



# Mississippi Expanded Parole And People Are Safely Coming Home

OCTOBER 2025

# SB 2795 is a Safe and Effective Policy

In a moment when misinformation regarding the effect of criminal justice reform is prevalent in the news, looking at Mississippi's expanded parole law and recidivism rates is an opportunity to understand how safe and effective criminal justice policies can reduce incarceration without compromising public safety. The consequences of this misinformation are profound and widespread, impacting American families, workers, and businesses.

In 2021, Mississippi lawmakers overwhelmingly voted to expand parole to ensure more people had the opportunity to earn their way home. SB 2795, which expanded parole eligibility from roughly one-third to two-thirds of the prison population, allowed people convicted of offenses classified as violent to be eligible for parole after serving 50% or 60% of their sentence, depending on the offense. Prior to this, people serving prison terms for these convictions were not eligible for parole and some were ineligible to earn time off of their sentences, limiting their incentive to participate in rehabilitative and educational programming inside prison.

Now, four years later, it is clear we can deliver meaningful second chances without compromising public safety. **Ninety-seven percent of people made parole-eligible by SB 2795 did not return to prison on a new sentence within three years of release.**

**The policy has been hugely successful, saving the state an estimated \$159 million by sparing people a collective 2.4 million nights or 6,663 years of prison time.**

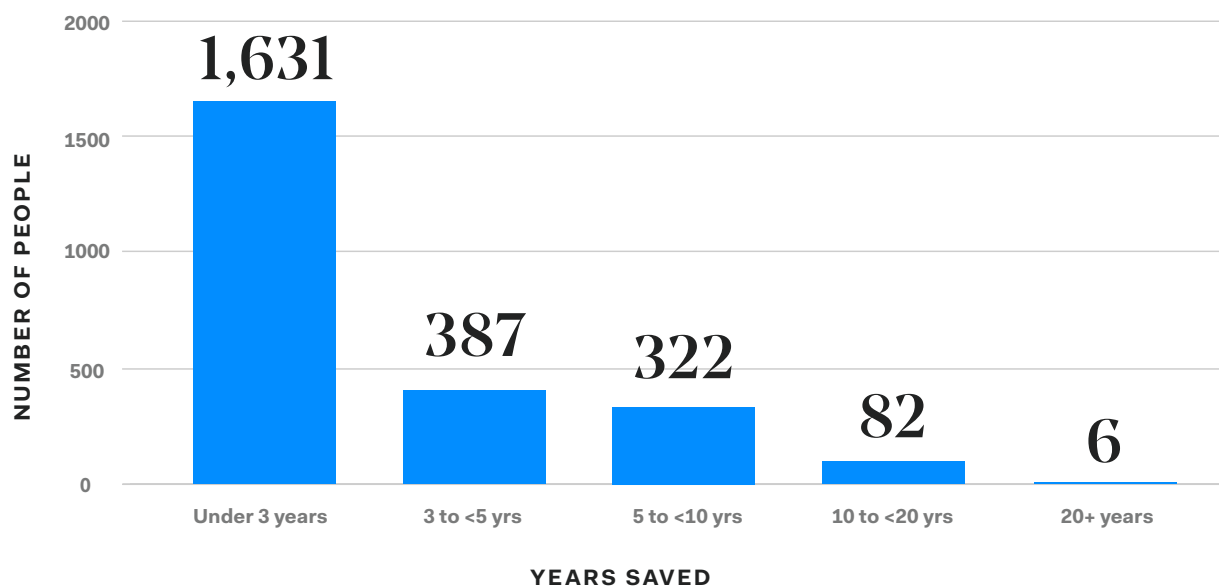
Expanding parole eligibility and releasing people who demonstrated rehabilitation, even when they were convicted of serious offenses, did not lead to a spike in violent crime in Mississippi. Instead, the very low recidivism rates for those released under this policy and the overall steady or declining state and local crime rates show that this policy was safe and effective.<sup>1</sup> Recognizing the evidence of the success of expanded parole eligibility, in 2024, Mississippi lawmakers reauthorized the state's parole law, with even more support than in 2021.

