

offenders and focus on improved public safety outcomes. If the trend that was observed between 2004 and 2014 had continued, Alaska would have needed to build another prison or resume sending prisoners out of state as early as 2017.

The Commission also found that people had been staying in prison for longer periods of time for the same conduct—whether they were serving time for a new sentence, remanded for a supervision (probation or parole) violation, or were being held pretrial—over the decade from 2004-2014. Though the length of stay for most people in prison increased over that time, the recidivism rate remained the same—about two of every three people released from prison would return within three years. This data mirrored national research indicating that longer prison stays do not discourage reoffending.³

The changes to the law in 2016 responded to the Commission’s findings and recommendations by enacting shorter sentences for most non-sex crimes,⁴ shorter sentences for purely technical violations of probation and parole (i.e., non-criminal conduct), and reforms to pretrial release practices.

After the 2016 sentence reforms became effective, some members of the public, criminal justice practitioners, and legislators became concerned that some sentences were now too short. In 2017 the Legislature responded to these concerns by enacting SB 54, which increased sentences for the smallest

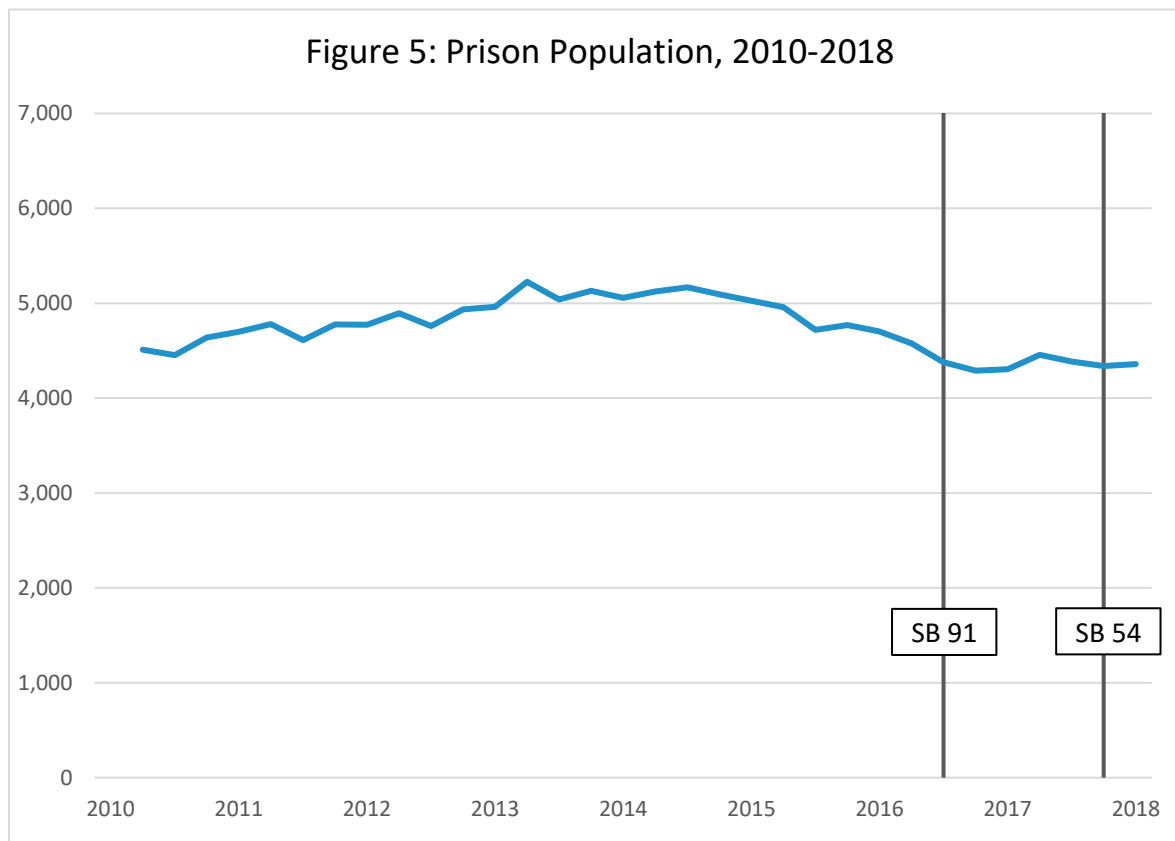


Figure 5 Source: Department of Corrections

³ See, e.g., Nagin, Cullen, & Lero Jonson, “Imprisonment and Reoffending” *Crime and Justice* Vol. 38, No. 1 (2009), University of Chicago Press. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/599202>.

⁴ Sentences for first- and second-degree murder were increased.