

# Protecting Public Safety and Reducing Incarceration: Successes and Challenges

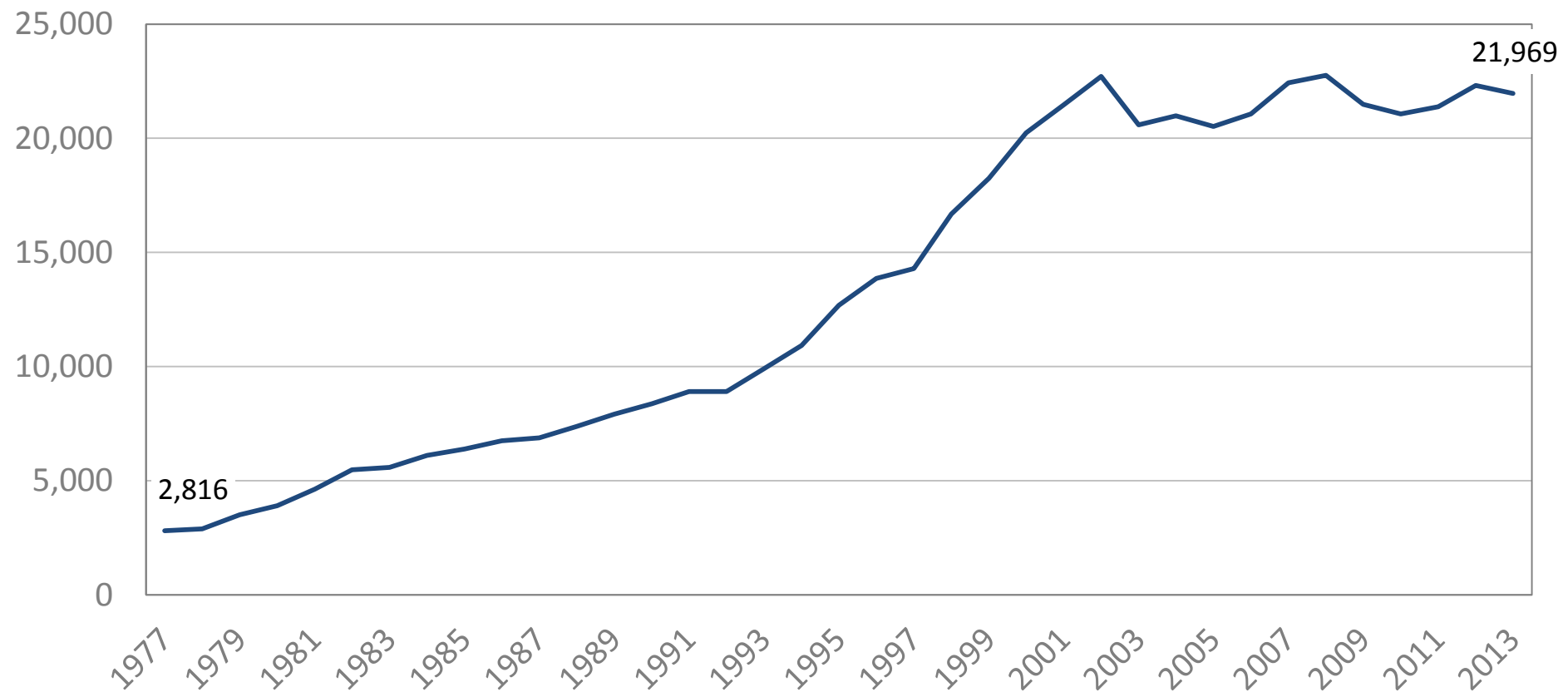
Emily Levett, The Pew Charitable Trusts  
Barbara Pierce, The Crime and Justice Institute