This brief draws from Mississippi Department of Corrections data covering the period of July 2021 through April 2025, to examine the impact of Mississippi's parole expansion and better understand the effect of providing second chances to people convicted of violent crimes.

Since the expanded parole law went into effect in July 2021, over 2,400 newly eligible people earned release through parole.

## Most people released less than 3 years earlier under SB 2795

People released to parole under SB 2795 between July 1, 2021-April 30, 2025

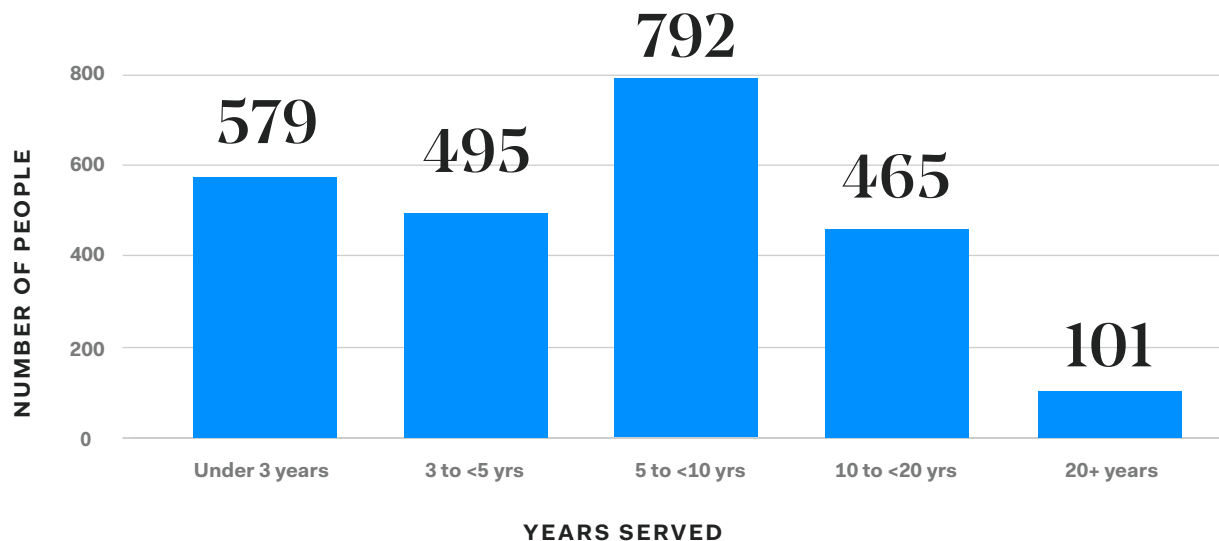


**People returned home to their communities and had the opportunity to rejoin the workforce an average of three years early.** For almost 90 people, this law meant that they were able to come home at least a decade earlier; six people came home more than 20 years early.

Many people served between 5 and 10 years at the time prior to their release. More than 400 people were under 18 when they committed their offense, and they had served an average of 7.5 years before being released. Long prison sentences for young people are an ineffective deterrent because their brains are still developing, and they struggle to weigh consequences.<sup>2</sup> Of all the people released under the expanded parole law, more than 250 people had served at least 15 years when they were released.

## Over 1,000 people released under SB 2795 served more than 5 years

People released to parole under SB 2795 between July 1, 2021-April 30, 2025





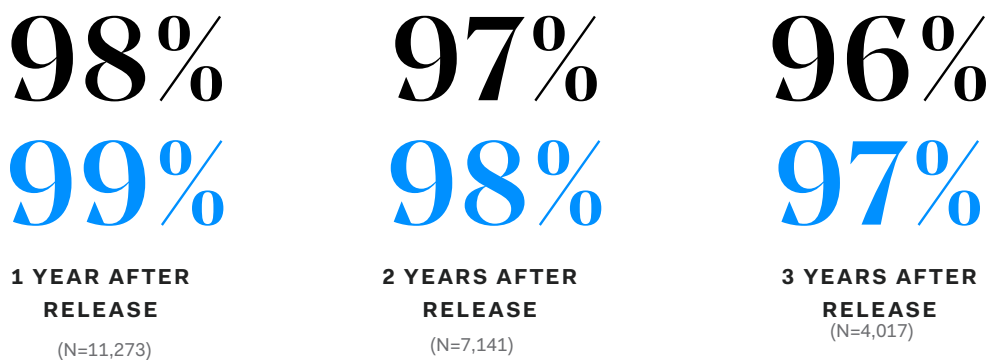
# Mississippi's Parole Expansion Prioritizes Public Safety

Critically, the more than 6,600 prison years that were spared did not compromise public safety. People who became eligible for parole under SB 2795 were just as or even more successful as people convicted of non-violent offenses who were already eligible for parole.

