

State Notes

TOPICS OF LEGISLATIVE INTEREST

Winter 2019



Michigan Prison Closures and Prison Population Trends **By Abbey Frazier, Fiscal Analyst**

Introduction

The fiscal year (FY) 2018-19 budget included \$38,033,800 in General Fund savings for the closure of two State prisons: the West Shoreline Correctional Facility in Muskegon and the Ojibway Correctional Facility in Marenisco. In addition to these facilities, the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) has closed or consolidated over 20 prisons since 2005, with the Ojibway Correctional Facility being the most recent in December 2018. After years of increasing capital investment to accommodate a growing inmate population throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and the early 2000s, Michigan's prison population has reached a 20-year low, reducing the need for bed space and allowing for the closure of correctional facilities across the State.

After reaching an historical peak in 2007 with a population of 51,544, the 2017 year-end prison population shrank 23.0% to 39,666, the lowest level seen since the mid-1990s. Between 2010 and 2018, the year-end population declined by roughly 1,000 inmates per year, on average, representing a marked reversal from the previous decade, when the population grew over 12.0% between 2001 and the 2007 peak. This *State Notes* article provides a brief historical overview of prison population trends since the 1980s, major policy initiatives in the State's corrections system, and prison facility closures and consolidations by fiscal year.

A Brief History on Prisoner Population Trends

Before the surge in Michigan's prison population growth that began in the late 1980s, inmate population trends mostly followed changes in the State's adult civilian population. Thus, the prison population hovered between 10,000 to 15,000 prisoners. A national shift in criminal justice policy towards a "tough on crime" approach, as well as legislative and voter-approved initiatives affecting the Michigan corrections system, led to the creation of 20 new prisons, roughly \$1 billion in new corrections expenditures, and the addition of over 25,000 new prisoners to the corrections system over the course of the 1980s.

The elimination of "good time" credits by voter-approved referendum in 1978 and the repeal of the Prison Overcrowding Emergency Powers Act in the late 1980s, which allowed a 90-day minimum sentence reduction when population exceeded capacity, preceded rapid growth and overcrowding in the State's prison system that occurred in the latter part of the 1990s.

The period from 1984 to 1989 saw the largest growth in inmate population in the State's history; which increased from 14,658 in 1984, to 31,834 by the end of 1989. Parole approval rates dropped by 10 percentage points from 1984 to 1985, in part due to several high-profile crimes committed by parolees released under the Prison Overcrowding Emergency Powers Act. A 482% increase in drug-related prison commitments helped contribute to growing felony dispositions and new prison admissions.¹

Despite the adoption of a double-bunking policy by the MDOC in 1989, which required some prisoners to share prison cells, growth in the prison population throughout the 1990s continually outpaced capacity. From 1990 to 1996, Michigan had the largest prison, parole, and probation population among the Great Lakes states. During those years, the State incarcerated 411 citizens per 100,000 each year,

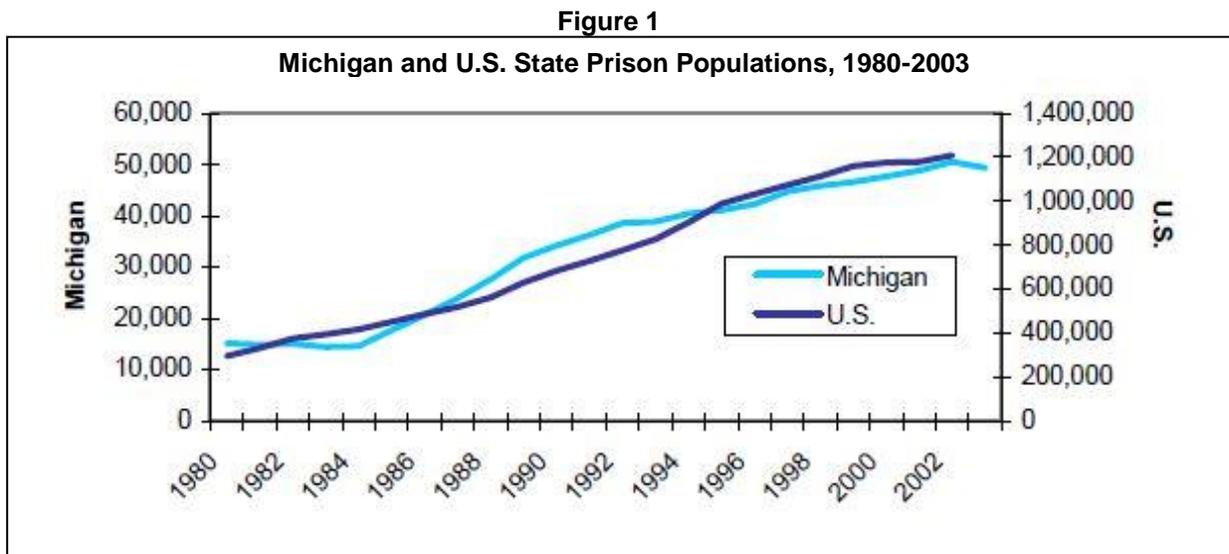
¹ The Citizens Research Council of Michigan, *Growth in Michigan's Corrections System: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, p. 4, 2008.



