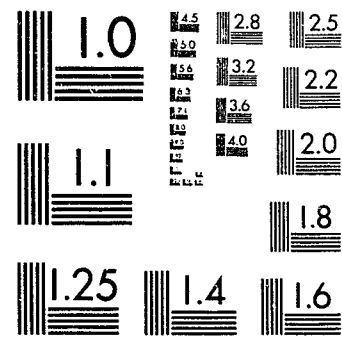


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# Long-term Offenders in the Pennsylvania Correctional System

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**CSG**

Correctional Services Group, Incorporated

92247

# Long-Term Offenders in the Pennsylvania Correctional System

## Findings and Recommendations

Final Report

September 1983

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Abstract

This project resulted in a descriptive study of criminal offenders who have and will serve a period of long-term confinement within the Pennsylvania Bureau of Corection. For data collection purposes, long-term confinement was defined as continuous confinement for a period of at least five years.

The study was comprised of three inter-related components. Each segment of the study explored answers to similar questions from the perspectives of three distinct groups--the inmates themselves; their families and friends; and, correctional staff who work with long-term offenders. The primary objectives of this study were to identify problems imposed by long-term confinement on the offenders and their families and friends and to solicit suggested strategies for addressing these problems and to define, within the context of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction, what length of confinement distinguishes long-term offenders from their short-term counterparts.

Four data sources were used to complete this study of how long-term offenders could best be managed and programmed by the Bureau. These sources were: survey of long-term offender literature; assessment of Bureau statistical records, policy and procedural documents; survey of national programs; and a survey of staff, inmates and inmate families and friends.

Numerous recommendations to lessen the secondary effects of long-term incarceration are presented as well as recommendations for future research.

Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	vi
Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Major Study Findings .....	1
Recommendations .....	6
Chapter One: Problem Statement: Long-term Offenders and the Pennsylvania Correctional System .....	22
Introduction .....	22
Long-term Offenders in Pennsylvania .....	24
Bureau Long-term Offender Efforts to Date .....	26
Definition of Long-term Confinement .....	28
The Nature of this Study .....	29
Project Methodology .....	30
Chapter Two: Characteristics of Long-term Offenders .....	33
Studies of Long-term Confinement .....	33
Survey of State Programs/Services Unique to Long-term Offenders .....	36
Comparison of Long-term Versus Short-term Inmates ....	39
Characteristics of Long-term Offenders Within the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction .....	43
Conclusion .....	50
Chapter Three: Perceptions of Long-term Offenders .....	51
Definition of Long-term Confinement .....	51
Problem Identification .....	56
Strategies for Addressing Problems and Meeting Needs .....	63
Program Sequencing .....	66
Special Issues .....	66
Chapter Four: Perceptions of Staff .....	68
Introduction .....	68
Problems and Needs of Long-term Offenders .....	69
Strategies for Addressing Problems and Needs .....	74
Program Sequencing for Long-term Offenders .....	82
Chapter Five: Impacts of Long-term Confinement on Offender's Family and Friends .....	84
Introduction .....	84
Inmate/Family Communication .....	86
Family/Conjugal Visitation--A Special Issue .....	94

TABLE OF CONTENTS (concluded)

References ..... 98

Appendix A: Contacts ..... 100

Appendix B: Questionnaires ..... 102

Acknowledgements

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations resulting from a nine month study of the long-term offender population confined within the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction.

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This project involved the combined efforts of CSG and Bureau of Correction staff. CSG staff involved in the project consisted of Cindie A. Unger who is the report's author and Robert A. Buchanan who served as project director. Russell Mazouch, CSG's Support Services Manager, was responsible for the preparation of all project reports as well as managing project support activities.

The active and whole-hearted support of the Bureau of Correction was essential to this project. Former Commissioner Ronald Marks, provided the impetus for the project and gave his full support throughout as did his executive staff. The superintendents of the major institutions, the regional correctional facilities and the community service centers also devoted their time and support to the study as did the numerous institutional staff who were concerned enough to answer the lengthy questionnaires.<A>

Special thanks are due Harry Smith, Director of Programs, who served as project manager. As project manager, Mr. Smith oversaw the project, reviewed draft documents and progress reports, dutifully distributed and collected scores of questionnaires and scheduled all on-site reviews.

Correctional Services Group also wishes to acknowledge the efforts of Scott Thornsly from the Bureau's Planning and Research Division who conducted a computer analyses of the prisoner population and Tom Stachelek, Treatment Director at Graterford who provided information on a past long-term offender study at that institution.

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Finally, CSG would be remiss in not extending our gratitude to the numerous offenders who consented to be interviewed or to complete questionnaires and to their families.

A A complete list of CSG's contacts during the course of this study appears as Appendix A.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Executive Summary

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: to summarize the salient findings of the study and to recommend changes in the policies and procedures of the Bureau that will address the problems and needs of its long-term offender population.

### MAJOR STUDY FINDINGS

Four data sources were used to complete the descriptive study of how long-term offenders could best be managed and programmed in the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction. These sources were: a survey of long-term offender literature; an assessment of Bureau data and materials; a survey of national programs; and, a survey of staff, inmates (both long- and short-term) and the families of long-term inmates.

The first component of this study consisted of a general analysis of the characteristics of long- and short-term offenders. To conduct this analysis, three data sources were used: the first was a 1974 survey, conducted for the now defunct Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, entitled the Survey of Inmates of State Correctional Facilities - Advance Report; the second was a 1979 survey conducted by Flanagan<sup>1</sup> on 1,486 inmates confined in a large state correctional system; and the third was a survey, conducted by CSG project staff, of long-term and short-term offenders confined within the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction.

The principal finding of the preceding analysis was that, there are few substantive differences between long- and short-term offenders confined within the Bureau other than the obvious characteristics--length of sentence and seriousness of current offense.

The primary differences between the long- and short-term inmate samples include:

- As a group, long-term offenders are older than short-term offenders;
- Dissolution of marriage ties is much more common for long-term offenders; and
- Long-term offenders are more likely than short-term offenders to have alcohol abuse histories and less likely to have drug abuse histories.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Timothy Flanagan, "Long-term Prisoners: A Study of the Characteristics, Institutional Experience and Perspectives of Long-term Inmates in State Correctional Facilities.

The difference in the age distribution between long- and short-term offenders is primarily a function of length of time served rather than age at admission.

One possible reason for the differences in the types of substance abuse reported by the two groups may be the different time periods during which the offenders could be considered "at risk." Since many of the long-term offenders have been confined in excess of eight years, and had been incarcerated previously, they are likely to have been imprisoned when widespread drug use that crossed socio-economic boundaries became prevalent. This phenomena was largely a product of the late 1960's and 1970's.

The second component of this study involved surveying long-term offenders to determine the distinctive problems and needs of long-term offenders, as perceived by the prisoners themselves. Questionnaires were distributed to a sample of long-term offenders (who had served at least five years as of the date the sample was drawn) to accomplish this task. Other relevant questions concerned: defining long-term confinement within the context of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction<2>; strategies for addressing the unique problems and needs of the long-term prisoner population; and maintenance of family/community ties.

2 During the early stages of the project, project staff were tempted to adopt the five-year timeframe, used in previous studies, to define long-term confinement. The five year criterion was not automatically selected for several reasons: first, the five year timeframe, while it may have been representative of an acceptable time period in the late 1970's was not considered representative of the early 1980's where sentences are considerably longer and the number of lifers has increased dramatically (10.6% of the Bureau inmate population as of December 31, 1982). Second, the laws in Pennsylvania provide prisoners with less than two year sentences are assigned to a county prison. As a result, the majority of prisoners transferred to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction have sentences in excess of two years at the time of assignment. The two exceptions are the Regional Correctional Facility at Greensburg and the Regional Correctional Facility at Mercer which accept prisoners with less than a one-year sentence. This, combined with the fact that good time is not available for Bureau prisoners, seemed to suggest that the majority of staff and prisoners may consider five years to be a conservative figure relative to determining a time criterion for long-term offenders.

The final reason for not arbitrarily adopting the five-year continuous confinement used in previous studies is echoed in the sentiments of a subcommittee of the Council of Europe's Committee on Crime Problems who found it difficult to specify a criterion of long-term incarceration due to the wide variation of correctional practices among diverse countries.<3>

3 Council of Europe, Committee on Crime Problems.

The primary findings of this task include:

- The average length of continuous confinement inmates perceived as long-term was 7.8 years;
- According to long-term offenders, the top five problems they experience that distinguishes them from short-term offenders are:
  - Difficulty in maintaining family contacts,
  - Restrictions placed upon privileges that are enjoyed by short-term offenders,
  - A lack of programs for which they are eligible to participate,
  - General difficulty in adjusting to long-term confinement, and
  - Lack of long-range planning.

Significant differences in perceptions of unique problems associated with long-term confinement were noted when the results were examined by sub-grouping, i.e., age, sex, proximity to release, etc.

The most common recommendations for addressing the problems and needs of long-term offenders suggested by these prisoners include:

- Enact a good-time law;
- Expand legal services available to inmates;
- Allow more frequent family days;
- Provide sequenced programs that build upon one another;
- Provide more intensive pre-release programming to long-term offenders; and
- Provide more frequent visiting periods.

At the present time most long-term offenders participate in one or more of the following activities to fill their time:

- Athletics/sports;
- Work/school assignment;
- Lifer's association;
- Religious programs; and
- Movies/television viewing.

The third component of this study was a survey of 124 Bureau of Correction staff. CSG project staff believed that Bureau staff were an untapped resource that could share invaluable perceptions concerning long-term offenders, their problems and needs, and identify strategies for addressing these issues.

Staff were asked many of the same questions that were posed to long-term offenders; however, staff were also asked sensitive questions that were not included in the inmate questionnaires. Included were questions concerning disciplinary



violations, interinstitutional transfer, temporary release programs, staff response to long-term offenders, automatic parole review, commutation, good-time, and the Bureau's prerelease model.

The principal findings of this particular survey included:

- The average length of continuous confinement Bureau staff perceived as long-term was 7.7 years;
- According to Bureau staff, the top five problems experienced by long-term offenders that are unique to this population are:
  - Inmate's acceptance of (adjustment to) long-term confinement,
  - Difficulty long-term offender experiences in maintaining family/community ties,
  - Feelings of hopelessness,
  - Monotony/boredom,
  - Lack of programs (for which long-term offenders are eligible).

In terms of the best methods for addressing the problems and needs of long-term offenders, Bureau staff most frequently recommended the following five strategies:

- Sequenced programs that build, in so far as possible, one upon another;
- Linkage between vocational training/institutional maintenance needs/prison industries;
- Personal development programs;
- More diverse recreational programs; and
- Family counseling programs.

In comparing staff program recommendations to those offered by long-term offenders, the most immediate and discernable difference is the focus of the programs they believe would be useful. For Bureau staff the focus of most of their common recommendations was upon changes that could be made in institutional programs and operations. On the other hand, the focus of the long-term offender's most common recommendations was outside the institution. That is, their first and foremost objective is release from the institution on a permanent or temporary basis and secondly, on maintaining relationships with their families, friends and communities outside the walls.

Other specific recommendations of Bureau staff included:

**Interinstitutional transfer**--no change from current practice.

**Family ties**--expand current programs/services and develop new programs, including: family counseling; increase visiting opportunities; provide normative visiting environment; provide family/conjugal visiting; and increase number of family days.

**Temporary release program**--expand escorted furlough, work and education release programs to serve larger percentage of long-term inmate population.

**Automatic parole review dates**--most staff support this action.

**Commutation**--the consensus of Bureau staff was that for life-sentenced inmates commutation is a necessary release option in special cases.

**Good-time provisions**--seventy-three percent of the staff favored enactment of a good-time law.

**Bureau's current prerelease model**--Bureau staff believed the current model is appropriate for long-term offenders.

The fourth, and final, component of this study consisted of a survey that was mailed to the families of the long-term offenders sampled for this study. The impact of long-term confinement on the family and friends of prisoners is an area much discussed by correctional officials but minimally examined. Few studies of long-term confinement have identified these impacts and what available information there is has come primarily from the offenders, not those directly affected.

The questionnaires employed several questions concerning the maintenance of relationships with long-term offenders. Other questions explored such topics as furlough participation, the problems long-term confinement has created for the respondent, helpful programs/services provided by the Bureau, and recommended programs and services that would reduce the hardships associated with long-term confinement, both for the long-term offender and for the respondent.

The principal findings resulting from this survey are:

- Most family members and friends visit the long-term offender less frequently now than when the inmate was first confined.
- There appears to be a strong correlation between the frequency of visiting and the distance visitors must travel to the institution.

- There is an inverse relationship between the frequency of visiting and the frequency of writing/telephone calls. Many respondents who stated they visit infrequently or not at all reported they write or telephone more frequently as a result.
- The Bureau's furlough program was perceived as beneficial to the maintenance of family ties.
- The separation caused by long-term confinement results many times in severe hardships for the families of the prisoners. Specific problems cited by respondents ranged from insufficient income to time lost from work to physical and mental strain to explaining the offender's absence.
- Respondents recommended the following programs be developed to help long-term offenders and their families maintain sustained and effective relationships.
  - Volunteer services program to address problems and needs of prisoner's families.
  - Graduated good-time program.
  - Community furloughs--expanded.
  - Family visiting

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The dilemma long-term offenders pose for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction is summed up by the following quote:

"Long term prisoners present correctional policymakers with several intractable problems. These problems derive from two principal characteristics of the long-term prisoner population: a) the diversity that exists within the long-term inmate group; and b) the serious offenses that eventuated the imposition of the long-term sentence. Taken together, these factors make it extremely difficult for even the most diehard reformer to suggest realistic and meaningful changes in current practice."<4>

Unfortunately, although long-term inmates are probably the most "needy" when it comes to correctional programs, they are the least desirable group to experiment with due to the negative

political and public response that would ensue should problems arise.

The following recommendations are not unique strategies for addressing problems and needs of long-term offenders. They are all programs and/or services that are currently available to offenders at the adult correctional institution level. What is unique about these strategies is that they have been evaluated in the context of the Pennsylvania correctional system and judged on their relative merits before the decision was made to incorporate them into this report as recommendations. Further, as necessary, the recommendations have been tailored to the needs and resources of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction. Thus, project staff firmly believe the potential utility of the following recommendations is higher than it would have been had project staff attempted to generalize these recommendations to the nation's long-term prisoner population.

The following recommendations are not organized on a priority basis as project staff believe the assignment of priority is the Bureau's prerogative.

**RECOMMENDATION** The Bureau should continue its practice of assigning offenders to institutions based upon the factors incorporated into the Correctional Classification Profile. Long-term offenders should not be segregated into one institution or housing unit solely based upon length of sentence.

Once the prison overcrowding eases in Pennsylvania, the Bureau may want to consider designating one housing unit at one of the large-walled institutions for the exclusive assignment of long-term offenders who volunteer for such an assignment. This should be done on a trial basis to see if any benefits of such a living arrangement accrue to the long-term offenders assigned there.

The Prisoner Preference Profile, (PPI) currently printed on the face sheet of the Bureau's initial classification form, should be used for long-term offenders both at initial and subsequent classifications. The results of this exercise should be used to design (as much as possible) and structure the long-term offender housing unit. The PPI should then also be used to select from among the long-term offender applicants who would be assigned there.

For the balance of the long-term offender population, the PPI should be used to determine where within the institution (recommended by the Correctional Classification Profile) the long-term offender should be housed.



**RECOMMENDATION** Bureau staff recommend, and CSG project staff concur, that inmates under the sentence of death should be segregated from the general population both for housing and program purposes.

Death sentence inmates should be offered basic program services within the confines of their housing unit. Basic programs would include counseling, religious services, recreation (including crafts and hobbies) and access to reading materials.

**RECOMMENDATION** Specialized counseling services should be available to long-term offenders to help them adjust to their imprisonment.

Life sentence prisoners should be provided specialized counseling services over the entire length of their incarceration. Other long-term offenders need these types of services the most during the first few years of their incarceration and again during the eighteen to twenty-four month period prior to release.

The Kansas State Penitentiary, located in Lansing, is a maximum security prison for male offenders. It has a Mental Health Unit which provides a variety of services to inmates, including individual and group counseling, marriage and family counseling, biofeedback and a pilot treatment program for ex-offenders. Of special interest to this project is the Weekend Marriage Workshop for inmates and their legal or common law wives.

The purposes of the workshop are to help inmates learn to be responsible to themselves and their families and to help inmates and their families:

- Recognize that there have been changes in all individuals while they have been apart;
- Communicate more effectively;
- Develop skills that will allow them to cope with their problems; and
- Make a clear decision about staying together and be clear in the reasons for their collective decision.

During the weekend workshop, staff make structured presentations, lead group discussions and utilize exercises that reinforce the content and skills learned. Special areas of concentration include: common marital problems; community resources; relaxation and assertiveness training; and communication skills.

Participants are urged to examine their marital relationship and reach a decision about staying together. On the

last evening of the workshop, each couple meets with the workshop staff to discuss their mutual decision about continuing the relationship and to relate their individual reasons for their decision.

Although in Kansas the inmate and his wife become eligible to participate in the marriage workshop when he is within three to four months from release, such a program would be useful for long-term offenders, primarily at the beginning and end of their sentences. If possible, the inmate and his or her spouse should participate in a marriage workshop on an annual basis if there was a mutual commitment to maintaining the relationship at the time of the initial workshop.

**RECOMMENDATION** The Bureau should sequence programs for long-term offenders such that there exists a logical, programmatic flow from academic education to vocational training and from vocational training to prison industries, institutional job assignments or supervised and unsupervised work release.

The development of a flow from academic to vocational training and on to prison industries, institutional job assignments or work release (for eligible inmates) will provide long-term offenders with needed long-term goals while at the same time reinforcing the skills and work habits developed during vocational training with actual, relevant work experience.

Of necessity, programmatic flow needs to be an individualized process for each long-term offender. The new classification system will support this process. For some offenders with very long or life sentences, this might mean an initial academic education program followed by a vocational training program and then placement into a prison industries program. For other inmates, who will be released in eight to ten years, the most appropriate flow might require an initial academic assignment, followed by placement in a prison industries program with participation in a vocational training program coming shortly before the projected release date.

One of the primary reasons for developing the programmatic flow concept of inmate programming is to develop "career" opportunities for interested and qualified long-term offenders. Many of the long-term offenders who have been and will be committed to the Bureau will spend the majority of their productive years behind bars. It behooves the Bureau to educate and train these inmates to pursue a career while incarcerated that will not only benefit the inmate but will also provide the Bureau with needed services, e.g., inmate instructors, prison industries supervisors, librarians, carpenters, electricians, etc.

The prerequisite to developing appropriate programmatic flow is to inventory all skills needed by the Bureau and the number of slots vacant on an annual basis; analyze the available vocational programs; identify the educational and vocational needs of long-term offenders and then restructure the Bureau's

programs to correspond to these findings. For example, the Bureau wants to avoid training more long-term offenders in a skill area than will be needed in the immediate future. Otherwise, the inmates will be needlessly frustrated and their skills will atrophy over time.

**RECOMMENDATION** The Bureau should consider developing "refresher" vocational training programs to offer those long-term offenders who are within eighteen months of release who completed vocational training programs more than five years previously. Such programs should require no more than two to three weeks to complete because the emphasis would be placed upon advances made in the field, including new techniques and the use of improved tools and equipment.

**RECOMMENDATION** The Bureau should expand its leisure-time activities to include increased opportunities for long-term offenders to participate in arts and crafts. In addition, recreational activities of special interest to long-term offenders should be expanded. More effort should be placed upon soliciting the participation of community groups and organizations in bringing leisure activities to the long-term inmate population.

**RECOMMENDATION** The State Legislature should consider enacting an accelerated good time law that would be predicated on each inmate's institutional adjustment.

Long-term offenders would especially profit from such a law because the maximum number of days an inmate could earn off his or her sentence on a monthly basis would depend upon the number of years the inmate had served on the sentence in question.

Several states have considered accelerated good time for prisoners serving long sentences. This approach involves the provision of additional time credited to the prisoner as the individual completes his or her sentence without manifesting behavior which would warrant disciplinary action. For example, a prisoner may earn one day per week off from his or her sentence during the first two years of confinement, two days per week during the next two years and continue earning good time in this fashion until the prisoner earns day for day good time credit.

The advantages to this system are two-fold. First, the offender benefits as he or she is able to experience a substantial reduction in the confinement period. Knowing that more good time will be awarded on an increasingly more frequent

basis as the sentence is completed without major incident. Second, the Bureau benefits in two ways. The good time acts as a management tool as it provides a practical and viable incentive for promoting positive behavior and participation in programs. It also would serve to reduce the number of prisoners confined in the system by dramatically reducing the number of bed days. This would serve to alleviate the prison overcrowding experienced by the Bureau in the past few years.

