

Board of Parole

2006 Annual Report

State of Wyoming



Board of Parole

Wyoming Board of Parole Annual Report

Quality of Life Result

Wyoming families & individuals live in a stable, safe, supportive, nurturing, healthy environment.

Agency

Wyoming Board of Parole

Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life

Wyoming's Public Safety is enhanced and families are reunified through informed Wyoming Board of Parole decisions releasing inmates with adequate preparation into a supportive community environment with appropriate conditions and levels of supervision.

The Wyoming Board of Parole, by making informed decisions about the release of inmates based on assessed risks and needs, participation in responsive programs while incarcerated, likelihood of successful adjustment to the community and other relevant factors, and by structuring release plans with conditions designed to ensure successful re-entry into the community with appropriate levels of supervision and services, makes the following contributions to the quality of life in Wyoming:

- Public safety and reduced victimization through reduction of crime
- Reduction in costs of incarceration
- Reunification of families
- Restoration of productive citizens into the community
- Involvement of Crime Victims in the parole process

Basic Facts

The Board is a separate operating agency composed of seven (7) members appointed by the Governor to serve six (6) year terms, with an administrative staff of six (6) full time employees headed by an Executive Director who is appointed by the Board. Institutional preparation of inmates for parole, information necessary to make parole decisions and post-release supervision of parolees is provided by a separate agency, the Wyoming Department of Corrections (WDOC).

The Board acts as a decision-making authority on the following matters:

- Grants of parole releasing inmates to community supervision or to consecutive sentences or sentences in other states
- Setting of conditions of parole
- Revocations of parole based on violations of conditions
- Recommendations to the Governor for grants of commutations of sentences
- Removal and withholding of good time credits from inmates as a sanction for misbehavior or refusal to participate in rehabilitative programs

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- Restoration of voting rights to qualifying felons

Additionally, the Board notifies victims of its actions and of offender status and provides them with the opportunity for input into its decisions before they are made, provides education about the parole process, enforces payment of restitution and Victim Compensation Fund obligations by parolees and makes referrals to other victim services such as advocacy and financial assistance. Victim input is factored into Board decisions regarding parole grants and special conditions of parole.

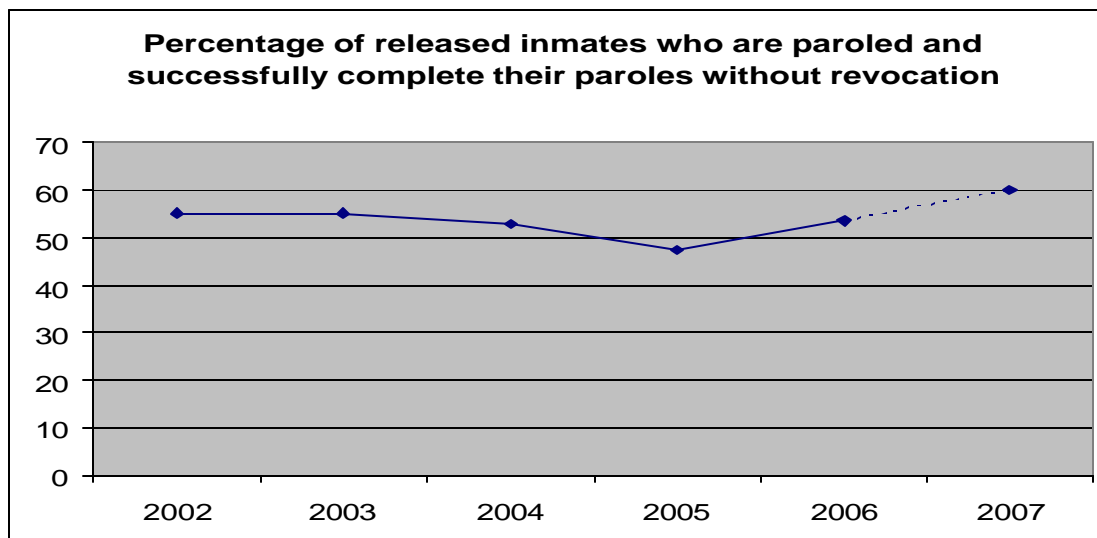
In FY 2006, the Board heard the cases of 1,077 inmates to consider various actions. Of 738 inmates who were parole eligible, 419 were granted paroles. There were 90 revocations of paroles granted both during and prior to 2006. Eight (8) commutation recommendations were made to the Governor, and voting rights were restored to two (2) citizens. 1,269 letters were sent to victims notifying them of notification rights and notifying them of pending hearings and actions of the Board. 117 victims wrote input letters to the Board and fourteen (14) personally appeared to give input.