Within the first three years of release from prison, 97% of people newly eligible did not return to prison on a new sentence. Seventy-one percent of people newly eligible under SB 2795 did not return to prison at all, compared to 62% of people who were already parole-eligible prior to the passage of SB 2795. Returns to prison without a new sentence may be for technical violations of parole or other minor supervision violations.

## The vast majority of people released from MDOC custody, including those released under SB 2795, did not receive any new criminal sentences

Percent of people released from MDOC with no new criminal sentences, July 1, 2021-April 30, 2025



● Eligible Pre - SB 2795    ● Eligible Under SB 2795

In addition, individuals convicted of offenses like carjacking who previously had no pathway to early release, had the lowest recidivism of any offense group, with 98% not returning to prison on a new sentence and 76% not returning to prison at all within three years following release. Since 2021, crime in Mississippi has been declining.<sup>3</sup>

# Meaningful Opportunities for Release Mean More People in the Workforce

SB 2795 applied to people who were already in prison. Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) people who became newly eligible had already served well beyond their parole eligibility date when the law went into effect and were immediately eligible to be considered for parole. On average, these individuals had served 11 years and were released nearly three years earlier than they would have been otherwise.

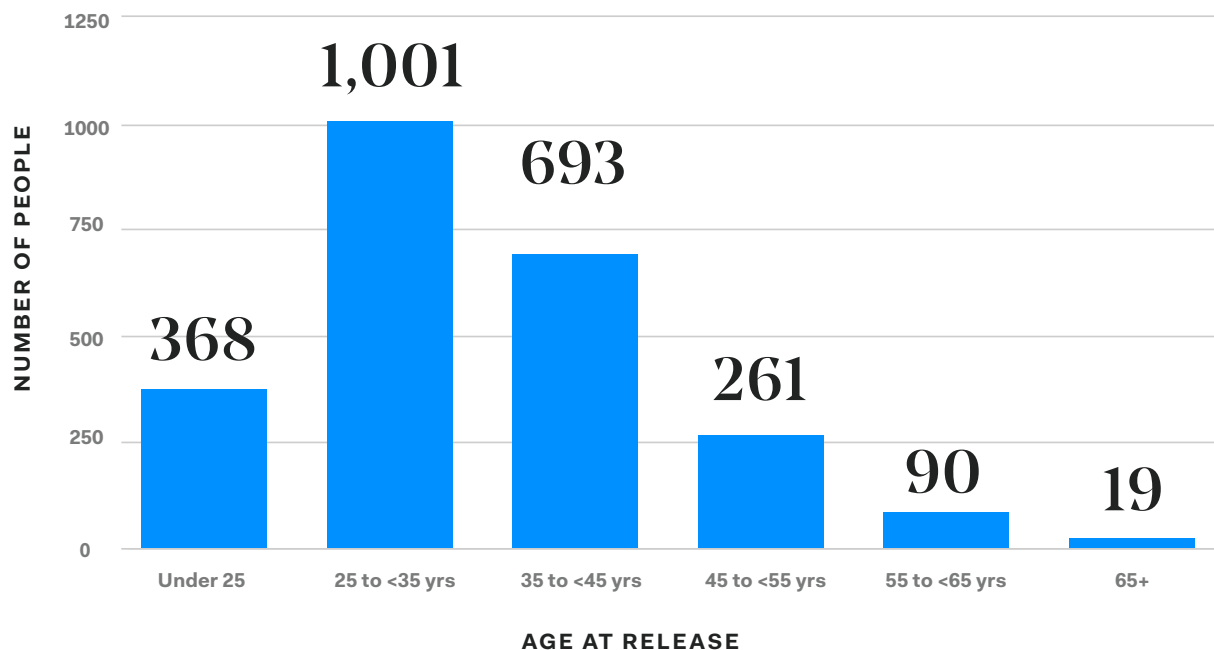
Parole expansion is a pro-workforce and pro-economy policy. On average, newly eligible individuals who were granted parole were released on parole at age 34, with decades of opportunity to contribute to the state's workforce ahead of them.

