

BOARD OF PAROLE HEARINGS

2025

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REPORT OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS



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# 2025

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

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### WORKLOAD AT A GLANCE

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#### Parole Hearings

##### ◆ 7,882 scheduled parole hearings

- Down 1.46% from 7,999 in 2024
- 251 or 3% were housed at an institution for women, unchanged from 2024
- 7,631 or 97% were housed at an institution for men, unchanged in 2024
- 3,317 or 42% were initial hearings, down from 45% in 2024
- 4,565 or 58% were subsequent hearings, up from 55% in 2024
- 3,699 or 47% were youth offender parole hearings, down from 48% in 2024
  - 2,613 or 71% of those were sentenced to an indeterminate term and eligible for a youth offender parole hearing, down from 72% in 2024
  - 1,085 or 29% of those were sentenced to a determinate- term and eligible for a youth offender parole hearing, up from 28% in 2024
- 3,674 or 47% were eligible for an elderly parole hearing, up from 45% in 2024
  - 3,410 or 93% of those were for indeterminately sentenced people eligible for an elderly parole hearing, no change from 2024
  - 264 or 7% of those were for determinately sentenced people eligible for an elderly parole hearing, no change from 2024
- 728 or 9% were for indeterminately sentenced people eligible for a parole hearing as a nonviolent offender

##### ◆ 832 parole grants

- Down 28% from 1,150 in 2024
- 24% of hearings conducted, down from 31% in 2024
- 11% of scheduled parole suitability hearings, down from 14% in 2024
- 45 or 5% were housed at an institution for women, no change from in 2024
- 787 or 95% were housed at an institution for men, no change from 2024
- 207 or 18% were grants issued at a person's initial hearing, down from 24% in 2024
- 427 or 51% were eligible for a youth offender parole hearing, up from 44% in 2024
- 424 or 51% were eligible for an elderly parole hearing, down from 53% in 2024
- 65 or 9% were to indeterminately sentenced persons eligible for a parole hearing as a nonviolent offender

◆ **2,626 parole denials**

- No percentage change from 2,614 in 2024
- 76% of conducted hearings, up from 69% in 2024
- 33% of scheduled hearings, up from 32% in 2024
- 74 or 3% were housed at an institution for women, unchanged from 2024
- 2,552 or 97% were housed at an institution for men, unchanged from 2024
- 1,095 or 42% were eligible for a youth offender parole hearing, down from 45% in 2024
- 1,383 or 53% were eligible for an elderly parole hearing, up from 49% in 2024
- 235 or 9% were to indeterminately sentenced persons eligible for a parole hearing as a nonviolent offender

◆ **598 stipulations**

- Up 9% from 547 in 2024
- 8% of scheduled hearings, up from 7% 2024
- 18 or 3% were housed at an institution for women, unchanged from 2024
- 580 or 97% were housed at an institution for men, unchanged from 2024
- 263 or 44% were eligible for a youth offender parole hearing, down from 51% in 2024
- 254 or 43% were eligible for an elderly parole hearing, up from 37% in 2024
- 67 or 11% were to indeterminately sentenced people eligible for a parole hearing as a nonviolent offender

◆ **2,181 voluntary waivers**

- Up 12% from 1,956 in 2024
- 28% of scheduled hearings, up from 25% in 2024
- 55 or 3% were housed at an institution for women, unchanged from 2024
- 2,126 or 97% were housed at an institution for men, unchanged from 2024
- 1,054 or 48 % were eligible for a youth offender parole hearing, down from 53% in 2024
- 909 or 42% were eligible for an elderly parole hearing, up from 39% in 2024
- 189 or 9% were from indeterminately sentenced people eligible for a parole hearing as a nonviolent offender

◆ **1,182 postponements**

- Down 7% from 1,271 in 2024
- 15% of scheduled hearings, down from 16% in 2024
- 43 or 4% were housed at an institution for women, up from 3% in 2024
- 1,139 or 96% were housed at an institution for men, down from 97% in 2024
- 602 or 51% were eligible for a youth offender parole hearing, up from 50% in 2024

- 502 or 42% were eligible for an elderly parole hearing, down from 43% in 2024
- 130 or 11% were for indeterminately sentenced people eligible for a parole hearing as a nonviolent offender

◆ **463 continued or cancelled hearings**

- Up 1% from 467 in 2024
  - 82 or 18% were continued
  - 381 or 82% were cancelled
- 6% of scheduled hearings, unchanged from 6% in 2024
- 16 or 3% were housed at an institution for women, down from 5% in 2024
- 447 or 97% were housed at an institution for men, up from 95% in 2024
- 192 or 41% were eligible for a youth offender parole hearing, down from 50% in 2024
- 202 or 44% were eligible for an elderly parole hearing, up from 42% in 2024
- 45 or 10% were for indeterminately sentenced people eligible for a parole hearing as a nonviolent offender

**Parole Reconsideration Hearings**

- ◆ 280 parole reconsideration hearings scheduled
  - Up 11% from 252 in 2024
  - 58 or 22% were initial parole reconsideration hearings, down from 33% in 2024
  - 222 or 79% were subsequent annual parole reconsideration hearings, up from 67% in 2024