January 25, 2018

# Mississippi Leading up to Reform

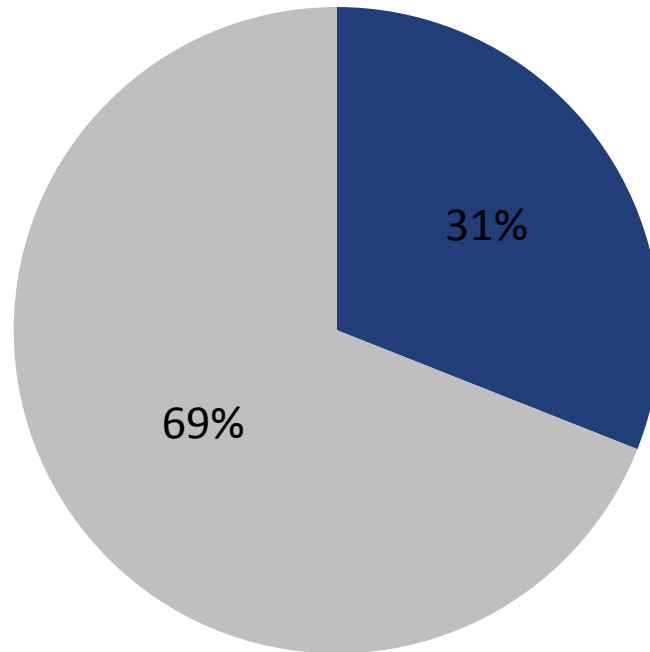
# Prison Population Grew 600% In Last 3 Decades

