



CITIZENS RESEARCH COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN



The Growth of Michigan Corrections: A 30-year Perspective

***Balancing Our Priorities:
Can We Safely Spend Less on Corrections?***

**The Inn at St Johns
October 8, 2009**

Citizens Research Council of Michigan



Citizens Research Council of Michigan

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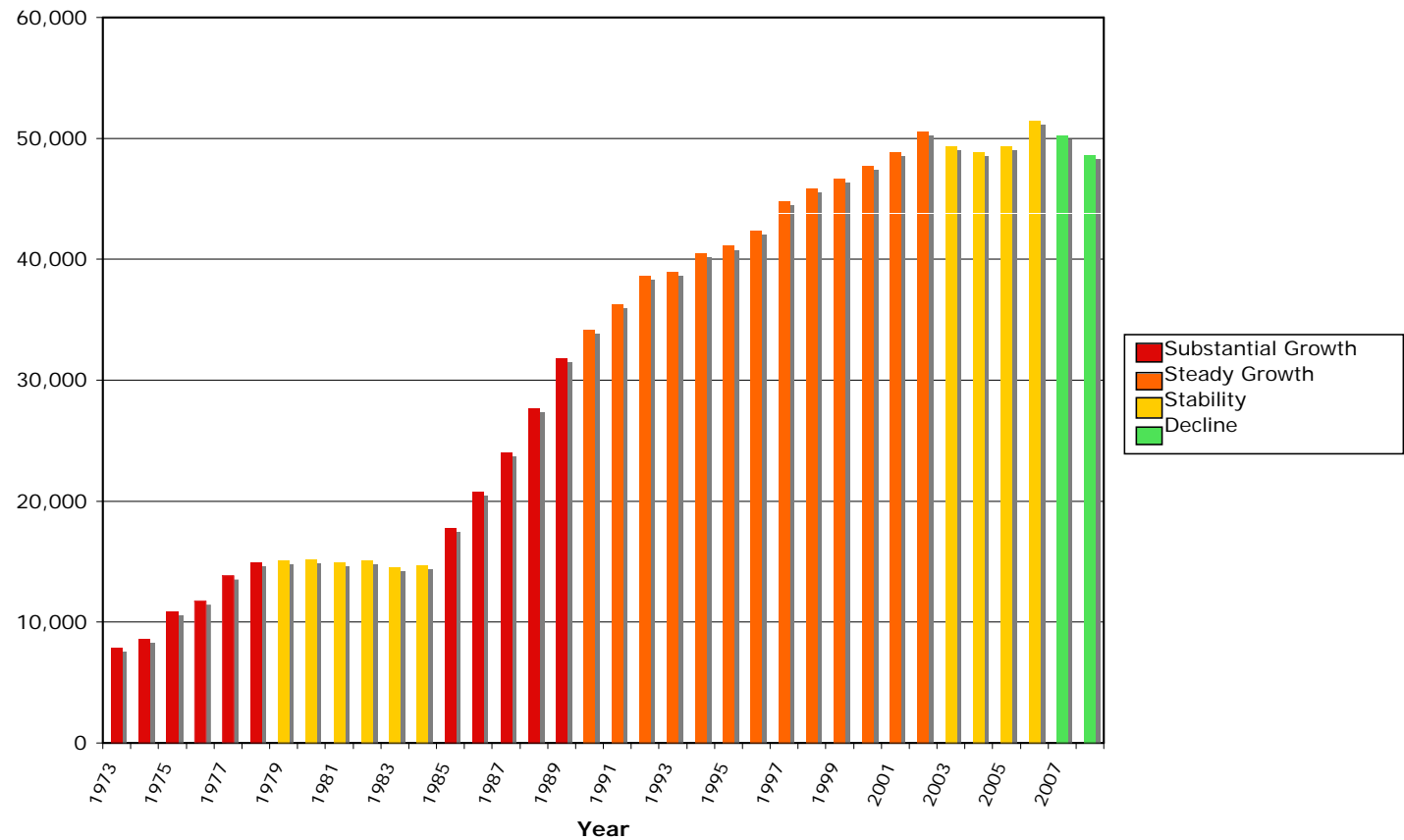
One Theme In Michigan Corrections Since 1973: Growth

- Michigan's prison population has grown by 538 percent in the last 34 years
- Department of Corrections expenditure and workforce sizes have reached record levels
- Michigan is an outlier in national and Great Lakes states corrections comparisons, but gaps are narrowing
- **Update: The growth has slowed.** Increased parole approval has decreased the length of stay and reduced the prison population





Michigan's Prison Population Growth: 1973-2008



Source: Michigan Department of Corrections Statistical Reports, Michigan Department of Corrections 2008 Prison Population Projection Report



Pop Quiz

What is the Primary Driver of Michigan's
Prison Population Growth?