**Administrative Reviews to Consider Advancing Parole Hearing Dates**

- ◆ 1,886 cases were screened for possible review, up 6% from 2024
- ◆ 1,547 cases or 82% received a review on the merits, up from 81% in 2024
  - 648 or 42% of cases reviewed on the merits were approved for an advanced hearing date, down from 53% in 2024
  - 878 or 57% of cases reviewed on the merits were denied an advanced hearing date, up from 35% in 2024
- ◆ 30% of parole hearings held because of an administrative review conducted in 2025 to advance a person's next hearing date resulted in a grant of parole, no change from 30% in 2024
- ◆ 44% of parole hearings held because of an administrative review conducted in 2024 to advance a person's next hearing date resulted in a denial of parole, up from 37% in 2024

**Comprehensive Risk Assessments (CRA)**

- ◆ 4,029 CRAs were completed, up 8% from 3,726 in 2024

**Consultations**

- ◆ 2,204 consultations conducted, no percentage change from 2024

## **Correspondence**

- ◆ 118,410 pieces of correspondence processed, up 1% from 117,104 in 2024
  - 1,108 letters were sent from the Legal Division, down 39% from 1,828 in 2024
  - 31,144 hearing notices were sent, down 6% from 33,154 in 2024
  - 12,642 notices of determinately sentenced nonviolent offender parole reviews, petition to advance reviews, and administrative reviews were sent, down 6% from 11,907 in 2024

## **Determinately sentenced Nonviolent Offender Parole Reviews**

- ◆ 2,462 referrals to the Board of Parole Hearings (Board) for nonviolent offender parole review, down 5% from 2,587 in 2024
- ◆ 2,438 reviews on the merits were conducted, down 9% from 2,684 in 2024
  - 165 or 7% of eligible for nonviolent parole consideration reviews were approved for release, down 10% from 2024
  - 2,162 or 89% of eligible for nonviolent parole consideration reviews were denied release, up from 88% in 2024
- ◆ 111 referrals were reviewed and closed for lack of jurisdiction, down 15% from 130 in 2024
- ◆ 734 reviews of merit decisions were conducted, down 20% from 914 conducted in 2024
  - 688 decisions or 94% were upheld after review, up from 90% in 2024
  - 46 decisions or 6% were modified after review, down from 10% in 2024

## **Executive Case Summaries**

- ◆ 822 executive case summaries of parole grant decisions were prepared by the Legal Division, down 32% from 1,205 in 2024

## **Extradition Cases**

- ◆ 266 extradition cases were reviewed, down 41% from 450 in 2024

## **Petitions to Advance a Parole Hearing Date**

- ◆ 503 petitions were received, down 3% from 518 in 2024
- ◆ 503 preliminary reviews of petitions completed, down 3% from 518 in 2024
- ◆ 418 reviews on the merits of petitions received, down 5% from 439 in 2024
  - 170 or 41% of those petitions were approved for an advanced hearing date, down from 50% approved in 2024
  - 231 or 55% of those petitions were denied for an advanced hearing date, up from 44% denied in 2024
- ◆ 22% of parole hearings held as a result of the Board approving a petition to advance a parole hearing date in 2024 resulted in a grant of parole, down from 39% in 2024
- ◆ 55% of parole hearings scheduled as a result of the Board approving a petition to advance a parole hearing date in 2024 resulted in a denial of parole, up from 34% in 2024

### **International Prisoner Transfer Program**

- ◆ 67 cases completed, up 56% from 43 in 2024
- ◆ No persons were transferred to another country, unchanged from 2024

### **Investigations**

- ◆ 840 pre-parole investigations were completed, down 30% from 1,203 in 2024
- ◆ 0 intimate partner battering investigations were completed, down from 2 in 2024
- ◆ 196 Board-initiated investigations were completed, up .51% from 195 in 2024
- ◆ 74 Board-initiated investigative fact findings were completed, down 4% from 71 in 2024
- ◆ 28 parolee out-of-state transfer request investigations, down 22% from 36 in 2024
- ◆ 7 special conditions of parole modification investigations, down 42% from 12 in 2024
- ◆ 1,158 pardon investigations were completed, up 14% from 1,014 in 2024
- ◆ 155 cases where a check was completed to determine if the incarcerated person participated in fraudulent Employment Development Department claims, down 40% from 259 in 2024

### **Offenders with Mental Health Disorders (OMHD) Actions**

- ◆ 383 certification hearings were conducted, down 9% from 423 in 2024
- ◆ 373 placement and annual review hearings were conducted, down 1% from 377 in 2024
- ◆ 164 holds to detain persons for OMHD screening were placed, down 39% from 269 in 2024

### **Parole Discharge Reviews**

- ◆ 10,072 cases were reviewed to determine whether a parolee should be discharged from parole, down 3% from 10,436 in 2024

### **Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) Screening**

- ◆ 2,803 SVP screenings, down 11% from 3,166 in 2024
  - 1,748 cases were referred for clinical screening, down 14% from 2,030 in 2024
  - 1,055 cases were closed as not meeting criteria for clinical screening, down 7% from 1,136 in 2024
  - 1,717 clinical screenings completed, down 19% from 2,115 in 2024
  - 468 people were referred after clinical screening to the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) for a full evaluation, down 8% from 511 in 2024
  - 1,249 were not referred after clinical screening to DSH for a full evaluation, down 22% from 1,604 in 2024

