

To: Governor Dannel P. Malloy
From: Mike Lawlor, Under Secretary for Criminal Justice Policy and Planning
Date: September 25, 2017
Subject: 2017 Mid-Year Update on Crime Trends

Executive Summary

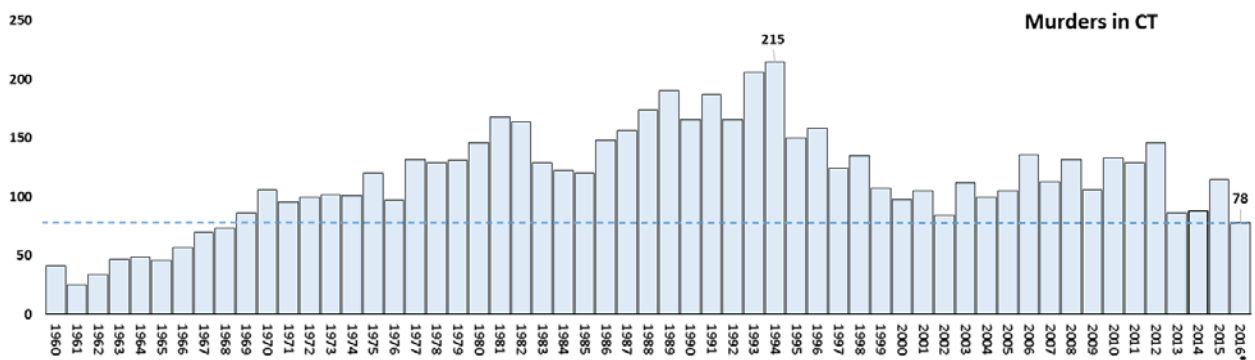
At the end of each summer we have presented you with a mid-year briefing on crime trends. This supplements our annual “Trends in the Criminal Justice System” report issued each January. Updates are arranged by topic below, but there are several key points:

Overall reported crime in 2016 was the lowest since 1967. There were a total of 72,787 index crimes reported in 2016. The highest year for reported crimes in our state was 1990 when the total was 177,068. In 2010, the year before you took office, the total was 88,342, representing an 18% decline in overall crime over your first 6 years in office. Reported violent crime in Connecticut declined 20% over that same period. The violent crime rate in Connecticut increased by 2.6% in 2016. This slight increase follows three years of sizeable drops. Despite the increase, Connecticut has had the largest decrease of any state in the last four years. In fact, 2016 was the second lowest violent crime rate since 1974. The lowest was 2015.

There was a decrease in the number of murders in 2016. Statewide, only 78 murders were reported. This represents the lowest total since 1969.

Finally, there was a steady downward trend in 2016 for arrests made and admissions to prison. The inmate population is currently at a 23 year low. One troubling aspect in recent years is that the total number of male inmates has dropped significantly while the number of incarcerated women had held constant. However recent changes implemented by Commissioner Semple have resulted in a drop of more than 10% in the total female population over the last year. The number of arrests of young people continues to rapidly decline. For example, the total number of arrests for 17 years olds in 2016 was down 65% compared to 2008.

Crime Reduction



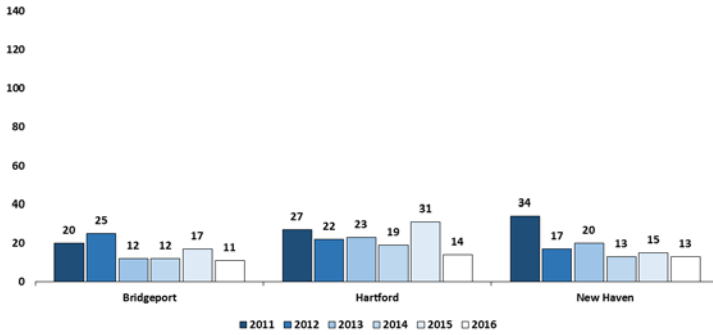
Following a one year uptick, the number of murders in Connecticut fell back to the levels seen in 2013 and 2014. Murders fell by 32% from 2015 to 2016 from 115 to 78. Since 1977 there have been fewer than 100 murders in only 5 of 39 years and three of those were in the last four years: 2013, 2014 and 2016. A word of caution regarding the steep decline, as reported in this memo last year, the number of murders recorded in 2015 was artificially inflated by the discovery of bodies who were killed in prior years. The FBI counts murders as having occurred during the year when the body was discovered, not when the homicide occurred. Six

bodies were discovered in New Britain, victims of a single offender. One other victim was from Hartford, another from Bridgeport. In addition, the city of Hartford reported a spike in homicides during 2015. The city witnessed 12 more murders in 2015 than it did in 2014.

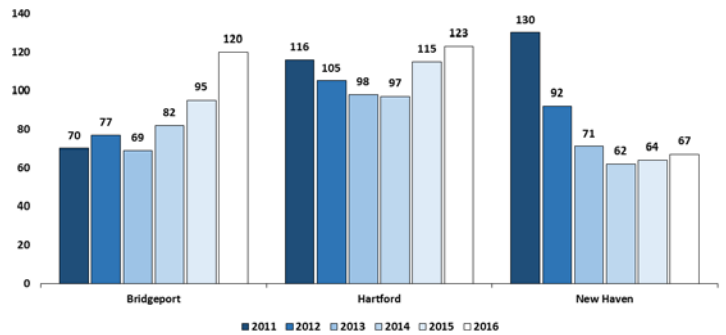
As seen in the charts below, the number of shootings recorded in the three major cities rose in 2016, with Bridgeport seeing the largest increase followed by Hartford and New Haven.