Originally good time was developed to replace punishment as a tool for managing inmates. Unlike flogging or solitary confinement, good time was intended as a reward for good behavior--a positive inducement was thought to be more effective than a negative reinforcement. Privileges could only affect the conditions of confinement, whereas good time determined when release would occur, the inmate's most critical concern. As originally intended, good time laws had "real value in offering incentive and in reducing the bitterness of a long sentence served without hope of release."<5>

The primary reason that good time fell into disfavor was that prison administrators quickly converted good time into a block of time that was automatically credited to the inmate's sentence. Typically, good time was deducted from the sentence upon entrance into the correctional system. Thus, instead of functioning as a positive, individual and earned reward for cooperation, good time came to be regarded by inmates as a right that was due them. In effect, good time became a form of punishment; only serious misconduct resulted in the forfeiture or denial of good time.

Thus, prison officials still had problems with prison discipline and population control. In part to help manage prisons, parole release was adopted. The introduction of parole raised questions about the value of good time in general. Parole was usually viewed as more effective than good time in achieving their common goals.

In indeterminate sentencing structures, such as Pennsylvania's, credit may be subtracted from the minimum term--to accelerate parole eligibility, or it may be subtracted from the maximum term, to provide an early mandatory (and sometimes a conditional form of) release.

In determinate sentencing structures, credit is deducted from the definite term imposed at sentencing to shorten the period of imprisonment. Good time has come back into favor with a move to determinacy since, in the judgement of prison officials, it provides the only incentive for conformance to prison rules and regulations.

5 Helen D. Pigeon, Probation and Parole in Theory and Practice, New York: National Probation Association (1942), p. 163.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The State Legislature should consider enacting a law that sets automatic parole review dates for life sentence inmates. The minimum number of years a life sentence inmate should serve before the automatic parole review dates are established is fourteen to sixteen years.

If the legislature chooses to enact a good time law, life sentence inmates could be allowed to earn automatic parole review dates instead of being given automatic parole review dates once a given number of years is served on the sentence.

As noted previously, the possibility of parole, no matter how remote, provides life sentence prisoners with an incentive for maintaining a good conduct record and for program participation because it provides them with a goal to work toward.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Bureau should support, through documented research, that the practice of commuting life sentences in selected cases is beneficial to both the Bureau and long-term offender population.

Although the decision to commute a life sentence is at the discretion of the chief executive officer in Pennsylvania, the Bureau should demonstrate that the limited number of commutations of life sentences each year have not seriously jeopardized the safety of the public nor compromised the mission of the Bureau of Correction and yet have a salutary effect on the morale of life sentence prisoners while providing an incentive for life sentence inmates to maintain good conduct records. The Pardons Board has statistical baseline data that could be utilized for this purpose.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Since the Bureau's inmate population includes 2,606 long-term offenders, or twenty-three percent, the Bureau's training academy should develop and deliver a training program for all staff who work with long-term offenders on a regular basis.

This program should focus on the unique problems and needs of long-term offenders and appropriate methods for addressing these problems, both on an interpersonal basis and through established Bureau programs and services.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Bureau should establish an outreach program to alert interested citizen and community groups to the special needs of long-term offenders and their families. Special steps should be taken to identify community resources that might help meet these special needs, particularly in

providing services to the families of long-term offenders.

As noted frequently throughout this report, long-term offenders are not the most acceptable candidates for experimentation, primarily because of the public's expectation that these offenders will be confined for very long periods of time under very strict security. To propose programs that breach this public trust is to invite public criticism and legislative or executive reprisals. Many correctional administrators would like to implement innovative programs for long-term offenders but are paralyzed into inaction due to their concerns about public opinion.

In the experience of project staff, the public will be relatively indifferent to the Bureau's efforts on behalf of the long-term offender unless there is a major incident involving a long-term offender who is participating in such a program and a member of the public. If the programs are properly structured and supervised and the eligibility criteria are defensible, the Bureau should not let perceived public opinion influence their program developments.

Further, while public education campaigns will not change the attitudes of the public at large, there are numerous influential special and public interest groups that would wholeheartedly support the efforts of the Bureau to improve the conditions of confinement for long-term offenders. The task before the Bureau is to identify these groups and target them for educational efforts. For example, in Missouri the vast majority of the voters favor execution of the inmates currently under the death sentence. However, whenever the time draws near, numerous demonstrators picket the capitol building and the order is invariably rescinded, at least to date.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Bureau should make a special effort to meet the needs of children of long-term offenders. Children should be a special focus of any specialized family counseling programs that are developed.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Child care facilities should be available in each institution so that the inmate and his or her spouse or other adult visitor can relate more freely. Occasional use of such facilities should be encouraged.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Special mother/child programs should be developed for the female institution at Muncy. The objective of such programs should be to maintain or strengthen the mother/child relationship and to provide opportunities for improving parenting skills. Prototypical programs include "Sesame Street Goes to

Prison," operated within the Dwight Correctional Center in Illinois.

**RECOMMENDATION** Provided that security and program considerations warrant, long-term offenders should be assigned to an institution as close as possible to their primary visitors unless contraindicated by other factors.

**RECOMMENDATION** Similar to the above recommendation, the maintenance of family ties should also be an important criterion in the selection of sites for new prisons where long-term inmates will be confined.

**RECOMMENDATION** Family counseling programs should be developed in institutions housing long-term offenders. Group and individual counseling should be available for all inmates and families desiring to work out separation and communication problems, particularly during the early and late stages of incarceration.

The initial period of incarceration marks a difficult transition period for the family of a long-term offender. The family must learn to cope with the loved one's absence and the loss of income. For the families of long-term offenders the absence will present the most enduring hardship for they are personally powerless over this circumstance. The prospects of maintaining a meaningful long-distance relationship that is so restrictive in the available avenues of expression is inconceivable for many spouses of long-term offenders.

Family counseling should begin at the first visit of the family members to the institution. A prerequisite for participation in Minnesota's "Residential Family Counseling Program" (a form of family/conjugal visiting) is participation in a family counseling session prior to each of the first two visits. Counseling at this juncture is important because "the which the family must try to maintain meaningful contact with its loved ones.<6>

A model for a family counseling program that could be implemented in the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction is the Prisoner Family Project operating in the State of New York. The program was expressly designed to involve both the inmates and their families. The program has the following four phases:

- Inmates meet alone in groups (in prison);

- Family members meet alone in groups (in community);
- Inmates and families meet together in prison; and
- Parolees and families meet together in community.

The program is composed of ten sessions and are applicable not only to an inmate and his/her spouse, but also to other members of the inmate's immediate family. The sessions deal with: self-worth; family building tools; communications; decision-making; negotiation; values; use of free time; contracts concerning use of alcohol, drugs, TV, budgeting and sex.

There is a structured curriculum which is presented by correctional staff in the institution and community service workers outside the institution.

Although the program is probably most effective for inmates who are in the final stages of their incarceration, the program would prove valuable for all long-term inmates who share a mutual commitment with their families to maintain and/or improve their relationship.

Although it would be far simpler to purchase the program from its developer, the reality of the situation is that the Bureau is unlikely to receive increased funds to buy the program.

While the program appears to be working in the New York correctional system, Pennsylvania may want to limit its investment by developing a pilot program for one institution that houses a significant number of long-term offenders and is near an urban area having community mental health centers. The presence of mental health centers is important because it may be possible to jointly design and implement a prisoner family project that uses mental health center staff to deliver phases two and four (meetings in community).

A full-time Bureau staff member will be required to develop, implement and administer the program. The Bureau's other investment would be in training staff to deliver segments of the program and in reassigning staff from their regular duties to deliver the program on an intermittent basis.

**RECOMMENDATION** At least one staff member should be assigned the responsibility of reviewing the welfare (with the inmate's permission) of family members, particularly spouses. This staff member should work with community social service agencies to monitor the well-being of family members.

6 Susan Fishman and Candace Cassin, Services for Families of Offenders: An Overview. Department of Justice (January 1981), p. 8.

**RECOMMENDATION** Transportation programs should be developed for institutions not readily served by public transportation. At least twice a month, the Bureau, or another appropriate state agency, should arrange for bus transportation of family and friends to remote institutions such as Dallas, Huntingdon and Muncy. This service is currently provided by Families Outside, a service organization located in Pittsburgh. The viability of this program has been threatened by budgetary cutbacks. If possible, the Bureau should continue to support this program as it is probably more cost-effective for Families Outside to offer transportation services than for the Bureau.

**RECOMMENDATION** The Bureau should modify its visiting program to expand both the number of hours and number of visits long-term offenders may receive.

**RECOMMENDATION** Family-centered visiting should be planned so that larger groups of family members can plan to visit in normative surroundings for up to eight hours. Only I-3 level inmates or below should be eligible for such visits.

**RECOMMENDATION** Family/conjugal visiting should be permitted for spouses and children of inmates. These visits should take place in comfortable surroundings within the main security perimeter of the institution but separated from the general population. Because of the security deficiencies inherent in this recommendation, only P-3 or below and I-2 or below inmates would be eligible. (See Chapter Five for further discussion)

As described by Fishman and Cassin,<7> family and conjugal visits are special visiting arrangements that allow the family or authorized friends to spend an extended period of time, from 20 to 48 hours, with the offender in a setting that is as much like a normal family setting as possible. The type of visiting arrangements vary from state to state and within the same correctional system.

Family visits may not include an overnight stay. For example, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction offers "family days" which consist of an extended visit on a Sunday with numerous family members and friends participating. The family day is available only during the summer months as it is held on the grounds of the institution and involves a picnic dinner.

7 Fishman and Cassin, pp. 11, 12.

In seven correctional systems, certain family members may visit the inmate in special facilities, such as mobile homes. For the most part, these visits are not supervised and the inmate and his/her spouse have the opportunity and privacy to engage in sexual relations. Although two of these states emphasize the sexual benefits that are inherent in this type of visiting arrangement (indeed one of the states permits only legal spouses to participate), the remaining five states emphasize the positive effects on the maintenance of meaningful family ties.

Use of family/conjugal visitation could ease the overcrowded conditions currently experienced within the visiting rooms at the Bureau's major institutions as many long-term offenders would utilize the family visiting facilities outside the institution for their visits.

**RECOMMENDATION** The furlough (temporary release) program should be expanded to include inmates sentenced to life sentences. Again, to minimize the threat to the general public and provide an incentive for positive institutional performance, only P-3 or below and I-2 or below inmates would be eligible.

If security considerations permit, the furlough is preferable to family/conjugal visiting as a means for maintaining family ties. In those states that provide family or conjugal visiting, inmates who are eligible for furloughs are excluded from participation in family/conjugal visiting programs.

In addition to permitting the offender to attend to family matters, the furlough also permits the offender to seek employment and to take care of other matters related to his or her impending release.

**RECOMMENDATION** A transportation pool, developed and maintained by the Bureau, should be established to facilitate family and friends visitation. This pool should be computerized to include the names, addresses, telephone numbers and visitation schedules of families and friends who visit inmates on a routine basis.

**RECOMMENDATION** Finally, the number of family days should be expanded to a minimum of three per year for long-term offenders only. This would allow visitors the opportunity to share extended visits with long-term offenders at least during the summer months when outdoor visiting is feasible.

The preceding twelve recommendations were suggested by the staff, inmates and inmate families surveyed by CSG project



staff. While some of these recommendations may seem radical, particularly with respect to the present mood of the public and the legislature, the reader should be reminded that the furlough programs, an established Bureau program, were likewise considered somewhat extreme when first suggested. These recommendations, if introduced, should not bring about an increased threat to the safety and security of the public as they directly employ the Public and Institutional Risk factors of the Bureau's new classification system. As will be noted in several of the recommendations, inmates must be a specific "P" or "I" level to take advantage of the program in question.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Correctional Services Group staff recommend that the Pennsylvania Legislature develop legislation which would authorize the Bureau to employ the recently instituted Correctional Classification Profile (CCP) in arriving at a decision relative to a prisoner's suitability for participation in programs for which he or she is now declared unqualified primarily as a result of a life sentence status.

As has been stated several times in this report, prisoners serving life sentences in the Pennsylvania correctional system are precluded from participation in a variety of Bureau programs. While this was not considered a major problem several years ago when the lifer population was relatively small, it is now a significant issue as over 1,400 prisoners are serving life sentences or approximately fifteen percent of the total prisoner population. These include, at a minimum, the following:

- Community Service Center assignment;
- Home and family furloughs;
- Education and vocational training release programs;
- Work release; and
- Any other prerelease or parole programs which may exist now or be legislated within the scope of the meaning of prerelease programs in the future.

The only means by which a life sentence prisoner can participate in prerelease programming is to have his or her life sentence commuted by the Governor of the Commonwealth and express language in the commutation to authorize prerelease participation.

While it is understood that a number of life sentence prisoners should be excluded from participation in one or more of these programs due to the seriousness of their offense, history of escape, etc., there is also a considerable segment of this population that would make positive use of the program without

jeopardizing public safety. The questions to be answered are how can the Bureau identify these individuals and at what point in their period of confinement should they be considered eligible? Beyond eligibility which of these prisoners are also suitable and acceptable given the Bureau's definitions for these two classification concepts?

Suitability is the prisoner an appropriate case for prerelease referral based on programmatic considerations, time remaining, etc?

Acceptability is the inmate acceptable for prerelease based on community sensitivity, offense, programming available, etc?

The CCP is a classification system developed to identify and rank eight basic needs including, in order of priority, the following:

- Medical and Health Care;
- Public Risk;
- Institutional Risk;
- Mental Health;
- Education;
- Vocational Training;
- Work Skills; and
- Drug and Alcohol Needs.

Each factor is rated on a scale of one to five with one being the least need and five the highest. For example, in considering the programmatic suitability and acceptability for the lifer, the two most important factors would be his/her Public Risk (P) and Institutional Risk (I) scores with the P-score being the most important. A prisoner's Public Risk score, by definition, is the likelihood a prisoner will attempt to escape and the extent of risk he or she would present to the general public should the escape be successful. Individuals rated as a P-5 for instance, would be considered an extremely serious threat to the public's safety and well-being while P-1 prisoners would present virtually no or minimal risk.

A prisoner's Institutional Risk Score, on-the-other-hand, indicates the extent to which that person is an institutional management problem either as an aggressor or victim. Similar to the P-score ratings, individuals with a score of I-5 are considered extremely serious problems within the confines of a correctional institution while prisoners at the other end of the continuum, I-1, represent no or minimal risk to the operation of the prison.

Employing the P and I scores on the CCP, it can readily be seen that a wide variety of prisoner security and custody types result, ranging from inmates who are both serious public and institutional risk to inmates who are not a risk for either factor to inmates who are a public risk but adapt positively to



institutional life to prisoners who are of minimal threat to the public but inside the prison are difficult to control.

With the above classification system in mind, it would logically follow that all prisoners, except those awaiting capital punishment and a few other special management groups, could and should be assigned a P and I score which would assist in determining program suitability for the Bureau's long-term prisoner population.

The principal concern of the Bureau, with respect to this segment of the population, should be the potential risk they present to the public, staff and other inmates. Using the CCP's assigned scores as the basis for the assessment of risk rather than policy statements which preclude long-term prisoners from participation in the aforementioned programs would seem not only more equitable relative to program suitability for this prisoner group but would also minimize the likelihood of prisoners with shorter terms participating in a program when the Public Risk score would argue to the contrary.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Correctional Services Group specifically recommends that persons serving life sentences in Pennsylvania be eligible for participation in prerelease programming upon completion of ten (10) years of their sentence provided they meet the requirements established for participation in such pre-release and parole programs with the provision that their Public and Institutional Risk scores demonstrate they are of minimal threat to the general public and have proved not to be an institutional management problem.

This recommendation would eliminate the requirement that the prisoner must have served one-half of his or her minimum sentence to be eligible for prerelease programs by substituting a term of ten (10) years completed imprisonment.

Using the CCP, life prisoners would be required to have a Public Risk score of P-3 or less and an Institutional Risk Score of I-2 or less to be considered suitable. The rationale for a lower I-score than P-score is based on the prisoner's ability to assert more personal control over his or her institutional adjustment and program participation versus the inability to have much input into changing the P-score which is primarily based on the nature of the current offense and prior criminal behaviors. In addition, the use of a lower I-score should provide motivation for positive institutional adjustment on the part of lifers as their participation in prerelease activities would hinge on remaining free from serious disciplinary actions and participation in institutional rehabilitation programs.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Correctional Services Group recommends that future research be conducted on the Pennsylvania long-term offender population, particularly now that a definition of long-term confinement has been determined. This research would include a more detailed analysis of possible differences between long- and short-term offenders and a thorough investigation of the characteristics of long-term offenders. Special attention would be afforded to:

- Sex;
- Age/Including Commitment Age;
- Ethnic Background;
- Educational History (Including Reading and Math Levels);
- Vocational Training Skills;
- Work Assignment;
- Current offense(s);
- Offense History (Including Escape);
- Medical and Health Needs (Including Mental Health);
- Length of Sentence;
- Adult Arrest Record;
- Adult Incarceration History;
- Parole History;
- Committing Jurisdiction;
- Marital Status;
- Family Status;
- Substance Abuse History;
- Institutional Adjustment;
- Transfer History;
- Proximity to Release;
- Time Served on Sentence;
- Rates of Suicide, Acts of Self-Mutilation and Mental Illness; and
- Use of Correctional Institution Environment Scale (CIES) for Both Long- and Short-term Inmates.

# Problem Statement: Long-Term Offenders and the Pennsylvania Correctional System

## INTRODUCTION

The recent explosion in the growth of the nation's prisoner populations--11.6% for the year ended December 31, 1982--and the staggering costs of constructing sufficient beds to house this influx of inmates has prompted a renewed discussion of who belongs in prison and who does not. Numerous public interest groups across the United States are proposing community-based alternatives to imprisonment for offenders who do not pose a risk, in terms of violent behavior, to society. At the same time, these groups acknowledge that there is a core group of offenders for whom imprisonment is the only answer. These offenders are characterized by violent offense histories or the commission of a single act so heinous that society will demand protection from such individuals. These offenders, by virtue of their offense histories, will require maximum security imprisonment for extended periods of time.

These long-term offenders are the subject of this particular study. Until only about five years ago, little attention was given to the long-term offender. Recent developments are changing this observation, however.

During the late 1970's and early 1980's, the nation's prisons experienced a substantial increase in the number of offenders with long prison terms. While the total number of offenders has grown dramatically over this same time period, the rate of increase for long-term offenders has been astonishing when compared with that observed for short-term offenders.

There are numerous factors that explain why the percentage of long-term offenders within the prison population has grown so rapidly. First, the liberal attitudes that characterized the 1960's and early 1970's have given way to a conservatism that is expressed in many facets of American life--dress, politics, finances, religion, legal decisions, to name a few. Concern for the rights of the offender have been overshadowed by a new-found concern for the rights of the victim. Second, although the incidence of violent crime has decreased in many jurisdictions over the past few years, the awareness of the public concerning violent offenders and their acts has achieved a notoriety in the media that has hardened the attitudes of many people toward criminals. Third, public acceptance of rehabilitation as a goal of correctional agencies has waned due to the absence of proof that expensive rehabilitation programs actually do reduce recidivism. Simultaneously, the public has

adopted an increasingly pervasive argument that law violators should be confined not only to protect the public, but also for punishment. It became insufficient, in the minds of many people, to simply imprison an offender. Instead, the offender should be put away for a period of time that is sufficiently long to impress upon that offender society's strong reaction to the commission of serious offenses.

Finally, numerous state legislatures, in response to public outcry, have enacted new sentencing laws which mandate fixed or determinate sentences in place of the indeterminate sentencing structure that had been utilized since early in this century.

The increasing punitiveness of American society is indicated most clearly by the incarceration rate. The highest recorded figure of previous decades was 137 per 100,000 population in 1939. This figure was surpassed in 1980 to reach a level of 170 per 100,000 population. In 1983, it is 175 per 100,000 population.

Furthermore, determinate sentencing structures are not immune to this punitive era. For example, California adopted determinate sentencing in 1977. During the first two years following its enactment, the fixed terms it provided were increased as the result of amendments and a public referendum. Even before the sentencing structures went into effect, they were amended to provide stiffer penalties and since that time, constant public pressure has been mounted to make them even harsher. The most important change was an amendment that went into effect in January of 1980 that raised the base terms from which a judge must choose a sentence for most serious crimes. As part of the referendum cited above, California voters also approved changes in the prison terms for murder. The minimum time to be served on a life sentence for first degree murder was increased from seven to sixteen years and eight months (i.e., twenty-five years, less good time). For second degree murder the change was even more drastic. The penalty under the determinate structure was a flat five, six or seven years. The Legislature had scheduled an increase to five, seven or eleven, but the referendum substituted a sentence of fifteen years to life with parole possible after ten years if good time was earned. This measure not only restored an indeterminacy to the system but also demonstrated that if the legislature resisted public pressure to raise sentences, the voters could and would take matters into their own hands.