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## GRANT AND DENIAL RATES

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The Board's parole hearing grant and denial rates are calculated both as a percentage of **hearings held** that result in a grant or denial and as a percentage of **hearings scheduled**. A scheduled hearing can result in one of several outcomes: grant, denial, stipulation, voluntary waiver, postponement, cancellation, or continuance. A variety of factors unrelated to a person's suitability for parole can affect the outcome of a scheduled hearing (such as the need to postpone a hearing when a person is ill). For this reason, the percentage of **hearings held** that result in a grant or denial more accurately reflects the Board's parole suitability decision-making.

### Parole Hearing Outcomes as a Percentage of Hearings Held

In 2025, the Board held **3,458** hearings resulting in the following outcomes:

2025 Outcomes of Hearing Held		
Outcome	Number	Percentage
Grant	832	24%
Denial	2,626	76%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,458</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Parole Grant Outcomes as a Percentage of Hearings Held

Grant rates for parole **hearings held** in 2025 are as follows:

- ◆ 24% of all hearings held resulted in a grant, down from 31% in 2024
- ◆ 38% of hearings held at an institution for women resulted in a grant, down from 43% in 2024
- ◆ 24% of hearings held for persons housed at an institution for men resulted in a grant, down from 30% in 2024
- ◆ 28% of hearings held for people eligible for a **youth offender parole hearing** resulted in a grant, down from 30% in 2024
  - 31% of hearings held for indeterminately sentenced people eligible for a youth offender parole hearing resulted in a grant, down from 32% in 2024
  - 17% of hearings held for determinately sentenced persons eligible for a youth offender parole hearing resulted in a grant, down from 20% in 2024
- ◆ 23% of hearings held for people eligible for an **elderly parole hearing** resulted in a grant, down from 32% in 2024
  - 24% of hearings held for indeterminately sentenced people eligible for an elderly parole hearing resulted in a grant, down from 33% in 2024
  - 16% of hearings held for determinately sentenced persons eligible for an elderly parole hearing resulted in a grant, down from 18% in 2024
- ◆ 22% of hearings held for people eligible for a hearing as an indeterminately sentenced nonviolent offender resulted in a grant, down from 31% in 2024
- ◆ 22% of hearings held as a result of a person filing a petition to advance their next hearing date in 2025 resulted in a grant, down from 34% in 2024

- ◆ 30% of hearings held as a result of an administrative review conducted in 2025 resulted in a grant, no change from 2024

### **Parole Grant Outcomes by Comprehensive Risk Assessment (CRA) Rating<sup>1</sup>**

- ◆ 53% of hearings held for people with a CRA rating of low risk for future violence resulted in a grant of parole
- ◆ 25% of hearings held for people with a CRA rating of moderate risk for future violence resulted in a grant of parole
  - 41% of hearings held for people with a CRA rating of moderate low risk for future violence resulted in a grant.
  - 19% of hearings held for people with a CRA rating of moderate medium risk for future violence resulted in a grant.
  - 7% of hearings held for people with a CRA rating of moderate high risk for future violence resulted in a grant.
- ◆ 1% of hearings held for a person with a CRA rating of high risk for future violence resulted in a grant of parole

### **Parole Denial Outcomes as a Percentage of Hearings Held**

Various denial rates for parole **hearings held** in 2025 are as follows:

- ◆ 69% of hearings held resulted in a denial, up from 65% in 2024
- ◆ 62% of hearings held at an institution for women resulted in a denial, up from 57% in 2024
- ◆ 76% of hearings held at an institution for men resulted in a denial, up from 70% in 2024
- ◆ 72% of hearings held for people eligible for a youth offender parole hearing resulted in a denial, up from 70% in 2024
  - 69% of hearings held for indeterminately sentenced people eligible for a youth offender parole hearing resulted in a denial, up from 68% in 2024
  - 83% of hearings held for determinately sentenced persons eligible for a youth offender parole hearing resulted in a denial, up from 80% in 2024
- ◆ 77% of hearings held for people eligible for an elderly parole hearing resulted in a denial, up from 68% in 2024
  - 76% of hearings held for indeterminately sentenced people eligible for an elderly parole hearing resulted in a denial, up from 67% in 2024
  - 84% of hearings held for determinately sentenced people eligible for an elderly parole hearing resulted in a denial, up from 82% in 2024
- ◆ 78% of hearings held for indeterminately sentenced persons eligible for a parole hearing as a nonviolent offender resulted in a denial up from 69% in 2024.
- ◆ 55% of hearings held as a result of a person filing a petition to advance their next hearing date in 2025 resulted in a denial, down from 64% from 2024
- ◆ 47% of hearings held as a result of an administrative review conducted in 2025 resulted in a denial, down from 49% in 2024

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<sup>1</sup> A CRA may be up to three years old at the time of the person's hearing.

