

To: Governor Dannel P. Malloy
From: Mike Lawlor, Under Secretary for Criminal Justice Policy and Planning
Date: September 24, 2018
Subject: 2018 Mid-Year Update on Crime Trends

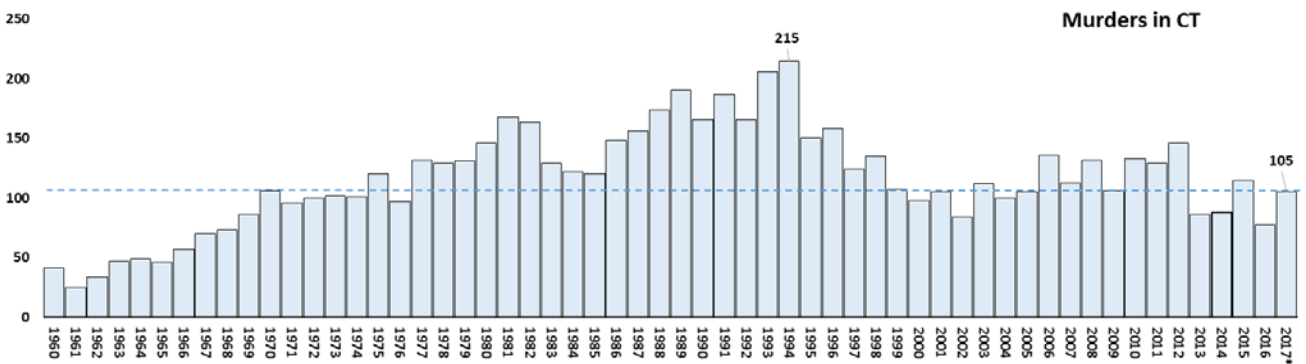
Executive Summary

At the end of each summer we have presented with 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 2017 was, again, the lowest since 1967. There were a total of 71,883 index crimes reported in 2017, a drop of 2% from last year. 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 a 19% decline in overall crime over your first 7 years in office. Reported violent crime in Connecticut declined 19% over that same period. The violent crime rate in Connecticut was flat in 2017. Connecticut and New Jersey had the largest decreases in violent crime among all states over the last five years. In fact, 2017 was the second lowest violent crime rate in Connecticut since 1974. The lowest was 2015. Since 2010 property crime has also fallen by 19% from 82,712 to 63,697 reported crimes.

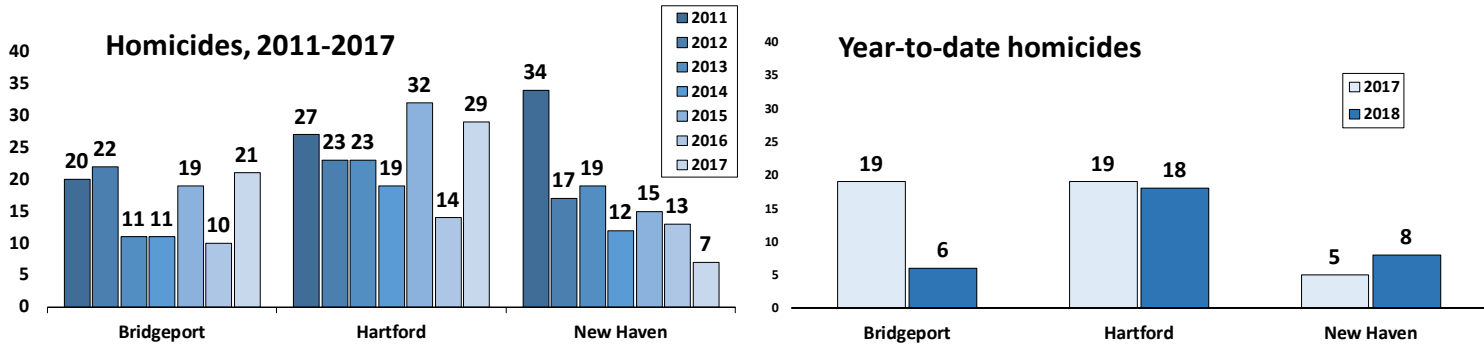
Finally, a steady downward trend for arrests made and admissions to prison continued in 2017. The inmate population is currently at a 24 year low. One troubling aspect in recent years is that the total number of male inmates has dropped significantly while the number of incarcerated women had held constant. However recent changes implemented by Commissioner Semple resulted in a drop of more than 10% in the total female population in 2017, but reductions have stagnated. The number of arrests of young people remains at historic lows. For example, the total number of arrests for 17 years olds in 2016 was down 65% compared to 2008.