- A. Crime
- B. Corrections policy





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➔ **B. Corrections policy**





Michigan's Prison System as a Bathtub

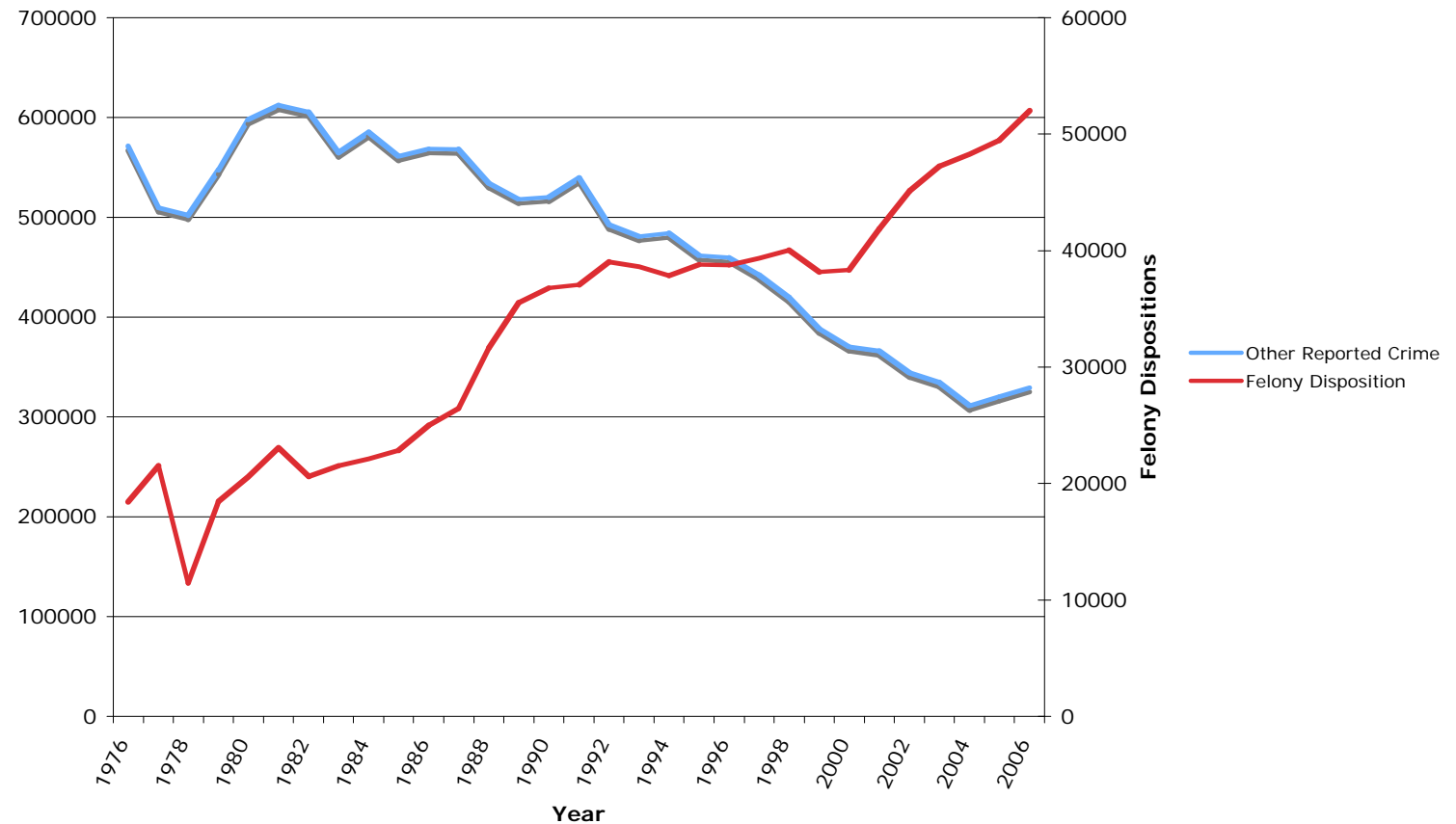
Why is the Tub Filling?

- **The flow in has been relatively constant since 1989**
 - The felony crime rate has increased, but more prisoners are being diverted from prison
- ➔ • **The flow out has decreased substantially**
 - Decreased parole approval and more technical parole violations increased the average prisoner length of stay



