

Criminal Justice

Policy & Planning Division

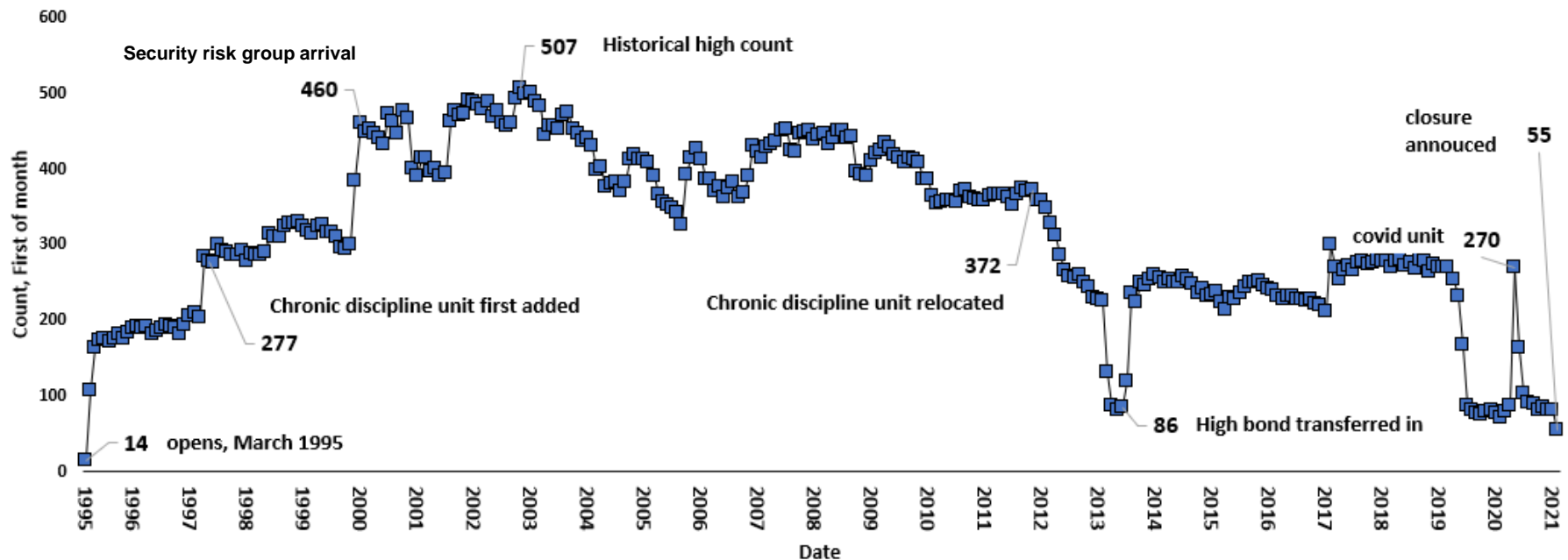


Review of:
February 2021 Monthly Indicators - Chart 2A
2021 Prison Population Forecast
2021 Recidivism Study

*Presented to the
Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission*

February 25, 2021

Monthly Indicators Report, Chart 2a: Announced Closure of Northern



- On February 8, Governor Lamont announced plans to close Northern Correctional Institution, the state's only level five, maximum security facility.
- After Northern opened in 1995, its population contracted and expanded based on transfers of people into the facility or to high-security units in other facilities.
- In 2003, the facility reached its historical high count (507 people), after which the population gradually shrank 89%, to 55 people, by 2021.
- The announced closure of Northern reflects an evolution of DOC policy and practice over the years, leading to a population reduction in the facility as people requiring heightened security were safely housed in units in other facilities.

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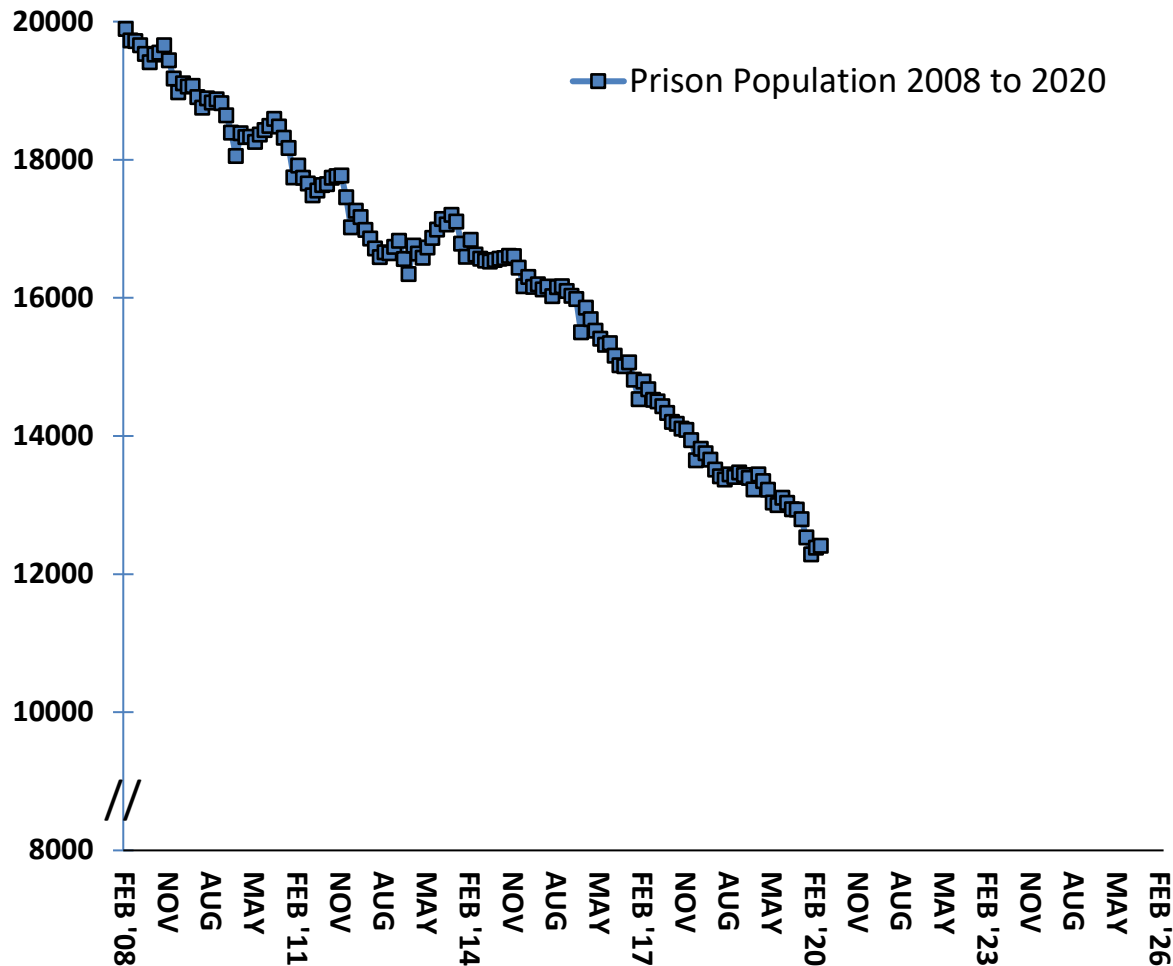
2021 Prison Population Forecast