Source: Project Longevity

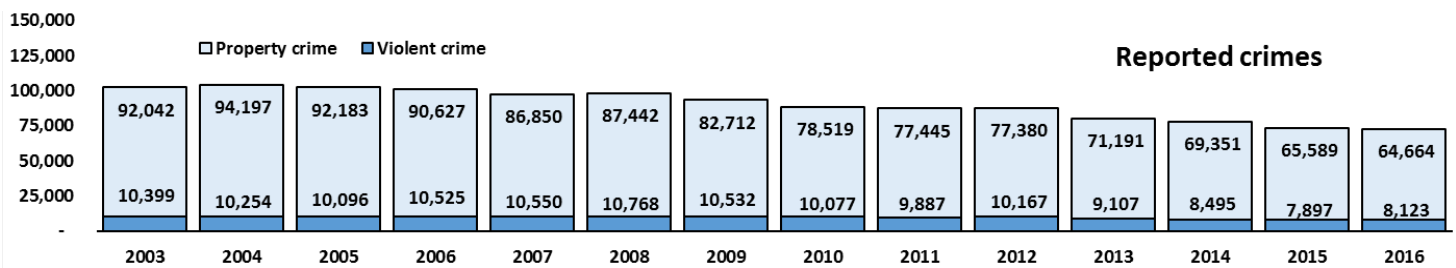
Homicides, 2011-2016



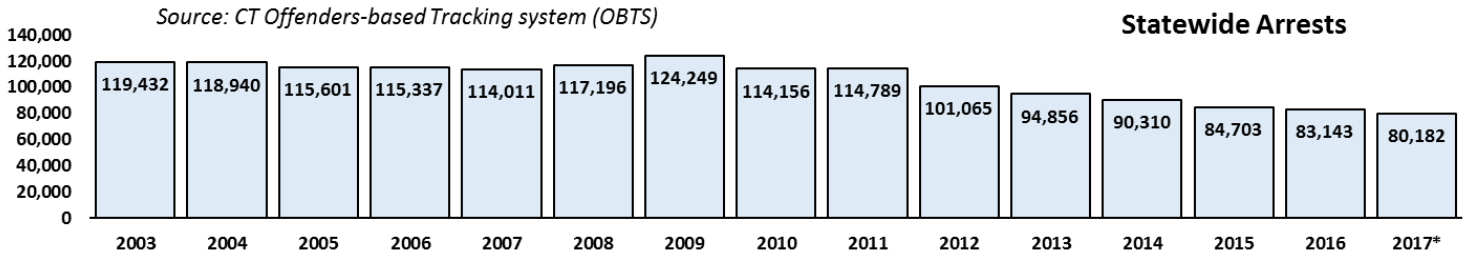
Non Fatal Shootings, 2011-2016



According to the FBI, reported “Index Crimes” (crimes involving victims, i.e. murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson) dropped 25.9% in Connecticut between 2008 and 2016. During the same time period, despite a slight increase in 2016, violent crime is down 24.5% while property crime has fallen by 26%.



Based on data from the Connecticut offender based tracking system, the total number of statewide arrests for all crimes (Index and non-index crimes combined) has dropped 33% between 2009, the last peak, and 2016. In 2009 there were 124,249 arrests statewide. In 2016 there were 83,143 a drop of 2% from 2015. We are projecting another drop in arrests in 2017. Based on our projections*, 2017 will likely end up with about 4% fewer arrests than 2016.



Note: arrests for new crimes, excludes FTAs

Truth-in-Sentencing

January 1, 2011 to January 1, 2017 the DOC population dropped by 3214, or about 18%. Over that same period, the total number of releases from prison has declined by 20%, year over year. Reported crime also declined by over 16% (CT UCR 2011 – 87,332, 2016 – 72,787).

Commissioner Semple implemented changes in RREC (Risk Reduction Earned Credit) and as a result high risk prisoners are serving a greater portion of their original sentence in prison.