on average. The State's prison population grew another 24% over this period, from 34,267 inmates to 42,349, and Michigan's incarceration rate ranked the fifth highest in the nation.²

Truth in Sentencing legislation in 1998 eliminated all disciplinary credits by requiring offenders to serve their entire minimum sentence in prison before being considered for parole. The law applied to assaultive crimes committed on or after December 15, 1998, and all other crimes committed on or after December 15, 2000. "Disciplinary time" replaced disciplinary credits, allowing inmates to accumulate 'bad time' for misconduct violations.

Growth in the prison population began to slow by the early 2000s. In 2001, the slowdown in population growth was used to offset lower-than-expected revenues across the State's budget through facility reorganizations, staff reductions, and by postponing the opening of new housing units. By 2003, the prison population declined on a full-year basis for the first time since 1983 to 49,357 inmates. Trends in prison population growth between the 1980s and early 2000s in Michigan generally followed national trends, as shown in [Figure 1](#).



Source: Prisoner Reentry in Michigan Report, October 2004

In the early 2000s, the implementation of the Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI) in select pilot sites and the Michigan Department of Corrections' Five Year Plan to Control Prison Growth represented a formal shift in priorities and approach to criminal justice policy in Michigan. The MPRI emphasized the importance of lowering recidivism rates through successful reintegration of offenders back into their communities. The program offers transitional assistance to help connect offenders with housing, employment, family supports, and other services as they exit correctional facilities and reenter the community.

The MDOC's Five Year Plan used alternative incarceration strategies and community sanctions for low-level offenders and parolee technical violators across the State. The initiative aimed to expand the use of drug courts, improve parole and sentencing guidelines, and reform policies pertaining to mental health and substance abuse throughout the corrections system.

² Firestone, Karen, "Prison Population Comparison". Senate Fiscal Agency, *State Notes*, July/Aug. 1999.



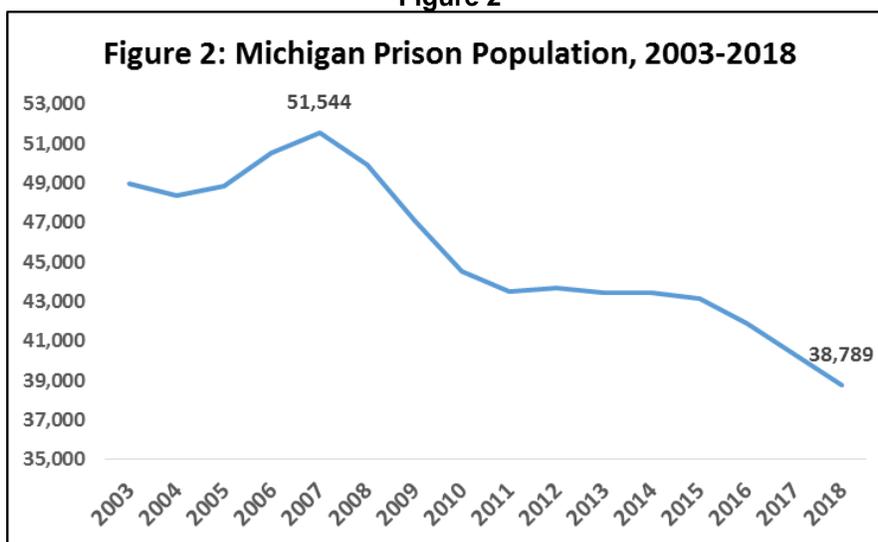
After two consecutive years of decline in the prison population, the number of inmates in State prisons again increased in 2005, and in 2006 it grew by over 2,000 prisoners. By March 2007, the inmate population reached its historic peak of 51,554 prisoners.