Long sentences are becoming the rule rather than the exception in many states. The average sentence of new inmates in South Carolina is now twelve years. Alabama gives a mandatory life without parole sentence to anyone convicted of a violent felony who has two previous felony convictions; in June 1983, there were about 130 inmates serving such terms. Florida has some 950 prisoners doing twenty-five year sentences--they cannot earn good time. Missouri has over 110 inmates doing fifty years--no parole. "These sentences," says John Conrad, a senior fellow at the National Institute of Justice, "mean we have a

different type of prison community. We [have] never had anything like it before."<8>

In addition, the average time served has gone up in many states. In Maryland, Illinois and Oklahoma, it has risen from twenty to fifty months in the past five years. Several states, such as Texas, have eliminated good time for many offenses; this will raise the amount of time served by Texas inmates by one-third or more.

In summary, the increasing public sentiment favoring harsh terms of confinement in concert with trends toward determinate sentencing and longer sentences are resulting in lower prison population turnover and a growing number of offenders who are experiencing prolonged institutionalization.

#### LONG-TERM OFFENDERS IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction, much the same as numerous other state correctional systems across the nation is experiencing a significant increase in the number of long-term offenders it is receiving from the courts. Since mid-1981, the Bureau has received not only an increasing number of inmates in general, but increasing numbers of inmates with longer sentences whose average length of stay will continue to grow longer and longer.

As on the national level, there are several factors which have been identified as contributing to this recent increase in long-term prisoners. They are:

- Public attitude toward crime;
- Mandatory sentencing structures recently enacted into law;
- More stringent sentencing guidelines recently implemented;
- A more conservative release position by the Board of Probation and Parole;
- Legislation that established a "guilty, but mentally ill" plea, thus placing persons so convicted under the jurisdiction of the Bureau;
- A pending parole reform bill that would abolish parole and give the sentencing judge more discretion in passing sentencing; and

8 Stephen Gettinger, "The Prison Population Boom: Still No End in Sight," Corrections Magazine, Vol. IX, No. 3 (June 1983), p. 10.

- A more conservative attitude toward clemency by the Board of Pardons and the Governor, decreasing the number of commuted sentences.

The impact of the preceding factors on the number of long-term offenders confined within the Bureau is illustrated by the following table which presents, for each of the past ten years, the number of inmates within the Pennsylvania system who were serving life sentences.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF INMATES SERVING LIFE SENTENCES

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
1972	402	-
1973	434	8.0
1974	498	14.7
1975	572	14.9
1976	664	16.1
1977	719	8.3
1978	763	8.9
1979	816	4.2
1980	878	7.6
1981	962	9.6
1982	1,074	11.6

In ten years, the number of inmates serving a life sentence has increased by over 167%. At the end of 1982, these offenders made up 11.1% of the Bureau's total inmate population. Presently, there are over 1,420 life sentence inmates in the Pennsylvania system. The important thing to remember is that in Pennsylvania a life sentence means just that--the offender will do life in prison unless his/her sentence is commuted by the Governor. The incumbent has commuted very few inmates during his tenure in office. Historically, inmates in Pennsylvania have not served "life" in prison. Commutation had been granted at between seven and thirty years served--the mean life sentence being sixteen years.

The current focus of the Bureau's programming efforts is the average prisoner who is confined within the Pennsylvania correctional system from eighteen to twenty-four months. This is not an atypical finding when examining state departments of correction. For example, typically both educational and vocational training programs that are provided to inmates are designed for rapid turnover in students. Most programs are designed to last from three to twelve months. Long-term offenders are usually ineligible to participate in programs designed to strengthen and/or maintain family and community ties until they are within six to eighteen months of release. Some, like the inmate serving a life sentence, may never meet the stated eligibility requirements.

Until recently in Pennsylvania, the long-term offender has been something of an anomaly. Because of their small numbers, relative to other inmates, the long-term offenders were

- Therapy--individual and group;
- Maintenance of family and community contact; and
- Pre- and post-release assistance in finding jobs, homes, needed medical or social services, etc.

The second formal response of the Bureau to address the needs of long-term offenders was the establishment of lifers' programs at the State Correctional Institutions at Graterford, Dallas, Huntingdon, Rockview, Camp Hill and Pittsburgh.

For example, Lifers Incorporated, located at Graterford, is composed of men serving life sentences and operates under the auspices of the national Lifers of America program. Its primary goals are to upgrade institutional programs, to facilitate family contact and to create a public climate favoring enlightened legislation. For example, the group recently sponsored a seminar entitled "Criminal Justice Issues Affecting Long-Term Prisoners," which involved participants from the judicial, religious, correctional and educational communities. The group is currently preparing a "Profile Paper" calling for state legislators to enact a bill that would enable those persons serving life sentences in Pennsylvania to be given an opportunity to participate in the rehabilitative process that has been set forth by legislation.

The third response of the Bureau was, similar to the Lifers program, initiated at SCIG. In 1982, staff and inmates at Graterford participated in a formal exercise to determine what could be done at their facility to address the programmatic needs of their long-term prison population (primarily lifers). The first task undertaken was a survey of treatment personnel which posed the following questions:

- What current and future problems do lifers face?
- What are some current and future solutions?
- How do the problems lifers face affect the institution?
- What factors might enhance solutions to current and future problems?

This survey led to the following recommendations:

- The frequency of visiting for life prisoners should be increased beyond that provided to the general inmate population. The Family Day Picnic Program should be expanded to two to three times per year for life prisoners.
- A program of family counseling specifically geared to life prisoners and their families should be developed.

- Life prisoners should not be categorically denied access to vocational training.
- Life prisoners should be reclassified on a semi-annual basis.
- Life prisoners should not be isolated, but rather programmed into the mainstream of institutional living.

#### DEFINING LONG-TERM CONFINEMENT

The crux of this particular investigation centers on the operational definition of long-term confinement. At present the literature does not support a single criterion that distinguishes short-term confinement from long-term confinement. Moreover, the choice of one criterion over another opens the door to much criticism and debate over whether or not the criterion so-chosen is correct. Further, if the criterion is long, for example twenty to twenty-five years of continuous confinement, then the number of inmates affected is extremely small.

Conversely, if the criterion is shortened considerably, the numbers of inmates affected will grow, but detractors may quibble about whether a four or five year confinement is actually a long-term incarceration.

Another important factor is that the definition must consider only time served in confinement not the sentence length imposed by the courts. Most of the inmates presently in the Pennsylvania system were sentenced under an indeterminate sentencing structure that requires inmates serve the minimum sentence before consideration is given for their release by the Board of Parole and Probation. Theoretically, any inmate could be released upon serving his or her minimum sentence. If sentence length was the driving factor, an inmate with a sentence of three to seven years could be considered a long-term inmate if five years was the criterion. However, it is probable that this hypothetical inmate would be paroled before he or she had been incarcerated for a five year period. Therefore, time incarcerated (not sentence length) is the more satisfactory standard to impose.

In a recent study, in support of his doctoral candidacy, Dr. Timothy Flanagan, set the definition for long-term confinement at five years continuous imprisonment. In this study, the imprisonment had to have been the result of a single court-imposed sentence, or the result of a series of consecutive sentences, provided that the period of incarceration was not interrupted by release.

For the purpose of collecting data from inmates, project staff arbitrarily adopted a five-year period of continuous confinement as the criterion for determining whether an inmate was to be considered a short- or long-term offender. However, project staff believed that the final criterion should

be set by the Bureau's staff and inmate population. Therefore, questionnaires developed for this study asked the opinions of staff and inmate respondents concerning the length of time an inmate would have to be incarcerated for them to consider him or her a long-term offender. This position was taken because project staff are aware that numerous factors, unique to the correctional system under consideration, affect the perceptions of the inmates themselves. For example, a confinement of from two to three years in a county jail where movement is limited, programs are few and turnover is high, would seem like an eternity for most inmates, especially if the jail were far removed from their families and friends.

#### THE NATURE OF THIS STUDY

This study was comprised of three inter-related components. Each segment of the study explores answers to similar questions from the perspectives of three distinct groups--the inmates themselves, their families and friends and correctional staff who work with the inmates. The primary objective of the study was to identify problems imposed by long-term confinement on the groups of respondents identified above and to solicit suggestions for ameliorating these problems.

It is important to point out that this study of long-term offenders within the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction was not designed or even conceived to be a research study. This effort was, instead, a descriptive study. Such data as educational background, age, committing jurisdictions, offense history, etc., were only obtained and analyzed when germane to the particular issue being examined. For example, educational history is only an important issue in so far as this information helped to identify what types of academic programs would benefit long-term offenders.

Likewise, differences between long- and short-term inmates concerning demographic characteristics, economic characteristics, criminal history, drug and alcohol use, institutional adjustment, institutional program participation and community contact, were not statistically analyzed in this study. Other studies have found few statistically significant differences between short- and long-term offenders. The findings of these studies will be used, where applicable, to support recommendations for meeting the needs of long-term offenders.

The findings of this study were extracted from numerous questionnaires and interview schedules. Inmates were asked their views regarding the major problems associated with long-term confinement, the most important needs of long-term offenders, suggestions for meeting these needs, any perceived differences between long- and short-term inmates and what (in terms of years served) constitutes long-term confinement. More detailed information on the study methodology is presented in Chapters Three, Four and Five.



## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

### Data Sources

Project staff employed four data sources to complete this study of how long-term offenders could be best managed and programmed in the Pennsylvania correctional system. These sources were:

- Survey of Long-Term Offender Literature:
  - Research performed by other research groups, universities, etc.,
  - Impending studies in the area of long-term confinement,
  - Related literature, and
  - Nationally-recognized experts in the area of offender programming;
- Assessment of Bureau Data Sources:
  - Bureau policy documents including policy and procedures manuals,
  - Central office files and statistical reports,
  - On-site visits to three Bureau facilities with distinctly different types of long-term offenders, i.e., the young offender institution at Camp-Hill, the women's facility at Muncy and one of the maximum security facilities for adult males located at Graterford. While on-site, CSG project staff conducted interviews with administrative, program and security staff and with selected inmates and personally observed procedures and programs unique to long-term offenders; and
  - Various specialized sources such as legislators, offender aid groups, lifers organizations and representatives from other state agencies;
- Survey of National Programs;

Fifty-one correctional agencies (all states, plus the District of Columbia) were surveyed to identify unique programs and services which could be considered for replication in Pennsylvania and to learn of any recently conducted or on-going research studies concerning long-term offenders.
- Survey of Staff, Inmates and Inmate Families:

- Survey of a sample of Bureau staff directly or indirectly involved with long-term offenders representing the following areas:
  - \* Central office program and operations,
  - \* Community services,
  - \* Institutional administration, operations and security,
  - \* Classification and programs,
- Survey of a sample of Bureau prisoners representing both short and long-term offenders to determine their perceptions relative to the programming that should be available to long-term offenders, and
- Survey of families of long-term offenders to determine the extent of impact of long-term separation and what programs and services could be developed or expanded to minimize separation problems.

### Project Objectives

Correctional Services Group, Incorporated, in conjunction with Bureau staff, identified eight objectives that this study was to address. They were:

- Determine the operational and programmatic needs of long-term offenders which differ from those experienced by offenders who are serving short- to medium-range sentences;
- Determine what order of program sequence is most realistic and appropriate for long-term offenders so that proximity to release is placed in proper perspective;
- Identify the special needs of long-term offenders (if any) such as attitude, motivation, psychological state, etc., which warrant new or modified programs;
- Assess how the Bureau's educational, vocational, job placement, prison industries and other related programs should be utilized for the long-term offender population;
- Determine what types of programs and services would help interested inmates maintain family and/or community ties;
- Identify what considerations relative to prisoner housing (institutional and internal cell/dormitory assignment) require attention;



- Examine the extent of violent acts, internal crime, etc., committed by long-term offenders against other inmates and staff while they are incarcerated<sup>9</sup>; and
- Evaluate staff perceptions of long-term offender needs and the differences between long- and short-term offenders.

<sup>9</sup> This objective was not met because the retrieval of this information would have required manual coding that was outside the time and budgetary constraints of this particular study.

# Characteristics of Long-Term Offenders

The results of two tasks completed for this study, the literature review and the survey of national programs, will be summarized prior to discussing characteristics of long-term offenders to give the reader a better perspective of the issues involved in studying long-term confinement.

## STUDIES OF LONG-TERM CONFINEMENT<10>

Most of the literature that is available on the impacts of long-term confinement concerns data that was collected from foreign prisons. Therefore, it is difficult, if not foolhardy, to generalize these findings to the American prison experience. A further drawback of existing studies, in terms of using the results for comparative analysis, is fourfold:

- No common definition for long-term incarceration has been used;
- Heavy reliance has been placed on standardized psychological inventories as measures of personality and attitude change;
- Measures of psychological change have been used almost exclusively as indicators of adjustment; and
- Methodological problems. Foremost among these are inadequate follow-up periods and the use of cross-sectional research design.

Most of the studies, completed during the last five years, can be characterized as one or more of the following study types:

- Descriptive studies of long-term offender samples;
- Studies of time perception and management among long-term offenders;
- Studies of physical, cognitive and personality changes in offenders subjected to long terms of confinement;

<sup>10</sup> In the preparation of this discussion, project staff are indebted to Dr. Timothy Flanagan for the excellent literature search completed for his 1980 dissertation entitled, "Long-Term Prisoners: A Study of the Characteristics, Institutional Experience and Perspectives of Long-Term Inmates in State Correctional Facilities."

- Studies of unique problems associated with long-term confinement, such as maintenance of familial relationships, friendships and loss of privacy; and
- Studies of the institutional experience of long-term offenders.

Descriptive Studies: The conclusion to be drawn from most of these studies is that long-term offenders are not remarkably different from short-term inmates, despite the findings that long-term inmates, as a group, have committed more serious offenses and have accrued longer and more serious offense histories.

Time Perception and Management: This issue has been the subject of many studies probably because time is the factor that most readily distinguishes the long-term offender from his/her short-term counterpart. Also, there is much interest in how an offender manages to cope with the long-term deprivations associated with lengthy prison terms.

Most researchers have observed that long-term confinement is associated with accommodation in terms of time perception on the part of long-term offenders. That is, chronological benchmarks used by the majority of adults on the outside are inappropriate for inmates whose day-to-day existence is always similar. These inmates gauge time passage according to key events in their otherwise monotonous lives, e.g., the date of a major disturbance, the date a new superintendent came, the date of the last family picnic, etc. Based upon a study of future time perspective among inmates serving life sentences, one researcher has postulated what he termed a barrier effect that suppresses the long-term offender's ability and/or desire to contemplate the time period beyond the date of release.

In order to cope with the large amounts of time stretching out before them, it appears that many long-term offenders have adopted time-framing techniques to divide their sentences into manageable segments of time. For example, many inmates, and not just long-term offenders, use the available programs to set long-term goals for themselves, e.g., body building, crafts mastery, degree attainment, vocational certification, etc. Other inmates may use institutional assignments as a means of passing time more quickly. It should be noted that many researchers believe inmates are not merely content to do their time, they desire activities that will allow them to use time to their benefit that otherwise they consider to be wasted.

In his study of long-term offenders, Flanagan contends that long-term offenders adopt, intentionally or not, a perspective on doing their time that differs from that exhibited by short-term offenders. He states, "In order to adjust to [long-term imprisonment], the prisoner must devise strategies that will enable him to negotiate his current involvement and yet not lose sight of the outside world."<11>

<sup>11</sup> Flanagan, p. 29.

Physical and Psychological Changes in the Long-term Offender: Previous studies have investigated the following possible effects of long-term confinement: physical deterioration; cognitive impairment; personality deterioration; attitudinal change; and psychopathological effects. These studies have demonstrated that the effects of long-term imprisonment are nearly as varied as the offenders serving such sentences. For example, although some offenders become institutionalized after several years in prison, others, regardless of the length of their sentence, are able to devise strategies that enable them cope with the realities of imprisonment.

Unique Problems Associated with Long-term Confinements: A number of studies have focused on the unique problems of long-term offenders. These include:

- Maintenance of familial and other relationships;
- Loss of privacy;
- Loss of self-determination;
- Relationships within the prison community; and
- The perceptions of long-term offenders concerning their most serious problems.

The areas of investigation of the preceding studies and their findings obviously overlap. The most salient findings were:

- Maintenance of contact with the outside world is a common concern of long-term inmates although strategies for coping with this concern are varied. In extreme cases, the long-term offender will break off all contact with the outside world in order to put aside his/her doubts and fears about the survival of the relationship.
- Inmates perceive their inability to maintain outside relationships as more of a hardship than the usual deprivations associated with incarceration.
- Older inmates are more concerned with privacy than younger inmates, who are most concerned with activity and freedom.
- There is no pattern of friendships among long-term offenders. Most offenders make few friends among other inmates. Some long-term inmates will speak only in terms of acquaintances.
- One of the primary deprivations of imprisonment is a loss of self-determination. The prison environment is very regimented, wherein the inmate has little or no opportunity for exerting control over any facet of his/her daily life. In simple

terms, inmates are treated as if they were children. They are told when to get up, when and what to eat, when they can receive visitors, how many, who, etc.

Institutional Experience: Only Flanagan's study of long-term offenders in a large state correctional system examined the differential institutional experiences of long- and short-term inmates. His principal findings included:

- Long-term inmates showed lower rates of current program involvement but a greater rate of participation in work assignments. Furthermore, as a group, the long-term inmates held more desirable work assignments than did short-term inmates.
- The physical distance between the long-term offenders home of record was inversely correlated to the frequency of extra-mural contact, i.e., familial and other visits and other forms of contact.
- The records of long-term inmates indicate a slower rate of change in their institutional lives.
- Long-term inmates commit less but more serious misconduct violations.

#### SURVEY OF STATE PROGRAMS/SERVICES UNIQUE TO LONG-TERM OFFENDERS

Within the first month of the project, Correctional Services Group staff mailed letters to the directors of the other fifty state-wide correctional systems, including the District of Columbia, which requested information on whether or not their respective agencies were experiencing a significant increase in commitments of long-term offenders and, if so, what responses, e.g., new programs and services, classification system changes, sequencing of programs, etc., or changes had been implemented to address this issue.

Out of the 49 states and the District of Columbia, 27 or 54% responded to the survey request. This response rate is high considering no follow-up telephone calls were made to the jurisdictions who did not respond and evidences a high interest in the issue of long-term offender programming. Conversations with nationally-recognized experts in the field lead project staff to believe that many states did not respond to the survey because they do not have any programs or services unique to the long-term offender or do not perceive the management of long-term offenders as an issue.

Included below is a listing of the states that responded to the survey and a summary of their responses.

State Agency

Responses

Alabama Department of Corrections

- Only related programs for the Aged and Infirm

Alaska Department of Corrections

- No programs; Department currently has contract with Federal Bureau of Prisons for serious offenders. A new 300 bed facility is being built to accommodate this population.

Arizona Department of Corrections

- In February 1983, formed a task force to study needs of offenders with sentences in excess of ten years.

California Department of Corrections

- No programs now in operation.

Delaware Department of Corrections

- Special construction crew composed of lifers.

Hawaii Department of Corrections

- Department is currently planning new facility for long-term offenders which will address:
  - Academic Skills
  - Vocational Training
  - Correctional Industries
  - Furloughs

Iowa Department of Corrections

- Developed Privilege Level System for lifers at Iowa State Penitentiary.
- Periodic rotation of assignments for long-term offenders.
- Honor Lifer Range

Kentucky Department of Corrections

- Department is now studying issue at Kentucky Reformatory

Maryland Division of Correction

- Mutual Agreement Program (MAP) includes provisions for long-term offenders.

Minnesota Department of Corrections

- Procedures mandate periodic custody reduction for long-term offenders.

Michigan Department of Corrections

- Department has authorized two programs for lifers:
  - National Lifers of America
  - Lifeliners

Missouri Department of Corrections and Human Resources

- Classification system incorporates plans for lifers and long-term offenders

- No programs now in operation

Montana Department of Corrections

- Emphasis on programming during latter part of sentence.

Nebraska Department of Corrections

- Assign (voluntarily) long-term inmates to volunteer programs such as braille translation and blind tape recordings.