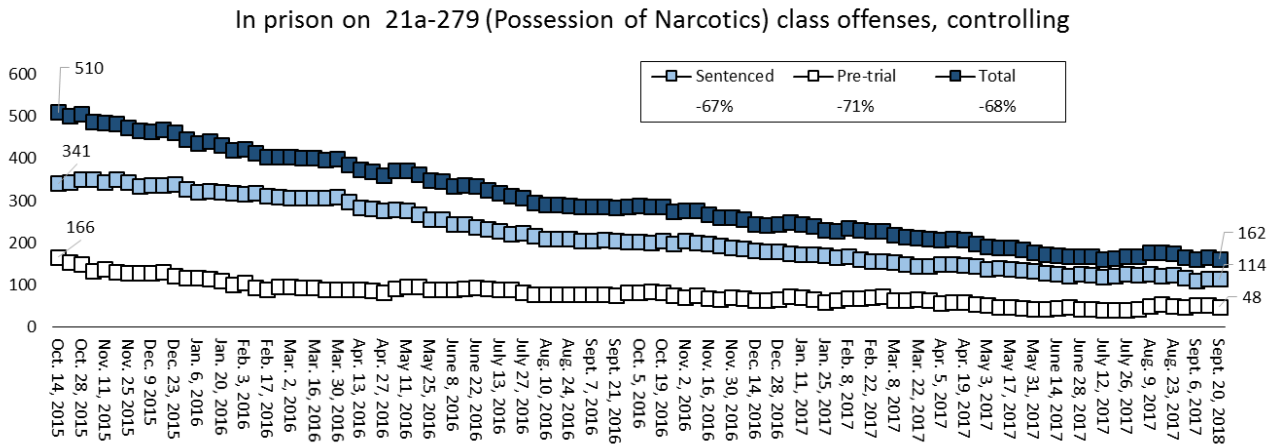
Through improvements to the offender re-entry process that took effect in 2015 discretionary releases ticked up in 2016. OPM projects that releases will remain flat in 2017, which coupled with declining admits suggests a continued decline in the prison population.

The decline in the prison population has been most pronounced among sentenced offenders. Their numbers have dropped by 21% since January 2011.

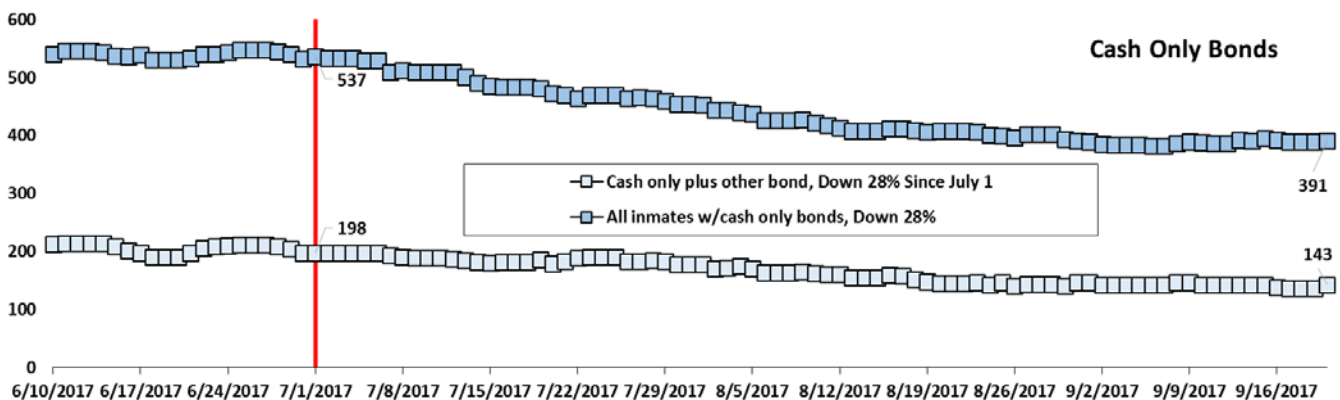
Second Chance Society Implementation Update

Public Act June Special Session 15-2 changed the penalty for drug possession from an unclassified 7 year felony to a Class A Misdemeanor [one year in jail maximum] effective October 1, 2015.

Since the change, the number of prisoners incarcerated for drug possession has fallen by 67%. In the first year, the largest impact was on the pretrial population. The sentenced population fell more in the second year.

