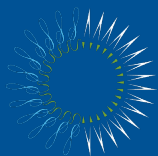


# An Evaluation of Earned Compliance Credits in Missouri

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National Association of Sentencing Commissions  
Salt Lake City, UT  
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## General background

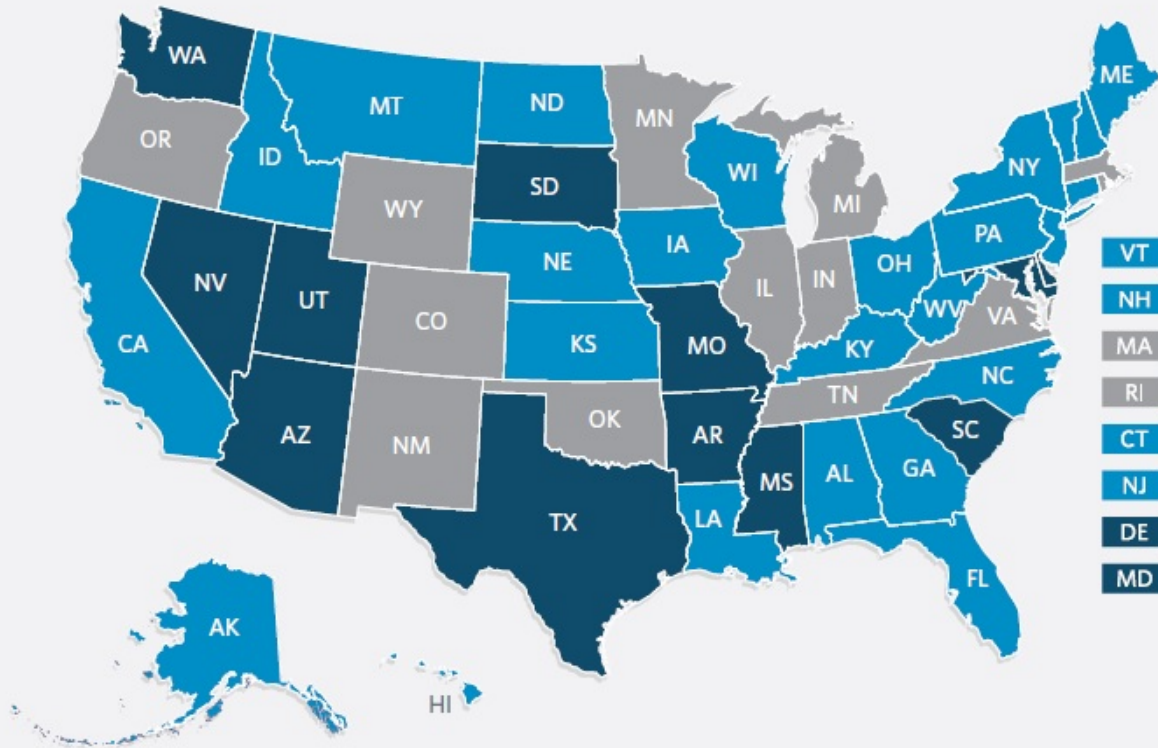
- ECCs are a form of **earned discharge**: Allow those on probation or parole to shorten supervision time in exchange for adherence to rules or participation in programming
- Goals: Improve compliance with supervision conditions; focus supervision resources on non-compliant individuals; reduce supervision populations; reduce probation/parole officer caseloads; reduce technical revocations to prison; reduce taxpayer costs

## Research basis

- Behavior change is likeliest when correctional systems use a combination of positive interventions (rewards) and negative consequences (sanctions) to manage individuals
- Rewards should outnumber sanctions
- Motivation to participate in programming or follow rules comes from prospect of early release

## 37 States Have Earned-Discharge Laws

Policies vary in scope; Missouri's is among the most comprehensive



■ No earned discharge (13) ■ General earned discharge (25) ■ Earned compliance credits (12)

Source: Pew's analysis of legislative information from the National Conference of State Legislatures.