Prison Population Forecast - Methodology

OPM Forecasting method:

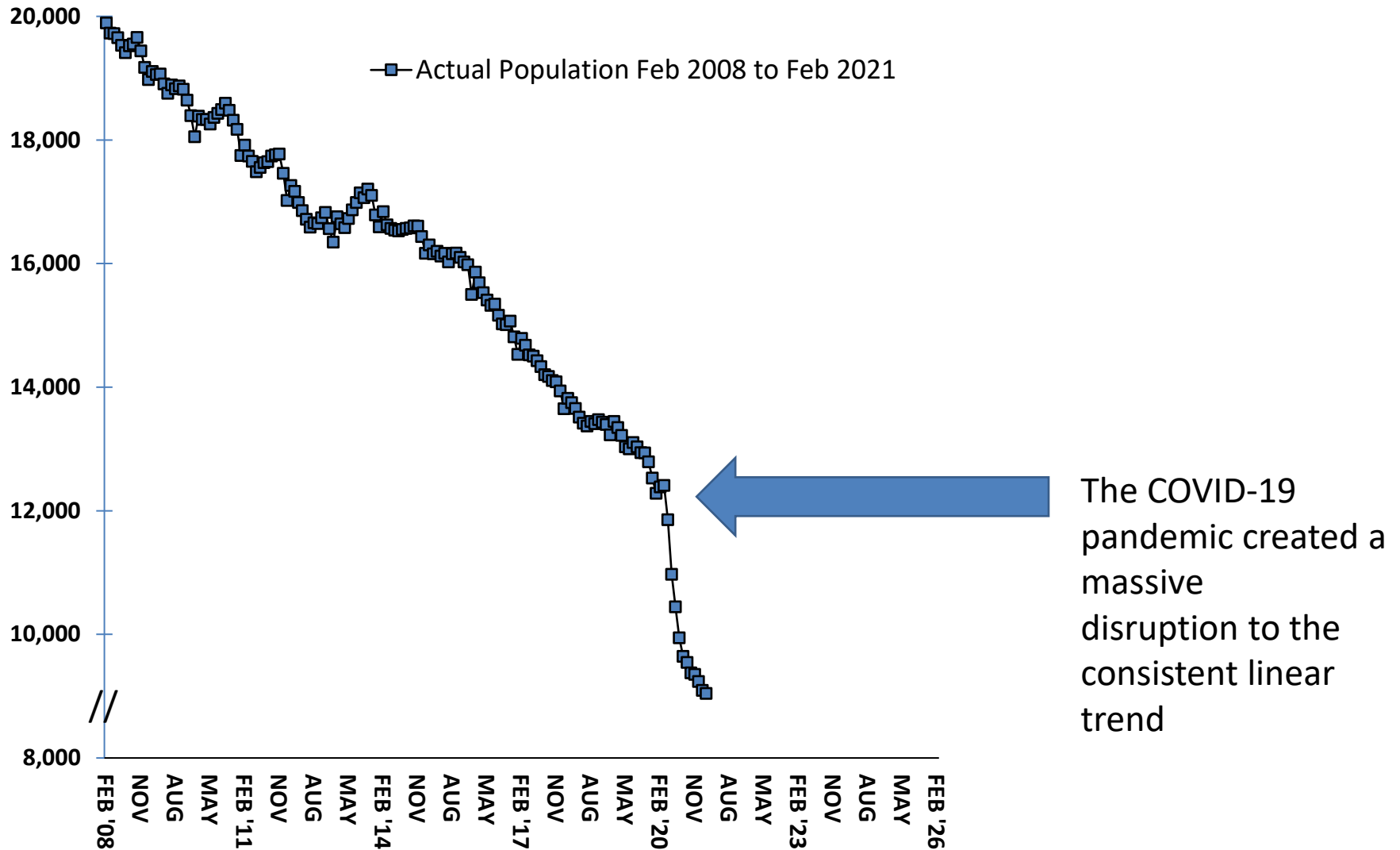
- OPM began forecasting the DOC facility population in 2007, making 2021 the fifteenth edition of the forecast report.
- Uses an input-output model of operational flows.
- Is reliant on time-trend data.
- Utilizes qualitative assessments to adjust as needed for potential impacts of proposed legislative and policy changes.
- Historical performance data underpins the analysis, making prediction of major events, like the COVID-19 pandemic's effects, impossible.
- Under normal circumstances, the forecast report has managed to predict within 5% of target the prison population 12 months out. The 2020 forecast is an exception.