The annual budget of the Board in FY2007 is \$805,461 in general funds.

Performance Measures

The most important performance measures identified by the Board of Parole are:

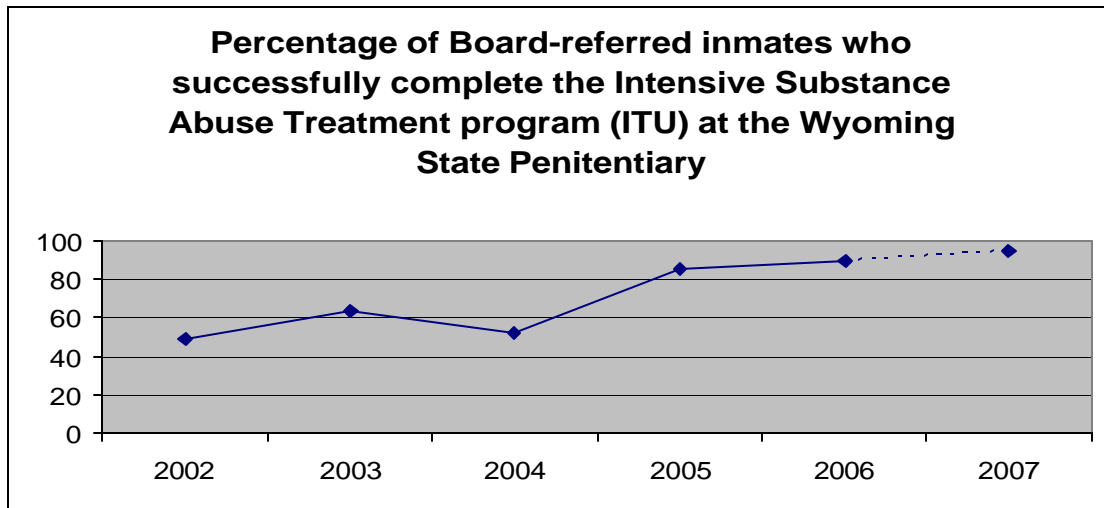
#1:



#2:



#3:



#1: Story Behind The Performance

Percentage of released inmates who are paroled and successfully complete their parole without a revocation action

Data shows a 13% improvement in this measure, which is calculated by dividing the number of parole grants less revocations for the year by the total number of inmates released from incarceration during that fiscal year. The Board's intent is to see more

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inmates spend some time under community supervision prior to discharge from their sentences, rather than being released from prison with no supervision or assistance.

The improvement in this measure is explained by two variables. The number of paroles granted increased by 7% from FY 2005 to FY 2006, which primarily reflects an increased population of eligible inmates. Additionally, the number of revocations during the same time frame decreased by 34%. This may be attributed to increased WDOC and Board of Parole training to agents in the concepts of a more case-management oriented approach to parole supervision, with an emphasis on prompt interventions and intermediate sanctions before resorting to revocations when violations are detected. Additionally, legislation passed in 2005 authorizes Board officials to conduct preliminary revocation hearings, where appropriate cases may be diverted from the revocation process with imposition of additional conditions.

What Has Been Accomplished?

Several positive steps have been initiated in partnership with the WDOC during the last year, which should have a positive impact on this performance measure, as indicated by the projected graph line for FY 2007.

