

The Role of Second Look Policies in Reforming California's Approach to Incarceration



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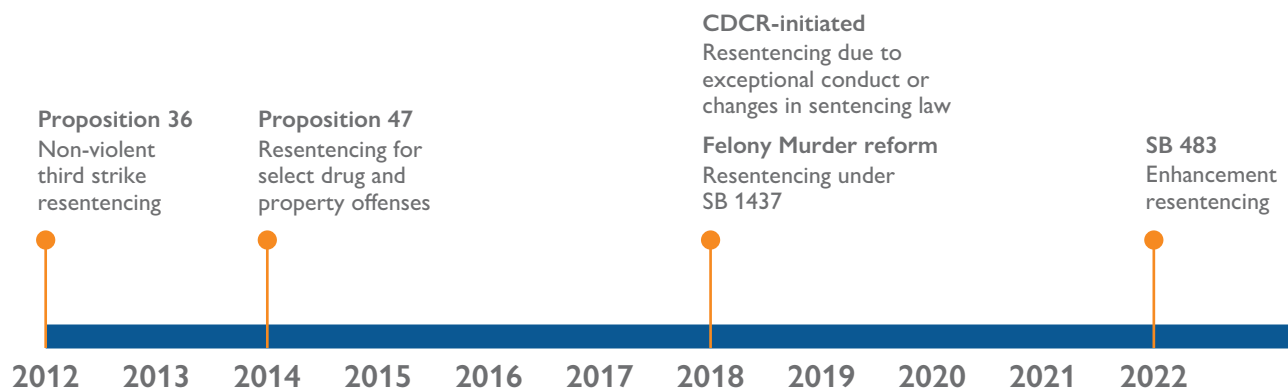
Executive Summary

Over the past 13 years, California has implemented numerous criminal justice reforms aimed at reducing prison sentences, limiting the use of sentencing enhancements, and shrinking the state’s prison population. Many of these reforms include “second look” provisions, allowing courts to review older sentences in light of new policies, and where appropriate, apply new laws retroactively. The efforts reflect a broader shift toward proportional sentencing, rehabilitation, and more equitable sentences.

California’s resentencing policies are wide-ranging, affecting individuals serving sentences for both low-level, non-violent offenses and violent felony convictions with lengthy terms. To date, approximately 11,900 people have been resentenced under these laws.

This research provides the first in-depth look at who is affected by these reforms and their recidivism rates. In this report and a [series of accompanying policy briefs](#), we examine five of the most prominent resentencing policies enacted between 2012 and 2022 ([Figure 1](#)). We present the number of people released from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) custody under each reform, their demographic and case characteristics, and their recidivism rates. For context, we also provide summary statistics and recidivism rates for all individuals released from CDCR custody in fiscal year 2018–19.

FIGURE 1: Timeline of five resentencing policies enacted in California, 2012–22



Key findings

- **Together, these five resentencing policies contributed to the release of approximately 9,500 people.** The number of people released under each policy ranged from approximately 800 (CDCR-initiated resentencing) to nearly 5,000 (Prop 47) — with many people, especially those serving long sentences, released earlier than they otherwise would have been.
- **People released due to resentencing policies were less likely to be convicted of new crimes within the first year than total releases, and the majority of new convictions were for misdemeanors.** The one-year new conviction rates ranged from 3% (felony murder reform) to 29% (Prop 47). New serious or violent felony convictions were rare, with Prop 47 having the highest rate at 1.6%.
- **People resentenced and released after serving long sentences (a median of 12–16 years) had very low recidivism rates.** Among those resentenced under felony murder reform, Prop 36, or CDCR-initiated resentencing, just 3% to 8% were convicted of any new offense within one year. Fewer than one percent — less than five people — released through CDCR-initiated resentencing or felony murder reform were convicted of a serious or violent felony in that time.
- **Within three years following release, 25% of those resentenced under Prop 36 were convicted of a new offense.** More than half of those convictions were for misdemeanors.
- **Among those resentenced under Prop 47, 57% were convicted of a new offense within three years, compared to 42% of total releases.** Thirty-eight percent were convicted of a new misdemeanor and 19% were convicted of a new felony.
- **Women made up a larger share of people resentenced under felony murder reform than any other policy.** Felony murder laws hold people liable for deaths occurring during the commission of a felony, even if they did not directly cause or intend the death. Women made up 11% of those resentenced and released under felony murder reform, compared to 7% of total releases. In contrast, women represented less than 2% of releases under Prop 36 and SB 483, reflecting gender differences in arrests and convictions for serious or violent felonies and sentencing enhancements.
- **People resentenced under these policies were generally older and had served longer sentences than all people released from prison in fiscal year 2018–19 (“total releases”).** Nearly 60% were aged 40 or older at release, compared to 34% of total releases.

Introduction

Since the early 2010s, California has implemented a series of criminal justice reforms to reduce prison overcrowding, recalibrate sentencing laws, and reassess whether long sentences remain justified under current policy standards. Passed through legislation and ballot initiatives, these reforms have reduced penalties for low-level offenses, narrowed the application of some lengthy sentences, and eliminated certain sentence enhancements. While many reforms applied prospectively only, several included “second look” mechanisms that allow eligible individuals who are already incarcerated to have their sentences reviewed and possibly reduced.

These efforts to reduce excessive prison terms were driven by legal, public safety, and fiscal concerns. A pivotal moment in California’s decarceration efforts was the US Supreme Court’s 2011 decision in *Brown v. Plata*, which required the state to reduce its prison population by up to 46,000 people to alleviate overcrowding and improve inadequate medical and mental health care — conditions deemed a violation of the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment.¹ The following year, California voters enacted Proposition 36, the Three Strikes Reform Act of 2012, the first of a series of laws authorizing judges to reconsider old prison sentences and resentence individuals to shorter terms. Research suggests long prison terms do not necessarily improve public safety — particularly as the likelihood of committing crimes diminishes with age (Pryzybylski et al., 2022; Blumstein & Nakumara, 2009). Incarcerating older individuals also imposes significant financial burdens, with costs nearly three times higher than for younger individuals due to increased healthcare needs (Williams et al., 2012). Under one of the most recent reforms, AB 600 (effective January 2024), a large number of people in California’s prisons are now eligible for reconsideration of their sentences if sentencing laws have changed.

Another central goal of these reforms was sentencing fairness. When reforms only apply to future cases, individuals sentenced under outdated laws may serve far longer terms than those convicted more recently for the same offenses. Resentencing mechanisms help correct this imbalance by aligning past sentences with current legal standards.

¹ In forthcoming work, CPL will examine releases and recidivism rates after changes to California’s parole processes, including the expanded non-violent second strike parole process implemented as a result of the Plata decision.

Despite the scope of these changes, little is known about the people who have been resentenced and their outcomes after release. Understanding their trajectories is crucial not only for the individuals impacted, but also for ensuring responsible use of public resources, assessing the public safety impact of these reforms, and guiding future sentencing policy decisions.

This series examines five resentencing policies enacted between 2012 and 2022 that led to the resentencing of about 11,900 people and the release of approximately 9,500 — roughly one-quarter of CDCR’s typical annual releases ([Table 1](#)). People released under these policies were generally older and had often served longer sentences than those released from prison in fiscal year 2018–19. The one-year new conviction rates ranged from 3% (felony murder reform) to 29% (Prop 47). Most new convictions were for misdemeanors, and serious or violent felony convictions were rare — fewer than 2% within one year across all policies. Recidivism rates were lowest among those resentenced after long prison terms under felony murder reform, Prop 36, or CDCR-initiated resentencing, with just 3% to 8% convicted of any new offense within one year.

Note on language: Information on race and ethnicity may not be self-reported and can reflect classifications made by prison staff, court officials, or arresting agencies. All reported sex fields refer to sex assigned at birth and may not reflect someone’s gender identity.