New Hampshire Department of Corrections

- No programs now in operation

New Jersey Department of Corrections

- Department is now undergoing a major analysis of its long-term offender population with emphasis on:

- Prisoner Housing
- Classification
- Vocational Training
- Special Medical and Health Services
- Geriatrics

New Mexico Department of Corrections

- Expanded programs for long-term prisoners as a result of 1980 Consent Decree

New York Department of Corrections

- Department has conducted extensive research of long-term offenders in system but has not enacted any programs as a result of findings.

Oregon Department of Corrections

- Lifers Club in operation at State Penitentiary.

Rhode Island Department of Corrections

- No programs in operation as of this date.

South Carolina Department of Corrections

- Support Line Program in operation at Women's Correctional Center.

Virginia Department of Corrections

- Operates Senior Awareness Program for geriatric offenders.

Washington Department of Corrections

- Department has incorporated long-term offender needs in following areas:

- Classification (security status dependent primarily on length of sentence and offense)
- Program long-term offenders early into vocational training which is then linked with prison industries assignment
- Long-term offenders fill majority of skilled/semi-skilled work assignments.
- Geriatric offenders

Washington DC Department of Corrections

- No programs in operation at this time.

Wisconsin Department of Corrections

- No programs in operation at this time.

Wyoming Department of Corrections

- No programs in operation at this time.

COMPARISON OF LONG-TERM VERSUS SHORT-TERM INMATES<12>

Two data sources were used to compare the characteristics of long-term and short-term prisoners housed in state correctional systems. The first was a 1974 survey conducted for the now defunct Law Enforcement Assistance Administration by the United States Bureau of the Census. This survey, entitled the Survey of Inmates of State Correctional Facilities - Advance Report was completed to develop a national data base that described the social and economic characteristics, criminal and correctional background, adjudication experience and institutional activities of offenders confined in state correctional systems. The second data source was a 1979 survey conducted on 1,486 inmates confined in a large state correctional system by Flanagan.<13>

Table 2 summarizes the data considered pertinent to this particular descriptive study of long-term offenders. Factors believed to be important included demographic and job history characteristics, current and prior offense and incarceration history, substance abuse history, institutional program participation and maintenance of family ties.

To simplify the following comparisons between the 1974 survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and the 1979 survey conducted by Flanagan, the former will be referred to as the U.S. survey and the latter as the state survey.

12 The definition of long-term confinement used for these comparisons was five years continuous confinement.

13 Flanagan, p. 110.

TABLE 2  
COMPARISON OF LONG-TERM VERSUS SHORT-TERM INMATES<a>

Factor	Long-Term		Short-Term	
	1974 Survey	1979 Survey	1974 Survey	1979 Survey
Sex				
Male	99.0	*	96.0	*
Female	1.0	*	4.0	*
Race				
White	54.0	42	51.0	43
Black	45.0	58	47.0	57
Other	1.0		2.0	
Education				
Less than High School Diploma	60.0	85.0	63.0	78.0
High School Diploma	26.0	12.0	29.0	17.0
Beyond High School	13.0	4.0	8.0	4.0
Median Age at Commitment	27	27.6	26	24.6
Median Age at Survey Period	36	*	27	*
Marital Status at Commitment (Married)	31	27	31	25
Marital Status at Survey Period (Married)	16	*	25	*
Full-time Job Prior to Arrest	70	48	61	42
Longevity on Last Job Greater than One Year	54	*	44	*
Modal Offense Category	Homicide	Homicide	Robbery	Robbery
Prior Incarceration				
Yes	75	Prior 88	70	Prior 91
No	25	Arrests 12	30	Arrests 9
Under Influence of Drugs at Time of Current Offense				
Yes	21	*	33	*
No	79		67	
Under Influence of Alcohol at Time of Current Offense				
Yes	50	*	43	*
No	50		57	
Program Participation				
Yes	46	43	44	43
No	54	57	56	57
Institutional Work Assignment				
Yes	84	*	78	*
No	16		22	
Distance from Institution to Home				
Less than 100 Miles	37	*	41	*
100 to 249 Miles	29		28	
250 Miles or More	33		29	
No Home	1		<1	
Frequency of Visits				
Weekly	12	*	16	*
Monthly	26		31	
Every 3 Months	13		10	
Every 6 Months	9		6	
Less than Every 6 Months	15		8	
Never	25		28	

\* This data was not available  
a/ The operational definition of long-term offenders used to analyze data from both surveys was five years continuous confinement.

Demographic Characteristics: Due to the small number of female inmates in the state correctional system that was studied, the state survey did not include female inmates. The U.S. survey found nearly all long-term offenders were male (99%). Females comprised only 4% of the short-term sample.

There were no significant differences with respect to race between short and long-term offenders in either survey. In the U.S. survey, the majority of both types of offenders were white. In the state survey, the reverse was true.

In the U.S. survey there was little difference between short- and long-term offenders in terms of educational background. Likewise, in the state survey the differences, although greater, were not significant. The differences, however, between the U.S. and state survey were significant. Much higher percentages of both long- and short-term inmates in the state survey had not completed high school (a total of 85% and 78% respectively).

The median age at commitment, although lower for short-term inmates in both surveys, was not significantly lower. (Three years lower in the case of the state survey.) The median age at commitment for long-term offenders was about 27 years for both surveys.

The state survey did not obtain age at survey period. The U.S. survey did with not surprising results. The median age of long-term inmates at the time the 1974 survey was completed was 36 years. The equivalent age for short-term inmates was 27. Both the older age at initial commitment and the increased length of sentence imposed on the long-term offender contribute to this finding.

Both surveys determined marital status at commitment. Approximately equal percentages of both the long- and short-term inmates were married at the time of commitment for both samples (31% for the U.S. survey and 27% versus 25%, respectively, for the state survey.) The U.S. survey also determined marital status at the time of the survey with significant results. Fifteen percent fewer long-term inmates were married at the time of survey than at commitment. For short-term inmates, only 6% fewer were married at the time of the survey.

Job History: For both surveys, more long-term offenders than short-term offenders, held a full time job prior to their arrest for the current incarceration. Comparing the results of the two surveys, however, finds a significantly smaller percentage of both types of inmates who held a full time job prior to arrest.

In terms of longevity, the U.S. survey found a significant difference between long- and short-term inmates in terms of longevity on last job greater than one year, 54% of the long-term sample had been on their last job for one year or longer, as opposed to 44% of the short-term inmates.

Offense/Incarceration History: The modal offense categories for long-term offenders sampled by both surveys was homicide. For short-term offenders it was robbery.

The vast majority of both long- and short-term offenders in the U.S. survey had served prior incarcerations (75% and 70% respectively). The state survey did not examine prior incarcerations. Instead data on prior arrests was collected. There, too, there was no significant differences between long- and short-term inmates, although a higher percentage of short-term inmates had prior arrest records (91%) than did long-term offenders (88%).

Substance Abuse: Only the U.S. survey collected this data, primarily because this effort also involved face to face interviews with a sample of inmates whose case records provided the data for the survey. The chief findings were that long-term offenders were more likely to have been under the influence of alcohol at the time their current offense was committed than were short-term offenders. But short-term offenders were more likely to have been under the influence of drugs at the time the current offense was committed. The perceived differences in substance use patterns are possibly explained by the finding that the median age of long-term offenders at the time of the survey was 36. Given that most had previous incarcerations and many had served between eight and ten years, it is reasonable to assume that the prevalence of drug useage that began in the mid to late 1960's did not have the same impact on long-term offenders as it did on those who were younger at the time of the survey who had been in prison for less than five years.

Institutional Program Participation: In terms of the percent of long-term inmates and short-term inmates who were participating in institutional programs at the time the surveys were conducted, there is no appreciable differences between the groups or between the two time periods sampled.

In terms of participation in institutional work assignments, a slightly higher percentage of long-term offenders were participating compared to short-term offenders (84% versus 78% respectively).

Maintenance of Family Ties: Only the U.S. survey looked at its sample in the following terms. The distances between the maintaining institution and the inmates home of record were roughly comparable for both groups. A slightly higher percentage of the short-term inmates were housed within 100 miles of their homes (41% for short-term inmates, 37% for long-term). Likewise, when the frequency of visiting was analyzed, short-term inmates did not report appreciably more frequent visiting than did long-term inmates. In fact, a slightly higher percentage of short-term inmates than long-term inmates reported they never received visits.

The results of this analysis tend to support the findings of the descriptive studies summarized earlier in this chapter that long-term inmates are not appreciably different from



their counterparts in areas not highly correlated with their current offense or sentence length.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF LONG-TERM OFFENDERS WITHIN THE PENNSYLVANIA BUREAU OF CORRECTION

Description of the Survey Data: In this section, data are presented that were collected through questionnaires and interviews with 51 inmates--each of the long-term inmates had served a minimum of five years in continuous confinement.

As discussed previously, the primary objectives of this study were to collect demographic data on short- and long-term offenders to identify key differences, if any, between the three groups and to solicit the input of inmates, their families and BOC staff into programming long-term offenders.

In general, the inmate questionnaires were designed to solicit four types of information: basic demographic; perceptions of problems experienced by long-term inmates that short-term inmates do not experience to the same degree and strategies for ameliorating the identified problems; maintenance of family ties; and institutional program participation.

#### Data Collection Procedures

Project staff conducted personal interviews with 13 of the 51 respondents prior to dissemination of the inmate questionnaires in order to pre-test the instrument. The original interview schedule was open-ended; it was revised prior to dissemination and most of the questions were re-formatted into close-ended questions.

#### Sample Selection

A computer print-out of all inmates confined within the Bureau of Correction as of January 31, 1983 was provided to CSG by Bureau staff. A small sample was drawn for survey purposes (106 inmates). Questionnaires were disseminated to the inmates at each institution by institutional classification staff. Only slightly more than one-third returned completed questionnaires (38 respondents). Of those who did not participate, two inmates were physically incapable of completing the form and eight inmates had been paroled.

#### Conduct of the Interviews

Personal interviews were primarily used to test the instrument and to identify categories for each open-ended response so that close-ended questions could be substituted where feasible. As such, personal interviews were conducted only at three sites. The sites were chosen because of the unique characteristics of the inmate population housed there. Interviews were conducted at:

- State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill  
A medium/minimum security institution that houses adult, youthful male offenders
- State Correctional Institution at Muncy  
The Commonwealth's only female institution; and
- State Correctional Institution at Graterford  
A maximum security, walled institution that houses adult male felons

The interviews were conducted in the conference room at each institution that is normally used for classification hearings. All facilities were quiet, relatively private and far from outside distractions. Neither custodial nor other institutional staff were present during the interview sessions.

The interviews lasted from 15 minutes to 2 hours; the average interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Prior to the interview, the staff introduced themselves, explained the nature of the study, assured the inmate his/her answers would be kept confidential and asked for the inmate's cooperation in completing the interview. Not one inmate refused to participate. At Graterford, a member of the institutions Lifer Program spoke privately with the project director about the scope and objectives of the study and requested additional information be forwarded to him as it became available.

#### Characteristics of the Respondents<sup>14</sup>

As mentioned previously, inmates were surveyed by the project staff to identify any differences in demographic characteristics between long- and short-term offenders. Data was collected on the following areas:

- Ethnic Background;
- Education;
- Marital Status;
- Type of Offense;
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse; and
- Institutional Program and Work Assignments.

While whites make up 45.3% of the Bureau's inmate population as of December 31, 1981, they comprise 53% of the sample long-term inmate group. Blacks, on the other hand, make up 54.7% of the total inmate population but only 47% of the long-term offenders sampled.

The distribution of long- and short-term offenders by educational background shows that the two groups, at least insofar as the sample is concerned, are somewhat comparable. Fifty-seven percent of short-term prisoners and 60% of long-term in-

<sup>14</sup> Both interview and questionnaire respondents; male sample only.

mates have not completed high school. It is interesting to note, however, that the long-term offender group has a large proportion of inmates at the extremes.

The characteristic that is both the most obvious measure on which long-term inmates and short-termers differ, and in some respects the most important, is their age. As depicted in Table 3, long-term inmates are substantially older than their short-term counterparts. Although not shown in the table, almost 30% of the long-term offender group is over 40 years of age while less than 11% of the short-term sample was in the same age range.

The difference in the age distribution appears to be largely a function of time-served rather than age at admission. Data on age at admission for the inmate sample, also depicted in Table 3, does not indicate a substantial difference in the age distributions of the two offender groups at the time of commitment.

Recognition of the difference in age distributions between long- and short-term inmates is important for a number of reasons.

First, from the perspective of the correctional administrator, the older long-term inmates may have interests and goals that are distinct from their short-term counterparts. For example, older inmates may be less interested in educational programming and more inclined to participate in full-time industrial assignments. A current study by CSG staff in Missouri has determined that long-term offenders are not only more interested in industrial work assignments because the pay is the highest within the system, but possibly more importantly, industrial supervisors are disinclined to recruit short-term inmates as they turn-over too quickly due to interinstitutional transfer and release and as such generally make less than satisfactory employees. Furthermore, knowledge of the age differences between the two groups assists in placing the discussion of other age-related variables such as drug and alcohol use in perspective.

Second, older inmates tend to place a higher premium on different aspects of the institutional environment, such as order and stability than do younger inmates. This finding will be discussed more fully in Chapter III.

Finally, the differences in marital statuses between long- and short-term inmates is also worthy of comment. At the time of admission, the marital statuses between the two groups is quite comparable. Data on current marital status, however, indicate a greater likelihood of disintegration of marital ties among inmates who have served five years or more. For example, among long-term prisoners, nine percent more of the survey group were divorced than at the time of admission. While overall, sixteen percent of the entire long-term inmate group reported for one reason or another their marriages had been terminated. Only four percent of the short-term inmate group reported the disintegration of their marriage. When examined in relationship to time served, the data strongly suggest that dissolution of

TABLE 3  
COMPARISON OF SHORT- AND LONG-TERM OFFENDERS

	<u>Short-Term Offenders</u>	<u>Long-Term Offenders</u>
	Percent	Percent
Age (Average in Years)	24.6	34.4
Age At Admission (Average in Years)	24.8	26.0
<u>Race</u>		
White	47	53
Black	52	48
<u>Education</u>		
0 to 8 Years	27	34
9 to 11 Years	30	26
High School Graduate	36	28
College	7	12
<u>Marital Status (At Time of Survey)</u>		
Married	35	21
Divorced	11	21
Widowed	2	3
Separated	9	9
Never Married	43	46
<u>Marital Status (At Time of Admission)</u>		
Married	39	37
Divorced	9	12
Widowed	2	2
Separated	8	6
Never Married	43	46
<u>Seriousness of Offense</u>		
Violent	9	84
Nonviolent	91	16
<u>Current Assignment</u>		
Educational Program	13	6
Vocational Training Program	12	7
Substance Abuse/Counseling	8	3
Work Assignment	37	49
Other/None	30	35
<u>Alcohol and/or Drug Abuse</u>		
Alcohol	32	47
Drug	27	14
Both	11	6
None	30	33

marriage ties is one consequence of confinement that is especially pertinent to individuals serving long prison terms.

Table 3 depicts the relation between type of offense and length of confinement. As would be expected, inmates serving long sentences are nine times as likely to have been committed (eighty-four versus nine percent) for a violent offense, i.e., murder, rape, etc., as short-term inmates. Conversely, short-term offenders are more than five times as likely (ninety-one percent versus sixteen percent) to be confined for a nonviolent offense, i.e., burglary, robbery, etc., than a long-term inmate.

Figure 1 depicts the percent distribution of inmates in the Bureau of Correction on December 31, 1982 by major offense. Although not divided into short-term versus long-term sentences, this figure shows robbery as the modal offense for the entire Bureau. Given there are more short-term offenders in the system than long-term inmates, it appears robbery is also the modal offense for short-term inmates.

The average time served by offenders convicted of robbery who were released from the Bureau during 1982 was two years, nine months and fifteen days. Conversely, of the eight men convicted of first degree murder who were released during 1982, the average time served was fourteen years, twenty days. Although the data are not available, it is safe to assume the modal offense category for long-term inmates is homicide.

The next area of interest has to do with alcohol and drug abuse. A substantial difference, again based on inmate self-report, exists between the two groups.

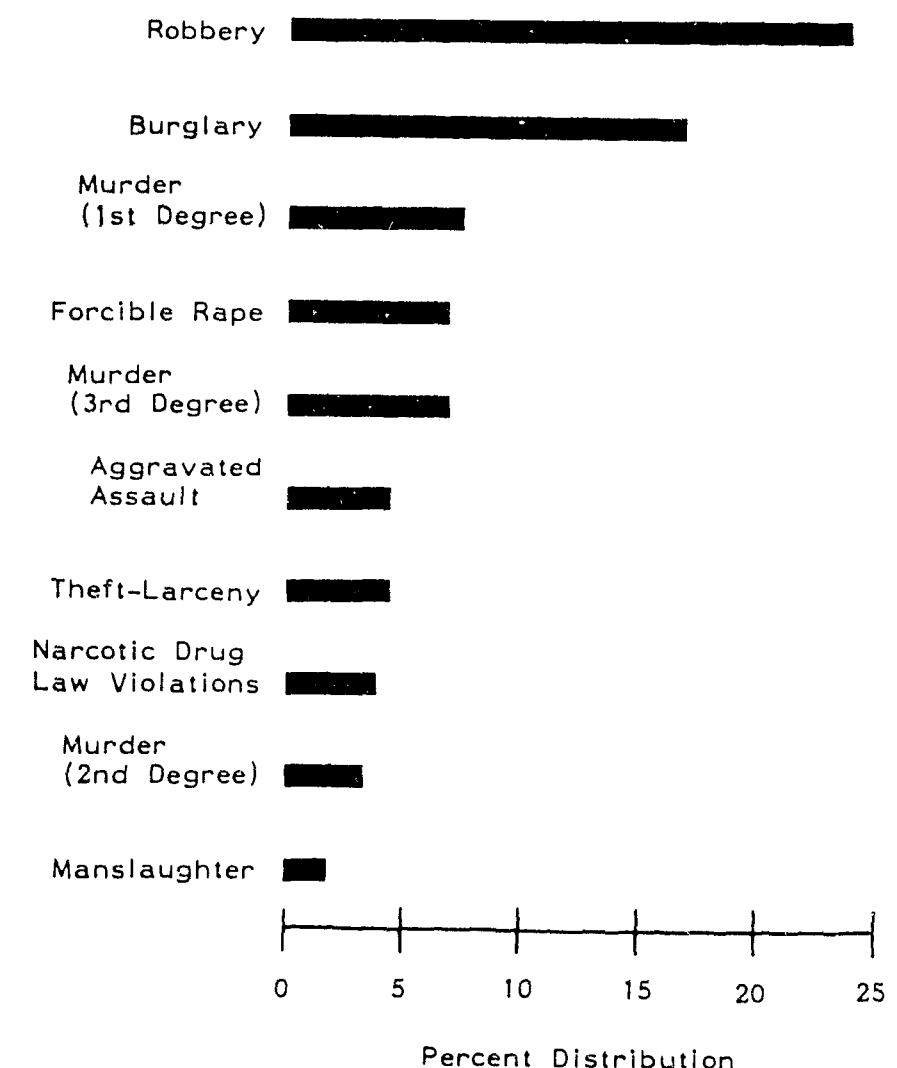
Forty-seven percent of the long-term group report they abuse alcohol as compared to only thirty-two percent for short-term inmates, however, only fourteen percent of the long-term inmates stated that they were subject to drug abuse as compared to twenty-seven percent for short-termers. Eleven percent of the short-term inmates reported they abused both substances in comparison with only six percent of the long-term offenders.

One reason for the substantial differences in reported substance abuse between the two groups may be the different time periods during which the individuals were "at risk." Since many of the long-term inmates have been confined for over ten years, they may not have been in the community when widespread drug use that crosses socioeconomic boundaries became prevalent. This phenomena was essentially a product of the 1970's and early 1980's. This hypothesis is further substantiated in recent studies that report higher drug usage among individuals confined since the early 1970's.

The last area surveyed was the institutional program and work assignments of short- and long-term inmates. Inmates were asked whether they were currently enrolled in any formal program or other activity in the institution. The data in Table 3 show that, in general, a substantial difference exists between long- and short-term prisoners. Among short-term inmates, twenty-five percent are involved in academic or vocational

FIGURE 1

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF INMATES IN THE BUREAU OF CORRECTION  
ON DECEMBER 31, 1982 BY MAJOR OFFENSE



training programs in contrast to only thirteen percent for long-termers. A factor to be considered in interpreting these results is the fact that long-term inmates have completed more programs than short-term inmates. Given that the number of formal program offerings in the Bureau is limited within certain facilities, it is obvious that some long-term prisoners may have already exhausted the program alternatives available to them.