After reaching peak levels, the prisoner population began a steady decline that resulted in over 6,000 fewer inmates by 2009. The shrinking prison population, which reached 45,478 at the end of 2009, combined with severe budget constraints resulting from the 2009 economic downturn, led to the closure and consolidation of several correctional facilities throughout Michigan. The Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative was expanded statewide during this time, and parole approval rates increased to 62.5%, and recidivism fell to 30%.

After several years of consistent declines in the inmate population, the first full-year increase since the 2007 peak occurred in 2013 with an overall increase of 690 inmates. In 2014, the inmate population increased by 110 inmates, bringing the total population to 43,704. Prison population growth during this period was driven primarily by fewer moves to parole, more parole technical violations, and new prison admissions.

The steady decreases in the inmate population that began in 2007 continued over the next decade. By 2017, the prison population fell below 40,000 inmates, 12,000 fewer than the peak population. With the exception of two years of modest growth in 2013 and 2014, all other years from the end of 2007 until 2017 saw overall declines in the number of inmates under State supervision. Much of the drop in the inmate population from 2015 to 2018 was driven by fewer felony court dispositions and fewer probation and parole violations. By December 2018, the prison population stood at 38,789, and the recidivism rate fell to 28%.³

Figure 2



Source: Michigan Department of Corrections Monthly Population Data, 2003-2018

The shrinking prison population has allowed the MDOC to consolidate and close over 20 correctional facilities between 2005 and 2018, generating hundreds of millions in General Fund savings. All prison closures and consolidations by fiscal year are described below.

³ Report to the Legislative: Monthly Population Report, Michigan Department of Corrections. Retrieved on 1-1-2019.

Prison Closures and Consolidations by Fiscal Year

FY 2004-05

The Western Wayne Correctional Facility in Plymouth, a minimum-security women's prison, was closed in FY 2004-05 with \$20,472,200 budgeted in General Fund savings. An additional \$2,898,500 in efficiencies were estimated to be saved from the facility's closure. The Huron Valley Correctional Facility, originally constructed as a women's prison but operated as a psychiatric hospital for convicted felons until 2004, was converted back into a women's facility to allow for the closure of Western Wayne Correctional Facility because of an aging structure and environmental problems.

FY 2005-06

The FY 2005-06 budget included \$18,840,700 in General Fund savings from the closure of the privately-operated Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Baldwin. Funding for the facility was included in the budget passed by the Legislature, but later was eliminated by Governor Granholm's veto.

Camp Tuscola in Caro and Camp Sauble in Free Soil were closed under Executive Order 2005-7. The closure of these low-level security facilities resulted in a combined savings of \$3,141,800.

FY 2007-08

The FY 2007-08 budget included \$50,272,200 in General Fund savings through the closure of several correctional facilities. Camp Manistique was closed for savings of \$4,641,300 and a reduction of 47.0 full-time equated positions (FTEs) and 264 beds. The Southern Michigan Correctional Facility and Egeler Reception and Guidance Center Annex, both located in Jackson, closed for a savings of \$36,693,800 and \$9,322,900, respectively. The Southern Michigan Correctional Facility held 1,481 beds and 434.8 FTEs, and the Egeler Reception and Guidance Center Annex held 483 beds and 100.0 FTEs.

FY 2008-09

The FY 2008-09 budget closed the Scott Correctional Facility in Plymouth for \$14,566,700 in General Fund savings and a reduction of 880 beds and 369.7 FTEs. The Scott Correctional Facility closure allowed a consolidation with the Huron Valley Complex, and all female inmates at Scott were paroled or transferred to the Huron Valley Complex. The FY 2008-09 budget also removed remaining funding from the Southern Michigan Correctional Facility line item, which amounted to savings of \$3,064,500 General Fund.

FY 2009-10

The FY 2009-10 budget closed several correctional facilities and prison camps for General Fund savings totaling \$116,898,900. The closure of the remaining prison camps, Cusino, Kitwen, Lehman, Ottawa, and White Lake, eliminated 1,638 beds. Hiawatha, Standish, and Muskegon Correctional Facilities also were closed with a reduction of 3,061 beds, though Muskegon Correctional Facility later reopened in 2012 after housing Pennsylvania inmates under an interstate compact from 2010 to 2012. The 2009-10 facility closures eliminated 1,077.0 FTEs.

