A DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTS RELEASED ON GOOD CONDUCT DISCHARGES DURING 1973

Massachusetts Department of Correction

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During 1973 the Massachusetts Department of Correction had 1042 sentenced prisoners released on parole and 111 on discharge. Parole releases have been described in detail in three companion reports issued by the Parole Board.[1] The present report (a) presents the relative numbers of dischargees and parolees by year and by committing and releasing institution, then (b) describes dischargees and compares them to parolees on several variables.

Table I presents the numbers of dischargees and parolees during each of the last ten years, as well as the proportion of releasees who were released on discharge.

TABLE I

NUMBERS OF PAROLEES AND DISCHARGEES BY YEAR: 1964-1973

YEAR	DISCHARGEES	PAROLEES	DISCHARGEES AS % OF TOTAL RELEASEES
1963	426	787	35%
1964	452	862	34%
1965	452	815	35%
1966	391	869	31%
1967	296	775	27%
1968	341	759	31%
1969	291	735	28%
1970	242	759	24%
1971	238	949	20%
1972	155	1366	10%
1973	111	1042	10%

1 "Report on State Commitments Released to Parole During 1973." "Report on Time-Related Variables on 1973 Releases to Parole Supervision." "Background Characteristics of State Case Openings to Parole Supervision During 1973." The three reports focus on, respectively, release processes and trends, time periods and trends therein, and background characteristics.

From 1964-68 about one-third of releasees were discharged. Subsequent years (1969-72) saw a decline in the proportion of releasees who were discharged, from one-third to one-tenth. This decline now seems to have bottomed out; during both 1972 and 1973 dischargees constituted 10% of the total number of releasees.

Further, not only were few residents released on discharge, but also most dischargees were parole violators previously paroled then returned to serve out the balance of their sentence until discharge. Of the 111 dischargees during 1973, 63 had been previously paroled on the present sentence, and only 48 were discharged without ever having been paroled. (One result of most dischargees being parole violators is that the typical (median) length of incarceration for dischargees was six months). The central conclusion to be drawn is that at present virtually all releasees are paroled. During 1973 only 4% of the releasees (48 of 1153) were discharged without having been paroled at some point in their present sentence.

Tables II and III present the numbers of dischargees and parolees by committing and releasing institutions.

TABLE II

NUMBERS OF PAROLEES AND DISCHARGEES, BY INSTITUTION COMMITTED TO

INSTITUTION COMMITTED TO	DISCHARGEES	PAROLEES	DISCHARGEES AS % OF TOTAL RELEASEES
Walpole	44	446	9%
Concord	41	521	7%
Framingham	26	75	26%
TOTAL	111	1042	10%

TABLE III

NUMBERS OF PAROLEES AND DISCHARGEES, BY INSTITUTION RELEASED FROM

INSTITUTION COMMITTED TO	DISCHARGEES	PAROLEES	DISCHARGEES AS % OF TOTAL RELEASEES
Walpole	29	137	18%
Norfolk	20	209	9%
Forestry	1	86	1%
Concord	31	337	8%
Pre-Release	2	122	2%
Framingham	28	98	22%
TOTAL	111	989	10%

These tables reveal two patterns worth noting. First, a larger proportion of females are released on discharges than was the case for males. Second, among institutions holding males, commitment institutions (i.e. Walpole and Concord) released proportionately more dischargees than was the case for other institutions. Thus the proportion of releases who were discharged was 18% for Walpole and 9% for Concord, but only 1% for Forestry and 2% for Pre-Release. This apparently reflects a pattern of parole violators who were close to their discharge date, being held until release at the commitment institution to which they were returned.

The Appendix to the report presents the characteristics of parolees and dischargees on a selected set of thirteen variables. In terms of these variables, the central differences between the groups is that dischargees are more likely to have:

- been committed from the lower courts (29% for dischargees vs 9% for parolees)
- served 6 months or less on the present incarceration (54% for dischargees vs 31% for parolees)
- been previously sentenced to correctional institutions as an adult (81% for dischargees vs 60% for parolees)

The greater likelihood of commitment from the lower courts is related to the larger number of women who are discharged, and the shorter length of incarceration is related to the fact that most dischargees are parole violators. Other statistically significant differences include that dischargees are more likely to have been committed on shorter Walpole sentences, to be older at release, and to be divorced or separated.

