

# Is Public Safety Realignment Reducing Recidivism in California?

Magnus Lofstrom,  
Steven Raphael, and Ryken Grattet

Supported with funding from the Smith Richardson Foundation



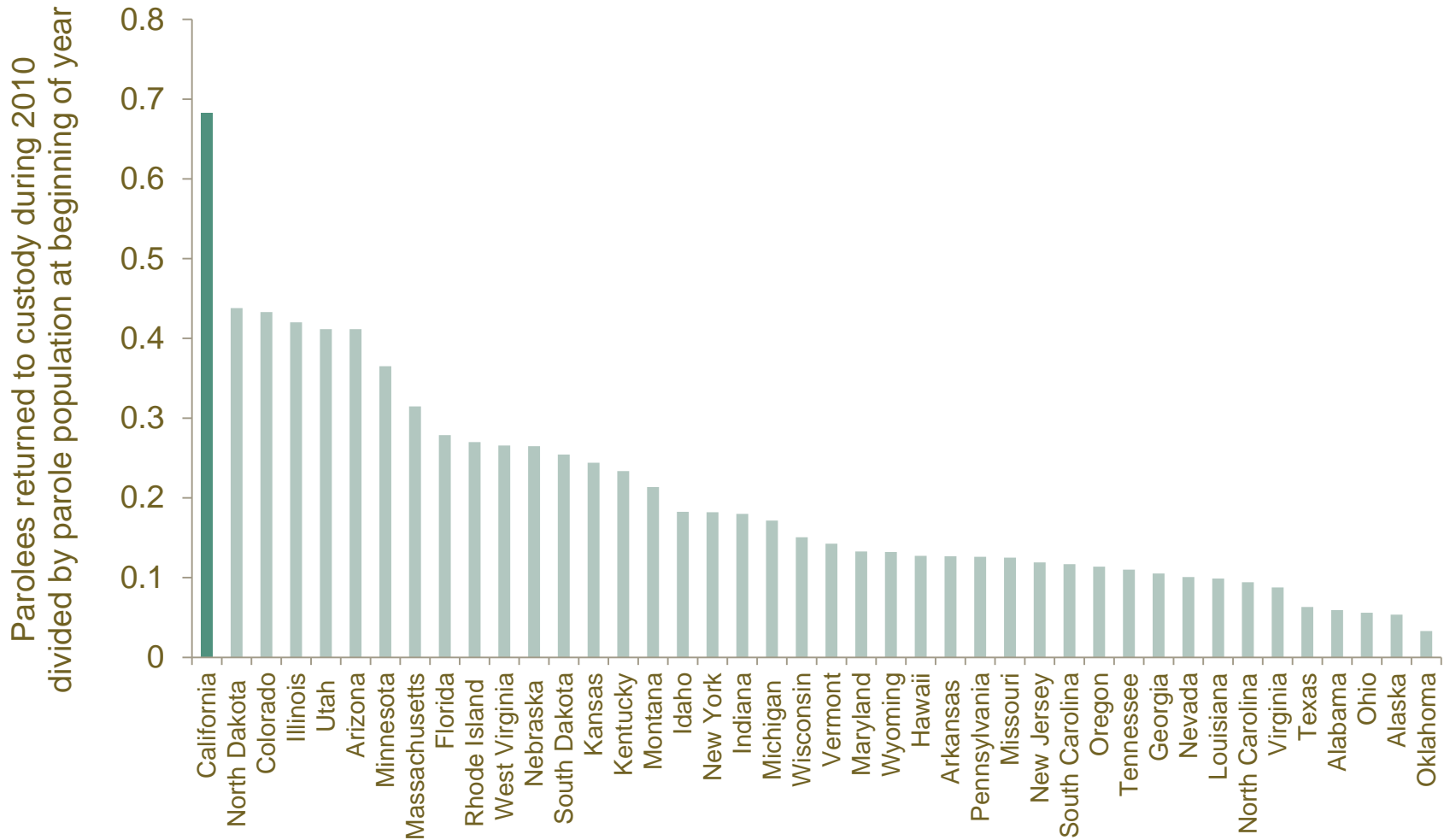
# Realignment brought sweeping changes to California corrections

---

- Realignment was the state's answer to overcrowding
- Prison population declined dramatically
  - 27,000 prisoners, a 17% drop
- More released offenders on the streets
  - Concerns about crime
- Recidivism a central issue
  - Key measure of a correctional system's overall performance
  - Success of reform hinges on improvements



# Released offenders returned to prison at a much higher rate in California



# Outline

---

- Realignment and released offenders
- Effect of realignment on recidivism rates
- Conclusions



# Realignment significantly reduced reliance on incarceration

---

- Created new rules for released offenders:
  - Parole violators no longer return to prison; counties now responsible
  - Maximum sentences for supervision violations reduced
  - Most released offenders supervised by county probation
- Encouraged evidence-based practices
- Defined a set of lower-level felonies with sentences served in county jails instead of state prisons