The FY 2009-10 budget also reflected \$40,543,800 in General Fund savings from the previous year's closure of the Scott Correctional Facility, Deerfield Correctional Facility, and Camp Branch. Deerfield Correctional Facility and Camp Branch were closed as part of Executive Order 2008-21, which reduced FTEs by 218.4 and 121.9, respectively.



FY 2011-12

The FY 2011-12 budget reflected \$26,090,700 in General Fund savings from the closure of Florence Crane Correctional Facility. The closure eliminated 229.0 FTEs and 1,062 beds.

FY 2012-13

The FY 2012-13 budget included the closure of the Mound Correctional Facility, which eliminated 1,320 beds and 238.0 FTEs for a savings of \$23,427,800 General Fund.

The FY 2012-13 budget also reflected the closure of the Ryan Correctional Facility for repurposing into the Detroit Reentry Center for soon-to-be paroled inmates and parole violators. Consequently, the Muskegon Correctional Facility was reopened to compensate for the loss of beds with the Ryan closure, and the Tuscola County Reentry Center was closed. This facility restructuring resulted in a net increase of \$10,800,000 in General Fund and an additional 84.0 FTEs.

FY 2016-17

After several years without a facility closure, the FY 2016-17 budget included \$26,991,000 in General Fund savings from the closure of the Pugsley Correctional Facility in Kingsley. The Pugsley closure resulted in a reduction of 232.7 FTEs and 1,342 beds.

