at least one previous criminal conviction.
Probation Violations

- In 2004, 60% (610) of all new admissions to prison are the result of a violation of probation. About 45% are for a technical violation; 55% are for a new criminal act.
- In county jails, about 42% of the sentenced population are serving a violation of probation.
- 30% of the jails’ pretrial population is being held for a probation violation.
Prison Population by Type of Court Action

Source: MDOC CORIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Probation Violation (%)</th>
<th>Sentenced for a New Crime (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pretrial Practices (Jails)

- Pretrial defendants represent over 60% of the offenders in county jail in 2007, more than double from 10 years ago.

- The average length of stay of pretrial defendants in a majority of Maine jails is more than three times higher than those in other states.

- A wide range exists in the percentage of pretrial defendants in individual county jails from a low in Piscataquis County of 16.4 percent to a high in Cumberland County of 74.7 percent.
Sentencing Practices

- No major increase in sentencing length over the past four years
- Split-sentenced probationers in Maine have higher revocation rates. Individuals with straight probation have a revocation rate of 27.3 percent while individuals with split sentences have a revocation rate of 39.7 percent.
- Majority of Maine DOC offenders are on probation or in prison with a split sentence
State Crime Rates

- Maine’s Crime Rate has been relatively stable over the last 10 years.
- In 2006, however, property and violent crimes rose three percent (3%).
- Between 2006-2007, the increase in prison population appears driven by offenders receiving a sentence for a new crime.

Source: MDOC CORIS
Resources

- CAAC reports

- Sabol, W., and Couture, H., Prisoners in 2006, December 2007, NCJ2194, Bureau of Justice Statistics


- Shaler, G., Dorsey, C., and Leighton, A., Reoccurring Criminal Behavior Analysis: Snapshot Survey of 400 Maine State Prisoner Files, October 2003, Muskie School of Public Service
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