



LOCAL / PolitiCal

The face of the federal prison release: A heavy dose of meth, crack and cocaine



Paige St. John · Contact Reporter

OCTOBER 10, 2015, 11:50 AM | REPORTING FROM SACRAMENTO

Trafficking in methamphetamines and cocaine, in powder form and crystallized as crack, accounts for three-fourths of the drug convictions for more than 13,000 offenders to be released starting next month from federal prison under new sentencing guidelines.

A federal analysis of the expected impact of the first wave of those approved for early release shows 663 prisoners from California had filed for shorter sentences as of late July. Federal judges denied 92 of them. The rest will leave federal prison an average 19 months earlier than their original sentences required.

The releases are the result of a decision to apply new penalty guidelines adopted a year ago by the U.S. Sentencing Commission to those already sentenced and serving time.

The policies reduce the weight that judges must apply to drug trafficking offenses. They already are having an impact in current cases. The average sentence in Central California dropped from 10 years, eight months to nine years, one month. In Southern California, the new average is seven years, nine months, a 21% decrease.

Article continues below ↓

The sentencing commission's analysis shows fewer than 10% of those headed home early had convictions involving marijuana. More than 77% dealt with methamphetamines, powder cocaine and crack. Heroin made up more than 7% of the cases.

For more, go to www.latimes.com/politics.

Get the best from our political teams delivered daily.

Enter your email

SIGN UP

[Privacy Policy](#)

Copyright © 2015, Los Angeles Times

UPDATE

11:50 a.m.: This article was updated with the latest federal report.

This article was originally published at 11:14 a.m.

This article is related to: [Drug Trafficking](#)

[VIEW COMMENTS \(53\)](#)

Content Continues Below