TABLE 1: Summary of five resentencing policies covered in this report

POLICY AND EFFECTIVE DATE	SUMMARY	REVIEW MECHANISM	MEDIAN YEARS IN PRISON ^a	FREQUENCY	
				# RESENTENCED ^b	% RELEASED ^f
Proposition 36 November 2012	Allowed individuals to petition courts for resentencing if their third strike conviction, carrying 25-years-to-life sentence, was for a non-serious or non-violent offense.	People petitioned for judicial review ^c	15.7	2,217	99.5
Proposition 47 (PC § 1170.18(a)) November 2014	Prop 47 reduced most drug possession offenses and some thefts of property valued under \$950 from felonies to misdemeanors, and § PC 1170.18(a) allowed individuals convicted of those offenses to apply to reduce their felony to a misdemeanor. Judicial approval was required if a person was still in custody when reclassification was requested. Proposition 36 (2024) undid some of the punishment reductions in Prop 47 for people convicted of certain drug and property crimes after December 18, 2024.	People petitioned for judicial review ^c	1.0	4,724	100
CDCR-initiated resentencing (PC § 1170(d); now PC § 1172.1) January 2018	Using existing law, the Secretary of CDCR began referring cases to courts for resentencing reviews. Consideration is made in the following circumstances: 1) there is a discrepancy in sentencing due to errors or changes in the law or 2) the person exhibited exceptional conduct while incarcerated. The CDCR Secretary reviews and, if approved, refers the case to the sentencing court for a final decision. ^d	CDCR recommends individuals for judicial review	12.2	1,063	74.8
Felony murder reform (SB 1437 and SB 775) January 2018 Expanded in 2022	Allowed resentencing for anyone convicted of murder under California's felony murder or "natural and probable consequences" doctrines, which allowed murder convictions for a person who was not the actual killer of another person. Eligibility was expanded to manslaughter and attempted murder in 2022.	People petition for judicial review ^c	14.4	1,172	77.6
SB 483 January 2022	California ended the use of sentence enhancements that added three years of incarceration for each prior drug offense (SB 180) and one year for each prior prison or felony jail term (SB 136). SB 483 allowed courts to retroactively reduce the sentences of people incarcerated with one or more of these enhancements. Resentencing deadlines were October 1, 2022 (for people in custody only serving time on the enhancement) and December 31, 2023 (for everyone else in custody with the enhancement).	All eligible people were automatically considered for judicial review	12.9	3,019	37.0
Total people^e				11,892	79.7

Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24)

Notes: a) Calculated as of December 31, 2024 for those who are still in custody.

b) The "number resentenced" represents the number of people that CPL was able to identify as resentenced by CDCR and may reflect a slight undercount from the total number that CDCR has resentenced.

c) The original court of sentencing reviews the resentencing request and determines whether to grant or deny the request.

d) Though prosecutors and courts can also initiate resentencing under this law, this data is not tracked statewide and not included in this analysis.

e) The total people is less than the total terms affected, as people can be affected by multiple policies: 59 people were affected by multiple policies over the study period and 245 people had multiple policies affect the same prison term.

f) Percent released is as of Dec. 31, 2024.

Two of these policies — felony murder reform and CDCR-initiated resentencing — are still ongoing, meaning additional people will continue to be resentenced. In some cases, individuals remained incarcerated even after being resentenced if they were still serving the remainder of a reduced sentence. For example, 63% of people resentenced under SB 483 and 25% of people resentenced through CDCR-initiated resentencing were still in prison as of December 2024.

The policies summarized in this report vary in the type of offenses targeted, the scale of resulting releases, and the level of judicial discretion involved — particularly in assessing whether a reduced sentence would pose an unreasonable risk to public safety. Prop 47, for example, focused on lower-level offenses with shorter sentences; individuals had typically served about one year in prison at the time of resentencing. In contrast, felony murder reform applied to individuals serving long sentences, often more than 14 years, before being resentenced. While Prop 36 applied only to non-violent felonies, other policies — such as CDCR-initiated resentencing and SB 483 — did not exclude individuals serving time for violent convictions. The standard for denying resentencing on public safety grounds also varied. Under Prop 47, denial was limited to individuals deemed at risk of committing one of eight specific “super-strike” felonies, such as murder. In contrast, felony murder reform did not require any weighing of the public safety consequences of a resentencing. As a result, each policy affected a distinct segment of the incarcerated population.

In this overview report, we present descriptive statistics for people who were resentenced and were released from prison by December 2024. We present summary recidivism measures for people released from CDCR in fiscal year 2018–19 “total releases” as a benchmark.² For a deeper look at each policy please [see the companion briefs accompanying this series](#).

² **Note:** We used CDCR FY 2018–19 Outcomes Report because most of the recidivism window for the more recent FY 2019–20 cohort overlapped with the COVID-19 pandemic, a period when arrests and convictions declined due to reduced law enforcement activity and court operations under COVID-19 emergency orders. Arrest and conviction rates decline slightly between the FY 2008–09 and FY 2011–12 CDCR cohorts, and have remained relatively stable since ([Appendix B](#)). The return-to-prison rate declined more during this time, but has also since stabilized.

Data and methods

Data

The primary data source for this report is the California Department of Corrections (CDCR). CDCR provided multiple sources of person-level flags indicating if a person was resentenced under one or more of these five policies. CPL linked these records on a secure server to the complete CDCR-incarceration history for anyone incarcerated between January 2014 and December 2024, and used admission date, release date, and principal offense to identify which prison term was resentenced.³ The final analysis file includes the term that was resentenced under any of these policies, and any prior or subsequent CDCR terms, which are used to measure criminal history and recidivism (returns to CDCR through June 2024). For each term in CDCR, we have sentence length, time served, length of stay in CDCR, and data on the longest sentence in the admission, more commonly known as the controlling offense. Additionally, this file includes demographic information such as the person's sex, age at arrest, age at release, and race/ethnicity.

In order to measure new arrests and convictions, we linked the resentencing sample to records from the California Department of Justice's Automated Criminal History System (ACHS) using a unique identifier at the person-admission level. This produced a match rate of 99%. The linkage was conducted on CPL's secure server and, once the records were linked, all identifying information was removed. These data include information on arrests, charges, and case resolutions between January 1976 and June 2024. The data also include information on county and date of arrest, as well as sentence date, duration, and location. We use these records to measure prior convictions, as well as new convictions and new arrests through June 2024.

Methods

This report is not intended to evaluate or determine the causal impact of resentencing policies. Instead, it aims to provide policymakers and the public with data and insights into the scope of these policies — specifically, the number of people released, recidivism rates among those released, and factors correlated with recidivism. The primary measure of recidivism used in this report is a new conviction, which is also the primary recidivism measure defined by the California

³ CDCR provided supplemental records for anyone resentenced and released under Proposition 36 (as many people were released in 2013), felony murder reform, and CDCR-initiated resentencing.

Board of State and Community Corrections.⁴ We report additional recidivism measures, including new arrests, the severity of arrests and convictions, new admissions to CDCR, and new admissions for serious or violent felonies — measured at one, two, and three years post-release.

This report includes one-year recidivism outcomes through June 30, 2024, for all five policies.⁵ For the earliest policies — Prop 36 and Prop 47 — we also provide three-year recidivism outcomes, as almost all individuals resentenced under these policies were released by June 2021. To contextualize these findings, we compare recidivism rates for each policy to recidivism rates for people released from prison in fiscal year 2018–19 (hereafter referred to as “total releases”). Because CDCR does not publish disaggregated one- and two-year recidivism rates by offense severity, we use our linked CDCR-DOJ data to produce these additional measures.⁶

We also use regression models to identify which observable individual and case characteristics are associated with recidivism. For the earlier policies (Prop 36 and Prop 47), the primary outcome is a new conviction within three years of release. For more recent policies (felony murder reform, CDCR-initiated resentencing, and SB 483), the primary outcome is a new conviction within one year of release.

There are three key limitations to our analysis. First, we observe only those individuals who were resentenced and cannot account for people who were eligible but were not resentenced. Second, several policies rely on a petitioner-initiated review process, so our data reflect only those who initiated a request and were ultimately approved. Third, for most policies, we cannot observe a person’s original expected release date prior to resentencing. As a result, we are unable to estimate the precise amount of time reduced from their original sentence. Under policies like Prop 36 and felony murder, many people had multiple years taken off their sentence. In contrast, reductions after resentencing under Prop 47 were likely modest given that the original sentences were short.

The time to release after resentencing differed by policy. Under Prop 36, people were typically released shortly after resentencing, while under others — such as SB 483 and felony murder reform — many individuals remained incarcerated to serve the remainder of a revised sentence.

4 We follow the methodology in the Recidivism Report for Individuals Released from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in Fiscal Year 2018–19 and present the most serious offense in the first conviction. For example, if a person was convicted of a misdemeanor and subsequently convicted of a felony, only the misdemeanor conviction is presented.