Crime Reduction



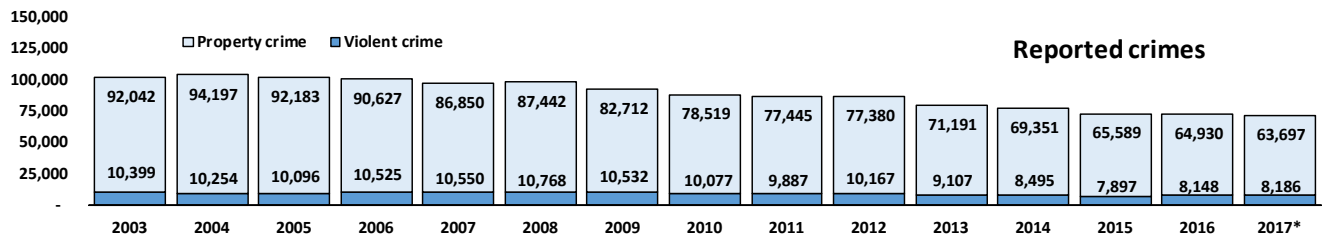
The number of murders in Connecticut increased in 2017, but remain well below the heights of the 1990s. Since 1977 there have been fewer than 100 murders in only 5 of 40 years and three of those were in the last five years: 2013, 2014 and 2016. The average number of murders in Connecticut over the last seven years was 103. During the preceding seven years the average was 113. Year-to-date in 2018 the total number of murders in Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport are at 32, down almost 30% from a total of 44 last year at this time.

The charts below show the breakdown of homicides in the three major cities. These three cities typically account for well over half of the homicides in the state each year. Year-to-date Hartford and New Haven appear to tracking very similar to last year, while Bridgeport is well below where it was in September of 2017 – a cause for cautious optimism for 2018.



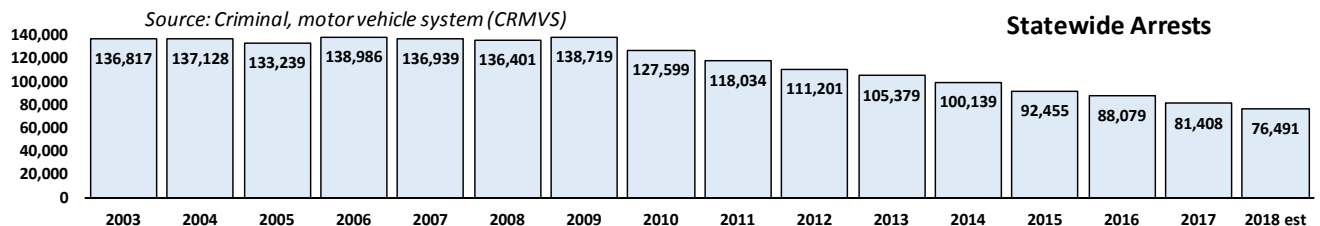
Source: CT UCR and city police departments

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 27% in Connecticut between 2008 and 2017. During the same time period, despite a slight increase in 2016, violent crime is down 24.5% while property crime has fallen by 27.5%.



Based on data from the criminal, motor vehicle arrest data system, the total number of statewide arrests for all crimes (Index and non-index crimes combined) dropped by 41% between 2009, the last peak, and 2017. In 2009 there were 138,719 arrests statewide. In 2017 there were 81,408 a drop of 7.5% from 2016. We are projecting another drop in arrests in 2018. Based on our projections (which are based on how the prior year performed from this point forward), 2018 will likely end up with about 6% fewer arrests than 2017.

2018 Estimates calculated by following formula: $estimate = \frac{(Current\ YTD) \times (Prior\ Year\ Total)}{(Prior\ Year\ YTD)}$



Note: arrests for new crimes, excludes FTAs

Truth-in-Sentencing

January 1, 2011 to January 1, 2018 the DOC population dropped by 4097, or about 23%. Over that same period, the total number of releases from prison has declined by 24%, year over year. Reported crime also declined by over 18% (CT UCR 2011 – 87,332, 2016 – 71,562).

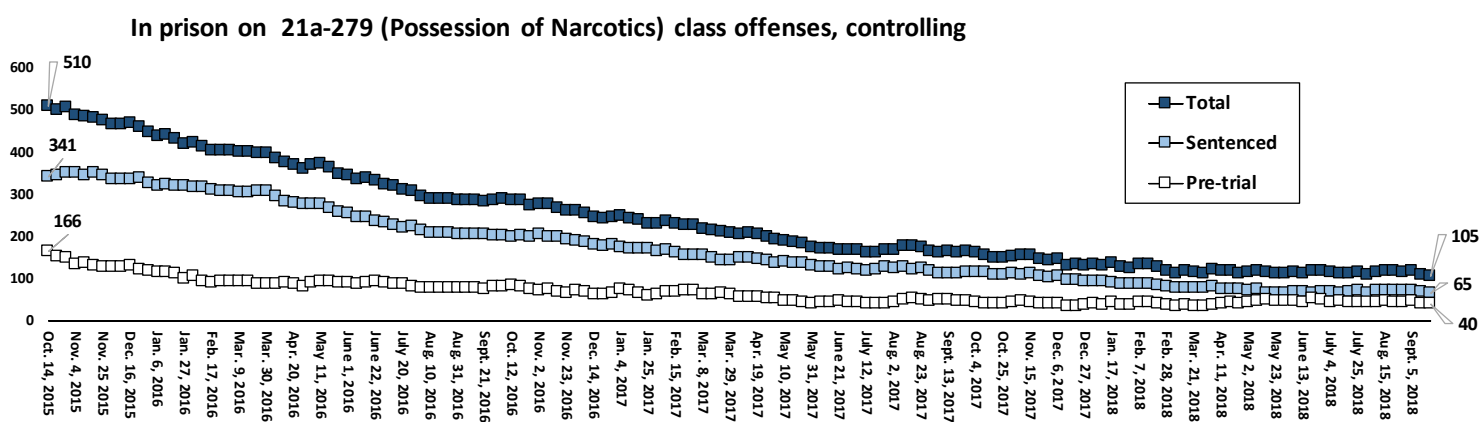
Commissioner Semple implemented changes in RREC (Risk Reduction Earned Credit) and as a result high risk prisoners are serving a greater portion of their original sentence in prison.

