

# Rethinking Justice in Massachusetts: Public Attitudes Toward Crime and Punishment

A public opinion study  
by the Crime and Justice Institute  
and Doble Research Associates

November 3, 2005

Sponsored by The Boston Foundation

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# Rethinking Justice in Massachusetts

## Public Attitudes Toward Crime and Punishment

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# Summary and Policy Implications

## Introduction

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has followed a national trend in criminal justice for the past two decades that emphasizes more prison sentences and mandatory minimum terms. The result has been a tripling of incarceration rates.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, programs designed to promote rehabilitation, provide access to treatment for substance abuse, and offer a staged reentry to civil society have been substantially cut.

That strategy has raised a major issue: how to reintegrate 20,000 ex-inmates who return to the community each year. This imposes a significant burden on the public because the rate of recidivism is almost 40 percent for ex-offenders currently released from prison.<sup>2</sup> The costs associated with high rates of re-offending are enormous, both in terms of increased crime victims and the costs of the criminal justice system's response to new crimes, including incarceration.<sup>3</sup>

Because public opinion is an important factor in shaping criminal justice policy, the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) partnered with Doble Research Associates to conduct a nonpartisan public opinion study to explore the views of Massachusetts and Boston residents on a range of criminal justice policies. Over the past decade, mounting research has provided major advances in knowledge about how to reduce offenders' likelihood of committing new crimes. The study aimed to test public support for evidence-based practices that criminal justice research shows to be most effective in reducing criminal behavior. Supported by a grant from the Boston Foundation, the study included telephone interviews with 748 randomly sampled Massachusetts adults.

This summary offers a discussion of policy implications based on the results of the public opinion study. It discusses pertinent evidence-based practices, current policy and practice in Massachusetts, and the public's views on sentencing, corrections, and prisoner reintegration. For more details on the findings from the public opinion study, including statewide and Boston results, please see the full report.<sup>4</sup>

## 1. Sentencing

**Evidence-Based Practice:** Research suggests that to reduce recidivism, effective sentencing practices should facilitate treatment and reentry programs, and provide incentives to inmates to change their behavior. In particular, sentencing should also allow for some form of discretionary release that inmates can earn through good behavior and participation in programs determined to reduce their likelihood of committing more crimes. In addition, community-based intermediate sanctions should be employed for low-level offenders who can be managed safely in the community, thus reserving prison beds for offenders who pose a higher threat to public safety.

**Current Policy:** Following a national trend, Massachusetts enacted mandatory minimum sentences for several types of crimes, including drug offenses, in the 1980s. This type of sentencing prohibits discretionary release until the minimum time has been served. Moreover, mandatory minimum sentences limit inmates' ability to take part in pre-release programs.

<sup>1</sup> Between 1980 and 2002, the Massachusetts state prison population alone increased from 2,754 to 9,150. However, the vast majority of offenders are incarcerated and released from county jails. (See Brooks LE, Solomon AL, Keegan S, Kohl R, and Lahue L. [2005]. *Prisoner Reentry in Massachusetts*. Washington DC: Urban Institute.)

<sup>2</sup> Nearly 40% of state prison inmates released in 1999 were reincarcerated within three years of their release. See Hoover, HA. (2005, June). *Recidivism of 1999 Released Department of Correction Inmates*. Massachusetts Department of Correction.

<sup>3</sup> Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice Innovation. (2004). *Final Report*. Massachusetts.

<sup>4</sup> The full research report, survey questionnaire, and survey data are also available at the Crime and Justice Institute website at <http://crjustice.org/cji/cjipublications.html>.

In FY 2004, an estimated 766 people were convicted of drug offenses in Massachusetts. Of these, 44 percent were sentenced to a county jail and 56 percent to the state prison system.<sup>5</sup> Nearly one-third of all court commitments to state prison in 2003 were for drug offenses, and nearly half of these commitments had mandatory minimum sentences.<sup>6</sup>

### The public view

In contrast, state residents overwhelmingly oppose mandatory minimum sentencing and believe that judges should have at least some discretion in sentencing offenders, whether through sentencing guidelines or case-by-case sentencing. Only 9 percent of residents believe mandatory minimum sentences are appropriate for some offenders. For drug crimes, which a majority of residents believe to be the top crime problem, 76 percent of residents want judges to have the latitude to impose mandatory drug treatment rather than a mandatory term of imprisonment.

## 2. Corrections

**Evidence-Based Practice:** Research has found that recidivism can be reduced by addressing risk factors that are associated with criminal behavior. Assessment tools can be used to identify individual offenders' risk factors to help predict their risk for committing future crime and to allow appropriate targeting of interventions to change their criminal behavior.<sup>7</sup> Substance abuse, in particular, is one of the most significant risk factors. Over 80 percent of current inmates have a history of substance abuse.<sup>8,9</sup> Numerous studies show that to have a significant impact on recidivism, drug and alcohol treatment programs designed for offenders need to be provided throughout the correctional system, both in prison and after release. A study

published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1997 demonstrates that for every dollar invested in substance abuse treatment, taxpayers save seven dollars from reductions in crime, victimization, and other costs.<sup>10</sup>

**Current Policy:** Inmate programs accounted for about 3 percent of the Department of Corrections budget in FY2004.<sup>11</sup> And, while rates of incarceration have increased during the past two decades, the availability of correctional programs has declined. Recent cuts in the Department of Correction's budget further decreased programming. Between 2000 and 2003, the number of inmates completing the first phase of residential drug treatment in state prison declined 48 percent.<sup>12</sup> At the local level, correctional policies and programs vary greatly among the county jails, where the vast majority of offenders serve their time.

### The public view

Two-thirds of residents want the state to focus on prevention and rehabilitation rather than longer sentences or more prisons. Massachusetts residents are skeptical of the idea that prisons rehabilitate inmates. In fact, a majority believe that those who have served time are more likely to re-offend as a result. Large majorities of residents support education, job training and substance abuse treatment for inmates. In addition, 69 percent of residents say they are willing to spend more on programs proven to reduce recidivism, even if it means a tax increase.

<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Sentencing Commission. (2005, April). *Survey of Sentencing Practices FY2004*.

<sup>6</sup> Sampson LL. (2004, September). *2003 Court Commitments to The Massachusetts Department of Correction*. Massachusetts Department of Correction.

<sup>7</sup> Andrews DA. (1999). "Assessing Program Elements for Risk Reduction: The Correctional Program Assessment Inventory." In P. Harris, ed., *Research to Results: Effective Community Corrections*. Washington, DC: International Community Corrections Association.

<sup>8</sup> Mumola CJ. (1999). *Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners, 1997*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 12871.

<sup>9</sup> The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Substance Abuse Strategic Plan (May 16, 2005) reports that 81% of the state prison population has a substance abuse disorder.

<sup>10</sup> Gerstein DR, Johnson RA, Larison CL, Harwood HJ, and Fountain D. (1997, January). *Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment for Parents and Welfare Recipients: Outcomes, Costs, and Benefits*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>11</sup> The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Corrections Reform. (2004, June 30).

*Strengthening Public Safety, Increasing Accountability, and Instituting Fiscal Responsibility in the Department of Correction*.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

### 3. Prisoner Reintegration

**Evidence-Based Practice:** Research suggests that gradual reentry back to the community, where inmates move into lower security settings (such as work release) as they prepare to leave prison, helps them to reintegrate into the community, and may also reduce the chances that they will offend again. Studies indicate that correctional resources—supervision and treatment—should be focused on medium and high-risk offenders.<sup>13,14</sup> Moreover, community supervision must be coupled with appropriate treatment to cut recidivism.<sup>15</sup> Finally, numerous studies demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of community-based intermediate sanctions to respond to non-criminal (technical) parole violations. These can achieve the same or lower recidivism rates than incarceration at a substantially lower cost.<sup>16</sup>

**Current Policy:** Today over 80 percent of the current inmate population is restricted by law from participating in pre-release programming, with the vast majority released directly from medium and maximum security facilities.<sup>17</sup> Changes in state sentencing laws and practices in the 1990s significantly reduced the number of offenders who are eligible for parole, contributing to a dramatic decline in the proportion of state prison inmates released to parole—from 80 percent in 1980 to 33 percent in 2003.<sup>18,19</sup> Less than one in five inmates released from maximum security facilities was released with parole supervision and support in 2002.<sup>20</sup>

In 2003, 1,171 individuals had their parole revoked and were returned to prison, 13 percent of the total number of paroles granted that year.<sup>21</sup> Most revocations were for non-criminal violations of parole, such as failing drug tests. One significant issue here is a lack of community-based drug treatment programs, despite the potential savings. Prison costs over \$43,000 per person annually in Massachusetts,<sup>22</sup> while a full six-month regimen of residential treatment costs \$9,900, and a year of outpatient substance abuse treatment services costs \$4,970.<sup>23</sup> In addition to the lack of available drug treatment in the community, other serious gaps include mental health treatment, transitional housing, and employment assistance.

#### The public view

State residents overwhelmingly support the idea of preparing inmates for release by moving them through gradations of less secure confinement, through work-release and halfway houses, with early release on parole reserved for selected, nonviolent prisoners. The vast majority of residents say it is very important to provide mandatory treatment for parolees with a drug problem, as well as help finding work and housing. Three-quarters of residents say that providing such programs to released prisoners saves money by reducing future crime. Over 90 percent of residents want prisoners leaving maximum security facilities to be supervised after release, with a majority wanting to focus on those deemed most likely to commit a new crime. Residents also want to see a range of sanctions applied to ex-inmates who violate the terms of parole. Automatic reincarceration was rejected as an effective strategy, even for failing a drug test.

<sup>13</sup> Gendreau P and Goggin C. (1997). "Correctional Treatment: Accomplishments and Realities." In P. Van Voorhis, M. Braswell, and D. Lester, ed., *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Anderson Publishing.

<sup>14</sup> Andrews DA and Bonta J. (1998). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Anderson Publishing Co.

<sup>15</sup> Petersilia J. (1999). "A Decade of Experimenting with Intermediate Sanctions: What Have We Learned," *Perspectives* (Winter): 42.

<sup>16</sup> Clear T, Harris P, and Baird SC. (1992). "Probationer Violations and Officer Response." *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 20:1-12.

<sup>17</sup> Massachusetts Department of Correction. (2004, January). *Policy and Statutory Restrictions Impact on Inmate Placement*. Concord, MA: Massachusetts Department of Correction.

<sup>18</sup> Lahue L. (2004, August). *Releases from The Massachusetts Department of Correction in 2003*. Massachusetts Department of Correction.

<sup>19</sup> Brooks LE, Solomon AL, Keegan S, Kohl R, and Lahue L. (2005). *Prisoner Reentry in Massachusetts*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

<sup>20</sup> Massachusetts Department of Correction. Unpublished data.

<sup>21</sup> Massachusetts Parole Board. Unpublished data.

<sup>22</sup> Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice Innovation. (2004). *Final Report*. Massachusetts.

<sup>23</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health. (2005, May 16.) *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Substance Abuse Strategic Plan*.

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## Conclusion

This survey indicates substantial gaps between public opinion and current policy. National public opinion research shows that the public's views have evolved since the criminal justice reforms of the past two decades that focused on incarceration and stricter sentencing as the primary tools for fighting crime.<sup>24</sup> Like the rest of the nation, Massachusetts residents now seek a more balanced approach to crime that prioritizes prevention and treatment. Bay State residents are eager for change, and their prescription for criminal justice policies is, for the most part, consistent with evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism. Residents said that rehabilitative efforts save money by keeping people out of prison and offer a prudent investment.

As states grapple with fiscal crises and high rates of recidivism, many states have re-assessed their policies and made system reforms to use resources more effectively to reduce crime. Such reforms include increased use of community-based sanctions, instead of mandatory incarceration for nonviolent offenders, and targeting appropriate treatment to change criminal behavior.<sup>25</sup> As policymakers review criminal justice practices, this survey offers information on how policies and resources can be better aligned with the public's priorities and evidence-based practice to more effectively meet the needs of the Commonwealth.

<sup>24</sup> Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. (2002, January). *The New Politics of Criminal Justice. Summary of Findings*. Washington, DC: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

<sup>25</sup> For example, Louisiana, Indiana, North Dakota, and Connecticut recently abolished mandatory minimum sentences for certain nonviolent offenses, including certain drug crimes (See the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice's report, *Cutting Correctly: New Prison Policies for Times of Fiscal Crisis*.) States such as Oregon, Washington, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Maine have made or are in the process of making system reforms to increase their use of evidence-based practices.

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# 1.

