



# State of Connecticut Department of Correction

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## For Immediate Release **Prison Population Drops by 1,609 people since March 1<sup>st</sup>**

Wednesday May 6, 2020

Faced with the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Correction continues to assess its response efforts aimed at protecting the dedicated agency first responders and the incarcerated population.

In addition to modified operational plans and preventative measures implemented at all correctional facilities, the agency is closely monitoring its overall count in an effort to further reduce the population by releasing low risk offenders with stable home plans verified through the reentry planning process.

The agency's early action at the beginning of March emptied beds, creating essential space, which is a critical need during a pandemic. Available space enabled the department to separate new intakes at the jails for a fourteen-day period, establish statewide quarantine units and create a centralized medical isolation unit for all COVID-19 positive offenders at the Northern Correctional Institution.

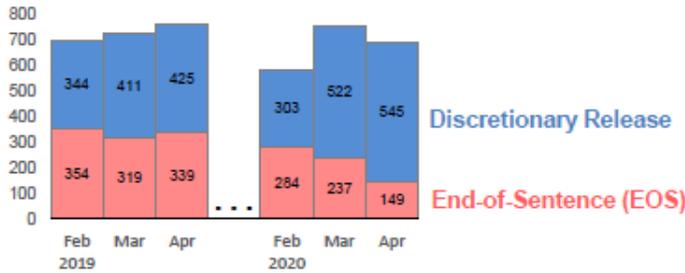
In an effort to expand release options, in addition to halfway house placements and releases to a home with a sponsor, Commissioner Cook signed a policy exception on 4/2/2020 to authorize furloughs up to 45-days for offenders serving two years or less. Eligible and suitable offenders in this category, absent any victim impact, are considered for release after serving 40% of their sentence.

Data from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) reveals that the number of discretionary releases from the onset of COVID-19 in March is significantly higher than any other month over the last year. There was a 72% increase in discretionary releases in March when compared to February. April data reveals another historical month with 43 more discretionary releases than March for a total of 545 discretionary releases.

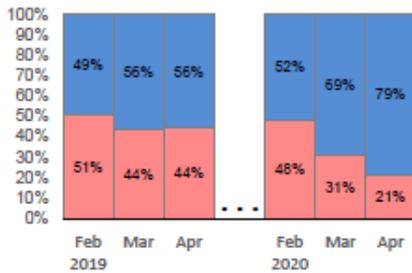
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## In April 2020, significantly more people transitioned from the DOC sentenced population to the community with supervision vs discharging their sentence from a facility (EOS) than April 2019.

Releases from DOC sentenced pop. by discretionary release vs. end-of-sentence discharge, by absolute number and percent, Feb. to Apr. 2019 and 2020



The number of discretionary releases increased 28% between April 2019 and 2020 (425 to 545).



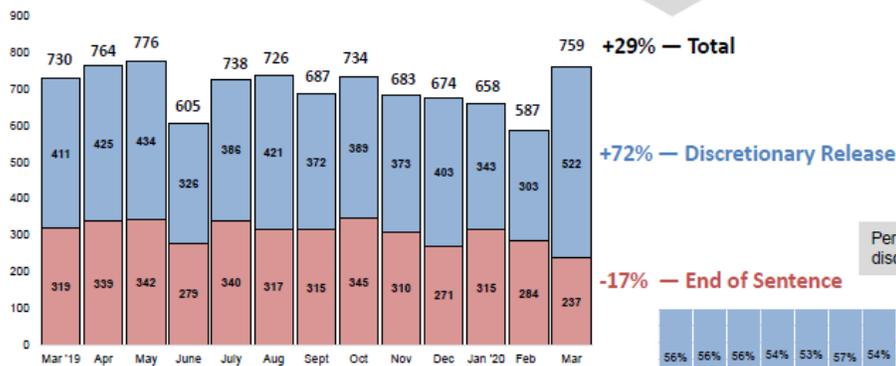
In April 2020, 79% of people returned to the community with supervision under a discretionary release mechanism, up 23 points from April 2019 (56% to 79%).

The increase in 2020 in discretionary releases helped reduce the number of people released from DOC with no community supervision (an EOS discharge).

Source: CT DOC. Excludes exits to special parole. The DOC is legally required to release an inmate in its custody at the conclusion of their court-stipulated sentence

## Between February and March 2020, discretionary releases of people sentenced to DOC climbed 72 percent while end-of-sentence releases fell 17 percent.

Number of people transitioning from DOC sentenced population by discretionary release vs. end-of-sentence release, March 2019 to March 2020



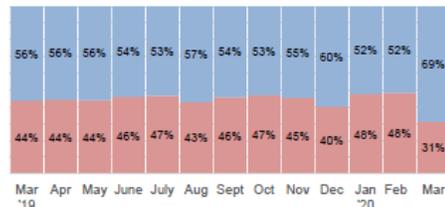
Percent Diff., Feb and March 2020

+29% — Total

+72% — Discretionary Release

-17% — End of Sentence

Percent of sentenced releases, by discretionary and end of sentence



This increase in discretionary releases had the secondary benefit of reducing the number of people released from correctional facilities with no community supervision. (The DOC is legally required to release an inmate in its custody at the conclusion of their court-stipulated sentence.)

Source: Data from CT DOC and analyzed for OPM Monthly Indicators Reports. Excludes exits to special parole.

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The population drop produced a considerable reduction in the number of offenders housed in dormitory style facilities. The Carl Robinson Correctional Institution witnessed a 36% reduction (-346 offenders) and Willard-Cybulski Correctional Institution has seen a 33% reduction (-365 offenders). In addition, the Radgowski portion of the Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center benefited by a 16% reduction (-72 offenders).

“Prior to any staff or offender COVID-19 cases, my direction was clear. Review all eligible offenders for release without circumventing risk assessments as swiftly as possible and add a layer of review that would prioritize offenders considered high risk if exposed to the virus,” said Commissioner Cook. “Balancing public safety, victim impact and public health considerations, while identifying housing and community supportive services during a pandemic is no easy task. The job they have done to release eligible offenders has exceeded even my expectations.”

#### **Connecticut Department of Correction Release Fact Sheet**

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOC/Pdf/Coronavirus-3-20/RELEASE-FACT-SHEET-covid-19-050520.pdf?la=en>

#### **April Sentencing Commission Presentation**

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/CJPPD/CjCjpac/CJPAC-Presentations-Folder/2020-presentations/Sentencing-Commission-PresentationAs-Presented-2020april.pdf?la=en>

#### **April Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission (CJPAC) Presentation**

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/CJPPD/CjCjpac/CJPAC-Presentations-Folder/2020-presentations/20200501FINALCJPACApr-Analysis-Presentation.pdf?la=en>

#### **Office of Policy and Management April 2020 Monthly Indicators Report**

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/CJPPD/CjResearch/MonthlyIndicators/2019---2020-Monthly-Indicators-Reports/April2020MonthlyIndicatorsReport--As-Released-\(002\).pdf?la=en](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/CJPPD/CjResearch/MonthlyIndicators/2019---2020-Monthly-Indicators-Reports/April2020MonthlyIndicatorsReport--As-Released-(002).pdf?la=en)

#### **Office of Policy and Management March 2020 Monthly Indicators Report**

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/CJPPD/CjResearch/MonthlyIndicators/2019---2020-Monthly-Indicators-Reports/MonthlyIndicatorsReport-MAR-2020-FINAL-DRAFT.pdf?la=en>