

Alternatives to Incarceration in California

Brandon Martin



PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

Alternatives to incarceration may help address California's public safety challenges

- Realignment is creating new pressures for the jail system
- California is still under pressure to reduce overcrowding in prisons
- A growing share of the state budget goes to prisons and jails

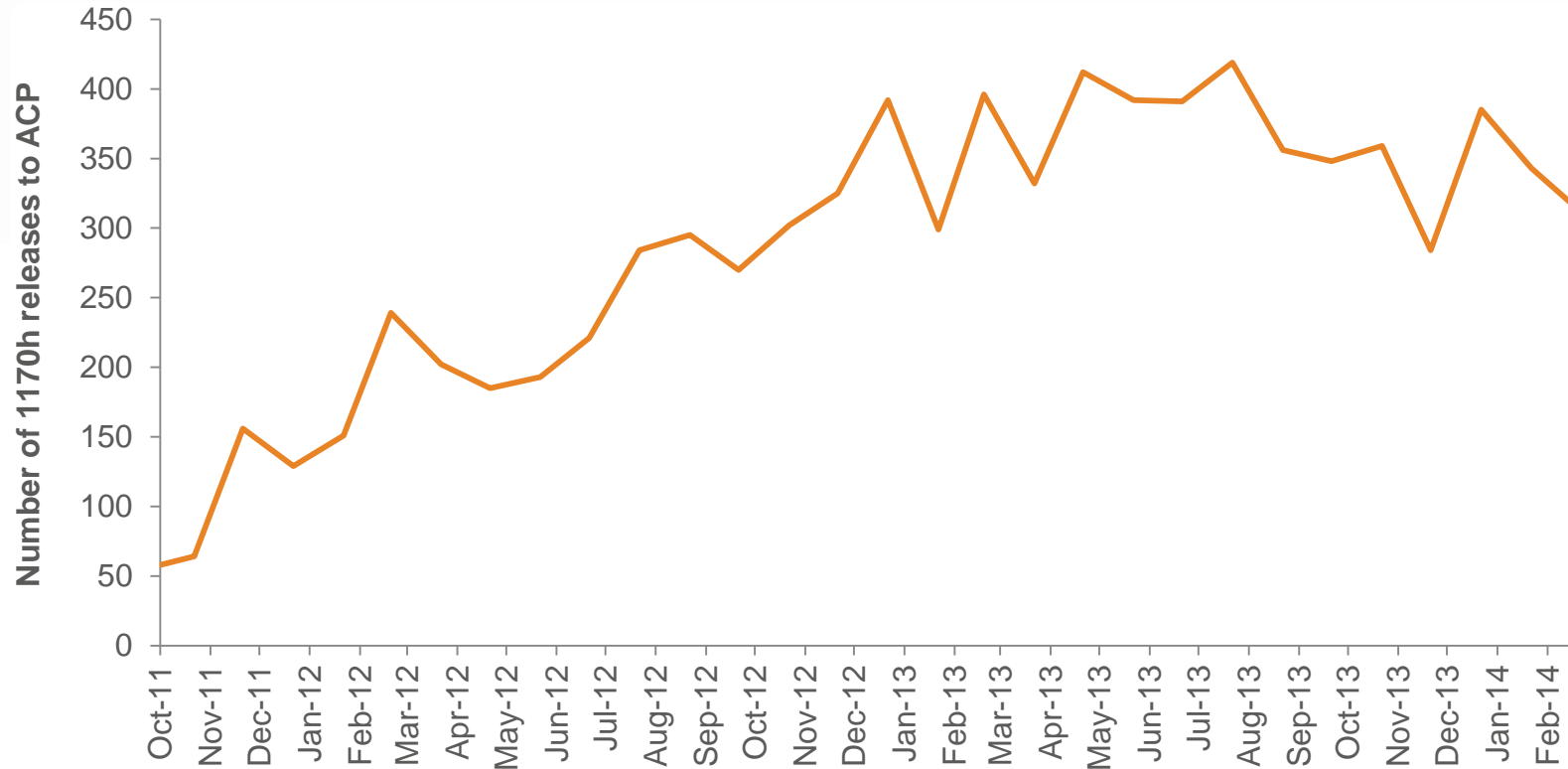
What are alternatives to incarceration?

