

## CALIFORNIA'S CHANGING PAROLE POPULATION

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### ► **Public safety realignment has accelerated reductions in the state's parole population.**

California's parole population had been in gradual decline from 163,000 at its peak in 2007 to 127,000 on October 1, 2011, when public safety realignment began. On that day, responsibility for supervising a large number of nonserious, nonviolent felons shifted from the state to the counties. By July 2013, the parole population was 56,500. Since realignment took effect, the percentage reduction in the parole population has been three times greater than that of the prison population.

### ► **The parole population has shifted toward those with more serious offenses.**

Under realignment, only prisoners with the most serious offenses are released to the state parole system—those with lesser offenses are released to county supervision. In January 2013, 65% of parolees had a current or prior violent or serious felony conviction, compared with 50% a year earlier. Registered sex offenders constituted 17% of the parole population—they were just 10% the year before. And 49% were on parole for violent crimes, up from 33% in 2012. In contrast, 23% were on parole for property crimes (29% in 2012) and 13% for drug crimes (23% in 2012).

### ► **African Americans are overrepresented in the parole system.**

African Americans constitute 6% of California's adult population but 29% of the parole population. Latinos are 35% of the state's adult population and 37% of the parole population. In contrast, Asians constitute 13% of the general adult population and only 1% of parolees; the respective figures for whites are 44% and 28%. Nearly 50% of parolees are between the ages of 25 and 39, about one-sixth are age 50 and older, and about one-eighth are under age 25.

### ► **The share of female parolees is small and shrinking.**

In January of 2012, 9.9% of parolees (nearly 10,000) were women; a year later, that figure stood at 7.2%, or about 4,200. Women are more likely to be on parole for property crimes (33% compared with 22% of men) or drug crimes (15% compared with 13% of men), and less likely to be on parole for violent crimes (40% compared with 50% for men).

### ► **The number of "at large" parolees has decreased, but their share of the parole population has increased.**

Just before realignment began, the whereabouts of some 11,000 parolees were unknown, and they were classified as "at large." This number has decreased to about 7,000, but the share of "at large" parolees of the total parole population has increased from 8.8% to 12.7%.

### ► **Parole violators are no longer going back to prison.**

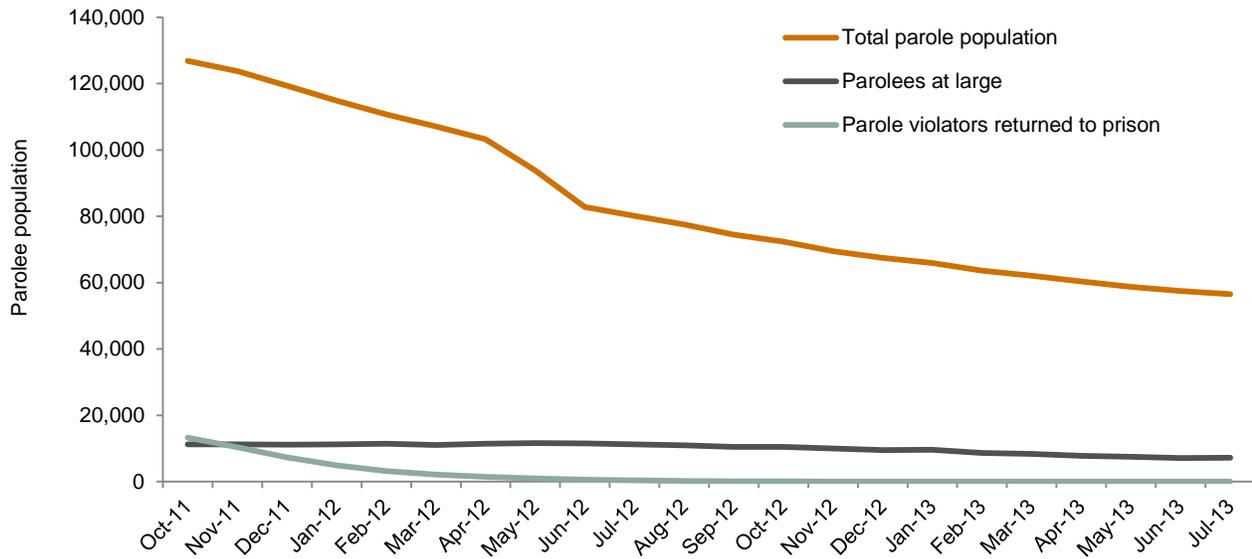
Prior to realignment, parolees comprised two-thirds of the annual arrivals into prison. Today, because most parole violators, along with most nonserious, nonviolent felons, now face county sanctions (e.g., jail, home detention, or electronic monitoring), the number of parolees serving time in prison for a parole violation is effectively zero.