Through improvements to the offender re-entry process that took effect in 2015 discretionary releases ticked up in 2016. OPM projects that releases will decline slightly in 2018, which will offset declining admits, resulting a slower decline in the prison population than has been the case in past few years.

The decline in the prison population has been most pronounced among sentenced offenders. Their numbers have dropped by 30% since January 2011.

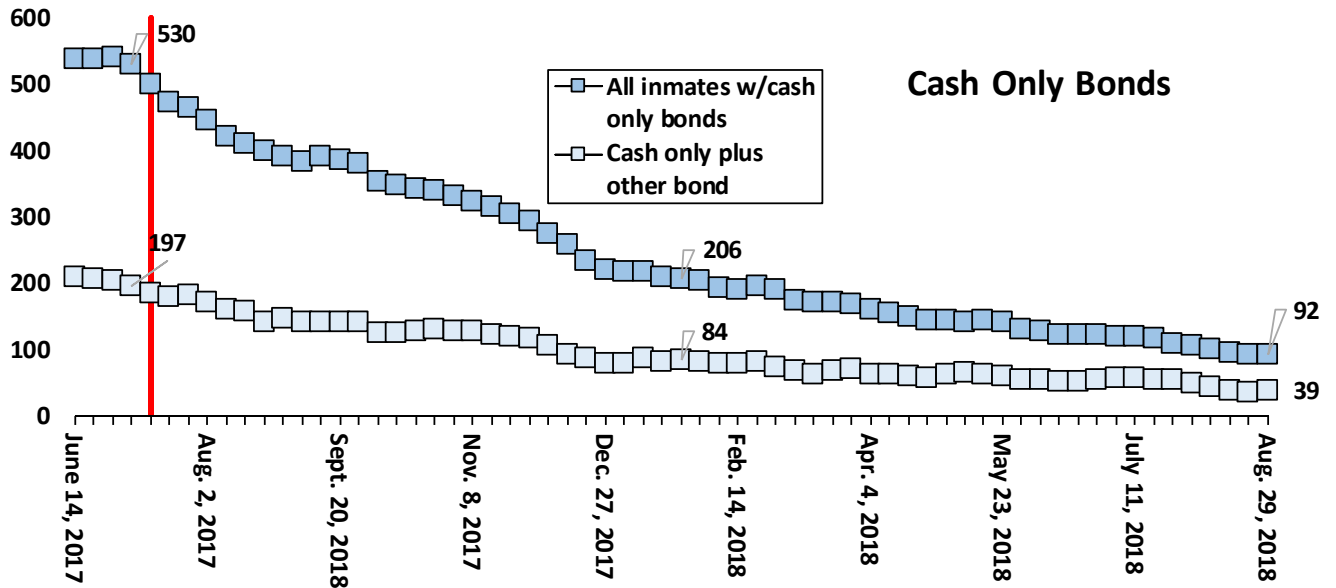
Second Chance Society Implementation Update

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.



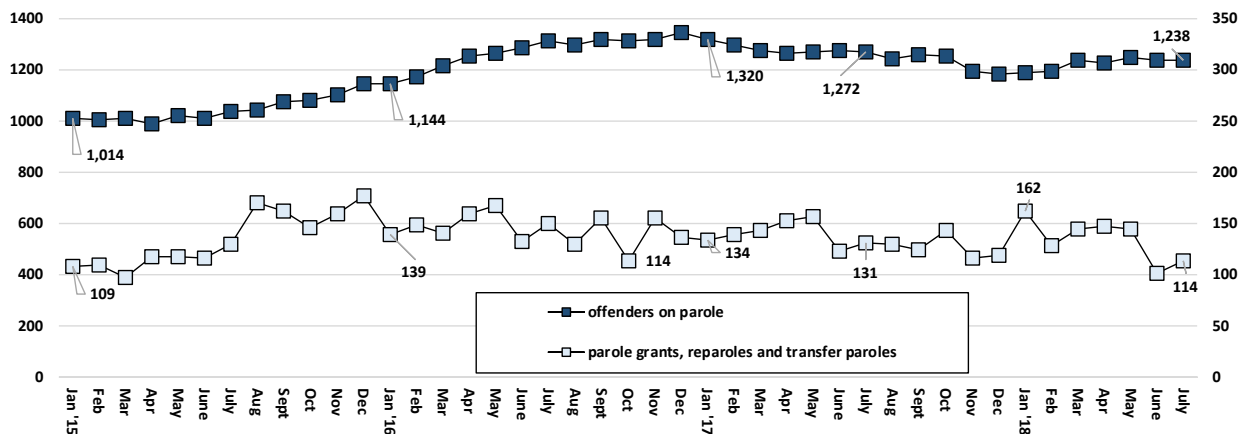
Since the change, the number of prisoners incarcerated for drug possession has fallen by 79%. In the first year, the largest impact was on the pretrial population. The sentenced population fell more in the second year.