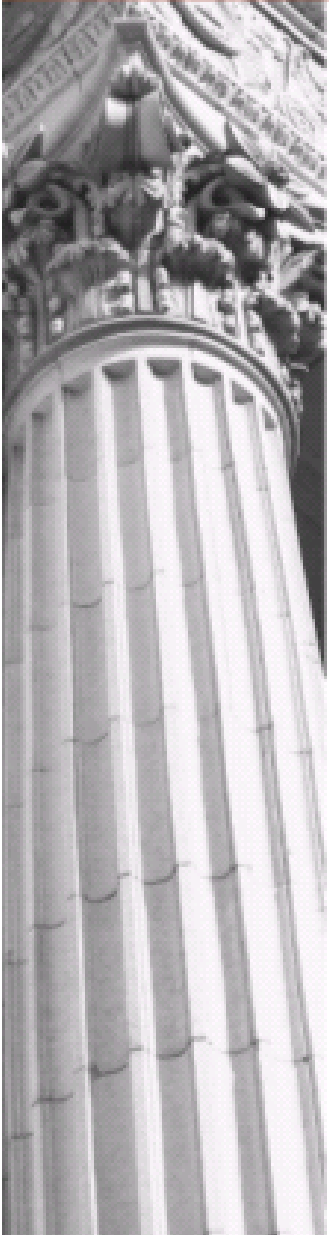


Felony Disposition Status of Michigan's Reported Crimes: 1976-2006

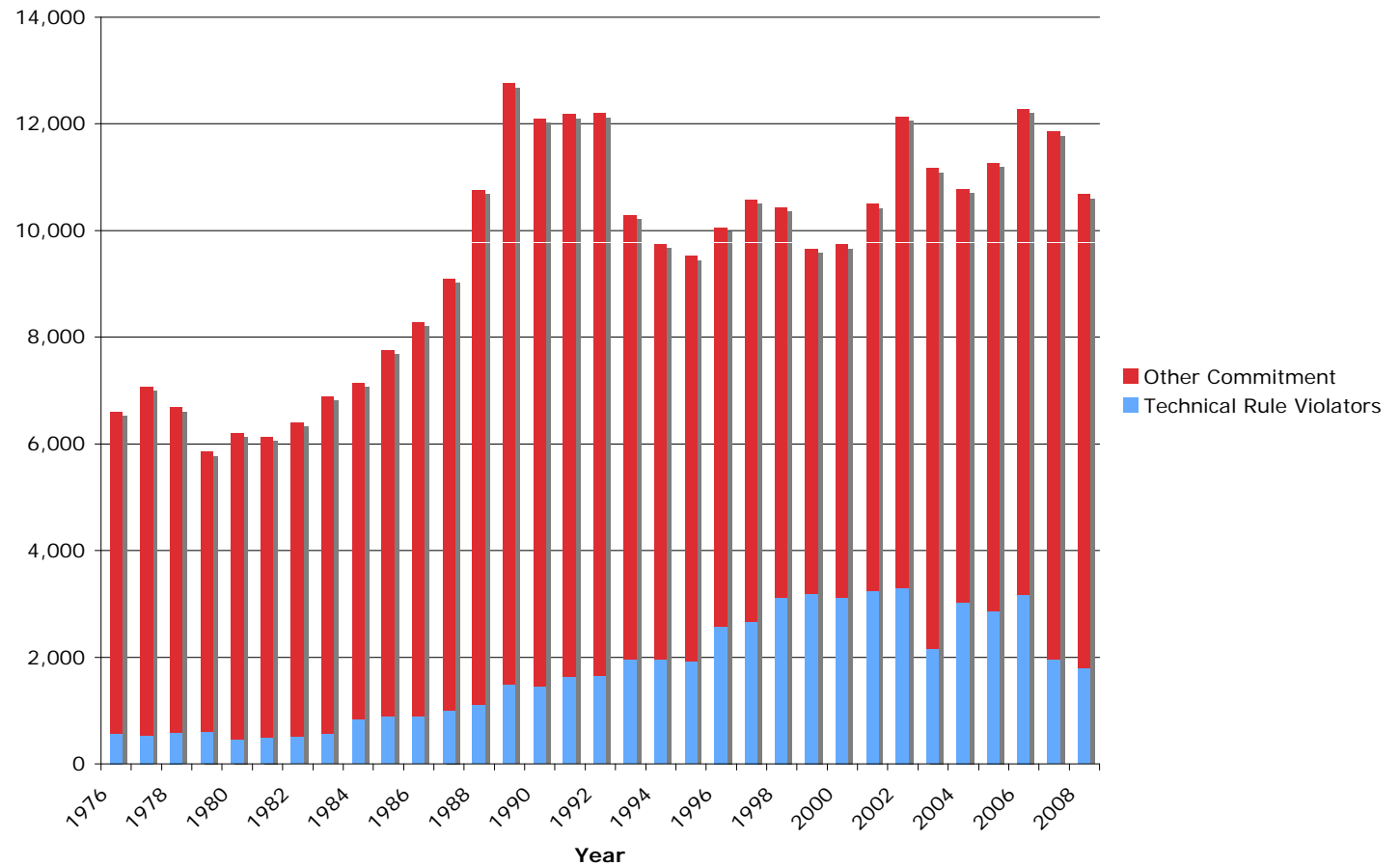


Source: Department of Corrections Statistical Reports, FBI Uniform Crime Reports

(Data Compiled by The Disaster Center Website)