### ► **Fewer than half of parolees are deemed "high risk" to reoffend.**

Assessing parolees' risk of reoffending is critical to the successful monitoring of this population. Based upon criminal history, age, and gender, 43% of parolees are considered to be at "high risk" to reoffend—25% with a violent offense, 11% with a property offense, and 7% with a drug offense. Twenty-seven percent of parolees are considered to be "low risk."

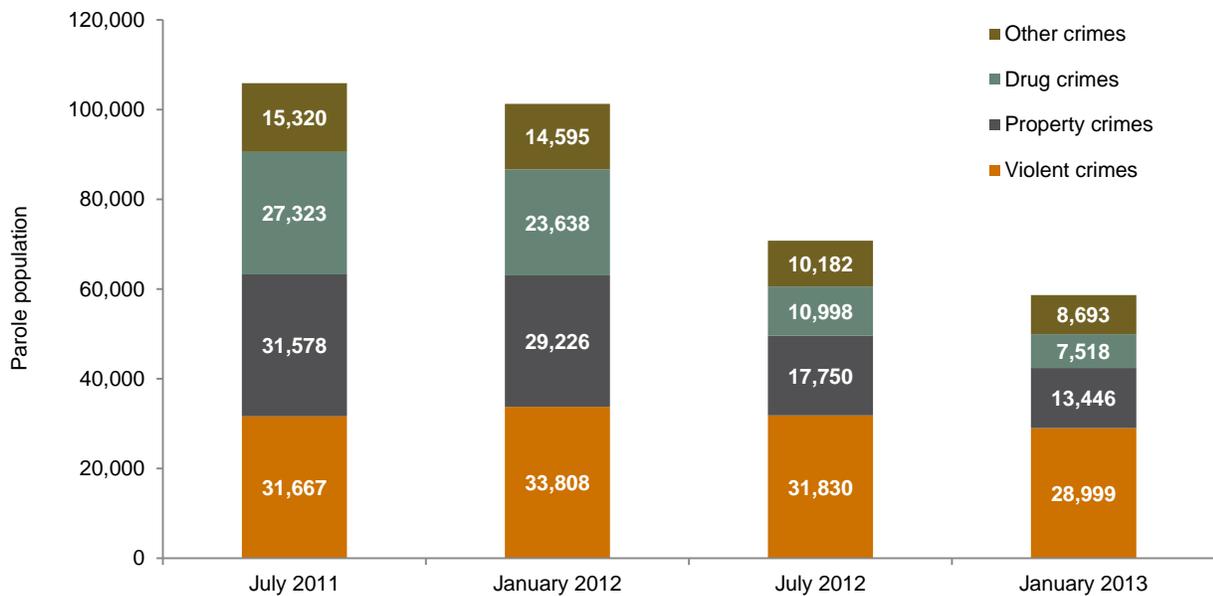


The parole population continues to diminish rapidly under realignment



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation data, 2011–2013.

Over time, fewer offenders are on parole for drug or property crimes



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation parole data, 2011–2012.

Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (prison and parole populations); Current Population Survey (general California adult population).

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