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## Missouri's program

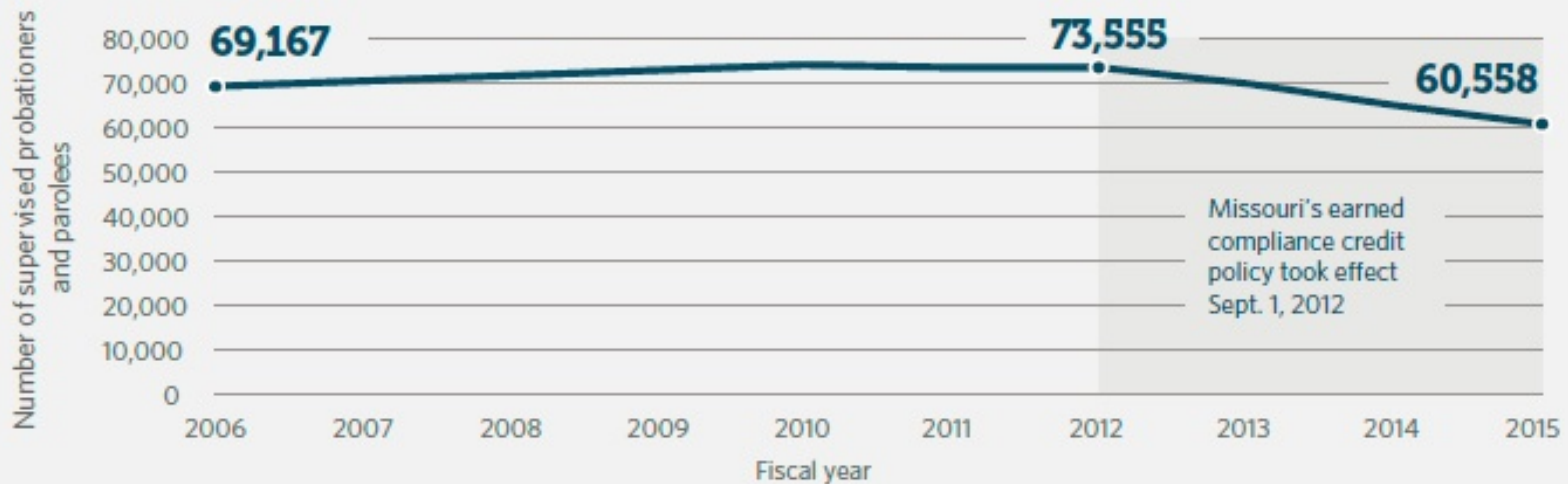
- Established under 2012 Justice Reinvestment Act (H.B. 1525); policy took effect September 2012
- Before law, revocations accounted for 71% of prison admissions, up from 55% in 1990; majority of revocations were for technical violations, not new convictions
- 30 days off supervision time for every full calendar month of compliance with conditions
- Credits awarded automatically, not subject to court approval

## Who is eligible?

- Probationers and parolees convicted of Class C or D offenses or drug offenses who comply with all applicable supervision conditions
- Must have served at least two years on supervision; can't be on lifetime supervision
- Statutory exceptions: Mainly sex/child abuse crimes
- Judicial exceptions: Court can refuse ECCs based on “history” and “character” of offender
- **About 75% of all supervisees ARE eligible**