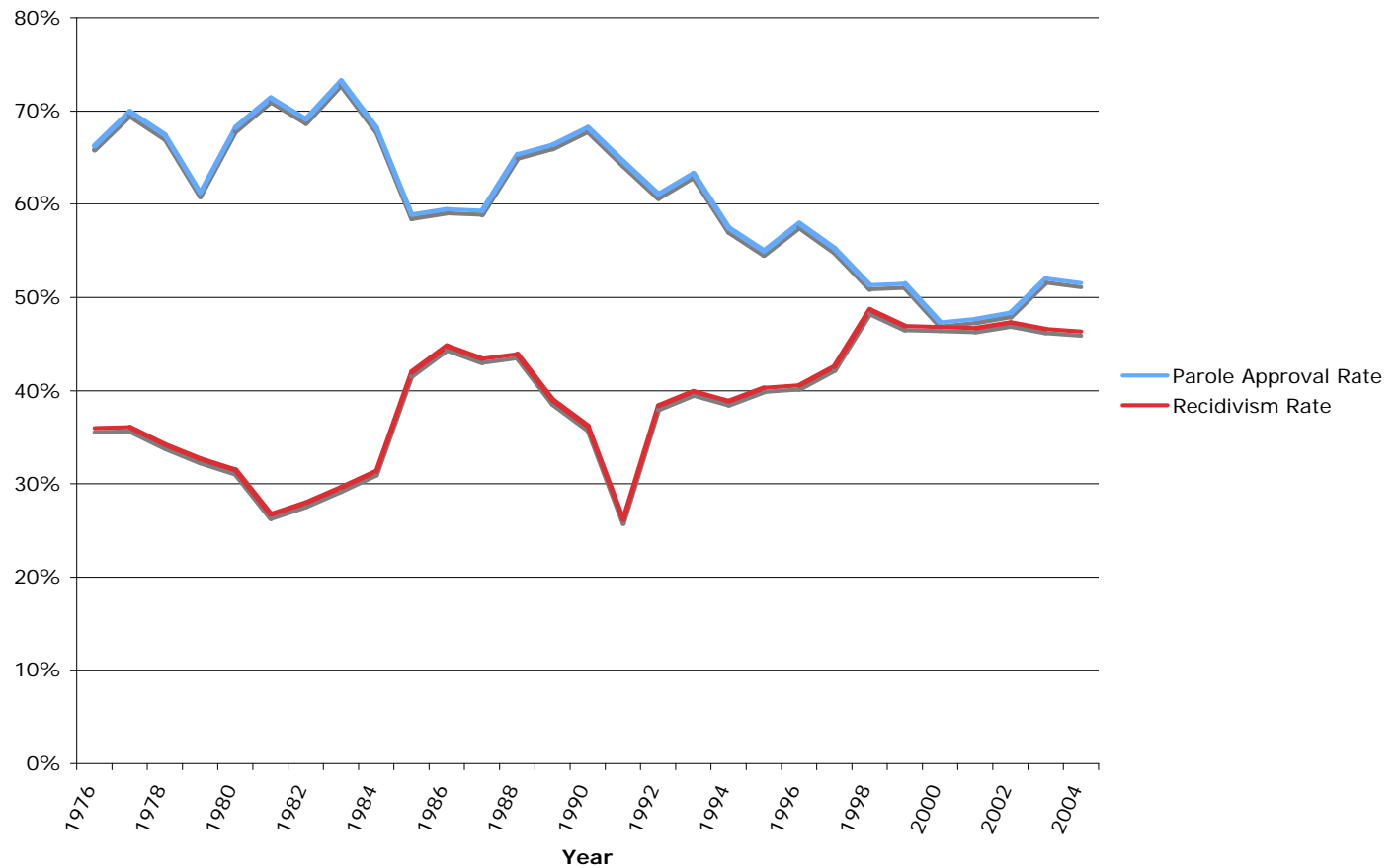
Prison Commitments: 1976-2008



Source: Michigan Department of Corrections Statistical Reports



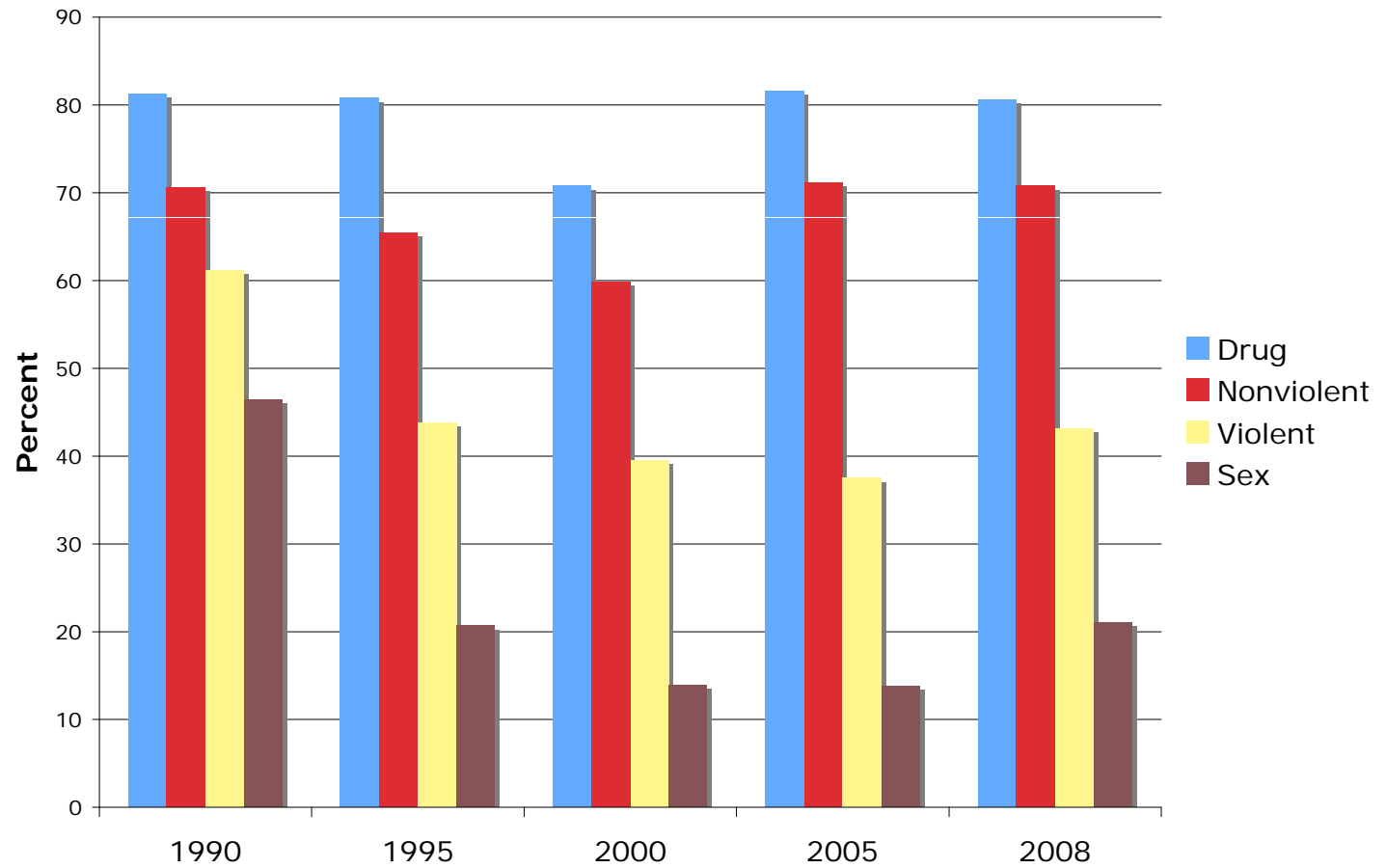
Recidivism and Parole Approval Rates: 1976-2004



Source: Michigan Department of Corrections Statistical Reports, Department of Corrections MPRI Quarterly Status Report July 2007