Another factor to be considered is the relevance of Bureau program offerings for inmates who will be held in confinement for a long period of time. Concern about this was expressed by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals:

[A] major problem in adult institutions is the long sentences, often related more directly to the type of crime committed than to the offender. How can vocational training and other skill-oriented programs be oriented to a job market 20 years hence.<15>

In addition, CSG's recent evaluation of the inmate programs and services in Missouri suggests that there may be some important motivational differences between long- and short-term inmates. For example, many long-term inmates replied "I'm too old" when asked about their interest in academic programming. Further, these inmates, as a group had numerous academic and vocational program completions in their records, many from previous incarcerations. Toch best summarized the problem administrators faced in programming long-term offenders when he stated:

The lifers, and the long-term inmates generally...have too much time to fill, too remote a future, and too little hope. How many correspondence courses can a man take, how many vocational programs can he complete? And what is the point of it all, when the time to apply learning is limited.<16>

Finally, and as suggested earlier, lower program participation for long-term inmates may be the result of a higher rate of institutional work assignments, particularly industrial, which are more likely to be assigned to them than short-term offenders. It is interesting to note that recent studies have determined that industrial and "status" jobs such as administrative, hospital, building and equipment maintenance, etc., tend to be over represented by long-term inmates while

15 National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Corrections (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 350.

16 H. Toch, "The Long-Term Prisoners As A Long-Term Problem" in S. Rizkalla, R. Levy and R. Zauberman, eds. Long-Term Imprisonment: An International Seminar (Montreal: University of Montreal, 1977), p. 287.

assignments requiring large groups and minimal skills, particularly food service and laundry, tend to be overrepresented by short-termers.

## CONCLUSION

A comparison of the results of this analysis of Pennsylvania's long- and short-term offender population with the U.S. and state surveys discussed previously, leads to the conclusion that there are few substantive differences between long- and short-term offenders in the Pennsylvania system other than the obvious length of sentence and seriousness of current offense. The primary differences include:

- As a group, long-term offenders are older than short-term offenders;
- Dissolution of marriage ties is much more common during the confinement of long-term offenders;
- Long-term offenders are more likely than short-term offenders to have alcohol abuse histories and less likely to have drug abuse histories.

Due to the limitations of this study, and its focus on describing the long-term offender, little is known about any differences between short- and long-term offenders with respect to disciplinary infractions, transfers between facilities and contacts with the parole board. It appears from examining another study that did investigate these institutional events, that there were significant differences in the rates of involvement for each of these three types of institutional events. For example, long-term offenders tended to commit somewhat different types of infractions and that, upon further analysis, their misconduct was slightly more serious when compared to the short-term groups. Similarly, the long-term group experienced lateral transfers between maximum security prisons, while short-term inmates, as a group, experienced transfers to less secure facilities. Finally, both groups served an approximately equal relative proportion of their minimum sentences prior to their release.<17>

These preceding institutional events, as well as a more in-depth investigation of program involvement should be further explored by the Bureau.

17 Flanagan, pp. 195-196.

## Perceptions of Long-Term Offenders

Other than descriptive questions, the survey instrument that was developed for administration to inmates was concerned with five major issues. First was an attempt to define what minimum sentence (in years) would discriminate between long-term offenders and the rest of the inmate population. Second, the offenders were asked to identify, on a personal basis, as well as from a group perspective, the special problems experienced by long-term offenders that are not experienced, to the same degree, by short-term inmates. Third, inmates were asked questions designed to elicit information concerning personal strategies they had adopted to cope with long-term confinement. Fourth, inmates were asked to identify programs and services and suggestions for system reform that would benefit inmates serving long sentences. Finally, the inmates were asked to respond to questions relating to the maintenance of family and/or community ties.

### DEFINITION OF LONG-TERM CONFINEMENT

As noted previously, in Chapter One, no accepted departmental definition of long-term incarceration existed at the time this study was initiated. This is hardly an unusual finding. Until only recently, the percentage of the Bureau's offender population who were confined for long periods of time was fairly stable. Recent developments, discussed in Chapter One, have indicated that the proportion of long-term offenders will be increasing dramatically at least for the short-term. Therefore, up until now, there was little stimulus for identifying long-term offenders as a special management issue. Until long-term offenders are recognized as a special management problem, there is no need to define long-term imprisonment.

In order to define the long-term offender in Pennsylvania, a sample of staff and inmates were surveyed to determine their perceptions concerning the length of time an inmate should be continuously confined before he or she would be classified as a long-term offender. While data on length of confinement reflects substantially fewer prisoners in confinement than would adoption of length of sentence as the criterion, project staff adhere to the belief that the time served in confinement provides a more precise definition of long-term incarceration. This position was taken primarily because of the disparity between sentence length data and actual time served. This phenomenon has been noted by Carter, McGee and Nelson who remarked "[N]o subject in correctional administration is more misunderstood by the general public than that of the actual length of time to be served in confinement after a sentence has been imposed by a criminal court."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> R. Carter, R. McGee and E. Nelson, Corrections in America, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1975), p. 118.



Briefly, in defining long-term imprisonment in Pennsylvania, time served is a more sensitive indicator of a correctional policy than is sentence length because it incorporates the widely varying effects of parole authority practices, the philosophy of the Board of Pardons and the current and past sentencing structures.

In the few studies of long-term confinement that have been conducted, diverse definitions have been used to segment the population of long-term offenders for detailed study. For example, an Advisory Council on the Penal System to the British Home Office adopted, with the admission they were drawing an arbitrary line, a definition that designated a long-term prisoner as one serving a term of imprisonment in excess of four years.<19> A subcommittee of the Council of Europe's Committee on Crime Problems defined long-term confinement as "sentences of five or more years deprivation of liberty, including life imprisonment regardless of time actually served and of possible conditional release."<20>

In a recent study of long-term incarceration by Flanagan,<21> long-term confinement was defined as continuous imprisonment for a period of at least five years. The imprisonment may have been the result of a single court-imposed sentence, or the result of a series of consecutive sentences, provided that the confinement was not interrupted by a period of release. This definition considered time served in confinement rather than the length of the maximum sentence imposed on an offender. Flanagan's rationale for choosing this definition relies on the following argument. If the timeframe chosen is extremely long, such as twenty years confinement, the number of offenders encompassed in the criterion will probably be quite limited. Conversely, if the timeframe is quite short, say three or four years, the number of individuals will be quite substantial and the concept of programming for long-term prisoners will be "watered down" significantly. In his 1979 study, he found that if the maximum sentence length data were used as a measure of the number of long-term prisoners in state correctional facilities, 138,400 inmates according to the 1974 U.S. Bureau of Census survey conducted for LEAA in 1974, or nearly seventy-four percent are under sentence of five years or more. However, as of the survey period, about 22,000 prisoners, or only twelve percent of all state correctional facility inmates have been in confinement five or more years.<22>

19 Home Office, Advisory Council on the Penal System, The Regime for Long-Term Prisoners in Conditions of Maximum Security (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1968), p. 4.

20 Council of Europe, Committee on Crime Problems, Treatment of Long-term Prisoners (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1977).

21 Flanagan, p. 4.

22 Flanagan, p. 5.

During the early stages of the study, there was a temptation to adopt the five year timeframe for use in determining the length of incarceration offenders would be required to be confined to be considered a long-term prisoner in Pennsylvania. However, the five year criterion was not selected automatically for several reasons: first, the five year timeframe, while it may have been representative of an acceptable time period in the late 1970's was not considered representative of the early 1980's where sentences are considerably longer and the number of lifers has increased dramatically (10.6% of the Bureau's inmate population as of December 31, 1982). Second, the laws in Pennsylvania provide that prisoners with less than two year sentences are assigned to a county prison. As a result, the majority of prisoners transferred to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction have sentences in excess of two years at the time of assignment. The two exceptions are the Regional Correctional Facility at Greensburg and the Regional Correctional Facility at Mercer which accept prisoners with less than a one-year sentence. This, combined with the fact that good time is not available for Bureau prisoners, seemed to suggest that the majority of staff and prisoners might consider five years to be a conservative figure relative to determining a time criterion for long-term offenders.

The final reason for not arbitrarily adopting the five year continuous confinement used in previous studies is echoed in the sentiments of a subcommittee of the Council of Europe's Committee on Crime Problems who found it difficult to specify a criterion of long-term incarceration due to the wide variation of correctional practices among diverse countries.<23>

In an attempt to determine a mutually acceptable timeframe, CSG, as stated earlier, surveyed a sample of Bureau staff and inmates. The results, depicted in Table 4 represent, on an institution by institution basis, the findings of this exercise.

A review of the above findings shows that the mean number of years for a long-term offender, as considered by staff, is 7.7 years as compared to 7.8 years for the inmate sample. A further examination of the data indicates that staff from the less secure, shorter-term facilities, e.g., Greensburg, Mercer, tend to select a shorter criterion to define the long-term offender than do staff from the more secure, long-term institutions such as Graterford, Huntingdon and Pittsburgh. This would suggest that personnel are significantly influenced by the types of prisoners they manage on a day-to-day basis and in particular their incarceration lengths.

A similar finding resulted from the assessment of inmate perceptions of long-term confinement. Inmates from those facilities housing predominantly short-term offenders were more prone to selecting a shorter period of confinement than their counterparts from the longer-term institutions. For example inmates incarcerated at the State Regional Correctional Facility at Mercer and the Community Service Centers identified minimum confinements of less than five years as the criterion separating

23 Council of Europe, Committee on Crime Problems.



TABLE 4

MINIMUM LENGTH OF CONFINEMENT ( $\bar{X}$ ) CONSIDERED BY  
INMATES AND STAFF AS LONG-TERM BY FACILITY

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Inmates</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Total</u>
State Correctional Institution at Graterford	9.2	9.2	9.2
State Correctional Institution at Huntingdon	9.2	10.9	9.2
State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh	7.2	8.0	7.2
State Correctional Institution at Dallas	7.0	6.9	7.0
State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill	5.9	9.5	6.0
State Correctional Institution at Rockview	7.5	9.2	7.7
State Correctional Institution at Muncy	6.4	6.4	6.4
State Regional Correctional Facility at Greensburg	*	5.2	5.2
State Regional Correctional Facility at Mercer	4.3	6.2	5.8
Community Service Centers	4.9	6.0	5.3
Central Office	N/A	7.8	7.8
Totals	7.8	7.7	7.8

long-term offenders from the balance of the population (4.3 and 4.9 years, respectively).

Given the above results, CSG staff decided to select eight years as the cutoff point between short/mid-term offenders and long-term offenders.

The selection of the eight year criterion is supported by more than the opinions of Bureau staff and inmates.

Recent developments, such as the move toward definite or presumptive sentence schemes, suggest that both the number and proportion of the state's prison inmates that can be classified as long-term offenders will increase in the future.

In the past few years several state legislatures have passed laws that include mandatory minimum sentences for certain offenses, additional prison construction, longer sentences for repeat offenders and other measures designed to demonstrate to their constituents a harsher reaction to the problem of serious crime.

A similar situation appears to be present in Pennsylvania with the passage of the law providing for the imposition of mandatory sentences for certain crimes and the introduction of a sentencing guidelines act which created a uniform state-wide network for sentencing all offenders convicted of both felonies and misdemeanors. The guidelines identify the factors which must be considered in sentencing every case and assign relative importance to those factors.

The mandatory sentencing law, Act 1982-54, provides for minimum five-year sentences for the following crimes:

- Serious offenses committed with firearms;
- Serious offenses committed on public transportation; and
- Serious offenses where there was a prior serious offense or offenses.

In addition, the law provides for a mandatory life sentence for persons convicted of murder in the third degree in Pennsylvania who were previously convicted of murder or voluntary manslaughter in the state.

The sentencing guidelines also tend to create a mandatory sentencing structure, although they do not eliminate the individual sentencing which is traditional in Pennsylvania. The guidelines consider the gravity of the offense and prior record as well as aggravating and mitigating circumstances in a case. The court can impose a sentence which is outside the guideline limits but must explain its reasons for doing so in writing. The end result is a sentencing structure, which according to most members of the judiciary and corrections, is likely to increase both sentence lengths and actual lengths of stay.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Long-term offenders were asked to choose from a list of twelve problem areas, those they believed affected the long-term offender to a greater extent than short-term offenders. The most frequently cited problems, in descending order, appear in Table 5.

TABLE 5

<u>PROBLEMS THAT DISTINGUISH LONG-TERM OFFENDERS FROM SHORT-TERM OFFENDERS</u>	<u>RESPONDENTS (%)</u>
PROBLEM	
Maintenance of Family Contacts	84
Restriction of Privileges	68
Lack of Programs (Due to Eligibility Requirements)	68
Adjustment to Long-Term Confinement	63
Lack of Long-Range Planning	58
Monotony/Boredom	53
Sense of Hopelessness	53
Maintenance of Skills	50

Some interesting differences in perspectives appear when the responses are analyzed by the type of long-term offender responding; that is, whether or not the offender is an adult male or female, an adult male or youthful adult male or an adult male in the early to middle stages of a long-term or an adult male who is in the final years of his sentence.

No matter which type of offender was responding, more of each group of long-term offenders believed maintenance of family contacts was a more important problem than any other problem listed that distinguished long- from short-term offenders.

However, on a percentage basis, more than twice as many women as adult men cited monotony and boredom as a distinguishing problem. Only about half (fifty percent) of the youthful offenders and those in the last stages of their confinement saw this as a problem unique to long-term offenders. All but the inmates confined in Community Service Centers (CSC's) saw restrictions on privileges as more of a problem for long-term offenders than for short-term offenders. Likewise, all but the respondents from the CSC's believed there were fewer programs for which long-term offenders were eligible than for short-term offenders.

Over eighty percent of the female respondents observed that the Bureau's lack of long-range planning was a distinct problem for long-term offenders. Just over two-thirds (sixty seven percent) of the adult male offenders shared this sentiment. Less than half of the long-term offenders confined in CSC's believed this to be a problem and only twenty five percent of the youthful long-term offenders identified the lack of long-range planning as a problem for them.

Over three-fourths of the females and youthful offenders stated that a sense of hopelessness was a problem that plagues long-term offenders more than it does their short-term counterparts. Only a high percentage of female respondents believed long-term offenders are more likely than short-term offenders to be assigned to meaningless jobs.

These differences in perceptions noted among long-term offenders in Pennsylvania lead project staff to conclude that future studies of long-term confinement should focus on identifying the problems and needs of sub-groupings of the long-term offender population (e.g., analyze the population by age, sex, amount of time served on sentence, proximity to release, etc.)

It is interesting to note, in the Pennsylvania system, long-term offenders bear little resentment toward short-term offenders and vice versa. Moreover, the observation of past studies concerning the opinions of long-term inmates that short-term inmates had "nothing to lose by misbehavior" was more frequently applied to long-term offenders by short-term offenders than the reverse.

Long-term offenders were next asked to choose whether they would like to be housed in an institution with: all long-term offenders; all short-term offenders; or a "mixed" population. Sixty percent preferred a population composed of both short- and long-term prisoners (the Bureau's current practice); thirty-six percent preferred all long-term offenders; and, four percent said they would like to be confined among a population of only short-term offenders. Most offenders who chose a heterogeneous population stated long-term offenders give an institution stability while short-term offenders give hope to long-term offenders.

On a more personal basis, long-term offenders were asked to identify the single most difficult problem they had experienced since their incarceration. Not surprisingly, infrequent contact with family and significant others was the most frequently mentioned problem. The other two most frequently cited problems were lack of communications between staff and inmates and among inmates and problems with staff. If staff were selected as a problem, the offender was asked to explain. The most frequent reasons given were: lack of understanding; insensitivity to problems; and untrained staff.

Communication is a traditional problem within the prison environment whether between staff, between staff and inmates or among inmates. Since talking with others about problems is an almost universal method for helping oneself cope with those problems, long-term inmates were asked two related questions. First, they were asked to identify those persons they talked to about their problems and needs when they were first incarcerated and, those they talked to now. Table 6 presents the inmates' perceptions of changes in this behavior over time.

TABLE 6

INMATE PERCEPTIONS REGARDING COMMUNICATIONS

<u>IDENTITY</u>	<u>PERCENT CHANGE</u>
Other Inmates	- 13
Correctional Officers	+ 13
Chaplain	- 9
Counselor	+ 3
Physician	- 3
Teacher	0
Family Member	0
Superintendent	+ 10
Director of Treatment	+ 6
Casework Supervisor	+ 11
No One	- 8

From the preceding table, it appears that many of the long-term offenders learned that other inmates were not the ones to take their problems to. As is discussed later in this chapter, Bureau inmates subscribe to the practice of each inmate doing his or her own time.

Over time, more long-term inmates come to view correctional officers as persons they could talk to about their problems and needs. Flanagan described the relationship between most long-term offenders and correctional officers as peaceful coexistence, while recognizing that not all of the interactions between these groups are amiable nor that the officers authority is accepted by all long-termers.<24> This characterization seems to describe the present findings wherein the members of the two groups have come to know, over the years, what to expect from one another. In some cases, mutual respect has developed.

Communication with treatment staff in general, with the exception of the physician, has improved over the years. Next to the correctional officers, treatment staff usually have the most impact on the institutional lives of inmates and the most frequent contact of any other institutional staff members.

Of the long-term inmates who professed to speaking with no one about their problems and needs when first incarcerated, eight percent fewer now keep these problems and needs bottled up inside themselves.

Prior to beginning this study, project staff recognized that many inmates rely on prison friendships to help them cope with the hardships created by imprisonment. Several long-term offenders voiced a preference for being confined with all long-term offenders specifically due to the tenuous nature of friendships with short-term inmates. Further, it is reasonable to assume that the success of long-term offenders in forming relationships with others in prison may be an important factor in his or her ability to cope with long-term confinement or to achieve a successful adjustment upon release. In consideration

24 Flanagan, p. 251.

for this phenomenon, long-term offenders were asked if most of their friends were doing short sentences, long sentences or both long and short sentences. Sixty-five percent reported they had friends doing long sentences and friends doing short sentences. Another twenty-five percent indicated most of their friends were doing long sentences. Only seven and one-half percent of the long-term offenders said most of their friends were serving on short sentences. The remaining two and one-half percent of the sample stated they had no friends in prison, only acquaintances.

Likewise, over seventy-five percent of the long-term offenders did not perceive that long-term offenders tended to associate primarily with other long-term offenders. Of those that did believe this to be true, reasons given were that long-term offenders relate better to other long-term offenders and they have more in common with one another.

Family Contacts

As discussed previously, eighty-three percent of all the long-term offenders believed that maintenance of contact with family members and/or significant others was a particular problem for long-term offenders. To learn more about the interaction between the long-term offender and his or her outside contacts and factors affecting the frequency of that contact, the following questions were posed to the offenders: who visits most often--how often; how far must visitors travel to see inmate; type of transportation used; do visitors visit as often now as when inmate was first incarcerated; how often does the inmate talk over the telephone with his/her family or friends; and, how often does the inmate receive letters from family or friends. The offender's responses are summarized in the following tables:

TABLE 7

MOST FREQUENT VISITORS

<u>Visitor</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Mother	49
Other Friends	40
Brother/Sister	35
Girlfriend/Boyfriend	30
Father	22
Other Relatives	19
Children	16
Spouse	3
No One	3

Almost half of the offenders responding identified their mothers as the most frequent visitor. Slightly fewer (forty percent) said friends other than a boyfriend or girlfriend visited most frequently. Just over one-third of the offenders reported their most frequent visitor was a brother or sister.

Close personal relationships with members of the opposite sex and with children obviously suffer most for many of the long-term offenders as is evidenced by the low numbers of

respondents who cited boyfriends/girlfriends, children and spouse as their most frequent visitors.

For three percent of the inmate sample, there are no visitors to look forward to seeing.

TABLE 8

FREQUENCY OF VISITS

<u>Time Periods</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Weekly	11
Every Two Weeks	19
Monthly	12
Three to Five Times a Year	23
Once or Twice a Year	31
As Much as Possible	4

Forty-two percent of the offenders who received visits reported their visitors came at least monthly. Infrequent visits were reported by the remaining fifty-eight percent.

TABLE 9

VISITOR'S TRAVEL TIME

<u>Hours</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Less Than One Hour	8
One to Three Hours	32
Four to Six Hours	41
Seven to Ten Hours	14
Over Ten Hours	5

Forty percent of the respondents who received visitors, noted the visitors travel less than three hours to visit the inmate. Sixty percent reported the travel time was in excess of three hours. Of the five percent who indicated their visitors must travel in excess of ten hours, most are from outside the State of Pennsylvania.

