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New Report Shows California's Recidivism Rate Declined Again This Year

California's recidivism rate is now 61.0 percent

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) today released its *2013 Outcome Evaluation Report*, the fourth in a series of annual reports tracking and analyzing the recidivism – or reoffending – rates of adult felons released from state prison. The report shows that the total three-year recidivism rate for all felons released during fiscal year 2008-2009 is 61.0 percent, down from 63.7 percent last year and down from 67.5 percent four years ago.

“The continuing improvement in the state’s recidivism rate is encouraging news for all Californians,” CDCR Secretary Jeff Beard said. “When former offenders are leading productive, law abiding lives, our communities are safer. As we move forward and both CDCR and counties utilize state funds to invest more in evidence-based rehabilitation efforts, I’m confident we will see recidivism rates continue to decline.”

CDCR measures recidivism by arrests, convictions and returns to prison and uses the latter measure – returns to prison – as its primary measure of recidivism. CDCR’s return-to-prison measure includes offenders released from prison after having served their sentence for a crime as well as offenders released from prison after having served their term for a parole violation. All felons are tracked for the full three-year follow-up period, regardless of their status on parole or if they have discharged.

In fiscal year 2008-2009, 112,877 people were released or re-released from state prison and recidivated at a rate of 61.0 percent within three years.

The 2013 report focuses on the 68,803 inmates who returned to custody within three years of release. It also looks at demographics, including gender, age, ethnicity, offense, mental health status, length of stay, risk category and other factors and offers data and insights to CDCR executives, policy makers and correctional stakeholders.

The report’s findings include:

- Nearly 50 percent of inmates who recidivate within three years do so within the first six months.
- Women recidivate at a lower rate (48.9 percent) than men (62.4 percent).
- Although few in number, inmates released after serving an indeterminate sentence recidivate at a much lower rate (11.5 percent) than those who served a determinate sentence (61.0 percent).

- Despite the fact that Los Angeles County had the largest share of inmates released to parole (25.8 percent), its recidivism rate of 50.4 percent is the lowest of the 12 counties with the largest number of releases.
- San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Fresno counties have the highest overall three-year recidivism rates at 75.8 percent, 72.2 percent and 71.3 percent respectively.
- In general, recidivism rates decrease with age. Felons aged 18- to 19-years-old have a 73.7 percent recidivism rate; those age 60 and older have a 45.2 percent recidivism rate.
- The seriousness of an inmate's commitment crime is often inversely related to his/her recidivism risk. For example, second-degree murderers have a recidivism rate of 10.3 percent while people convicted of vehicle theft have a 72.5 percent recidivism rate.
- Overall, inmates with identified mental health issues recidivate at a higher rate than those without mental health issues.

Assembly Bill 109, the California Public Safety Realignment Act, became law on October 1, 2011. The law changed where people convicted of non-violent, non-serious and non-sex offenses serve their sentences. CDCR researchers expect that Realignment will have an impact on recidivism, but the impact is not significant in this report because it focuses primarily on offenders released before Realignment's implementation.

CDCR researchers did recently release a report that tracked inmates released from prison pre- and post-Realignment. It can be found here:

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult_Research_Branch/Research_Documents/Realignment_1_Year_Report_12-23-13.pdf

The *2013 Outcome Evaluation Report* is published by CDCR's Office of Research, which provides research data analysis and evaluation to implement evidence-based programs and practices, strengthen policy, inform management decisions and ensure accountability.

To view the entire report, please visit

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult_Research_Branch/Research_Documents/Outcome_Evaluation_Report_2013.pdf

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