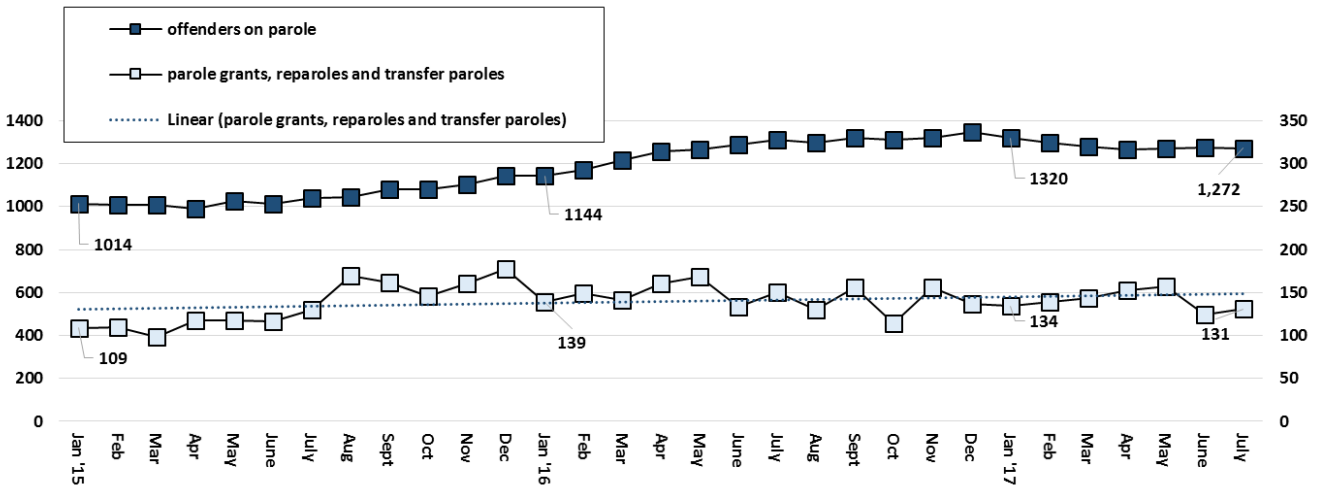


The 2017 Bail Reform initiative will reduce and ultimately eliminate the practice of setting “cash only” bail for defendants. This practice prohibited bail bondsmen from posting bond in cases where a judge ordered “cash only” bail. The new law makes it clear that this is no longer a permissible court order, although there is one needed clarification that is necessary in order for completely eliminate the practice. You did include that clarification language in the budget recommendation that is currently being considered by the General Assembly. The chart below shows that the number of pretrial prisoners being held on “cash only” bail has declined 28% since the law took effect on July 1.



Expedited parole hearings

Over the past several years, the Board of Pardons and Paroles has implemented structured-decision making procedures to improve the performance and quality of the parole-review process. Compared to the previous year, the number of new parole cases that were reviewed, and the number of cases considered for re-parole have increased. In addition, the Board also reinstated transfer parole releases for the most appropriate, low-risk offenders.



Expedited Pardon Review

The 2015 Second Chance Society legislation required the Board of Pardons and Parole to develop an “expedited pardons” process that would allow persons convicted of non-violent crimes to obtain a pardon without the necessity of a full hearing. In the recent past, many applicants have waited for more than two years to have a hearing, even in cases involving misdemeanor convictions that are more than a decade old. The legislature’s Regulations Review Committee approved final regulations for Expedited Pardons at its July 26, 2016 meeting. Under the new regulations, felony convictions that are more than five years old and misdemeanor convictions more than three years old are eligible to be considered for the expedited process. Violent felonies and misdemeanors are not eligible. If there is a victim in a non-violent case, a full hearing will be required if the victim requests such. These expedited proceedings began in the early fall of 2016. During Fiscal year 2017, 243 of the 841 pardons granted were expedited.

Pardons FY 2015-2017

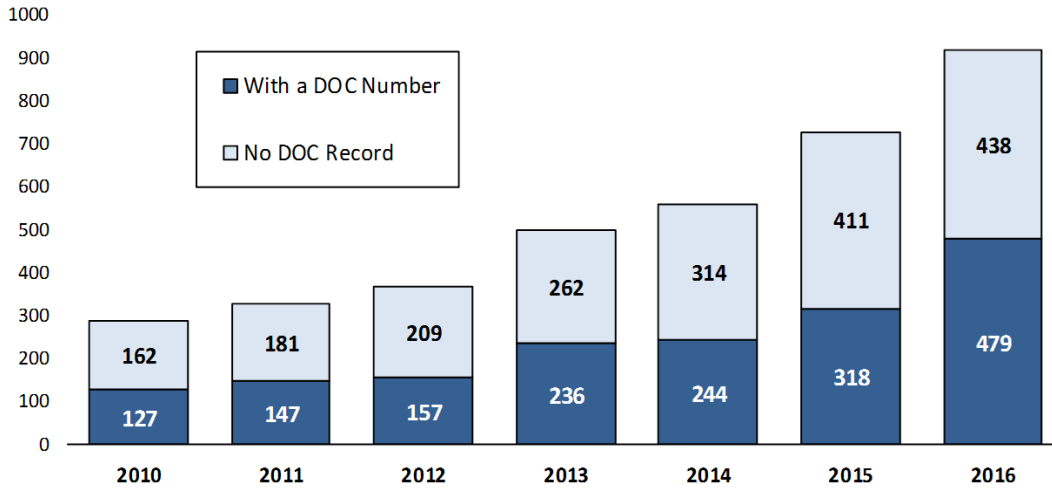
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	% Change 2015-2017
Applications Received	1103	1802	2122	92%
Eligible	963	1343	1202	25%
Granted	317	674	841	165%

The Board has eliminated its long-standing backlog of pardons applications following the appointment of five new board members pursuant to the 2015 legislation. Last year the Board nearly tripled the number of paroles granted only two years ago.

Public Act 15-84: AN ACT CONCERNING LENGTHY SENTENCES FOR CRIMES COMMITTED BY A CHILD OR YOUTH AND THE SENTENCING OF A CHILD OR YOUTH CONVICTED OF CERTAIN FELONY OFFENSE, gave parole eligibility to offenders sentenced in their youth. Hearings began in June 2016. As of this writing:

- 46 hearings have taken place
- 22 offenders were granted parole
- 21 were denied
- 3 decisions are pending
- 160 offenders are eligible and will be heard in the future.