TABLE 10

VISITOR'S MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

<u>Transportation Mode</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u> (Multiple Response)
Own a Car	74
Use Public Transportation	21
Borrow a Car	10
Use Bureau Subsidized Transportation	3
Other	5

Inmates were asked this question to gain information about the types of transportation their visitors had access to and whether or not transportation mode was a factor in frequency

of visiting. From the results, it appears that a variety of transportation modes are employed to visit the long-term offenders with personally-owned automobiles and public transportation being the most frequently used methods. Only three percent of the respondents indicated that their visitors used the transportation system subsidized by the Bureau.

TABLE 11

CHANGES IN FREQUENCY OF VISITING OVER TIME

<u>Do Visitors Visit as Often</u> <u>Now as When First</u> <u>Incarcerated</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Yes	38
No	53
No Response	9

Several studies have identified a correlation between length of confinement and deterioration of family and community ties. These responses also support these earlier findings. Over half of the long-term offenders reported the frequency of visiting has decreased over time. Nine percent of the offenders did not answer this question.

Project staff believe the percentage of inmates who reported a decreased level of visiting would have been greater but for the significant number of long-term offenders in the sample who are now confined in Community Service Centers (twenty percent of the sample). Many of these offenders are able to see family and/or friends daily, if they so choose.

The following reasons were given by the long-term offenders who indicated they received fewer visits now than when they were first confined:

- Excessive travel distance;
- Trip is too expensive;
- Length of sentence gives "hopeless" feeling;
- Potential visitors too busy;
- Age makes it difficult to travel;
- Family/friends deceased;
- No available transportation; and
- Do not know.

TABLE 12

TELEPHONE CONTACTS

<u>Frequency of Telephone Conversations</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
More Than Once a Week	26
Once a Week	33
Once Every Two Weeks	18
Once a Month	5
Less Than Once a Month	5
Never	8
No Response	5

Although telephone conversations are not a substitute for face to face meetings, they are one method for maintaining contact with family and friends that is apparently heavily used by the long-term offenders CSG surveyed. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents reported they spoke with family and/or friends at least once every two weeks. Only five percent reported infrequent telephone conversations and only eight percent indicated they never talked with family or friends over the phone.

TABLE 13

LETTER WRITING

<u>Frequency of Mail</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
More Often Than Once a Week	28
Once a Week	21
Once Every Two Weeks	21
Once a Month	13
Less Than Once a Month	10
Never	2
No Response	5

Eighty-three percent of the long-term offenders surveyed received a letter from family and/or friends at least monthly. Only two percent reported they never received any mail.

The frequency of some kind of contact, whether it is personal visits, telephone conversations or letters, between the long-term offender and his or her family and/or friends supports the finding that over ninety percent of the long-term offenders believe they are able to do their time better by maintaining contact with their family and/or friends. Only four percent of the long-term offenders believed they could do their time better by breaking off contact with their family and/or friends on the outside. (Five percent of the respondents did not answer this question.)

STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING PROBLEMS AND MEETING NEEDS

A primary focus of this particular study was to generate strategies for improving the conditions of long-term confinement as experienced by the offender and to identify management options for the Bureau of Correction.

Based upon the preliminary interviews, twenty-one suggestions for facilitating the adjustment to confinement of long-term offenders were presented to the respondents and they were asked to check those they believed would benefit inmates serving long sentences. The findings are summarized in Table 14.

TABLE 14

BENEFICIAL PROGRAMS/SERVICES

<u>Type of Program/Service</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Good Time	97
Expanded Legal Services	84
More Frequent Family Days	82
Sequenced Educational Programs	82
Annual Health Evaluation (After Certain Age)	79
Intensive Pre-Release Programming	79
More Frequent Visiting Periods	74
Solicit Community Involvement in Inmate Programming	74
Apprenticeship Programs	68
Reinstitute Excursions	68
Limited Furlough Programs	66
Develop Additional Programs for Creative Outlets	66
Special Commissary Items	63

A not surprising finding is that the vast majority of the long-term offenders surveyed are interested in getting out of prison. Nearly all the respondents favored the provision of good time (97%) and eighty-four percent indicated expanded legal services would be a beneficial service.

The perceived importance of maintaining family and community ties is reflected in three specific recommendations that received in excess of seventy percent support from the long-term offenders: more frequent family days (82%); more frequent visiting periods (74%); and solicit community involvement in inmate programming (74%).

Inmate interest in long-term program offerings is evidenced by the interest in sequenced educational offerings (82%) and apprenticeship programs (68%).

Many of the long-term offenders believe an annual health examination is a good idea after an inmate reaches a



certain minimum age (79%).<25> This finding corresponds with other studies of long-term confinement that have noted that long-term offenders have a fear of physically deteriorating during a long confinement in prison.

Another area of keen interest is intensive prerelease programming. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents said they believed this program would benefit long-term offenders. Based upon the eight years continuous confinement criterion chosen to define long-term confinement, approximately fifty-seven percent of the Bureau's long-term offender population are expected to be paroled from the system at a future date. After such an extended period of incarceration, these offenders will require a comprehensive re-entry program.

Long-term offenders also have an interest in getting out of prison at least on a temporary basis, as is demonstrated by the percent of long-term offenders who believe excursions should be reinstituted (68%), and that a limited furlough program should be available to long-term inmates (66%). The excursion program was discontinued several years ago due to problems related to maintaining custody outside the institutions.

Another area of interest in this study was on the methods and approaches used by long-term offenders to adapt to long-term confinement. To gather this type of information, inmates were asked the following question: "If a new inmate (not a prior offender) came into the institution today and was facing a twenty-five year minimum sentence, which of the following is the most important piece of advice you would give him/her on how to serve his/her sentence?"

The most common advice that the long-term inmates would offer to a new admission was to participate in programs. This advice would be offered for numerous reasons. First, it would help the new admission keep his or her mind and body occupied. Not only would time seem to pass faster but the newly-arrived inmate would be more likely to stay out of trouble. Second, many long-term offenders expressed the desire to use their long confinement to their personal betterment rather than just to fill time. Program participation would give a new admission the opportunity to profitably use his or her time. And, third, program participation enables long-term inmates to set goals for themselves that help to segment their sentence into manageable time periods.

The second most common piece of advice concerned the maintenance of contacts with family and/or significant others. As was reported previously, nearly all long-term offenders believed it was easier to serve time if the offender maintained ties with family and/or friends.

The third most common advice was to stay in contact with the sentencing judge. This strategy appears to provide some long-term offenders with hope that they will be released earlier in their sentence. For others, this strategy does not help in

25 The Bureau currently performs this service.

adjustment because they view it as a "false hope" that prevents the long-term inmate from adjusting to the realities of serving a long sentence.

Other categories of advice frequently mentioned dealt with behavior inside the institution and relationships with other inmates. This type of advice included, "mind your own business," "stay out of trouble," "be patient," "stay active" and "make friends."

"Minding your own business," appears to be a maxim for prison life. Much is said about each inmate doing his or her own time. In essence, this means that an inmate is expected to refrain from interfering in the business of other inmates and to not bring undue attention to him or herself by whining or complaining about personal problems. Therefore, if the long-term inmate is able to mind his or her own business, he or she is very likely to be able to "stay out of trouble."

Patience is a virtue that the long-term inmate strives for. The monotony of everyday prison life and the slow pace of change coupled with the long confinement inmates see stretching out before them make the development of patience an important factor in overall adjustment.

To learn patience is to acquire a different perspective on "doing your own time." Long-term confinement appears to facilitate this process for many offenders, as does the process of aging.

In conclusion, the types of advice offered by long-term offenders in Pennsylvania are similar to data reported by Flanagan in 1980 and by Glaser almost twenty years ago. The admonitions to do your own time, mind your own business, stay out of trouble and engage in program activities that were reported by Glaser constitute the basic prescription for serving time among the long-term inmates surveyed for this study.<26>

The long-term inmates were also asked what institutional programs they participated in to fill their time. The five most common answers were:

- Athletics/sports;
- Work or school assignment;
- Lifer's association;
- Religious programs; and
- Movies/television.

The long-term offenders were asked if they would prefer a different institutional assignment and approximately seventy-five percent said yes they would. The reasons given by the preferred institutions, were:

- SCIC - More programs/better educational program;
- SCID - More programs, closer to home;

26 D. Glaser, The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964)



- SCIG - Closer to home;
- SRCFG - Work release program;
- SRCFM - Closer to home; fewer restrictions; more programs;
- SCIP - Closer to home; and
- SCIR - More programs; better environment; farming operation.

Most of the inmates who indicated they would prefer another institutional assignment gave closer placement to their homes as the reason. The second most common response was that the desired institutional assignment offered more programs.

Finally, the long-term offenders were asked to identify the single most important action the Bureau could have taken to help them adjust to their confinement. Since there was no unanimity in their responses they are not noted here.

#### PROGRAM SEQUENCING

One of the most important questions asked of both long-term offenders and staff and one of the most disappointing, in terms of response, was the question concerning the most optimal time period within the long confinement for offering each relevant Bureau program. With the exception of temporary leave, the vast majority of long-term offenders believe the Bureau's programs should be provided to them early in their sentences. Many fewer inmates believed the Bureau's programs should be provided throughout their incarceration. Perhaps the inmate's responses were a reaction to the belief of many long-term offenders that many of the Bureau's programs are reserved for short-term inmates and inmates who are nearing their release date. It is certain that the respondents afforded little consideration to the long period of time between the early portion of the sentence and release.

#### SPECIAL ISSUES

##### The Aged Long-Term Offender

Aged offenders comprise a small proportion of every correctional system. Sixty or sixty-five is usually considered elderly in most prison systems. In some correctional systems, such as Pennsylvania, prisoners are afforded special attention as early as fifty-five years of age, as this is when the chronic problems generally associated with old age usually begin to appear. Inmates over sixty-one years of age comprise approximately one-half of one percent of a state's total prison population and those over fifty-five comprise about one percent. Aged long-term offenders make up an even smaller percentage. In Pennsylvania, there are 117 offenders over the age of fifty-five who have served or will serve a minimum of eight years continuous confinement. (Approximately one percent of the Bureau's total population, five percent of the long-term offender population.)

Inside prison, older inmates must deal with the constant large and small struggles for survival, the noise and the justifiable fear of being victimized by younger, stronger inmates. Many times there is little for aged offenders to do in prison; few older inmates are physically capable of performing a work assignment, and the traditional programs provided within the prison environment--vocational, educational and recreational programs, planned with the young inmate in mind--offer minimal appeal to the older prisoner population.

Although the proportion of elderly inmates in the prison population does not appear to be growing, their absolute numbers, along with that of all prisoners, have increased. As a result, it has become practical for some large prison systems to open separate facilities for the confinement of geriatric offenders.

Even a separate facility may not hold all the answers. For example, when North Carolina opened a specialized geriatric unit, the Director of Corrections was quoted as saying he did not want the geriatric unit to be simply a specialized warehouse. His position was that aging is a chronic problem not an acute one and that the system did not have sufficient staff and resources to deal with their acute problems, e.g., violent psychotics. His fear was, "If I ask for money to deal with a bunch of quiet, old people, I'll get laughed at. Its not surprising they get sifted down the chute."<27>

Aged short- and long-term offenders are alike in many respects. For both groups there is a distinct possibility that they will die in prison. The only real differences between these two groups are the severity of the current offense and, generally, criminal histories.

Pennsylvania was a leader in programming for geriatric offenders through the Consilium Program. However, recent budgetary cutbacks have severely restricted the program's services and the number of elderly inmates it is able to serve. The State Correctional Institution at Dallas is the only Bureau correctional facility that Consilium continues to serve.

In summary, while not a large nor a vocal segment of the Bureau's long-term offender population, the aged long-term offenders and their unique needs should not be forgotten.

27 Kevin Krajick, "Growing Old in Prison," Corrections Magazine (March 1979), p. 38.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Perceptions of Staff

## INTRODUCTION

Project staff believed that Bureau staff were also an untapped resource that could share perceptions of long-term offenders, their problems and needs. With a combined average tenure of 11.45 years with the Bureau their experiences with long-term offenders are an invaluable component of the present study.

The following Bureau staff were selected for survey purposes:

- Commissioner;
- Deputy Commissioner;
- Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner;
- Director, Community Services Division;
- Chief, Health Care Section;
- Assistant Chief, Health Care Section;
- Pardons Case Specialist/Chief, Activities Section;
- Chief, Education Section;
- Chief, Psychological Services;
- Director, Correctional Industries Division;
- Superintendents, State Correctional Institutions;
- Superintendents, Community Service Centers;
- Deputy Superintendents - Operations;
- Deputy Superintendents - Treatment;
- Majors;
- Activities Coordinators;
- Casework Supervisors;
- Counselors, State Correctional Institutions;
- Counselors, Community Service Centers;
- Chaplains;
- Correctional Officers;
- School Principals; and
- Teachers.

Of the possible 166 respondents, 124 staff, or seventy-five percent, responded during the allotted forty-five day timeframe.

Staff perceptions concerning what length of continuous confinement distinguishes long-term offenders from the balance of the population were presented in Chapter Three. It is interesting to note that numerous staff commented that their perceptions about long-term confinement had changed dramatically over the past few years, that is, if this study had been conducted three to four years previously, many respondents indicated they would have selected a much shorter timeframe as the criterion for the definition of long-term confinement. The longer sentences they have been witnessing have affected their perceptions of long-term confinement.

Staff were asked many of the same questions that were posed to the long-term offenders, with interesting results. However, staff were also asked questions about fairly sensitive topics that were not included in the inmate questionnaires. Included were questions concerning disciplinary violations, interinstitutional transfer, temporary release programs, staff response to long-term offenders, automatic parole review, commutation, good time and the Bureau's prerelease model.

#### PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF LONG-TERM OFFENDERS

Staff were asked several questions in an attempt to identify problems and needs experienced by long-term offenders. First, each respondent was asked to identify the special problems or needs that long-term inmates experience that perhaps short-term inmates do not experience to the same degree. The intention of this question was to elicit issues that were perceived as common among inmates who are serving long sentences. Later, in the questionnaire each staff member was asked what was the most serious problem he or she had experienced in dealing with long-term offenders.

With respect to the identification of problems experienced by long-term offenders, the staff responses are shown in Table 15.

TABLE 15

#### PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY LONG-TERM OFFENDERS

<u>Problem Area</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Acceptance of/Adjustment to Long-term Confinement	90
Maintenance of Family/Community Ties	88
Feeling of Hopelessness	71
Monotony/Boredom	63
Lack of Programs (For Which Inmates are Eligible)	52
Lack of Long-range Planning	50
Inadequate Preparation for Release	36
More Likely to Be Assigned to Meaningless Jobs	32
Restricted Privileges	29
Skills Maintenance	28
Low Self-Esteem	24
Job Training	16

Ninety percent of the staff who responded to the survey believed that the most significant problem experienced by long-term offenders was the acceptance of or adjustment to long-term confinement. This was also perceived as a problem by long-term offenders, but not to the same extent--only sixty-three percent of the offenders indicated this was a problem.

The opinions of the staff concerning adjustment to confinement are confirmed by other studies of long-term offenders that found many prisoners refuse to recognize the probability that they will be confined for an extended period of time. These inmates utilize the legal system to its fullest extent by filing appeal after appeal. The admonitions of several Pennsylvania long-term offenders to the newly admitted long-term inmate to "study the law," and "keep in touch with the judge," as well as their recommendation to the Bureau to "provide expanded legal services" all tend to support this finding.

Bureau staff and long-term offenders agree that maintenance of family and community ties is a problem that affects long-term offenders more profoundly than short-term offenders. Many related that it is surprising, given the length of time some people serve, that any marriages survive the separation and related sources of stress.

To examine staff perceptions regarding the frequency of visiting experienced by long-term offenders, they were asked to respond to two questions. One, "Based upon your experience, do long-term offenders receive as many visits as short-term inmates?" and, two, "Do you believe the frequency of visiting declines with the amount of time served?" Sixteen percent of the respondents believed long-term offenders receive as many visits as short-term inmates. Forty-three percent believed long-term offenders receive less visits. Forty-one percent, however, indicated they did not know and recommended that this aspect of long-term confinement be studied by examining visiting records.

A significantly higher number of staff had an opinion concerning the frequency of visiting over time. Sixty percent of the staff responding replied that the frequency of visiting does decline over time. Only eight percent believed frequency of visiting does not decline over the length of a sentence. Thirty-two percent of the staff stated they did not know.

Seventy-one (71) percent of the staff indicated that a sense of hopelessness characterizes the long-term offender more so than his or her short-term counterpart. Only the female and youthful long-term offenders believed this to be true to any extent (eighty-three and seventy-five percent, respectively).

Just over sixty percent of the Bureau staff who responded, believed that monotony/boredom was a problem for long-term offenders. In this case, a significant number of female long-term offenders agreed with this position (eighty-three percent). Less than fifty percent of the balance of the long-term offenders who responded thought this was a problem for themselves or other long-term inmates.

Two problems long-term inmates frequently identified as characteristic of long-term inmates in general, were not frequently cited by Bureau staff. These were a lack of programs for which the long-term offender is eligible and the restricted privileges available to the long-term inmates.

Bureau staff also identified the most serious problems they had experienced in dealing with long-term offenders. Their responses are presented in Table 16 in descending order by raw score.

TABLE 16

Program Area	Score
Diminished Motivation/Morale	46
Lack of Hope	23
Cyclical Behavioral Problems	21
Periodic Depression	13
Boredom	10
Escape Potential	8
Disillusionment	7
Staff Burnout	3

All of the above responses, with the exception of staff burnout, relate to the problems associated with long-term confinement in a system that offers little hope of release to nearly fifty-seven percent of its long-term offender population (inmates serving life sentences) and has few program offerings that meet the perceived needs of its long-term offender population.

Although not examined in this particular study, the cyclical manifestation of behavioral problems has been noted by other researchers. It appears that long-term inmates can frequently serve their sentences without serious incidents for years, then without apparent provocation, motive or other discernable impetus, commit a rash of major and minor disciplinary infractions. It appears from the results in Table 18 that many Bureau staff have also noted this phenomenon and have found it troubling.

What this study did do, is again ask for staff perceptions concerning the frequency and seriousness of disciplinary actions. The applicable questions were: "In your opinion, do long-term offenders engage in more, the same or less serious disciplinary violations than short-term offenders?" and, "In your opinion, do long-term offenders commit more, the same, or less frequent disciplinary violations than short-term offenders?" The findings are presented in Tables 17 and 18.

TABLE 17

SERIOUSNESS OF DISCIPLINARY VIOLATIONS/LONG-TERM VERSUS  
SHORT-TERM OFFENDERS

	Number	Percent
More Serious	23	21
Same	34	31
Less Serious	33	31
Do Not Know	17	16
No Response	1	1
Totals	109	100

TABLE 18  
FREQUENCY OF DISCIPLINARY VIOLATIONS/LONG-TERM VERSUS  
SHORT-TERM OFFENDERS

	Number	Percent
More Frequent	6	5
Same	34	32
Less Frequent	60	57
Unknown	4	4
No Response	2	2
Totals	106	100

When asked about disciplinary violations and long-term offenders, very few of the staff held no opinions (sixteen percent for seriousness question and only four percent regarding frequency question).

In terms of the seriousness of disciplinary infractions, an almost equal number of staff believe that long-term offenders commit the same types of disciplinary infractions or less serious disciplinary infractions than are committed by short-term offenders (thirty-one percent each response). Twenty one percent believe they commit more serious disciplinary violations.

In terms of frequency of disciplinary violations, the results are more decided. Fifty-seven percent indicated that long-term offenders committed disciplinary violations less frequently than short-term offenders. Another thirty-two percent subscribed to the opinion that short- and long-term offenders committed approximately equal numbers of violations. Only five percent of the respondents believed long-term offenders commit more frequent disciplinary violations than short-term offenders.

In an expanded study of long-term confinement within the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction, the necessary data should be collected to enable comparisons between long-term offenders and short-term offenders with respect to visiting and to involvement in disciplinary violations. It would be important to compare the perceptions of staff and inmates with the actual data. For example, in Flanagan's study, he found that long-term offenders did, indeed, commit fewer disciplinary violations, but those that were committed were somewhat more serious than those of short-term offenders. Any observable differences between staff perceptions and reality will have important implications for staff training.

The reference to staff burnout is the first firm indication in this study that there may be a need for Bureau staff to be trained in methods for managing long-term offenders. As was noted previously, the staff within the Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction have become accustomed to working with inmates whose length of confinement was about two and one-half years. During the interviews, there was some speculation, on the part of staff, that the methods and strategies used to deal with a population composed primarily of short-term inmates, may not work

as well with a population that contains a significant number of long-term inmates. (Using the definition developed for this study, long-term offenders comprise twenty-three percent of the Bureau's inmate population. The percentages will be somewhat higher at the Bureau's seven major state correctional institutions.)