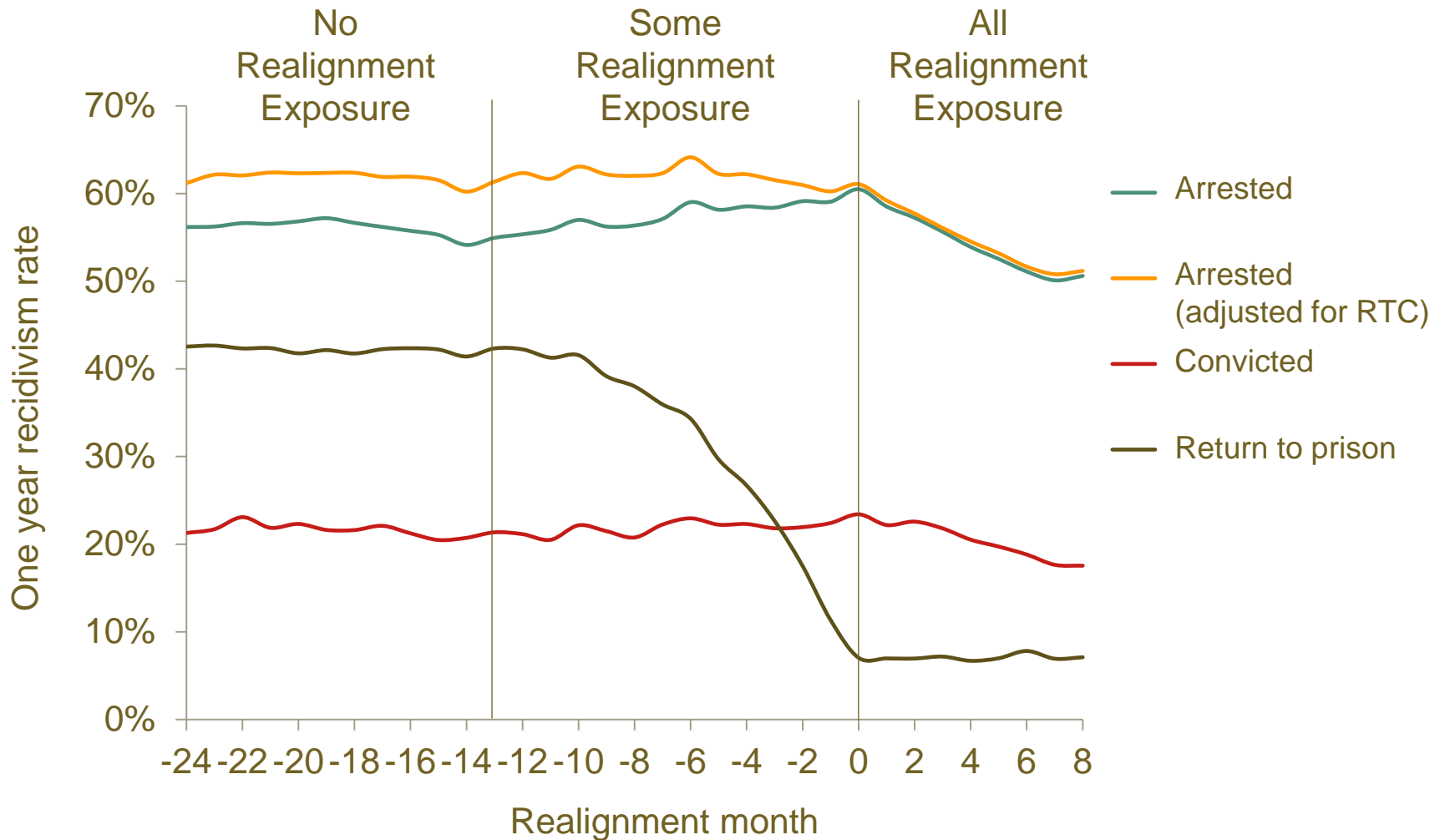
# Focus of this study

---

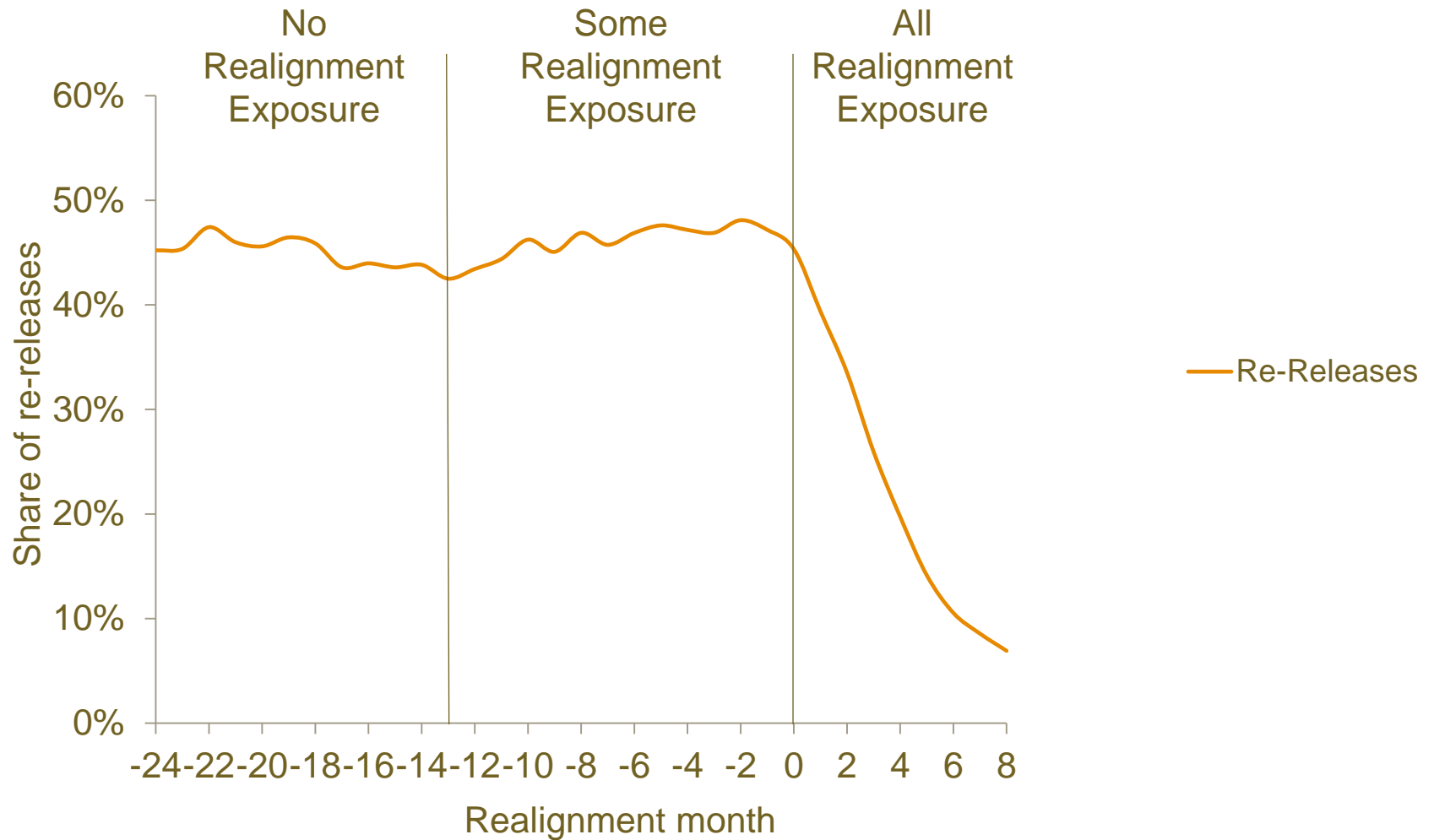
- Used offender level data provided by CDCR
- Examined one-year rates of
  - Re-arrest, re-conviction, and return to state custody
- Assessed type and number of arrests and convictions
- Grouped released offender by month of release
- Accounted for changes in the released prisoner population