A P P E N D I X

A1. LENGTH OF INCARCERATION	DISCHARGEES N	DISCHARGEES %	PAROLEES N	PAROLEES %
0-3 months	16	(15)	135	(13)
4-6 months	43	(39)	190	(18)
7 months - 1 year	18	(17)	278	(27)
13 months - 2 years	11	(10)	232	(23)
25 months - 3 years	5	(5)	64	(6)
37 months - 4 years	6	(6)	65	(6)
Over 4 years	10	(8)	68	(7)
KNOWN TOTAL	109	(100)	1032	(100)
UNKNOWN	2		10	

A2. AREA RELEASED TO				
Greater Boston	66	(64)	556	(61)
Boston (City)	45	(43)	416	(46)
Northern Suburbs	11	(11)	58	(6)
Remaining Suburbs	10	(10)	82	(9)
Greater Springfield	10	(10)	56	(6)
Greater Worcester	5	(5)	43	(5)
New Bedford/Fall River Area	2	(2)	38	(4)
Lowell/Lawrence Area	7	(7)	36	(4)
Other Mass. Communities	8	(8)	55	(6)
Out of State	4	(4)	131	(14)
KNOWN TOTAL	102	(100)	915	(100)
UNKNOWN	9		127	

A3. AGE AT RELEASE				
Under 20	2	(2)	91	(9)
20-24	32	(30)	402	(39)
25-29	35	(32)	250	(24)
30-39	22	(20)	208	(20)
40-49	15	(14)	56	(5)
50 or More	2	(2)	35	(3)
KNOWN TOTAL	108	(100)	1042	(100)
UNKNOWN	3		0	
(Median Age)	27		25	

	DISCHARGEES		PAROLEES	
	N	%	N	%
A4. RACE				
White	68	(62)	692	(68)
Black	41	(38)	330	(32)
KNOWN TOTAL	109	(100)	1022	(100)
UNKNOWN	2		20	
A5. MILITARY STATUS				
No	86	(82)	761	(75)
Yes	19	(18)	250	(25)
KNOWN TOTAL	105	(1-0)	1011	(100)
UNKNOWN	6		31	
A6. MARITAL STATUS				
Single	57	(53)	594	(58)
Married	22	(21)	245	(24)
Separated	7	(7)	47	(5)
Divorced	19	(18)	112	(11)
Widowed	1	(1)	16	(2)
KNOWN TOTAL	106	(100)	1014	(100)
UNKNOWN	5		28	
A7. LAST GRADE COMPLETED				
0-5	11	(10)	56	(5)
6-8	37	(35)	302	(30)
9-11	42	(39)	459	(45)
High School Grad or More	17	(16)	203	(20)
KNOWN TOTAL	107	(100)	1020	(100)
UNKNOWN	4		22	
A8. PRESENT OFFENSE				
Person	49	(45)	478	(46)
Property	28	(26)	261	(26)
Sex	2	(2)	58	(6)
Narcotics	7	(6)	169	(17)
Other	23	(21)	48	(5)
KNOWN TOTAL	109	(100)	1014	(100)
UNKNOWN	2		28	

	DISCHARGEES N	DISCHARGEES %	PAROLEES N	PAROLEES %
A9. MINIMUM SENTENCE				
No Minimum	64	(58)	581	(58)
2-4 Years	27	(25)	178	(17)
5-9 Years	16	(15)	196	(18)
10 or More	2	(2)	69	(7)
KNOWN TOTAL	109	(100)	1024	(100)
UNKNOWN	2		18	
A10. FIRST OFFENDER?				
Yes	20	(19)	409	(40)
No	87	(81)	604	(60)
KNOWN TOTAL	107	(100)	1013	(100)
UNKNOWN	4		29	
A11. COURT COMMITTED FROM				
Superior	41	(71)	609	(90)
Lower	17	(29)	60	(9)
Courts Outside Mass.	0	(0)	2	(1)
KNOWN TOTAL	58	(100)	671	(100)
UNKNOWN	53		371	
A12. PRIOR JUVENILE INCARCERATIONS				
None	72	(67)	706	(70)
1-2	24	(23)	222	(21)
3 or More	11	(10)	85	(9)
KNOWN TOTAL	107	(100)	1013	(100)
UNKNOWN	4		19	
A13. PRIOR HOUSE OF CORRECTION INCARCERATION				
None	45	(43)	565	(56)
1-2	36	(34)	312	(31)
3 or More	24	(23)	136	(13)
KNOWN TOTAL	105	(100)	1013	(100)
UNKNOWN	6		19	

	DISCHARGEES		PAROLEES	
	N	%	N	%
A14. PRIOR STATE OR FEDERAL INCARCERATIONS				
None	41	(38)	601	(59)
1	31	(29)	234	(23)
2	19	(18)	94	(9)
3 or More	16	(15)	84	(8)
KNOWN TOTAL	107	(100)	1013	(100)
UNKNOWN	4		29	