## Background and Introduction

Rates of incarceration have grown dramatically across the country in the past two decades. In the Commonwealth alone, the number of people sent to prison has tripled during that time.<sup>1</sup> That makes prison increasingly important to the rest of civil society because nearly everyone who goes to prison eventually returns to the community. As local residents go to prison and jail in record numbers, they are returning to Massachusetts communities in record numbers — approximately 20,000 ex-inmates a year. Many of these men and women fail to successfully reintegrate into their local communities. The result: nearly 40 percent of state prison inmates released in 1999 were reincarcerated within three years of their release.<sup>2</sup>

Because of that rate of failure, policymakers and community leaders in Massachusetts are wrestling today to find ways to help returning prisoners rejoin their communities, and to reduce the risk that they will again engage in criminal behavior. Potential rewards for an effective strategy are enormous, because of the high cost of recidivism — in human terms, more crime means more crime victims — and because of the financial burden on citizens who must pay the costs of crime and punishment. Incarceration alone costs over \$43,000 per inmate per year in Massachusetts.<sup>3</sup> There is an indirect burden as well. Higher criminal justice costs also mean less public money for other important government programs. One point of comparison makes that clear: in 2004, Massachusetts spent almost as much on prisons and jails as on public higher education, according to the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation.

This nonpartisan, public opinion study was conceived to establish in clear terms how Massachusetts residents view issues of crime and punishment and to identify the kinds of reforms and policies they would support.

This study specifically sought to determine how much public support exists for evidence-based practices that criminal justice research has shown to be most effective in reducing criminal behavior. There is a growing body of research produced over the last decade that has provided major advances in our knowledge about how to reduce an offender's risk of re-offending. The study also sought to identify areas where more public education and dialogue might be beneficial.

### Where we are now

Since the 1980s, the Commonwealth has followed a national trend in crime fighting that focuses on enforcement, increased rates of incarceration, and longer sentences, including mandatory minimum sentences for drug crimes.

While prison populations have expanded in Massachusetts, the availability of programs designed to rehabilitate prisoners has declined. At the same time, changes in sentencing laws and practices have dramatically reduced inmates' eligibility for parole. The result is that more prisoners are being released without significant opportunities to change their attitudes and behaviors, and also without parole supervision and transitional services. Almost three-quarters of prisoners released from high and medium security prisons in 2002 were put directly on the street without parole supervision.<sup>4</sup>

Around the country and in Massachusetts, concern has grown about the issue of prisoner reentry. Several state commissions and policy groups in Massachusetts have studied reentry-related policy issues and developed recommendations for improvements in the current system.<sup>5</sup> Many correctional agencies, including the Massachusetts Department of Correction, the Parole Board, and some local houses of corrections have already undertaken changes within their agencies to strengthen their roles in the reentry system.

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However, the policy issues raised by a quest for an effective re-entry strategy cut across existing criminal justice, education, and human service systems. The public health system, for example, plays an enormous role in providing the treatment services that can reduce individuals' risk to commit crime and help stabilize them in the community. Prisoners have extremely high rates of substance abuse problems,<sup>6</sup> and relatively high rates of mental and physical health issues. Research shows that substance abuse, in particular, is strongly linked to future criminal behavior. Conversely, increased education, stable employment, and housing are associated with successful reintegration and reduced crime.

As the Commonwealth seeks to make prisoner reentry more successful, policymakers must struggle with the need to prioritize and allocate resources to have the greatest impact on crime. How can we make the criminal justice and human service systems more effective in protecting public safety? As policymakers deliberate on these issues and entertain options for systemic reform, the perspective of the public necessarily looms large. How does the public think about these issues and what are their values and priorities? Their attitudes and expectations will have a significant impact on how policy is changed.

## Methodology

The study included 20-minute telephone interviews conducted in early 2005 with 748 randomly sampled Massachusetts adults. The telephone survey sample was comprised of 411 adults statewide and 337 in the City of Boston to allow for comparisons between Boston and the state as a whole; the sample size for Boston also made it possible to analyze the views of minority group members in Boston. Before the survey was conducted, two three-hour focus groups were held with urban and suburban Boston area residents to collect information that was used to shape the telephone questionnaire. The questionnaire was extensively pre-tested before the survey was conducted. The survey asked over 60 questions, many covering overlapping issues, and analysis of the entire series of questions reveals consistent patterns of responses.

The following is a summary of study findings, including public perceptions on: crime in Massachusetts, strategies for fighting crime, sentencing practices, the prison system, prisoner reentry, and post-release supervision. This study was made possible by a grant from the Boston Foundation. The public opinion survey was conducted by the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) and Doble Research Associates.

## 2.

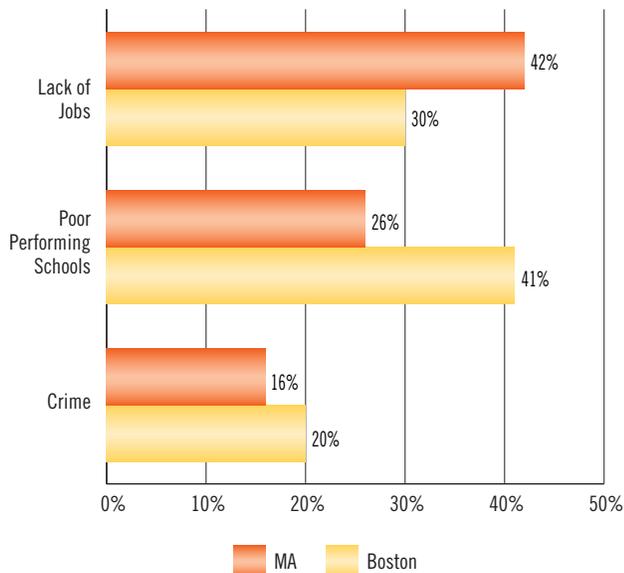
# Perceptions of Crime in Massachusetts

### Crime is not the greatest problem

Massachusetts residents were asked which is the most serious problem facing their community: crime, a lack of jobs, or poorly performing public schools. Only 16 percent of state residents identify crime as the most serious problem. As shown in **Figure 1**, people in Massachusetts identify a lack of jobs as a top concern, followed by poorly performing public schools. In Boston, schools are the highest concern, jobs are ranked second, and crime third. During a Boston-area focus group interview, one woman asked, “What about the poor kids in the inner city that we’re not focusing on?” The question was received with general agreement.

FIGURE 1

### Which of These Is the Most Serious Problem Facing Your Community?\*

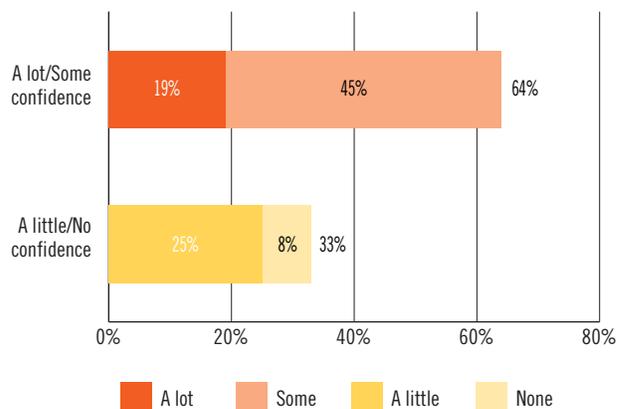


\*9 percent of Massachusetts residents said “Other” and 7 percent said “Don’t Know.” 4 percent of Boston residents said “Other” and 4 percent said “Don’t know.”  
 Question: Which of these three problems do you think is the most serious one facing your community? Would you say it is crime, lack of jobs, or poor performing public schools?

FIGURE 2

### Confidence in Criminal Justice System\*

MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS



\*3 percent of Massachusetts residents answered that they were not sure or did not know.

Question: How much confidence do you have in the criminal justice system as a whole – do you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, a little, or no confidence at all?

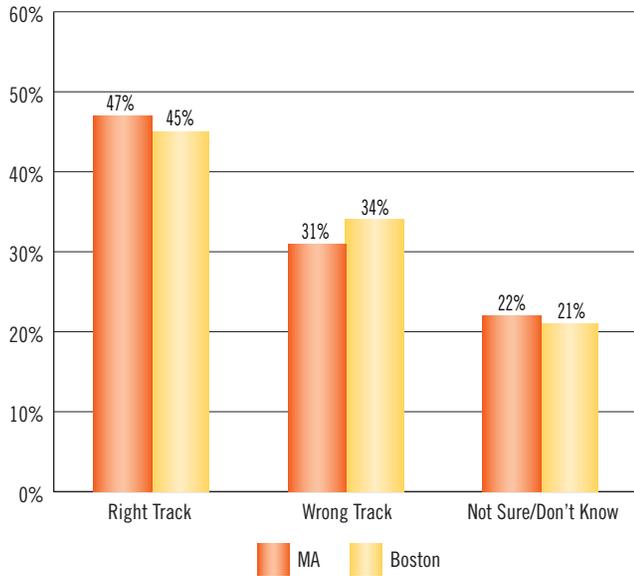
### The criminal justice system earns moderate marks

Most people in Massachusetts and in the City of Boston report having some or a lot of confidence in the criminal justice system. As shown in **Figure 2**, 19 percent of state residents have a lot of confidence, 45 percent have some confidence, 25 percent have a little confidence, and 8 percent have no confidence.<sup>7</sup> The results for Boston residents are nearly identical.

Focus group participants in Greater Boston felt that criminal justice professionals are dedicated and trying to do a good job. “There’s people that really do care,” said one man. A woman from the Boston area said the parole system is “Probably like all our social systems — the people that are doing the work are doing a great job, but their caseloads are too big.”

FIGURE 3

### Approach to Crime in MA is Generally on the Right Track



Question: Which of the following comes closer to your view? Massachusetts' approach to crime is headed in the right direction or Massachusetts' approach to crime is off on the wrong track.

Massachusetts residents are more inclined to say that the state's approach toward crime is on the right track than they are to say it's headed in the wrong direction (47 percent vs. 31 percent), as shown in **Figure 3**.

The views of Bay State residents are more likely to be positive in this regard than the views of Americans in general. In 2002, only 35 percent of Americans said that the country's approach to crime was headed in the right direction, while a majority, 54 percent, said it was on the wrong track—a difference of 23 percentage points compared to Massachusetts.<sup>8</sup> Yet, although many residents think the state's overall approach is headed in the right direction, a majority of Massachusetts and Boston residents strongly favor a number of changes in priorities and in current criminal justice policy, which are detailed later in the report.

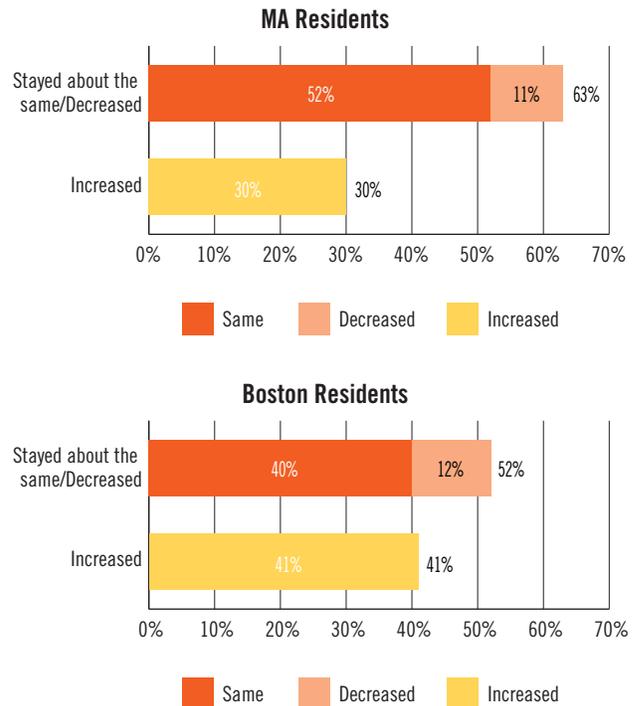
### Many say crime has not increased

As shown in **Figures 4 and 5**, most residents in the state (63 percent) and Boston (52 percent) feel that crime has not increased over the past couple of years. Just over half of the state's residents say crime has stayed about the same, 11 percent feel that crime has decreased, while 30 percent feel that crime has increased. However, 41 percent of Boston residents feel that crime has increased.

In terms of crime's personal impact, about one in six state residents (17 percent) indicates having been a victim of crime in the past three years, or having had a close family member fall victim to crime in that time. More than one in five Massachusetts and Boston residents (22 percent and 21 percent, respectively) report having an immediate family member who has ever been to jail or prison.

FIGURES 4-5

### How is Crime in Your Community?

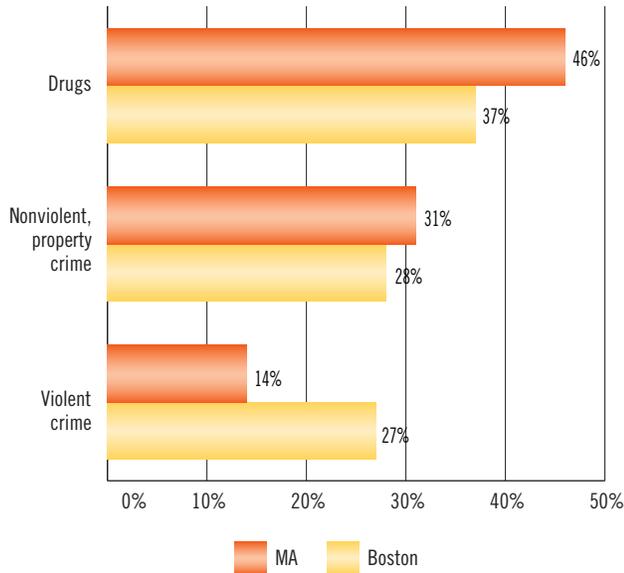


\*7 percent of Massachusetts residents and 7 percent of Boston residents said they were not sure or did not know.

