

# Realignment, Incarceration, and Crime Trends in California

Magnus Lofstrom  
Steven Raphael

---



**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

# Outline

- Realignment's early impact
- Incarceration trends
- Crime trends
- Conclusions and recommendations

# Realignment is a major public safety reform ...

- Prompted by federal court order to reduce overcrowding
- Shifted responsibilities and funding from state to counties
  - Parole violators no longer sent back to state prison
  - Lower-level felons now go to county jails
  - Counties now supervise lower-level felons released from prison

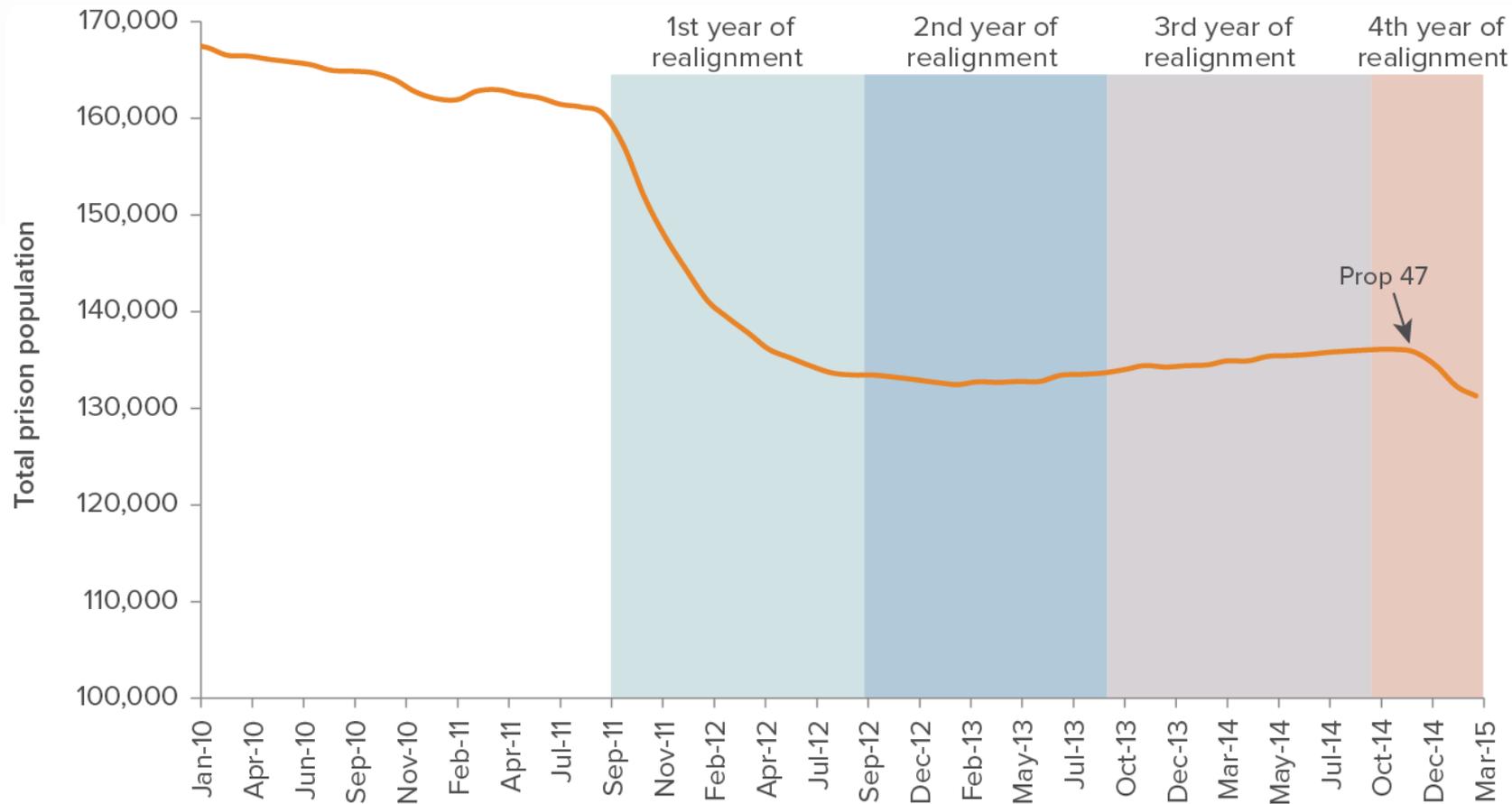
## ... that had substantial effects in its first year