- Punishment or treatment that does not involve long-term confinement in a jail or prison
- Can be used at sentencing or during community supervision
- Can be mandated by law and policy or result from discretionary decisionmaking or offender initiative

Most existing alternative custody programs are at the county level

- Home detention
- Work release
- Split sentencing
 - Period of incarceration followed by period of community supervision
- Flash incarceration
 - Short period of incarceration (10 days or less) for post-release community supervision (PRCS) and parole violations

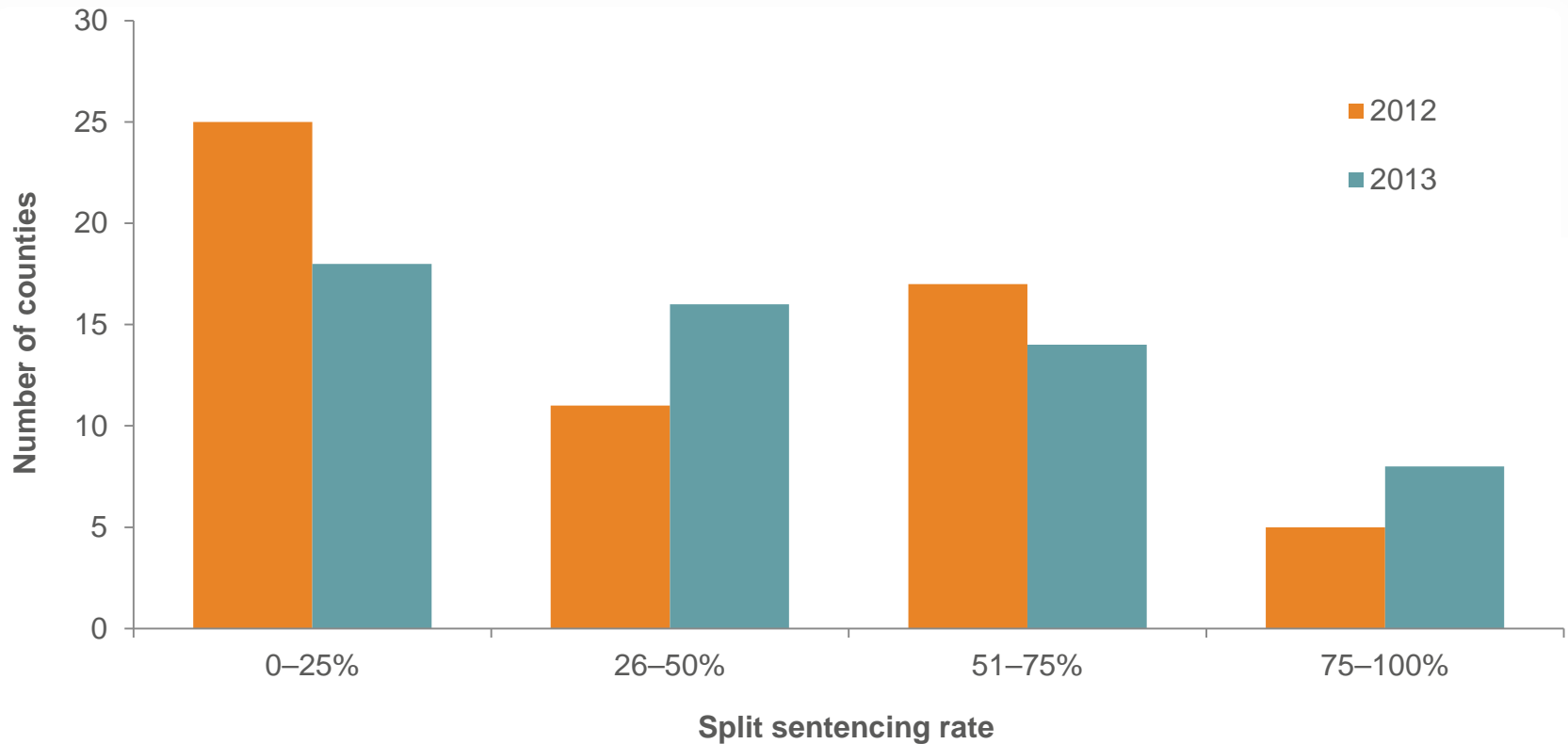
Statewide use of alternatives for realigned offenders is still at a low level



SOURCE: AB 109 Monthly Survey, October 2011–March 2014, Board of State and Community Corrections.

NOTES: 1170h = newly convicted non-serious, non-violent, non-sexual felons who would have previously served their sentences in state prison. ACP = sheriff's alternative custody program.

Counties' use of split sentencing is increasing slowly



SOURCE: Chief Probation Officers of California Realignment Dashboard.

Key questions about incarceration and alternatives

- Does incarceration reduce crime?
 - Yes — depending on the rate of incarceration
- Would relying less on incarceration affect recidivism?
 - Little difference in outcomes

What makes for effective alternatives?

- Intensive supervision and swift responses
 - Swift, certain, and short
- Targeted services
 - Risk, need, responsivity
- Effective implementation is key
 - Combining intensive supervision and targeted services is the most promising approach

How can California assess effectiveness?

- Need to know more about counties' experience with community-based strategies
- Need better understanding of characteristics of program participants and outcomes
- Intensive data collection is crucial

Alternatives to Incarceration in California

Brandon Martin



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:

Brandon Martin (martin@ppic.org; 916-440-1131)

Thank you for your interest in this work.