Question: Over the past couple of years, would you say that crime in your community has increased, decreased or stayed about the same?

FIGURE 6

### What is the Number One Crime Problem?\*



\*8 percent of Massachusetts respondents and 8 percent of Boston respondents said they were not sure or did not know.

Question: When you think about crime in your community, which would you say is the biggest problem – violent crime, illegal drugs, or nonviolent, property crime?

Violent crime is an especially serious concern for Boston residents, with 27 percent of City residents identifying it as their number one crime issue. Statewide, only 14 percent of residents hold the same level of concern about violent crime. Members of minority groups in both Boston and the state as a whole are more likely than whites to name violent crime as their top crime problem. It should be noted that the statewide sample of minorities is relatively small.

Overall, Massachusetts and Boston residents both identify illegal drug use as their number one crime concern, followed by nonviolent, property crimes, as shown in **Figure 6**.

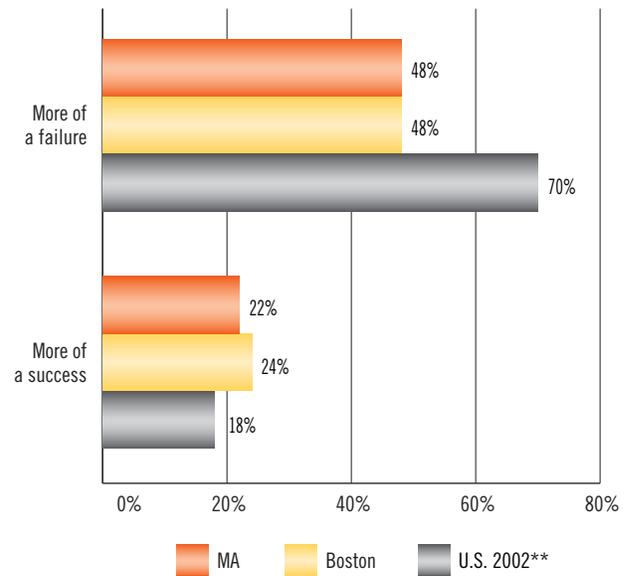
### ‘War on Drugs’ called a failure

While most people in Massachusetts and in Boston say drugs are the number one crime problem, they see the “War on Drugs”<sup>9</sup> as a failure by a margin of about two to one, as shown in **Figure 7**. When asked the same question, the American people as a whole were even more inclined to view the war on drugs as more of a failure than a success (70 percent vs. 18 percent).<sup>10</sup>

The sentiments of Massachusetts residents stem in large part from their views about treatment. In a suburban Boston focus group, for example, a woman said, to general agreement, that drug treatment “is offered too late.” It should start earlier, she continued, “before people are [incarcerated].” Later in the report, we show that residents strongly favor expanding substance abuse treatment offered to prisoners while incarcerated and after release.

FIGURE 7

### Assessment of the War on Drugs\*



\*22 percent of Massachusetts residents and 21 percent of Boston residents said they were not sure, and 8 percent of Massachusetts residents and 7 percent of Boston residents responded some of both; in the national poll, 3 percent responded they did not know and 9 percent responded some of both.

\*\*National results are from a 2002 study by Peter D. Hart Research Associates.

Question: How would you describe the “War on Drugs” in Massachusetts—more of a failure or more of a success?

### 3.

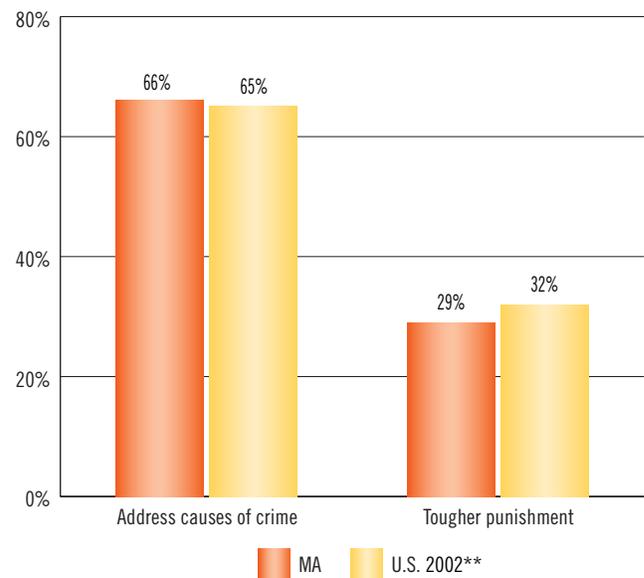
## The Public's Priorities for Fighting Crime

### Focus on the causes

As shown in **Figure 8**, two-thirds of Massachusetts residents want to focus on the underlying causes of crime, with an emphasis on improving job and vocational training, providing family counseling, and increasing neighborhood activity centers for young people. Such methods were perceived more favorably than focusing on stricter punishment. Less than one-third (29 percent) called for a more punitive approach, such as stricter sentencing, capital punishment for more crimes, or fewer paroles. In this regard, state residents' views are nearly identical to national sentiments.<sup>11</sup> Americans as a whole also favor addressing the causes of crime instead of making punishment tougher by a margin of about two to one.

FIGURE 8

### Best Approach to Crime\*



\*5 percent of Massachusetts residents and 3 percent of U.S. residents responded that they were not sure.

\*\*National results are from a 2002 study by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, which asked the same question.

*Question: Which of the following comes closer to your view? A) We need a tougher approach to crime with an emphasis on stricter sentencing, capital punishment for more crimes, and fewer paroles for convicted felons or B) We need a tougher approach to dealing with the causes of crime with an emphasis on improving job and vocational training, providing family counseling, and increasing the number of neighborhood activity centers for young people.*

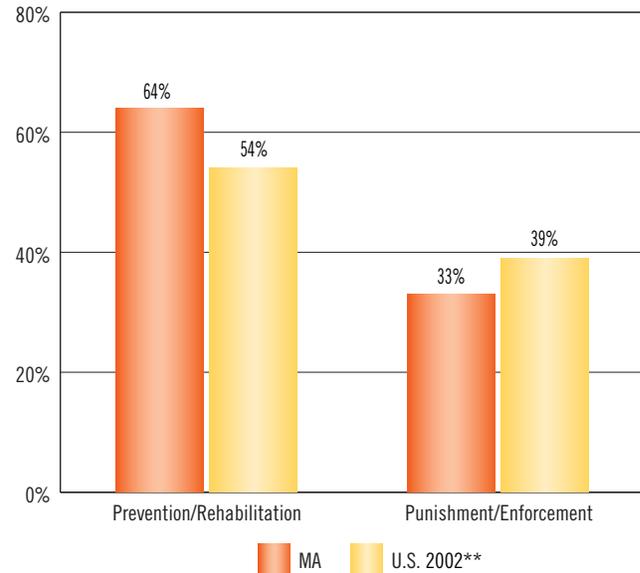
## Focus on prevention and rehabilitation

Nearly two-thirds of Bay State residents (64 percent) want prevention and rehabilitation to be the state's top crime reduction priorities, as opposed to longer sentences or more prisons, as shown in **Figure 9**. Notably, the number holding this view is 10 percentage points greater than in the nation as a whole in 2002.<sup>12</sup> In the focus groups, people had much to say about this issue. "I've had students that by the age of nine you knew [would end up in prison]," a Boston-area school teacher said, adding that these children "never had a chance." This attitude was not greatly influenced by crime victimization. In fact, survey respondents with a recent crime victim in their immediate family were about as likely as non-victims to say the state should focus more on the causes of crime, along with prevention and rehabilitation.

Broad public support for crime prevention is consistent with people's belief that those who break the law are not doomed. Fully three-quarters of Massachusetts residents believe that given the right circumstances, an offender can turn his or her life around and become a productive member of society. In a suburban Boston focus group, one woman said, "Some . . . make a mistake, [even] a bad mistake; [but] they can be rehabilitated."

Massachusetts residents strongly believe in the value of treatment, education, and vocational training. These themes run through many of their attitudes about how to deal with those who break the law.

FIGURE 9  
Top Priority for Dealing with Crime\*



\*3 percent of Massachusetts residents and 7 percent of U.S. residents responded that they did not know.

\*\*National results are from a 2002 study by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, which asked the same question.

Question: Which do you think should be a top priority for dealing with crime? A) Prevention, such as education and youth programs, B) Rehabilitation, such as education and job training for prisoners, C) Punishment, such as longer sentences and more prisons, D) Enforcement, such as putting more police officers on the street.

## 4.

# Attitudes Toward Sentencing

## End mandatory minimum sentencing

Massachusetts residents overwhelmingly oppose mandatory minimum sentencing, with 88 percent against it.<sup>13</sup> Opposition to mandatory minimum sentences was consistent regardless of political party, age, or race. Although the sample is small, the statistically significant results suggest that crime victims are about as likely to oppose mandatory minimum sentencing as are non-victims.

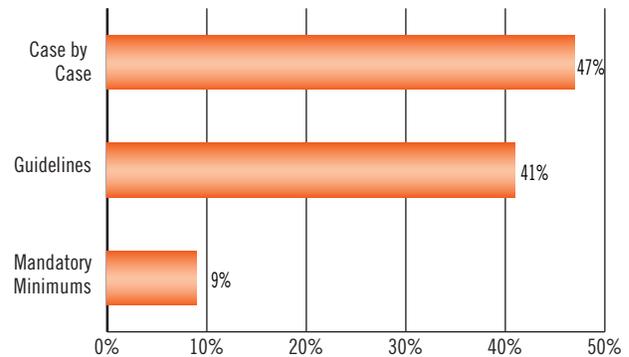
Residents believe that judges should have at least some discretion in sentencing offenders, whether through use of sentencing guidelines (41 percent) or sentencing on a case-by-case basis (47 percent), as shown in **Figure 10**. In a focus group, a man from Boston who favored sentencing guidelines said, “I think that there should be a guideline but it should be more situational . . . rather than mandatory, which I don’t think is fair.”

Residents also oppose mandatory minimum sentencing for drug cases, which they cited as the number one crime problem. As many as 76 percent of residents want judges to have the latitude to impose mandatory drug treatment instead of a mandatory term of imprisonment. For information on evidence-based practices and current sentencing policies in Massachusetts, see the shaded box on the next page.

FIGURE 10

### How to Sentence Convicted Offenders\*

MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS



\*3 percent answered that they were not sure.

Question: Here are three options. Which is the best way for judges to sentence convicted offenders? A) Require judges to sentence some offenders to prison for a minimum period of time or B) Have judges use sentencing guidelines that give them some but not complete discretion or C) Let judges decide the punishment each time on a case-by-case basis.

## Explore sentencing guidelines

The survey results suggest that sentencing guidelines are currently a complex, unfamiliar issue and that many people want more information along with a chance to reflect before reaching a verdict on them. When residents were asked if they favor or oppose guidelines, 61 percent said they are in favor. But when asked to choose between mandatory minimums for some offenders, sentencing guidelines, or case-by-case sentencing, about the same number prefer guidelines and a case-by-case approach. While these results did not vary significantly by political party, those with more education tended to favor guidelines, while those with less education tended to favor case-by-case sentencing — a difference that could reflect greater familiarity with the issue. In both focus groups, where people had time to deliberate about the issue, there was strong support for sentencing guidelines. On balance, however, the results suggest that this is an issue where public opinion is unsettled and in need of “working through.”<sup>14</sup>

## Policy Context for Sentencing

**Evidence-Based Practice:** Sentencing dictates who goes to prison, for how long, and the terms of release. To reduce recidivism, research suggests effective sentencing practices should facilitate treatment and reentry programs, and provide incentives to inmates to change their behavior. In particular, sentencing should also allow for some form of discretionary release that inmates can earn through good behavior and by participating in programs determined to reduce the risk of recidivism. Community-based intermediate sanctions should be employed for low-level offenders who can safely be managed in the community, with prison beds reserved for those offenders who pose a higher threat to public safety.

**Current Policies in Massachusetts:** In the 1980s, Massachusetts enacted mandatory minimum sentences for drug crimes, which remain in force today. This requires judges to sentence offenders to prison or jail for a minimum period of time and precludes consideration for parole until that minimum time has been served. However, judges commonly impose state prison sentences where the minimum

sentence and maximum sentence are essentially the same (one day apart), especially for drug crimes.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, mandatory minimum sentences have the unintended consequence of preventing the possibility of parole supervision.