In 2017 a Bail Reform initiative was set in place to reduce and ultimately eliminate the practice of setting “cash only” bail for defendants. This practice prohibited judges from ordering “cash only” bail. The chart below shows that the number of pretrial prisoners being held on “cash only” bail has declined 83% since the law took effect on July 1, 2017. By this point, no one should be held on a “cash only” bail, but a small number remain. This is possibly due to residual number of offenders still held who were charged prior to the law taking effect.



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 2018, 381 of the 1,022 pardons granted were expedited.

Pardons FY 2015-2018

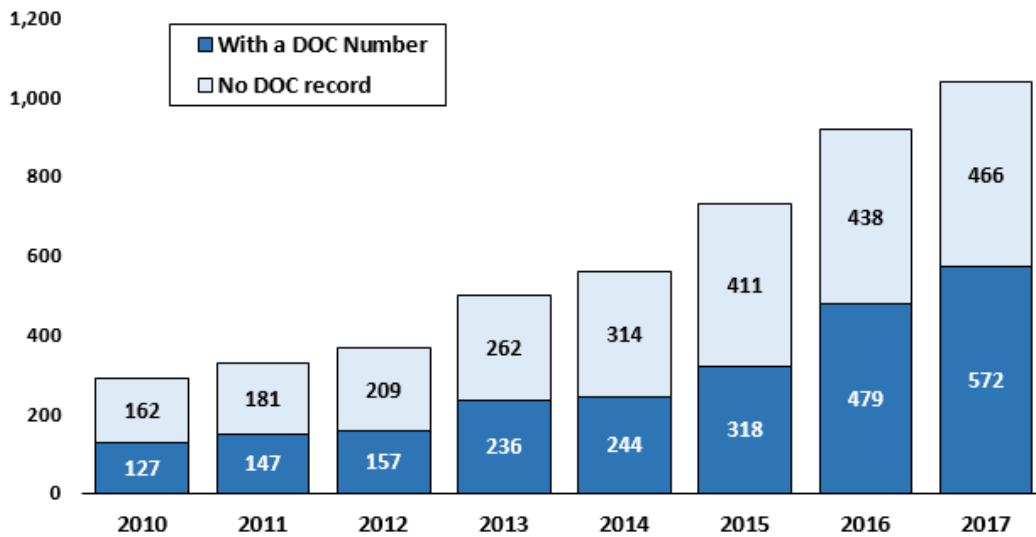
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	% Change 2015-2018
Applications Received	1,103	1,802	2,122	1,846	67%
Eligible	963	1,343	1,202	895	-7%
Granted	317	674	841	1,022	222%

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 more than tripled the number of pardons granted only three 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:

- 71 hearings have taken place
- 35 offenders were granted parole
- 25 were denied
- 8 decisions are pending
- 121 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	2017
Total Drug Deaths	289	328	366	498	558	729	917	1,038
With a DOC Number	127	147	157	236	244	318	479	572
No DOC record	162	181	209	262	314	411	438	466
% with a DOC record	44%	45%	43%	47%	44%	44%	52%	55%

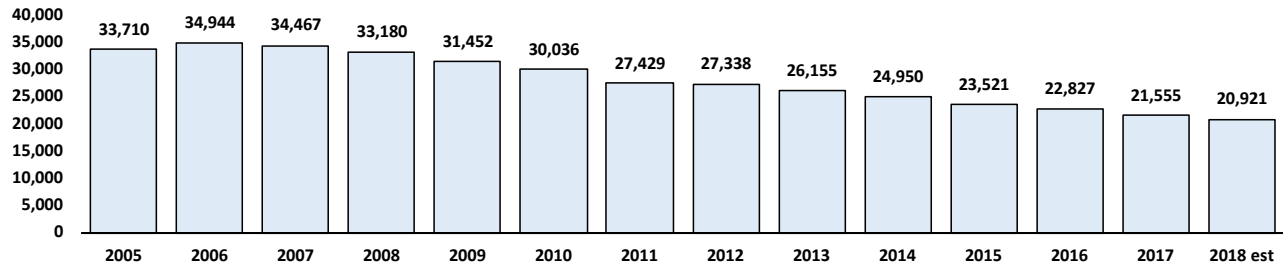
The New York Times (8/15/2018) estimated that up to 72,000 people died of drug overdoses in the US in 2017. In CT, 1038 people died, a 12% increase over the 2016 figure. OPM, which has been monitoring drug deaths reported by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) for several years recently determined that 55% of 2017 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 continue to surpass 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.