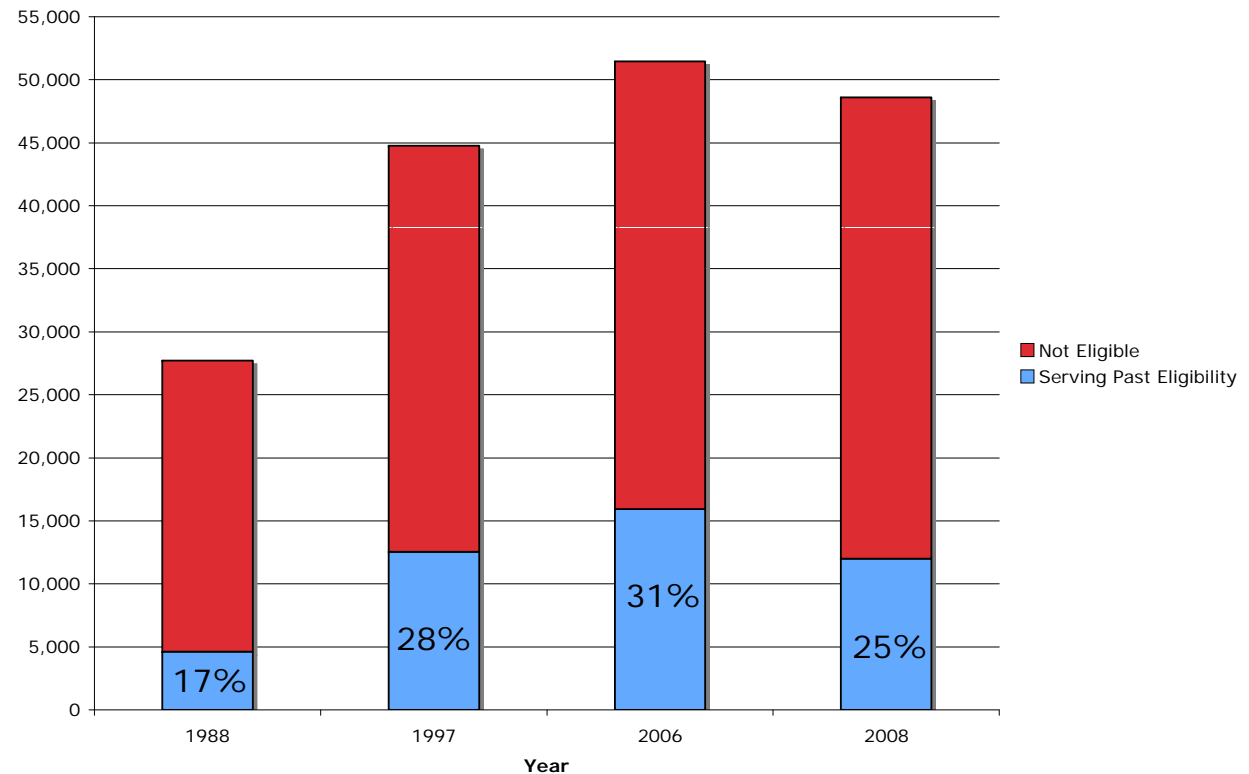
Parole Approval Rates By Offense Type



Source: Michigan Department of Corrections Statistical Reports



Prisoners Serving Past Parole Eligibility*

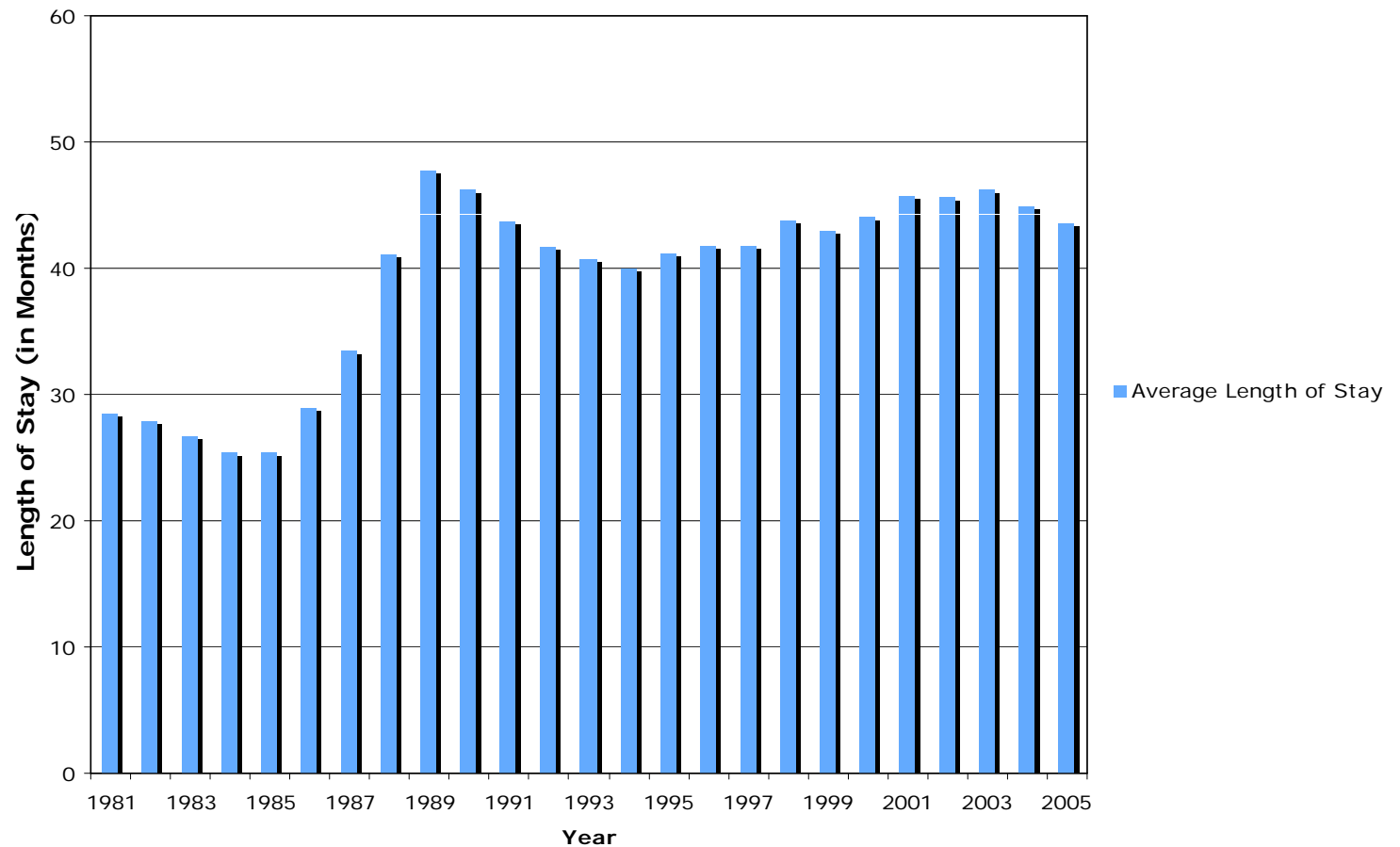


*Prisoners with parolable life sentences are not included in the 'Serving Past Eligibility' category

Source: Michigan Department of Corrections MPRI Quarterly Status Report July 2007, Department of Corrections Research Section May 1995, Department of Corrections Five Years After Report September 1997



Estimated Average Prisoner Length of Stay: 1981-2005



Source: CRC Calculations, U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics Annual Releases

Spreadsheet



How Do Sentencing Guidelines Affect Sentence Length?

