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**Simulation of Impact:  
Abolishing Parole and Good Conduct Time**

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**Sentencing Dynamics Study**

**Report 3**

NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS



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## Note From the Director

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This is the third report of a series specifically designed to help the Texas Punishment Standards Commission in their policy development. The Commission requested that the Criminal Justice Policy Council simulate the effect of abolishing parole on the projected jail backlog. The simulation was conducted using the JUSTICE model developed by the Criminal Justice Policy Council, and the fiscal impact of the simulation was estimated using figures calculated by the Legislative Budget Office, Criminal Justice Policy Unit.

Parole releases from prison determine the number of prison admissions possible unless new capacity is available to increase admissions. When the state prison system instituted a controlled admissions policy in 1987, a target of 150 releases and admissions was established, based on the admission pressure at that time. Prison releases currently fluctuate at a lower rate than the targeted 150 per day which decreases admissions. Therefore, convicted felons who are sentenced to prison and are not admitted because of a lack of prison space remain in a "backlog" of inmates who reside in county jails awaiting transfer to prison. If parole and good conduct time are abolished and present sentencing practices stay the same, the jail backlog will increase to levels physically and fiscally unrealistic. Without good conduct time credits and parole, offenders admitted to prison will use more prison space by serving 100% of their sentence as opposed to the present average of 17%. The simulation presented here, therefore, is mainly for comparative policy discussion purposes since without substantial additional prison and jail capacity or other changes in sentencing practices, this scenario is not realistic.