# Basic trends suggest improvements



# But the released offender population has changed





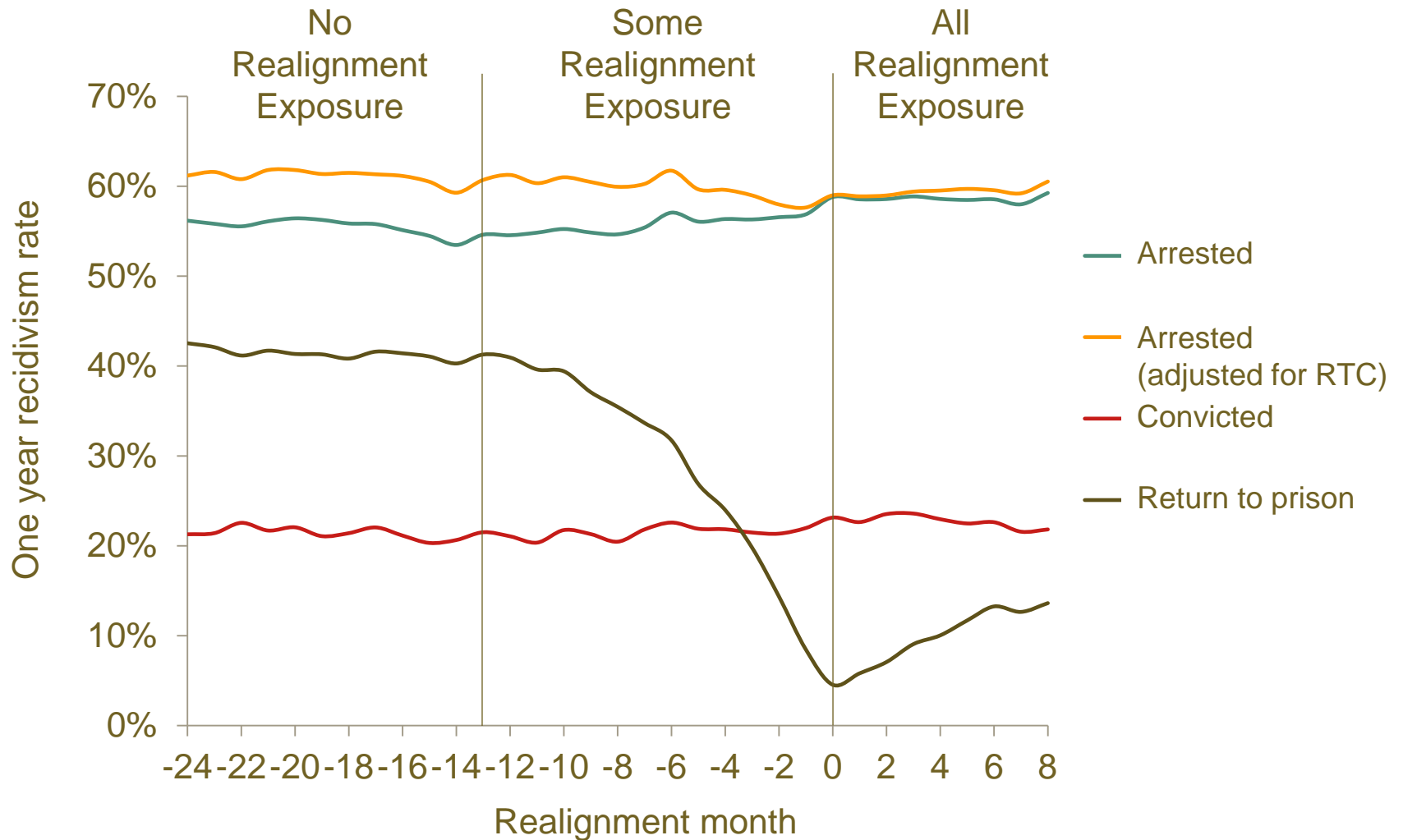
# Outline

---

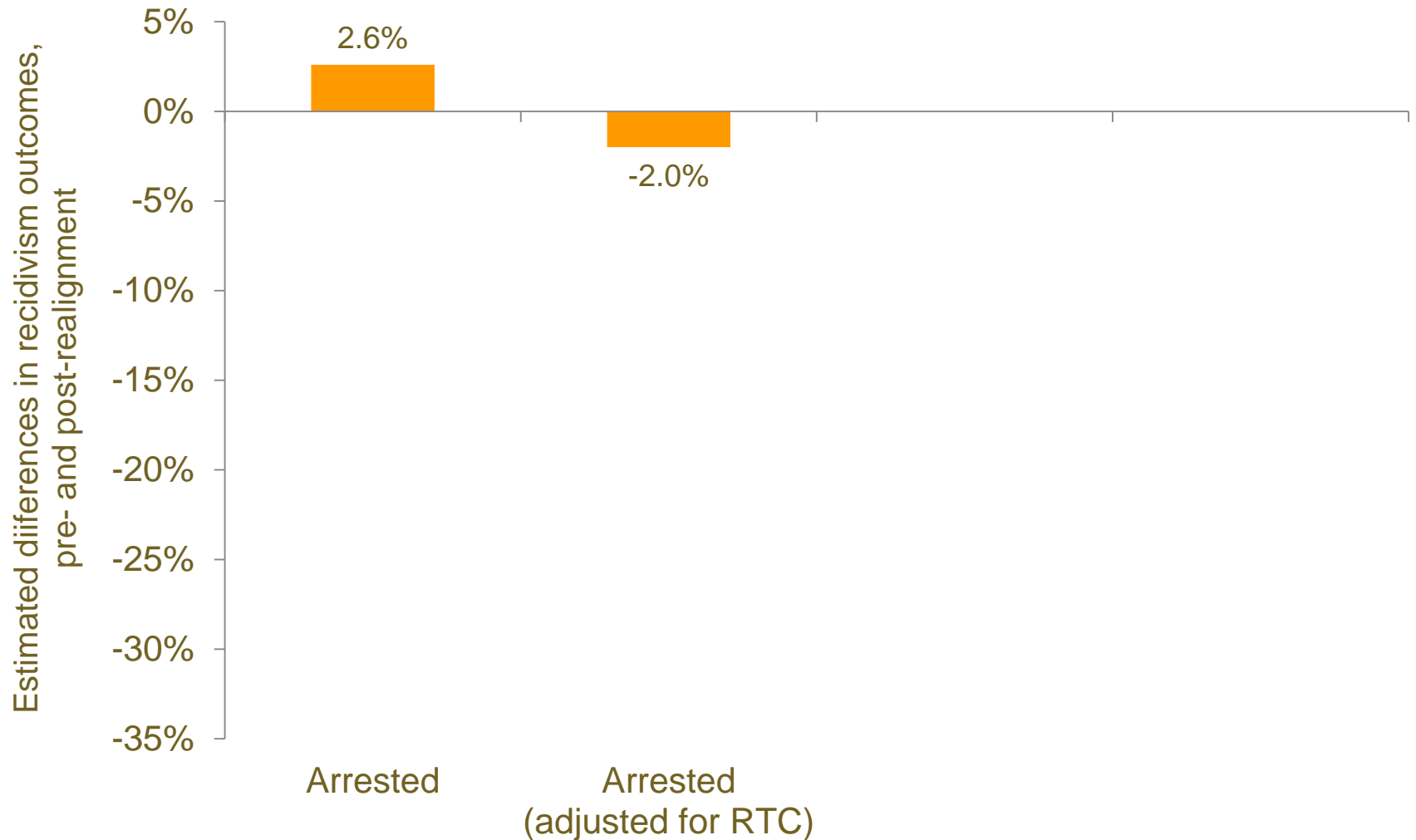
- Realignment and released offenders
- Effect of realignment on recidivism rates
- Conclusions