- Prison population fell by about 27,000
- County jail population went up, but by substantially less
  - Increased by 9,000 inmates
- As a result, about 18,000 additional offenders were on the street
- Modest impact on crime—increased property crime, specifically auto thefts

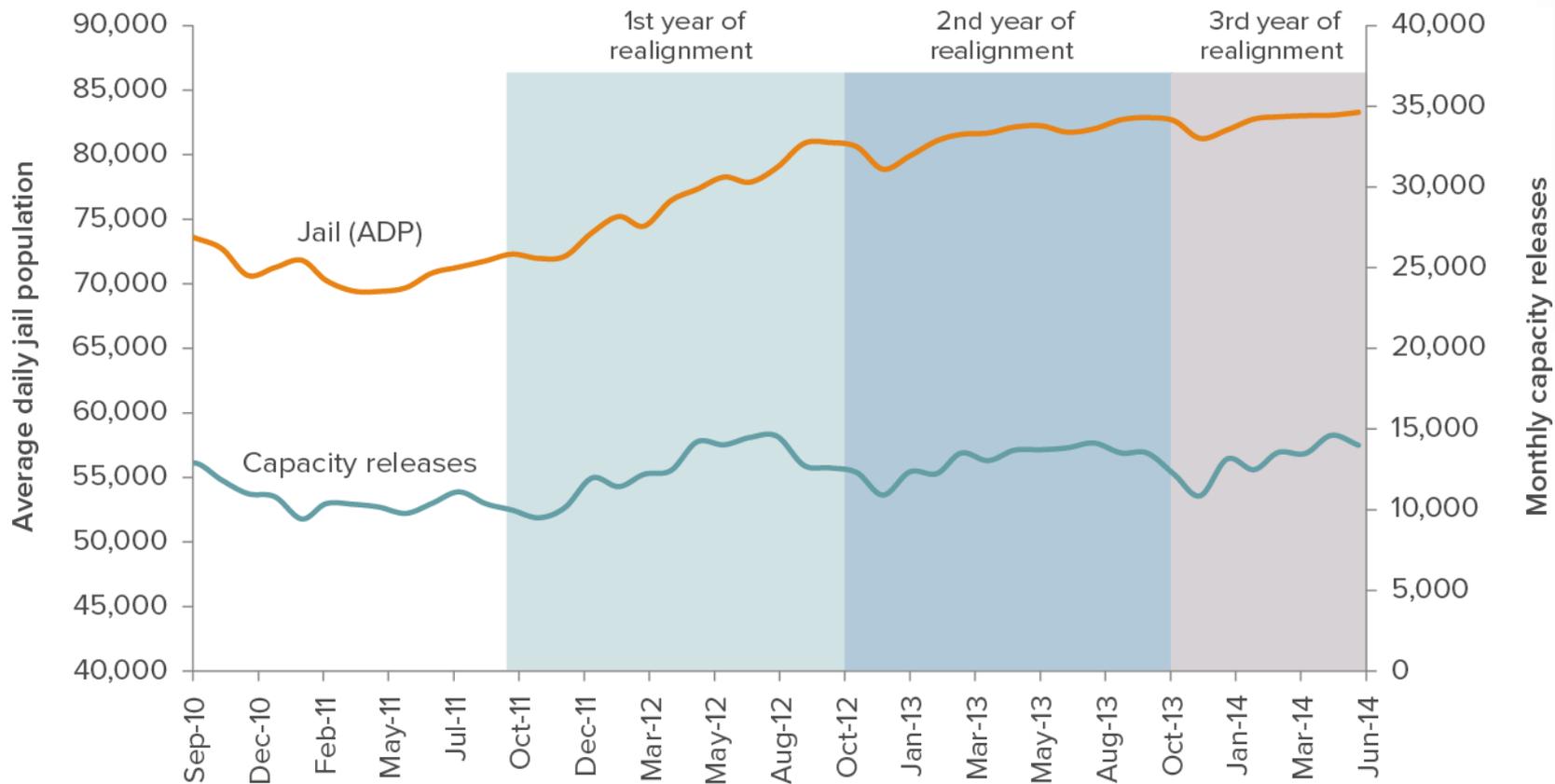
# Outline

- Realignment's early impact