Tony Fabelo, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

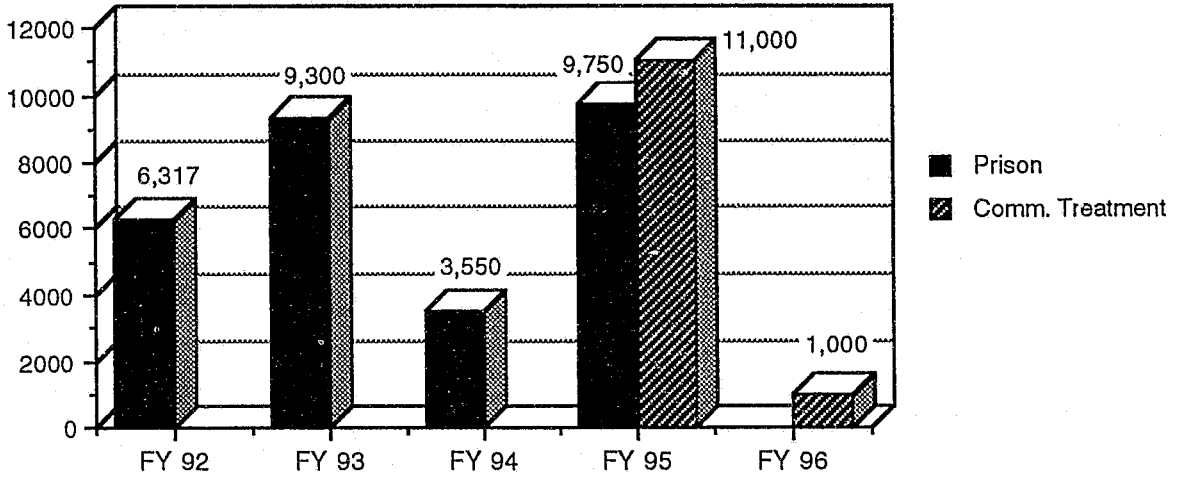
## Main Assumptions of Simulation

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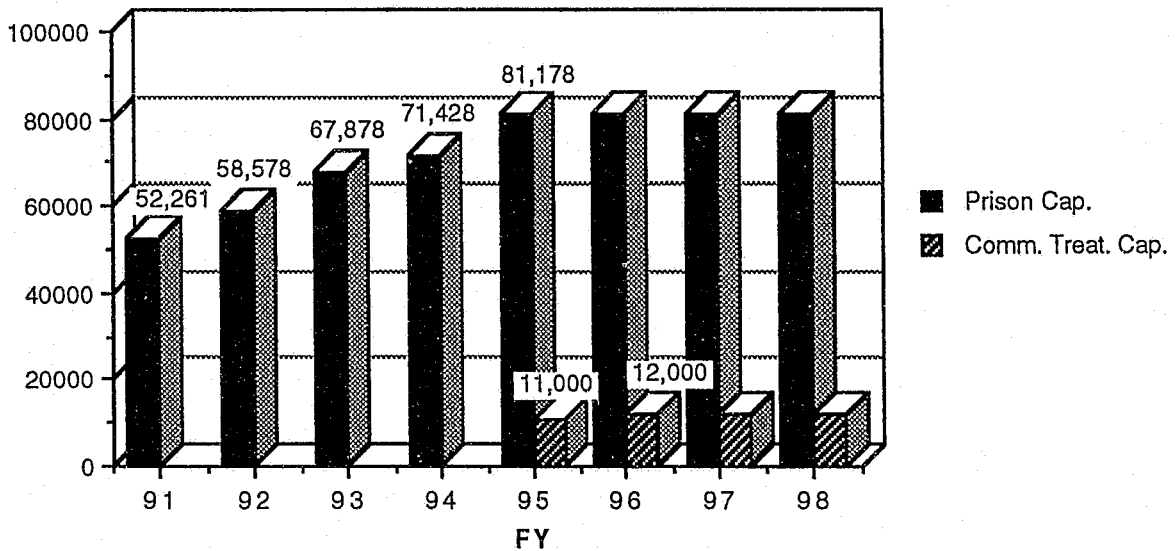
- **Abolishing parole and good conduct time as of January 1992**
  - √ All offenders sentenced on or after January 1992 will not be eligible for parole or good conduct time and will have to serve their full sentence in calendar time
- **Sentencing patterns are assumed not to change from present practices during the period of the projection**
- **Prison capacity and the capacity of the Community Corrections Drug Treatment Facilities will become operational according to the schedule in Chart 1 and 2**
  - √ This schedule is based on projections made in January 1992 by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Institutional Division
- **Added prison capacity will be used for reducing the backlog as soon as it becomes operational**
  - √ This assumes that the maximum daily processing capacity of the Institutional Division Diagnostic Unit will increase from the present 225 inmates per day to 400 inmates per day by May 1992
- **Residential facilities funded by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Community Justice Assistance Division, which become operational in FY 1992, will result in approximately 759 new diversions from prison**
- **The community corrections drug treatment beds will operate as follows:**
  - √ The facilities will operate at full capacity
  - √ Offenders will serve an average of nine months in these facilities
  - √ Approximately 50% of offenders placed in these facilities will be diversions from prison (would have gone to prison otherwise)
  - √ Approximately 95% of the offenders placed in the facilities will complete the drug treatment program successfully
  - √ All those completing the program successfully will be ordered by the court to complete their sentences on probation
  - √ All those not completing the program successfully will be ordered by the court to complete their sentences in prison

# Correctional Beds Capacity Expansion Schedule

**Chart 1: Correctional Bed Expansion Schedule, FY 92 - 96**



**Chart 2: Correctional Bed Capacity, FY 91 - 98**

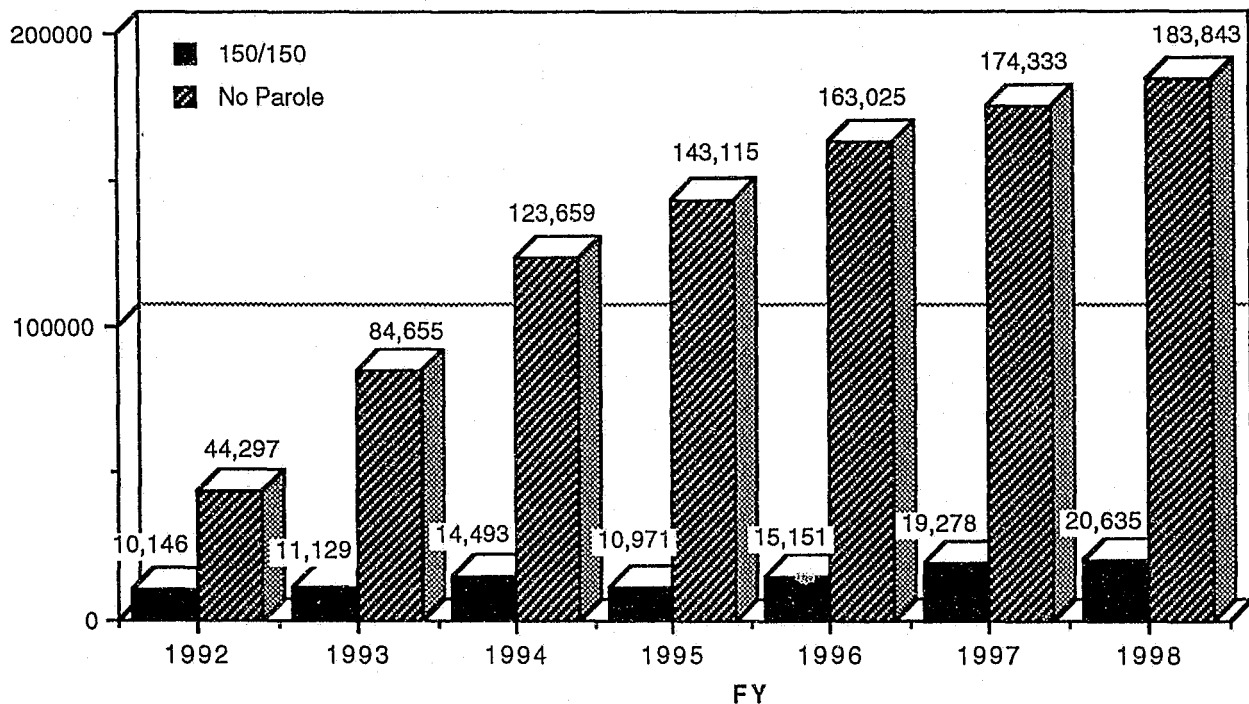


## Simulation: Impact of Abolishing Parole and Good Conduct Time

- Chart 3 below shows the simulated impact in the growth in the jail backlog of abolishing parole and good conduct time compared to the projected growth under the targeted prison release/admission rate policy of 150 a day