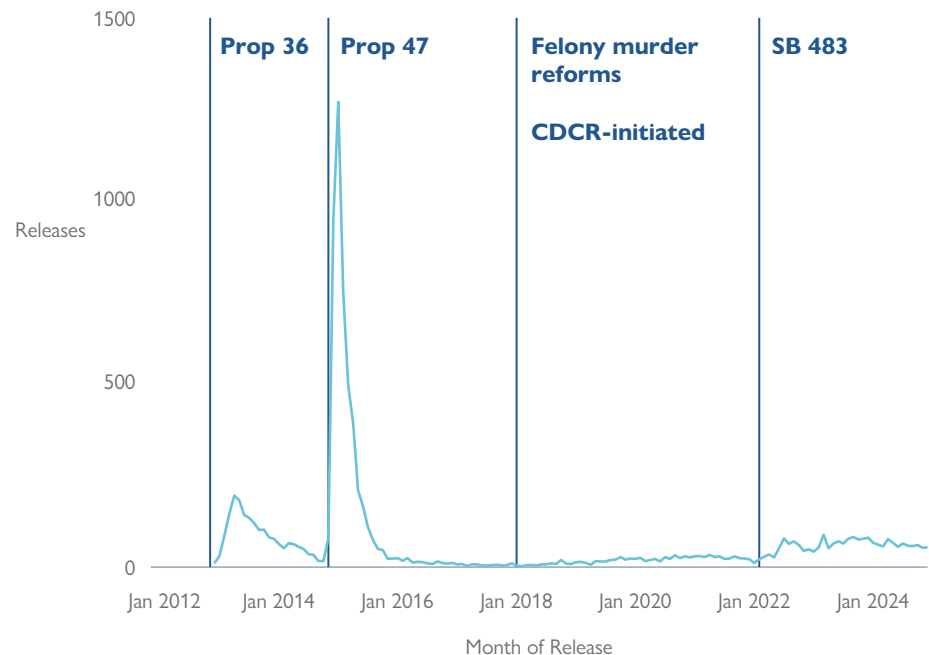
5 Two- and three-year recidivism measures are available in the policy-specific reports for people resentenced under felony murder reform and CDCR-initiated resentencing. We do not present these measures in the main report because only 30% of people resentenced under felony murder reform and 40% of those resentenced through CDCR-initiated resentencing were released before June 30, 2021.

6 To do so, we replicate the release cohort and categorize the severity of the first new offense (misdemeanor, non-serious/non-violent felony, or serious or violent felony for convictions and arrests; non-serious non-violent felony or serious or violent felony for CDCR return). We then apply these percentages to the overall recidivism rates published by CDCR.

Resentencing Reforms in California

Nearly 9,500 people have been released from CDCR after resentencing since 2012 under these five policies (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: Monthly releases of individuals resentenced under Prop 36, Prop 47, felony murder reforms, CDCR-Initiated resentencing, and SB 483



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24).

Note: The volume of Prop 47 releases in January 2015 (nearly 1,300 releases) makes it hard to see other trends. [Figure A-1](#) excludes Prop 47.

Demographics of people released

The demographic and case characteristics of people released under these five policies vary considerably ([Table 2](#)). For context, we also provide descriptive statistics of all people released from prison in fiscal year 2018–19 (“total releases”).

Women represented a larger share of the people resentenced and released under felony murder reform than any other policy. The share of women resentenced and released under felony murder reform was 11%, compared to 7% of total releases. Conversely, women made up a very small share of those resentenced under Prop 36 and SB 483 (less than 2% for both policies), reflecting substantial gender differences in arrest and conviction rates under Three Strikes and drug and prior prison enhancements.

Resentencing policies

Prop 36 (2012): Allowed people serving a life sentence for a non-serious, non-violent third strike to petition for resentencing.

Prop 47 (2014): Reduced many low-level drug and theft felonies to misdemeanors and allowed people incarcerated to petition for resentencing.

CDCR-initiated resentencing (2019): Resentencing referral based on changes in sentencing law or exceptional conduct in prison.

Felony murder reform (2018; expanded 2022): Allowed resentencing for those convicted of murder, manslaughter, or attempted murder under accomplice liability theories.

SB 483 (2022): Allowed courts to reduce sentences tied to now-repealed prior drug and prison term enhancements.

Black people comprised a larger share of people released across all policies, compared to total releases. They represented the greatest share of people resentenced under Prop 36 and felony murder reform (46% and 41%, respectively). Hispanic people comprised a smaller share of those resentenced and released (between 25–42%, depending on the policy) than total releases (45%). White people represented almost one-third of people resentenced under Prop 47 (31%) and only 10% of those resentenced under felony murder reform, compared to 25% of total releases.

TABLE 2: Summary statistics of people released under Second Look policies (as of December 2024) and total releases

	TOTAL RELEASES (FY 2018–19)	PROP 36 (NON-VIOLENT 3RD STRIKE)	PROP 47 (DRUG & PROPERTY)	FELONY MURDER REFORM	CDCR- INITIATED RESENTENCING ^a	SB 483 (ENHANCEMENT REFORM)
TOTAL	36,086	2,206	4,720	909	795	1,118
Sex						
Female	7.3	1.6	7.5	10.7	6.9	1.9
Male	92.7	98.4	92.5	89.3	93.1	98.1

(Table 2 continues)

	TOTAL RELEASES (FY 2018–19)	PROP 36 (NON-VIOLENT 3RD STRIKE)	PROP 47 (DRUG & PROPERTY)	FELONY MURDER REFORM	CDCR- INITIATED RESENTENCING ^a	SB 483 (ENHANCEMENT REFORM)
Release age						
18–19	0.4		0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
20–24	11.5		5.8	—	—	—
25–29	19.6		13.6	9.5	4.2	3.4
30–34	18.1	—	15.7	18.3	13.0	9.7
35–39	16.0	2.1	14.6	17.2	13.0	14.1
40–44	11.1	9.8	12.1	15.6	12.3	16.6
45–49	8.1	21.4	14.9	14.2	10.4	11.6
50–54	6.6	29.8	13.2	9.7	12.7	11.8
55–59	4.8	21.8	6.8	6.2	16.2	11.4
60 and over	3.7	14.5	3.2	9.0	18.0	21.1
Race/ethnicity						
American Indian/ Alaska Native	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.0	0.75	1.9
Asian or Pacific Islander ^b	1.6	—	0.7	1.7	1.4	0.6
Black	23.9	45.6	27.7	40.6	38.1	38.7
Hispanic	44.8	25.3	37.1	42.0	35.7	36.6
Another race	3.2	2.7	2.1	5.3	4.4	2.6
White	25.4	25.2	31.2	9.5	19.6	19.6
Commitment offense category						
Crimes against person	51.1	11.1	4.7	90.1	81.4	74.9
Drug crimes	8.7	36.5	49.0	1.7 ^d	1.5	4.6
Other crimes	20.8	7.4	3.4	4.1 ^d	3.1	6.0
Property crimes	19.5	45.0	42.9	4.2 ^d	14.0	14.6
Serious/violent offense						
Not serious, not violent	53.5	94.3 ^c	94.4	5.3	3.4	13.1
Serious felony	21.1	—	3.6	30.0	11.3	20.8
Violent felony	25.4	—	2.0	64.8	85.3	66.2

(Table 2 continues)

	TOTAL RELEASES (FY 2018–19)	PROP 36 (NON-VIOLENT 3RD STRIKE)	PROP 47 (DRUG & PROPERTY)	FELONY MURDER REFORM	CDCR- INITIATED RESENTENCING ^a	SB 483 (ENHANCEMENT REFORM)
Length of prison stay						
Less than 1 year	38.5	—	48.8	0.0	—	—
1 year (12 to 23 months)	26.3	—	31.1	—	—	—
2 years (24 to 35 months)	10.4	—	9.4	0.9	—	0.6
3 years (36 to 47 months)	5.4	—	3.2	1.1	0.63	4.6
4 years (48 to 59 months)	3.6	1.1	1.8	3.6	2.1	6.0
5 to 9 years	8.3	9.8	2.6	20.8	33.2	33.0
10 to 14 years	3.5	28.7	0.7	23.7	29.7	21.9
15+ years	4.1	59.3	2.4	49.3	33.6	33.6
Prior admissions to prison						
0	48.1	2.3	10.4	76.7	36.4	4.7
1	16.6	19.0	21.0	14.7	21.6	27.5
2	7.9	29.6	19.9	4.6	14.2	28.6
3	4.9	25.7	15.6	2.1	11.9	19.2
4	3.9	14.3	12.8	1.2	5.4	11.1
5	3.5	6.4	9.0	0.6	4.4	4.5
6+	15.1	2.8	11.4	—	5.0	4.4

Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24) and Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19

Notes: Cell sizes that represent fewer than 5 people are suppressed and will show a “—” in the table.

a) See the accompanying CDCR-initiated resentencing brief for statistics broken out for those recalled and resentenced due to exceptional conduct and those due to changes in sentencing law.

b) Asian and Pacific Islander are combined due to small sample sizes.

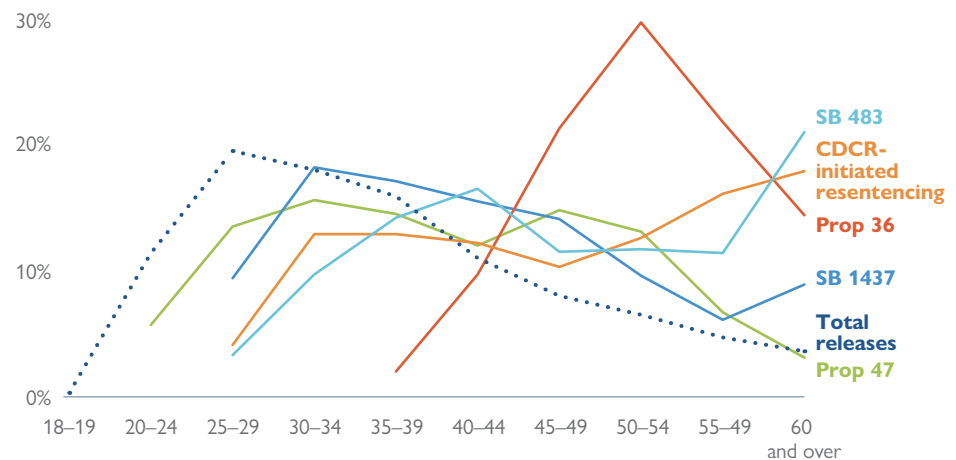
c) Approximately 6% of people resentenced under Prop 36 are categorized as incarcerated for a serious or violent felony, even though these offenses are not eligible. We do not know if this is a data error or an accurate categorization of their term, so we retain them in the sample but do not report their term severity.

d) These drug, other, and property offenses represent the principal offense people were resentenced to after their original murder charge was vacated under felony murder reform.