Overall, 85% of newly-eligible people granted parole were under 45 years of age. This meaningful opportunity for release can help the state's workforce and economy without compromising public safety. This is especially important given that Mississippi has had the lowest labor force participation rate in the country several times in the past decade, and currently has the second-lowest.<sup>4</sup> Long prison sentences remove people from the labor force, and make it more difficult for people to find work on their return without making communities safer.<sup>5</sup>

As more people return home through mechanisms like parole, Mississippi's leaders have the opportunity to continue to strengthen the state's workforce by addressing barriers to employment. This will help people to rebuild their lives and embark on careers that can support their families long into the future and continue to ensure the longevity and success of Mississippi's economy.

## The majority of releases under SB 2795 were in prime working age

People released to parole under SB2795, July 1, 2021 - April 30, 2025





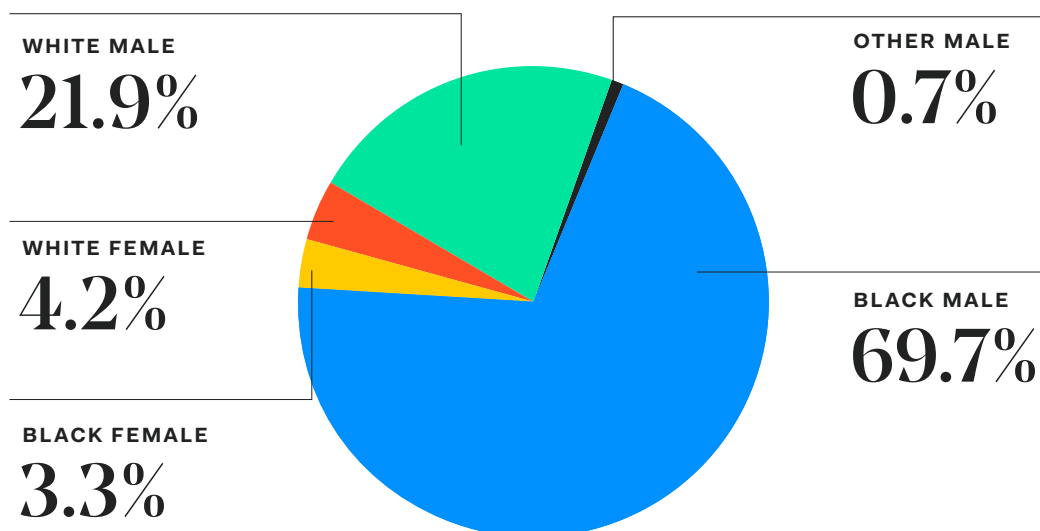
## Addressing the Aging Prison Population and Racial Disparities

Because of Mississippi's long sentences, there is an aging population behind bars. These individuals often have serious medical needs and are not a threat to public safety. Because of parole expansion, 109 people who were 55 years old or older were released from prison early, and nearly 80 people were saved from aging past 54 in prison. None of the 109 people released at age 55 or older returned to prison on a new sentence, demonstrating what research shows – people age out of crime and incarcerating older adults does not improve public safety.

The expansion of parole has had a particularly large impact on Black men. Seven in ten people released under SB 2795 were Black men, a population that has been disproportionately impacted by long sentences and is far overrepresented in the state prison system. Black men comprise just 17% of Mississippi's population, but well over half of the state prison population.<sup>6</sup>

### Black men make up 70% of SB 2795 parole releases

Parole releases eligible under SB 2795 July 1, 2021-April 30, 2025 (New admissions)



# A Win-Win for Mississippi

**Parole in Mississippi has been a resounding success, adding to the mountain of evidence that expanding release opportunities is effective public safety policy.** We can reduce the number of people behind bars and keep our communities safe. There is more work to be done to continue addressing the state's high imprisonment rate while continuing to safely bring people home. The success of Mississippi's parole expansion should encourage lawmakers across the country to expand release opportunities to strengthen communities, boost economies, save taxpayer dollars, and reunite families.



