



# 2008 Legislative Mini-Forums

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## What are the factors influencing Prison and Jail Populations?

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## Background

- The Maine Justice Policy Center conducts independent analyses of crime and justice data.
- This research is based primarily on data provided by the Maine Department of Corrections information system (CORIS).

### **Current Situation about Maine's Corrections population**

- Lowest prison incarceration rate in the nation
- Prisons are over capacity by 300 prisoners
- In-house jail population has increased 89 percent in the last ten years

### **Five factors influencing prison and jail numbers**

- Reentry Practices
- Probation Violations
- Pretrial Practices
- Sentencing Practices
- State Crime Rates

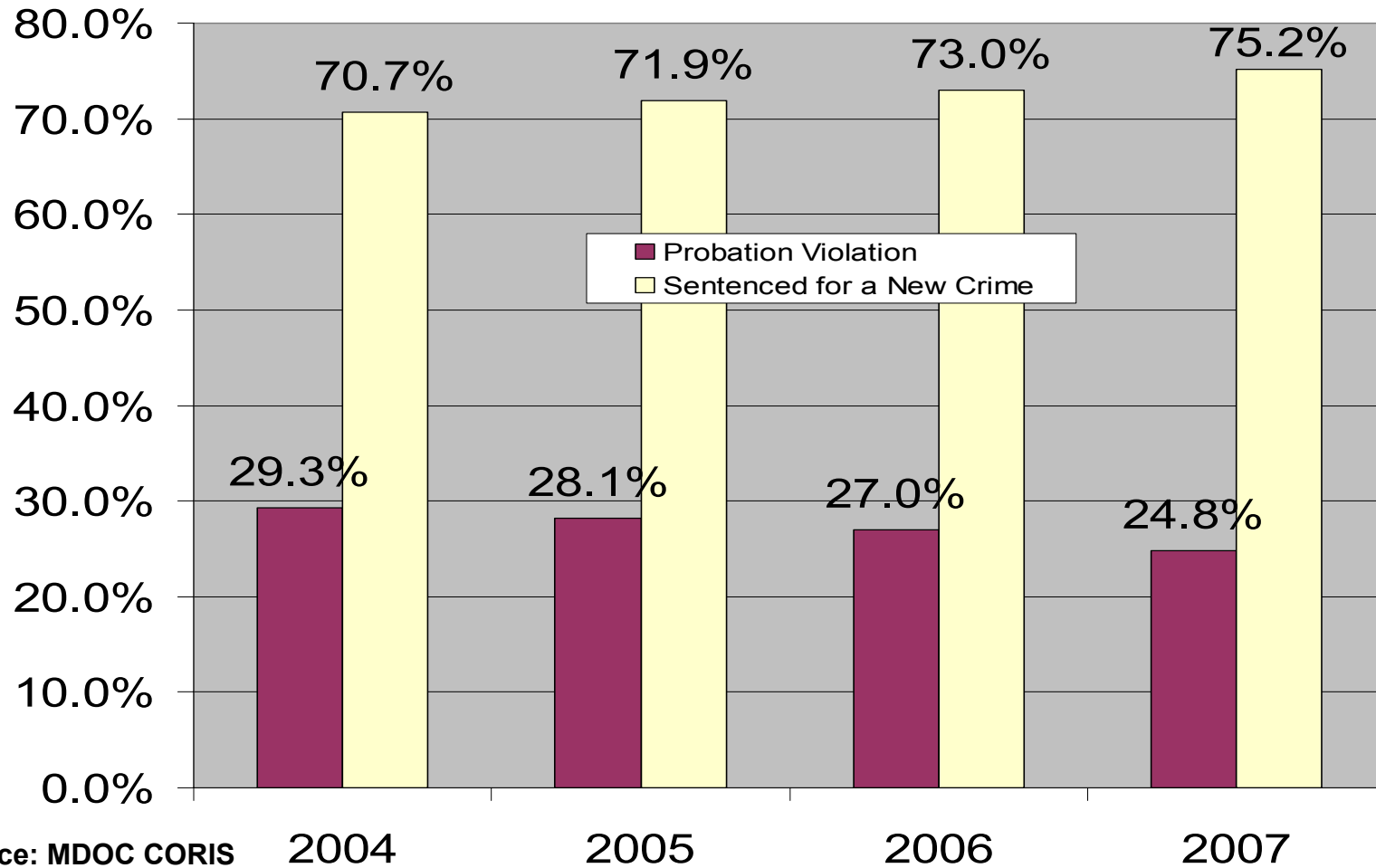
### Reentry Practices

- 98 percent of prison inmates will be released from prison.
- Almost two thirds of the prison population (10/15/2007) have a sentence of 3 years or less.
- A sample of 400 MDOC inmates found 81% with at least one previous criminal conviction.

### Probation Violations

- In 2004, 60% (610) of all new admissions to prison are the result of a violation of probation. About 45% are for a technical violation; 55% are for a new criminal act
- In county jails, about 42% of the sentenced population are serving a violation of probation
- 30% of the jails' pretrial population is being held for a probation violation

## Prison Population by Type of Court Action



Source: MDOC CORIS

### Pretrial Practices (Jails)

- Pretrial defendants represent over 60% of the offenders in county jail in 2007, more than double from 10 years ago.
- The average length of stay of pretrial defendants in a majority of Maine jails is more than three times higher than those in other states.
- A wide range exists in the percentage of pretrial defendants in individual county jails from a low in Piscataquis County of 16.4 percent to a high in Cumberland County of 74.7 percent.

