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California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation: Division of Juvenile Facilities

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented to:

Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4

On State Administration

Hon. Mark DeSaulnier, Chair

Senate Public Safety Committee

Hon. Mark Leno, Chair





Overview of Division of Juvenile Facilities

- ☑ **Background.** The Division of Juvenile Facilities (DJF), the statutory name for the agency often referred to as the Division of Juvenile Justice, is responsible for the housing, supervision, and rehabilitation of individuals that have been committed to their custody. As a result of Chapter 175, Statutes of 2007 (SB 81, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), only juveniles who are violent, serious, or sex offenders are committed to DJF.

- ☑ **Characteristics of Wards.** As of November 18, 2009, 1,564 wards (generally ages 13 to 25, average age 19) reside in DJF institutions. Males comprise about 95 percent of the ward population. Latinos account for roughly two-thirds of the total population, while African-Americans make up about one-third the population.

- ☑ **Operations Budget.** The 2009-10 budget includes about \$444 million—almost entirely from the General Fund—to operate DJF. This amount is roughly \$23 million, or less than 5 percent, below the revised 2008-09 amount.

- ☑ **Juvenile Facilities.** The DJF is comprised of six youth correctional facilities and two camps. This year, DJF announced plans to close the Heman G. Stark Youth Correctional Facility in Chino by March 2010.



Several Ways to Be Committed to DJF

- Juvenile Court Admissions.** Most first-time admissions to DJF are made by juvenile courts. Roughly 90 percent of the institutional population is committed by the juvenile courts and includes offenders who have committed both misdemeanors and felonies.

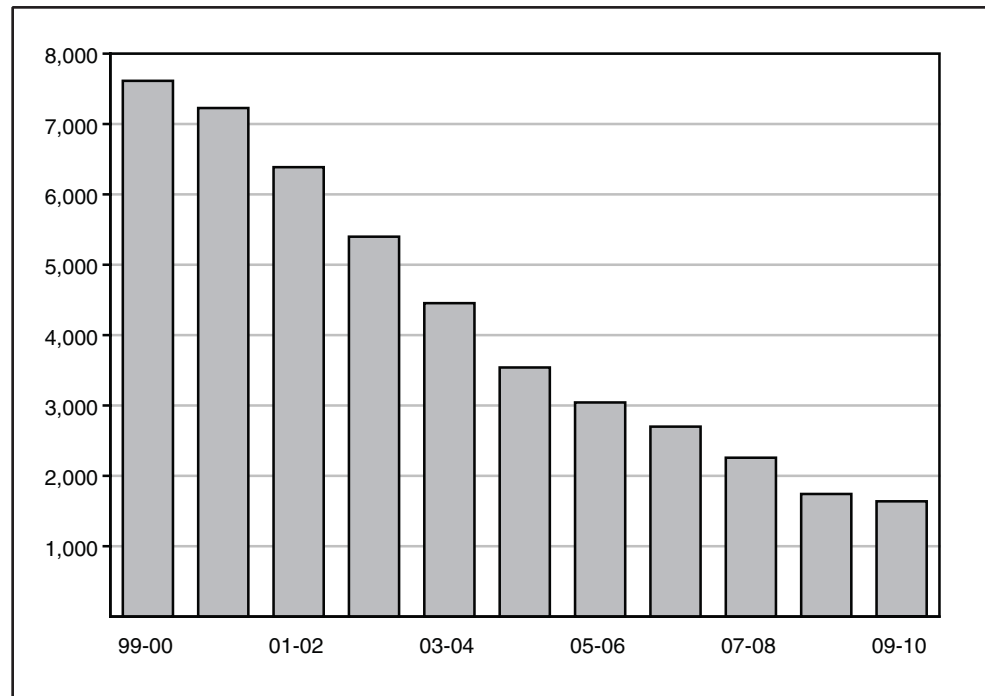
- Criminal Court Commitments.** Roughly 10 percent of the DJF institutional population is initially committed by criminal courts. This includes juveniles committed directly to DJF after being tried and convicted as adults. It also includes youthful offenders sentenced to adult prison but housed at a DJF facility. Current law requires that these individuals be transferred from DJF to prison at age 18, unless their earliest possible release date comes before they reach age 21.

- Parole Violators.** Parolees who violate a condition of parole are returned to a DJF facility. In addition, some parolees are recommitted to such a facility if they commit a new offense while on parole.