Accidental Drug Intoxication Deaths among former inmates



CT Accidental Drug Deaths

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Drug Deaths	289	328	366	498	558	729	917
With a DOC Number	127	147	157	236	244	318	479
No DOC Record	162	181	209	262	314	411	438
% with a DOC record	44%	45%	43%	47%	44%	44%	52%

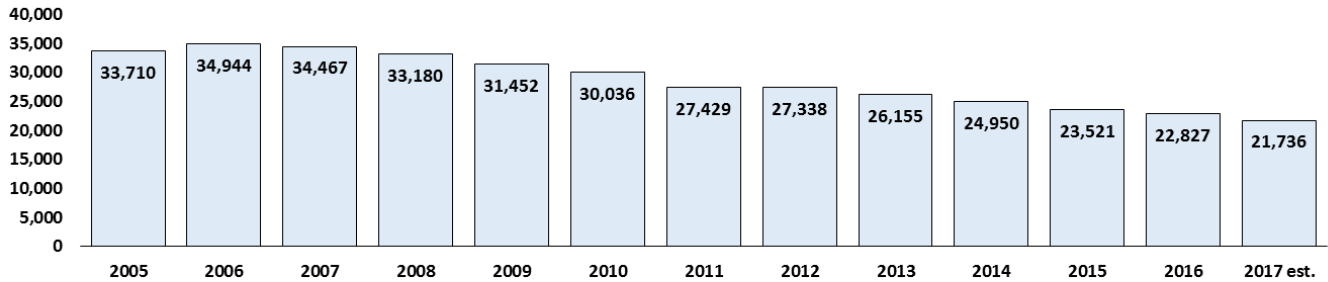
The New York Times (6/6/2017) estimated that up to 65,000 people died of drug overdoses in the US in 2016. In CT, 917 people died, a 27% increase over the 2015 figure. OPM, which has been monitoring drug deaths reported by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) for several years recently determined that 52% of 2016 overdose victims been admitted to the DOC and assigned a DOC inmate number. This is an alarmingly high rate given the small percentage of state residents who have ever been admitted to prison.

Qualitative research conducted by OPM found that almost everyone in prison admitted to using illicit drugs before arriving in prison. Among prisoners, marijuana-use was virtually ubiquitous. In fact, the only offenders who did not report using drugs in our study were self-described, heavy-users of alcohol. Opioid abuse is driving the recent rise in overall overdose deaths in the state and nationally. National overdose deaths last year surpassed the peak number of deaths for gun fatalities, HIV-related deaths and car crashes. Our analysis of OCME and DOC data revealed that overdoses are probably the single most common cause of death among prisoners within 60 days of release from prison.

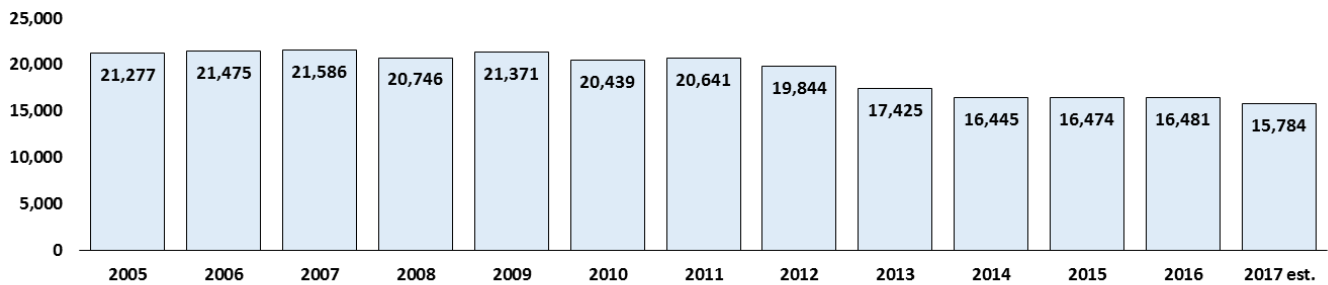
While Whites accounted for almost 80% of state overdose deaths, OPM analysis reveals that opioid-related death rates have increased almost identically among every major racial and ethnic group in CT. Given the high concentration of drug abusers in prison, it would make good public policy sense to develop and expand programs to address opioid-use among prisoners and educate them about the resources that may be available to users after prison.

Below are four additional charts that will provide you with a twelve-year historical perspective on the changes outlined above. 2017 estimates are full year projections based on actual numbers for the first seven months of the year.