In FY 2004, approximately 766 people were convicted of mandatory drug offenses in Massachusetts. Of these, 44 percent were sentenced to a county house of correction and 56 percent were sentenced to the state prison system.<sup>16</sup> Nearly one-third (30 percent) of all court commitments to state prison in 2003 were for drug offenses, and nearly half (48 percent) of these commitments had mandatory minimum sentences.<sup>17</sup> A 1997 study found that half of the drug offenders given long mandatory sentences were sentenced for nonviolent offenses.<sup>18, 19</sup>

In the 1990s, the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission drafted sentencing guidelines to make sentences more uniform, while allowing for some judicial discretion. Legislation was filed in 1996 and periodically thereafter, but has not yet been passed by the Massachusetts Legislature.

## 5.

# Attitudes Toward Prisons

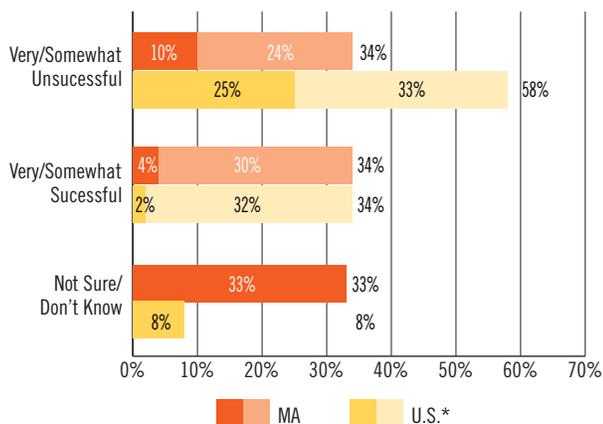
### A missed opportunity

As shown in **Figure 11**, Massachusetts residents are skeptical that prisons rehabilitate, with only about one in three saying they do so successfully. Although people hold a generally negative view of the effect of prison, their sentiments are somewhat less negative than in the nation as a whole, as gauged in 2002 and also shown in **Figure 11**. For information on recent rates of recidivism in Massachusetts, see the shaded box below.

Massachusetts residents say that far from rehabilitating, prison is a breeding ground for crime. A solid majority (58 percent) say released offenders are actually more likely to commit new crimes after serving time because they have been hardened by their experience, while 16 percent feel that inmates are less likely to commit a new crime after release, with 26 percent saying they don't know. Nearly half (48 percent) of all state residents believe that inmates are mostly wasting time in prison, while 12 percent think they are mostly doing useful and productive activities. "They're going

FIGURE 11

### How Successfully Do Prisons Rehabilitate?

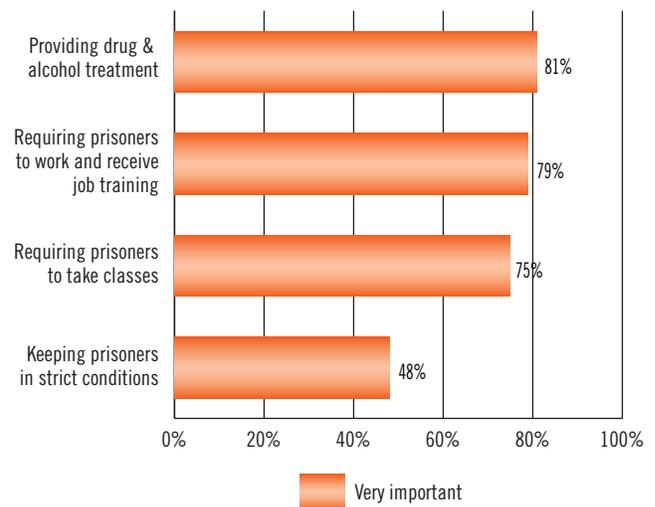


\*National results are from a 2002 study by Peter D. Hart Research Associates.

Question: How successful are Massachusetts prisons at rehabilitating prisoners? Very successful, somewhat successful, somewhat unsuccessful, or very unsuccessful?

FIGURE 12

### What Prison System Should Do



Question: 1) As you may know, three-quarters of all prison inmates have a drug or alcohol problem. How important is it to provide treatment for prisoners with drug or alcohol problems? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all? 2) Requiring prisoners to take classes and get an education so they can find a job when they're released. Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all? 3) Requiring prisoners to work and receive job training so that they have job skills when they are released from prison. Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all? 4) Keeping prisoners in strict conditions so that serving time is tough? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?

in there to learn to come back [to prison]. They're not learning to come out to the public, get a job, become a citizen," said a man in a Boston focus group.

State residents strongly support a variety of measures they feel might help break the cycle of criminal activity. As shown in **Figure 12**, fully 81 percent say it is very important to provide drug and alcohol treatment to prisoners, while 14 percent feel that it is somewhat important. In the focus groups, a suburban Boston man said that drug treatment gives inmates "...the opportunity to actually get better." A large majority of state residents also want to require that prisoners get an education, work, and receive job training.

In the focus groups, people felt that productive activity in combination with treatment, education, and the acquisition of job skills would provide inmates with an opportunity to acquire the tools and attitudes they need to become productive members of society. One man said a key is helping young people who are incarcerated find “a sense of purpose” in their lives. A Boston man said, “When they first get into prison, educate them. Give them that shot. Show them something that they never knew before.” Others expressed particular support for teaching inmates life skills, such as how to budget money. For information on evidence-based practice and current policies for correctional treatment and education in Massachusetts, see the shaded box below.

## Recidivism in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Correction reports that 39 percent of state prison inmates released in 1999 returned to prison within three years of release, with most re-offending within one year of their release.<sup>20</sup> A 2002 study by the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission found that within 12 months, 51 percent of inmates released from the county houses of corrections had a new arrest (arraignment) or technical (noncriminal) violation of parole or probation resulting in incarceration.<sup>21</sup>

## Policy Context for Correctional Treatment and Education

**Evidence-Based Practice:** Research has found that recidivism can be reduced by addressing risk factors that are associated with criminal behavior. Use of a validated assessment tool can help predict offenders’ risk of committing future crimes, and it can identify their individual risk factors—such as substance abuse problems, or a lack of educational and vocational achievement—to allow appropriate targeting of interventions to change their criminal behavior.<sup>22</sup>

Substance abuse, in particular, is one of the most significant risk factors. Over 80 percent of inmates have a history of substance abuse.<sup>23, 24</sup> Numerous studies show that to have a significant impact on recidivism, drug and alcohol treatment programs designed for offenders need to be provided throughout the correctional system, ideally both in prison and after release. For example, a study of the Key-Crest program in Delaware revealed that offenders who did not receive alcohol and drug treatment in prison or the community had a 70 percent re-arrest rate. Treatment in the community following prison resulted in a 50 percent reduction in recidivism, and treatment that began in prison and continued into the community resulted in a 64 percent reduction in recidivism.<sup>25</sup> A study published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1997 further demonstrates that for every dollar invested in substance abuse treatment, taxpayers save seven dollars as a result of reductions in crime, victimization, and other costs.<sup>26</sup>

**Current Policies in Massachusetts:** While rates of incarceration increased in Massachusetts, there was a decline in the number of available treatment, educational, and transitional programs in prison and in the community that can reduce the likelihood that a prisoner will commit new crimes after release. Recent cuts in the Department of Correction’s (DOC) budget further decreased educational, employment, and drug treatment programming, with the number of inmates completing the first phase of residential drug treatment declining 48 percent between 2000 and 2003.<sup>27</sup> Inmate programs accounted for approximately 3 percent of the state prison budget in FY2004.<sup>28</sup> The DOC is currently expanding its capacity to provide substance abuse treatment, employment training, and other programs designed to reduce the risk that offenders will commit new crimes. However, demand still exceeds available supply, with long waiting lists.<sup>29</sup>

Correctional policies and program availability vary greatly among the local houses of correction, where the vast majority of offenders serve their time. In the community, programs designed to meet the needs of released prisoners fall far short of the capacity needed in the areas of substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, transitional housing and employment assistance.

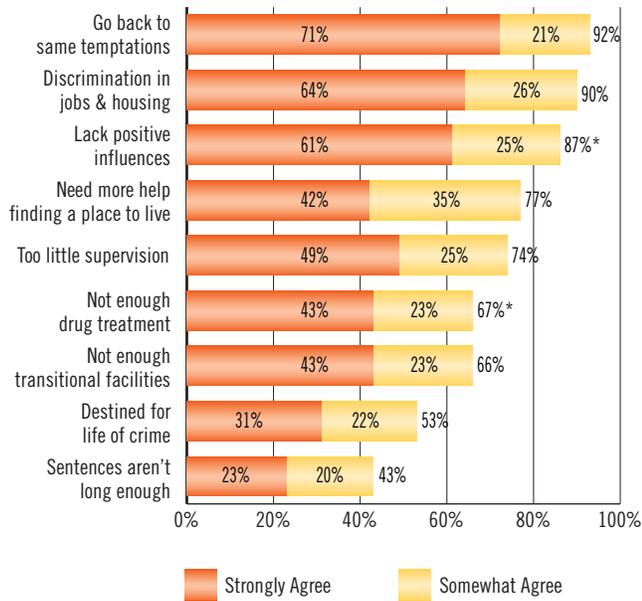
## 6.

# Attitudes Toward Prisoner Reentry to the Community

FIGURE 13

### Why Released Prisoners Commit New Crimes

MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS



\*Percentages may not add up due to rounding.

Question: Here are some arguments about why some released prisoners end up committing new crimes. In your opinion, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each statement. How about (a) There is too little supervision after prisoners are released? . . . etc.

### The roots of recidivism

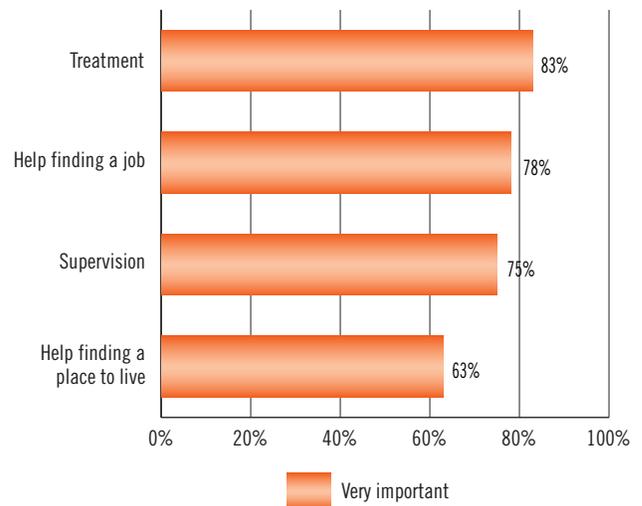
As shown in **Figure 13**, the vast majority of Massachusetts residents believe that men and women leaving prison commit new crimes because they return to old temptations or because they lack positive influences. “If you come back out [and] you go back to the company [you kept before you went in] . . . you will end up doing the same thing,” said a woman in a Boston focus group.

A huge majority of residents also feel that those leaving prison face discrimination in securing employment<sup>30,31</sup> and housing, while substantial majorities say those reentering society lack adequate supervision,

FIGURE 14

### What Offenders on Parole Need

MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS



Question: The fact is that in Massachusetts today, some nonviolent offenders are released early on parole. When nonviolent offenders are released early on parole how important is it to provide each of the following? [For each one, “Is that very important, somewhat important, not very, or not at all important?”] 1) Mandatory treatment for those with a drug problem; 2) Strict supervision where they must see a parole officer once a week; 3) Help finding a job; 4) Help finding a place to live.

drug treatment, and other transitional services, including housing. All of these factors, people feel, contribute to failure and therefore the commission of new crimes and recidivism.

### Early release for some inmates

Seventy-eight percent of Massachusetts residents favor the early release of selected, nonviolent prison inmates. Focus group participants saw early release on parole as an incentive for inmates to attend classes and better themselves while in prison. In marked contrast to their thinking about nonviolent offenders, however, a majority of state residents want violent

offenders (57 percent) and sex offenders (74 percent), in particular, to serve their entire sentence and not to be eligible for early release.

## Provide treatment, supervision and support

Residents do not want parolees to be released into the community without support and supervision. As shown in **Figure 14**, the vast majority say it is very important to provide: mandatory treatment for those with a drug problem (83 percent); strict supervision (75 percent); and help finding both a job (78 percent) and housing (63 percent). Ninety percent of state residents also favor providing released prisoners with job training and placement. In the focus groups, residents expressed concern that supervision efforts are limited by sheer numbers. “The people who are doing the work [are] overworked so they can’t put the attention

on what they need to do. Therefore, the criminals act up more and go back to prison,” said a suburban Boston woman. For information on evidence-based practice and current policies for parole and post-release supervision, see the shaded box below.