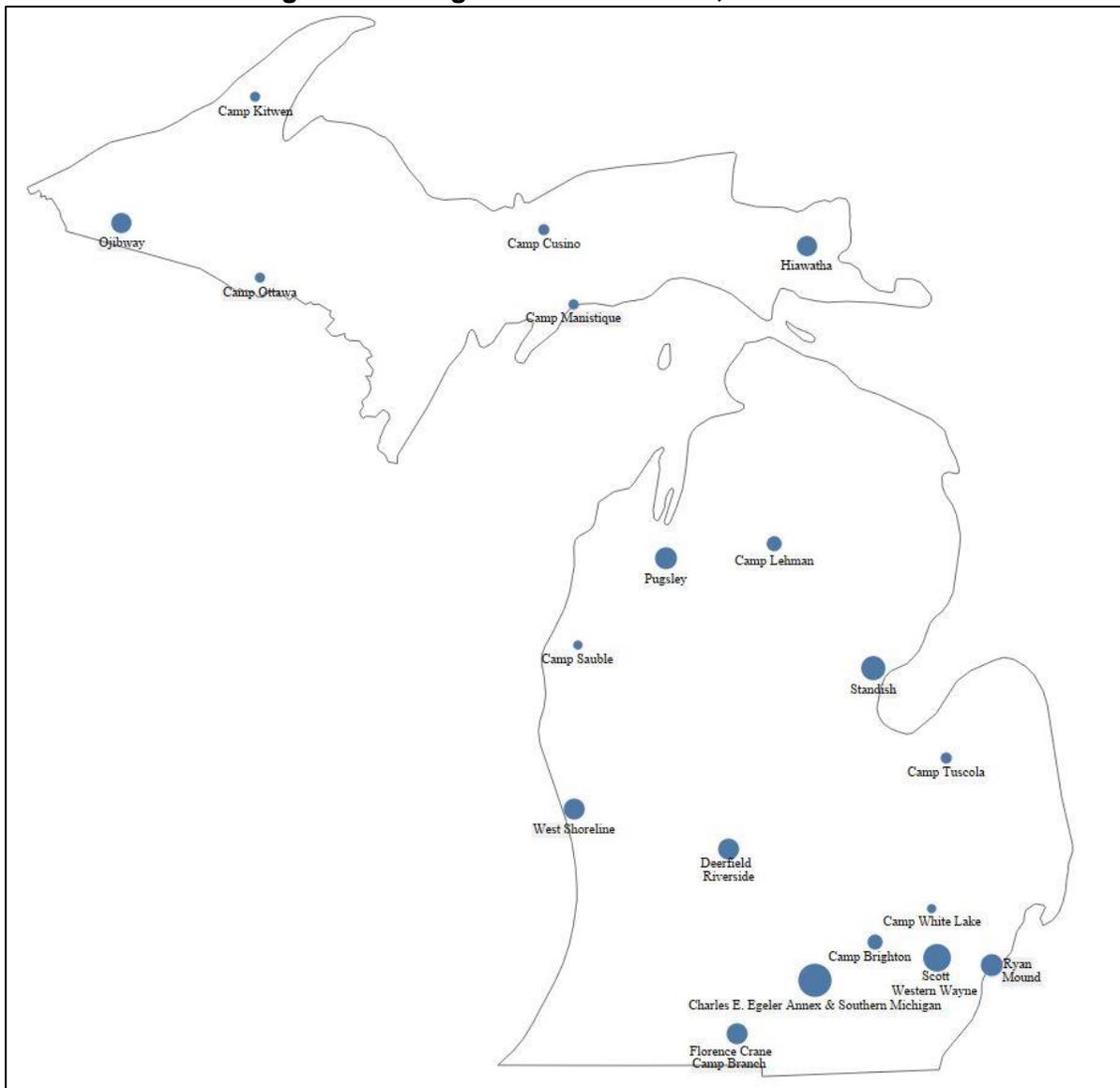
FY 2018-19

The FY 2018-19 budget reflected \$18,821,700 in General Fund savings from the closure of the West Shoreline Correctional Facility and an additional \$19,201,100 in savings from a mid-year closure at another facility, later identified as the Ojibway Correctional Facility in Marenisco. The West Shoreline Facility closure resulted in a reduction 212.7 of FTEs, and the elimination of 1,280 beds. The Ojibway Correctional Facility, closed in December 2018, employed 202.0 FTEs and housed 1,180 inmates.

Future Outlook

Michigan's prison population is expected to continue on a downward trend over the next several years; however, it is anticipated that the rate of decline will slow from rates seen in the past. The MDOC projects a decline of around 500 inmates per year through 2022, reaching a low of 36,776 inmates by December 2022. The possibility for any future prison closures will depend upon when and how the inmate population stabilizes, and if new initiatives or reforms are undertaken that affect the rate of growth in the prison population.

Figure 3: Michigan Prison Closures, 2005 - 2018



Source: Michigan Department of Corrections Statistical Reports, 2002-2016, Initial Appropriations Reports, 2005-2018, Senate Fiscal Agency



Table 1
Michigan Prison Closures, 2005 - 2018

Fiscal Year	Facility	Bed Reduction	FTE Reduction	Budgeted Savings
2004-05	Western Wayne Correctional Facility.....	778	299.2	\$20,472,200
2005-06	Camp Sauble	156	36.0	\$3,141,800
2005-06	Camp Tuscola.....	260	61.0	\$3,141,800
2005-06	Michigan Youth Correctional Facility	450	-	\$18,840,700
2006-07	Camp Brighton.....	404	103.2	-
2007-08	Camp Manistique	264	47.0	\$4,641,300
2007-08	Southern Michigan Correctional Facility	1,481	434.8	\$36,693,800
2007-08	Egeler Reception and Guidance Center Annex....	483	100.0	\$9,322,900
2007-08	Riverside Correctional Facility	(127)	26.1	\$1,794,400
2008-09	Camp Branch	710	121.9	\$6,773,900
2008-09	Deerfield Correctional Facility.....	1,200	218.4	\$14,219,100
2008-09	Scott Correctional Facility	880	369.7	\$19,341,100
2009-10	Camp Cusino	320	60.0	\$6,768,000
2009-10	Camp Kitwen.....	288	56.0	\$6,183,700
2009-10	Camp White Lake	160	42.0	\$4,084,300
2009-10	Hiawatha Correctional Facility	1,120	194.8	\$25,228,400
2009-10	Camp Ottawa	288	51.0	\$5,227,500
2009-10	Standish Maximum Facility	620	281.0	\$33,200,400
2009-10	Camp Lehman	582	110.0	\$11,870,700
2011-12	Florence Crane Correctional Facility	1,062	229.0	\$26,090,700
2012-13	Mound Correctional Facility	1,320	238.0	\$23,427,800
2012-13	Ryan Correctional Facility.....	-	198.0	\$28,807,100
2016-17	Pugsley Correctional Facility	1,342	232.7	\$26,991,000
2018-19	West Shoreline Correctional Facility.....	1,280	212.7	\$18,832,700
2018-19	Ojibway Correctional Facility	1,090	203.0	\$19,201,100