Mississippi Prison Population,  
1977-2013



# Despite Prison Growth, Recidivism Remained Stubbornly High

Percentage of Nonviolent Offenders Who Return to Prison Within 3 Years

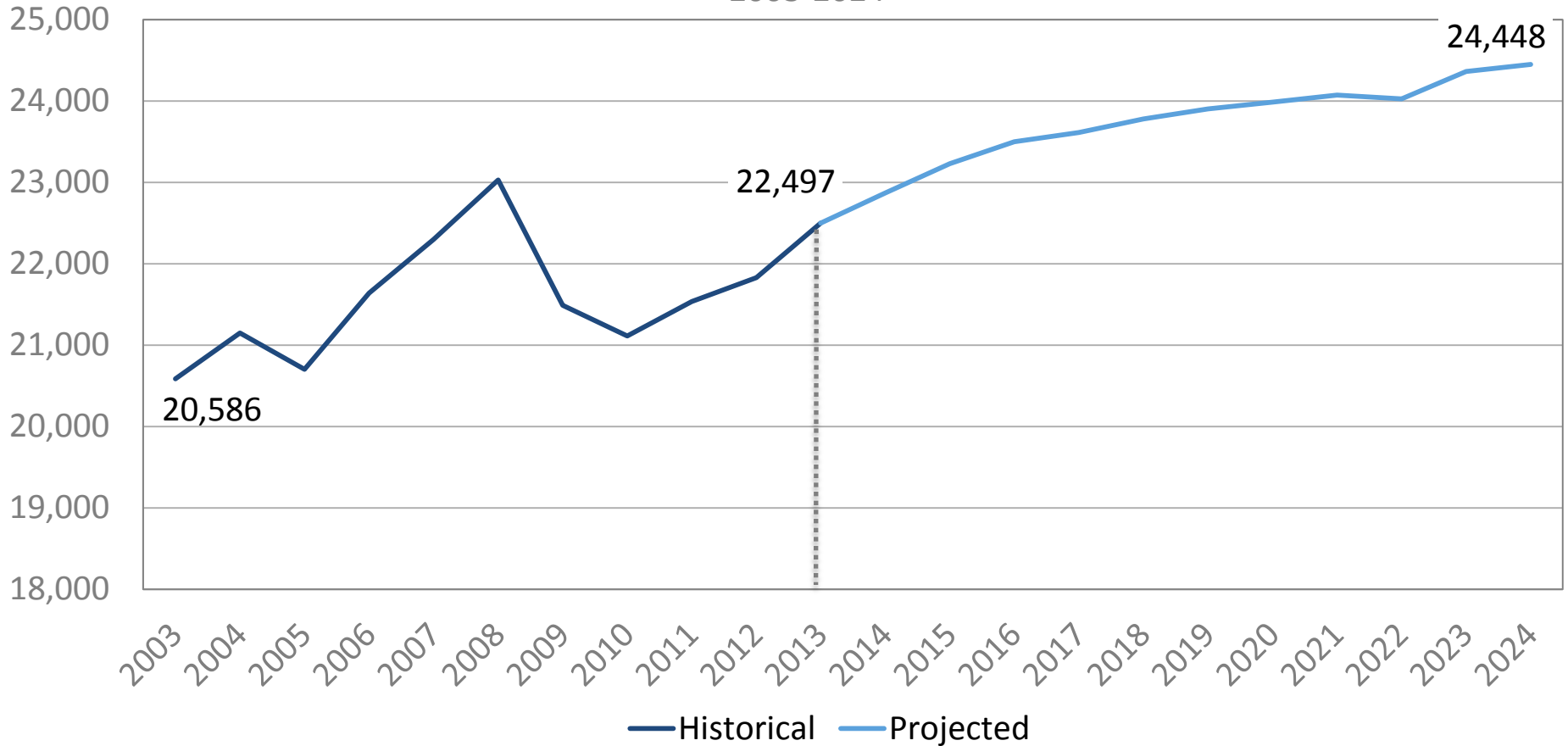


■ Returns Within 3 Years

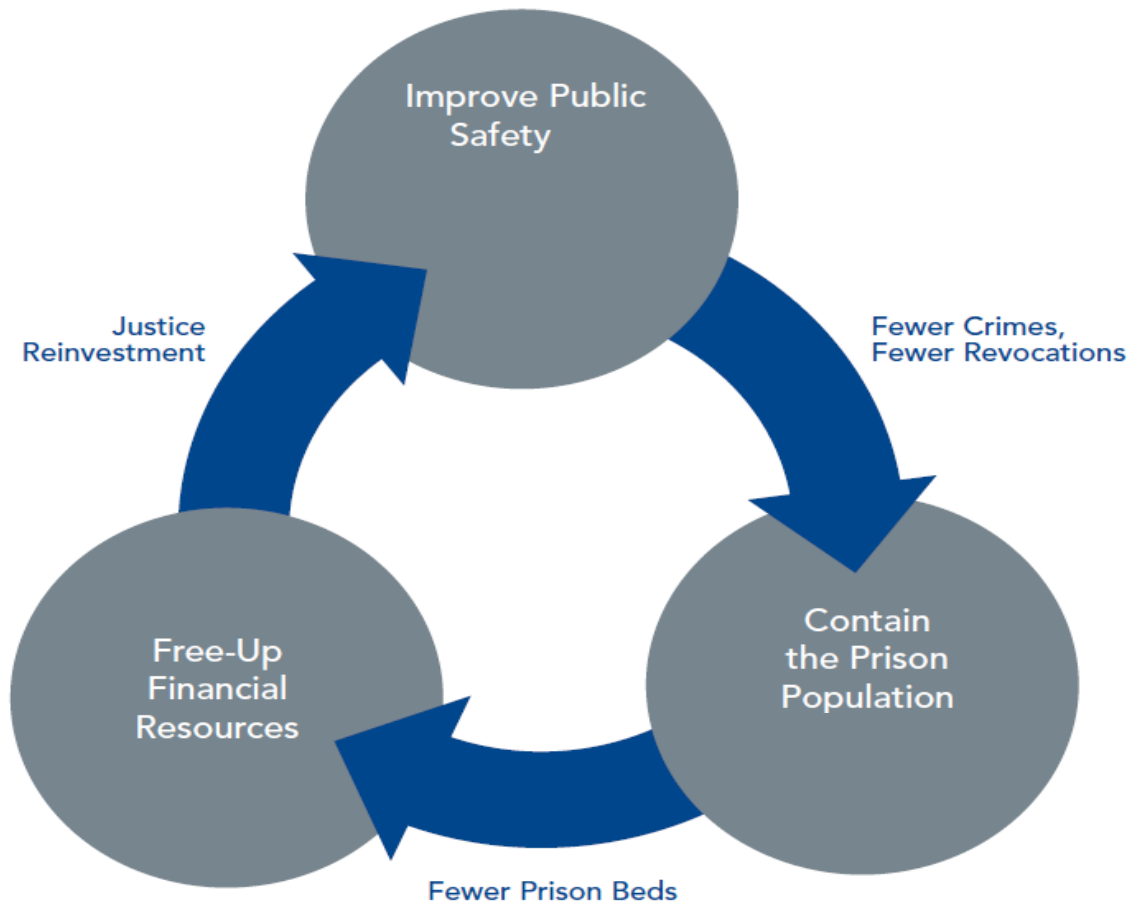
