

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Criminal Justice Estimating Conference

August 12, 2022

The Criminal Justice Estimating Conference convened August 12, 2022, to revise the forecast of prison admissions and population. During the seven months monitored since the January 2022 Conference, admissions totaled 17,696 which was 904 above the estimate. Conversely, the prison population at the end of July 2022 was 82,323 or -40 below the January estimate. These errors in the forecast directly result from the residual impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on the criminal justice system and the state's response, which began in March of 2020. The most recent effect has been a temporary increase in prison admissions as the various stakeholders (the Department of Corrections and the local court systems) resolved their respective backlogs. For some stakeholders, the timing of their efforts was delayed relative to prior expectations. In addition, the instability in the average sentence length of those admitted has made it difficult to forecast losses to the population. This has resulted in total admission numbers greater than estimated, while a greater number of releases resulted in a population that was below the estimate for the end of July.

Once the Department of Corrections cleared its backlog, total admission numbers moved closer to the levels anticipated at the conference held in January 2022. Furthermore, both the upward pressure on admissions exerted by the courts as they processed their own backlog of pending felony cases and the downward pressure from the reduced number of felony arrests have resolved at the levels expected in January.

Current data indicates that admissions are now relatively close to the January forecast. Little change was made to those annual estimates, other than adding an additional year to the forecast. Each year's level is consistent with or identical to the prior expectation for it.

Although admissions are essentially the same, updates to forecasted releases have resulted in slight differences to the forecasted population in each fiscal year. The June 30 projected prison population is now expected to increase by an additional 232 inmates in FY 2022-23 and by 68 inmates in FY 2023-24 relative to the prior forecast. After incorporating all of these adjustments, the growth in each year's population over the prior year is 4.3 percent in FY 2022-23; 3.0 percent in FY 2023-24; 1.5 percent in FY 2024-25; 1.6 percent in FY 2025-26; 1.6 percent in FY 2026-27; and 1.0 percent in FY 2027-28. These percentage changes are similar to those assumed in January.

| Year | Admissions | Releases | End of year pop | End of year over (under) January 2022 CJEC | End of year percent change |
|----------|------------|----------|-----------------|--|----------------------------|
| FY 22-23 | 27,794 | 24,236 | 85,682 | 232 | 4.3% |
| FY 23-24 | 28,733 | 26,197 | 88,218 | 68 | 3.0% |
| FY 24-25 | 28,386 | 27,041 | 89,563 | -235 | 1.5% |
| FY 25-26 | 28,467 | 27,069 | 90,961 | -68 | 1.6% |
| FY 26-27 | 29,019 | 27,535 | 92,445 | 76 | 1.6% |
| FY 27-28 | 29,101 | 28,211 | 93,335 | | 1.0% |