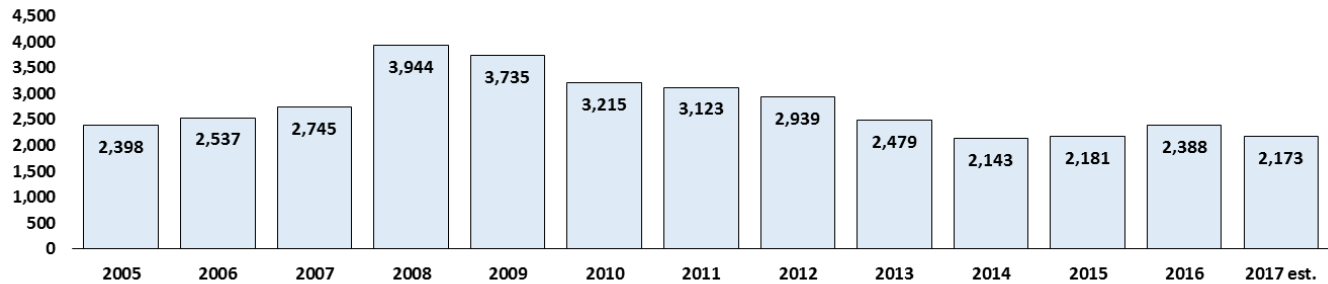
All prison admits



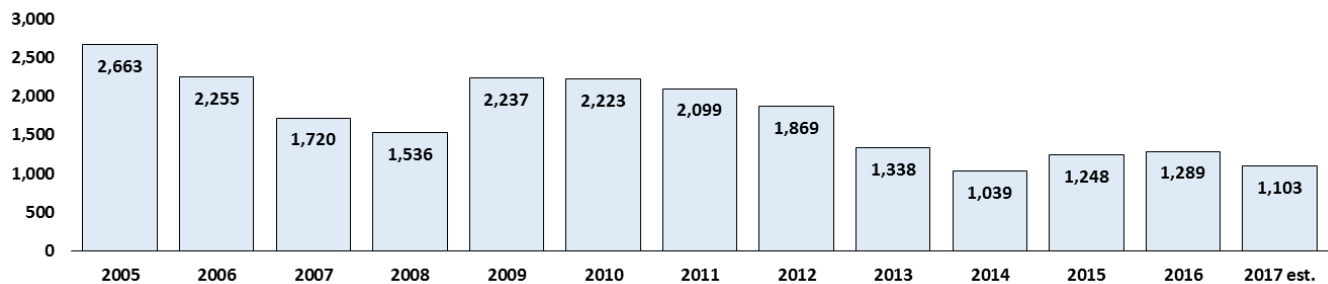
Total releases and discharges, sentenced



TS (Transitional Supervision) releases

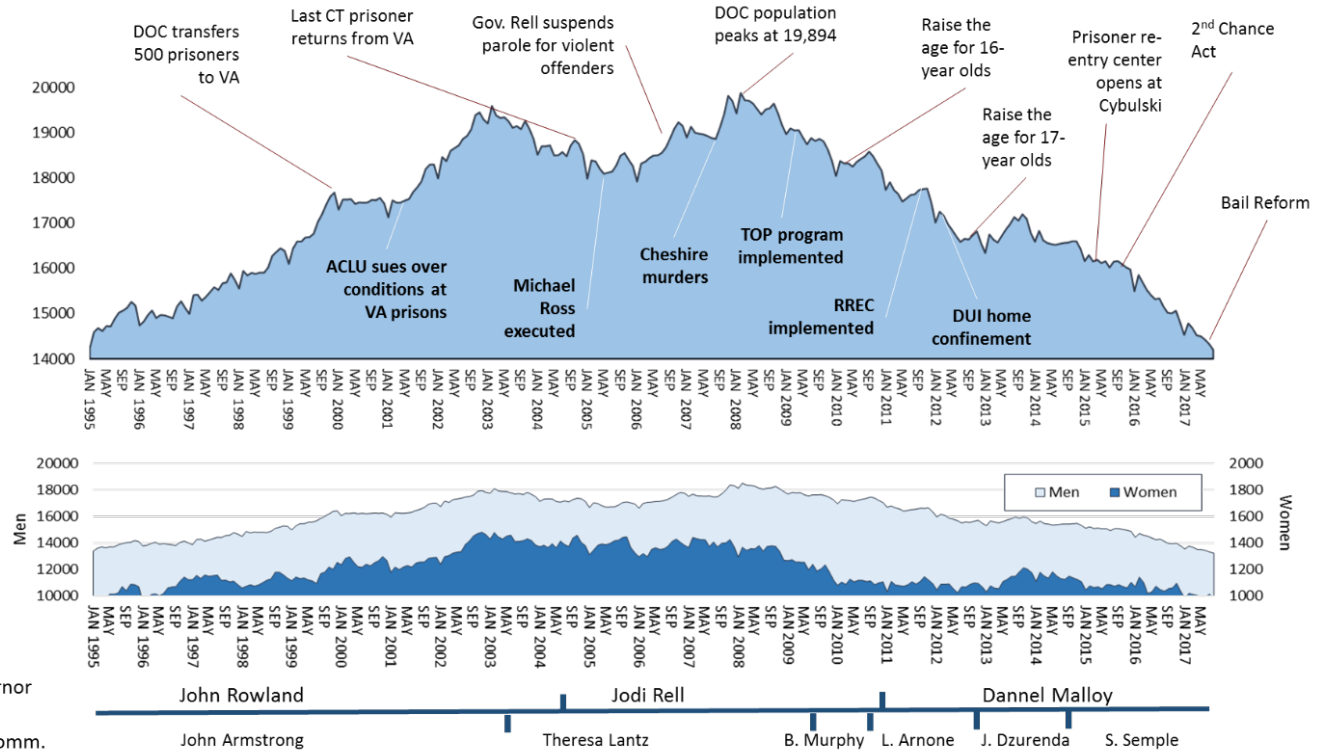


Parole releases



2017 Estimates calculated by following formula: $\frac{\text{Prior Year, YTD}}{\text{Prior Year, Total}} = \frac{\text{Current Year, YTD}}{X}$