- Incarceration trends
- Crime trends
- Conclusions and recommendations

# After a big first-year drop, the prison population stopped declining until Proposition 47 passed



# Jail populations have increased slowly since the first year of realignment



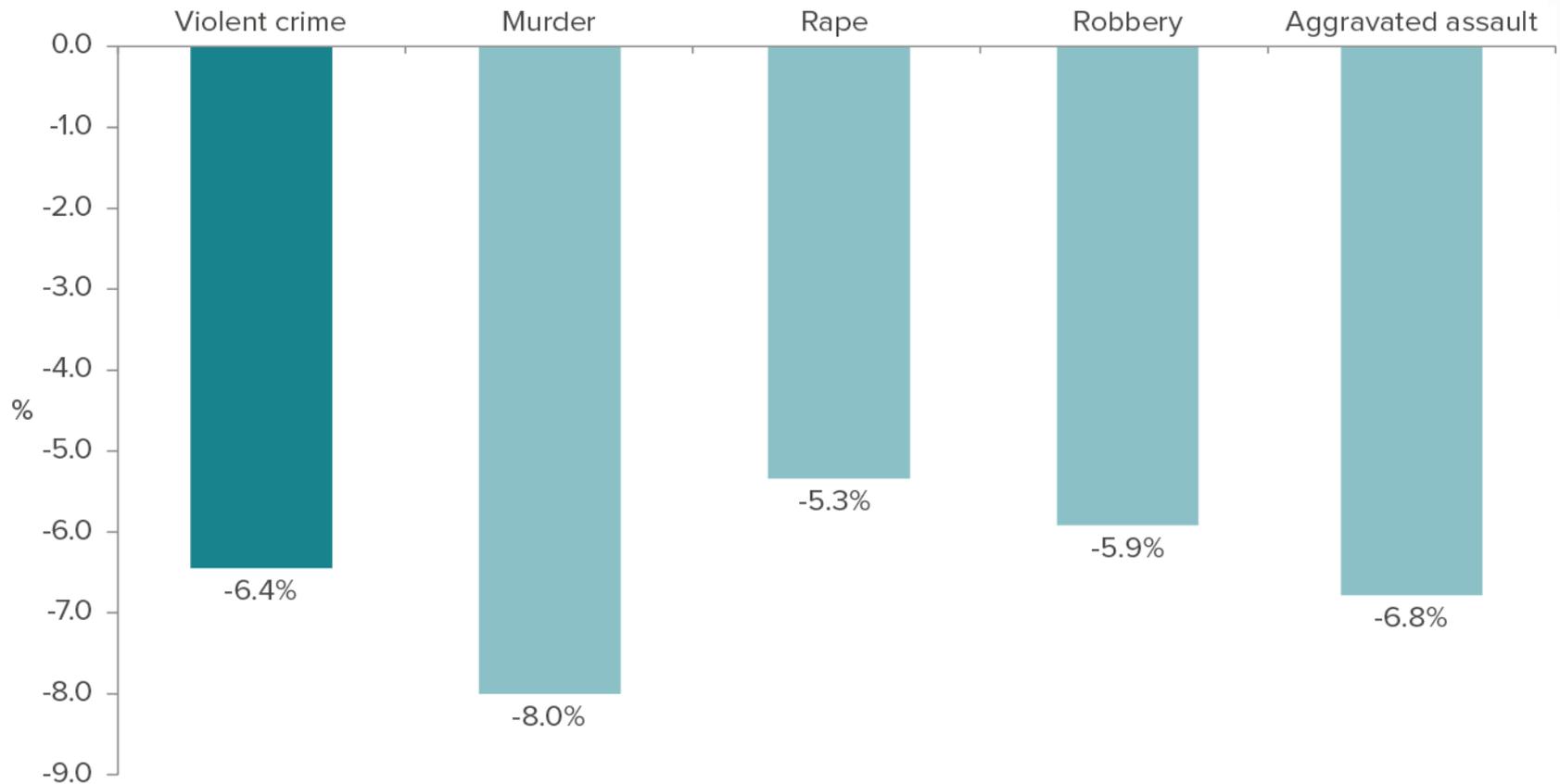
# The total incarceration rate has held steady