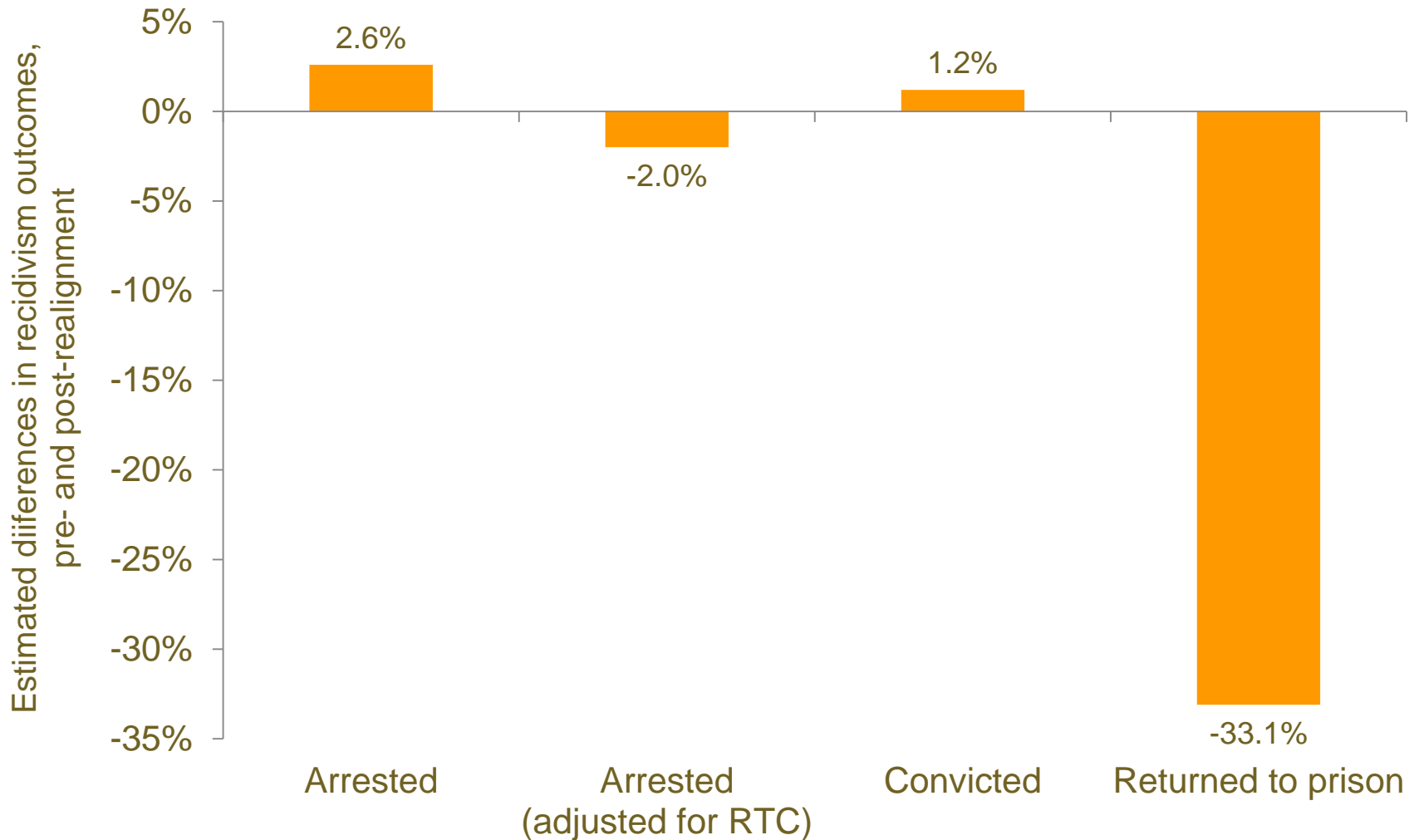
# Adjusted trends are mostly flat



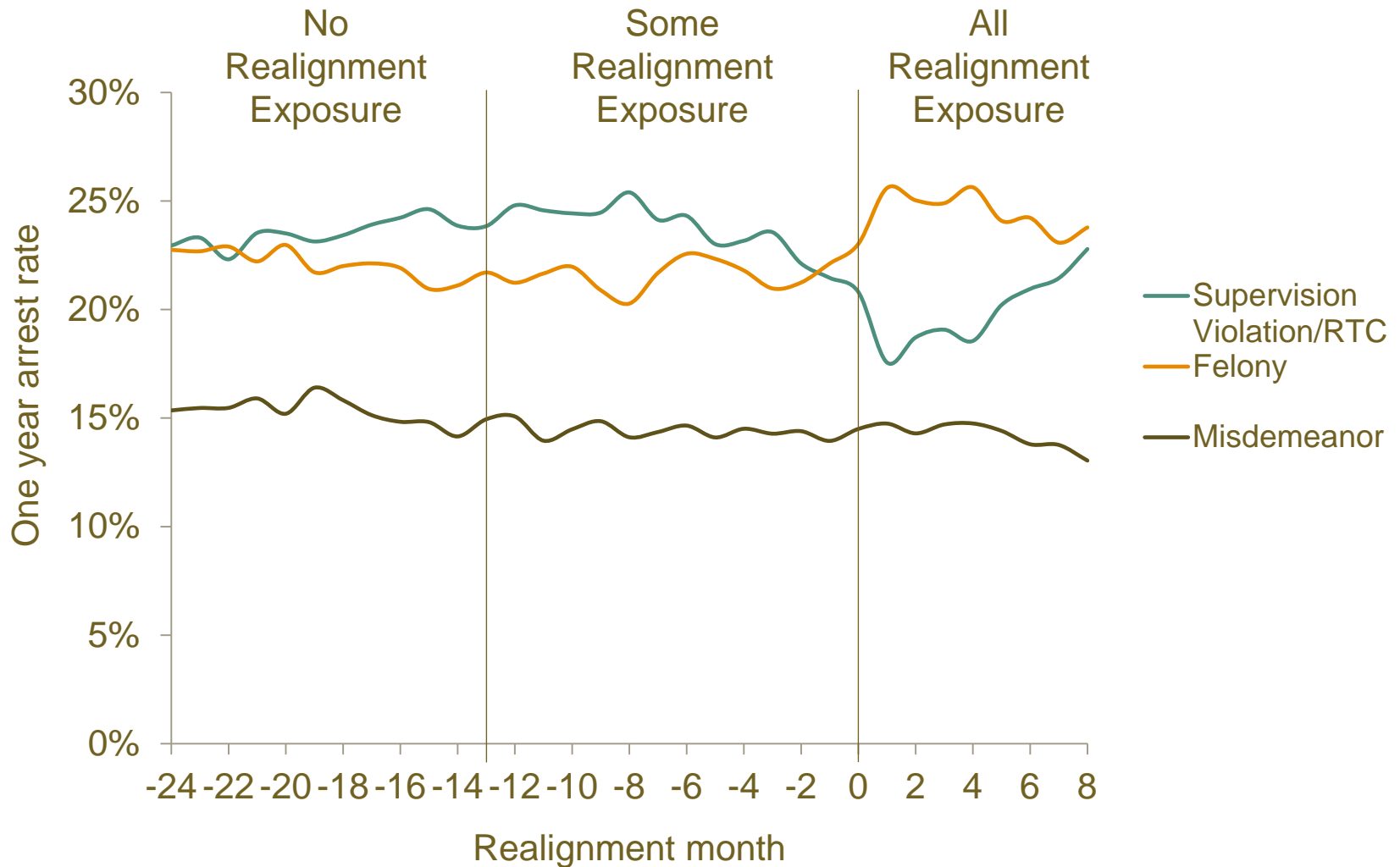