### Grant Rates by Race and Ethnicity

For hearings held in 2025, Black and Latino/a incarcerated persons were granted parole at a rate slightly higher than white incarcerated persons. The overall rates varied by a total of three percent, from highest to lowest grant rate.<sup>2</sup>

Outcome	Black	Latino/a	White
Grant	23%	25%	22%
Deny	77%	75%	78%

A more extensive independent study is being conducted by the University of California at Berkeley concerning hearing outcomes, evidence-based risk factors, and various demographics, including race and ethnicity.

### Parole Hearing Outcomes as a Percentage of Scheduled Hearings

As mentioned above, a scheduled parole hearing can result in a grant, denial, stipulation, voluntary waiver, postponement, cancellation, or continuance. As shown below, a grant rate of 11 percent for scheduled hearings, therefore, **does not** mean the remaining 83 percent of scheduled hearings resulted in a denial. In 2025, the Board scheduled **7,882** hearings resulting in the following outcomes:

Outcome	Number	Percentage
Grant	832	11%
Denial	2,626	33%
Stipulation	598	8%
Voluntary waiver	2,181	28%
Postponement	1,182	15%
Cancelled	381	5%
Continued	82	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,882</b>	<b>100%</b>

Using the **scheduled hearing** outcomes above, 832 people were granted parole and 2,626 people were denied parole by the Board after a hearing. Another 598 people were denied parole without a hearing when they entered a stipulation with the Board stating that they were not suitable for parole. In the remaining 3,826 hearings scheduled, there was no decision rendered concerning the person's suitability for parole because the person voluntarily waived their hearing or the hearing was postponed, continued, or cancelled.

<sup>2</sup>There were too few hearings held for persons from other races and ethnicities to provide meaningful comparison.

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**RECIDIVISM RATES**

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**Recidivism Rates for Persons Released After Serving a Sentence of Life with the Possibility of Parole**

A total of 6,220 people serving a term of life with the possibility of parole were released from state prison between fiscal year 2011-12 and fiscal year 2019-20 after receiving a grant of parole from the Board. More than 97 percent of persons who were released after a grant of parole successfully transitioned to the community without being convicted of another crime within three years of release. Less than three percent were convicted of a new misdemeanor or felony crime within three years of release and less than one percent were convicted of new felony crimes against persons during the same three-year period.

Fiscal Year of Release	No. Released	No. with any new felony or misdemeanor conviction within 3 years of release	% with any new felony or misdemeanor conviction within 3 years of release	No. with new felony conviction for crime against person within 3 years of release	% with new felony conviction for crime against person within 3 years of release
<b>FY 2019-20</b>	972	29	2.9%	7	0.7%
<b>FY 2018-19</b>	1,051	23	2.2%	2	0.2%
<b>FY 2017-18</b>	757	15	2.0%	1	0.1%
<b>FY 2016-17</b>	701	13	1.9%	6	0.9%
<b>FY 2015-16</b>	720	23	3.2%	5	0.7%
<b>FY 2014-15</b>	682	16	2.3%	3	0.4%
<b>FY 2013-14</b>	510	16	3.1%	3	0.6%
<b>FY 2012-13</b>	478	20	4.2%	2	0.4%
<b>FY 2011-12</b>	349	11	3.2%	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,220</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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### **Comprehensive Risk Assessments**

Each year the Board's Chief Psychologist presents to the Board an analysis of comprehensive risk assessments (CRA) administered by the Board's Forensic Assessment Division (FAD) during the preceding year. The information is presented at an executive board meeting open to the public.

A CRA is a structured professional judgment model of risk assessment that assesses a person's potential risk for future violence as low, moderate, or high. In 2025, the FAD relied on the Historical Clinical Risk Management-20 (HCR-20) Version 3, the STATIC-99-Revised (when applicable) and Structured Professional Judgment Template to Assess Sexual Dynamic Risk (when applicable) for its CRAs. Based on CRAs administered in 2025, 7% of examinees were rated low risk, 60% of examinees were rated moderate risk, and 33% were rated high risk.

### **Elderly Parole Hearings**

There are two elderly parole programs under California law: Court-Ordered Elderly Parole and Statutory Elderly Parole.

#### **Court-Ordered Elderly Parole Program**

Determinately and indeterminately sentenced persons who are at least 60 years old and have served 25 years of continuous incarceration are eligible to receive a parole hearing under the court-ordered elderly parole program. Persons sentenced to LWOP or death are excluded. However, unlike the statutory elderly parole program, persons sentenced under California's Three Strikes law for a second or third strike and persons convicted of first-degree murder of a peace officer are not excluded from the court-ordered program.

#### **Statutory Elderly Parole Program**

Determinately and indeterminately sentenced persons who are at least 50 years old and have served 20 years of continuous incarceration are eligible to receive a parole hearing under the statutory elderly parole program. A person is excluded from this program if they are: (1) sentenced to LWOP or death; (2) sentenced under California's "Three Strikes" law for a second or third strike, or (3) convicted of first-degree murder of a peace officer.

In 2025, the Board scheduled 3,674 hearings for people eligible for elderly parole, resulting in 424 grants, 1,383 denials, and 254 stipulations to unsuitability. The remaining 1,613 scheduled hearings were waived, postponed, continued, or cancelled.