Prison Population Forecast, Historical trend

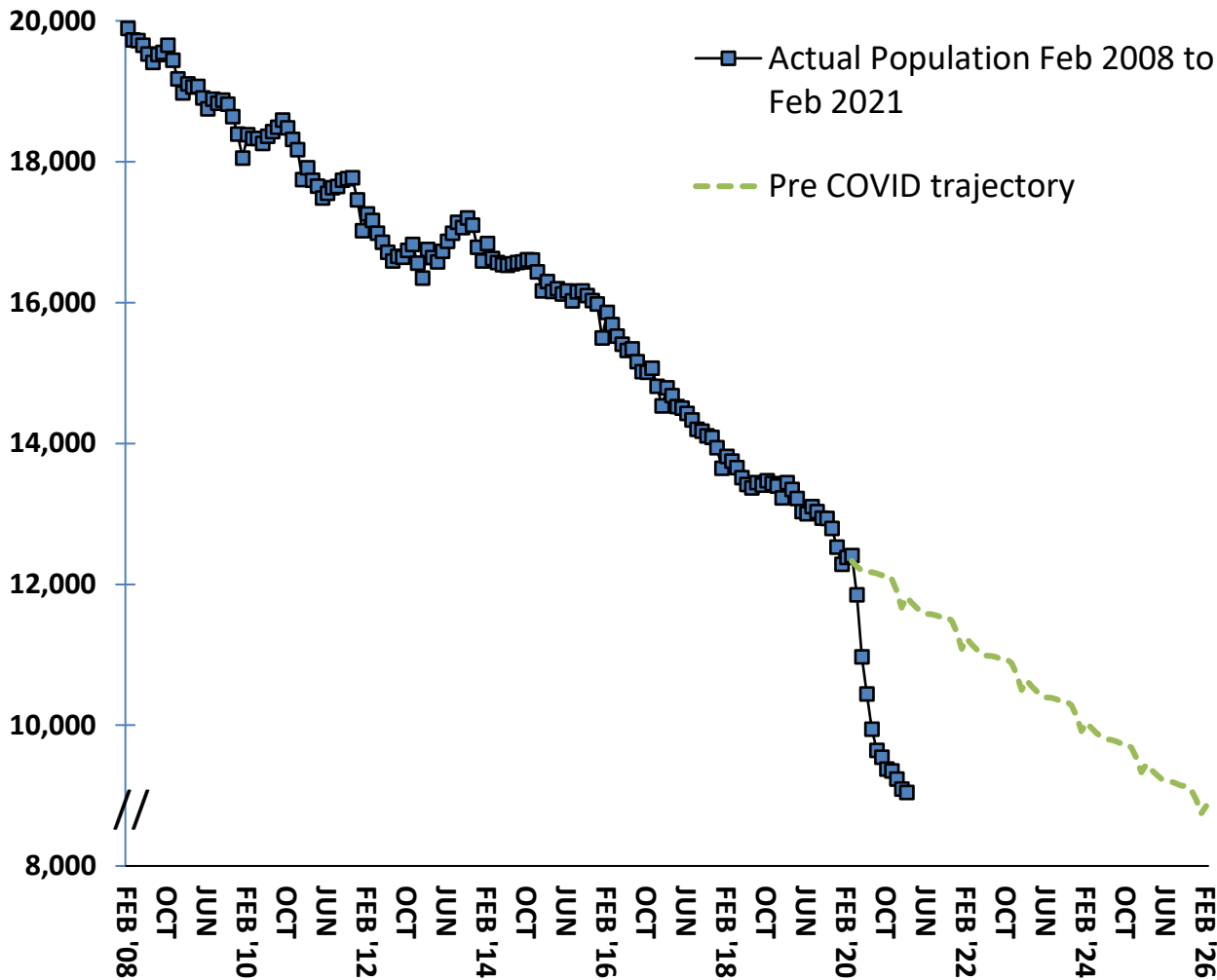


Between February 2008 and March 2020, Connecticut's correction population experienced a long, steady and remarkably linear decline, contracting an average of 3.8% annually