■ Does Not Return Within 3 Years

# Cost of Doing Nothing: \$266 Million

Mississippi Historical and Projected Prison Population Growth, 2003-2024



# Justice Reinvestment



# Task Force Findings and HB 585

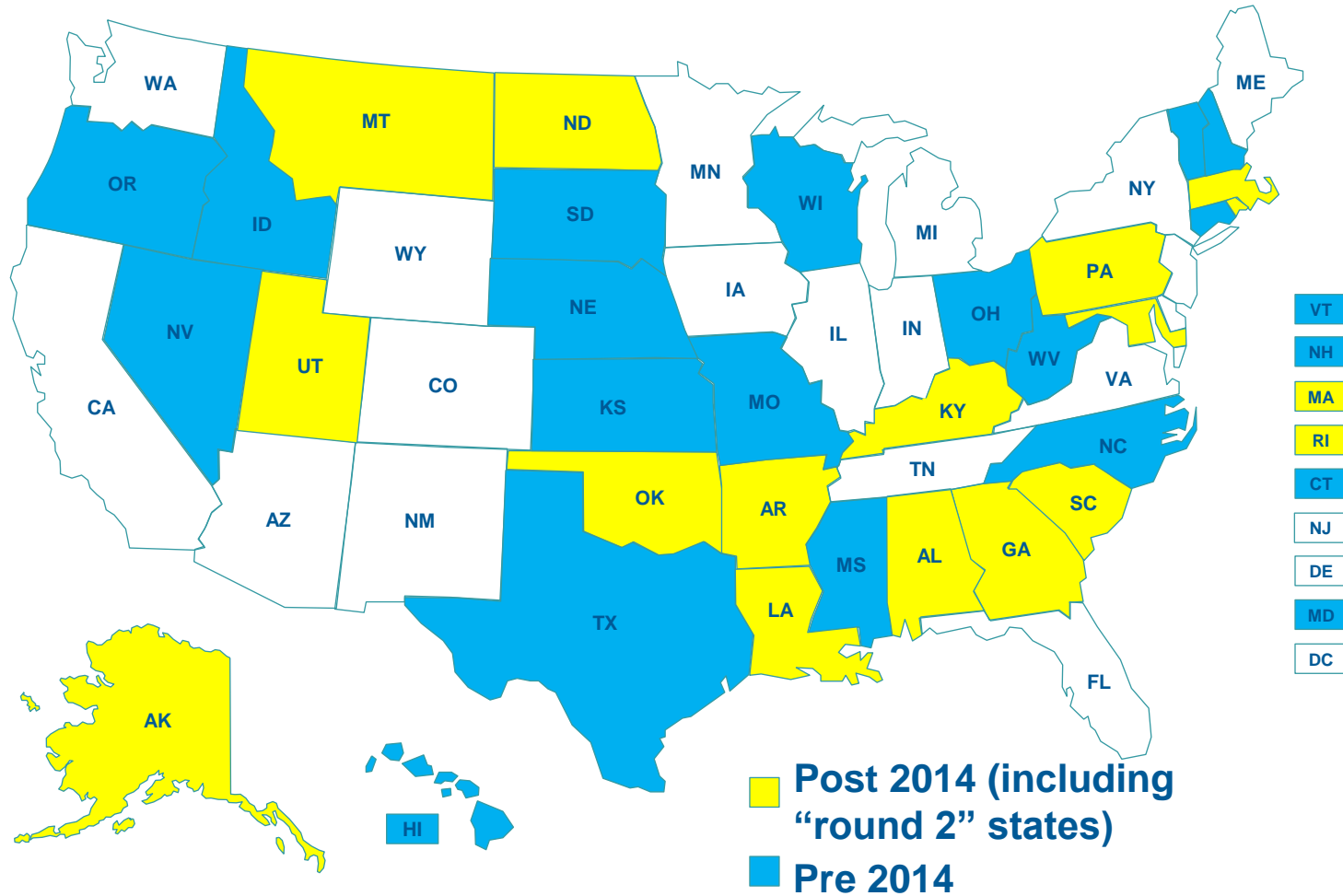
## Corrections and Criminal Justice Task Force (2013):