# Arrest procedures matter



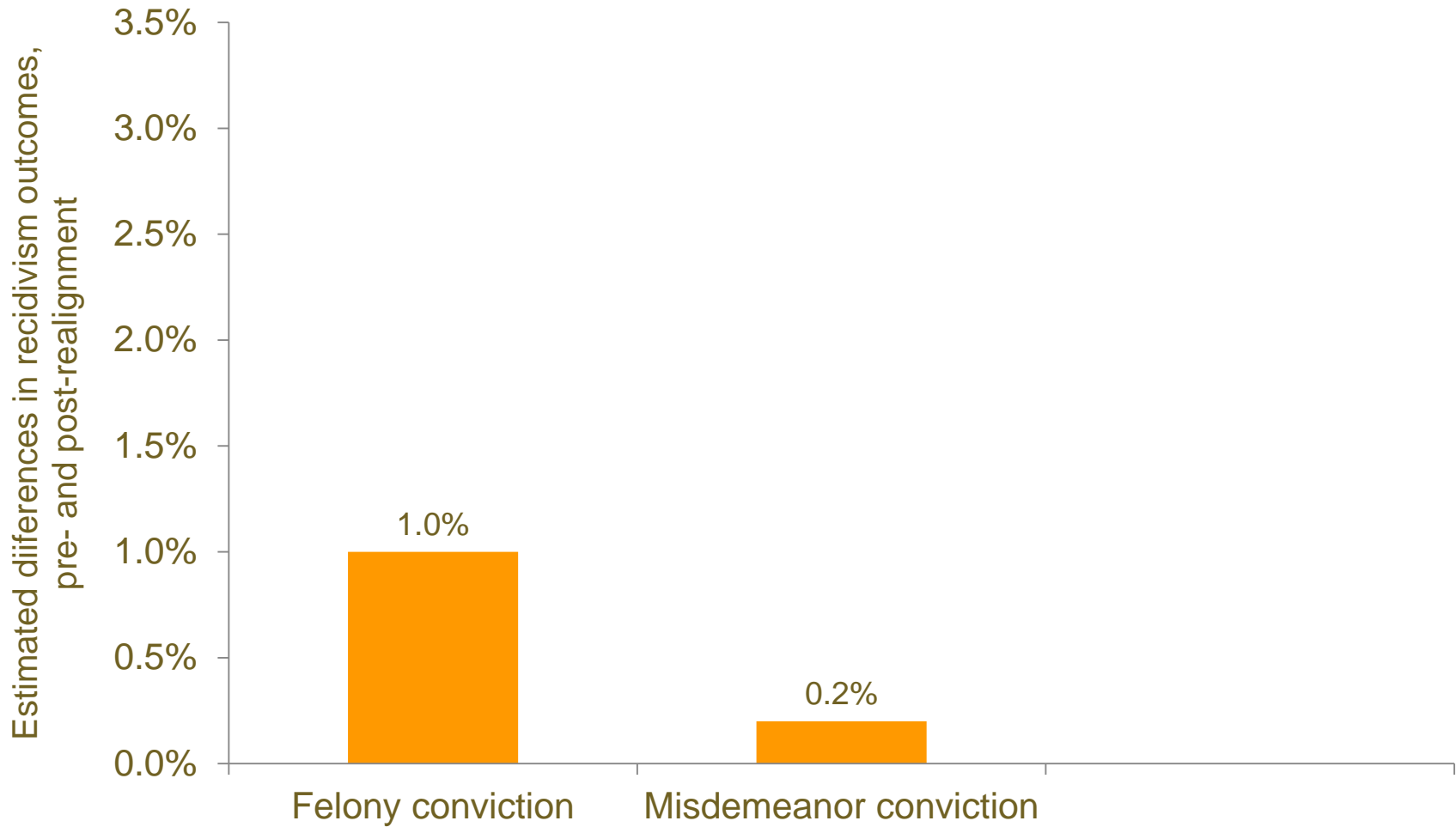
# Convictions are up slightly, returns to prison nearly ended



