

November 4, 2010

Overview of the Division of Juvenile Facilities

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented to:
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
Hon. Alyson Huber, 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. Since 2007, only juveniles who are violent, serious, or sex offenders are committed to DJF. Recently, legislation was approved as part of the 2010-11 budget to shift the responsibility of supervising offenders released to the community from DJF facilities to county probation departments.
- ☑ **Characteristics of Wards.** As of October 27, 2010, 1,319 wards (generally ages 14 to 25, average age 19) reside in DJF institutions. Males comprise about 95 percent of the ward population. Latinos account for roughly 55 percent of the total population, while African-Americans make up about 30 percent of the population. Whites and other races make up the remaining 15 percent.
- ☑ **Operations Budget.** The 2010-11 budget includes about \$316 million—almost entirely from the General Fund—to operate DJF. This amount is roughly \$45 million, or about 13 percent, below the revised 2009-10 amount.
- ☑ **Juvenile Facilities.** The DJF is currently comprised of five correctional facilities (two in Southern California and three in Northern California) and two camps.



Several Ways to be Committed to DJF

- Juvenile Court Admissions.** Most first-time admissions to DJF are made by juvenile courts. Roughly 80 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 20 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 allows these individuals to be transferred from DJF to prison at age 18, unless their earliest possible release date comes before they reach age 21.

- Returns for Violations Following Release.** Offenders who violate a condition of their supervision in the community could be returned to a DJF facility. In addition, some offenders may be recommitted to such a facility if they commit a new offense following their release.



DJF Continues Progress in Implementing *Farrell* Remedial Plans

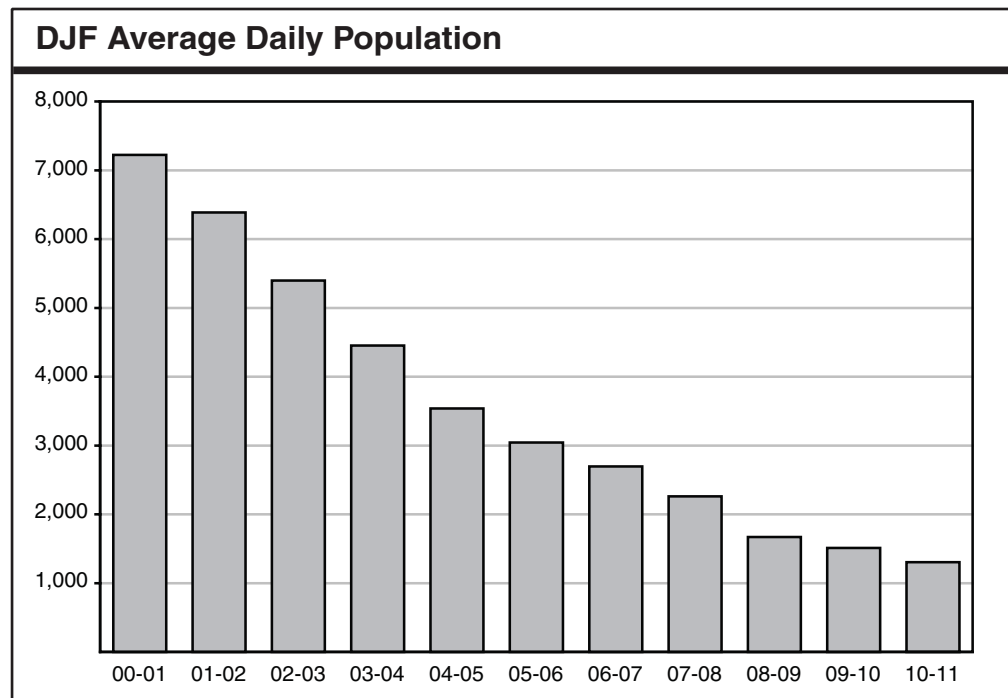
(Items Reviewed by Auditors, as of August 2010)

Remedial Plan	Substantial Compliance	Partial Compliance	Beginning Compliance	Non-Compliance
Education Services	90%	4%	—	6%
Wards with Disabilities	86	14	—	—
Sexual Behavior	40	45	4%	11
Health Care Services	87	1	—	12
Safety and Welfare	67	25	6	3
Dental Services	94	2	—	4
Mental Health	41	26	20	13
Overall	84%	5%	1%	9%

- In January 2003, a lawsuit, *Farrell v. Allen* was filed against DJF, which challenged nearly every aspect of the state's operation of its juvenile institutions (such as not providing adequate care and effective treatment programs).
- In November 2004, the administration agreed to plaintiffs' demand that the state develop and implement remedial plans to address deficiencies in seven program areas: (1) education, (2) disabilities, (3) sex behavior treatment, (4) health care, (5) safety and welfare, (6) dental care, and (7) mental health.
- Compliance with the remedial plans is monitored by court-appointed auditors. As of August 2010, court-appointed auditors found DJF in substantial compliance with the consent decree in 84 percent of the items reviewed, up from a 65 percent rate of substantial compliance in July 2008.



Steep Decline in Juvenile Institution Population



- The DJF ward population has declined by over 80 percent (average annual decrease of 16 percent) since 2000-01, decreasing from roughly 7,200 wards to 1,300 wards.
- 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 juvenile 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 in their custody.
- The DJF ward population is expected to decline further in the next few years as a result proposals approved as part of the 2010-11 budget, which include (1) limiting the ability for DJF staff to delay the parole consideration date of a ward for disciplinary reasons and (2) shifting the responsibility of supervising offenders released from a DJF facility to county probation departments.



Population Decline Has Reduced the Need for DJF Facilities

- ☑ Since 2003, the DJF has closed nine of its youth correctional facilities. Most recently, the division closed the Heman G. Stark Youth Correctional Facility in Chino. Last month, the division announced plans to close the Preston Youth Correctional Facility in Lone.

- ☑ According to information provided by DJF staff, the division's facilities and camps currently operate at 45 percent of design capacity. The design capacity of individual facilities ranges from a high of 90 percent to a low of about 30 percent. We note, however, that, in some cases, the requirements of the *Farrell* consent decree prevent many of the housing units at these facilities from fully utilizing their design capacity.