- The average minimum sentence of new commitments to prison has **decreased** from 4.1 years in 1986 (pre-legislative guidelines) to 3.4 years in 2008.
- This trend is consistent across all crime categories





Pop Quiz

What was the Primary Driver of Michigan's Prison Population Growth?

- A. More crime led to more people coming to prison**
- B. Sentencing guidelines increased sentence lengths**
- C. Fewer prisoners were paroled and more were brought back as technical parole violators**
- D. More prisoners committed new felonies after being released**





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National and Great Lakes States Comparisons

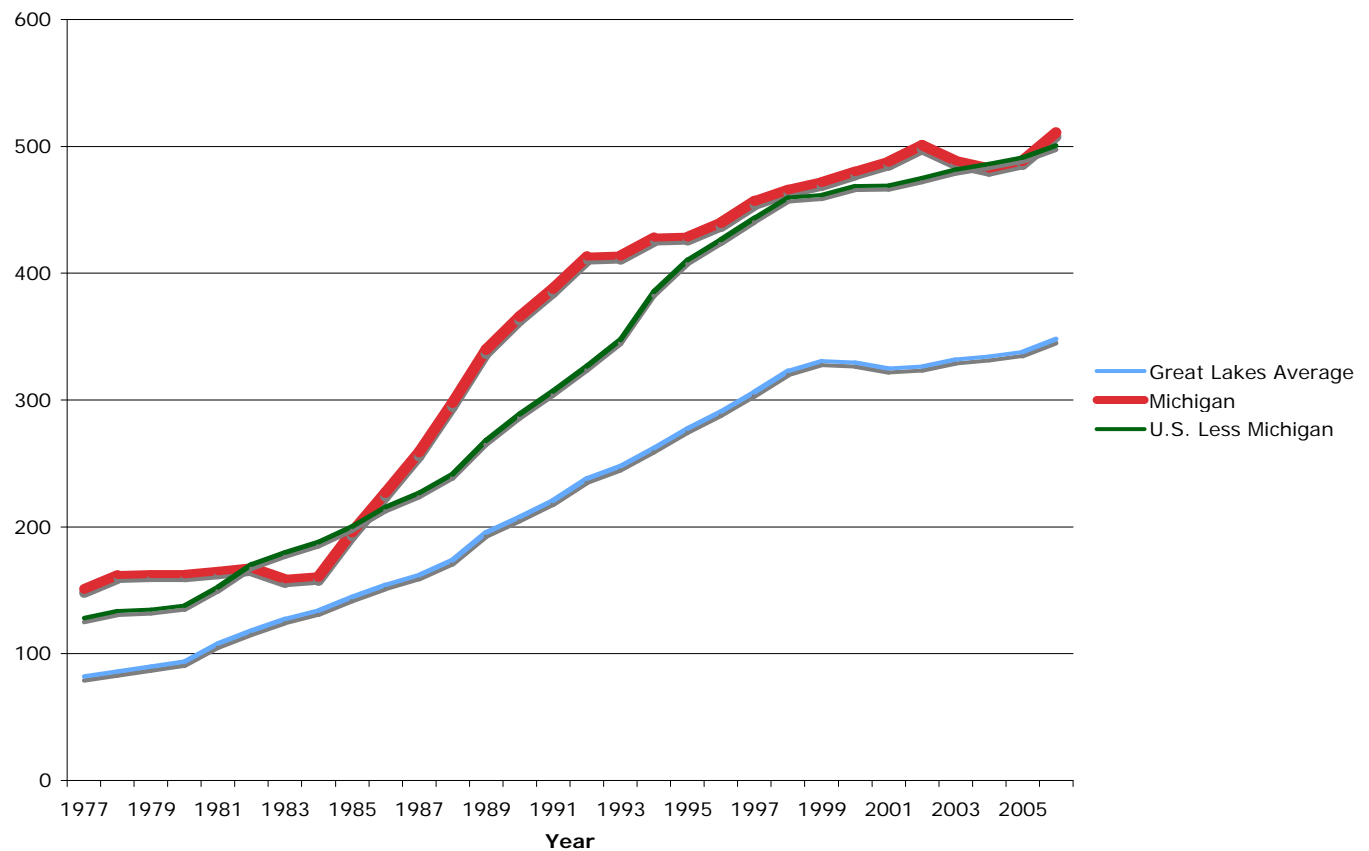
When compared to the U.S. and Great Lakes states averages, Michigan:

- has **higher** incarceration rates
- has **lower** prison admissions rates
- sends **fewer** convicted felons to prison
- has a substantially **longer** average prisoner length of stay
- spends the **largest** percentage of its total state expenditures on Corrections





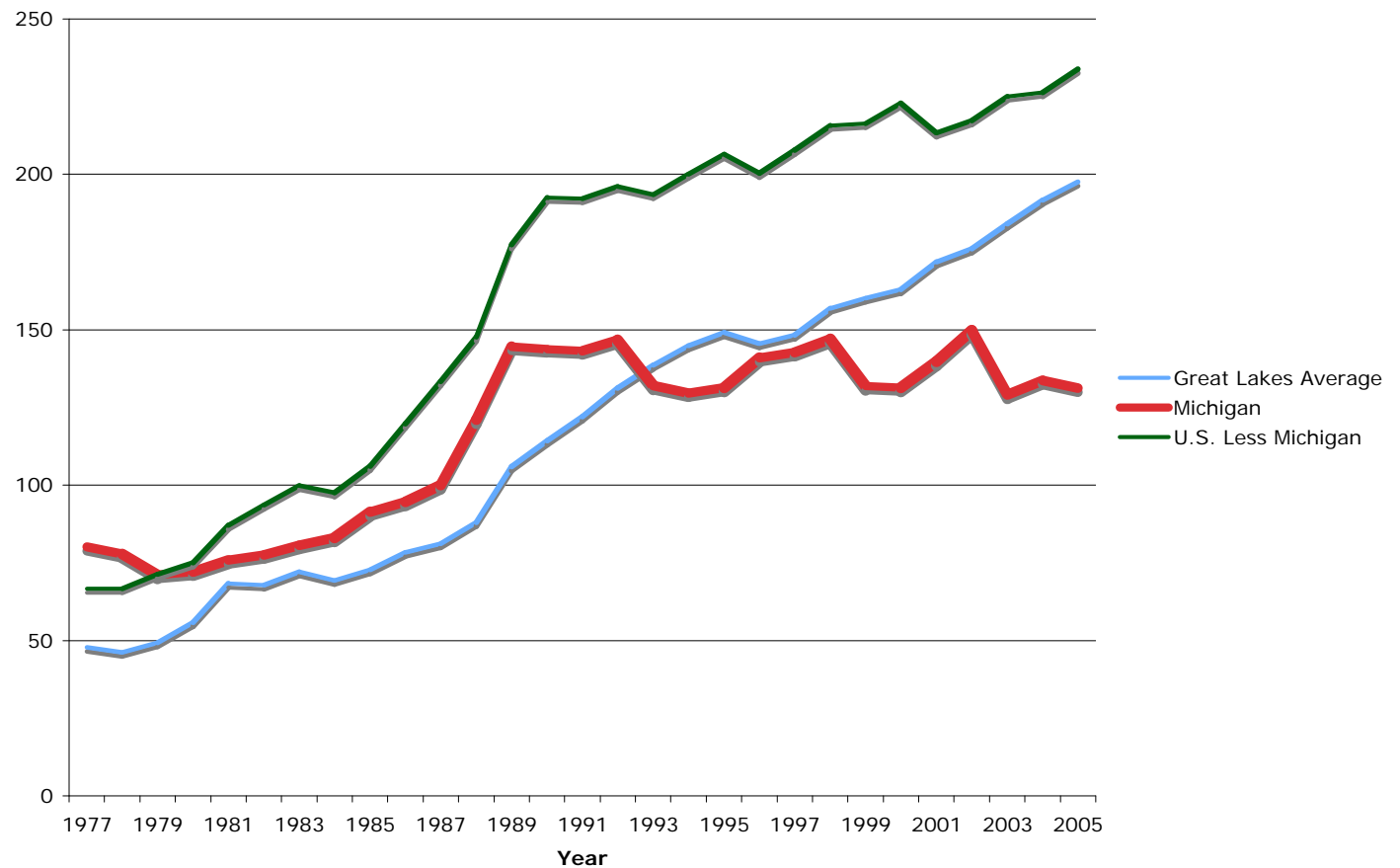
Michigan, U.S., and Great Lakes States Incarceration Rates: 1977-2006