## Missouri's Supervised Population Fell 18% Under Earned Credit Policy

Law allows low-level probationers and parolees to shorten their sentences

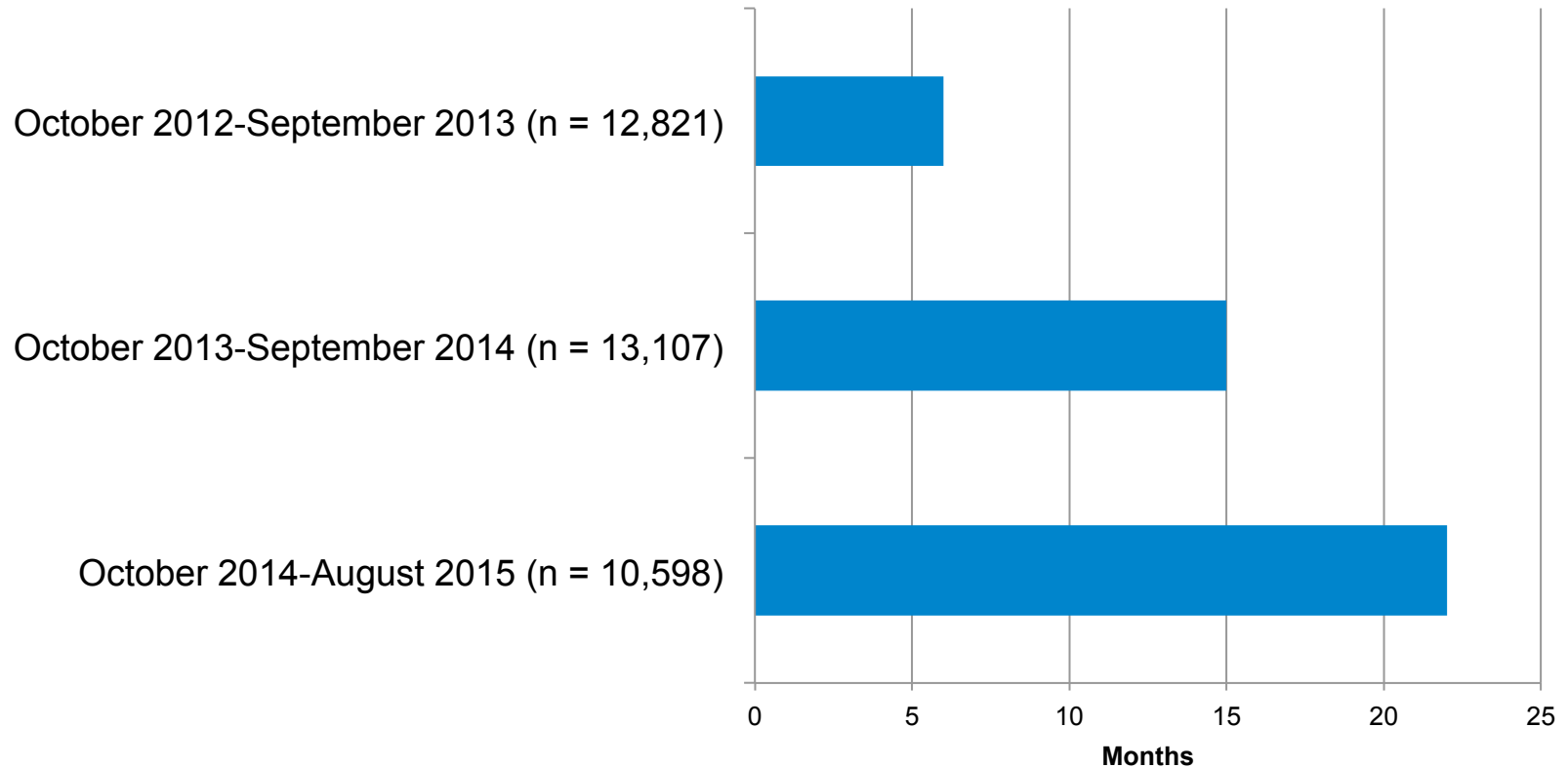


Note: Missouri's fiscal year begins July 1.

Source: Missouri Department of Corrections, "Profile of the Institutional and Supervised Offender Population" (June 2015), <https://doc.mo.gov/Documents/publications/Offender%20Profile%20FY15.pdf>

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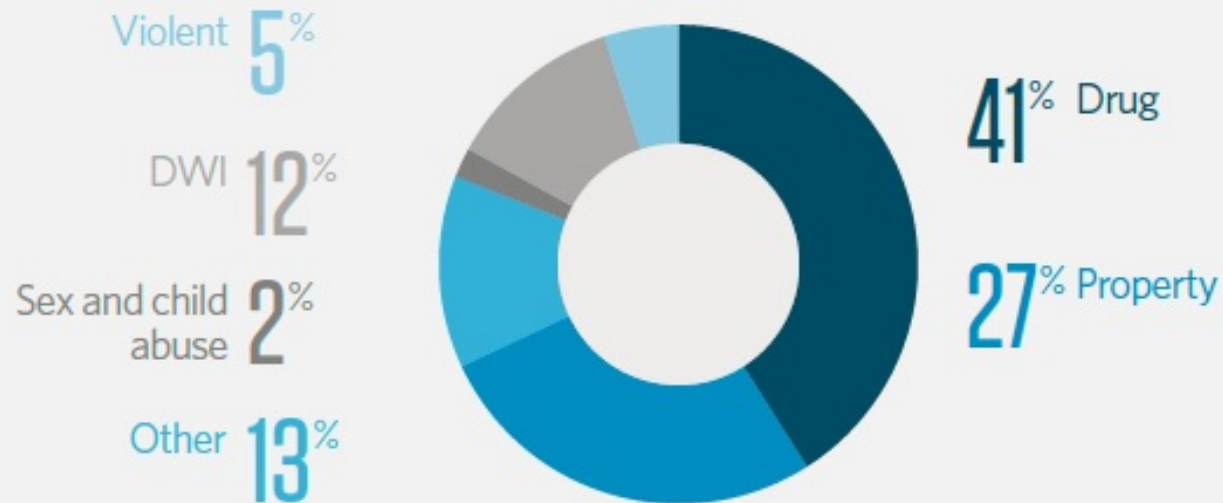
## Average Credit Went Up Over Time





