

May 11, 2010

# Elderly Inmates In California Prisons

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LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented to:

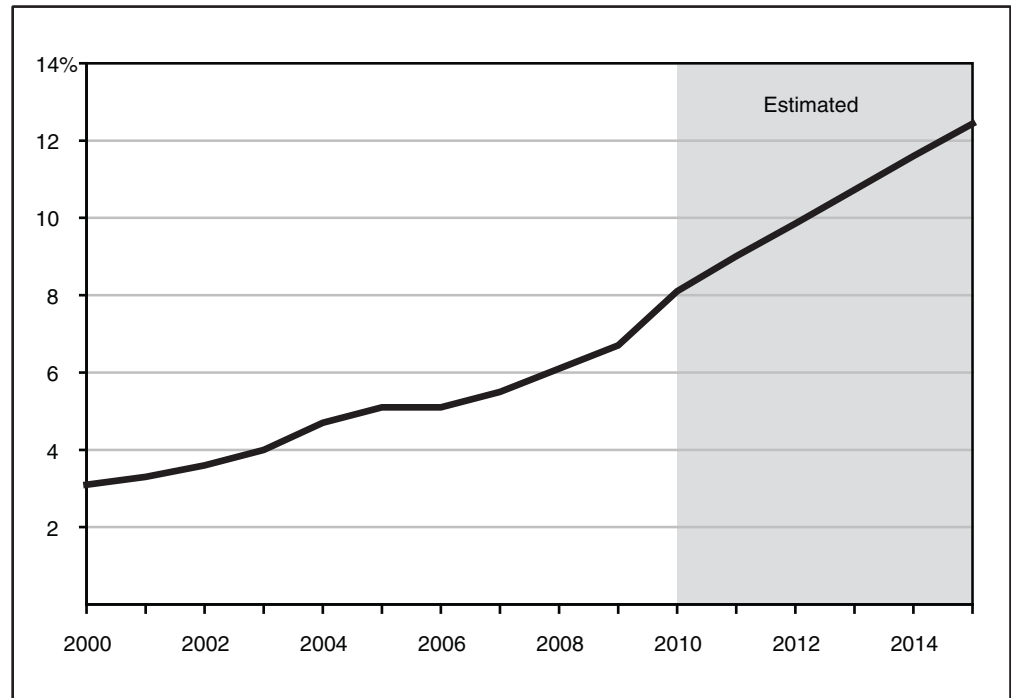
Assembly Committee on Public Safety

Hon. Tom Ammiano, Chair





## Increasing Percentage of Inmates Are Over Age 55



- According to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the percentage of inmates over the age of 55 has more than doubled over the past decade, from 3 percent (or about 4,900 inmates) in 2000, to 8 percent (or about 13,600 inmates) in 2010.
- The department projects that the percentage of inmates over the age of 55 will continue to increase over the next few years to about 12 percent of the prison population by 2015.
- The growth in elderly inmates is primarily due to various sentencing law changes that have increased the average length of stay in prison, such as the “Three Strikes and You’re Out” law.



## Elderly Inmates Are More Expensive to Incarcerate

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- ☑ Although CDCR does not track inmate expenditure data by age group (such as over age 55), our review of research from other states suggests that it costs two to three times more to incarcerate an elderly inmate, as compared to the average inmate. In California, the average annual cost to incarcerate an inmate in prison is about \$51,000.
  
- ☑ Some of the reasons why elderly inmates cost more to incarcerate are their increased need for (1) particular health care services (including appropriate facilities to provide such services) and (2) special housing accommodations (such as showers with handrails).



## Reducing the Elderly Inmate Population to Achieve State Savings

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- In the past, our office has recommended early discharge to parole for non-violent and nonserious inmates over the age of 55. This is because research indicates that many of these older inmates represent a relatively low risk of reoffending and show high rates of parole success. We estimate that such a policy would result in annual state savings in the several millions of dollars.
  
- Similarly, the federal court-appointed Receiver for prison medical services recently proposed releasing inmates who are permanently medically incapacitated and pose no threat to public safety to parole.