Disruption caused by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

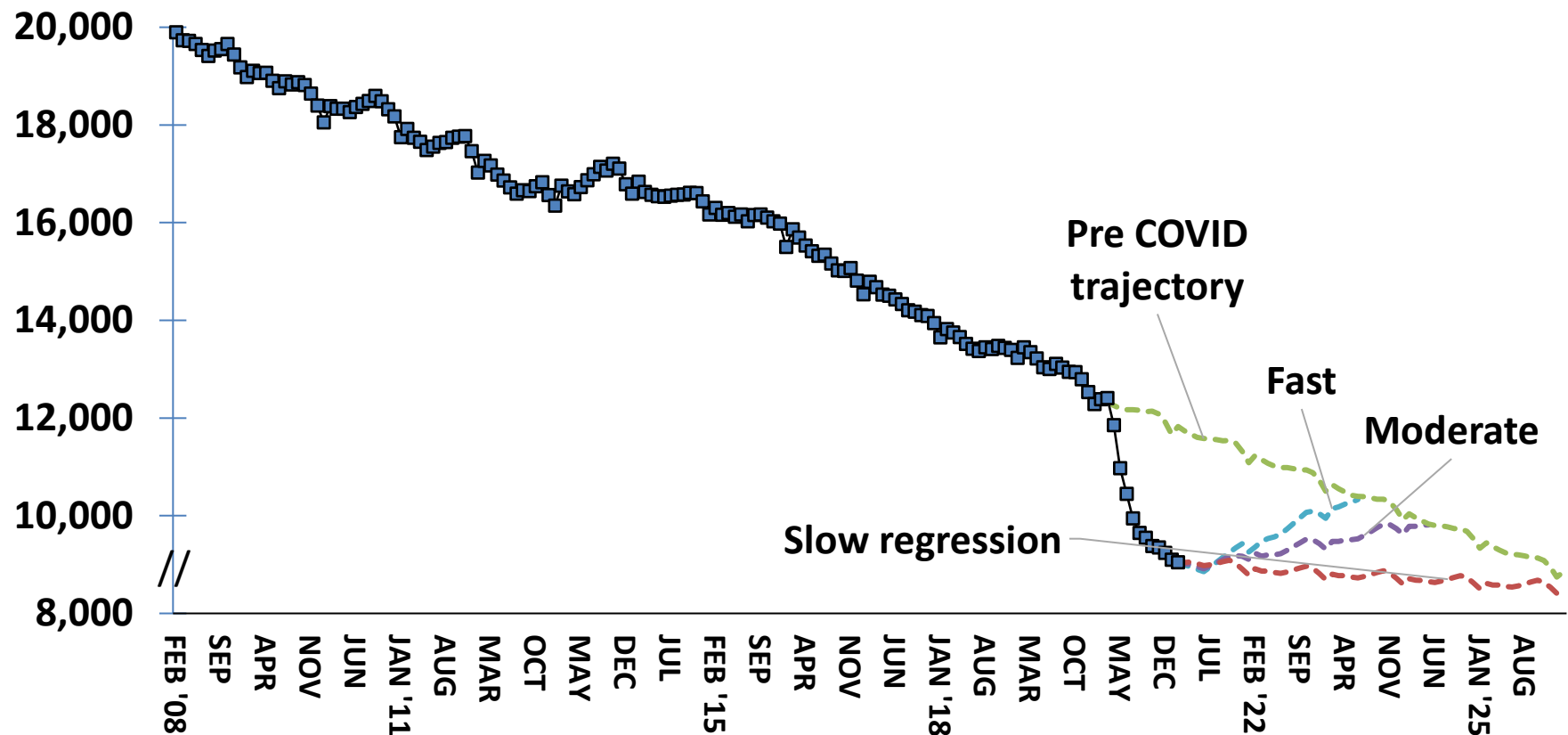


Baseline trajectory based on system fundamentals



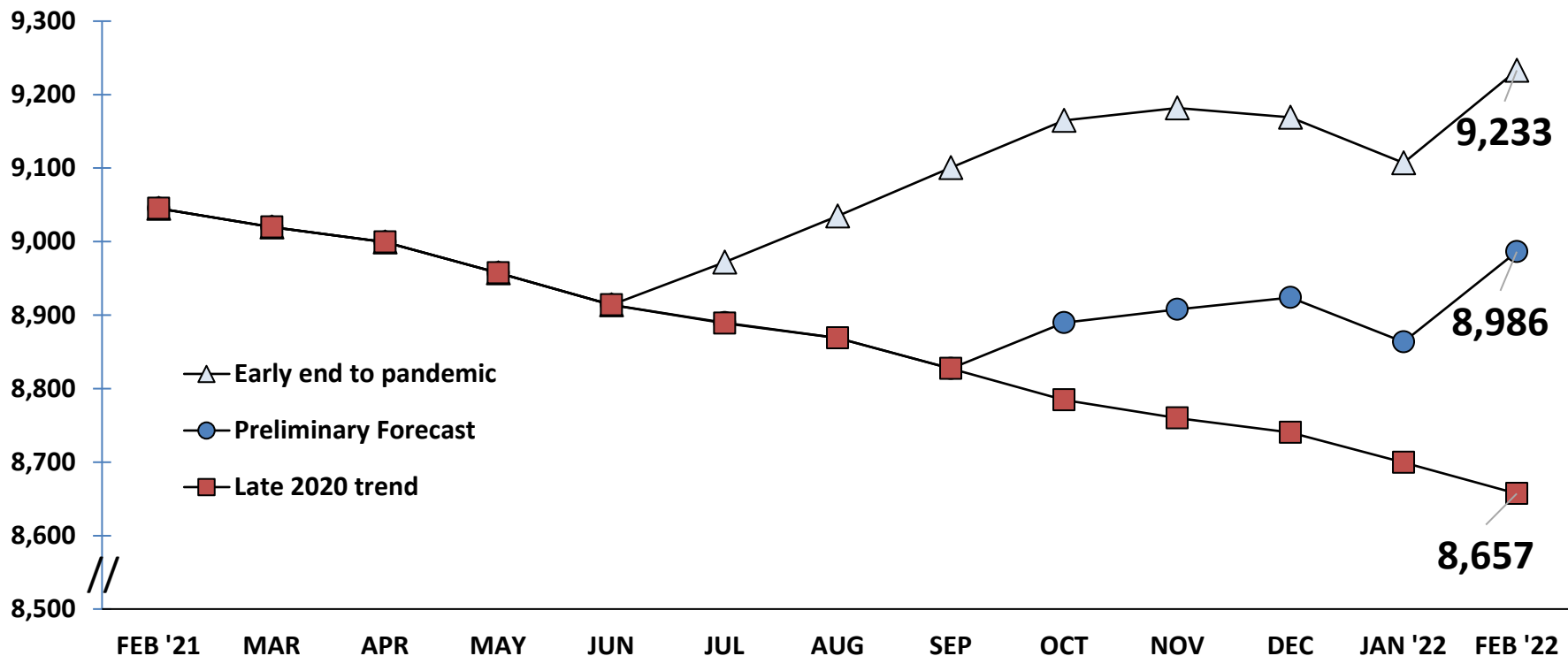
- OPM quantified a baseline scenario to depict the long-range trend underlying the trajectory of the correction population before the deviation caused by the pandemic.
- The dotted line shows where a baseline scenario would project to in 6 years' time.

Return to prevailing trend, long range scenarios



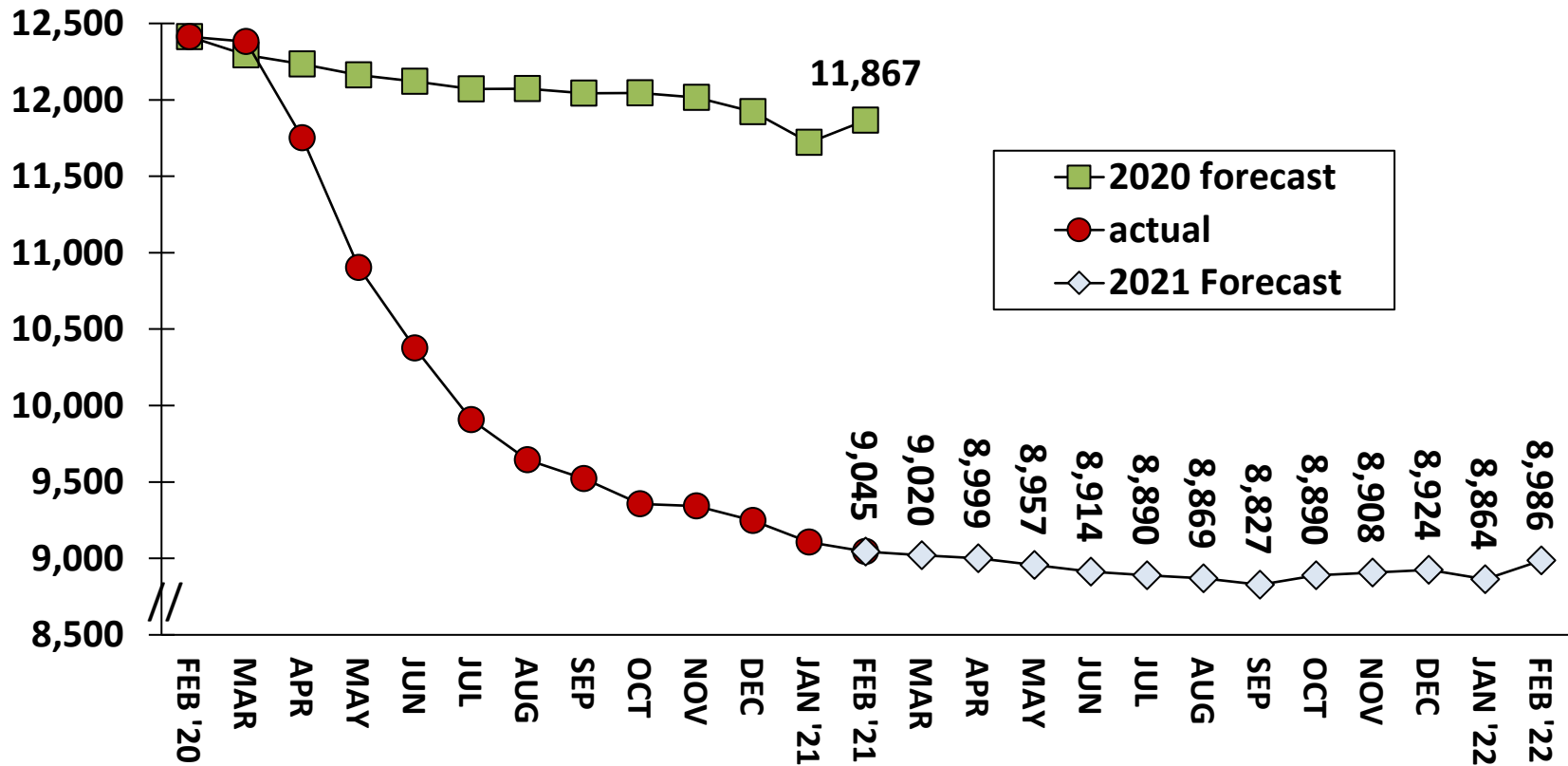
As the deviation was externally driven and not structural, the system will, as it has in the past, return to the prevailing historical trend, which is driven by consistent, steady and conservative reductions in crime, arrests, and admissions to prison.

