

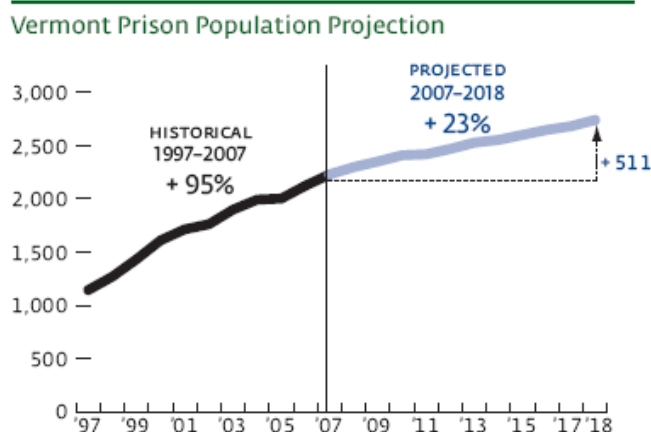
# Vermont

*"There's no question that the current rate of growth in Vermont's prison population is unsustainable... We must find ways to do better."*

— Senate President Pro Tempore Peter Shumlin

## Prison Population & Cost Indicators

- Between 1996 and 2006, Vermont's prison population doubled in size, jumping from 1,058 to 2,123 inmates. To accommodate this increase, state policymakers increased spending on corrections 129 percent, from \$48 million in FY1996 to \$130 million in FY2008 and contracted with out-of-state facilities for additional capacity.
- State spending on corrections increased from 4 percent of state general funds in 1990 to 10 percent of state general funds in 2008.
- Over the past 10 years, Vermont's incarceration rate increased 80 percent, while the nation rate increased 18 percent.
- Recent analyses reveal that if current trends continue, the state prison population will increase 23 percent by 2018, adding an additional 511 persons to Vermont's corrections system.
- If the prison population continues to grow, policymakers will either need to contract with out-of-state facilities for additional capacity at a cost of \$82 million or build new facilities at a cost of \$206 million in construction and operating expenses over the next 10 years.



## Drivers of Incarceration & Spending

- High rates of failure among people released from prison are significant contributors to the projected prison growth. Half of the inmates released from prison in 2003 were reconvicted within three years.
- Though modest, a projected 0.8 percent annual increase in prison admissions over the next 10 years will impact the rate of growth of the prison population.

## Public Safety Performance Project

An operating project of The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Public Safety Performance Project seeks to help states advance fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing and corrections that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable and control corrections costs. The project helps states diagnose the factors driving prison growth and provides policy audits to identify options for reform, drawing on solid research, promising approaches and best practices in other states. The initiative also helps state officials, practitioners and others share state-of-the-art knowledge and ideas through policy forums, public opinion surveys, multi-state meetings, national, regional and state-level convenings, and online information about what works.

## PARTNERS

The project works with the Pew Center on the States and a number of highly respected external partners, including the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Vera Institute of Justice, to provide expert, nonpartisan information and assistance to states.

## CONTACT

[info@pewpublicsafety.org](mailto:info@pewpublicsafety.org)  
[www.pewpublicsafety.org](http://www.pewpublicsafety.org)

"Unless we find a way to ensure that people returning to the community from prison have access to drug treatment, employment opportunities and housing, we will miss an opportunity to make Vermont safer."

— Speaker of the House Gaye Symington

## Opportunities & Action

- The Governor, Chief Justice, Senate President Pro Tem, and Speaker of the House convened several policy forums and established a bipartisan Justice Reinvestment Working Group that includes members of the judiciary, executive branch, and legislature.
- The group's charge is to design strategies to avert growth in the prison population, reduce spending on corrections, and increase public safety.

The Public Safety Performance Project and the Council of State Governments Justice Center are providing nonpartisan research, analysis and expertise to the Vermont policy makers to help collect and analyze data and identify possible policy options for presentation to the state legislature during 2008.

By the Numbers			
2006 Index crime rate per 100,000 (rank):	2,425 (47 <sup>th</sup> )	2008 Corrections budget:	\$130 million
2006 Violent crime rate per 100,000 (rank):	137 (48 <sup>th</sup> )	2008 Corrections share of budget:	10%
2006 Incarceration rate per 100,000 (rank):	259 (45 <sup>th</sup> )	2005 Releases reincarcerated:	50%
2007 Prison population:	2,202	2011 Projected prison population:	2,418

Sources: FBI Uniform Crime Reports; "Public Safety, Public Spending: Forecasting America's Prison Population 2007-2011," Pew Public Safety Performance Project; Facts and Figures 2006, Vermont Department of Corrections; Facts and Figures 2007, Vermont Department of Corrections; H.537 – Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations Spreadsheet, Vermont State Legislature; Budget History - General, Transportation and Education Funds, Vermont State Legislature; "Recent and Projected Growth in the Vermont Prison Population", Council of State Governments Justice Center

Updated February 2008

