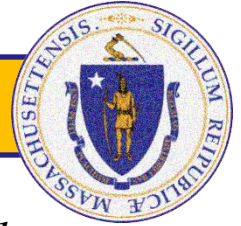


MASSACHUSETTS PAROLE BOARD: SPECIAL REPORT



An Analysis of Success and Failure among Massachusetts Parolees

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After offenders are released to parole supervision a variety of circumstances may occur, leading up to the end of one's sentence. Returns to incarceration, releases from temporary custody, revocations and reparaes, and revocations to complete a sentence under custody, these examples illustrate the complexity of measuring success or failure over the period of one's parole. It is possible to measure failure by several different means, such as at the point of return to custody, after final revocation, in cases of rearrest or reconviction during community supervision, or after a revocation without a return to parole. Because offenders may be returned to custody and released or reparaed to successfully complete their sentence in the community, it may not be accurate to measure failure by the event of reincarceration or revocation alone.

In the following analysis, success or failure is determined at the end of one's sentence (i.e., point at which the commitment is closed). This method of analysis accounts for the variety of pathways that parolees take throughout the length of their sentences. The Parole Board may utilize revocation after parole violation as a sanction, after which the parolee may be released back onto parole. Therefore, such instances will not be considered a failure in this analysis.

The sample is derived from all closed commitments during the given time frame for each year of analysis. Inmates who were never paroled are excluded from the sample. In addition, the sample does not include individuals who were not initially paroled to Massachusetts supervision (e.g., paroled to another state's or federal custody, paroled to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, paroled to serve another sentence, parole to community supervision in another state). Finally, duplicates were removed according to overlap in sentence and parole length.ⁱ

Calculating Success vs. Failure: 2013 (Through 8.31.2013)		
Discharge Type	Count	Percentage
Closed as Inmate	314	21%
Closed as Parolee (Community)	1042	71%
Closed as Parolee (Custody)	118	8%
Total	1474	100%

In total, the 2013 sample was comprised of 1,474 closed commitments. Of those, 314 offenders (21%) were inmates at the time of sentence expiration. These offenders were paroled one or more times, but were ultimately returned and revoked, without reparole. Approximately 71% of the sample, 1,042 offenders, successfully completed supervision. These offenders discharged from community supervision (n=4 out of state, n=1,038 in Massachusetts). Finally, 118 offenders (8%) discharged from their sentence in a state of transition, while in custody at Massachusetts Houses of Correction or Department of Correction. These offenders were technically on parole status, but were incarcerated, at the time of sentence completion. This group cannot be classified as a success or failure because they may have been returned to the community without revocation, if not for sentence expiration.

In comparison, the following results are provided based on 2012, 2011, and 2010 discharges. This information is produced using the same method of analysis.

Calculating Success vs. Failure: 2012		
Discharge Type	Count	Percentage
Closed as Inmate	579	24%
Closed as Parolee (Community)	1604	66%
Closed as Parolee (Custody)	246	10%
Total	2429	100%

Calculating Success vs. Failure: 2011		
Discharge Type	Count	Percentage
Closed as Inmate	670	24%
Closed as Parolee (Community)	1863	67%
Closed as Parolee (Custody)	255	9%
Total	2788	100%

Calculating Success vs. Failure: 2010		
Discharge Type	Count	Percentage
Closed as Inmate	700	19%
Closed as Parolee (Community)	2706	72%
Closed as Parolee (Custody)	352	9%
Total	3758	100%

A majority of offenders successfully completed parole supervision in all of the years examined. Each year, approximately two-thirds to three-quarters of parolees completed supervision in the community. Similar rates were observed between 2010 and 2013 (i.e., success rates within six percentage points). In comparing these figures to a national sample of parole discharges, Massachusetts consistently boasts a higher rate of success on parole. It is estimated that 52% of parolees exited supervision successfully in a 2011 sample derived from parole agencies nationwide (Maruschak & Parks, 2012). The method for calculating success on parole may differ among parole agencies. However, from this analysis, it is evident that the Massachusetts Parole Board is committed to providing an opportunity for its parolees to complete a term of supervision in the community, as compared to in custody.

Note: ¹More than one commitment with commitments closed on different dates, both commitments retained; more than one commitment with commitments closed on the same dates, one commitment retained.

Source: Maruschak, L.M., & Parks, E. (2012). *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2011*. Washington, DC: Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.