Although the Board did not realize its goal of obtaining six (6) full time employees to directly maximize utilization of available programs in the institutions and communities, and to provide adequate information for Board decision-making, as requested in the FY 2007-2008 budget exception request, cooperative efforts with the WDOC have resulted in meaningful progress in the following areas:

- A comprehensive “parole summary” format has been implemented to enable WDOC to provide all necessary information on each offender for informed Board decision-making.
- WDOC has committed to fund ten (10) substance abuse treatment beds for parolees who have violated their paroles, which will divert some violators from being revoked back to prison. The Board of Parole, the WDOC, the Natrona County Drug Court and Casper Community Education Center, a private treatment provider, are working in collaboration on this project.
- The Board of Parole, WDOC and Prison Health Services, Inc., the contract prison mental health provider, are progressing in discussions about providing meaningful mental health information to the Board.
- The Board has implemented a process of scanning all offender files and making e-files available to Board members at each hearing so pertinent information on each offender is at their disposal.
- The Board has continued its involvement in the multi-agency collaborative Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative (SVORI) program, which succeeded in obtaining a grant funding extension for four (4) community re-entry specialists to be utilized throughout the state during the next year to facilitate coordination of community resources to assist in the re-entry process.

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- The Board has affirmatively engaged in providing training for probation and parole agents, and is emphasizing the consideration and use of intermediate sanctions prior to revocations.
- The Board has developed a system of sending written critiques to WDOC personnel and administration after each session of Board hearings, which is intended to assist personnel in understanding and meeting Board expectations for positive parole consideration, offender management and record keeping.

#2: Story Behind The Performance

Percentage of certified victims who provide input to Board

The percentage of certified victims who provided either written or in-person input to the Board prior to offenders' parole hearings increased by 10%.

This is the result of a much more proactive and user-friendly approach through the Board's Victim Notification Program. Victim notification letters have been revised to be more understandable, provide more information and give more assurances regarding the importance of victim input into the Board's decisions and the confidential treatment afforded to victim information.

More time has been spent in personal communications with victims prior to hearing dates, with better explanations of financial assistance available for travel to Board interviews. Cooperative arrangements with local victim advocacy organizations has resulted in additional sources of financial assistance for Board appearances.

The Board has provided outreach by the visible presence of Board personnel at virtually every available victim issues conference and training throughout the State. This has provided the opportunity for networking and education about the victim services provided by the Board.

What Has Been Accomplished?

The most significant accomplishment was the Governor's endorsement and the Legislature's approval of a new full time employee position for a Victim Services Coordinator. The addition of a full time staff member dedicated to victim services will bring a new level of energy, focus and direction to the efforts outlined above. As a liaison between the Board and the victim and victim services community, the person in this position will be expected to measurably improve knowledge about and participation by victims in the parole process.

In a related effort, the Board has rejuvenated the process by which parolees are required to re-pay Victim Compensation Fund obligations as a condition of parole, and has worked cooperatively with the Victim Services Division and WDOC to require re-

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payment by incarcerated inmates, thus making more funds available for compensation to victims.

The Board is also pursuing legislation which will enable it to enforce payment of Victim Surcharges and other monetary obligations through parole conditions.

#3: Story Behind The Performance

Percentage of inmates who complete the intensive substance abuse treatment program (ITU) at the Wyoming State Penitentiary

There has been a 5% increase in the number of inmates who complete the ITU program at the Wyoming State Penitentiary. This increase could be attributable to offender knowledge of a policy change that allows the Board to remove good time credits for non-participation in a recommended intensive treatment program, increased recognition of positive Board action for completion or graduation from said program and “motivational interviewing” by the Board members to educate inmates about the benefits of the various programs offered by the WDOC facilities.

What Has Been Accomplished?

The Casper Re-entry Center Therapeutic Community has become an integral tool for the Board both for the granting of paroles and after revocations and re-parole. This 100-bed facility provides an intensive treatment program without the offender feeling like he has been regressed into a maximum facility, which has been an impediment for some inmates at minimum security facilities who were required to return to the Wyoming State Penitentiary for the ITU program. The Board is collaborating with WDOC to grant classification overrides to allow inmates who wouldn't be otherwise qualified to enroll upon a granting of parole upon completion of the program. The goal of having inmates enroll in and complete intensive substance abuse treatment when indicated will remain a high priority for the Board, with anticipated increased availability of both correctional and community treatment beds in the future.