People released under these policies were, on average, older than the total release population ([Figure 3](#)). Two-thirds of people resentenced across all policies were 40 years old or older at the point of release, compared to only one-third (34%) of total releases. This is unsurprising, as many of the policies were aimed at reducing long sentences, whereas people with shorter sentences make up a larger share of those released from prison in a given year. The average release age also varied substantially by policy. Prop 36 applied to people with multiple convictions, most of whom had served at least 15 years, therefore nearly everyone

resentenced under this policy was 40 years of age or older at the point of release (median age at release was 52.6). Whereas 50% of those resentenced under Prop 47 were 40 or older at release.

FIGURE 3: Distribution of age at release among people resentenced under five resentencing policies and total releases



Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24) and [Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19](#).

Note: Total releases includes everyone released from CDCR in fiscal year 2018–19.

There are important differences in the severity of resentenced offenses and prior admissions to prison across the policies. For example, 97% of people released under CDCR-initiated resentencing had been convicted of a serious or violent felony. People resentenced under Prop 36 and Prop 47, however, were largely incarcerated for felony property or drug offenses (82% and 92%, respectively). Many people had two or more prior admissions to prison, with Prop 36 — by definition — having the highest share at nearly 80%.⁷ People resentenced under Prop 47 and SB 483 had similar criminal histories (approximately 50% of people resentenced and released under Prop 47 and 40% under SB 483 had three or more prior admissions) despite substantial differences in offense severity for people affected by each policy (94% of Prop 47 releases were not serious or violent, compared to only 13% of SB 483 releases). For most people resentenced under felony murder reform (77%), their felony murder conviction — which applied to deaths that occurred during the commission of a felony regardless of intent or direct cause — was their first admission to prison.

⁷ We assume the other 20% likely had multiple strikes in one prior proceeding, as is permissible under *People v. Fuhrman*, 16 Cal.4th 930 (1997). Alternatively, some people may have out-of-state convictions or received probation for one of the priors, neither of which are observable in the data.

Recidivism rates

Assessing the effectiveness of a policy based on recidivism rates can be challenging without a guidepost for what level of subsequent criminal justice contact to expect. As a benchmark, we present recidivism rates for people released from prison in fiscal year 2018–19 (“total releases”). It may be more informative to compare recidivism rates for those released under a specific policy to the total release population, rather than across policies, due to differences in the underlying populations.

CDCR’s primary recidivism measure is any new conviction (for a felony or misdemeanor) within one, two, and three years of release. Of those released in fiscal year 2018–19, 21% had a new conviction within one year of release, 33% within two years of release, and 42% within three years (Table A-1). The disaggregated three-year conviction rates were 25% for new misdemeanor convictions, 13% for non-serious and non-violent felony convictions, and 4% for serious or violent felony convictions.⁸ CDCR also provided two supplementary recidivism measures: new arrests (for a felony, misdemeanor, or supervision violation)⁹ and returns to CDCR (new prison sentences).

Primary recidivism measure: new convictions

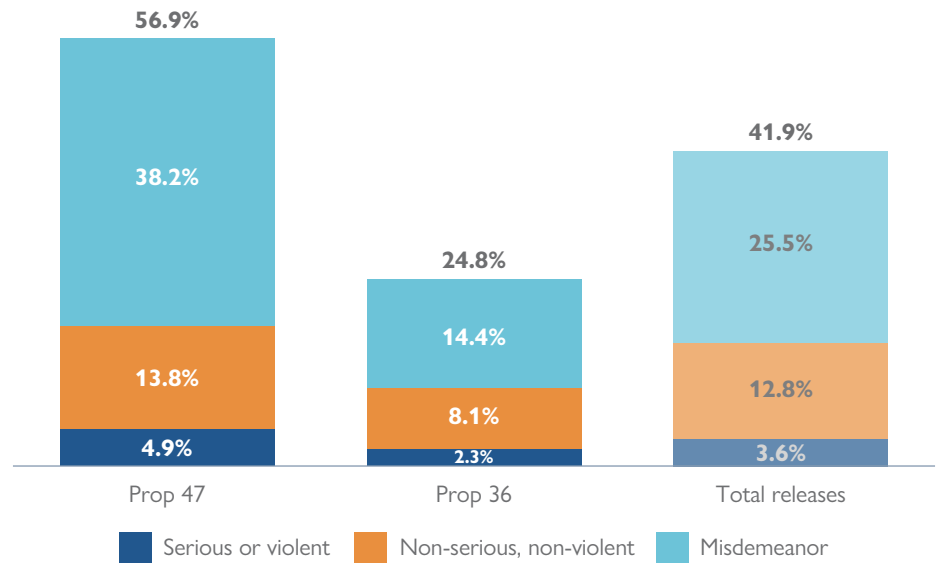
This section presents three-year conviction rates for people released under the earliest resentencing policies — Prop 36 and Prop 47 (Figure 4). Despite differences in criminal history, sentence length, and age, both policies largely affected people incarcerated for non-serious, non-violent drug or property offenses, who made up 94% of those released under either policy. Prop 36 applied to individuals who were serving 25-years-to-life under the Three Strikes law for a non-serious, non-violent third strike. In contrast, Prop 47 applied to a broader group of people because it reclassified certain low-level drug and property felonies as misdemeanors, applying to a broader group of people.¹⁰

8 CDCR does not disaggregate the severity of new convictions to this level of detail. We generate these estimates by replicating the CDCR FY 2018–19 release cohort and recidivism outcomes using our linked CDCR-DOJ data. For example, we categorize the first new conviction within three years (5% serious or violent felony, 26% non-serious/non-violent felony, and 68% misdemeanor) and apply those percentages to the published CDCR three-year recidivism rate of 42%.

9 We cannot consistently identify supervision violations in the ACHS data, so we report new misdemeanor and felony arrests only. Because of this we may be slightly undercounting new arrest rates: for example, using the ACHS data we find 62% of those released in FY 2018–19 were arrested for a new misdemeanor or felony within three years, compared to the 67% reported by CDCR.

10 Resentencing was a small part of Prop 47. Prior to its passage, an estimated 40,000 people were convicted annually of offenses reclassified by the measure (LAO, 2014). After Prop 47, individuals convicted of these offenses were released earlier from jail, as misdemeanor sentences are shorter and capped at one year. Arrest patterns also changed, with a decrease in monthly arrests and an increase in field citations (Bird et al., 2018). Additionally, Prop 47 required counties to redirect savings from reduced incarceration toward treatment programs aimed at reducing recidivism. This report focuses solely on individuals resentenced under PC 1170.18(a) and does not cover the majority of people affected by Prop 47.

FIGURE 4: Three-year conviction rates among people resentenced under Prop 36, Prop 47, and total releases, disaggregated by offense severity



Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24), California Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System, and [Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19](#).

Note: total releases includes everyone released from CDCR in fiscal year 2018–19.

People resentenced under Prop 36 had lower overall recidivism rates than those released from prison in a typical year. Specifically, 25% of people resentenced under Prop 36 were convicted of a new offense within three years, compared to 42% of total releases. Only 2% were convicted of a new serious or violent felony, 8% were convicted of a new non-serious and non-violent felony, and 14% were convicted of a new misdemeanor. Two-thirds of the people resentenced under Prop 36 were 50 or older at the time of their release and 15% were 60 or older. This population also experienced some of the longest incarceration periods prior to release, as the majority spent 15 or more years in prison. These factors — older age and longer incarceration — are associated with lower risk of recidivism (Farrington et al., 2008; Farrington, 1986).