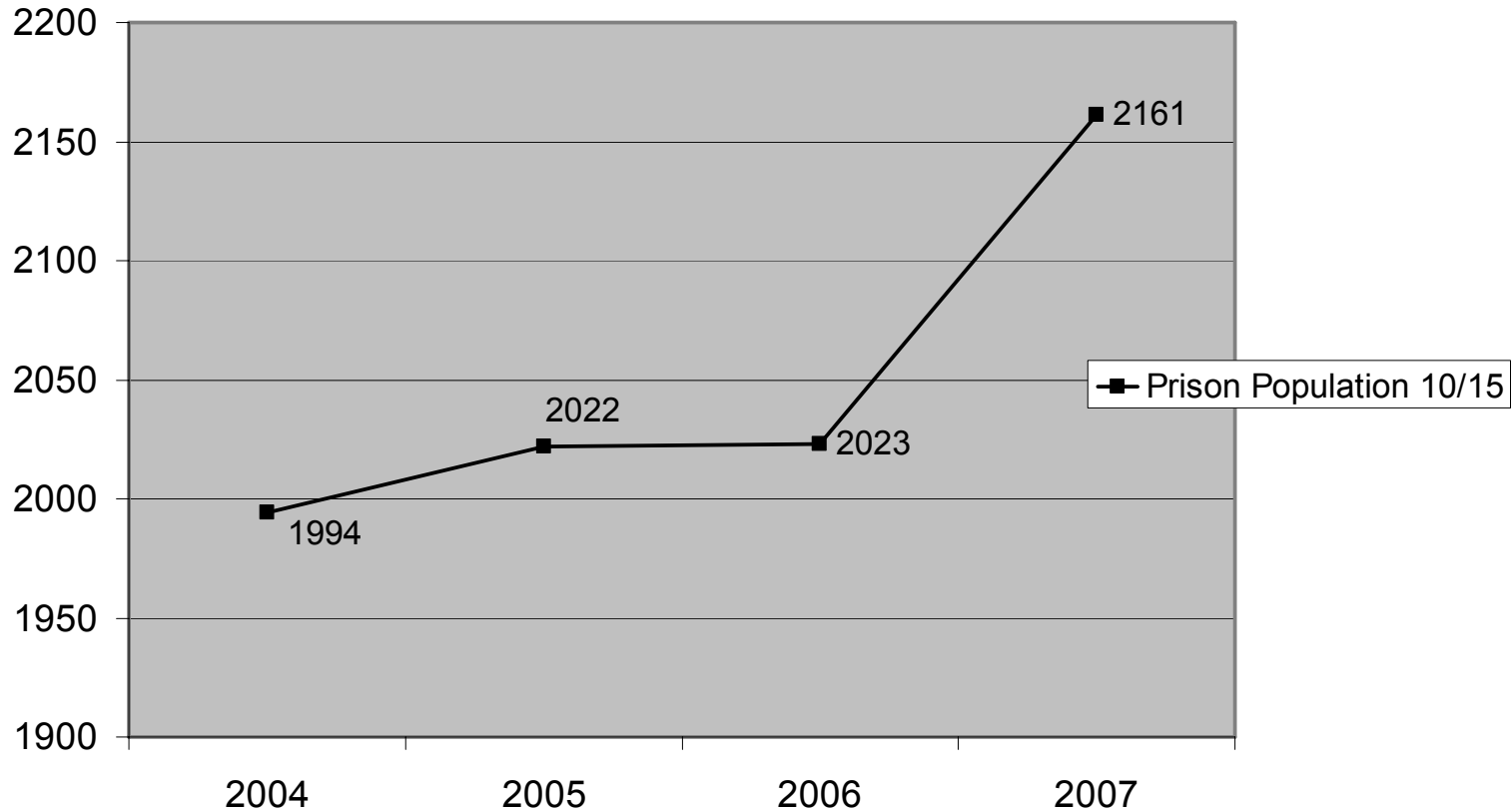
### Sentencing Practices

- No major increase in sentencing length over the past four years
- Split-sentenced probationers in Maine have higher revocation rates. Individuals with straight probation have a revocation rate of 27.3 percent while individuals with split sentences have a revocation rate of 39.7 percent.
- Majority of Maine DOC offenders are on probation or in prison with a split sentence

### State Crime Rates

- Maine's Crime Rate has been relatively stable over the last 10 years.
- In 2006, however, property and violent crimes rose three percent (3%).
- Between 2006-2007, the increase in prison population appears driven by offenders receiving a sentence for a new crime.

# Prison Population on 10/15/2004, 2005, 2006, 2007



Source: MDOC CORIS

## Resources

- CAAC reports  
<http://www.maine.gov/corrections/caac/CAACFinalReport.pdf>  
<http://www.maine.gov/corrections/caac/reports/InterimReport.pdf>
- Sabol, W., and Couture, H., *Prisoners in 2006*, December 2007, NCJ2194, Bureau of Justice Statistics
- Rubin M., *Targeted Interventions Could Ease Maine's Prison and Jail Population*, February, 2008, Maine Crime and Justice Brief Series, Muskie School of Public Service.
- Noreus B., and Rubin M., *Property and Violent Crimes Increase in 2006, But 30-Year Trend is Downward*, February, 2008, Maine Crime and Justice Brief Series, Muskie School of Public Service.
- Rubin, M., Presentation at Maine Sentencing Summit; Analysis of Sentences and Probation Conditions of MDOC clients 2004-2007, presented on October 30, 2007
- Shaler, G., Dorsey, C., and Leighton, A., *Reoccurring Criminal Behavior Analysis: Snapshot Survey of 400 Maine State Prisoner Files*, October 2003, Muskie School of Public Service

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