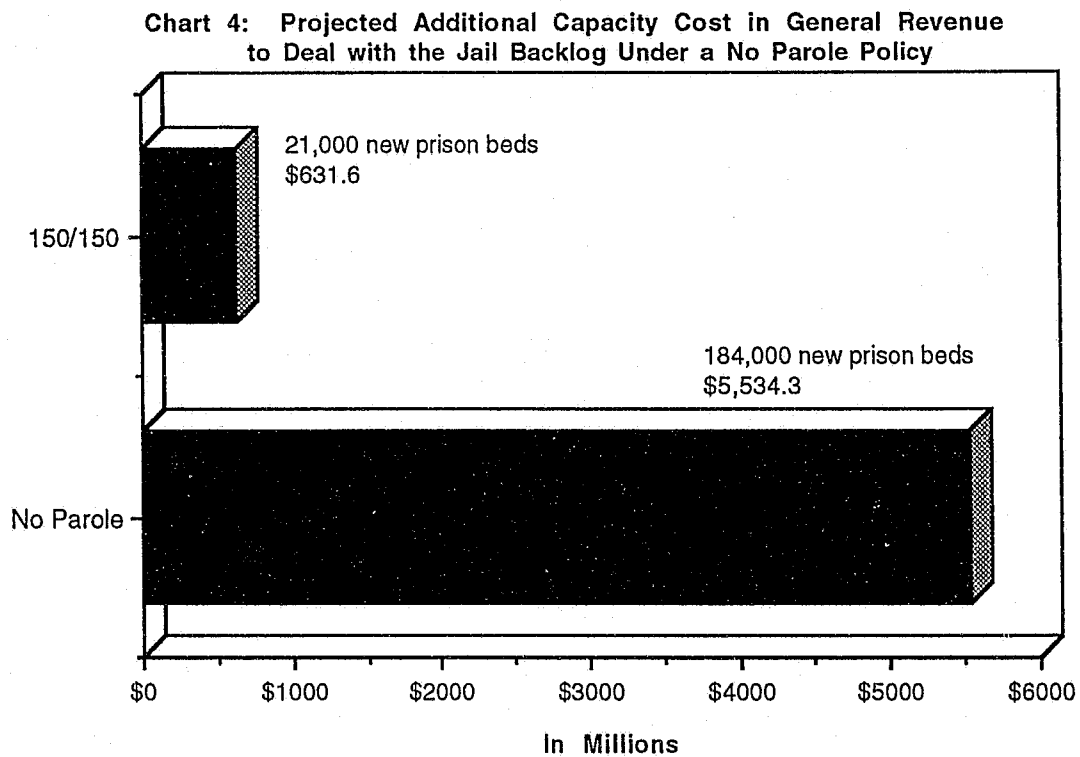
- √ If parole and good time were abolished as of January 1992 as assumed in the simulation, the prison population growth would immediately skyrocket since offenders sentenced to prison would serve 100% of their sentence compared to the present 17%
- √ By 1998 the necessary capacity needed to accommodate the demand for prison space will be 183,843 under the no parole/no good conduct time policy compared to 20,635 under the targeted prison release/admission rate policy of 150 a day

**Chart 3: Projected Jail Backlog of State Prisoners Under a No Parole Policy**



# Additional Construction Cost

- Chart 4 shows the additional construction cost of building new capacity to accommodate the demand for prison space resulting from abolishing parole



## Additional Operational Cost

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- **Table 1 shows the projected yearly operational cost to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice that will result from the additional capacity**
  - √ The operational base is the cost of running the prisons for fiscal year 1991
  - √ The operational base in fiscal year 1998 is the cost of running the prisons after all presently authorized prison construction is completed (including Community Justice Drug Treatment Beds)
  - √ The operational base with new capacity is the cost of running the prisons after building the additional capacity to meet the demand under the comparative simulations
- **The operational cost is estimated using figures developed by the Legislative Budget Office**
  - √ The operational cost is the cost to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and not the cost to the state
  - √ The operational cost to the state is slightly higher due to state paid benefits not charged to the agency

**Table 1**  
**Projected Prison Operational Yearly Cost**  
**(Including Community Justice Treatment Beds)**

Operational base FY 1991:	\$ 732.1
Operational base FY 1998:	\$ 1,269.7
Operational base of an additional 21,000 prison beds:	\$ 217.8
Operational base of an additional 184,000 prison beds:	\$ 2,060.3
Operations for 114,178 beds: (93,178 capacity FY 98 + 21,000 new beds)	\$ 1,487.5
Operations for 277,178 beds: (93,178 capacity FY 98 + 184,000 beds)	\$ 3,330.0

**In Millions of Dollars**