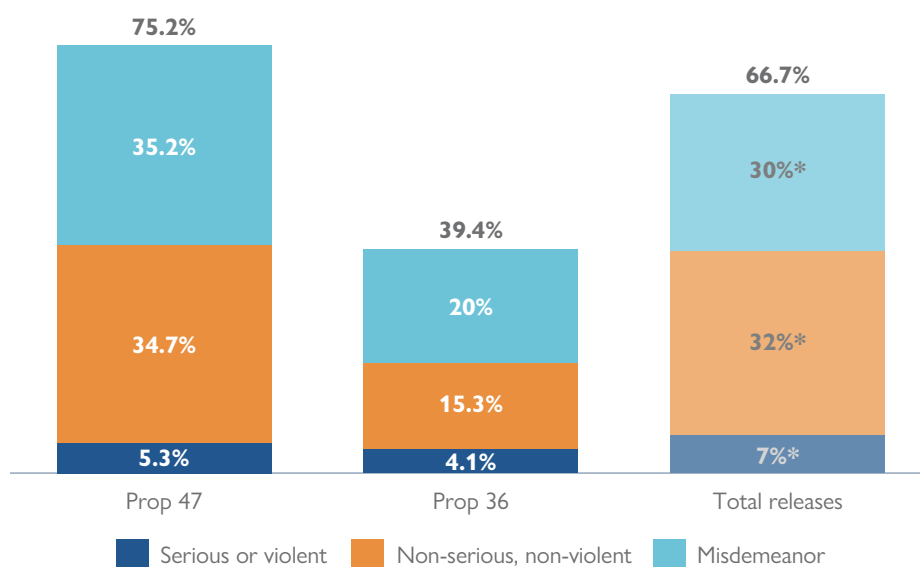
In contrast, individuals resentenced under Prop 47 had higher new conviction rates than total releases (57% compared to 42%). A new misdemeanor conviction was the most common (38%), whereas 14% of people resentenced under Prop 47 were convicted of a non-serious, non-violent felony, and 5% were convicted of a new serious or violent felony. This group typically had shorter incarceration periods and greater rates of prior incarceration. Nearly half had served less than one year in prison at release, and 80% were in custody for fewer than two years. One-third had five or more prison sentences. These patterns align with long-standing trends: people admitted to prison for short sentences related to non-serious, non-violent property and drug crimes — and greater criminal history —

have historically had higher recidivism rates than those serving longer sentences for more serious offenses (CDCR, 2024). People resentenced under Prop 47 were also relatively young, with nearly half under the age of 40 at release. Among those in the total release population, people whose controlling offense was a property offense had the highest three-year new conviction rate (53%), while those whose offense was a crime against a person had the lowest (36%) (Table 4).

Supplemental recidivism measures: new arrests and returns to CDCR custody

The supplemental recidivism measures (new arrest for a misdemeanor or felony, return to prison for a new felony) are consistent with the primary results for new convictions. Similar to the new conviction measure, people released under Prop 36 had lower three-year arrest (39% compared to 67%) and return-to-prison rates (12% compared to 19%) than the total release population (Figure 5). Very few people released under Prop 36 were arrested for a new serious or violent felony (4%) or returned to prison for a new serious or violent felony (3%) (Figure 6).

FIGURE 5: Three-year arrest rates among people resentenced under Prop 36 and Prop 47 and total releases, disaggregated by offense severity



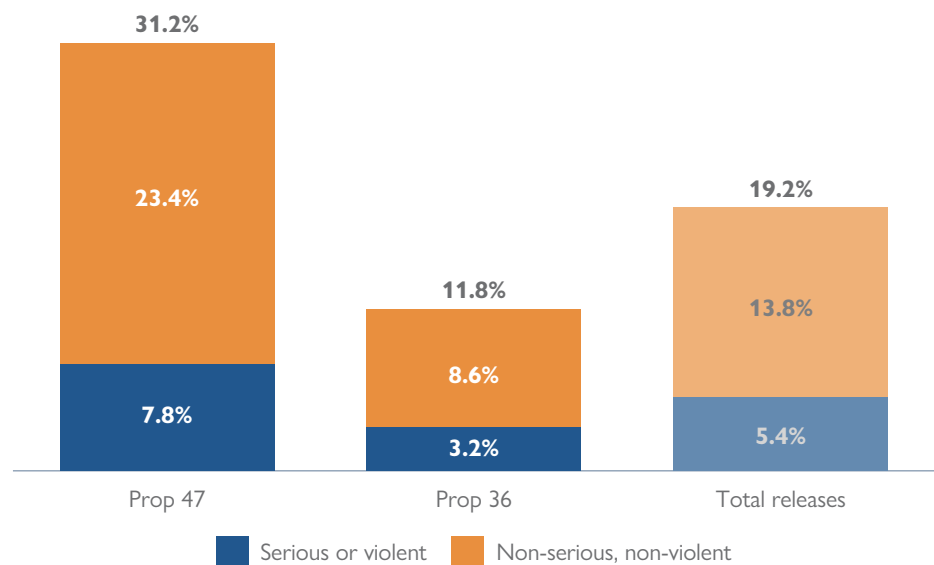
Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24), California Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System, and [Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19](#).

Notes: Total releases includes everyone released from CDCR in fiscal year 2018–19. *The overall arrest rate (66.7%) is from CDCR, but the severity-level shares are CPL estimates. These estimates exclude arrests for technical violations and therefore will not match CDCR's reported distribution by severity.

Three-quarters of people resentenced under Prop 47 were arrested within three years of release (75% compared to 67% of total releases), with equal shares arrested for a new non-violent, non-serious felony or a new misdemeanor (35%). Five percent of people resentenced under Prop 47 were arrested for a new serious or violent felony. Nearly one-third returned to prison within three years, and just under 8% returned for a serious or violent felony.

Aggregate one-, two-, and three-year arrest, conviction, and return to CDCR rates by policy and year are available in [Table A-1](#).

FIGURE 6: [Three-year return to prison custody rates among people resentenced under Prop 36 and Prop 47 and total releases, disaggregated by offense severity](#)



Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24) and [Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19](#).

Note: Total releases includes everyone released from CDCR in fiscal year 2018–19.

Characteristics of people convicted of a new offense within three years

Three-year recidivism rates varied by individual and case characteristics across the different policies ([Table 4](#)). Descriptively, new conviction rates declined as release age increased. The length of stay in CDCR custody was also inversely correlated with recidivism, and new conviction rates generally decreased as time in prison increased. People with a higher number of previous prison admissions tended to have higher conviction rates, though the relationship was not always linear.

TABLE 4: New conviction rate (three-year) by individual and case characteristics for people resentenced under Prop 36, Prop 47, and total releases, disaggregated by offense severity

	TOTAL RELEASES (FY 2018–19)		PROP 36 (NON-VIOLENT 3RD STRIKE)		PROP 47 (DRUG AND PROPERTY)	
	# REL	% CONV	# REL	% CONV	# REL	% CONV
	36,086	41.9	2,177	24.8	4,714	56.9
Sex						
Female	2,645	34.2	36	19.4	354	45.8
Male	33,441	42.5	2,141	24.9	4,360	57.8
Release Age						
18–19	157	61.1	0	0.0	—	—
20–24	4,152	54.9	0	0.0	275	61.8
25–29	7,081	50.5	0	0.0	642	66.7
30–34	6,548	45.9	—	—	741	63.8
35–39	5,785	43.0	46	32.6	689	62.8
40–44	4,018	36.4	215	34.0	570	57.9
45–49	2,916	30.9	464	30.8	700	54.0
50–54	2,375	37.9	655	23.1	620	46.9
55–59	1,725	25.2	474	22.8	319	41.4
60 and over	1,329	16.5	313	14.4	152	30.3
Commitment offense category						
Crimes against person	18,448	36.3	228	27.6	220	60.9
Drug crimes	3,124	42.5	802	21.4	2,310	57.5
Other crimes	7,494	45.5	161	29.8	161	58.4
Property crimes	7,020	52.7	986	26.1	2,023	55.7
Serious/violent offense						
Not serious, not violent	7,754	47.4	2,069	25.0	4,452	57.1
Serious felony	18,777	51.5	108	21.2	169	56.8
Violent felony	8,916	27.5	0	0	93	48.4

(Table 4 continues)

	TOTAL RELEASES (FY 2018–19)		PROP 36 (NON-VIOLENT 3RD STRIKE)		PROP 47 (DRUG AND PROPERTY)	
	# REL	% CONV	# REL	% CONV	# REL	% CONV
Length of stay						
Less than one year	4,567	53.8	0	—	2,302	61.1
1 year	8,963	52.1	0	—	1,468	56.7
2 to 3 years	3,670	44.3	—	—	443	56.9
3 to 4 years	2,087	37.3	—	—	151	43.0
4 to 5 years	1,480	33.7	25	36.0	87	40.2
5 to 9 years	3,065	26.9	215	36.3	122	44.3
10 to 14 years	1,145	19.7	627	25.2	32	25.0
15+ years	1,158	6.7	1,285	22.3	109	28.4
Number of prior CDCR stays						
0	16,968	36.9	48	16.7	489	53.8
1	5,590	50.4	409	21.3	990	57.5
2	2,631	49.6	644	23.9	934	59.0
3	1,851	51.6	560	25.9	734	57.2
4	1,445	47.8	315	26.7	604	58.1
5	1,291	51.4	140	30.0	424	53.1
6+	5,671	54.9	61	32.8	539	56.6

Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24), California Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System, and [Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19](#).