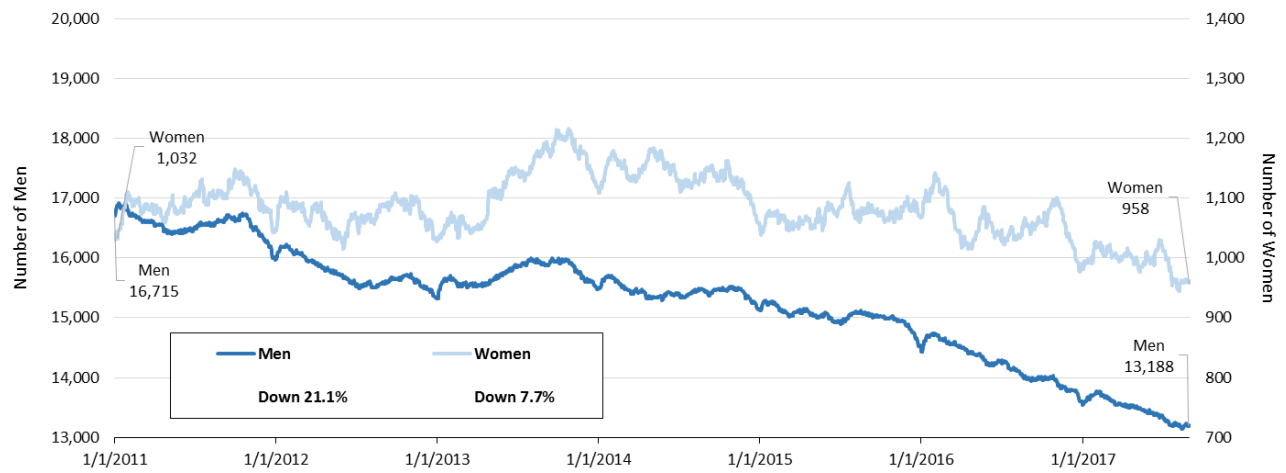
The CT Prison population, January 1995 through August 2017



Facility space shrinks as population declines

Facility Closed	Date	Beds Offline
Webster CI	1/15/2010	584
Gates CI	6/1/2011	1139
Bergin CI	8/12/2011	962
Bridgeport CC - Fairmont Building	7/31/2015	204
Niantic Annex	1/8/2016	658
Osborn CI - Q Unit	12/9/2016	692
Radgowski Annex	4/5/2017	254
Total		4493

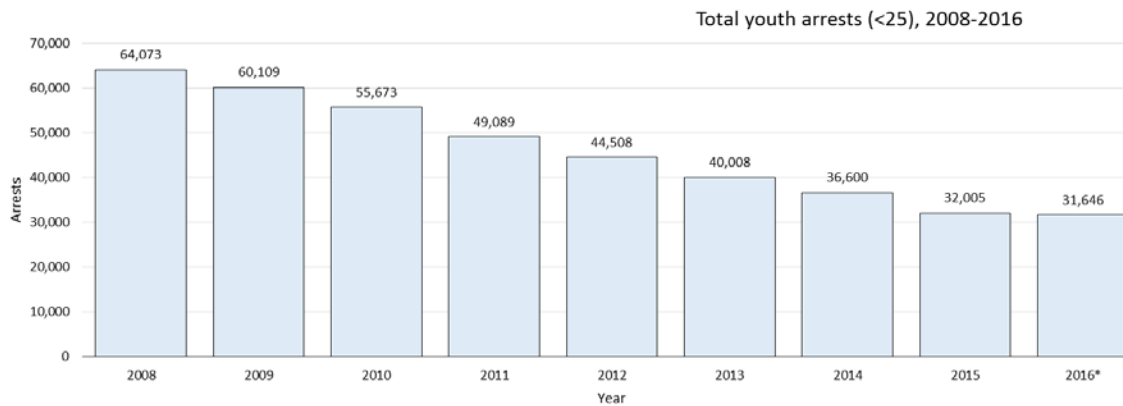
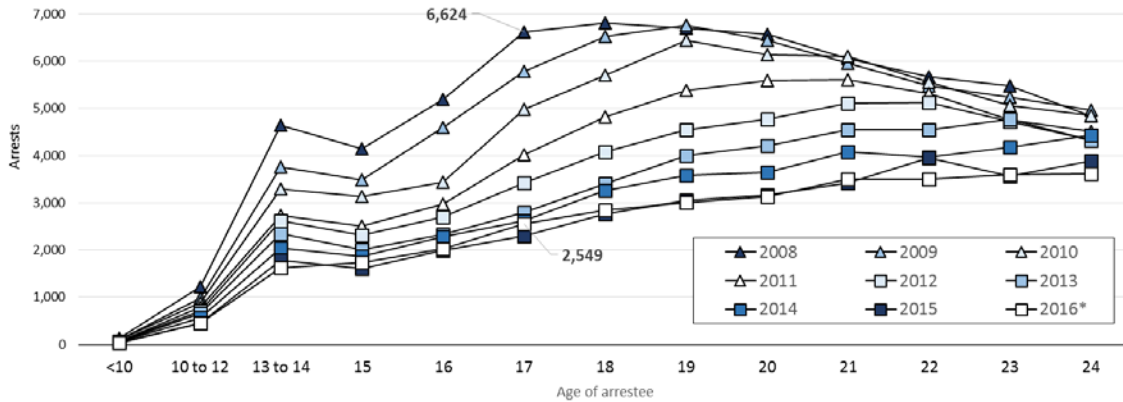
Connecticut Correctional Facility Population by Gender



While the male population at the DOC has fallen considerably since 2011, the women’s population has not. As recently as July 1, 2017 the women’s population was essentially the same as it was on January 1, 2011. Recent changes made to re-entry procedures at the DOC have had an immediate impact at York. Since June 23rd, the population at York has fallen 7%.