## Increase supervision

Massachusetts residents generally like the idea of preparing inmates for release by moving them through a sequence of less secure confinement, from lower security levels in prison, to work-release and halfway houses. Eighty percent of residents feel this approach would be very or fairly effective in substantially reducing crime. This finding is consistent with a 1997 survey of Massachusetts residents.<sup>41</sup> (For information on evidence-based practice and current Massachusetts practice in this area, see the shaded box on the following page.) In addition, 91 percent of residents feel that

### Policy Context for Parole and Post-Release Supervision

**Evidence-Based Practice:** Research shows that correctional resources — supervision and treatment — should be focused on medium and high-risk offenders. Focusing supervision and treatment resources on low-risk offenders can increase their criminal behavior by drawing them deeper into the criminal justice system where they associate with more serious offenders.<sup>32, 33</sup> Research also shows that supervision and sanctions alone do not reduce crime. Supervision must be combined with appropriate treatment interventions to cut recidivism.<sup>34</sup>

**Current Policies in Massachusetts:** In Massachusetts, prisoners may be supervised after release if they are granted early release to parole supervision or have a sentence that includes a period of post-release probation supervision after their term of incarceration. In the 1990s, changes in Massachusetts sentencing laws and practices significantly reduced the number of offenders who were eligible for parole. This inevitably contributed to a decline in the proportion of state prison inmates released to

parole supervision, from 80 percent in 1980 to 33 percent in 2003.<sup>35, 36</sup> Fewer than one in five (17 percent) inmates released from maximum security facilities were released with parole supervision in 2002.<sup>37</sup> The remaining prisoners either completed their sentences and were released without supervision or were serving additional post-release probation sentences. In a study of prisoners released from July through December 2002, the Massachusetts Department of Correction found that approximately 26 percent of state inmates who were not released on parole were released on probation supervision, and 10 percent had both.<sup>38, 39, 40</sup>

Judges have tried to offset this decline in parole supervision by imposing sentences that include a period of probation supervision after the incarceration term. Nonetheless, large numbers of offenders — especially those released from high security prison facilities — do not receive supervision, treatment, or transitional support after they are released.

## Policy Context Regarding Gradual Release from Prison

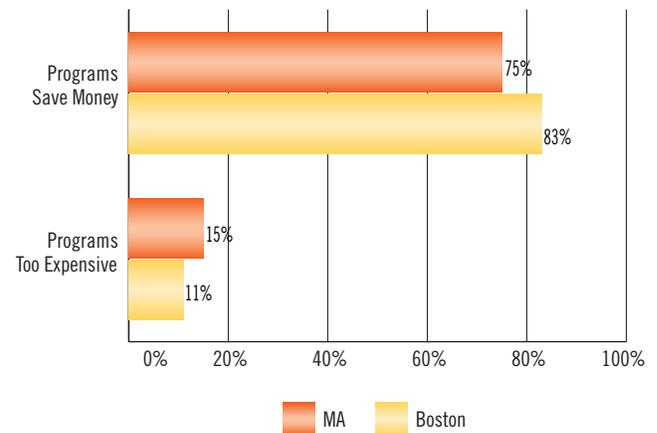
**Evidence-Based Practice:** Research suggests that gradual reentry back to the community, having inmates move into less restrictive settings as they approach release, makes it easier for them to reintegrate into the community and may reduce the chances they will offend again after release. The American Correctional Association recommends housing inmates at the lowest security level consistent with public safety.<sup>42</sup>

**Current Policies in Massachusetts:** Nearly 75 percent of state prison inmates released in 2003 came from medium and maximum security facilities, with 21 percent released from lower security facilities, and 5 percent from county or other state or federal facilities.<sup>43</sup> The Massachusetts Department of Correction is currently in the process of reviewing how they place offenders in appropriate security levels. However, over 80 percent of the inmate population is restricted by law from participating in pre-release programming (i.e., work release, education release, and pre-release centers), which limits the ability to gradually prepare inmates for release.<sup>44</sup>

maximum security prisoners should be supervised after release, even after they've served their entire sentence. Finally, a majority of these residents (55 percent) favor focusing post-release supervision on those released prisoners most likely to commit a new crime rather than supervising all former prisoners.

FIGURE 15

## Cost Effectiveness of Education, Job Training and Drug Treatment for Released Prisoners\*



\*10 percent of Massachusetts residents and 6 percent of Boston residents responded that they were not sure or did not know.

Question: Here are two statements about programs that offer released prisoners education, job training, and drug treatment. Which comes closer to your own view? A) Such programs are probably too expensive or B) Such programs probably save money by keeping people out of prison.

## Spend more on what works

Most state residents (64 percent) say that Massachusetts should be doing a lot more to reduce the chance that released offenders will commit new crimes. Only 7 percent feel that the state is doing enough, while 28 percent do not know. As shown in **Figure 15**, state residents see education, job training, and drug treatment for released prisoners as cost effective, with 75 percent saying these programs save money by preventing new crimes. Boston residents feel even more strongly that these programs are cost effective. Moreover, large majorities of state and Boston residents (69 percent and 77 percent, respectively) say they would be willing to increase spending on programs that have been proven to reduce the chances that released prisoners will commit new crimes—even if that means a tax increase, as shown in **Figure 16**.

## Fit the sanction to the violation

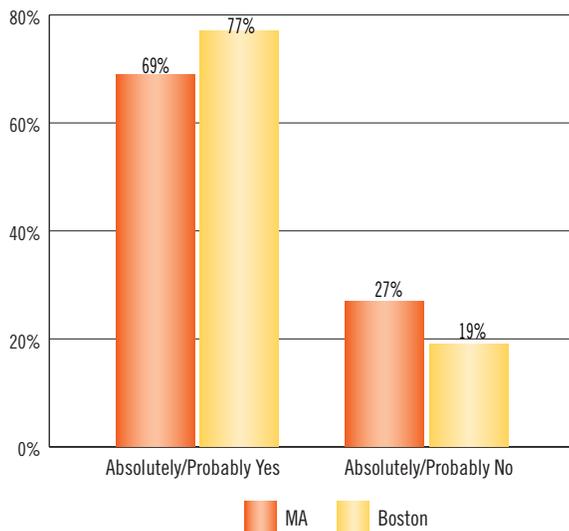
Massachusetts residents want to penalize individuals who violate the conditions of their parole by using a range of sanctions that are proportional to the violation, but they do not support automatic reincarceration. These results indicate the desire to offer those on parole a reasonable chance to turn their lives around rather than seeing them as “lost causes.” For example, 64 percent of residents favor warning offenders who miss a scheduled meeting with their parole officer but have a good excuse. Another 24 percent favor closer supervision by the parole officer. And only 2 percent support sending that parolee back to prison. “If the person was late the first time, [should we] throw him back in jail? That’s ridiculous,” said a man from a Boston-area suburb. Parolees who miss a meeting without a good excuse deserve a stepped-up sanction,

according to state residents, with 43 percent favoring closer supervision and 24 percent calling for house arrest; however, people were still reluctant to reincarcerate, with about 90 percent preferring a lower-level sanction. In the focus group, residents talked about how a parole violator’s punishment should fit the violation.

State residents’ desire for graduated sanctions also extends to drug violations and crimes such as shoplifting. As shown in **Figure 17**, if a parolee fails a drug test for the first time, 81 percent want that person to receive a community sanction, such as closer supervision (30 percent), halfway house (21 percent), house arrest (20 percent) or a warning (11 percent), while only 17 percent support reincarceration.

FIGURE 16

### Spend More on Successful Programs, even if a Tax Increase\*



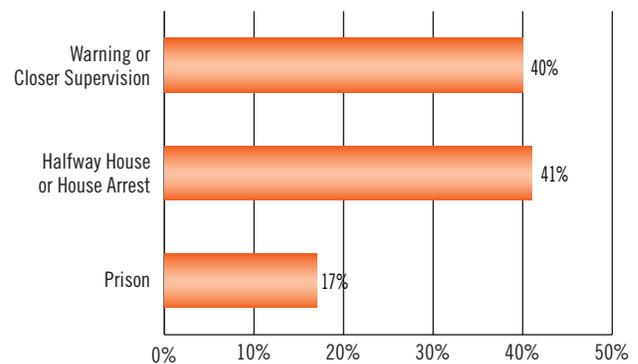
\*4 percent of Massachusetts and Boston residents responded that they were not sure or did not know.

Question: Should we increase spending on programs proven to reduce the chances that released prisoners will commit new crimes, even if this means a tax increase? Would you say absolutely yes, probably yes, probably no, absolutely no?

FIGURE 17

### What Should Happen if Parolees Fail a Drug Test?\*

MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS



\*2 percent responded that they were not sure.

Question: Now suppose that an offender on parole fails a routine drug test. It’s the first time he failed since being released. In addition to mandatory drug treatment, should he: receive a warning; be more closely supervised by his parole officer; be put under house arrest with electronic monitoring; be put in a halfway house; be sent back to prison?

## Policy Context Regarding Parole Violations

**Evidence-Based Practice:** Intermediate community-based sanctions, such as increased reporting, community service, and house arrest are effective ways to respond to non-criminal or technical violations of the conditions of parole. Numerous studies demonstrate how cost-effective community-based sanctions are when compared to prison, achieving the same or lower recidivism rates at substantially lower cost.<sup>45</sup> Sanction and revocation policies can provide graduated responses to violations that are proportional to the risk and seriousness of the noncompliant behavior.

**Current Policies in Massachusetts:** In 2003, 1,171 men and women had their parole revoked and were returned to incarceration, 13 percent of the total number of paroles granted that year.<sup>46</sup> For the first two months of FY2006, more than twice as many revocations were for technical violations, such as failing a drug test, as opposed to a new arrest.<sup>47</sup> In an analysis of inmates released on parole from the Hampden County Correctional Center (HCCC) in 2003 (n = 498), 25 percent had

their parole revoked and were returned to prison within one year of release. Fully 88 percent of these revocations were for technical violations. A majority of these revocations (57 percent) were for failed drug tests. Nearly 90 percent of inmates released on parole from HCCC in 2003 were assessed to have significant substance abuse problems, and a large proportion (31 percent) was originally incarcerated for nonviolent drug offenses.<sup>48</sup>

The Parole Board is in the process of developing statewide guidelines for graduated responses to parole violations to achieve a more consistent response to violations and to better apply intermediate sanctions. However, one significant and persistent challenge is a lack of resources, in particular, a lack of available drug treatment.<sup>49</sup> As stated earlier, a year in prison costs over \$43,000 for one person.<sup>50</sup> In contrast, six-months of residential substance abuse treatment costs \$9,900, and a year of outpatient substance abuse treatment services costs \$4,970.<sup>51</sup>

Even when asked about parolees who fail a drug test for the second time, less than a majority of residents (48 percent) support reincarceration; most favored a more restrictive community sanction, such as a halfway house (23 percent), house arrest (20 percent), or closer supervision (6 percent). Finally, nearly 60 percent of state residents want a parolee caught shoplifting \$100 worth of merchandise to serve a community sanction, such as house arrest (25 percent), closer supervision (17 percent), halfway house (12 percent), or warning (5 percent), while 38 percent support reincarceration. For more information on evidence-based practice and parole violations in Massachusetts, see the box above.

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## 7.

# Differences in Views Between Boston and Massachusetts Residents

Crime is a more pressing issue in the City of Boston than in the state as a whole. City residents are more inclined to say that crime has increased over the past couple of years, and that violent crime is the biggest crime problem facing their community. They are also more likely than state residents to have a family member who was a crime victim within the past three years (26 percent vs. 17 percent).

Despite those numbers, Boston residents are even more supportive of certain policy changes than are people in the state as a whole. Boston residents are slightly more inclined to say the state should focus on the causes of crime, such as improving job and vocational training, rather than emphasizing stricter sentencing, capital punishment, and fewer paroles (78 percent in Boston compared to 66 percent in the state as a whole). They are also a bit more likely to favor early release for nonviolent offenders (85 percent in Boston compared to 78 percent in the state). Similarly, Boston residents feel a little more strongly than state residents that education, job training, and treatment for released prisoners saves money by keeping people out of prison (83 percent to 75 percent). Boston residents are also more likely than state residents to say it is very important to help released offenders find a place to live (73 percent to 63 percent).

### Views of Minority Group Members

While the views of minority group members living in Boston generally are similar to the views of Caucasians, there are some noteworthy differences. Minority group members are more likely to feel that a lack of jobs is the most serious problem facing the community. They are less likely to have confidence in the criminal justice system (50 percent vs. 71 percent) or to feel that the state's approach to crime is headed in the right direction (38 percent vs. 51 percent). They are also more than twice as likely to say that violent crime, as opposed to illegal drugs or property crime is the top crime problem (38 percent to 18 percent), and they are more likely to have a family member who was a victim of violent crime in the past three years (16 percent to 7 percent). African-Americans in Boston are particularly likely to rank violent crime as the number one crime problem (45 percent) compared to Caucasians (18 percent).

Generally speaking, minority group members are more likely than Caucasians to say the state should do a lot more to reduce the chances that released inmates will commit new crimes (77 percent to 59 percent), and more likely to favor requiring people to get an education while incarcerated. Minority group members are even more emphatic than Caucasians about mandating drug treatment for parolees and about helping parolees to find a place to live. At the same time, they are also more inclined to favor monitoring parolees through use of day reporting centers, halfway houses, and house arrest.

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## 8.

# Conclusion and Policy Implications

## How to reduce recidivism

Although the people of Massachusetts as a whole do not see crime as the state's biggest problem, they have a definite prescription to reduce recidivism that centers on three elements:

**1) Support:** Provide education and job training for inmates and those returning from prison; help released prisoners find a job and a place to live; and enact an array of measures designed to prevent crime by intervening early and often, with a particular focus on crime prevention among young people at greatest risk.