The inmates Flanagan interviewed for his study most often sought other long-term inmates as friends because of their "mutual interests and goals, their common experiences and problems and their compatible perspectives on doing time." This finding did not hold true in this study. Most long-term offenders had both long- and short-term inmates as friends and did not prefer one above the other. The perceptions of staff were also that long-term offenders did not discriminate between long- and short-term offenders when choosing friends.

On a related subject--whether long-term offenders should be assigned to a long-term facility or mixed in with short-term inmates--approximately sixty percent of the staff respondents indicated an institutional mix of both groups was most desirable from a management perspective. It is interesting to note that sixty percent of the long-term offenders also held this viewpoint.

Another area that could cause problems for long-term offenders is communication with staff. As was true for the long-term offender respondents, ninety percent of the staff believed that inmates freely communicate with institutional staff. Some of the dissatisfaction with communication expressed by long-term inmates, and cited in Chapter Three, is probably a result of staff's inability to resolve certain inmate problems because they are outside of the staff member's authority or they involve Bureau programs that are not available to long-term offenders until they reach a certain stage in their incarceration.

Other than other inmates, the second group of people with whom the long-term offender must reach an understanding are the correctional officers and other institutional staff. As was reported in Chapter Three, many more long-term offenders communicate with staff about their problems now than when they were first incarcerated. As long-term offenders reach an accommodation with staff, so staff must reach an accommodation with long-term offenders. There is some reason to believe that the accommodation staff reach with long-term offenders is unlike that reached with short-term offenders. An explanation of this process was the purpose of the following question, "Do staff, in general, respond differently to long-term offenders than they do to short-term inmates?" The responses to this question appear in Table 19.

TABLE 19  
STAFF RESPONSES TO LONG-TERM OFFENDERS AS COMPARED TO  
SHORT-TERM OFFENDERS

Respond the Same	39 Percent
Respond Differently	61 Percent

Staff provided comments as well as yes or no responses to the preceding question. In reviewing the comments the following statements appear to characterize the staff's responses to long-term offenders.

- At the major institutional level staff are more lenient with long-term offenders and they are treated more personally because staff are more familiar with them. On-the-other-hand, staff have higher expectations of long-term offenders and their reactions are more negative toward serious disciplinary actions. In spite of the statements that long-term offenders are trusted more, many staff stated they are more cautious in their dealings with long-term offenders and become more security conscious.
- At the regional correctional facility and community service center levels, staff state they are more familiar with long-term offenders, more cognizant of their needs and believe they need less supervision than short-term offenders.

In Flanagan's study of long-term confinement, he expressed surprise at finding long-term offenders receive more serious dispositions than short-term offenders from prison disciplinary hearings for similar offenses. This finding is not surprising considering the staff responses that indicate staff place higher expectations on the behavior of long-term offenders and react more severely when the offender commits what they consider to be a serious disciplinary violation.

STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING PROBLEMS AND NEEDS

Within the questionnaires, Bureau staff were asked to suggest strategies that could be implemented by the Bureau or the Commonwealth that would be beneficial to long-term offenders. The following table summarizes staff support for programs and services the Bureau may want to consider making available to long-term offenders.



TABLE 20  
LONG-TERM OFFENDER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Program Service	Percent of Respondents
Annual health evaluation after designated age	86
Sequenced educational programs	76
Linkage between vocational training/institutional maintenance needs/prison industries	73
Personal development programs	70
More diverse recreational programs	65
Family counseling program	61
Apprenticeship programs	58
Additional programs for creative outlets	54
Expanded pre-release programming	46
More frequently family days	46
Career planning	45
Good time provision	44
Automatic parole board review	43
Expanded legal programs	38
Additional community involvement in inmate programming	34
More frequent visiting programs	34
Expanded religious programs	28
Furlough program	27
Excursion programs	24
Special commissary items	24
Inmate self-government opportunities	15

In comparing staff responses with those of the long-term offenders, there is much disparity. For example, the most frequent choice of the inmate respondents was the enactment of good-time provisions (ninety-seven percent). Only forty-four percent of the staff believed good-time would be beneficial to long-term offenders. Expanded legal services, favored by eighty-four percent of the inmates, was believed to be important by only thirty-eight percent of the staff. Likewise, the desire of inmates for more frequent family days (eighty-two percent) was not shared by staff (forty-six percent).

There was agreement on sequenced educational programs for seventy-six percent of the staff favored this strategy, as well as, eight-two percent of the long-term offender sample. Likewise, eighty-six percent of the staff indicated that an annual health evaluation after a designated age was a good idea as compared to seventy-nine percent of the long-term respondents.

The fourth most frequent strategy for meeting the needs of the long-term offender population was "personal development programs." The Bureau has offered, on a limited basis, the "Personal Development and Life Management Program" developed by Vital Issues Projects, located in Erie, Pennsylvania. By all reported accounts this program was an unqualified success in helping inmate participants learn needed life skills such as goal setting, effective communication and perception of self-worth. Inmates and staff alike reported satisfaction with the program and its impact on the behavior of participants.

Although project staff are not intimately familiar with this particular program, it appears that programs of this type would be beneficial in helping long-term offenders develop appropriate strategies for coping with long-term confinement.

As a further comparison, the following table presents the five most frequently mentioned strategies in rank order according to the number of favorable responses recorded.

TABLE 21  
COMPARISON OF STAFF AND INMATE RESPONSES TO LONG-TERM OFFENDER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Program/Service	Staff Rank	Inmate Rank
Annual health evaluation	1	5
Good-time provisions	12	1
Sequenced educational programs	2	4
Expanded legal services	14	2
Linkage between vocational training/institutional maintenance/prison industries	3	9
More Frequent Family Days	10	3
Personal development programs	4	12
Expanded pre-release programming	9	6
More diverse recreational programming	5	14

The most immediate and discernable difference between the responses of the staff and the inmates is the focus of the programs they believe would be useful. For the staff, the focus is inside the institution as evidenced by the five most common responses. The focus of the long-term offenders, on-the-other-hand, is outside the institution. First and foremost is release from the institution and secondly on their families, friends and communities outside the walls. Only five of the thirteen programs cited as beneficial by more than fifty percent of the inmate respondents are institution-centered programs, i.e., sequenced educational programs, annual health evaluation, apprenticeship programs, programs for creative outlets and special commissary items.

The results of this exercise will be particularly useful to the Bureau if it chooses to implement some of the programs listed above, primarily because it is one measure of possible staff resistance to or acceptance of the programs cited.

The five most important pieces of advice staff felt they could give a newly-admitted long-term offender were:

- Participate in programs/stay active;
- Assume responsibility for your own actions;
- Maintain contacts with your family/friends;
- Be cooperative; and
- Stay out of trouble.

A comparison of staff advice with that offered by long-term offenders shows no appreciable differences. The most common



advice offered by both groups was to participate in programs in order to stay active.

In recognition of previous studies that have demonstrated that long-term offenders hold a greater percentage of desirable work assignments than do short-term inmates, staff were asked if there were any particular types of work assignments for which long-term offenders were best suited. Surprisingly, the respondents were evenly split on this question--half did and the other half did not.

In other state correctional systems project staff are familiar with, interinstitutional transfer is used as a management tool for rewarding good institutional adjustment and to relieve the monotony an offender may experience by being confined in one institution for a long-period of time. The Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction does not utilize interinstitutional transfer in this manner. It is not uncommon for inmates to do the majority of their sentences in one institution. Common rewards offered include more program choices and the opportunity to "work outside the walls." Recognizing that long-term offenders pose special management problems that may require special responses led project staff to question Bureau staff about the possible uses of interinstitutional transfers in the management of long-term offenders. The most frequent responses were:

- To participate in specific programs(s);
- To move inmate closer to family/community;
- To respond to disciplinary problems;
- To reduce security prior to release;
- To provide needed treatment opportunities; and
- Reward inmate for good adjustment.

Only two of the preceding suggestions deviate from the Bureau's current practices--move inmate closer to family/community and as a reward for good adjustment.

Considering the importance afforded maintenance of family ties by both staff and long-term offenders, staff were asked to suggest programs that would help long-term offenders maintain these relationships. The most common responses were:

- Develop family counseling programs;
- Increase visiting opportunities;
- Provide more normative visiting environment;
- Utilize community volunteers;
- Establish family/conjugal visits; and
- Increase number of family days.

Staff were also asked to identify temporary release programs the Bureau could expand or develop to help long-term offenders better cope with long-term confinement. The results are summarized in Tables 22 and 23.

TABLE 22

EXPANDED TEMPORARY RELEASE PROGRAMS

Type of Release Program	Percent of Respondents (Multiple Response)
Escorted furlough	44
Work release	43
Educational Release	41
None	24
Community Service Center	8
Halfway house placement (except lifers)	3
Treatment activities (escorted)	2

Over forty percent of the staff surveyed favored expansion of the escorted furlough, work and educational programs to meet the needs of long-term offenders for extra-institutional contact. Almost one-fourth, however, favored no changes in the current level of participation.

TABLE 23

NEW TEMPORARY RELEASE PROGRAMS

Type of Release Program	Percent of Respondents (Multiple Response)
None	41
Temporary release/community adjustment	9
Vocational release	7
Longer CSC placement	6
Family/conjugal visiting	3
Funeral leave	1

Most staff did not favor the development of new temporary release programs for long-term offenders. Of the few that did, temporary release to facilitate community adjustment when the inmate is nearing release was the most popular.

Project staff sought to identify what steps could be taken to "give hope to the hopeless." That is, what actions would staff support that would shorten the length of incarceration for an offender serving a life sentence. Although not a popular position to take in Pennsylvania at this time, project staff recognize the seriousness of the situation facing the Bureau--managing thirteen percent of the population who are likely, if current sentiment prevails, to spend the better part of their natural lives behind bars.

First, staff were asked if automatic parole review dates should be set for long-term offenders. Sixty-five percent of the staff responded in the affirmative. Reasons given for this position included:

- Gives inmate an incentive, a goal, something to work toward;
- Decreases sense of hopelessness;

- Provides good method for evaluating programs;
- Keeps attention on inmate, he/she does not get lost in system; and
- Helps inmate to understand/accept sentence.

The remaining forty-five percent of the respondents said no. Their reasons included:

- Should not tamper with sentence set by court;
- Review date should not be automatic--its a privilege; and
- Current laws are adequate.

Probably the most important reason for adopting an automatic parole date, if Flanagan's assertion that inmates segment time in order to cope with their sentences is correct, is that it gives the long-term inmates a goal to work toward. In other words, an automatic parole review date segments the prisoner's sentence a priori.

Several of the respondents, as stated previously, did not favor an automatic review date. They were not, however, against parole reviews of long-term offenders. They merely believe parole reviews should be earned by the inmate.

Staff were also asked if they believed in commutation for long-term offenders. Ninety-two percent stated they do believe that commutation should be employed in special cases. Reasons given for this belief included:

- Provides hope;
- It is adaptable to individual cases;
- Some inmates are capable of change; and
- Commutation has worked in the past; and
- Offers review by agency outside criminal justice system.

Only eight percent of the respondents did not believe in commutation. Their reasons included the potential for undermining the role of the courts and that good behavior in prison does not lessen the seriousness of the criminal act that resulted in their confinement.

Pennsylvania repealed its good time legislation many years ago. However, several staff expressed the opinion that good time may be an idea whose time has come again. The growing prison population and the increase in the number of long-term offenders who will be occupying beds many years hence have put a tremendous strain on the fiscal resources of the state. Early releases of inmates who have shown good institutional adjustment through the use of good time measures reduces this strain somewhat. Because of its impact on the length of confinement which affects not only the long-term offender but also the Bureau, staff were asked if they thought Pennsylvania should enact a good-time law.

Of the staff who responded, seventy-three percent favored enactment of a good-time law; the remaining twenty-seven percent did not. Reasons staff gave both for and against a good time law are shown in Table 24.

TABLE 24

STAFF ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST ENACTMENT OF A GOOD-TIME LAW

<u>In Favor Of</u>	<u>Against</u>
Reward for good behavior/ incentive	Too bureaucratic/expensive
May alleviate overcrowding	Does not reduce assessment/evaluation dilemma
Provides another management control	Inmates can manipulate system
Reduces disparity	Lessens impact of court sentence
Serves as useful evaluation tool	Difficult to administer

There was some concern expressed during the initial staff interviews that the Bureau's present pre-release model might be inappropriate for long-term inmates who were nearing the end of their sentences. Staff were asked to express their opinions on this topic. Eighty-one percent felt the current pre-release program was adequate. The remaining nineteen percent did not and gave the following reasons for their beliefs:

- The current pre-release model is too inflexible and restrictive;
- All long-term offenders should be released through CSC's;
- The current program should be more realistic and gradual;
- Intensive group counseling should be provided at the CSC level; and
- The use of furloughs should be expanded to some long-term offenders.

Offenders who are under the death sentence in Pennsylvania constitute a unique subgroup of long-term offenders. Should Pennsylvania resume executing offenders sentenced to death, it is likely that most of these prisoners will not be confined in excess of eight years. If not, these prisoners will remain in prison for extended periods of time even if the Governor sees fit to commute sentences of death to life imprisonment.

Staff were, therefore, asked specific questions about the programming and management of inmates under the sentence of death. First, they were asked if inmates under the sentence of death should be segregated (in terms of housing) from the general population. Eighty-six percent of the staff believed that death sentence inmates should be segregated from the general population. The most common reasons for supporting this position were:

- Death sentence inmates are security/escape risks;
- Attitudes/behavior set bad examples for other prisoners; and
- Death sentence inmates have different problems and needs.

The remaining fourteen percent saw no problems in housing death sentence inmates among an institution's general population. The reasons staff gave for not segregating death sentence from other inmates included:

- Death sentence inmates do not present any greater risk than inmates in general population;
- These inmates should be provided with a "normal" environment;
- Segregation (in housing) serves no purpose; and
- Placement in general population can be stabilizing for inmates under the sentence of death.

Table 25 presents the opinions of Bureau staff concerning the availability of programs for inmates under sentence of death:

TABLE 25

PROGRAM AVAILABILITY FOR INMATES UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u> (Multiple Response)
All programs (within segregated unit)	32
All programs	10
None	3
Counseling	64
Religious	74
Recreation	65
Education	37
Vocational	17
Legal services	3
Work opportunities	2

Few staff subscribe to the notion that all available institutional programs should be provided to death sentence inmates (either within a segregated unit or with out) or that

none should be provided. Most staff believe that religious (seventy-four percent), recreation (sixty-five percent) and counseling programs (sixty-four percent) are beneficial to inmates under the sentence of death. Slightly over one-third of the staff who responded to this question thought death sentence inmates should be provided educational program opportunities.

PROGRAM SEQUENCING FOR LONG-TERM OFFENDERS

This is a subject not addressed in any previous study of long-term confinement that project staff are familiar with yet it presents a problem for correctional administrators, staff and long-term offenders alike. The question is how does one program an offender who has a lengthy confinement period before him/her in such a way that the inmate's needs are served as well as those of the correctional system? Project staff approached this problem from the strategy of sequencing the programs a long-term offender participates in over the entire length of the offender's confinement. The input of Bureau staff was sought through a question which asked, "At what point in the long-term offender's sentence should each of the following programs be offered?" The choices were: early in sentence; during middle portion of the sentence; at end of the sentence; and, over entire sentence length. A list of current Bureau program offerings was also provided.

The results of this exercise were disappointing. With the exception of temporary release, the majority of the respondents believed all programs should be offered over the entire length of the sentence. However, one staff member did offer the following scenario (paraphrased from interview response).

The time a long-term offender is to serve would be hypothetically broken in half. The first period would have the inmate working on higher levels (e.g., trust). The first one to two years of the first half of the sentence would be an assessment period. During this assessment period specialized counseling/treatment services would be provided to the long-term offender to help him/her cope with confinement. Frequent family visitation would be encouraged and a home-like atmosphere provided. Specialized services would be available to families of long-term offenders to help them adjust to a long-term separation from the offender.

During the second half of the incarceration the emphasis would be on educational programs leading possibly to college programs or vocational training leading to an apprenticeship program. During the second period the development of trustee relationships would be encouraged. During the last quarter of this second period, a mandatory prerelease program would be developed. The long-term offender would transfer to a Community

Service Center, when eligible, to complete his/her term and to fulfill requirements set forth in the prerelease program. The inmate would be involved in planning for his/her confinement from the onset.

The dominant theme expressed by staff during the interview sessions was the need to individualize the program to meet the specific needs of the offender who is being programmed. Another common theme was to provide continuity in programming by using a building block approach which has been discussed previously in this report.

**CONTINUED**

**1 OF 2**

# Impacts of Long-Term Confinement on Offenders Family and Friends

## INTRODUCTION

An area much discussed by correctional officials but minimally examined is the impacts of long-term confinement on the family and friends of prisoners. Few studies of long-term confinement have identified these impacts and what available information there is has come from the long-term offenders, not those directly affected. This is the first study of long-term confinement, with which project staff are familiar, that attempted to secure this type of information directly from the family members and friends of long-term offenders.

Many researchers hold the opinion that family ties are the most positive factor in the rehabilitation of the offender. The family offers the closest emotional ties in the inmate's life and, therefore, the strongest motivation for him or her to succeed after release from confinement. The family is also the main source of news and information that keep the offender in touch with the outside world and of the financial support both while incarcerated and in their return to the community. "In spite of the fact that incarceration often falls on families who have the fewest resources to deal with its impacts, the effectiveness of family support in easing the emotional and practical turmoil of the offender's incarceration and reintegration appears to be consistent across diverse age groups, populations and socioeconomic statuses."<29>

The project team surveyed a combination of fifty (50) family members and friends of prisoners who had been confined in excess of five years.<30> Bureau staff were instructed to supply, with the inmate's consent, the names and mailing address of a family member or friend for each of the long-term offenders who participated in the survey. The respondents were chosen at random from the names supplied by the Bureau. Questionnaires (Appendix B) were then mailed to each of the family members or friends. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of the responses plus a stamped, self-addressed envelope were enclosed for the information and convenience of the respondents.

Project staff anticipated that the return rate for the questionnaires would be low, given the historical rate of return for similar endeavors. The project team's expectations were unfortunately accurate, as only twenty-six family members or

29 Susan Fishman and Candace Cassin, Services for Families of Offenders: An Overview, U.S. Department of Justice: National Institute of Corrections (1981).

30 At the time of data collection, the criterion of eight years for defining long-term confinement had not yet been derived.



friends returned completed questionnaires within the stated time-frame of forty-five days. Although this small number of questionnaires does not constitute a statistically valid sample, the responses do provide information and insights concerning the effects of long-term confinement from the perspective of the families and friends of prisoners.

The questionnaires included several questions concerning the maintenance of relationships with long-term offenders. Other questions explored such topics as participation in furlough programs, problems for respondent created by long-term confinement, Bureau programs and services that the respondent perceived as helpful and programs and services the Bureau could develop that would lessen the impacts of long-term confinement both for the long-term offender and for the respondent.

Family members and friends are important to long-term offenders for many reasons not shared by short-term offenders. For example, among many long-term offenders, family and friends represent a source of hope. Also, they provide the inmate with sustained contact with the outside world that helps the inmate maintain his or her ability to relate to persons who are not prisoners nor the "keepers" of prisoners. Finally, a third reason why these outside relationships are important is that many long-term offenders perceive they will need these contacts to help reestablish themselves once they are released from confinement.

Given the difficulties normally associated with prison life, the confinement of urban inmates in widely dispersed rural prisons, the inability of the inmate to help resolve problems at home, etc., it is a small wonder that most long-term inmates find it difficult to maintain sustained and effective communication with loved ones over the entire length of their confinement.

For example, Holt and Miller stated in their report that although contacts with family and friends generally do not decrease throughout the period of incarceration, marital ties are likely to weaken. Their study indicated that after three years imprisonment, twenty-five percent fewer wives were still visiting.<31> Several other authors also support the opinion

31 Norman Holt and Donald Miller, "Explorations in Inmate Family Relationships," California: Department of Corrections, Research Division, January 1972, Report Number 46.

that lengthy, extended separation caused by imprisonment can lead to the disintegration of marital ties.<32>

Information obtained from the inmate interviews and questionnaires, as discussed in Chapter Three, indicates that long-term inmates perceive the maintenance of outside relationships as an important mechanism for helping them to adjust to long-term confinement. The importance of these outside relationships is dramatized by a relatively recent study conducted in West Germany concerning the post-release adjustment of inmates who had served life sentences. The researchers determined that the attitudes of the family members toward the offender and the offenders' post release position in the social structure "vitally determine the extent of effects from [long-term] imprisonment."<33>

The preservation of outside relationships present a dilemma for correctional policymakers. On the one hand, the presence of such relationships are important factors in the long-term offenders adjustment to incarceration. On the other hand, is it fair to the family members and friends for the Bureau to actively promote the maintenance of family and community ties through its programs and services. Aside from this dilemma, the orderly operation of the institutions is a definite consideration. Increased contact with the public always corresponds to increased disruptions in prison schedules, increased opportunities for compromising security and increased opportunities for introducing contraband into the facility. All of these factors and more must be considered in establishing Bureau policy relative to maintenance of family ties for long-term prisoners.

