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UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION

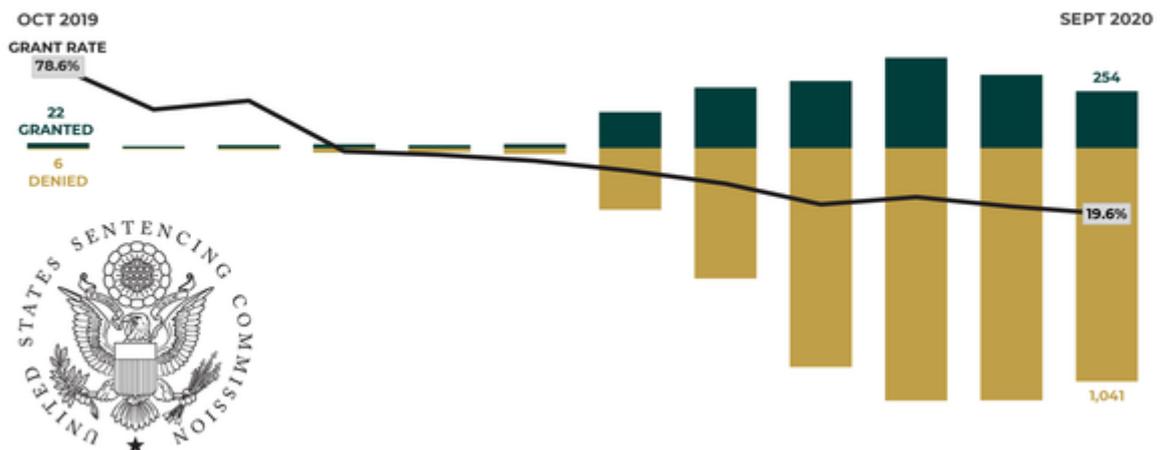
NEW REPORT

Compassionate Release

The Impact of the First Step Act and COVID-19 Pandemic

FISCAL YEAR 2020

OFFENDERS GRANTED AND DENIED COMPASSIONATE RELEASE BY MONTH



See Figure 1 of the report.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — (March 10, 2022) The United States Sentencing Commission today released a **new report that examines trends in compassionate release** during fiscal year 2020 in light of the enactment of the First Step Act of 2018, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among other findings, the **report illuminates the growing need for a post-First Step Act compassionate release policy statement** that can provide guidance to courts and facilitate greater uniformity in compassionate release.

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Quick Highlights

- The number of offenders who sought compassionate release **dramatically increased** in fiscal year 2020, primarily due to COVID-19. **The First Step Act**, which authorized the defendant to file a motion in federal court, **helped facilitate a substantial increase in grants** of compassionate release during the pandemic.
- An offender's **age**, the **original sentence length** imposed, and the amount of **time already served** by the offender emerged as the **central factors** that impacted the likelihood an offender would be granted relief.
 - *By contrast, an offender's race, criminal history category, and offense of conviction generally appeared to have little impact on the likelihood an offender would receive relief.*
- Overwhelmingly, **courts cited grant reasons comparable to** those listed by the Commission in its **policy statement**; however, in the absence of recently amended federal sentencing guidelines, **application** of compassionate release among those studied **varied considerably across the country**.
- When offenders were **granted relief** in fiscal year 2020, they received **substantial reductions** in sentence, both in months and as a percentage of their original sentence. The **average sentence reduction** was **59 months** (or **42.6%** of the offender's sentence).



NEW Commission Chats Episode

(March 10, 2022) - In the latest episode, **meet the Director of Legislative Affairs** and learn more about **how the Commission advises and assists Congress and executive branch** in developing effective and efficient crime policy.

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