**2) Structure:** Require drug and alcohol treatment for both inmates and those returning from prison; use inmates' time productively; and take steps to make sure those who have been released from prison stay away from the influences that led them to break the law in the first place.

**3) Supervision:** Supervise individuals released on parole, especially those most likely to commit new crimes, even after they've served their whole prison sentence; use house arrest, halfway houses, and day reporting centers when appropriate; and gradually step up sanctions when those on parole commit violations that do not seem to pose a significant threat to public safety.

## Public policy implications

The study's findings suggest that residents' priorities for criminal justice policies are not well reflected in the state's current policies. A number of implications for public policy and communication between public officials and their constituents can be drawn from the survey data:

### **Massachusetts residents are eager for change.**

Although many residents say the state is headed in the right direction when it comes to criminal justice, the vast majority want Massachusetts to focus more on crime prevention and the causes of crime rather than on punishment or longer sentences. They also want to provide far more rehabilitation options for inmates and those recently released from prison. There is particular interest in more drug and alcohol treatment, education, and job training, and in helping those recently released find a job and a place to live. Proposed policy changes in these directions will be well received.

### **Since the policy and political environment is not hostile to policymakers, leadership will find the public open to its message.**

In many other states where public opinion on crime and corrections has been studied, the public's mood has been far more mistrustful—sometimes even hostile—towards criminal justice professionals. In Massachusetts, however, people tend to feel that people in the criminal justice system do a pretty good job, even if they are overburdened. A number of participants in the focus groups also praised the dedication, competence, and credibility of people in the criminal justice system. Therefore, state residents may be predisposed to give a fair hearing to what leadership has to say. However, policymakers need to be mindful to communicate criminal justice concepts and terms in clear ways that people can understand.

### **Residents are not aware that nearly everyone currently in prison will eventually return to the community.**

Residents were sobered when they considered this reality, but they accepted it immediately, saying, in effect, "I never thought of that before." They also do not realize how many people are released each year. Therefore, the study suggests that reminding residents of this fact will illustrate the scope of the issue while impressing upon them the urgency of addressing policy issues surrounding prisoner reentry.

**When they considered the idea, residents said rehabilitative efforts save money in the long run.** An overwhelming majority of both state and Boston residents said that education, job training, and drug treatment for released prisoners save taxpayers money by preventing reoffending. Importantly, however, this was not an idea that residents spontaneously volunteered. Instead, they made the connection when they were asked to consider if these kinds of programs are cost effective or too expensive.

**People are willing to invest in efforts that reduce crime.** Massachusetts residents said they would pay higher taxes to spend more on programs proven to reduce recidivism. While this result should not be taken at face value, this along with other results in the study, demonstrates residents' priorities for resource allocation and their willingness to accept some trade-offs to prevent crime and reduce recidivism.

**State residents oppose mandatory minimums, but have not worked through their views about sentencing guidelines vs. case-by-case sentencing.** Although residents overwhelmingly oppose mandatory minimum sentences, they seem to be divided about use of sentencing guidelines vs. case-by-case sentencing. While our exploration of people's thinking in the focus groups suggests that increased knowledge may increase support for guidelines, policymakers should keep in mind that residents will need information and the opportunity to work through their thinking on this issue before they can render a final verdict.

## Massachusetts in context

These survey results found Massachusetts public opinion to be broadly consistent with the direction of national public opinion on criminal justice policies. National public opinion research shows that the public's views have evolved since criminal justice reforms were implemented in the 1990s. The public now seeks a more balanced approach to crime, rather than focusing exclusively on punishment and long prison sentences. As Peter Hart Research reports in its 2002 study, "Americans now see prevention as their top priority for fighting crime." They increasingly support diversion of nonviolent offenders from imprisonment and use of various community sanctions and treatment programs.<sup>52</sup> Similar findings also emerged in

other surveys, such as a 2001 national poll conducted by Belden, Russonello, and Stewart,<sup>53</sup> and in many state surveys conducted by Doble Research Associates and others, including in North Carolina, Oregon, Washington State, and Vermont.<sup>54</sup> Massachusetts residents share the national view that we need a multi-pronged approach to fighting crime that prioritizes prevention and treatment. Supervision of high-risk offenders in the community is also a priority in Massachusetts.

In the 1990s, prisons and jails were one of the fastest growing line items in state budgets.<sup>55</sup> As states grapple with fiscal crises and high rates of recidivism, many states have re-assessed their policies and made reforms to use resources more effectively. Such reforms include increased use of community-based sanctions instead of mandatory incarceration for nonviolent offenders, and increased use of evidence-based practice to reduce reoffending.<sup>56</sup> As Massachusetts embarks on reforms to improve its criminal justice policies, it should be kept in mind that — as this study indicates — there are substantial gaps between the public's priorities and current policies.

In addition, the public's prescription for more effective criminal justice policies is generally consistent with evidence-based practices. A large body of research shows that correctional programs that address criminal risk factors, such as substance abuse, are the most effective and cost-efficient way to reduce crime. Findings from this public opinion survey provide information on how policies and resources can be better aligned with the public's priorities and evidence-based practices to more effectively meet the needs of the Commonwealth.

Policymakers and the various state and local agencies that affect prisoner reentry to the community must work together to create a more cohesive and coordinated approach to reduce recidivism in a cost-effective way. And adequate resources will need to be invested in the treatment, educational, and support programs to achieve what the public seeks: preventing crime and reducing recidivism.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Between 1980 and 2002, the Massachusetts state prison population alone increased from 2,754 to 9,150. However, the vast majority of offenders are incarcerated and released from county jails. (See Brooks LE, Solomon AL, Keegan S, Kohl R, and Lahue L. [2005]. *Prisoner Reentry in Massachusetts*. Washington DC: Urban Institute.)
- <sup>2</sup> Hoover HA. (2005, June). *Recidivism of 1999 Released Department of Correction Inmates*. Massachusetts Department of Correction.
- <sup>3</sup> Governor’s Commission on Criminal Justice Innovation. (2004). *Final Report*. Massachusetts.
- <sup>4</sup> Massachusetts Department of Correction, unpublished data. According to the Massachusetts Department of Correction, about 26 percent of those released without parole supervision had a post-release probation sentence. (See Brooks, et al. [2005]. *Prisoner Reentry in Massachusetts*. Washington DC: Urban Institute.)
- <sup>5</sup> See, for example: the Governor’s Commission on Criminal Justice Innovation, (2004), *Final Report*; the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Governor’s Commission on Corrections Reform, (2004, June 30); and Martin, G and Roberts, C., (2004), *From Incarceration to Community. A Roadmap to Improving Prisoner Reentry and System Accountability in Massachusetts*, Crime and Justice Institute. For more information about prisoner reentry policies in Massachusetts, also see Brooks, et al. (2005). *Prisoner Reentry in Massachusetts*.
- <sup>6</sup> The U.S. Department of Justice reports that nationally, 80 percent of prisoners have a history of substance abuse (Mumola CJ. [1999]), and that a majority of prison and jail inmates report using drugs or alcohol at the time of their offense (Wilson DJ. [2000]).
- <sup>7</sup> In a 1997 survey by the Crime and Justice Foundation (currently Crime and Justice Institute) and MassInc, 49 percent of Massachusetts residents rated their criminal justice system as doing an excellent (1.9 percent) or good (47.3 percent) job. Sixty-two percent of New Hampshire residents surveyed by Doble Research in 1998 and 46 percent of Vermont residents surveyed in 2000 rated their state’s criminal justice system as doing an excellent or good job.
- <sup>8</sup> Based on findings from a national telephone survey of 1,056 adults conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates in September, 2001 and published in January 2002. *The New Politics of Criminal Justice. Summary of Findings*.
- <sup>9</sup> The “War on Drugs” was a strategy that began in the 1970’s that focuses on enforcement, including interdiction, and long prison sentences for drug offenders.
- <sup>10</sup> Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. (2002, January). *The New Politics of Criminal Justice. Summary of Findings*. Washington, DC: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.
- <sup>11</sup> Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. (2002, January). *The New Politics of Criminal Justice. Summary of Findings*. Washington, DC: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. When this question was asked in 1994, Americans were more divided, with 48 percent preferring to address the causes of crime and 42 percent taking a more punitive approach. (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., 2002.)
- <sup>12</sup> Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. (2002, January). *The New Politics of Criminal Justice. Summary of Findings*. Washington, DC: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.
- <sup>13</sup> A national poll by Peter Hart Associates found that 38 percent of the public thought that mandatory sentences are a good idea, while 45 percent felt that judges should be able to decide. Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. (2002, January). *The New Politics of Criminal Justice. Summary of Findings*. Washington, DC: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

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<sup>14</sup> Public Agenda, a nonpartisan, internationally known research and educational organization co-founded by Dan Yankelovich, calls these type of survey results a “red flag” issue, an issue where public opinion still needs to be “worked through.” Red flag issues are often technically complex, multi-faceted, or issues that people are unfamiliar with.

<sup>15</sup> According to staff from the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission, data suggest that judges seem to impose this type of sentence (where the maximum is just one day over the minimum) when they feel there is no basis to impose a sentence longer than the minimum sentence required. In fiscal year 2004, 44 percent of state prison sentences had terms with a difference of one day between the minimum and maximum sentence, according to the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission in their report, *Survey of Sentencing Practices FY2004*.

<sup>16</sup> Massachusetts Sentencing Commission. (2005, April). *Survey of Sentencing Practices FY2004*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Sentencing Commission.

<sup>17</sup> Sampson LL. (2004, September). *2003 Court Commitments to The Massachusetts Department of Correction*. Massachusetts Department of Correction.

<sup>18</sup> Brownsberger WN. (1997). *Profile of Anti-Drug Law Enforcement in Urban Poverty Areas in Massachusetts*. Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

<sup>19</sup> In 2003, 62 percent of all prison commitments and 77 percent of all jail commitments were for nonviolent offenses. (See Massachusetts Department of Correction, *2003 Court Commitments to the Massachusetts Department of Correction*, and *New Court Commitments to Massachusetts County Facilities During 2003*.)

<sup>20</sup> Hoover HA. (2005, June). *Recidivism of 1999 Released Department of Correction Inmates*. Massachusetts Department of Correction.

<sup>21</sup> Massachusetts Sentencing Commission. (2002). *Comprehensive Recidivism Study*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Sentencing Commission. The study analyzed offenders released between April and June of 2000, with a one-year follow-up period.

<sup>22</sup> Andrews DA. (1999). “Assessing Program Elements for Risk Reduction: The Correctional Program Assessment Inventory.” In P. Harris, ed., *Research to Results: Effective Community Corrections*. Washington, DC: International Community Corrections Association.

<sup>23</sup> Mumola CJ. (1999). *Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners, 1997*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 12871.

<sup>24</sup> The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Substance Abuse Strategic Plan (May 16, 2005) reports that 81 percent of the state prison population has a substance abuse disorder.

<sup>25</sup> Inciardi JA, Martin SS, Butzin CA, Hooper RM, and Harrison LD. (1997). “An Effective Model of Prison-Based Treatment for Drug-Involved Offenders.” *Journal of Drug Issues*. 27(2):261–278.

<sup>26</sup> Gerstein DR, Johnson RA, Larison CL, Harwood HJ, and Fountain D. (1997, January). *Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment for Parents and Welfare Recipients: Outcomes, Costs, and Benefits*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>27</sup> The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Governor’s Commission on Corrections Reform. (2004, June 30). *Strengthening Public Safety, Increasing Accountability, and Instituting Fiscal Responsibility in the Department of Correction*.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Massachusetts Department of Correction, unpublished data. In FY 2005, 762 of the approximately 9,000 inmate population were admitted to residential drug treatment program, and 601 were on the waiting list at the end of the year.

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<sup>30</sup> Telephone surveys of employers administered in several large metropolitan areas, including Boston, between 1992 and 1994, found that employers are much more reluctant to hire ex-offenders than any other group of disadvantaged workers. Fewer than 40 percent of all employers said that they would definitely or probably be willing to hire ex-offenders to fill their most recent non-college job opening. See Holzer HJ (1996), *What Employers Want: Job Prospects for Less-Educated Workers*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Holzer's 2001 follow-up survey of Los Angeles employers found that 63 percent of employers always or sometimes check the criminal backgrounds of employees.

<sup>31</sup> Access to the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) system, created in 1972 for law enforcement use, has greatly expanded over the past few decades. Employers, housing authorities, and many other agencies now have access to individuals' criminal records. Currently, over 10,000 organizations are certified for access to the Massachusetts CORI compared to only 2,000 in 1993.

<sup>32</sup> Gendreau P and Goggin C. (1997). "Correctional Treatment: Accomplishments and Realities." In P. Van Voorhis, M. Braswell, and D. Lester, ed., *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Anderson Publishing.

<sup>33</sup> Andrews DA and Bonta J. (1998). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Anderson Publishing Co.