#### **Parole Consideration for Determinately Sentenced Nonviolent Offenders**

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) refers certain determinately sentenced persons eligible for parole consideration as a nonviolent offender to the Board for review and possible release once the person has served

the full term of their primary offense. Persons are reviewed for release based on their criminal history, a review of their institutional records, and after consideration of input received from the incarcerated person, victims, victims' families, and the district attorney's office that prosecuted the person. A written decision is rendered after an administrative review of relevant and reliable records; no hearing is conducted.

The number of persons approved for release under the nonviolent offender parole review program has steadily declined over the past several years, as more persons with recent negative behavior and persons convicted of sex crimes (who were ineligible for parole consideration under the program prior to 2021) are referred to the Board. At the same time, persons who were previously most likely to be approved for release under the program are no longer referred to the Board. This is because nonviolent offenders who participate in rehabilitative programs and who refrain from negative behavior are now eligible for increased credit earning. As a result, many are no longer referred to the Board because they are instead released once they have served the full term of their sentence, less applicable credits.

In 2025, the Board received 2,462 referrals under this program and conducted 2,438 reviews on the merits, resulting in 165 being approved for release and 2,162 denied release. An additional 111 were reviewed and the Board determined it did not have jurisdiction to render a release decision because the person was ineligible for parole consideration.

### **Parole Consideration for Indeterminately Sentenced Nonviolent Offenders**

The Board conducts parole hearings for incarcerated persons sentenced to an indeterminate term (life with the possibility of parole) under an alternative sentencing scheme (such as California's Three Strikes Law) for a nonviolent offense. Under this parole hearing process, CDCR refers eligible persons to the Board for a parole hearing and possible release once they have served the full term of their primary offense.

In 2025, the Board scheduled 728 parole hearings for indeterminately sentenced people eligible for a parole hearing as a nonviolent offender, resulting in 65 grants, 232 denials, and 67 stipulations to unsuitability. The remaining 364 scheduled hearings were waived, postponed, continued, or cancelled.

### **Response to Potential False Positive Opiate Tests**

In 2025, in response to revelations about the potential of false positive opiate test results, BPH attorneys began conducting file reviews to determine whether, without the positive drug screening, there is sufficient evidence to support an incarcerated person's denial of parole suitability, and if not, order a new hearing.

- BPH identified incarcerated persons who were denied parole between April 1, 2024 and April 17, 2025 and were on Medication Assisted Treatment. BPH identified 461 hearings that met that criteria.

- BPH then looked at whether the incarcerated person who was denied parole had a positive drug test for opiates between March 31, 2024 and July 31, 2024. That additional criteria reduced the list to 99 persons. For those 99 persons, BPH attorneys reviewed the hearing transcript to assess: Was the positive test for opiates included as a reason for the decision and, if so, was it a primary reason for the decision.
- Based on this review, 15 persons were referred for an ad hoc Administrative Review to determine whether their hearing date should be advanced. After the Administrative Review was completed, 13 persons were referred for a new hearing.

### **Parole Terms and Reviews for Discharge from Parole**

Under current law, the parole term for most determinately sentenced persons is now two years and for indeterminately sentenced persons, it is three years. One exception is that parole terms for persons required to register as a sexual offender under Penal Code section 290 et seq. remain unchanged. In addition, persons subject to the new parole terms must be reviewed for possible discharge from parole no later than 12 months after release from confinement, and annually thereafter. The Board is responsible for reviewing all indeterminately sentenced persons and certain determinately sentenced persons for discharge from parole.

In 2025, the Board conducted 10,072 parole discharge reviews.

### **Prosecutor Participation in Parole Hearings**

A prosecutor attended 3,879 suitability hearings in 2025. Of those hearings, 3,022 ended with a grant or denial decision. A grant of parole was issued in 723 (or 24%) resulted in a grant of parole and 2,299 (or 76%) resulted in a denial. As previously noted, the grant rate for all hearings held in 2025 was 24 percent and the denial rate was 76 percent.

### **Youth Offender Parole Hearings**

The Board began conducting youth offender parole hearings in 2014, as required by SB 260 (Chapter 312, Statutes of 2013). Under SB 260, youth offenders were defined as persons who were tried as adults but who were under the age of 18 when they committed their controlling offense. Under SB 260, youth offenders are eligible for a parole hearing during their 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, or 25<sup>th</sup> year of incarceration, depending on the length of the original sentence imposed by the court. Exclusions apply.

The Legislature has since expanded the definition of a youth offender multiple times. Today, persons who committed their controlling offense when they were under the age of 26 are eligible for a youth offender parole hearing during their 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, or 25<sup>th</sup> year of incarceration, depending on the sentence imposed by the court. Exclusions apply. This now also includes persons sentenced to life without the possibility of parole for crimes they committed when they were under the age of 18. Exclusions apply.

Overall, in 2025, the Board scheduled a total of 3,699 youth offender parole hearings; 2,613 were for indeterminately sentenced persons eligible for a youth offender parole hearing and 1,085 were for determinately sentenced persons eligible for a youth offender parole hearing. The 3,699 scheduled hearings resulted in 427 grants (31% of hearings held), 1,095 denials, and 263 stipulations to unsuitability. The remaining 1,914 scheduled hearings were waived, postponed, continued, or cancelled. In 2025, 47% of scheduled suitability hearings were youth offender parole hearings.