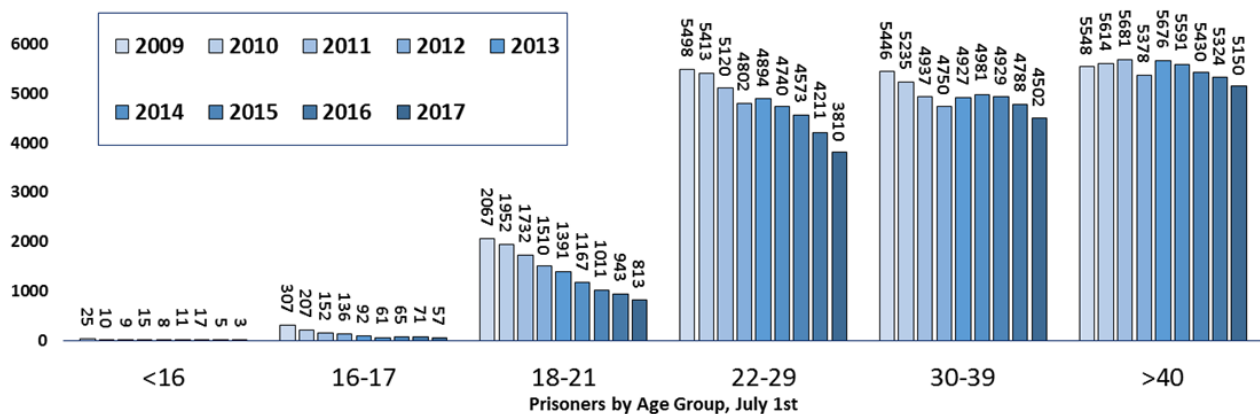
Youth Arrests, 2008-2016*

In addition to significant declines in the number of young people incarcerated in the state, the state's law enforcement agencies have reported major drops in the number of young people being arrested in recent years. Between 2008 and 2016, the number of young persons, under age 22, arrested declined by 56%. The number of 17-year olds arrested in the state declined by 62% between 2008 and 2016.

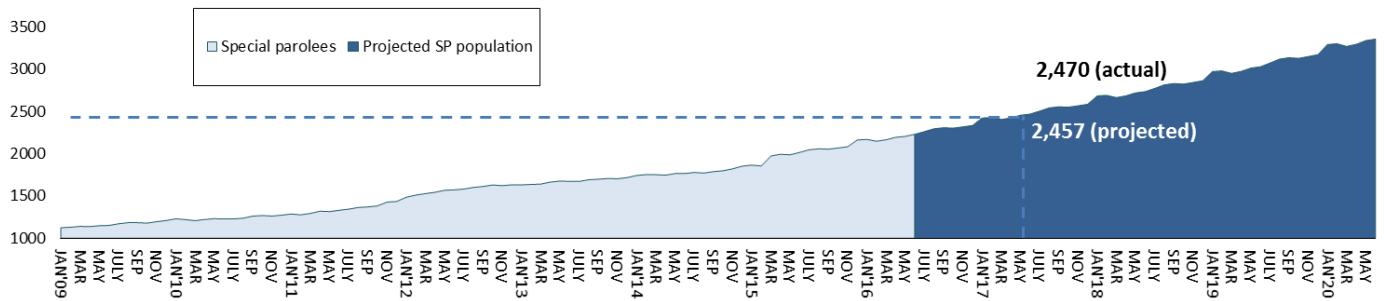


*2016 arrest data based on preliminary UCR data provided by DESPP

Incarceration and Age, 2009-2017



Special parole



This chart was prepared in June 2016. It was intended to draw attention to the steadily rising number of offenders who were being sentenced to special parole supervision. OPM is concerned that, given existing rates of growth, the special parole population would reach 3,360 by June 1, 2020.

In May 2017, the special parole population in the community topped 2,000 for the first time. To provide some perspective, this number is larger than the combined caseloads for parole and transitional supervision. Given this milestone, it seemed reasonable to revisit our projection. In June 2016, OPM projected that the special parole population on September 1, 2017 would total 2,557. In fact, the total special parole population on September 1 was 2,552. This number includes 1,763 special parolees who are currently under supervision, another 306 special parolees in halfway houses, and 483 special parolees who have been remanded to custody.

Unchecked growth in the size of the special parole population may create capacity problems for the DOC in the near future. Special parolees are generally supervised for longer periods than other offenders. In addition, they often require more resources than other offenders. This, coupled with higher remand rates, means that special parolees are consuming more and more resources, both in the community and in prison. It may be time to initiate a deeper discussion about the future of special parole and its role and function.