# Methodology

This analysis tracked releases for individuals who were newly parole eligible because of SB 2795 and post-release recidivism for individuals who entered prison on a new court commitment and whose first release from prison occurred between July 2021 and the end of April 2025 using data received from the Mississippi Department of Corrections via a records request. Outcomes were tracked for standardized 12-month, 24-month, and as possible, 36-month follow-up periods following their date of release, using MDOC release, sentencing, and readmission data. Trackable outcomes included any return to prison, and any return to prison on a new sentence. Individuals were identified to have returned to prison on a new sentence by a return admission type of “new prisoner.”

Recidivism cohorts were defined based on whether individuals were eligible for parole prior to the passage of SB 2795 or became parole-eligible as a result of the law’s enactment. For people serving multiple sentences, parole eligibility was determined by the most serious sentence on their admission. Individuals with at least one parole-ineligible sentence were excluded from the recidivism analysis, as were those involving individuals released to the custody of technical violation centers or medical facilities, since these individuals would not have the same release opportunities or post-release supervision. Although the recidivism analysis includes only people who were eligible for parole, they were not necessarily released to parole supervision: the cohorts studied also include individuals who were released upon completion of their sentence, as well as those released to probation, earned release supervision (ERS), and house arrest.

Analysis of time served and time saved in prison as a result of SB 2795 was limited to individuals who were released on parole. Time served was calculated by comparing release date to sentence begin date, thus including jail time. Time saved was calculated by comparing the actual release date to the tentative release date calculated and provided by MDOC. The tentative release date includes any earned credits already earned by the individual at the time of their release, and is a more conservative estimate of time saved than using maximum release date or sentence end date.

## Endnotes

1. In 2021, the FBI changed its national crime reporting program. A number of larger Mississippi agencies have yet to update their reporting capacity, meaning there is not strong data on statewide crime from 2021-2025. However the data that is available suggests that, much like across the country, crime peaked in Mississippi in 2021 and 2022 and then began to fall.
2. Tabashneck, S., Shen, F. X., Edershim, J. G., & Kinscherff, R. T. (2022). The science of late adolescence: A guide for judges, attorneys and policy makers. Center for Law, Brain & Behavior at Massachusetts General Hospital. <https://clbb.mgh.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/C>
3. FBI Crime in the US 2020-2024. Though Mississippi has incomplete crime reporting to the FBI, local data from Jackson has shown that homicides have been decreasing significantly over the same time period, and homicides are down another 43% through Aug. 1, 2025, compared to that period in 2024. WLBT, “Jackson’s Homicides: A Public Safety Tracker,” <https://www.wlbt.com/news/crime/jackson-homicides/>; Pam Dankins, Mississippi Clarion Ledger, “Jackson murders decline by nearly 45% amid varying JPD, capitol police homicide trends,” Aug. 1, 2025, <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/local/2025/08/01/murders-homicides-in-jackson-ms-continue-to-decline-as-of-july-2025/84520129007/>.
4. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/lau/rdscnp16.htm>. Accessed Sept 2025.
5. [FWD.us](https://www.fwd.us), “The Cost of Doing Business: Why Criminal Justice Reform is the Right Investment to Strengthen Mississippi’s Economy & Workforce,” June 2023, <https://www.fwd.us/news/ms-workforce-brief/#posts>
6. US Census Mississippi Sex by Age (Black or African American Alone) ; US Census Mississippi Age and Sex; MDOC Department of Corrections Monthly Fact Sheet September 2025, [https://www.mdoc.ms.gov/sites/default/files/Monthly\\_Fact\\_Sheets/2025\\_Monthly%20Fact%20Sheet\\_September.pdf](https://www.mdoc.ms.gov/sites/default/files/Monthly_Fact_Sheets/2025_Monthly%20Fact%20Sheet_September.pdf)