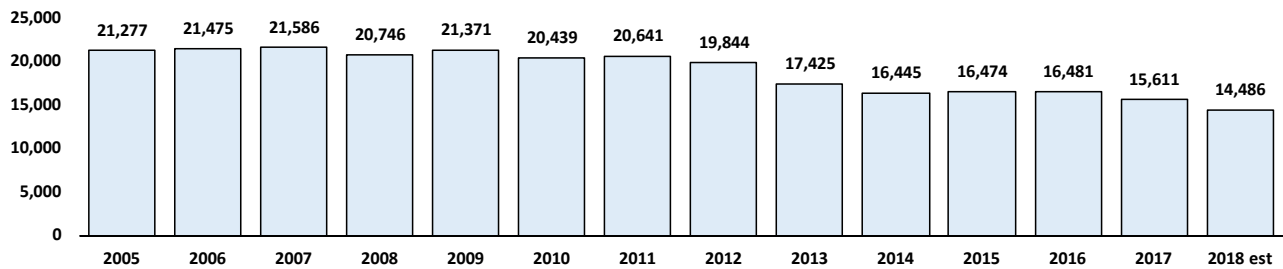
While Whites accounted for almost 80% of state overdose deaths, OPM analysis reveals that opioid-related death rates have increased almost identically among every major racial and ethnic group in CT. Given the high concentration of drug abusers in prison, it would make good public policy sense to develop 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 fourteen-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.

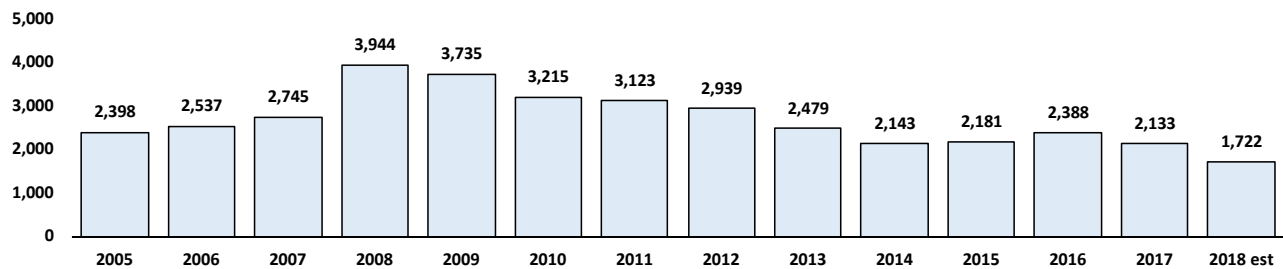
All prison admits



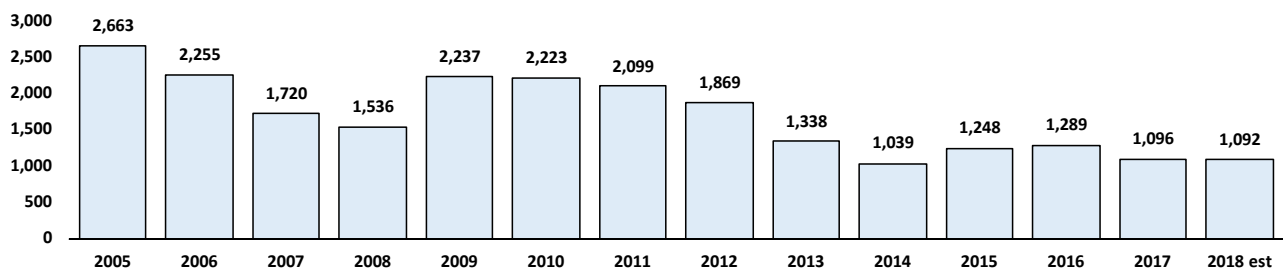
Total releases and discharges, sentenced



