

Day parole: Effects of Corrections and Conditional Release Act (1992) (R-62, 1998)

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This study was initiated to provide a description of how day parole use has changed since the introduction of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) in November 1992. The CCRA introduced a number of changes to day parole including eliminating automatic review for day parole, changing the eligibility date, and stipulating that the day parole must be used as preparation for full parole or statutory release. The study includes information on all day parole releases from April 1, 1990 to March 31, 1996.

The results of the study show a dramatic decline in the use of day parole since the introduction of the CCRA. Specifically, while the offender population increased by 12%, day parole releases declined by 32% and the number of offenders released on day parole declined by 37%. A detailed analyses of the 'time of day parole release' suggest that the observed declines are the result of a decrease in the number of offenders released early in their sentence on day parole, that is, released before their parole eligibility date (one third of the sentence).

The study examines the impact of other types of release introduced by the CCRA to determine if they could account for the observed decline in day parole use.

The CCRA changed the eligibility date for day parole from one-sixth of the sentence to six months before parole eligibility. While previous research indicated that this change should only affect about 8% of the day parole cases, it appears to have had a greater effect than anticipated given the decline in the percentage of offenders granted day parole early in their sentence. It is possible that a combination of the elimination of automatic review and the change in the day parole eligibility date resulted in cases being prepared for day parole review at a later point in the sentence and therefore fewer early releases.

The author suggests that day parole is more efficient than incarceration when the risk to the community can be effectively managed. It provides an opportunity for an offender to adapt slowly to the changes, which have occurred in society, and provides an opportunity to prepare for release by continuing treatment, looking for and starting work, and finding accommodation. Successful completion of day parole is a good predictor of future release success, and yet day parole use has declined since the implementation of the CCRA. Efforts may be needed to encourage the use of this option to ensure the correctional system is functioning effectively. ■