- Prison incarceration did not change much after a first-year drop from 431 inmates per 100,000 residents to 355
  - It began to fall again after Prop 47 passed last November
- Jail incarceration did not rise much after it went from 191 per 100,000 residents to 214 a year into realignment
- Most of increase in early releases occurred in the first year
- Overall, data indicate no additional offenders on the street beyond 18,000 in the first year

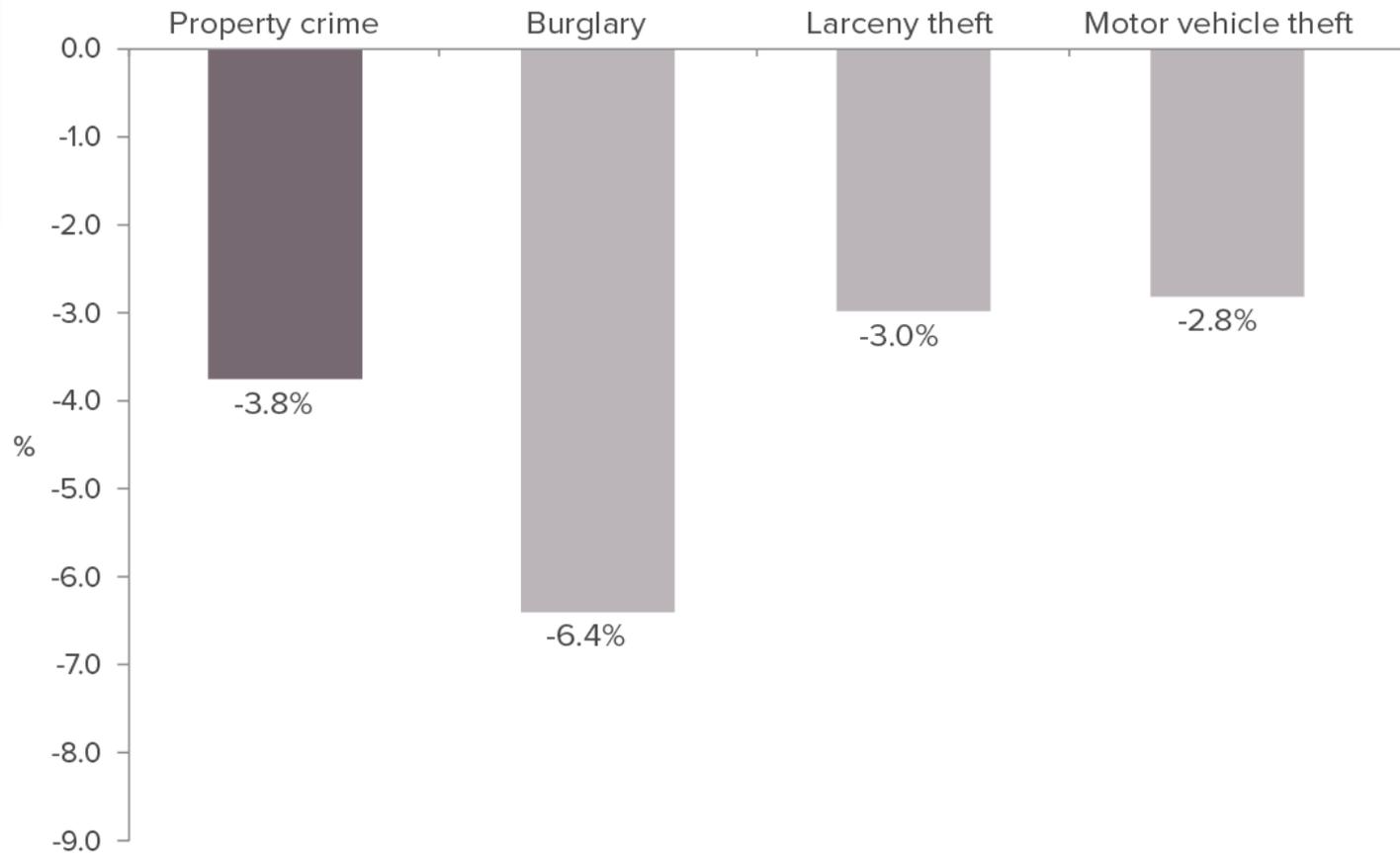
# Outline

- Realignment's early impact
- Incarceration trends
- Crime trends
- Conclusions and recommendations

# California saw declines in all violent offense categories in 2013



# Property crime declined by less than violent crime in 2013



# California's 2013 drop in violent crime was comparable to declines in most other states

	Violent crime	Murder	Forcible rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault
California	-6.4%	-8.0%	-5.3%	-5.9%	-6.8%
Nationwide	-5.1%	-4.3%	-7.0%	-3.5%	-5.6%
Number of states with greater decreases	18	21	26	17	20
Other western states					
Arizona	-5.3%	-1.8%	1.7%	-10.3%	-4.2%
Colorado	-5.3%	17.2%	-4.9%	-8.6%	-4.6%
Idaho	-2.4%	-10.5%	-8.7%	-10.5%	-0.4%
Montana	-13.7%	-24.1%	-27.4%	0.0%	-12.3%
Nevada	-2.9%	28.9%	15.7%	4.0%	-7.9%
New Mexico	6.6%	7.1%	17.6%	-2.0%	7.2%
Oregon	-1.7%	-13.0%	24.9%	-1.6%	-6.8%
Utah	0.6%	-5.6%	0.3%	10.6%	-2.2%
Washington	-6.8%	-25.8%	-20.9%	-0.7%	-6.6%
Wyoming	-1.8%	20.8%	-7.5%	21.7%	-2.7%