### **Victim and Survivor Participation in Parole Hearings**

In 2025, 1,164 suitability hearings had at least one victim or victim's family member in attendance. Of those hearings, 944 ended with a grant or denial decision. A grant of parole was issued in 192 (or 20%) of those hearings 752 (or 80%) resulted in a denial. As previously noted, the grant rate for all hearings held in 2025 was 24 percent and the denial rate was 76 percent.

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## LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

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The information below reflects legal developments as of December 31, 2025.

### ***Armstrong* Class Action Litigation (“*Armstrong II*”)**

The subject of the *Armstrong* litigation is the Board's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) throughout its hearing processes. In 2025, the Board's legal staff provided mandatory ADA training for attorneys representing people at their parole hearings, through Parole Justice Works. The Board continues to work toward full compliance with the *Armstrong* Remedial Plan II.

### **California Supreme Court Case Pending:**

#### ***Criminal Justice Legal Foundation v. CDCR, et. al.*; California Supreme Court, No. S292887**

Issue Presented: Does Proposition 57 authorize CDCR to award and apply earned credits to advance indeterminately sentenced persons' minimum eligible parole dates? Briefing is in process.

### **California Court of Appeal Cases Pending:**

#### ***Jessica M. et. al, v. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, et. al.*; Second District Court of Appeal, No. B343930**

The Los Angeles County Superior Court denied a petition for writ of mandate where petitioners sought to prevent youth parole hearings for people convicted of sex offenses and sentenced to “full, separate, and consecutive” terms under Penal Code section 667.6 based on how the legislation was passed. The superior court held that Jessica's Law resulted in a technical re-enactment of section 667.6, subdivision (c); thus the Legislature could amend that subdivision by a simple majority vote, or alternatively section 3051 did not amend section 667.6, subdivision (c) because the statutes do not conflict. Case was argued March 6, 2026.

## **Significant Cases Resolved in 2025**

### ***In re Thai* (2025) 117 Cal.App.5th 1<sup>3</sup>**

The Court of Appeal upheld the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's regulations which allow only educational merit credits to be applied to youth parole eligible dates.

### ***People v. Batten* (2025) 109 Cal.App.5th 908**

The Court of Appeal found that the statute that subjected parolee who was serving lifetime parole to mandatory remand to the California Department of Corrections and the Board of Parole Hearings upon parole revocation did not violate equal protection, when compared to a statute enacted after parolee was released on parole, which provided that "any inmate sentenced to a life term shall be released on parole for a period of three years."

## **Writs of Habeas Corpus**

In 2025, the Board was required to file a response to 26 habeas petitions filed in state and federal court (up from 25 in 2024). In 2025, the Board held two court-ordered parole rescission hearings and one court-ordered parole consideration hearing as a result of habeas petitions filed by incarcerated persons.

In addition, the Board was ordered to conduct parole consideration hearings for twelve people who were under 26 at the time of the commitment offense and were sentenced under Penal Code section 190.2, subdivision (d), based on *People v. Briscoe* (2024) 103 Cal.App.5th 479.

## **Regulations**

On September 5, 2025, the Board filed a notice of proposed rulemaking action with the Office of Administrative Law, seeking to promulgate regulations governing consultations and the commutation and recall of sentence recommendation assessment process. The regulations are expected to take effect in 2026.

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<sup>3</sup> The Board was not a party to this case, but it does impact timing of parole hearings.

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## TRAINING AND OUTREACH

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### **Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Training**

The Transcript Analysis Program provides commissioners with periodic legal feedback regarding their parole hearing decisions. In 2025, 21 consultations occurred between the Board's Legal Division and commissioners under the Transcript Analysis Program, which is three times more than occurred in 2024.

Commissioners and deputy commissioners receive training during monthly executive board meetings, the majority of which are open to the public. In addition to training required for all CDCR employees, the following training was provided to commissioners and deputy commissioners in 2025:

- ◆ *Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma, Strangulation, and the Science of HOPE*, presented by Casey Gwinn, Esq., President, and Gael Strack, CEO & Co-Founder of Alliance for HOPE international & the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention
- ◆ *Understanding Severe Mental Disabilities in the Context of the Parole Board*, presented by Dr. Craig Lareau, Senior Psychologist, Forensic Assessment Division, Board of Parole Hearings (BPH)
- ◆ *Parole and Community Team (PACT) Meetings for Supervised Persons*, presented by Brian Mendoza, Parole Administrator, Community Reentry Unit, Division of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO)
- ◆ *Life Support Alliance: Hope help Home*, presented by Vanessa Nelson-Sloane, Director and Cofounder, Life Support Alliance
- ◆ *Victim Involvement in Post-Conviction Processes*, presented by Mariam El-Menshawi, Chief, Office of Victim and Survivor Rights & Services (OVSRS), California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDCR)
- ◆ *Parole Planning for People Incarcerated for a Long Term*, presented by Tiffany Shultz, Assistant Chief Counsel and Martin Figueroa, Parole Agent III, BPH; Bianca Lopez, Parole Agent III, Freddie Yancy, Parole Agent II, and Eddie Yee, Parole Agent, DAPO; and Dr. Michel Ditomas, Assistant Deputy Medical Executive, Manjit Araich, Lead Nurse Consultant, and Brian Beltran, Nurse Consultant, California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS)
- ◆ *Parole Justice Works With You: PJW Inside Education*, presented by Heidi Rummel, President and Founder, and Renee Lizarraga, Executive Director, Parole Justice Works
- ◆ *Interviewing Incarcerated Persons with Invisible Disabilities*, presented by Dr. Nancy Kaser-Boyd, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, Geffen School of Medicine, University of California, Los Angeles
- ◆ *OCS: Gang Training and Policies on Stepping Away*, presented by Bianca Ramos, Special Agent, CDCR
- ◆ *Application of SPJ Sexual Dynamic Risk Considerations and the Concept of Change*, Dr. Jasmine Tehrani, Chief Psychologist, Forensic Assessment Division, BPH

