

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Criminal Justice Estimating Conference February 13, 2023

The Criminal Justice Estimating Conference convened February 13, 2023, to revise the forecast of prison admissions and population. During the six months monitored since the August 2022 Conference, admissions totaled 13,335 which was -164 below the estimate. The prison population at the end of January 2023 was 83,281 which was -688 below the August estimate. These errors in the forecast directly result from the lingering impact of the pandemic on the criminal justice system, which began in March of 2020. Most importantly, the Florida court system has been delayed in resolving its backlog of felony cases due to recruitment and hiring challenges. Conversely, both arrests and new felony filings are still below their pre-pandemic levels. Since arrests and filings are both upstream indicators of future admissions, the downward pressure they cause will push against the upward pressure arising from steps to clear the backlog, making it difficult to project the net impact on prison admissions. Furthermore, the marked increase in the average sentence length of those currently being admitted has made it complicated to forecast future releases from the incoming admissions.

Absent a clear path for how all of these issues will be resolved, the Conference made only slight adjustments to the admissions forecast—essentially assuming that the new commitments missing from the FY 2022-23 forecast will still occur, but over a three-year period. The new population forecast is shaped by these admission changes, as well as updates to the projected release schedule. The end result is minor changes to the prison population forecast adopted in August 2022. These changes range from a loss of -222 inmates in FY 2022-23 to a gain of 269 inmates in FY 2024-25. The annual percentage changes are similar to those assumed by the prior conference.

Year	Admissions	Releases	End of year pop	End of year over (under) August 2022 CJEC	End of year percent change
FY 22-23	27,671	24,335	85,460	-222	4.1%
FY 23-24	28,834	25,827	88,467	249	3.5%
FY 24-25	28,478	27,113	89,832	269	1.5%
FY 25-26	28,573	27,372	91,033	72	1.3%
FY 26-27	29,019	27,519	92,533	88	1.6%
FY 27-28	29,101	28,252	93,382	47	0.9%