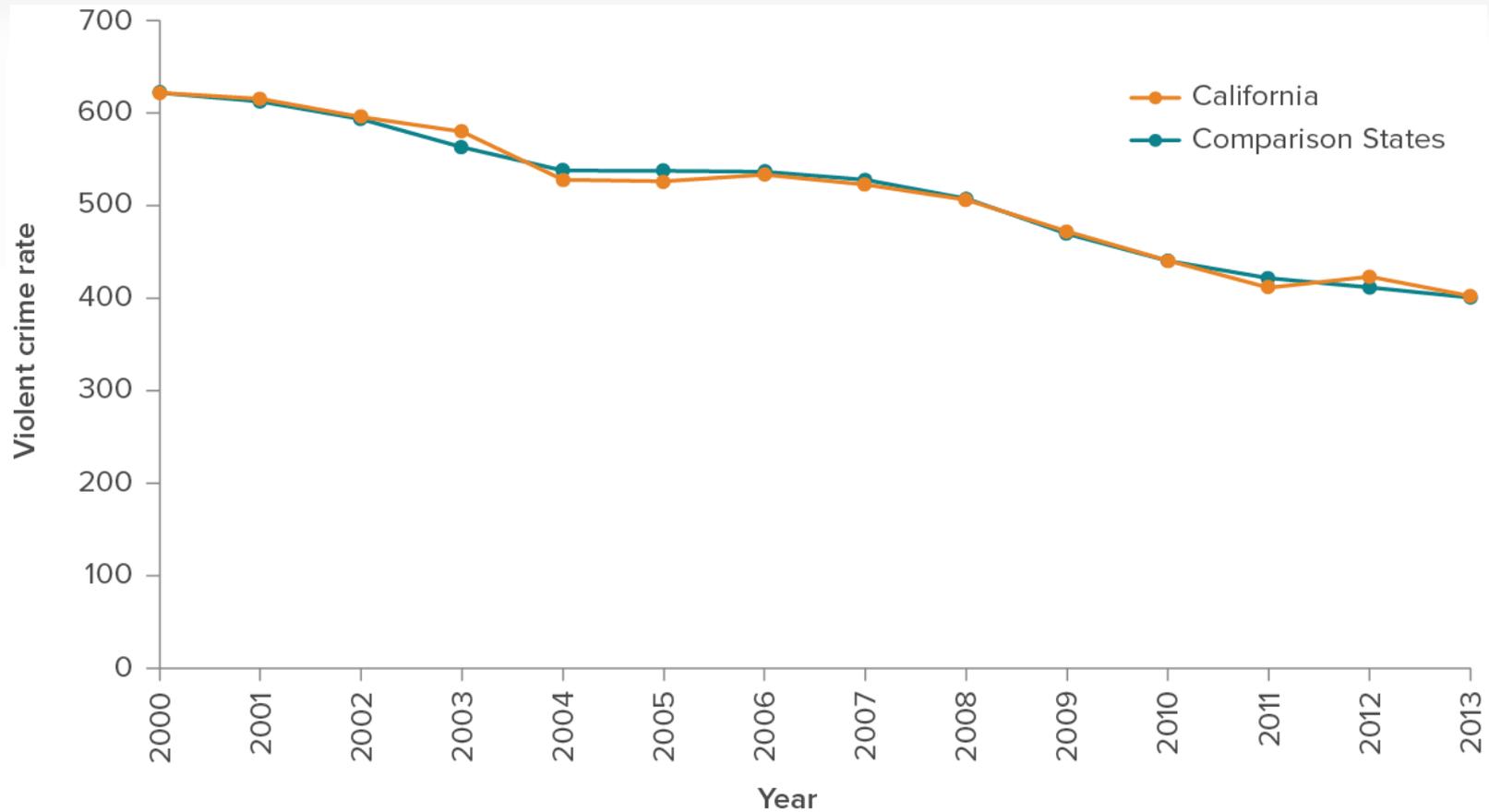
# In 2013, property crime did not decrease as much in California as in most other states

	Property crime	Burglary	Larceny theft	Motor vehicle theft
California	-3.8%	-6.4%	-3.0%	-2.8%
Nationwide	-4.8%	-9.3%	-3.4%	-3.9%
Number of states with greater decreases	33	34	30	26
Other western states				
Arizona	-3.9%	-9.3%	-1.5%	-9.2%
Colorado	-1.0%	-5.6%	-0.2%	2.0%
Idaho	-6.5%	-9.2%	-6.7%	10.0%
Montana	-1.5%	2.7%	-3.1%	7.9%
Nevada	0.8%	2.9%	0.4%	-1.5%
New Mexico	2.8%	0.4%	3.3%	8.0%
Oregon	-2.1%	-6.5%	-0.8%	-4.6%
Utah	-2.4%	0.2%	-5.1%	21.8%
Washington	0.6%	-6.0%	2.2%	5.4%
Wyoming	-4.1%	-9.0%	-3.3%	-2.1%