2021 prison population, discussion of potential timing



- Uncertain time frame for the system to return to the overall trend.
- In late 2020, the system began showing signs of stabilization which is expected to carry forward into 2021 but will likely change again.
- OPM CJPPD anticipates gradual month-over-month increases to the population.

The 2020 prison population projection, the actual population and the 2021 forecast.



- OPM CJPPD is confident the population will not experience a drastic upswing in the coming months, rather a gradual regression to the overall trend.
- System processes, which tend to favor equilibrium states, have firm upper boundaries that resist rapid growth.

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2021 Recidivism Study Summary of key findings

In 2020, OPM compared returns-to-prison (RTP) over a 12-month period for the 2017 release cohort to the 2015 cohort.

For 2021, OPM revisited the 2020 analysis, this time comparing both cohorts over a 36-month period.

Key methodology decisions for 2021:

- *Recidivism* defined as:
First return to a DOC facility following release or discharge into the community
 - Consistent with 2020 analysis
- Limited study population to the sentenced population released or discharged into community in either 2015 or 2017
 - Consistent with 2020 analysis
- Excluded those with a DOC coded legal status of X at time of release
 - New for 2021 analysis

2021 analysis: Comparison of cohort characteristics

2021 Study Population

	Release Year		Change
	2015	2017	%
DOC Population on July 1st	16,025	14,333	-10.6%
Release/Discharged Study pop.			
Sentenced	10,361	9,293	-10.3%
Male	9,103	8,055	-11.5%
Female	1,258	1,238	-1.6%
Under the age of 25	2,098	1,647	-21.5%