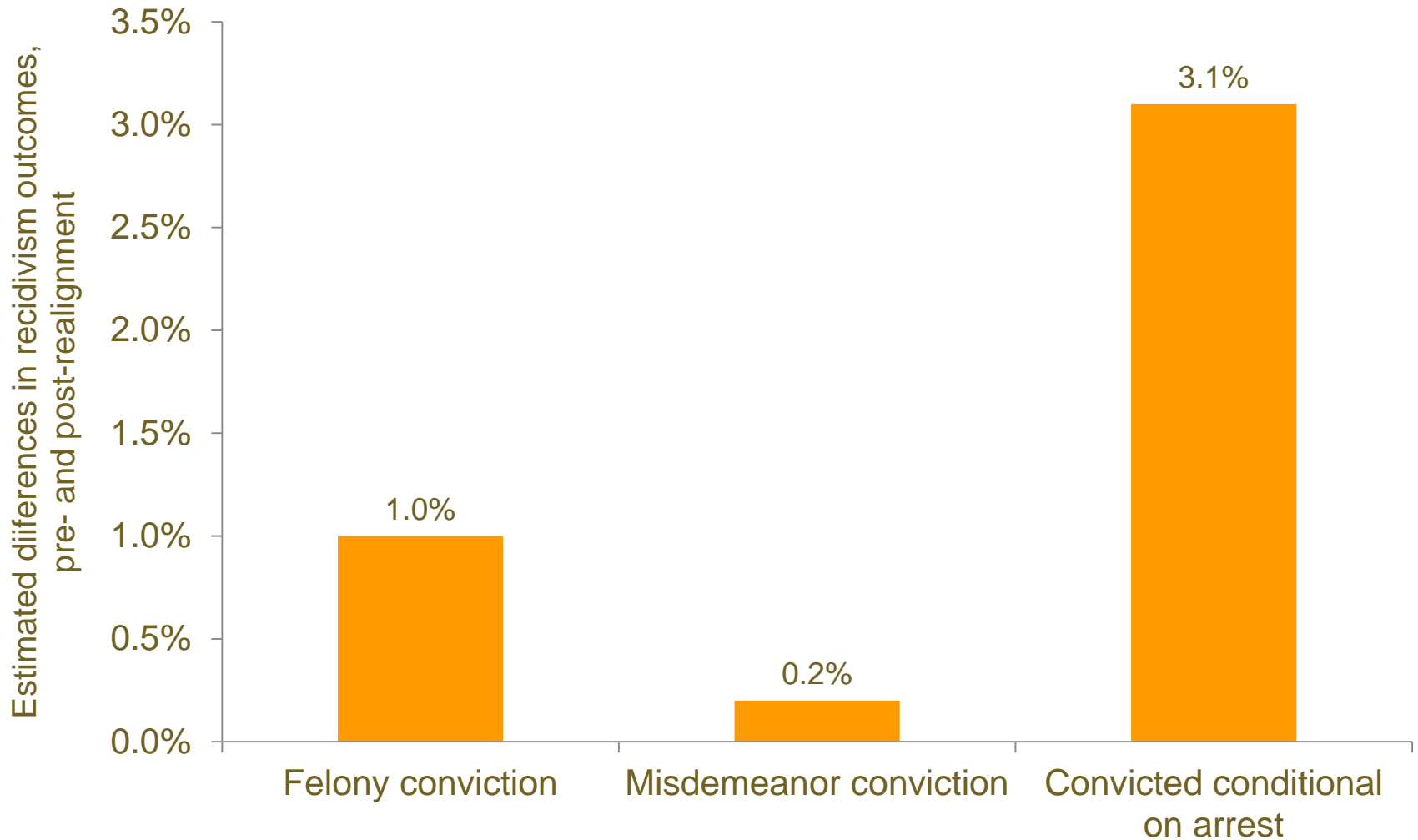
# Felony arrests are higher ...