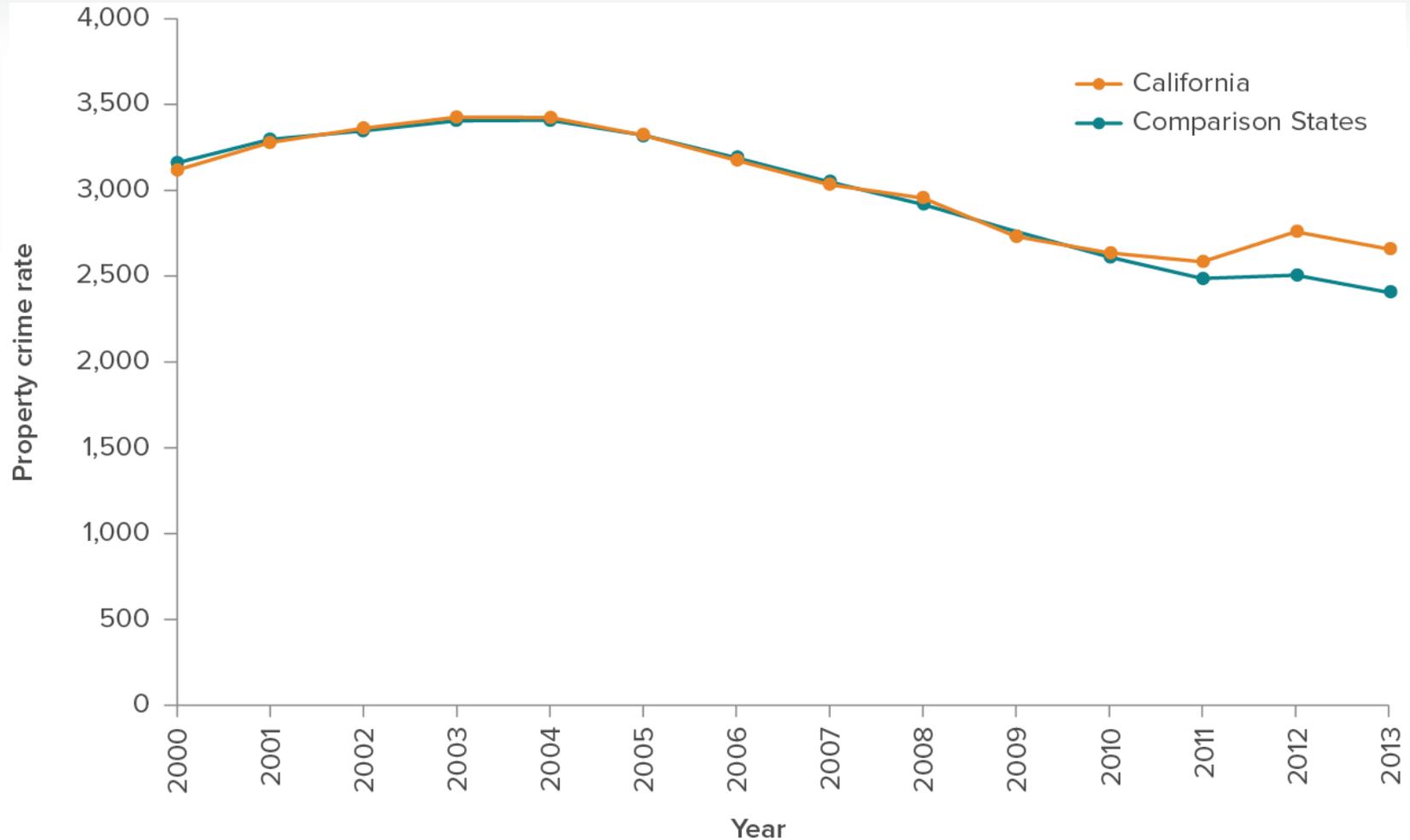
# How can we measure realignment's effect on crime trends?

- Need to estimate what crime trends would have been if realignment had not been implemented
- Identify states with pre-realignment crime trends similar to California's and compare post-realignment trends

# California's violent crime trend continues to match trends in comparison states



# The property crime rate gap between California and comparison states persisted in 2013



# Outline

- Realignment's early impact
- Incarceration trends
- Crime trends
- Conclusions and recommendations

# Conclusions and recommendations

- Realignment decreased California's reliance on incarceration
- No evidence of an impact on violent crime rates
- Modest increase in property crime due to rise in motor vehicle thefts
  - Increased auto theft rate by about 70 per 100,000
- Incarceration does prevent some crime, but at current rates its effect is very limited
- State would benefit from seeking alternative crime prevention strategies

# Realignment, Incarceration, and Crime Trends in California

Magnus Lofstrom

Steven Raphael

---



**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

# Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Magnus Lofstrom (lofstrom@ppic.org; 415-291-4454)

Thank you for your interest in this work.