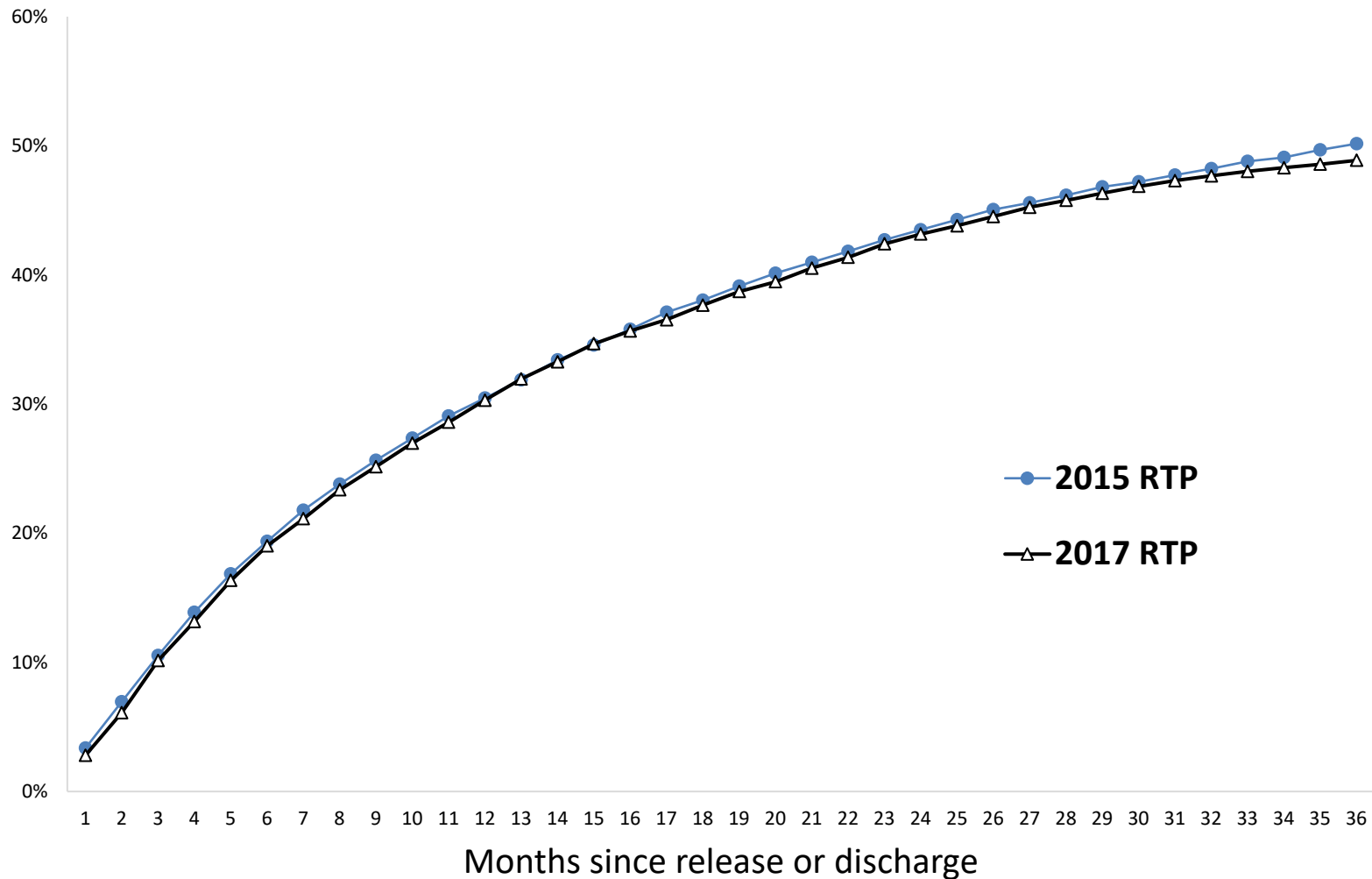
2015 release cohort - 10,361 offenders

	Total		Female		Male	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
15 to 25	2,098	20.2%	203	16.1%	1,895	20.8%
26 to 31	2,284	22.0%	293	23.3%	1,991	21.9%
32 to 37	1,921	18.5%	262	20.8%	1,659	18.2%
38 to 47	2,105	20.3%	264	21.0%	1,841	20.2%
48 and Older	1,953	18.8%	236	18.8%	1,717	18.9%
Total	10,361		1,258		9,103	

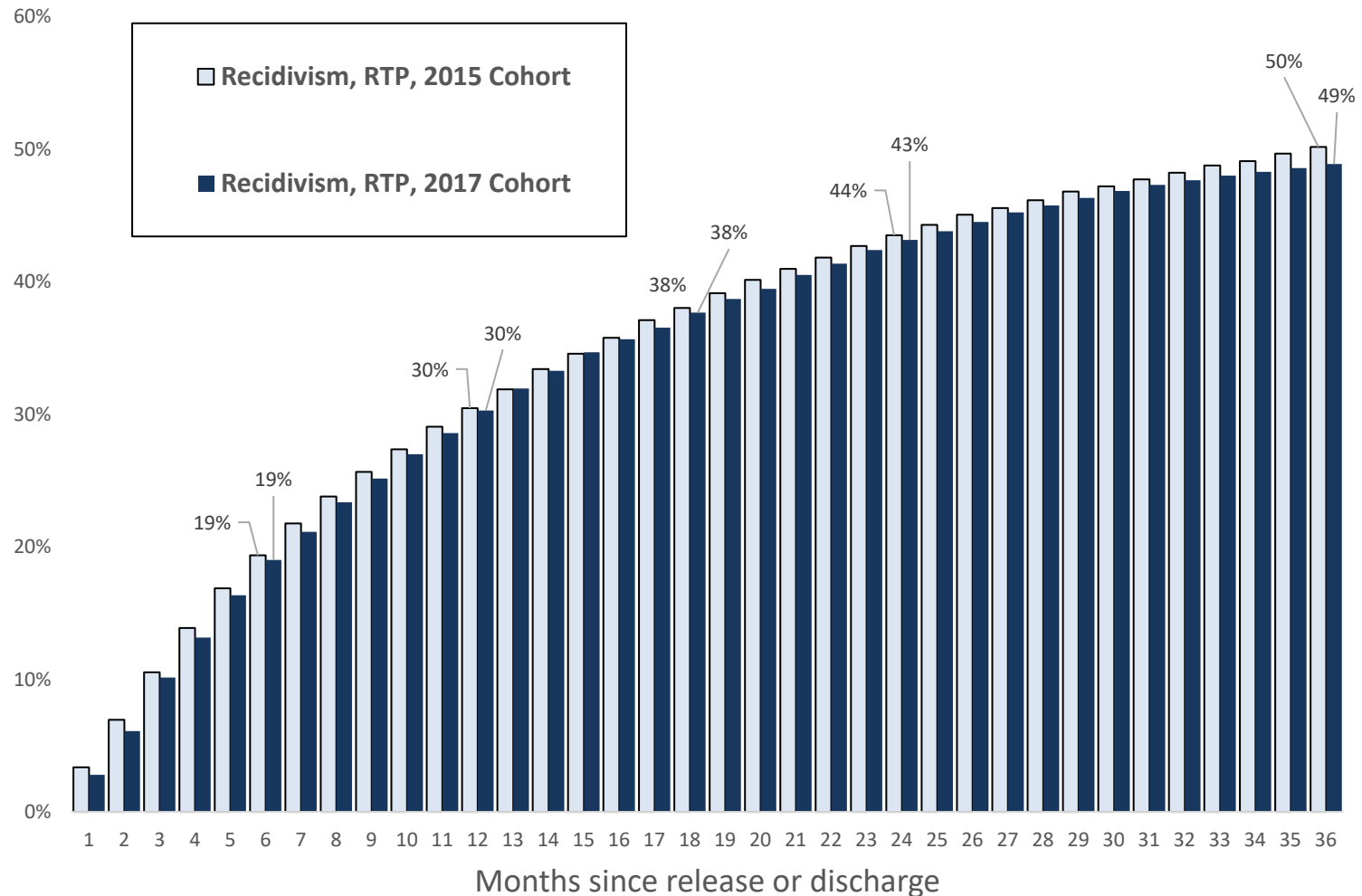
2017 release cohort - 9,293 offenders

	Total		Female		Male	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
15 to 25	1,647	17.7%	155	12.5%	1,492	18.5%
26 to 31	2,109	22.7%	308	24.9%	1,801	22.4%
32 to 37	1,795	19.3%	289	23.3%	1,506	18.7%
38 to 47	1,970	21.2%	265	21.4%	1,705	21.2%
48 and Older	1,772	19.1%	221	17.9%	1,551	19.3%
Total	9,293		1,238		8,055	

