

PRISON POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Introduction

After several years of fairly rapid growth, the prison population is still increasing but at a slower rate. From FY02-04, the prison population grew by an average of 635 offenders per year. But from FY05-07, the rate of growth has declined as the population increased by an average of 282 offenders per year during this time (see Figure 1).

The receding growth in the prison population is due to the fact that, although the total number of admissions continues to increase, offenders are staying, on average, for shorter periods of time. Shorter lengths of stay are due to a slight decrease in new commitment admissions (i.e., generally longer sentences with longer lengths of stay), coupled with a growing influx of offenders admitted as probation and supervised release violators (i.e., generally shorter lengths of stay).

Actual Population vs. Projections

During the most recent 12-month period, projections have overestimated the actual prison population by an average of 0.17 percent, or 15 offenders per month.

FY08 Forecast

The prison population is projected to increase by 115 inmates (1.3%) during FY08 and by 2,697 (30%) during the ten-year forecast period.

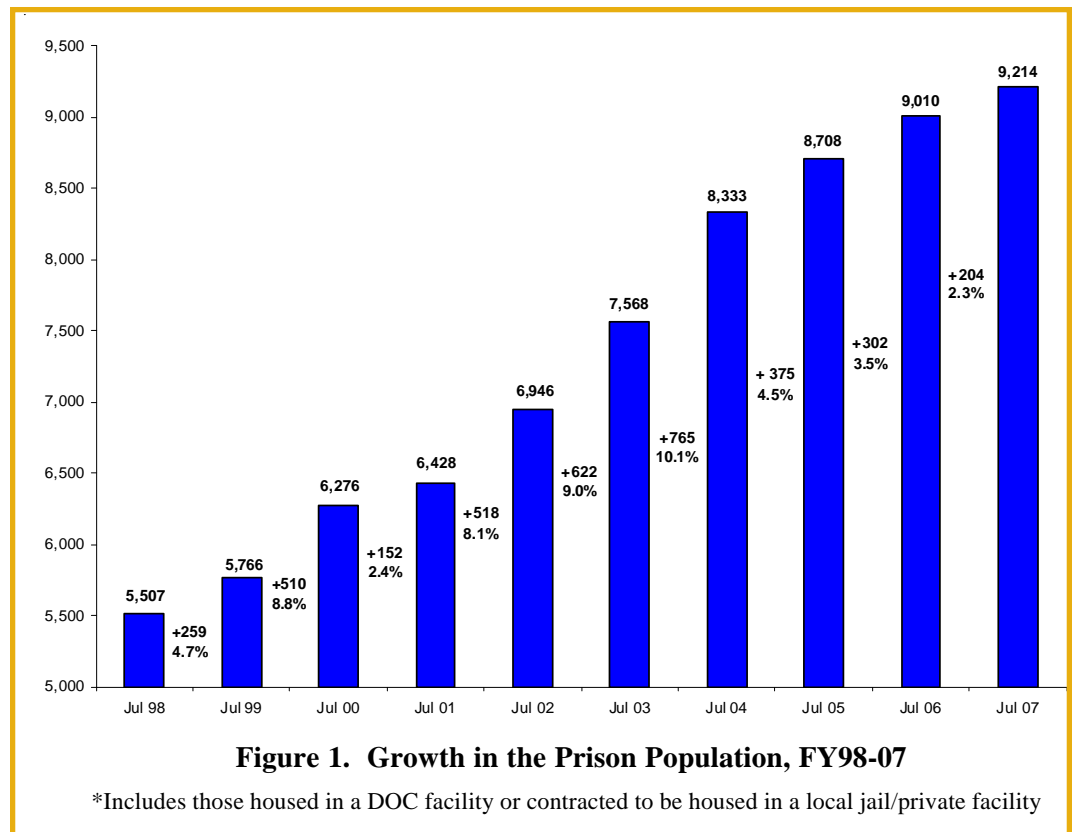
The modest growth, particularly over the short term, is partly due to the anticipated effect that the legislative increase in property offense threshold levels will have on the prison population.

The number of male inmates is expected to grow by 1.0 percent (82) during FY08, compared to 6.1 percent (33) for females. By the end of FY17, the projected growth rate is 30 percent for males (2,508) and 35 percent for females (189).

New commitments are expected to account for 70 percent (80) of the FY08 increase and 69 percent (1,851) of the growth over the next ten years. Offenders violating conditions of probation or supervised release are

estimated to account for the remaining short- and long-term growth.

After several years of declining drug offender numbers, particularly among those incarcerated for methamphetamine offenses, the projections indicate that other drug offenders will have the highest increase (57) for both males and females during FY08, followed by methamphetamine (36). Combined, the 93-offender increase is expected to make up 81 percent of the short-term growth in the total prison population. Over the long term, however, the growth among all drug offenders (both methamphetamine and other drugs) is expected to account for only 26 percent of the increase from FY08-17.



The forecast suggests that person offenders will account for a relatively large portion of the long-term growth in the prison population. For example, person offenders are expected to be responsible for 47 percent of the increase in the prison population by the end of FY17.