#### INMATE/FAMILY COMMUNICATION

The means by which incarcerated offenders and their families and friends maintain contact include visits, correspondence and telephone calls. These are the mechanisms through which they must strive to maintain their relationships. All of these methods are subject to varying degrees of regulation and restriction, dependent upon logistical factors and institutional policies.

32 Barbara Friendman and David Rice, "Marital Therapy in Prison: One-Partner 'Couple Therapy'", Psychiatry, Vol. 40, May, 1977.

E. Handler, "Family Surrogates as Correctional Strategy", The Social Service Review, Vol. 48, No. 4, 1974, pp. 539-549.

Gilbert Ingram and Ames Swartsfager, "Involving Families and the Community in Rehabilitating Offenders", Hospital and Community Psychiatry, Vol. 24, No. 9, September 1973.

33 Peter A. Albrecht, "The Effects of Imprisonment on the Self-Image of 'Lifers'", in International Summaries, National Criminal Justice Reference Service (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 153.

Families/friends were asked how long they have known the inmate. Responses ranged from six to forty-one years with an average of twenty-one years familiarity with the inmate.

The same group was then asked how far they lived from the institution in which the inmate was confined. The rationale for this question was to determine what relationship, if any, exists between frequency of visiting contacts and distance from the facility. In other words, the project team is aware that increased or diminished visiting is a product of several variables including the ability of family and friends to travel the distance between their residence and the prison. Traveling to the institution can present difficulties because many of the Bureau's institutions are located in remote areas and no policy exists to assign offenders to facilities that are close to their homes. Schaefer found in his national study that 36.9% of the responding institutions were less than fifty miles from the residence of most inmates; 33.3% were over one hundred miles; and the remainder fell in between.<34> Responses to distance from residence to institution ranged from six to six hundred twenty miles with an average distance of one hundred twenty miles.

An area considered vitally important to an inmate in maintaining contact with the outside world is his/her communications (number and type) with family and friends. For example, in 1972, Norman Holt and Donald Miller, research analysts with the California Department of Corrections, published the results of a study which linked parole success to the maintenance of strong family ties during incarceration. They concluded that "men who received more visits during their last twelve months in prison experienced significantly less difficulty and less serious difficulty in their first year of parole than did those with fewer visitors."<35>

Likewise, in a study to predict parole success conducted on a sample of men released from the Illinois correctional system from 1928 to 1935, Ohlin found that seventy-five percent of the inmates classified as maintaining "active family interest" while imprisoned were successful on parole while only thirty-four percent of those considered loners experienced parole success.<36>

34 N. E. Schafer, "Prison Visiting: A Background for Change", Federal Probation, Vol. 42, No. 3, September 1978, pp. 47-50.

35 Holt and Miller, op. cit.

36 L. Ohlin, "The Stability and Validity of Parole Experience Tables." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1954.

Using Ohlin's classification system, Glaser studied a sample of 1956 releases from Federal prisons with similar results--seventy-one percent of the "active family interest" group were successful on parole compared with only fifty percent of the "no contact with relatives" group.<37>

Holt and Miller questioned their findings in terms of the motivation of the individual inmate.<38> If differences in motivation were an explanation of parole success, it would have shown up in some of the other areas they examined. This did not prove to be true. Those who maintained frequent family contacts received about as many disciplinary reports, had no better work records, were no more likely to participate in treatment programs and did about the same in group counseling.

In summary, all the evidence suggests that there is a strong, independent, positive relationship between maintaining frequent family contacts while in prison and success on parole.

The convergence of these studies and the consensus of their findings should not be dismissed. The strong positive relationship between strength of family/social bonds and parole success has held for more than fifty years, across very diverse offender populations and for different correctional systems. It is doubtful if any other research finding in the field of corrections can come close to this record.

Families and friends were asked how often they currently visit the inmate in question. Table 26 summarizes their responses:

TABLE 26

FREQUENCY OF VISITS

	Number	Percent
At Least Once a Week	6	23.1
At Least Once Every Two Weeks	3	11.5
At Least Once a Month	2	7.7
At Least Once Every Three Months	3	11.5
At Least Once a Year	6	23.1
Never	6	23.1

With respect to the above issue, respondents were then queried as to the frequency of their visits compared to when the inmate was first confined. Seventeen or 65.4% stated they visited less often, seven or 26.9% the same and two or 7.7% more often.

Reasons family members and friends provided for less frequent visiting included the following:

37 Daniel Glaser, The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System. Bobbs-Merrill, Inc., New York (1964).

38 Holt and Miller, p. 63.

- Inmate has been transferred to a facility too far to visit;
- No public transportation exists to and from the institution and no private transportation is available;
- Cannot financially afford to visit;
- Relationship has disintegrated eliminating motivation to visit;
- Visits have been supplanted through additional telephone contacts; and
- Inmate has requested visits be limited or completely eliminated.

Of the above responses, the most common pertained to unavailability of transportation followed by disintegration of the relationship. It is believed by the project team that many of the individuals who failed to respond did so because the relationship with the inmate has either been terminated or is not as strong as when the inmate was first confined. This belief is supported by the rate of return of spouses versus parents/children. While almost fifty percent of the initial questionnaires were sent to wives, only seven out of the twenty-six returned were those completed by the spouse. Although there is no empirical evidence in the current study to document this supposition, past research conducted by Albrecht determined that in the case of spouses and boy/girlfriends, that for individuals confined over five years that over thirty-five percent of the relationships will have been terminated.<39> These findings are consistent with the results of the present project as most of the respondents who stated they visit less were wives or girlfriends as opposed to relatives who related that they visit the same or more often.

Another factor that may help to explain less frequent visits is economic. The cost of transportation, food and, if necessary, lodging, is compounded if there are children involved. Families receiving public assistance often find that such assistance will not adequately cover the cost of visiting their loved ones in prison. Public transportation to the institution is often inadequate and lodging accommodations in the more isolated areas are scarce.

There also appears to be a strong correlation, as suggested earlier, between number of visits and distance from the institution. Over fifty percent of those respondents who reported they visit less often stated they are limited in their visiting based upon the distance they must travel. Many of these individuals reported that they previously were able to obtain rides to and from the institution with family and friends of other inmates, but when their inmate was transferred to a more

distant facility, this mode of transportation was no longer available.

On a national level, Bill Nagel examined twenty-three of the newest state prisons and found the average distance between the prison and the states' largest city was 172 road miles. The shortest distance was thirty road miles, the greatest, 450 road miles.<40>

The respondents were then asked about the frequency of contacts through writing and/or by telephone. With respect to written communication, families/friends provided the following information (Tables 27 and 28):

TABLE 27

FREQUENCY OF WRITING

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Write Daily	3	11.5
Write At Least Once a Week	4	15.4
Write At Least Once Every Two Weeks	4	15.4
Write At Least Once a Month	6	23.1
Write Less Than Once a Month	4	15.4
Never Write	5	19.2

TABLE 28

FREQUENCY OF TELEPHONE CALLS

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Call Daily	2	7.7
Call At Least Once a Week	7	26.9
Call At Least Once Every Two Weeks	3	11.5
Call At Least Once a Month	4	23.1
Call Less Than Once a Month	2	7.7
Never Call	8	30.8

An examination of the individual questionnaires determined there is an inverse correlation between the frequency of visiting and the frequency of writing/telephone calls. Many of those respondents who stated they visit infrequently or not at all reported they write or call more often as a result. An interesting finding since the inception of the telephone program system wide several years ago, is that many family and friends depend primarily upon telephone calls as their principal means of communication with the long-term inmate. This finding is important in considering reductions in visiting and writing as it appears a substantial number of family and friends call in lieu of visiting and/or writing and that reductions in these latter two areas are not necessarily indicative of diminished concern

40 William Nagel, The New Red Barn: A Critical Look at the Modern American Prison. American Foundation, Inc., Institute of Corrections. New York: Walker and Company (1973)

for the long-term offender. This finding generally parallels behaviors in society where cost reductions in long distance calls and almost universal access to telephones have reduced personal letter writing and face-to-face visits.

Similar to visitation, respondents were asked whether they write the same, less, or more often than early in the inmate's incarceration. Fourteen or 53.8% stated less often, eight or 30.8% the same and four or 15.4% more often.

Two primary reasons were given by those respondents that reported they write less often. The first and most common involved a general falling off in communication between the family and inmate resulting from other than a decline in the family/inmate relationship or a situation where letters become repetitious after a period of time and inmates and/or family members do not write unless a noteworthy event has occurred. The second reason for a decline in writing is, as previously suggested, the expansion of the Bureau's telephone program. Those respondents who reported they write more often stated that they did so as a direct result of less visiting opportunities.

An important communication source for many inmates, particularly those in the latter parts of their sentences is the Bureau's furlough program. This program enables inmates to participate in temporary releases from their confinement institution.

Families and friends were asked if the inmate had participated in a furlough and if so, how many. Thirteen or 50% stated the inmate had received a furlough while seven or 26.9% had taken one furlough and six or 23.1% two or more.

Most individuals completing the questionnaire reported that the furlough program was the best method developed by the Bureau to maintain family/inmate relationships although it could be improved by expanding the timeframe from three to five days and permitting inmates to participate earlier in their sentence. Families and friends of lifers requested that the program be made available to that segment of the prison population after a specific number of years had elapsed on their sentence and particularly if the inmate had maintained a positive disciplinary record.

When asked what benefits, if any, the furlough program provided, the following excerpts were provided by the respondents:

- "The furlough helped her (female inmate) to adjust to coming home and being confined."
- "... Just being able to come and go was a pleasure for him and myself."
- "... helped reestablish [sic] the relationship that we once shared before his incarceration."

- "... fine but too short, 3 days, one day traveling here, one day here and one day to return."
- "...time to be free to work and get his life back in order with some guidance and supervision."
- "It gave him time to spend with his sons."

Previous studies have reviewed the problems created by inmate/family separation. The data suggest that the "longer the

prison term, the worse the relationships with parents, siblings, wife and children.<41>

In addition to the emotional and social adjustments that the family must make, incarceration of a loved one usually carries major economic implications for the family unit. By sentencing day, the family's few resources have often been depleted on legal and other pre-trial and trial-related costs. Families with children may be eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children or General Assistance but, for some, accepting public assistance is another stigma to bear.

The family's reduced income affects its ability to visit the member in prison, especially if the prison is a considerable distance away. In some situations, the family can no longer afford payments on the house or apartment and is forced to move to a less expensive living situation. The economic plight of the family causes feelings of helplessness and frustration for the inmate, who feels that he or she has failed in his/her role as provider. Any money earned by the inmate in the institution is minimal--usually just enough to cover personal incidentals--and so the financial burden of furloughs, and, finally, release often falls on the family as well.

Keeping the above in mind, respondents were asked to relate what problems, if any, they had experienced that were directly related to the inmates long-term confinement. While several families and friends did not include a response on their questionnaire, those that did included the following responses:

- "There is no money to buy clothes or to use to visit him."
- "I wore my car out visiting him and missed work traveling."
- "... his absence is steadily draining his step-father's strength. It takes (financially) two months to send necessary articles [sic]."
- "... I had to relay [sic] on welfare for support for 7-1/2 years. Now I am on Social Security but if he was out I could use his support as my income is low."

- "Telling my children where grandma is and why."
- "Worry, concern about him and when he gets and out and expenses."

The above are only a sample of the responses but they indicate that separation resulting from confinement leads to a variety of problems ranging from insufficient income to time lost from work to physical and mental strain to explaining the absence of the long-term offender.

Families/friends were then asked what Bureau programs and/or services, if any, have assisted them in maintaining their contacts with the inmate. Of the twenty-six reporting, only nine indicated the Bureau had programs and/or services that were of assistance. The other fifteen individuals either stated that no useful programs/services now exist, that they were not familiar with Bureau programs/services or simply did not address this question. Those answering stated that the following were of assistance in maintaining communication with the inmate:

- Community Service Center Program;
- Inmate's Counselor;
- Furlough Program; and
- Telephone Program.

Concerning assistance in maintaining contact with the inmate, respondents were queried as to what programs and/or services could be developed. The following are their responses:

- "A volunteer services program should be developed for the families and friends of inmates (long-term) to address and resolve problems... This volunteer program would be beneficial to inmate families that are having difficulty of accepting the confinement and long-term separation."
- "... prison administration [should] collectively lobby for legislation that would create criteria by which long-termers could substantially reduce their sentences during incarceration such as a graduated good-time program."
- "... expanded use of community furloughs."
- "... a structured notification system where families can call the inmate's counselor when they need to talk to the inmate."
- "... visiting where I can come and stay with my husband for a day or two."

Again, the above responses are but a sample of the recommendations provided by families and friends suggesting that the Bureau should consider programs ranging from good time to expanded furloughs to conjugal visits.

#### FAMILY/CONJUGAL VISITATION--A SPECIAL ISSUE

Seven states currently have programs that allow families to visit inmates in private surroundings and to engage in sexual relations with their legal spouses on prison grounds. These states are: Mississippi, South Carolina, California, New York, Minnesota, Connecticut and Washington. Descriptions of each states' program follows:

Mississippi: Conjugal visiting privileges for Mississippi prisoners dates back to the 19th century when residents of the prison camps located on the grounds of the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman were permitted to erect buildings for conjugal visiting purposes.

At present, the inmate must furnish proof of marriage before being allowed to participate in the conjugal visiting program. Female as well as male inmates are eligible to participate. The womens program is supervised by a county health department which requires female participants to practice birth control.

The family of a Mississippi inmate may visit for three days and two nights, usually Friday through Sunday. Upon their arrival at the Mississippi State Penitentiary, the family moves into one of five efficiency apartments or four houses designated for family visits. The visiting facilities have been furnished by contributions. Visitors must supply food and bed linens. Since these visiting facilities are not secure nor supervised by correctional staff, only minimum or community custody status inmates are eligible to participate.

South Carolina: South Carolina, like Mississippi, has a long history of providing conjugal visitation at its minimum security institutions. At the present time only one minimum security institution has a permanent conjugal visiting building. The building has fourteen private rooms and may be reserved on weekends and one weekday per week. The hours are from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. Private visits also take place in cars and tents brought by spouses at this and the other minimum security facilities. No children are permitted to visit under conjugal visiting circumstances. Eligible female inmates may also participate. South Carolina also permits married inmate couples to visit one another once per month.

California: California initiated its first family visitation program in 1968. Since then the program has grown to encompass ninety family visiting units on the grounds of the state's twelve major institutions. Although originally reserved for inmates who were medium or minimum custody, recent court challenges have prompted the agency to make this program available to all inmates except those within ninety days of release. This is currently under appeal.

Eligibility requirements include: no recent history of smuggling drugs or dangerous contraband into prison and a good conduct requirement that applies to conduct during visitation.



If the privilege is suspended, the penalty does not extend beyond six months.

The program emphasizes family unity not merely sexual release. Therefore, family visits often include children, parents or siblings in addition to or in lieu of inmates' spouses.

The daily costs of the operation are borne by the Inmate Welfare Fund. In the early years of the program, visiting units were built by the inmates using donated materials. More recently, the California Legislature appropriated money to build additional family visiting units. The units are furnished through contributions and donations.

The length of individual visits vary depending upon such factors as frequency of visits, length of waiting lists and distance visitors must travel. In general, the frequency of family visits to inmates will depend upon the availability of visiting facilities in the inmate's institution. For example, if there are numerous units and the inmate's family lives nearby, visits may be as often as monthly. At other institutions with larger populations and fewer units, three to four months may elapse between visits.

In recognition that financial limitations represent a real concern for those persons opposed to conjugal visiting on the grounds of the costs of implementing such programs, California presents an admirable example. Although much reshuffling of resources was necessary, California devised a program to accommodate 6,000 family visits per year without budget increases. As mentioned previously, in some cases inmates constructed the units using salvaged lumber and other materials.<42>

New York: The objective of New York's "Family Reunion Program" is to preserve, enhance and strengthen the relationship between inmates and families. The visits are held in mobile home units placed within the security perimeters of the state's correctional facilities but separated from the general prison population.

Persons eligible to visit the inmates include: legal spouses, children, parents, grandparents, step parents, foster parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews. To be eligible to participate in the family reunion program, the inmate must:

- Have been a resident of the facility for ninety days;
- Maintain a satisfactory adjustment;
- Demonstrate a successful program participation record;
- Not have major or chronic disciplinary problems;

42 For further information, contact Robert Dickover, Research Manager, Research Unit of the Department of Corrections, Sacramento, California 95814.

- Not be eligible for furloughs;
- Not have committed heinous or unusual crimes;
- Not be a sex offender;
- Be adjudged mentally defective; and
- Not have a disruptive pattern of institutional behavior.

The visits typically last thirty hours and the frequency of visits is dependent upon the number of applicants and the availability of space.

Minnesota: In March 1977, a "Residential Family Counseling Program" was initiated at the minimum security unit of the Minnesota State Prison in Stillwater. The unit is a two-story house formerly used as staff housing. It accommodates sixty to seventy men and was furnished through donations.

The program eligibility requirements are simply residence in minimum security for sixty days. Persons who may visit include: spouse, children, parents, grandparents, legal guardians and siblings. Before each of the first two visits, the resident and his family must participate in a two-hour counseling program. The frequency of visiting may be as seldom as once every two months if family members can visit on weekends.

Connecticut: The maximum security prison at Somers and the minimum security prison in Enfield jointly initiated the "Extended Family Visiting Program." The program serves all male inmates and was designed to maintain family ties. It may not be used by inmates who are eligible for home furloughs. There is no similar program for female offenders in Connecticut.

Eligibility criteria include: must have served one full year; inmates in solitary confinement are ineligible; and inmates found guilty of disciplinary infractions may not participate.

Eligible inmates may receive one visit every ninety days which lasts from 1:00 pm until 10:00 am the following day. House trailers provide the visiting facilities. They were purchased using donations received from church and civic groups.

Those family members who may visit the inmate include: spouse, children, parents, step parents and grandparents.

Washington: Two of the four main prisons in Washington have "Extended Family" visiting programs serving both male and female inmates. To participate, the inmate must have completed six months residence at the institution where the program is located and be of medium or maximum security status. Minimum security inmates may participate only if they are ineligible for furlough. Further, the inmate must not have been found guilty of escape attempts or major disturbances (e.g., assaultive behavior) during the previous year. Inmates housed in disciplinary or administrative segregation or in death row are ineligible as are those awaiting prosecution on a felony charge.



The state penitentiary requires the inmates to have been involved in schooling or employment programs and those under psychiatric are must obtain clearance from the Classification Committee.

Visitors may include legal spouses, children, parents, and, at the women's institution only, grandparents. Spouses may not visit if they are on parole, probation or subject to pending criminal action.

In summary, these seven states have implemented family or conjugal visiting programs that differ in many respects--eligibility criteria, sex of inmate served, length of visit, facilities available, etc. Yet all have been successfully implemented.

In considering whether or not to implement such controversial programs, correctional administrators are justifiably concerned about possible negative public response. In the few public opinion surveys that have been conducted over the past twenty years, there were consistently about one half of the respondents who were opposed to the idea of conjugal visitation in U.S. prisons. Some researchers suggest, however, that the states that had implemented such programs (as of 1975) had experienced no observable opposition. In stead, the public had been largely indifferent. In New York, the Family Reunion program met with disapproval from correctional officers, the public and various community organizations. Sentiments changed with its continued use.

The Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction should develop a pilot family visitation program exclusively for long-term offenders and implement it in the State Correctional Institution at Muncy (female institution) and one of the more isolated facilities that confines long-term offenders, e.g., Huntingdon. Funds for establishing the visiting facilities should be solicited from community and civic groups as has been successfully done in the seven states which have family/conjugal visiting programs.

It is true that limiting extended family visiting to long-term offenders may produce resentment and court action from short-term offenders. However, each of the seven states previously discussed have established eligibility criteria that places restrictions in who may participate in the programs.

One of the eligibility criteria should be that the inmate has a Public Risk score of 3 or less and an Institutional Risk score of 2 or less.

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