TS (Transitional Supervision) releases

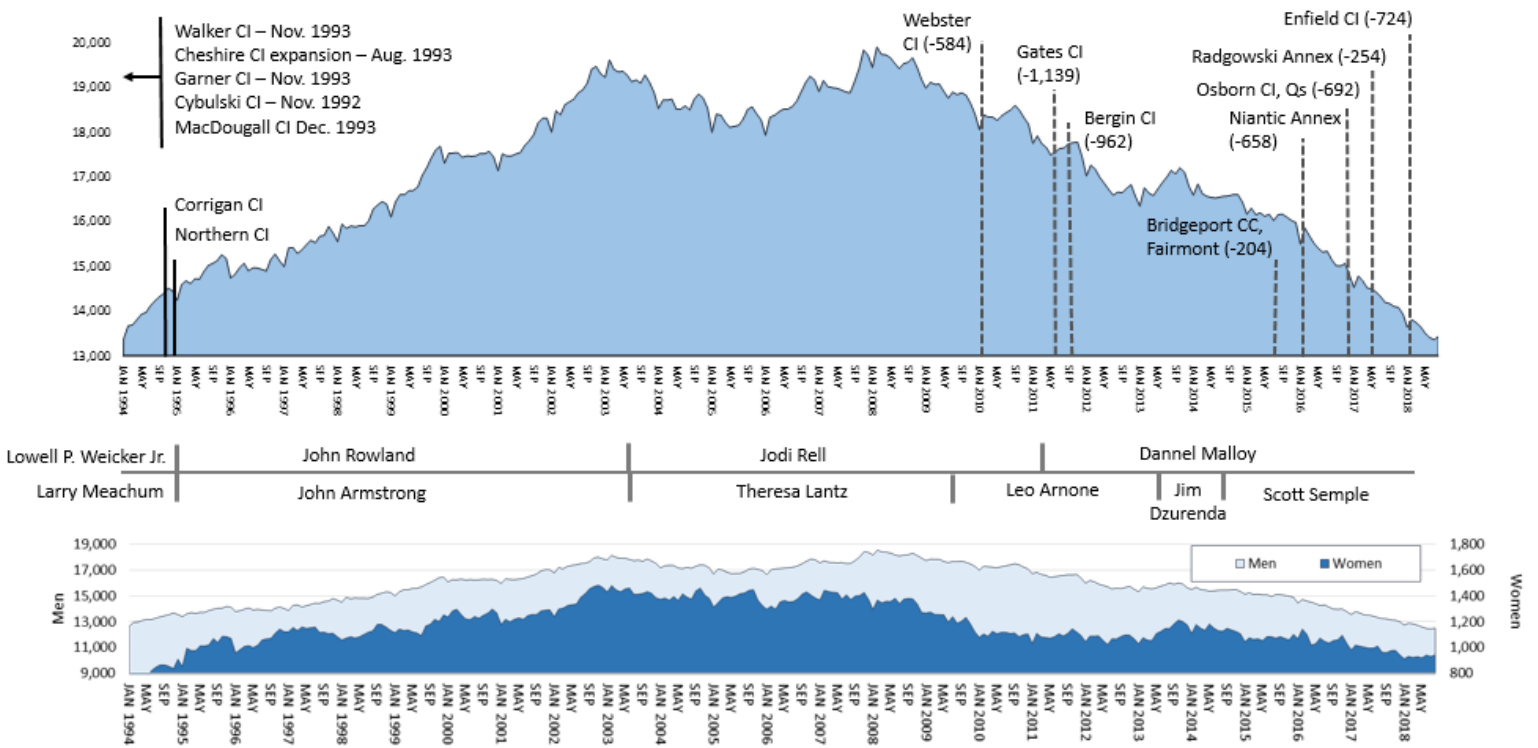


Parole releases



2018 Estimates calculated by following formula:
$$\text{estimate} = \frac{(\text{Current YTD}) \times (\text{Prior Year Total})}{(\text{Prior Year YTD})}$$

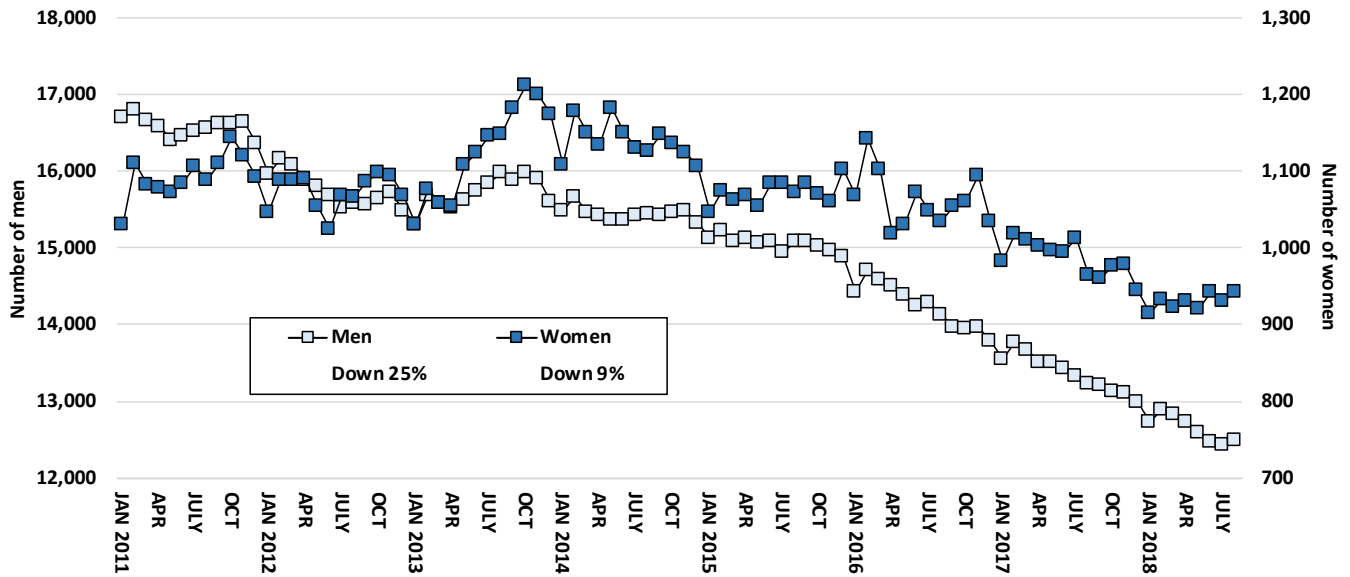
The CT Prison population, January 1994 through August 2018