Note: Cell sizes that represent fewer than 5 people are suppressed and will show a “—” in the table.

One-year recidivism rates across all policies

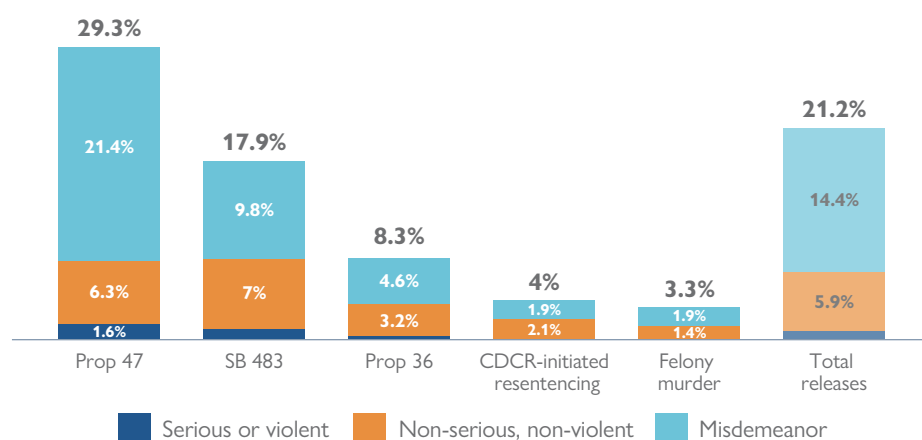
Recidivism rates are higher at two- and three-years post release ([Table A-1](#)), as more time allows for more potential recidivism. Additionally, one-year rates may be lower if review and release processes prioritize individuals deemed lower risk for recidivism. Even within the one-year timeframe, however, we observe notable differences across policies when compared to total releases.

One-year conviction rates were lowest among individuals resentenced under policies affecting life or long-term sentences — Prop 36, CDCR-initiated resentencing, and felony murder reform — at 8%, 4%, and 3%, respectively ([Figure 7](#)). Fewer than five people resentenced under felony murder reform or

CDCR-initiated resentencing were convicted of a new serious or violent felony within one year. Among those released under Proposition 36, just 0.5% were convicted of a new serious or violent offense within one year. In comparison, 21% of total releases were convicted of any new offense and 1% were convicted of a new serious or violent offense within one year.

One-year conviction rates were highest among those resentenced under Prop 47 (29%). Twenty-one percent of people resentenced were convicted of a new misdemeanor, whereas 6% were convicted of a new non-serious, non-violent felony, and less than 2% were convicted of a new serious or violent felony.

FIGURE 7: One-year conviction rates among people resentenced under five policies and total releases, disaggregated by offense severity



Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24), California Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System, and [Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19](#).

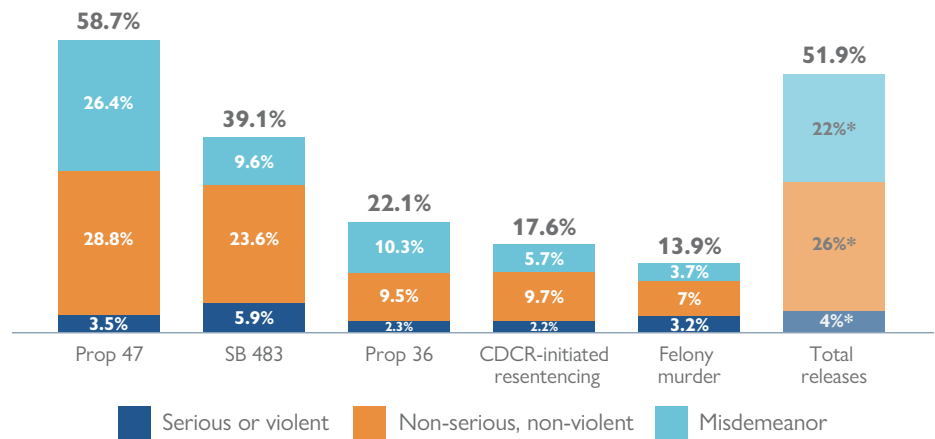
Note: Total releases includes everyone released from CDCR in fiscal year 2018–19.

We can only measure one-year recidivism rates for about one-third of those resentenced and released under SB 483 because it was enacted in 2022. Among this group, 18% had a new conviction within one year, most of which were for misdemeanors, while 1% were convicted of a new serious or violent felony.

One-year arrests and returns to CDCR custody

People resentenced under Prop 47 had the highest one-year arrest rate at 59%, followed by SB 483 at 39%, compared to 52% for total releases (Figure 8). Across all policies, most arrests were for misdemeanors or non-serious and non-violent felonies. However, people resentenced under SB 483 had the highest rate of arrests for new serious or violent felonies at 6%. Arrest rates were lowest among those resentenced under Prop 36 (22%), CDCR-initiated resentencing (18%), and felony murder reform (14%).

FIGURE 8: Supplementary measure: one-year arrest rates among people resentenced under five policies and total releases, disaggregated by offense severity

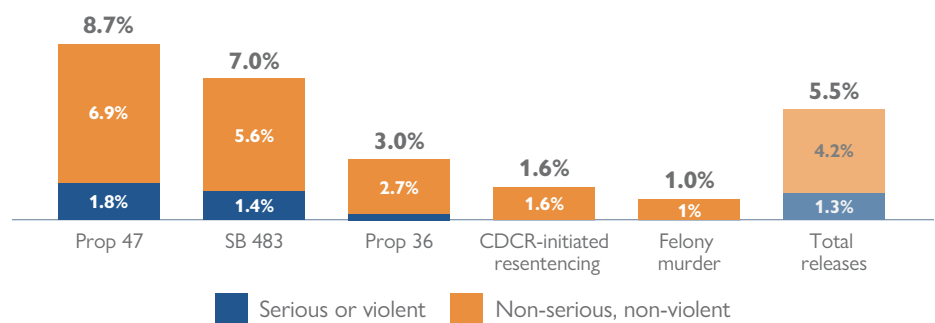


Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24), California Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System, and [Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19](#).

Notes: Total releases includes everyone released from CDCR in fiscal year 2018–19. *The overall arrest rate (51.9%) is from CDCR, but the severity-level shares are CPL estimates. These estimates exclude arrests for technical violations and therefore will not match CDCR's reported distribution by severity.

Returns to CDCR custody were relatively low — under 9% across all policies — and very few individuals returned due to a new serious or violent felony (Figure 9). Fewer than five people returned to prison for a new serious or violent felony following release under Prop 36, felony murder reform, CDCR-initiated sentencing, or SB 483. Overall return to CDCR rates were highest among those released under Prop 47, with 9% returning within one year, compared to 7% of total releases.

FIGURE 9: Supplementary measure: One-year return to CDCR custody rate among people resentenced under five policies and total releases, disaggregated by offense severity



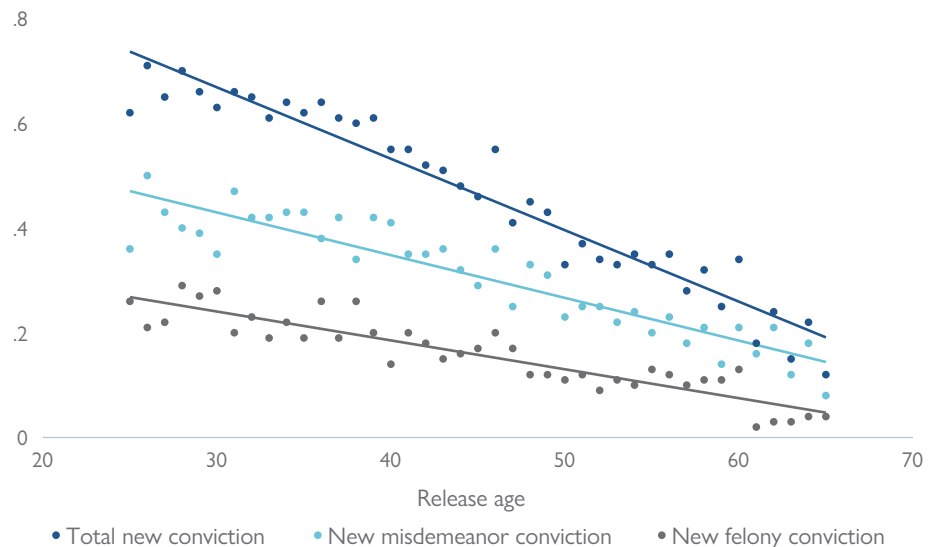
Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24), California Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System, and [Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19](#).

Note: Total releases includes everyone released from CDCR in fiscal year 2018–19.