<sup>34</sup> Petersilia J. (1999). "A Decade of Experimenting with Intermediate Sanctions: What Have We Learned," *Perspectives* (Winter): 42.

<sup>35</sup> Lahue L. (2004, August). *Releases from The Massachusetts Department of Correction in 2003*.

<sup>36</sup> Brooks LE, Solomon AL, Keegan S, Kohl R, and Lahue L. (2005). *Prisoner Reentry in Massachusetts*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

<sup>37</sup> Massachusetts Department of Correction. Unpublished data.

<sup>38</sup> Brooks LE, Solomon AL, Keegan S, Kohl R, and Lahue L. (2005). *Prisoner Reentry in Massachusetts*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

<sup>39</sup> At the county level, 25 percent of Suffolk County jail inmates released in 2002 were released onto parole supervision; the balance completed their sentence, with some serving an additional probation sentence afterwards (See *Prisoner Reentry in Massachusetts* [2005]). An analysis conducted by Anne Piehl in *Cell to Street* (2002) showed that 52 percent of inmates released from Suffolk County House of Correction in January 2001 were released with no supervision.

<sup>40</sup> In fiscal year 2004, 52 percent of offenders sentenced to state prison and 40 percent of sentenced to county houses of corrections had a split sentence that included post-release probation supervision. (Source: Massachusetts Sentencing Commission. (2005). *Survey of Sentencing Practices FY 2004*.)

<sup>41</sup> Harrison T. (1997). *Criminal Justice in Massachusetts: The Public's View*. The Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth and the Crime and Justice Foundation (currently the Crime and Justice Institute): Boston, MA. Same question asked in both surveys.

<sup>42</sup> See The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Corrections Reform, (2004, June 30). *Strengthening Public Safety, Increasing Accountability, and Instituting Fiscal Responsibility in the Department of Correction*.

<sup>43</sup> Lahue L. (2004, August). *Releases from The Massachusetts Department of Correction in 2003*. Massachusetts Department of Correction.

<sup>44</sup> Massachusetts Department of Correction. (2004, January). *Policy and Statutory Restrictions Impact on Inmate Placement*. Concord, MA: Massachusetts Department of Correction.

<sup>45</sup> Clear T, Harris P, and Baird SC. (1992). "Probationer Violations and Officer Response." *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 20:1-12.

<sup>46</sup> Massachusetts Parole Board. Unpublished data.

<sup>47</sup> Massachusetts Parole Board. Unpublished data. Data were only available for July and August 2005.

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<sup>48</sup> Hampden County Correctional Center. Unpublished data. The pattern of risk factors for the released parole cohort and technical violators is: unemployment, substance abuse, personal/emotional problems, criminal associates, and limited family support.

<sup>49</sup> Including detox beds and both residential and outpatient drug treatment.

<sup>50</sup> Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice Innovation. (2004). *Final Report*. Massachusetts.

<sup>51</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health. (2005, May 16.) *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Substance Abuse Strategic Plan*.

<sup>52</sup> Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. (January 2002). *The New Politics of Criminal Justice. Summary of Findings*.

<sup>53</sup> Belden, Russonello, and Stewart. (2001). *Optimism, Pessimism, and Jailhouse Redemption: American Attitudes on Crime, Punishment, and Over-incarceration*. Washington, DC.

<sup>54</sup> Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice. (2002). *Cutting Correctly: New Prison Policies for Times of Fiscal Crisis*. San Francisco, CA.

<sup>55</sup> National Association of State Budget Officers. (2001). *State Expenditure Report, 2000*. Washington D.C. As reported by the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, (2002), in *Cutting Correctly: New Prison Policies for Times of Fiscal Crisis*.

<sup>56</sup> For example, Louisiana, Indiana, North Dakota, and Connecticut recently abolished mandatory minimum sentences for certain nonviolent offenses, including certain drug crimes (See the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice's report, *Cutting Correctly: New Prison Policies for Times of Fiscal Crisis*.) States such as Oregon, Washington, Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, and Maine have made or are making system reforms to increase the use of evidence-based practices.

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## Appendix 1

# Methodology

The Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) obtained funding from the Boston Foundation for this project and partnered with Doble Research Associates, a public opinion research firm, to design and implement this study. There were two components to the study: two focus groups in the Boston metropolitan area and a telephone survey of Massachusetts and Boston residents.

### 1. Focus Groups

Project staff initially conducted two three-hour-long focused group interviews, or focus groups, in July 2004. One group included 10 residents from a wide range of Boston area suburbs, and the other group was with 10 residents of the City of Boston, drawing from the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. Both groups reflected broad cross sections of the respective communities in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, and education. Focus group participants were asked to consider their views on an array of issues related to criminal justice policies. Their views were explored both before and after they learned more about the issues and had a chance to deliberate about them. The focus group results helped guide the development of the questionnaire for the telephone survey.

### 2. Telephone Survey

For the second component, CJI and Doble Research engaged Consumer Logic of Tulsa, Oklahoma to conduct telephone interviews with randomly selected Massachusetts residents. Consumer Logic conducted a total of 748 20-minute telephone interviews between January 12 and February 1, 2005. This included 411 interviews statewide and 337 in the City of Boston, yielding a sampling error of plus or minus 4.83 percent and 5.33 percent, respectively.

To improve the quality of the data, the questionnaire was pre-tested extensively. First, staff from CJI and Doble Associates piloted the survey with a convenience sample. Then staff from Consumer Logic conducted two pre-tests with a small number of

respondents using random digit dialing (RDD). The pretest interviews were monitored by Doble Research and CJI staff and conducted using experienced interviewers who could best judge the quality of the answers given and which questions may have caused problems for the respondents. Some changes were made to the questionnaire after each pre-test based on the monitored pre-test interviews. The questionnaire, which included 65 questions, was designed to include questions with overlapping topics to approach the issues from different dimensions.

All interviews were conducted using random digit dialing (RDD) computer-assisted telephone interviewing system. To qualify for the interview, respondents had to be at least 18 and residents of Massachusetts for at least six months. As many as 12 attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. Calls were placed over different days of the week and at different times to increase the chance of reaching potential respondents. To verify the study, senior fieldwork managers from Consumer Logic monitored 20 percent of the interviews as calls were being made. In addition, Consumer Logic randomly recontacted 15 percent of the interviewees. No re-contacted respondents reported being unfamiliar with the interviews. The complete survey response rate was 25.4 percent. The Massachusetts and Boston samples were weighted according to age, gender, and race. Statistical weights were designed from 2000 census population estimates for the State of Massachusetts and the City of Boston based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

For more information about the survey (sample demographics, key demographic differences in responses, and more information on methodology), see the Crime and Justice Institute's website at: <http://www.crjustice.org/cji/cjipublications.html>.

## Appendix 2

# Questionnaire with Survey Data

Below is the survey questionnaire with the percentage distribution of responses to each question for Massachusetts as a whole and Boston residents.

RESPONDENT I.D. # \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS: FILL IN AT COMPLETION OF INTERVIEW

*This is for verification purposes only.*

RESPONDENT'S FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME BEGAN: \_\_\_\_\_AM/PM TIME ENDED: \_\_\_\_\_AM/PM LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_

### SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm with Doble Research Associates, a nationally known research firm. We're conducting a study of public opinion in Massachusetts and I'd like to include the opinions of the *youngest man in the household who is over 18*. *May I speak to the youngest man in the household who is over 18 . . . IF THERE IS NO MALE IN THE HOUSEHOLD, ASK TO SPEAK TO THE YOUNGEST FEMALE.* REPEAT INTRODUCTION IF NECESSARY.

	MA %	Boston %
<b>1.</b> Have you been a resident of Massachusetts for at least six months?		
Yes _____		
No _____ TERMINATE		
<b>2.</b> Do you live within the city limits of the City of Boston?		
Yes _____		
No _____		
Not sure _____		
<b>3.</b> For statistical purposes only, we need to get a representative sample and so I need to ask this question. When it comes to your race or ethnicity, are you . . . (READ LIST)		
White or Caucasian	85	55
Black or African-American	5	22
Hispanic or Latino	6	12
Asian-American	1	4
Other	4	8
Refused (DO NOT READ)	—	—
<b>4.</b> Which of these three problems do you think is the MOST SERIOUS one facing your community? Would you say it is: (READ ALOUD)		
Crime	16	20
Lack of jobs	42	30
Poor performing public schools	26	41
Other (DO NOT READ)	9	4
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	7	4

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about crime, the prison system, and what to do with people who break the law. Please don't hesitate to tell me if you're not sure how you feel or if you don't know an answer to a particular question.

<b>5.</b>	Over the past couple of years, would you say that crime in your community has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?		
	Increased	30	41
	Decreased	11	12
	Stayed about the same	52	40
	Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	7	7
<b>6.</b>	When you think about crime in your community, which would you say is the biggest problem — violent crime, illegal drugs, or nonviolent, property crime? [IF NECESSARY: Violent crime includes such things as homicide, rape or assault. Nonviolent, property crime includes such things as auto theft or burglary.]		
	Violent crime	14	27
	Illegal drugs	46	37
	Nonviolent, property crime	31	28
	Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	8	8
<b>7a.</b>	Have you or a member of your close family been a victim of a crime in the past three years?		
	Yes	17 – ASK 7b	26
	No	83 – SKIP TO 8	74
	Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	__ – SKIP TO 8	__
<b>7b.</b>	(ASK ONLY IF “YES” ON #7a ABOVE) Was it a violent crime involving force or a weapon?		
	Yes	31	43
	No	69	56
	Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	__	1
<b>8.</b>	How much confidence do you have in the criminal justice system as a whole—do you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, a little or no confidence at all?		
	A lot	19	18
	Some	45	43
	A little	25	25
	No confidence at all	8	12
	Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	3	2
<b>9.</b>	Which of the following comes closer to your view? (READ ALOUD) (TREND)		
	A. Massachusetts' approach to crime is headed in the right direction	47	45
	OR		
	B. Massachusetts' approach to crime is off on the wrong track	31	34
	C. Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	22	21
<b>10.</b>	How would you describe the war on drugs in Massachusetts? (READ ALOUD) (TREND)		
	More of a failure	48	48
	More of a success	22	24
	Some of both/mixed results (DO NOT READ)	8	7
	Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	22	21

	MA %	Boston %
<b>11.</b> Which of the following comes closer to your view? (READ ALOUD) (TREND)		
A. We need a tougher approach to crime with an emphasis on stricter sentencing, capital punishment for more crimes, and fewer paroles for convicted felons		
OR		
B. We need a tougher approach to dealing with the causes of crime with an emphasis on improving job and vocational training, providing family counseling, and increasing the number of neighborhood activity centers for young people		
Emphasis on stricter sentencing	29	17
Emphasis on causes of crime	66	78
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	5	5
<b>12.</b> Which do you think should be a top priority for dealing with crime? (READ ALOUD) (TREND)		
A. Prevention, such as education and youth programs	41	45
B. Rehabilitation, such as education and job training for prisoners	23	22
C. Punishment, such as longer sentences and more prisons	15	9
D. Enforcement, such as putting more police officers on the streets	18	21
E. Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	3	3
<b>13.</b> Which of the following comes closer to your view? (READ ALOUD)		
A. Once someone turns to crime, very little can be done to turn them into productive, law-abiding citizens		
OR		
B. Given the right conditions, a great many offenders can turn their lives around and become law-abiding citizens		
Very little can be done	16	11
Can turn their lives around	75	82
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	8	7
<b>14.</b> When it comes to sentencing, some people say the drug problem is so serious that judges should be required to sentence drug offenders to prison for a minimum number of years. Others say that judges must have the leeway to sentence some drug offenders to mandatory treatment instead of prisons that are overcrowded and expensive. What do you think? Should judges: (READ ALOUD)		
Be required to sentence drug offenders to prison	17	14
OR		
Have the leeway to sentence some to mandatory treatment	76	80
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	6	6
<b>15.</b> Let's talk about sentencing for all offenders. Some people say we should use sentencing guidelines that give judges some discretion in sentencing while making sure that offenders with similar records receive roughly the same sentence. Others say guidelines can be either too inflexible or too lenient. Do you favor or oppose the idea of sentencing guidelines? Strongly or somewhat?		
Strongly favor	27	23
Somewhat favor	34	42
Somewhat oppose	18	16
Strongly oppose	7	8
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	14	11