- ◆ *Legal Report on Issues Recently Raised by Hearing Officers, including J-Pay Access*, presented by Jessica Blonien, Chief Counsel, BPH and Ryan Youtsey, Chief, Investigations & Reentry Screening Division, BPH
- ◆ *Clemency & Resentencing Regulations*, presented by Jessica Blonien, Chief Counsel, BPH
- ◆ *Review of the 2024 Comprehensive Risk Assessments*, presented by Dr. Jasmine Tehrani, Chief Psychologist, Forensic Assessment Division, BPH
- ◆ *Office of Victim and Survivor Rights & Services on Restorative Justice*, presented by Marim El-Menshawi, Chief, OVSRS, CDCR
- ◆ *CalAIM's Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative Implementation*, presented by Lisa Heintz, Director, Strategic Initiatives and Innovation, Janene, DelMundo, Deputy Director, Strategic Initiatives and Innovation, and Ike Dodson, Communications Manager, CCHCS
- ◆ *I-Connect + Tablets Overview*, presented by Stephanie Jones, Chief, and Kyle Clark, Communications Manager, Incarcerated Population and Community Solutions
- ◆ *Evaluating Digital Learning Accomplishments for Use in Parole Decisions*, presented by Anna DeLuna Ferguson, Chief of Staff, Edovo
- ◆ *En Banc Review and What Should be Considered during Closed Session*, presented by Jessica Blonien, Chief Counsel, BPH
- ◆ *Division of Rehabilitative Programs (DRP)*, presented by Robert Fields, Correctional Administrator, Jessica Fernandez, Chief, Martin D. Griffin, Deputy Superintendent, Correction Education, and Daisy Mendoza, Correctional Captain, DRP, CDCR
- ◆ *Cannabis: Myths and Realities Relevant to Recidivism*, presented by Dr. Mitch Earleywine, Ph.D., Director Habits and Lifestyles Laboratory, Professor of Psychology at the University of Albany, State University of New York
- ◆ *The Impact of Aging on Parole Board Hearings*, presented by Dr. Renee Kanan, Deputy Director, Medical Services, Dr. Donna Kalaukalani, MD, MPH, Deputy Medical Executive, Medical Services, and Dr. Michele DiTomas, Assistant Deputy Medical Executive, CCHCS

The Executive Officer and Chief Counsel also attended an annual training conference hosted by the Association of Paroling Authorities International in 2025 with the following training sessions:

- ◆ *Sharing Considerations Across the Globe*, by Honorable Geoffrey Bellew SC, Faith Geary, Joyette Holmes, and Renee Schulte
- ◆ *Second Chance Advocacy Groups*, by Dan Fetsco, Mark Corbett, and Lori Garrison
- ◆ *From Enforcing Justice to Shaping Second Chances: A Career Cop's Journey on the Board of Parole*, by Mark Langan
- ◆ *From Punishment to Promise: How Former Juvenile Lifers are Leading Efforts to Make their Communities Safer*, by Donnell Drinks, Valencia Warren, and

Kareemah Hanifa

- ◆ *Data and the Truth It Brings*, by Bennet Wright
- ◆ *Medical Parole and Compassionate Release*, by Mark Keating, Shauna Rose, and Keith Wallington
- ◆ *Punitive Justice Model for Long-Sentences*, by John Prevost, Ph.D.
- ◆ *Interstate Compact: Monitoring Compliance and Applying Risk, Needs and Responsivity Principles*, by Allen Eskridge, and Simona Hammond
- ◆ *The "No Body, No Parole Laws,"* by the Honorable Geoffrey Bellew
- ◆ *Adopting Evidence-Based Practices*, by Richard Stroker
- ◆ *Collaborating with your Community Supervision Partner Agency*, by Cynthia Mausser, Mary Jane Ainsworth, Member, Laura A. Pisaturo, Esq., Scott Widmer, and Jennifer MJ Yim
- ◆ *Revolutionizing Behavioral Health: Engaging the Justice System and Healthcare to Impact Recidivism*, by Renee Schulte
- ◆ *Georgia's Unique Approach to Serving Crime Victims Post Conviction*, by Keir Chapple, Mandy Kimner, and Christopher Toussant
- ◆ *Decarceration Initiatives and Eligibility Criteria Innovations to Inform Group-Level Decisions*, by Danielle J. Rieger, Ph.D.
- ◆ *Building Bridges: How the Justice Reinvestment Initiative Enhances Reentry Outcomes*, by Valerie Meade, Abigail Strait
- ◆ *Navigating Parole in the Age of Voluntary Assisted Dying*, by the Honorable Geoffrey Bellew SC
- ◆ *Protecting the Public Whilst Maintaining a Fair Parole System*, by the Honorable Peter Rook QC, and Faith Geary
- ◆ *Effective Implementation of a Structured Decision-Making Approach to Improve Practice*, by Danielle Rieger, Ph.D.