Factors correlated with new convictions

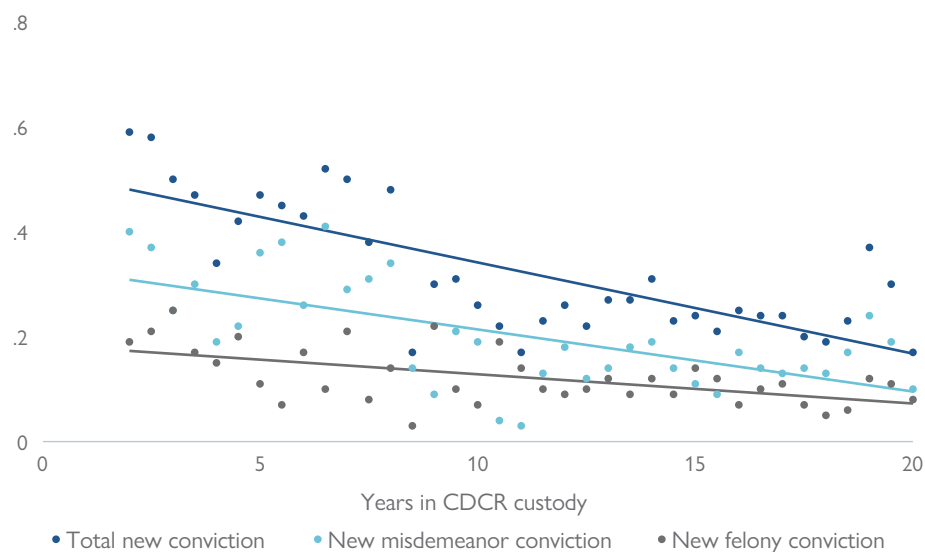
The characteristics of individuals released under the different policies vary widely (Table 2), as do the recidivism rates presented in the previous section. Does variation in the underlying characteristics of releasees explain some of the variation in recidivism outcomes? To explore this question, we first analyze the correlation between recidivism (defined as a new conviction within three years of release) and two factors: age at release and time served. There is a relationship between age and developmental stage and the likelihood of committing a crime, known as the age-crime curve (Farrington, 1986), with crime peaking in adolescence and declining with age. However, less is known about the related correlation between time in CDCR custody and recidivism. Among individuals who were released under Prop 36 or Prop 47, we find that both release age and time in CDCR are negatively correlated with new conviction rates (Figures 10 and 11). The slope of the relationship is steeper for age, suggesting that recidivism rates decline more rapidly with age at release as compared to time served.

FIGURE 10. Correlation between age at release and new conviction rate (three year) for people resentenced under Prop 36 and Prop 47



Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24) and California Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System.

FIGURE 11. Correlation between time in CDCR custody and new conviction rate (three year) for people resentenced under Prop 36 and Prop 47



Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24) and California Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System.

Given the likelihood that many factors may be correlated with recidivism, we estimate multivariate regression models of individual and case characteristics on recidivism for each policy. This allows us to understand the independent relationship of each factor with recidivism, holding all other factors constant. Across all policies, age at release and prior convictions were consistently correlated with recidivism (Table 5). Age at release and prior convictions are both continuous variables and the coefficients represent the relationship that one additional year or one additional conviction has on recidivism. Recidivism decreased as age at release increased, whereas it increased with each additional prior conviction.

Longer time in CDCR was associated with lower recidivism for those resentenced under Prop 36 and Prop 47, but there was not a significant relationship between time in CDCR and new convictions within one year for the newer policies. For two policies — Prop 47 and CDCR-initiated resentencing — women were less likely to be convicted of a new offense than men. A prior prison term was correlated with a higher recidivism rate for people released under Prop 47.

TABLE 5. Factors associated with recidivism under each of the five resentencing policies

	NEW CONVICTION IN 3 YEARS		NEW CONVICTION IN 1 YEAR		
	PROP 36	PROP 47	FELONY MURDER	CDCR-INITIATED	SB 483
Age at release	-0.0116*** (0.00145)	-0.0152*** (0.000797)	-0.00301* (0.00146)	-0.00400*** (0.000961)	-0.00901*** (0.00263)
Female	-0.0468 (0.0714)	-0.133*** (0.0261)	-0.0332 (0.0353)	-0.0594* (0.0302)	-0.128 (0.146)
Black	-0.0208 (0.0226)	-0.0219 (0.0179)	-0.0426 (0.0237)	-0.0464* (0.0212)	-0.04519 (0.054)
Hispanic	-0.0543* (0.0258)	-0.0148 (0.0167)	-0.0161 (0.0247)	-0.0767*** (0.0229)	-0.0350 (0.0544)
Another race	-0.109 (0.0580)	-0.0849 (0.0493)	0.0234 (0.0353)	-0.0158 (0.0408)	-0.0350 (0.0118)
Time in CDCR (Years)	-0.00540* (0.00257)	-0.00613* (0.00267)	0.00218 (0.00146)	0.000525 (0.00148)	-0.00329 (0.0393)
Any prior prison (binary)	0.0734 (0.0626)	0.0772** (0.0250)	-0.0132 (0.0223)	0.0382 (0.0220)	0.0541 (0.0909)
Prior convictions (count)	0.0178*** (0.00215)	0.0262*** (0.00142)	0.0113** (0.0395)	0.00655** (0.0220)	0.0157** (0.00561)
Assault	0.0298 (0.0422)	0.160*** (0.0482)	0.0106 (0.0196)	0.0519 (0.0291)	0.120 (0.0614)
Burglary	0.00659 (0.0373)	0.0310 (0.00281)	0.0834* (0.0396)	-0.00153 (0.0338)	0.000148 (0.0767)
Robbery	-0.00190 (0.0917)	0.0412 (0.0590)	0.0190 (0.0179)	0.0220 (0.02823)	0.0453 (0.0612)
Receiving Stolen Property	0.0205 (0.0475)	0.0110 (0.0299)	NA	NA	0.768* (0.371)
Petty Theft	0.0346 (0.0404)	0.0735* (0.0299)	NA	NA	NA
Vehicle Theft	0.0959* (0.0444)	0.154* (0.0718)	NA	-0.0419 (0.196)	0.272* (0.111)
Weapon	0.0462 (0.0521)	0.122* (0.0528)	-0.0457 (0.0700)	0.131 (0.0732)	0.0885 (0.0974)
Constant	0.693*** (0.104)	0.900*** (0.0403)	0.0878 (0.0572)	0.188*** (0.0610)	0.276 (0.208)
R2	0.066	0.121	0.055	0.072	0.189
N	2,177	4,714	628	632	356

Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24) and California Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System.

Notes: *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001. Offenses with an “NA” indicate that the offense was never a controlling offense for those resentenced under the policy. Linear probability models include controls for race, controlling offense, days from policy implementation to release, and month of release.

Other factors that we do not observe likely affect recidivism risk as well. For example, we cannot account for differences in the reentry process or in family or community support after release. As policymakers consider expanding second look policies, better understanding how these factors relate to successful reentry could help shape policies that support individuals and reduce recidivism.

Conclusion

California's second look reforms, implemented between 2012 and 2022, represent a significant effort to address prison overcrowding, right-size prison sentences, and promote fairness within the criminal justice system. These five policies have collectively led to the resentencing of almost 12,000 people, with approximately 9,500 (80%) released from CDCR custody — roughly equivalent to one-quarter of the annual number of people released by CDCR.

Some reforms affected people who had served more than a decade in prison, while others applied to those who had largely been incarcerated for three years or less. Certain policies were limited to non-serious and non-violent offenses, while others included people convicted of violent felonies. On average, those released under these policies were older than total releases, and two-thirds were 40 or older at the time of their release, compared to 34% of those released from prison in fiscal year 2018–19.

People released after serving long sentences had low recidivism rates, as shown by those released under felony murder reform, Prop 36, and CDCR-initiated resentencing. One year after release, new conviction rates ranged from 3% of people released under felony murder reform to 8% for those released under Prop 36. By comparison, 21% of total releases were convicted within one year of release. Additionally, few people were convicted of a new serious or violent felony within one year. Less than five people were convicted of a new serious or violent felony after release under felony murder reform or CDCR-initiated resentencing.

Conversely, recidivism rates were higher among individuals affected by policies targeting less serious offenses. Prop 47, which allowed resentencing for people incarcerated for less serious felony convictions, had higher three-year recidivism rates higher than the total releases (57% compared to 42% within three years), though only 5% were convicted of a new serious or violent felony.

Resentencing policies are one way California is trying to safely and effectively reduce the number of people who are incarcerated in prison. Our research identifies several factors correlated with lower recidivism, including time served and age at release, which can be used to guide the design of future resentencing and release policies. For example, a review process could automatically flag individuals who were of a certain age and who had been incarcerated for a certain amount of time for possible resentencing, if they did not present a public safety risk.

Limitations

There are limitations to this analysis. First, for some policies, we cannot estimate how early people were released relative to their original sentence.¹¹ As a result, we cannot assess how the policies changed time served for people who were released.