Among males, other person offenders had the largest projected numerical increase (723) over the ten-year period, followed by sex offenders (465). Among females, other person offenders also had the largest projected increase (65) by the end of the forecast period, whereas sex offenders had the highest long-term percentage increase (90%).

Since the inception of the Felony DWI law in August 2002, the number of male DWI offenders has increased substantially, growing by an average of more than 100 offenders per year. This year's forecast suggests, however, that the growth in the male DWI population will taper off with a 12-offender increase (2%) during FY08. Among females, the DWI population is projected to increase by one offender during FY08 and six over the entire ten-year period.

Full Report Available

Minnesota Prison Population Projections - Fiscal Year 2008 examines recent trends in Minnesota's prison population, analyzes accuracy of projections since 2000, and presents the prison population forecast over the next ten years. It is available online at www.doc.state.mn.us/publications/documents/ProjectionsReport-FY08_Final.pdf.

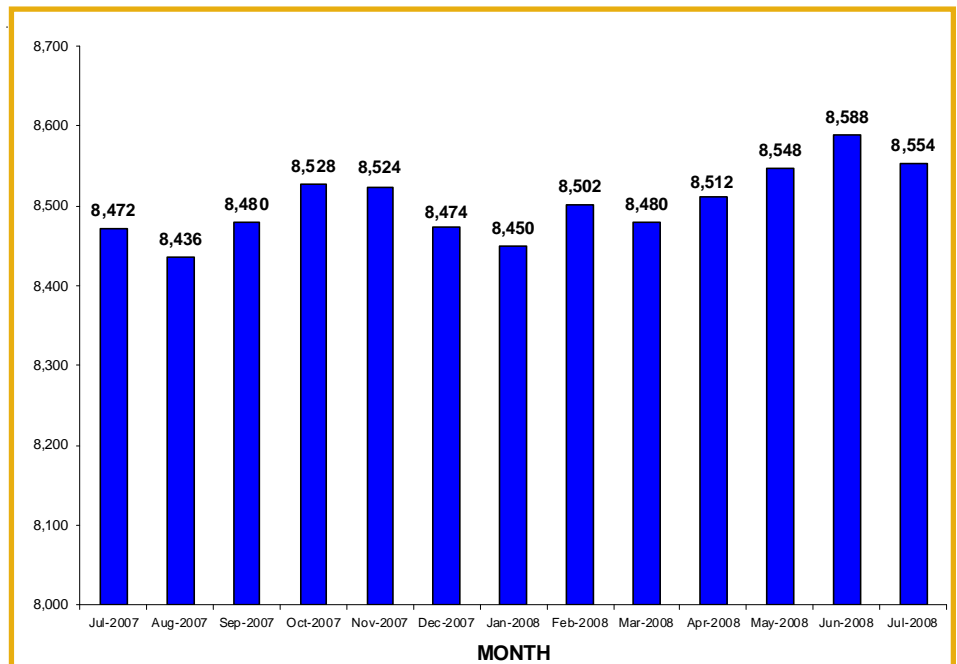


Figure 2. Projected Male Total Prison Population, FY08*

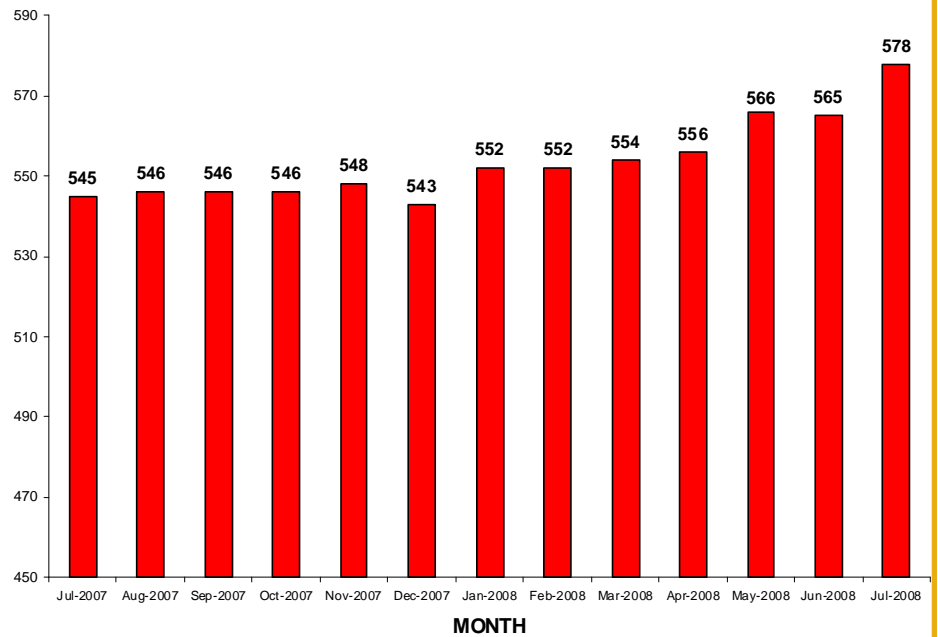


Figure 3. Projected Female Total Prison Population, FY08*

*Includes those housed in a DOC facility or contracted to be housed in a local jail/private facility