### **Clinical Psychologist and Senior Psychologist Training**

The Board's forensic clinical psychologists receive training during routine staff meetings throughout the year and review a variety of published research through Psych Net, a scholarly research database of the American Psychological Association, which is accessible to all members of the FAD. Additional training received by the Board's forensic clinical psychologists in 2025 included the following:

- ◆ *Recent Research on Domestic Violence Risk Assessment: Rethinking universality and specialization of risk factors influencing interpretation of risk*, presented by Dr. L. Maaïke Helmus, Associate Professor, Simon Fraser University
- ◆ *Structured Professional Judgment and the Moderating Effects of Protective Factors in Sexual Dynamic Risk Considerations*, presented by Dr. Shoba Sreenivasan, Department of State Hospitals – Sexually Violent Predator Unit, Clinical Professor, USC Keck School of Medicine, USC Institute of Psychiatry

- and Law, and Dr. Jasmine Tehrani, Chief Psychologist, BPH
- ◆ *Special Topics in Family Violence: Intimate Partner Violence and Child Homicide Offenders*, Dr. Lisa Kalich, FAD Psychologist, BPH
  - ◆ *Recognizing and Reversing Burnout in Forensic Work*, presented by Dr. Melinda DiCiro, Deputy Director, Department of State Hospitals, and Dr. Parker Houston, Chief Psychologist, Department of State Hospitals
  - ◆ *Aging and Cognitive Health in a Correctional Setting*, Dr. Michele DiTomas, Assistant Deputy Medical Executive and Hospice Medical Director, California Medical Facility, CDCR
  - ◆ *Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Refresher Training*, presented by Kerry Kunz, Associate Chief Deputy Commissioner, BPH

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## ADMINISTRATION AND TECHNOLOGY

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### **Board's Information and Tracking System (BITS) Improvements**

Each year the Board makes several significant modifications to its main computer system, BITS, allowing the Board to implement changes in the law and further streamline its processes. Below is a summary of modifications made to BITS in 2025:

- ◆ Awarded a new BITS contract
- ◆ Completed first ever BITS disaster recovery test
- ◆ Developed an MPED grant analysis screen allowing Case Records Administrators to enter an Incarcerated Person's MEPD without credits applied.
- ◆ Implemented functionality supporting compliance with court orders in *Criminal Justice Legal Foundation v. Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation* restricting certain parole releases.
- ◆ Developed an automated for BPH, CDCR, and external users comparing MEPD to MPED Modified and calculating the new controlling earliest possible release date pursuant to *Criminal Justice Legal Foundation v. Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation*
- ◆ Updated California Incarcerated Records and Information Search (CIRIS) web page to display the person's MEPD without credits applied after Case Records completes a grant analysis if the Board has granted the person parole
- ◆ Developed a Clemency Module in BITS
- ◆ Replaced the word Inmate with Incarcerated Person on forms, letter templates and screens within BITS.
- ◆ Began migrating form reports for legacy Oracle server to Power BI to modernize the Board's reports, and disabled 34 reports that had not been accessed for more than 12 months
- ◆ Created multiple new Correspondence templates for the Transcript unit
- ◆ Updated International Prisoner Transfer dashboard and created multiple letter templates for the unit
- ◆ Governor's name is now dynamic on all BITS forms
- ◆ Added a new pre-hearing postponement action:
  - Incarcerated Person Escaped
- ◆ Added a new document type "Graphic Photos" to the Board's Correspondence Management Module
- ◆ Added Incarcerated Person's Arrest History information to Hearing Officer Preparation dashboard and FAD Psychologist dashboard
- ◆ Deployed new Forensic Assessment Division assignment dashboards and Structured Professional Judgement module

### **Commissioner and Executive Team Appointments**

In 2025, Governor Newsom appointed Commissioner Rosalind Sargent-Burns to the Board. In addition, Governor Newsom reappointed the following five commissioners to the Board in 2025: Commissioners Patricia Cassady, Teal Kozel,

William Muñiz, Michael Ruff, Mary Thornton, and Jack Weiss. Also in 2025, the Senate confirmed Governor Newsom's prior appointment of Commissioners Dianne Dobbs, Julie Garland, Dave Long, Michele Minor, Excel Sharrieff, and Troy Taira to the Board.

**Document Production**

The Board continued to produce an unprecedented volume of data and reports for litigation, CDCR's Office of Research, CDCR's Office of Legislative Affairs, the Governor's Office, the Department of Finance, the Legislature, and in response to requests received under California's Public Records Act.