Second, we cannot fully assess recidivism for more recent policy changes (felony murder reform, CDCR-initiated resentencing, and SB 483). While one-year rates may offer some insight into recidivism trends, we know from policies with available three-year data that longer follow-up periods can show substantially higher recidivism rates.

Last, we cannot observe people who were eligible for resentencing but either did not apply or had their request denied. Those denied resentencing may differ systematically from those granted release in ways that correlate with recidivism.

Further, there are several factors that likely affect recidivism that are beyond the scope of this analysis. Specifically, successful reentry from incarceration often depends on access to employment, a support network, stable housing, and other supports (like healthcare, safety-net programs, or mental health care) (Travis et al., 2001). In this analysis, we do not observe any information on reentry support services that may affect subsequent recidivism. Future research might look beyond individual and case characteristics when examining recidivism, to consider the type and quality of services and supports available to people upon their release after resentencing. This might explain some of the variation in recidivism rates that we observe between resentencing policies.

¹¹ Prior research by CPL shows that, on average, people in California serve two-thirds of their prison sentences (Bird et al., 2023). Most, if not all, people were released early under Prop 36 and felony murder reform. The CDCR-initiated resentencing overview provides additional estimates about the amount of time, on average, sentences were reduced after resentencing.

Policy considerations

Policies like Prop 36, Prop 47, and SB 483, provided one-time sentencing adjustments in response to specific legal changes, while others, like CDCR-initiated resentencing, are ongoing, with individuals continuing to be considered for release as they become eligible. Since we lack data on those who were eligible but not resentenced, we cannot project how expanding eligibility might impact overall recidivism rates.

However, our analysis shows that recidivism generally declines with longer time served and with age at release. Older individuals had lower rates of new convictions and, for most policies, this inverse relationship between age and recidivism was statistically significant.

Resentencing policies are not automatic; they allow judges and other decision makers to deny release to individuals whom they deem a risk to public safety. Further, CDCR-initiated resentencing relies on a system of recommendations from prison staff to identify people for consideration. While this discretion is important in order to identify individuals who are ready for release (or earlier release), the process can be opaque to incarcerated individuals most affected by it. To promote transparency, incarcerated individuals should understand their options for relief and the steps required to seek it.

As California considers expanding second look policies, age and time served can help prioritize eligibility for review. As of December 2024, 7,732 people in CDCR custody are 60 years or older and have served 15 or more years; 11,481 are 55 years or older and have served 15 or more years; and 15,403 are 50 years or older and have served 15 or more years. While some may have already been considered but not released under existing policies, these estimates offer a framework for identifying additional strategies to ensure the state's prison population is consistent with California's sentencing and public safety goals. This report's preliminary recidivism analysis is also useful for policymakers evaluating future resentencing strategies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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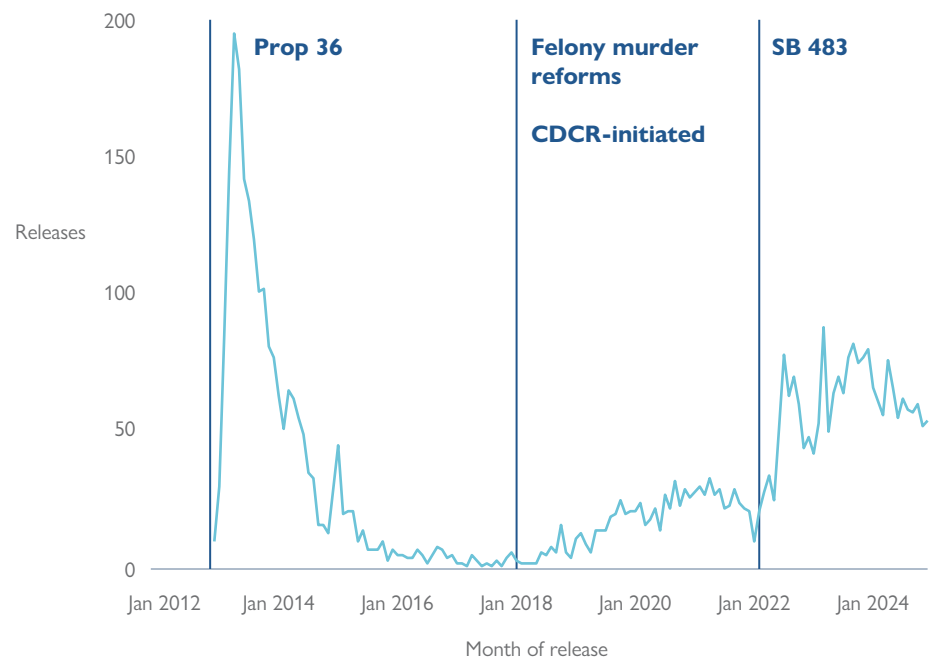
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Appendix

Appendix A: Additional Tables and figures

FIGURE A-1: Releases under four resentencing policies, by month of release



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24).

TABLE A-1: [Aggregate three-year recidivism outcomes: new arrests, convictions, and returns to CDCR](#)

	TOTAL RELEASES (FY 2018–19)	PROP 36 (NON-VIOLENT THIRD STRIKE)	PROP 47 (DRUG & PROPERTY)
Misdemeanor or felony arrest			
One year	51.9	22.1	58.7
Two year	62.0	33.2	70.7
Three year	66.7	39.4	75.2
Misdemeanor or felony conviction			
One year	21.2	8.3	29.3
Two year	32.7	18.0	47.0
Three year	41.9	24.8	56.9
Return to CDCR			
One year	5.5	3.0	8.7
Two year	10.4	7.4	21.3
Three year	16.8	11.8	31.2

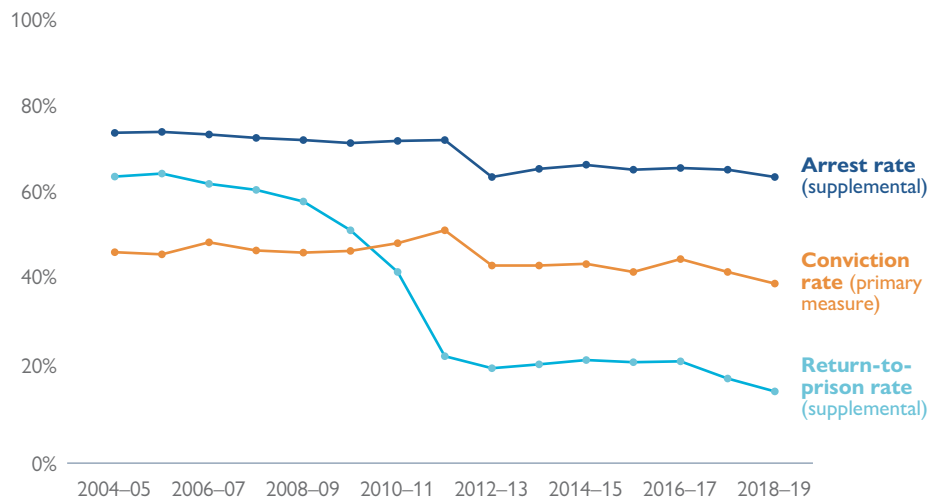
Sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2013–24) and [Recidivism Report for Individuals released from CDCR in Fiscal Year 2018–19](#).

Notes: The denominator (total releases) differs across each row as we only keep people that have at least one-, two-, or three-years post-release. Recidivism measures are through June 30, 2024. See policy-specific reports for recidivism measures disaggregated by severity.

Appendix B: Trends in CDCR recidivism

These resentencing policies were implemented over more than a decade. Given the differences in the times at which people affected by these policies were released from prison it is important to keep in mind broader trends in recidivism over time. [Figure B-1](#) summarizes three-year rates of rearrest, reconviction, and return to prison, as calculated by CDCR.

FIGURE B-1: [Recidivism rates for people released from CDCR over time](#)



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation [Offender Recidivism Reports](#).

The large decrease we observe in returns to prison between the 2008–09 and 2012–13 release cohorts was driven by SB 678 (2009) — which incentivized counties to reduce probation revocations — and Public Safety Realignment (2011) — which limits who can be revoked to prison and requires counties to locally manage most people sentenced to non-violent, non-serious, non-sexual offenses. Recidivism rates decrease for the 2012–13 releases, increase slightly for the 2014–15 releases — which CDCR attributes to the large number of releases of people in custody for lower-level drug and property felony offenses under Prop 47 — and then decrease through the end of this period (CDCR, 2024).

As we present findings on recidivism rates for different groups resentenced over this period, it is important to keep in mind that baseline recidivism rates for people released from prison can vary over time due to broader factors impacting crime rates, as well as other policies in place at the time. It is also important to keep in mind that some resentencing policies impact releases fairly quickly, with most people resentenced and released during the first year of implementation (e.g. Prop 47). In other cases, resentencing policies may be implemented over a longer period of time. In this report we use the recidivism rates of the 2018–19 cohorts as a baseline for consistency across analyses.