	MA %	Boston %
<b>16.</b> Here are three options. Which is the best way for judges to sentence convicted offenders? (READ SLOWLY, REPEAT IF NECESSARY)		
A. Require judges to sentence some offenders to prison for a minimum period of time		
OR		
B. Have judges use sentencing guidelines that give them some but not complete discretion		
OR		
C. Let judges decide the punishment each time on a case by case basis		
Mandatory minimums	9	8
Judge use guidelines	41	42
Judge decides case by case	47	47
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	3	4
<b>17.</b> As far as you know, how do most inmates in Massachusetts spend their time in prison? Are they mostly doing useful and productive activities, mostly wasting time, or mostly doing things that could be harmful?		
Mostly doing useful and productive activities	12	14
Mostly wasting time	48	40
Mostly doing things that could be harmful	6	7
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	34	38
<b>18.</b> In Massachusetts, when most inmates get out of prison, do you think they are: (READ ALOUD)		
A. LESS likely to commit new crime because they've learned their lesson or been rehabilitated		
OR		
B. MORE likely to commit new crime because they've been hardened by their experience		
Less likely to commit new crime	16	13
More likely to commit new crime	58	63
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	26	24
<b>19.</b> Almost all the inmates in Massachusetts prisons will eventually be released, and so I'll read some goals the prison system might have and ask how important you think each is. Here's the first one, requiring prisoners to take classes and get an education so they can find a job when they're released? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all? (TREND)		
Very important	75	77
Somewhat important	20	20
Not too important	2	2
Not Important at all	2	2
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	2	-
<b>20.</b> Keeping prisoners in strict conditions so that serving time is tough? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?		
Very important	48	42
Somewhat important	32	32
Not too important	9	13
Not Important at all	5	8
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	6	5
<b>21.</b> Requiring prisoners to work and receive job training so that they have job skills when they are released from prison? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all? (TREND)		
Very important	79	84
Somewhat important	18	13
Not too important	1	3
Not Important at all	1	1
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	1	1

	MA %	Boston %
<b>22.</b> How effective in substantially reducing crime would this idea be: Doing more to prepare inmates for release from prison by gradually moving them to a lower security level in prison, to work-release programs, to half-way houses and the like. Would that be very effective, fairly effective, not too effective, or not at all effective in substantially reducing crime? (TREND*)		
Very	33	32
Fairly	47	48
Not too	9	9
Not effective at all	4	5
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	7	7
<b>23.</b> How successful are Massachusetts' prisons at rehabilitating prisoners? (READ ALOUD) (TREND)		
Very	4	4
Somewhat	30	26
Somewhat unsuccessful	24	25
Very unsuccessful	10	13
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	33	33
<b>24.</b> Next are some questions about drug treatment. As you may know, three-quarters of all prison inmates have a drug or alcohol problem. How important is it to provide treatment for prisoners with drug or alcohol problems? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too, or not important at all?		
Very important	81	87
Somewhat important	14	10
Not too important	3	1
Not Important at all	1	1
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	1	1
<b>25a.</b> Here are questions about early release on parole for prison inmates convicted of a NONVIOLENT crime. Would you consider early release on parole for a NONVIOLENT offender if he has good behavior and completes drug treatment OR would you still want him to serve his entire sentence?		
Would consider early release	78 – SKIP TO 26	85
Serve their entire sentence	18 – ASK 25b	12
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	4 – SKIP TO 26	3
<b>25b.</b> [If "should serve their entire sentence," ASK] Suppose he were also strictly supervised after release — would you then consider early release for a NONVIOLENT offender OR should he serve his entire sentence?		
Would consider early release	34	29
Serve their entire sentence	62	63
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	5	7

*The fact is that in Massachusetts today, some NONVIOLENT offenders are released early on parole. When NONVIOLENT offenders are released early on parole, how important is it to provide each of the following? (For each one, ask: "Is that very important, somewhat important, not very, or not at all important?") (INSERT RANDOMLY)*

	Very Important MA/B	Somewhat Important MA/B	Not very Important MA/B	Not at all Important MA/B	Not Sure/DK MA/B
<b>26.</b> Strict supervision where they must see a parole officer once a week	75/73	18/21	5/6	1/-	1/-
<b>27.</b> A halfway house where they must stay at night and go to work or school during the day	51/61	34/28	9/7	4/1	3/3
<b>28.</b> Mandatory treatment for those with a drug problem	83/85	11/11	3/2	1/-	2/2
<b>29.</b> Help finding a job	78/83	18/15	2/1	2/1	1/1
<b>30.</b> Help finding a place to live	63/73	29/22	5/4	2/-	1/1
<b>31.</b> A day reporting center where they must check in each morning with a schedule of where they'll be and take mandatory drug treatment if they have a problem	64/67	26/26	5/5	3/1	2/1
<b>32.</b> House arrest where they are electronically monitored and must stay inside their home except to go to work or school	42/37	34/33	11/19	9/6	5/4

<b>33.</b> Here are two statements about programs that offer released prisoners education, job training, and drug treatment. Which comes closer to your own view? (READ ALOUD)		
A. Such programs are probably too expensive		
OR		
B. Such programs probably save money by keeping people out of prison		
Too expensive	15	11
Save money	75	83
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	10	6
<b>34.</b> Here are two statements about programs like strict parole supervision, a halfway house, and mandatory drug treatment. Which comes closer to your own view? (READ ALOUD)		
A. When it comes to <i>VIOLENT</i> offenders, such programs are the wrong way to go—only punishment and isolation from the community works for violent offenders		
OR		
B. Such programs are especially important to use with violent offenders being released from prison		
Isolation and punishment works	42	32
Especially important for violent	46	53
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	11	15
<b>35.</b> Would you ever consider early release on parole for a <i>VIOLENT</i> offender if he has good behavior, completes drug treatment, and was strictly supervised after his release, or should all <i>VIOLENT</i> offenders have to serve their entire sentence?		
Would consider early release	34	41
Should serve whole sentence	57	49
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	9	11
<b>36.</b> Would you ever consider early release on parole for a <i>SEX</i> offender if he has good behavior, completes counseling, and was strictly supervised after his release, or should all <i>SEX</i> offenders have to serve their entire sentence?		
Would consider early release	20	20
Should serve whole sentence	74	72
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	7	9
<b>37.</b> Is Massachusetts doing enough to reduce the chances that inmates will commit new crimes after release from prison or should it be doing a lot more?		
Doing enough	7	9
Should be doing a lot more	64	67
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	28	24

Here are some arguments about why some released prisoners end up committing new crimes. In your opinion, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each statement. How about [INSERT RANDOMLY] (For each one, ask: "Is that strongly or somewhat?")

	Strongly Agree MA/B	Somewhat Agree MA/B	Somewhat Disagree MA/B	Strongly Disagree MA/B	NS/ DK MA/B
38. There is too little supervision after prisoners are released	49/47	25/24	5/12	3/4	18/14
39. Too many released prisoners lack positive influences like job, church and family that can give structure to their day-to-day life	61/68	25/21	6/6	2/2	6/3
40. Some people are destined for a life of crime and simply can never change their ways	31/23	22/23	21/20	23/30	4/4
41. When prisoners are released, they often go back to the same neighborhood and temptations that got them in trouble in the first place	71/70	21/21	4/4	1/2	3/3
42. Prison sentences are not long enough	23/19	20/16	22/32	9/16	26/17
43. Offenders face discrimination in jobs and housing because of their record	64/68	26/21	6/3	1/5	4/4
44. There aren't enough transitional facilities such as a halfway house	43/49	23/23	9/6	4/6	21/16
45. There is not enough treatment for offenders addicted to drugs or alcohol	43/52	23/26	15/8	5/6	14/9
46. Offenders need more help finding a place to live	42/49	35/34	11/8	3/3	10/6
				<b>MA %</b>	<b>Boston %</b>
47. Do you favor or oppose providing job training and placement to released prisoners? Strongly or somewhat? (TREND)					
Strongly favor		60			68
Somewhat favor		30			26
Somewhat oppose		5			4
Strongly oppose		2			1
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)		3			1
48. Should we increase spending on programs proven to reduce the chances that released prisoners will commit new crime, even if this means a tax increase? Would you say: (READ ALOUD)					
Absolutely yes		26			35
Probably yes		43			42
Probably no		17			11
Absolutely no		10			8
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)		4			4
49a. In Massachusetts, many offenders who complete their sentences in maximum security prisons do NOT report to a parole officer—they are released without supervision. Do you think they should or should not be supervised after release?					
Should have to be supervised		91 – ASK 49b			89
Should not have to be supervised		7 – SKIP TO 50			7
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)		2 – SKIP TO 50			5
49b. [IF "should be supervised," ASK], Should ALL offenders be supervised after release or should we focus our supervision efforts on offenders most likely to commit new crime?					
All should be supervised		41			40
Focus on those most likely to commit new crime		55			57
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)		4			3

	MA %	Boston %
<b>50.</b> Here are some questions about what should happen when paroled offenders don't follow the terms of their release. Suppose that an offender on parole misses a scheduled meeting with his parole officer but has a good excuse, say a family emergency. It's the first time it happened. What should happen to him? Should he: (READ LIST SLOWLY)		
Receive a warning	64	70
Be more closely supervised by his parole officer	24	22
Be put under house arrest with electronic monitoring	6	3
Be put in a halfway house	1	1
Be sent back to prison	2	3
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	3	2
<b>51.</b> Now suppose that an offender on parole misses a scheduled meeting with his parole officer but does not have a good excuse. It's the first time. What should happen to him? Should he: (READ LIST SLOWLY)		
Receive a warning	16	20
Be more closely supervised by his parole officer	43	45
Be put under house arrest with electronic monitoring	24	21
Be put in a halfway house	6	4
Be sent back to prison	9	7
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	2	2
<b>52.</b> Now suppose that an offender on parole fails a routine drug test. It's the first time he failed since being released. In addition to mandatory drug treatment, should he: (READ LIST SLOWLY)		
Receive a warning	11	11
Be more closely supervised by his parole officer	30	36
Be put under house arrest with electronic monitoring	20	20
Be put in a halfway house	21	19
Be sent back to prison	17	13
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	2	2
<b>53.</b> Now suppose an offender on parole fails a routine drug test for the second time. In addition to mandatory drug treatment, should he: (READ LIST SLOWLY)		
Receive a warning	2	1
Be more closely supervised by his parole officer	6	13
Be put under house arrest with electronic monitoring	20	19
Be put in a halfway house	23	25
Be sent back to prison	48	38
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	2	3
<b>54.</b> Now suppose an offender is caught shoplifting \$100 worth of merchandise. It's the first time. Should he: (READ LIST SLOWLY)		
Receive a warning	5	6
Be more closely supervised by his parole officer	17	18
Be put under house arrest with electronic monitoring	25	27
Be put in a halfway house	12	16
Be sent back to prison	38	29
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	4	4

*These last few questions are for statistical purposes only.*

	MA %	Boston %
<b>55.</b> What is the last year of school you completed? (READ LIST)		
Less than 6th grade	—	—
6th–8th grade	1	1
Some high school	5	5
High school graduate	24	18
Some college/trade school	24	24
College graduate or more	45	53
Refused (DO NOT READ)	1	—
<b>56.</b> Sex (RECORD, DO NOT ASK)		
Male	47	48
Female	53	52
<b>57.</b> How old are you? (READ LIST)		
18–24	12	15
25–34	19	31
35–44	22	17
45–54	18	15
55–64	11	8
65+	17	13
Refused (DO NOT READ)	1	—
<b>58.</b> Are you the parent of any children who are under 18 years old or not?		
Yes, parent of child under 18	33	28
No, not a parent	66	72
Refused (DO NOT READ)	1	—
<b>59.</b> Please stop me when I read your current employment status? (READ LIST)		
Working outside the home full time	44	55
Working outside the home part time	11	11
Self-employed	10	4
A homemaker	7	5
Retired	19	12
Unemployed but not retired	6	7
A student	4	7
Don't Know/No answer (DO NOT READ)	1	—
<b>60.</b> Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you registered to vote in the precinct or election district where you live, or aren't you?		
Yes, registered	88	84
No, not registered	11	15
Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	1	1
<b>61.</b> Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent or something else?		
Republican	19	10
Democrat	33	48
Independent	36	28
Something else	8	8
Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	4	6

	MA %	Boston %
<b>62.</b> Next, in your political thinking, do you think of yourself as being very liberal, somewhat liberal, somewhat conservative or very conservative?		
Very liberal	11	20
Somewhat liberal	38	34
Somewhat conservative	31	29
Very conservative	10	7
None of these/Moderate/Middle-of the road, etc. (DO NOT READ)	6	6
Don't Know/No Answer (DO NOT READ)	5	4
<b>63.</b> I'm going to read some ranges of annual household income. Please stop me when I read the one that describes your total household income in 2004. [IF NEEDED: I know this is a personal question. Let me assure you that your answers are confidential.] (READ LIST)		
\$15,000 or Under	10	12
\$15,001 to \$25,000	7	14
\$25,001 to \$35,000	12	13
\$35,001 to \$50,000	16	16
\$50,001 to \$75,000	17	15
Over \$75,000	26	21
Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	12	10
<b>64.</b> Has anybody in your immediate family ever been in jail or prison?		
Yes	22	21
No	78	79
Not Sure/Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	1	1
<b>65.</b> May we call you back another day if we have a quick follow-up question?		
Yes, you may call back	—	
No, you may not	—	
Don't Know (DO NOT READ)	—	

THANK YOU, THAT NEARLY CONCLUDES THE INTERVIEW.  
 I HAVE JUST A FEW BACKGROUND QUESTIONS AND WE'LL BE FINISHED.  
 (ASK NAME, ETC., FROM THE FRONT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.)