Facility space shrinks as population declines

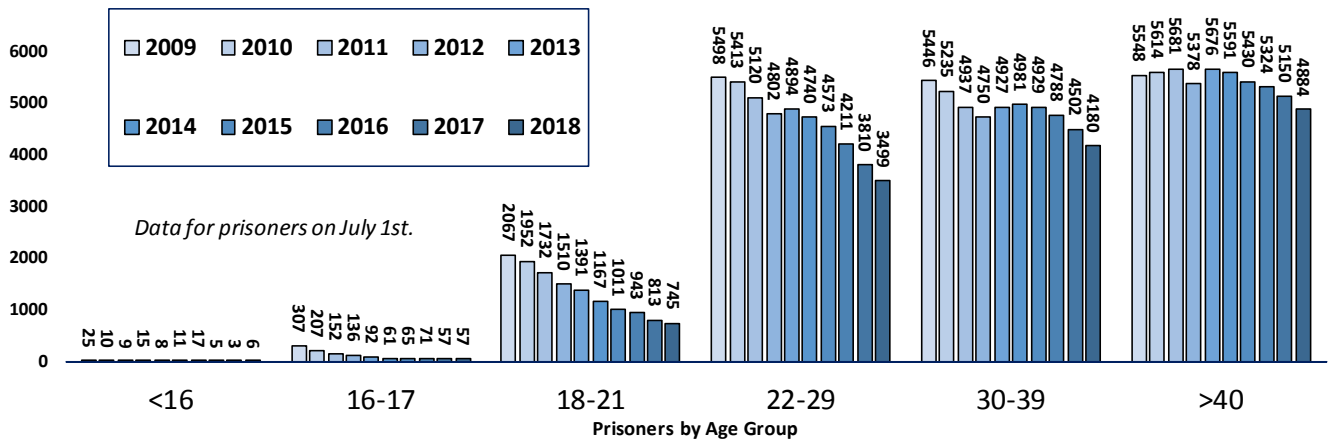
Facility	Date Closed	Beds Offline
Webster C.I.	1/15/2010	584
Gates C.I.	6/1/2011	1,139
Bergin C.I.	8/12/2011	962
Bridgeport CC - Fairmont Building	7/31/2015	204
Niantic Annex	1/8/2016	658
Osborn C.I. - Q Unit	12/9/2016	692
Radgowski Annex	4/5/2017	254
Unit at Manson Youth	12/7/2017	72
Enfield C.I.	1/23/2018	724
CT Juvenile Training School	4/12/2018	155
Total		5,444

Connecticut Correctional Facility Population by Gender



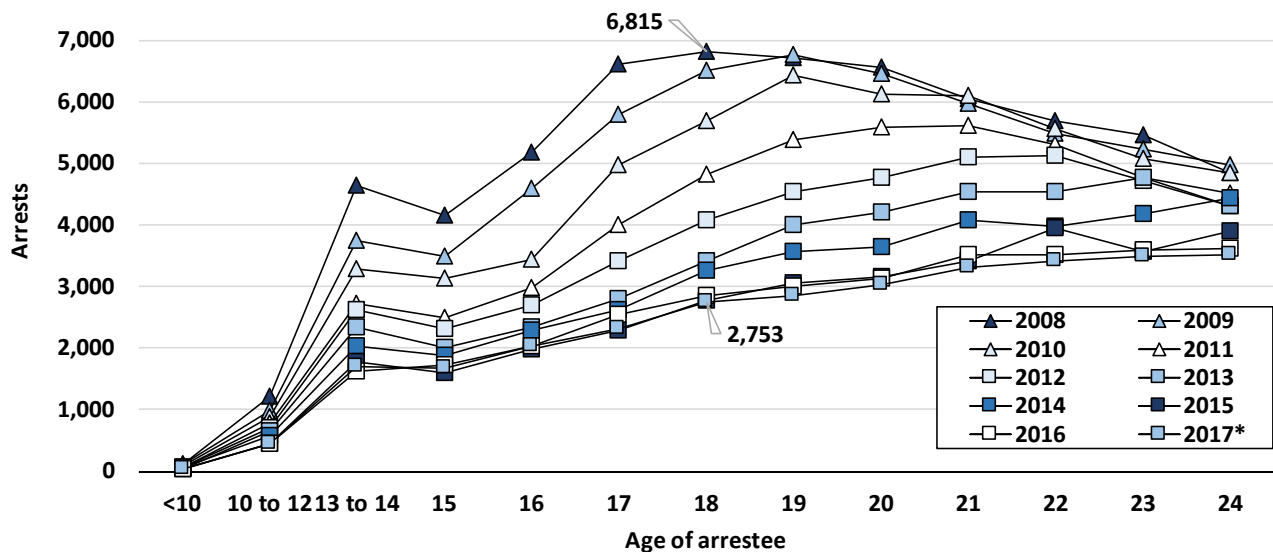
While the male population at the DOC has fallen consistently since 2011, the women’s population has followed a different overall pattern. As recently as July 1, 2017 the women’s population was essentially the same as it was on January 1, 2011. Changes made to re-entry procedures at the DOC in 2017 helped lower the women’s population at York through the end of the year.