Source: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics



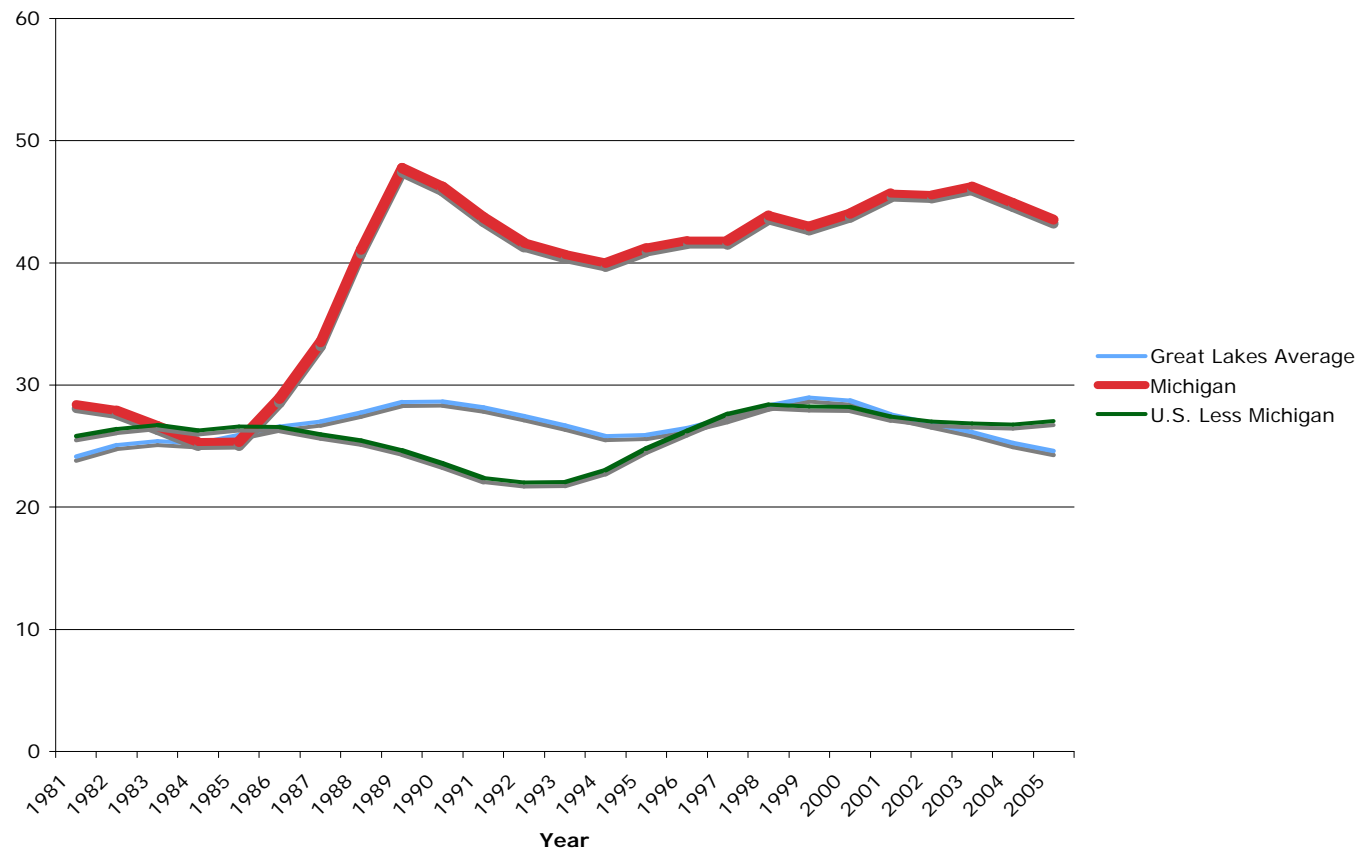
Michigan, U.S., and Great Lakes States Admissions Rates: 1977-2005



Source: CRC Calculations, U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics Annual Admissions



Michigan, U.S., and Great Lakes States Estimated Average Length of Stay: 1981-2005



Source: CRC Calculations, U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics Annual Releases



Michigan, U.S., and Great Lakes States Incarceration and Spending Comparisons 2005

	Incarceration Rate (per 100,000 residents)	Average Corrections Salary	Average Annual Costs Per Prisoner	Total Corrections Spending per Capita	Total Corrections Expenditures as a Percent of Total State Expenditures
U.S.	501	\$41,354	\$23,876	\$143	3.30%
Illinois	351	51,507	21,622	94	2.90%
Indiana	388	33,521	21,531	117	3.40%
Minnesota	180	44,252	29,260	80	1.70%
New York	326	60,713	42,202	151	2.90%
Ohio	400	34,091	23,011	166	3.80%
Pennsylvania	340	45,845	31,029	140	3.40%
Wisconsin	380	41,845	28,932	187	3.30%
Average	338	44,487	28,227	133	3.06%
Michigan	489	53,268	28,740	205	5.10%

*Numbers displayed in red are smaller than Michigan's corresponding number.

Source: Pew Charitable Trusts Public Safety, Public Spending, Forecasting America's Prison Population 2007-2011; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2005; National Association of State Budget Officers, 2006 State Expenditure Report



What if Michigan's Average Prisoner Length of Stay Was One Year Less Each Year From 1990 to 2005?

- There would have been roughly 14,000 **fewer** Michigan prisoners in 2005
- Michigan's 2005 incarceration rate would **drop** from 489 prisoners per 100,000 residents to 351
- At a cost of \$30,000 per prisoner, Michigan's 2005 Corrections expenditures would **decrease** by \$400 million
- There would have been approximately 4,700 **fewer** Corrections employees in 2005 (assuming the prisoners to employee ratio remained the same)



What Does the Future Hold for Michigan Corrections?





Five Years From Now: Is the Tub Emptying?

Michigan is at a crossroads:

- A smaller parole eligible population
→ **At most** 2 more years of post-ERD reductions
- Assuming no change in policy
→ 1,300 **more** prisoners in 5 years
- Implementing CSG parole recommendations
→ as many as 4,000 **fewer** prisoners in 5 years
- Other reform ideas, such as restoring good-time credits, would also reduce the prison population.



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