## Nearly All Credit Recipients Were Nonviolent

Eligibility focuses on lower-level felonies



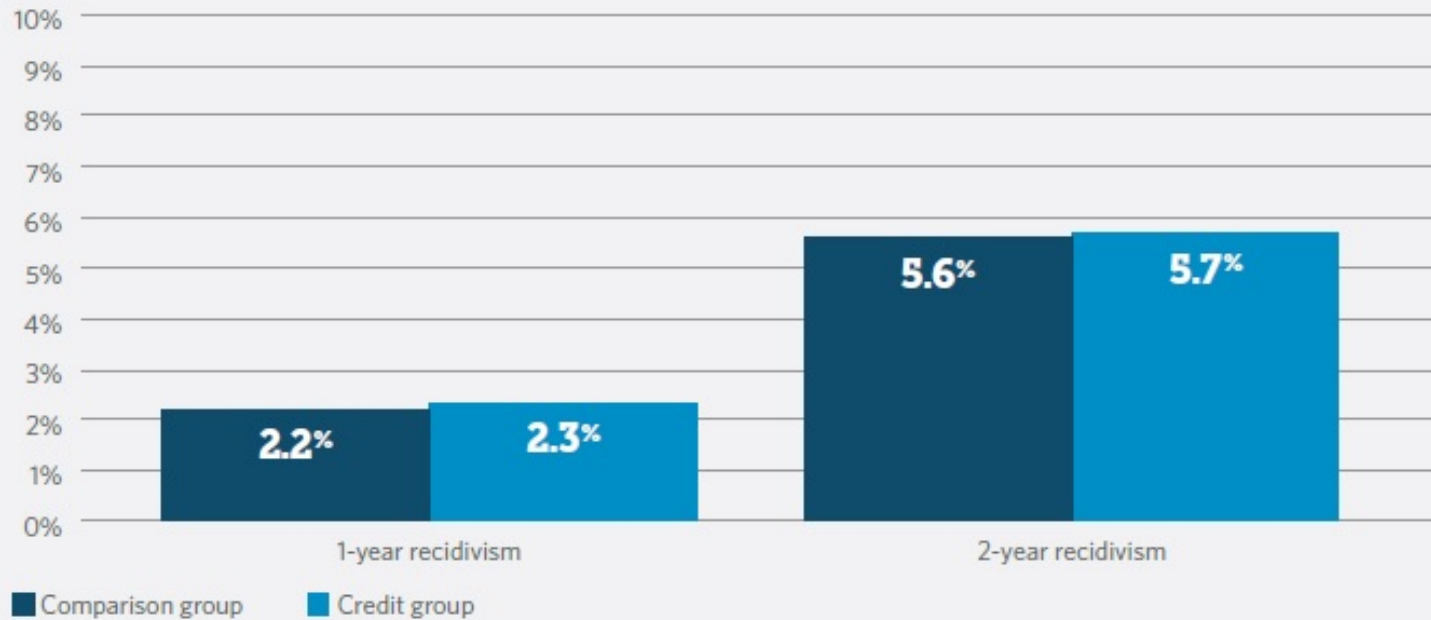
Notes: The "violent" and "sex and child abuse" categories include only offenses that are not excluded from earned credit eligibility as outlined in the 2012 Justice Reinvestment Act. "Other" includes driving with a revoked license, nonpayment of child support, and unlawful possession of a weapon.

Source: Pew analysis of Missouri Department of Corrections data

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## Earned Compliance Did Not Increase Recidivism Rates in Missouri

Probationers and parolees who received credits reoffended at the same rate as others



**Note:** The differences between the credit and comparison groups are not statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

Source: Pew analysis of Missouri Department of Corrections data

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## Questions for future research in Missouri

- Has state realized cost savings?
- Have ECCs meaningfully reduced technical revocations to prison?

**Questions, comments, follow-ups?**

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