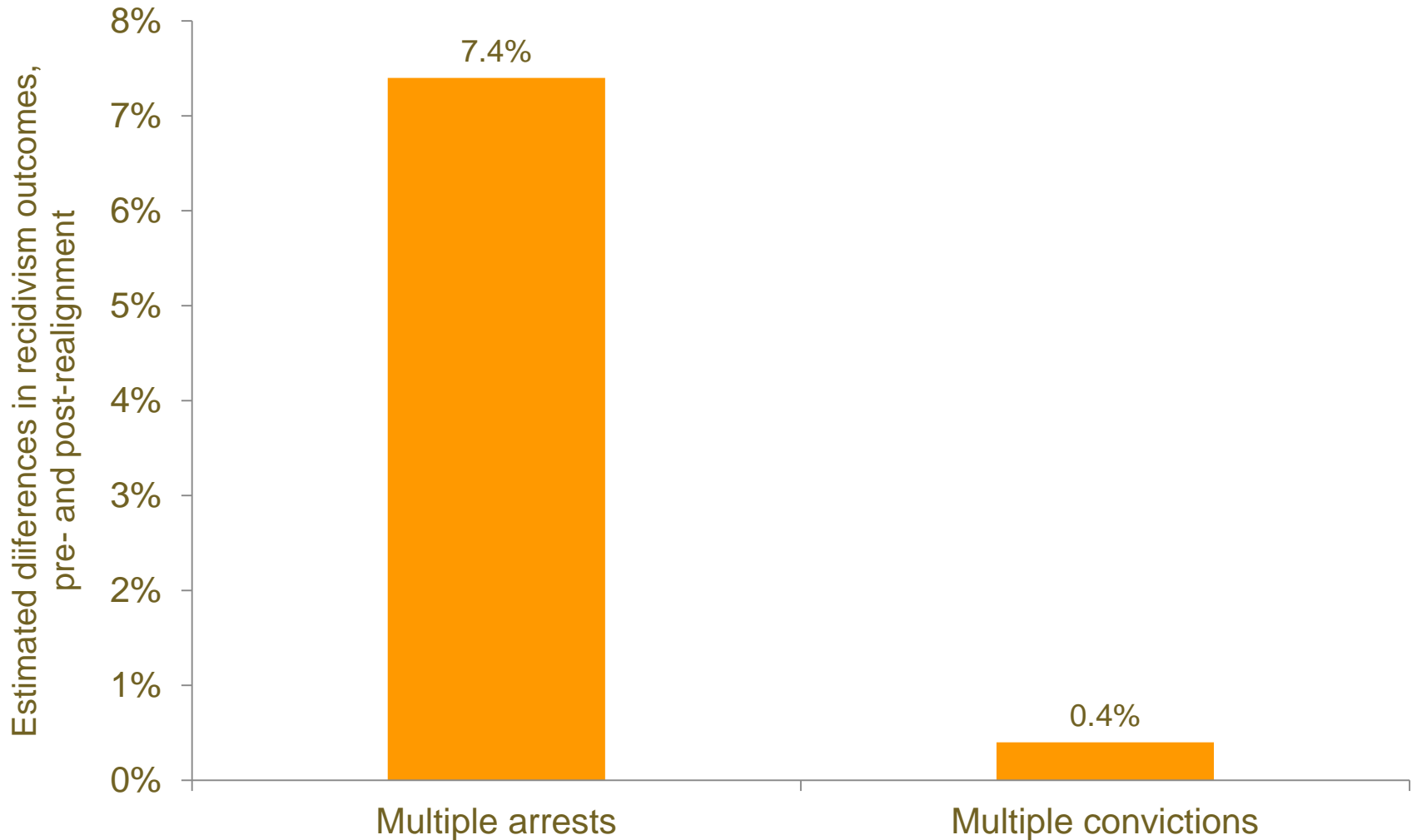
# ... As are conviction rates



# Arrests are more likely to lead to convictions



# Multiple arrests increased noticeably





# Outline

---

- Realignment and released offenders
- Effect of realignment on recidivism rates
- Conclusions



# Has behavior of released offenders changed?

---

- Our results are varied
  - Arrest rates down (2 percentage points)
  - Conviction rates up (1.2 percentage points)
  - Chances that arrest leads to conviction up (3.1 percentage points)
- Changes in arrest and prosecution are key
  - Parole violations processed through courts rather than parole board



# More effective, targeted policies needed

---

- No dramatic changes in offender behavior
  - County efforts may be partly offsetting increased street time
- But noticeable increase in offenders with multiple arrests
  - May reflect some counties' limited jail capacity
- Arrests and convictions remain high
  - Need more effective policies aimed at both crime and rehabilitation



# Is Public Safety Realignment Reducing Recidivism in California?

Magnus Lofstrom,  
Steven Raphael, and Ryken Grattet

Supported with funding from the Smith Richardson Foundation



# 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.