Steep Decline in Juvenile Institution Population

DJF Average Daily Population

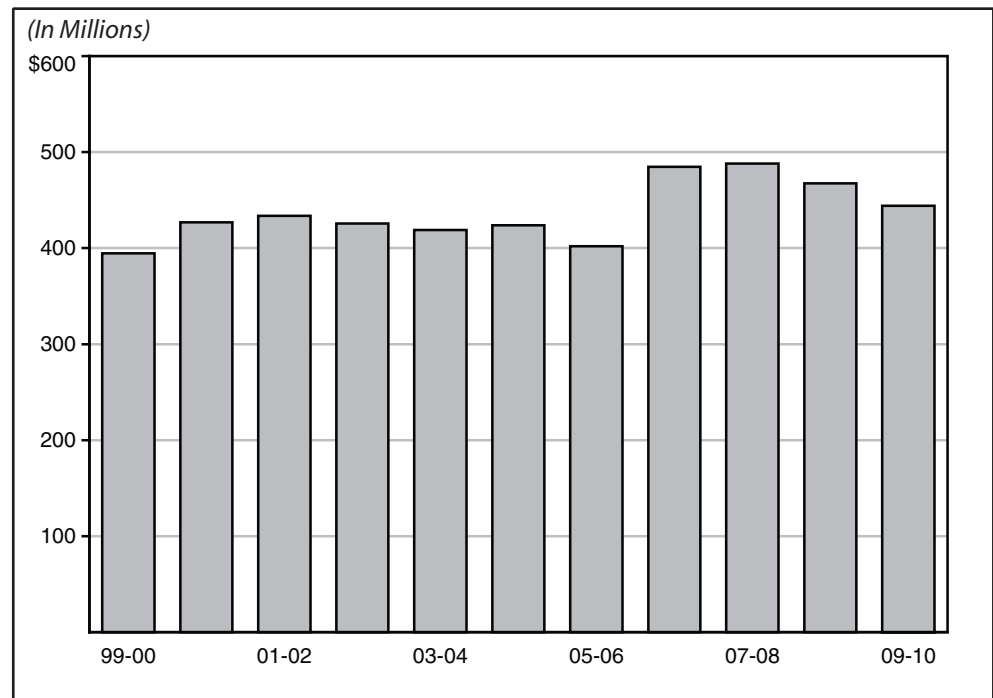


- The DJF institutional population has declined by nearly 80 percent (average annual decrease of 6 percent) since 1999-00, decreasing from 7,600 wards to 1,600 wards. The juvenile parole population has declined at a similar pace over that period.
- Several factors have contributed to this decrease in the ward population, including (1) the decline in juvenile arrest rates, (2) statutory changes that increase the likelihood that youthful offenders will end up in adult institutions, (3) increased capacity at the county level to retain juvenile offenders, and (4) the enactment of financial incentives for counties to keep lower-level offenders.



DJF Spending Has Generally Increased Despite Population Drop

DJF Budget



- Despite the significant decline in the juvenile ward and parole populations, DJF's budget has increased by roughly \$50 million, or about 13 percent, between 1999-00 and 2009-10, an average annual increase of just over 1 percent.
- One of the major factors for this increase is the *Farrell v. Cate* lawsuit, which challenged nearly every aspect of the state's operation of its juvenile institutions. Spending related to this lawsuit represents roughly one-quarter of DJF's budget.
- Currently, the state spends an average of \$247,000 to house and rehabilitate a ward, not including parole costs, which is almost five times the cost ten years ago. This average cost appears to be relatively high compared to other selected states, such as Texas (\$99,000), Washington (\$104,000), Louisiana (\$119,000), and Illinois (\$71,000).



Mental Health Services for DJF Wards

- Mental Health Living Units.*** Of the eight different living units available to DJF wards, four are designed for those with identified mental health needs. The DJF also has units dedicated to youth experiencing mental health crisis.

- Mental Health Programs.*** Currently, about one-quarter of the DJF ward population participates in at least one mental health treatment program. The DJF provides these particular wards with various programs, including residential mental health services, behavior treatment intervention, specialized counseling, and sexual behavior treatment.

- Mental Health Remedial Plan.*** The *Farrell v. Cate* settlement requires DJF to, among other things, implement a Suicide Prevention Assessment, develop mental health policies and programs, provide appropriate staff training, and develop treatment tools and assessments. In May 2009, the court-appointed mental health experts found that DJF was in substantial compliance with only 25 percent of the items audited.



Recent LAO Juvenile Justice Realignment Proposal



Shift Full Responsibility for Juvenile Offenders to Counties

- Under realignment, counties would have full program authority and the corresponding financial responsibility for juvenile offenders.
- Counties would be financially responsible for reimbursing DJF for any county youths placed in DJF facilities.



Benefits of Realignment Proposal

- ***Increases Accountability for Results.*** Provides fiscal interest for counties in promoting positive outcomes for all juvenile offenders and in preventing low-level offenders from becoming more serious offenders.
- ***Promotes Flexibility, Efficiency, and Innovation.*** Provides greater ability for counties to design programs to meet their unique challenges in dealing with juvenile offenders.
- ***Facilitates Closer Supervision of Offenders.*** Provides for a more efficient and effective system for supervising a small and disperse population in the community.
- ***Gives Counties Greater Fiscal Certainty.*** Provides greater capacity to counties for developing long-term plans to improve their facilities.