Incarceration and Age, 2009-2018

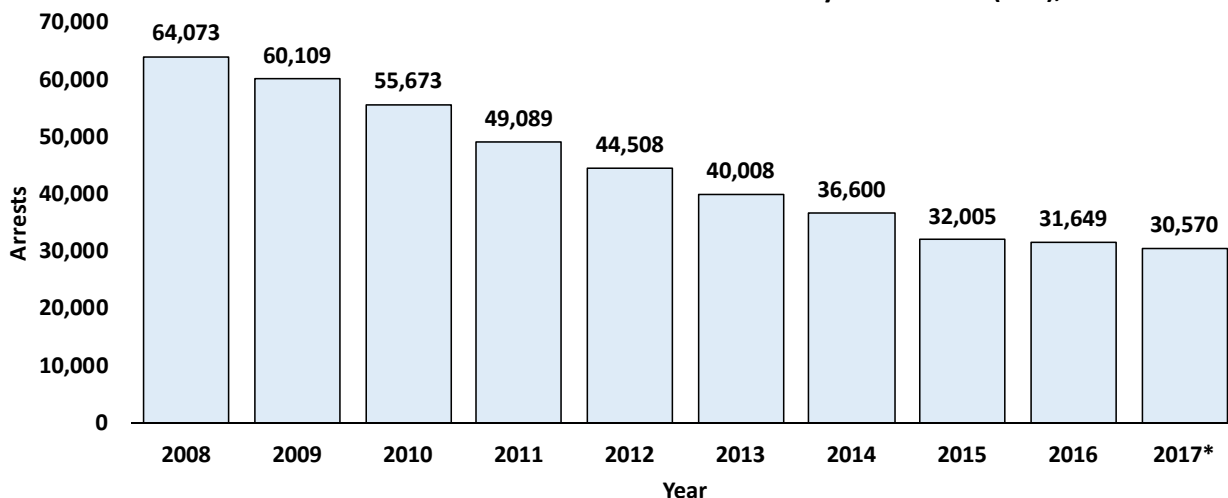


Youth Arrests, 2008-2017*

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 2017, the number of young persons, under age 25, arrested declined by 52%. The number of 17-year olds arrested in the state declined by 65% between 2008 and 2017.



Total youth arrests (<25), 2008-2017

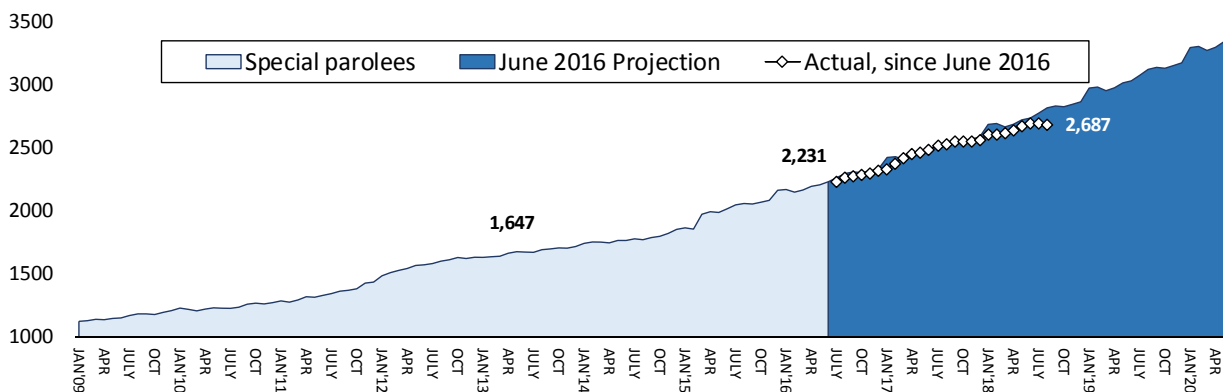


*2017 arrest data is preliminary

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 September 2018, the special parole population represents 48% of the DOC’s community population, which means it is nearly larger than all forms of discretionary release combined. In 2011 special parole made up less than one quarter of the DOC’s community supervision obligation. The total special parole population on September 1 was 2,687. This number includes 1,935 special parolees who are currently under supervision, 434 special parolees who have been remanded to custody and another 337 special parolees in halfway houses. Halfway house bed space is a limited commodity. The DOC contracts for approximately 1,000 beds. Special parolees have, over time, come to demand more of this space, now using over one third of halfway house beds.



Legislative change in the 2017 session made imposing a sentence including special parole supervision more burdensome on prosecutors. This change should help to bend the trend line seen in the chart above down, but the 2,000 plus offenders currently serving a sentence with special parole supervision to follow will undoubtedly add to the totals before the effects of legislation will come to bear.