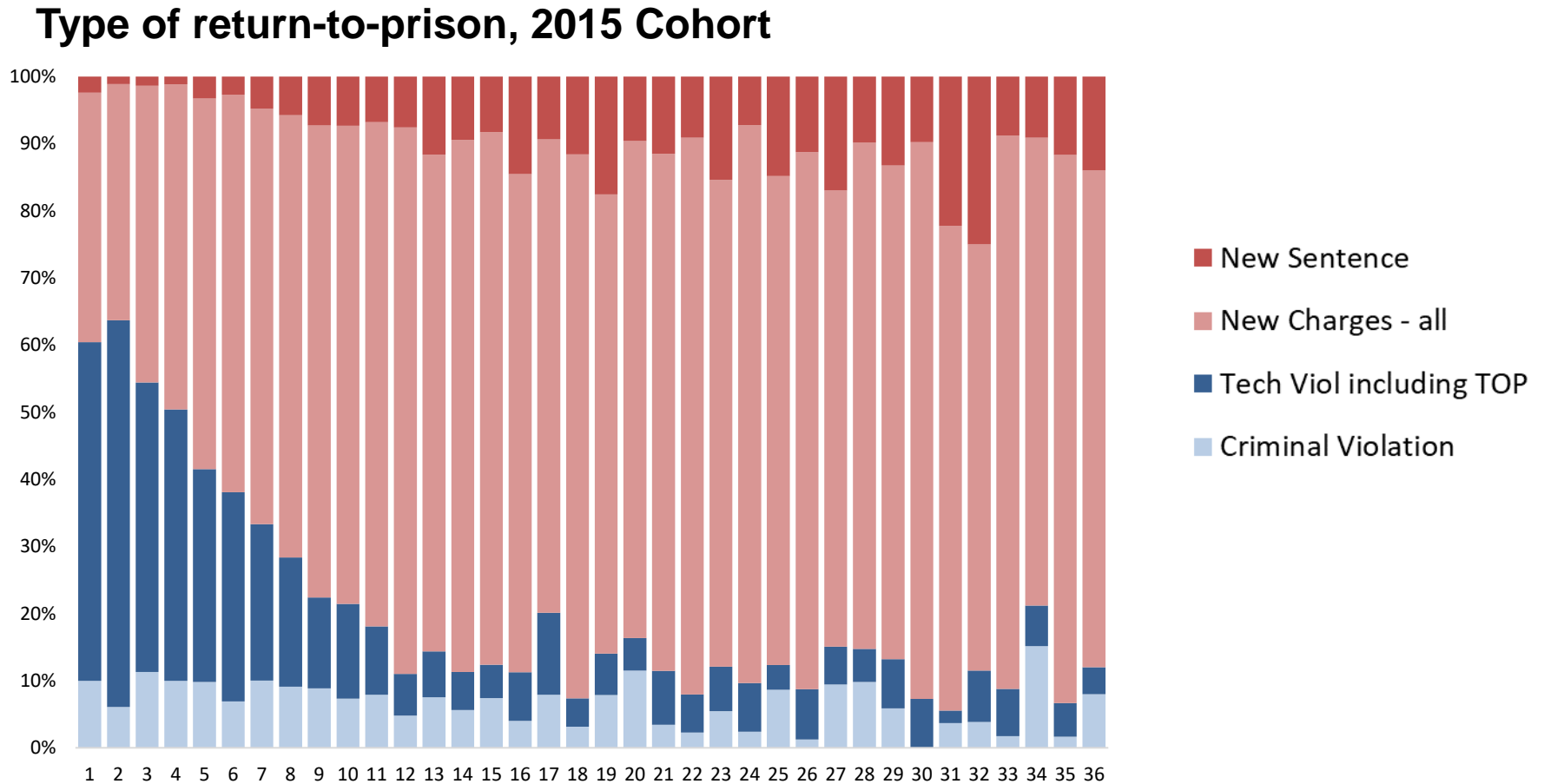
As in 2020 study, cumulative return-to-prison rates remained largely consistent between both cohorts.



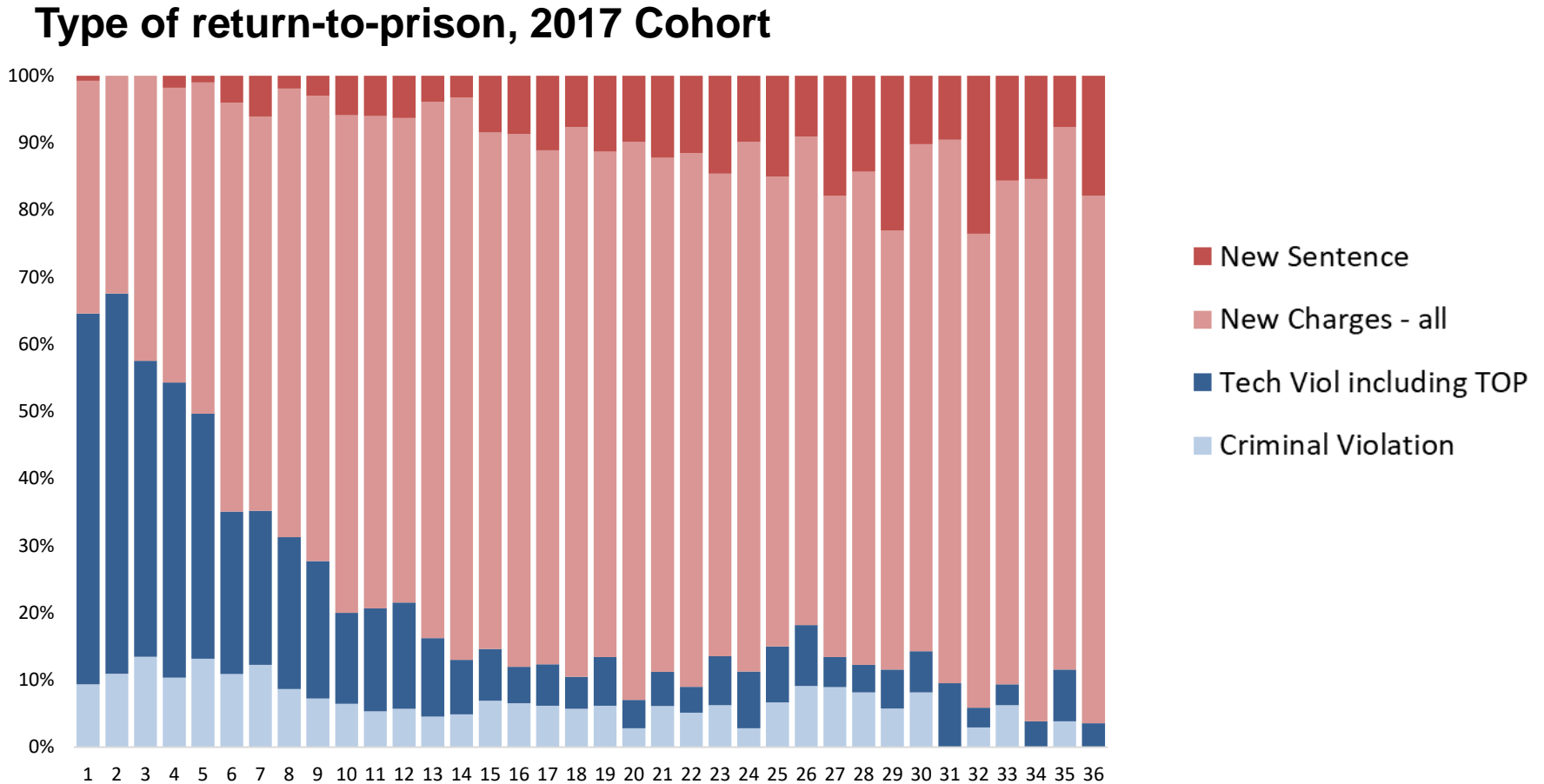
Recidivism rates between both cohorts are so low that, though smaller, 2017 cohort rates vary by no more than 1% at month 36.



We also observed incredibly similar proportions of return types across 36 months.

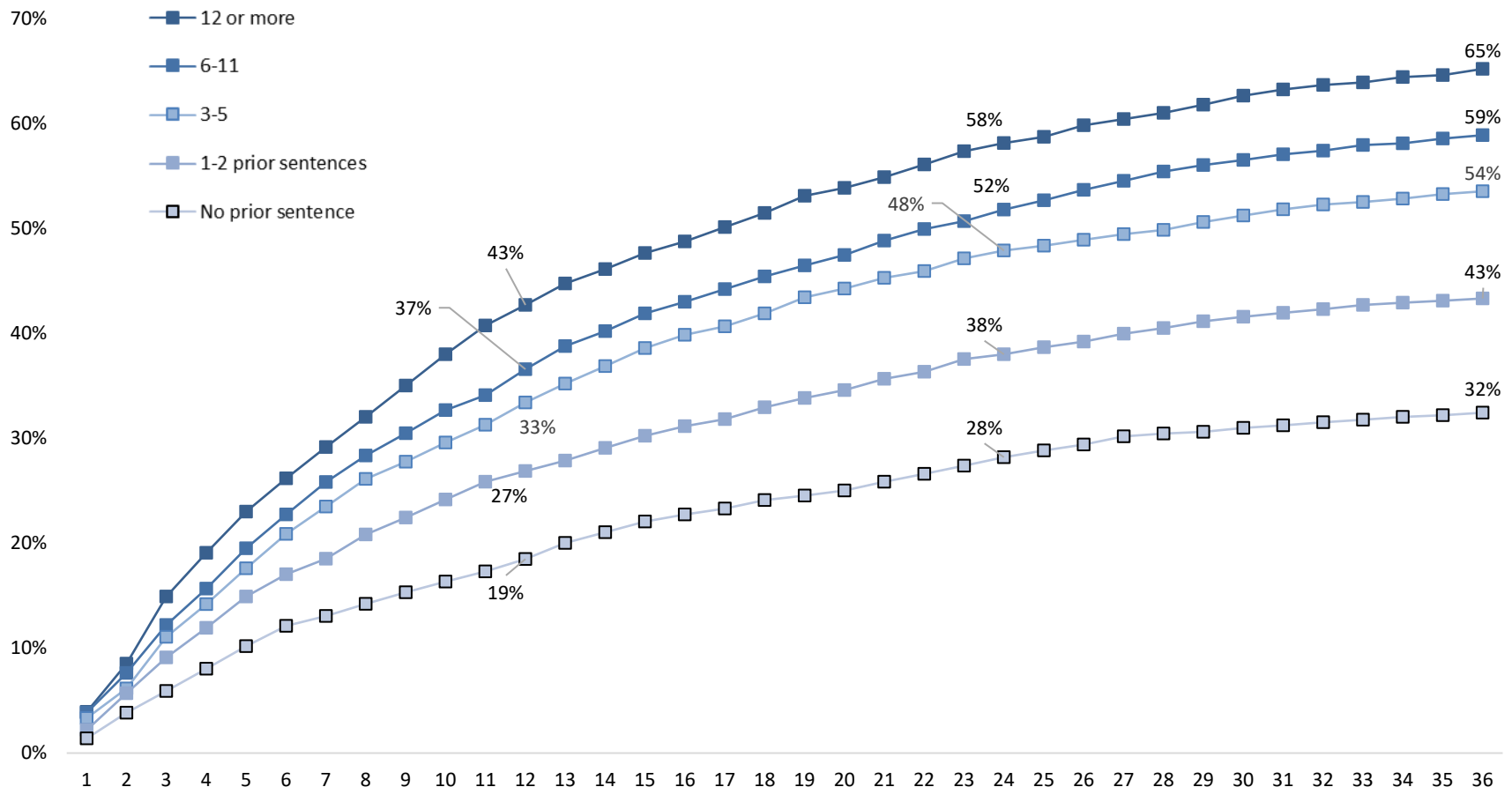


We also observed incredibly similar proportions of return types across 36 months.



Larger number of prior sentences correlates with a higher likelihood of recidivism, consistent with prior research on risk.

Returns-to-prison by sentence history, 2017 cohort



2021 analysis: Key Takeaways

1. Both cohorts in our 2021 study had extremely similar rates of returning to prison over 36-months following release.
2. Despite 2017's smaller cohort size, the proportion of return types remained remarkably consistent with pattern of returns observed with the 2015 cohort.
3. Prior sentence history continues to be predictive of increased likelihood in returning to prison.
4. By month 36, the 2017 return rate very slightly diverged from 2015. However, the 36-month observation period for the 2017 cohort overlapped with the COVID pandemic, which could affect rates. OPM intends to examine potential COVID-19 effects on observed returns in the future.

Recidivism studies: Future opportunities

More focused recidivism and victimization questions to explore

An aggregate recidivism analysis provides Connecticut with a baseline that is followed each year and can capture large or small changes.

A factor in the minor recidivism difference is the large N size of the population.

More focused analyses of specific cohorts, perhaps based on risk or supervision type, with smaller N sizes could produce more timely, dynamic analysis.

Additionally, deeper dives into the recidivism data set could surface more compelling findings.

This may be a topic for the CJPAC Research Workgroup to explore and share findings with the full commission.

Recidivism studies: Future opportunities

More focused recidivism and victimization questions to explore

Strategies to reduce re-victimization

- The impact on victims of the provision of supports and resources to mitigate the harm of the initial victimization and restore the person's wellness (adequate mental health support, access to safe housing, living wage and employment, etc.)

The effect of statewide and system COVID-19 impacts on recidivism rates.

Analysis of programmatic impacts on recidivism.

Analysis of supervision outcomes (probation, parole, special parole).

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Thank you.

For more information, please visit

<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-About/Homepage/CJPPD>