- Nonviolent offenders and those revoked for probation or parole violations accounted for a large share of the prison population
- Room to align supervision practices with the research on what works to reduce recidivism

## House Bill 585 (2014):

- Goals: Protect public safety; focus prison on serious offenders; and strengthen supervision

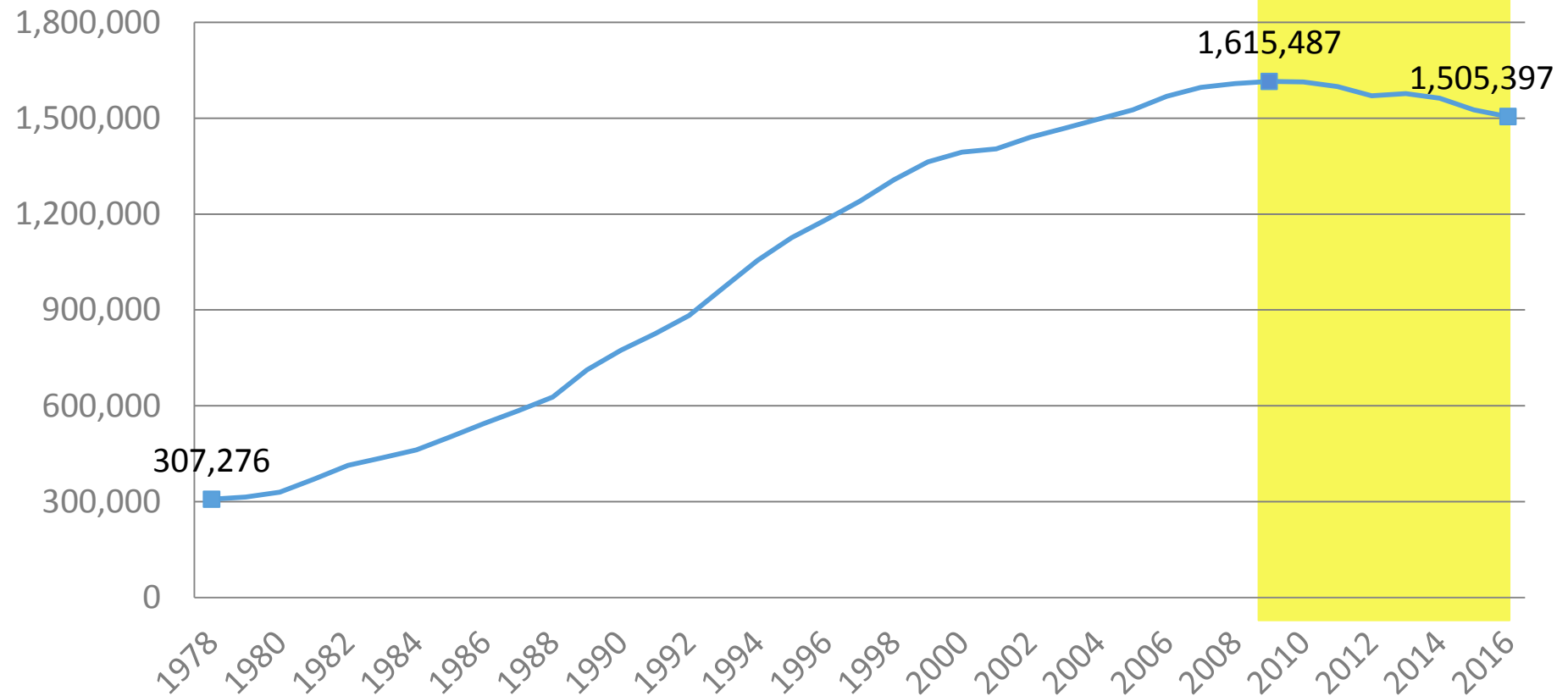
# Southern States Took on Justice Reinvestment after Mississippi





# After Years of Growth, National Prison Population Beginning Sustained Decline

United States Prison Population, 1978-2016



# Mississippi Since Reform

# Overview

Part I: Performance Post-Reform

Part II: Current Challenges

Part III: Summary

# Goal: Protect Public Safety

## Part I: Performance Post-Reform

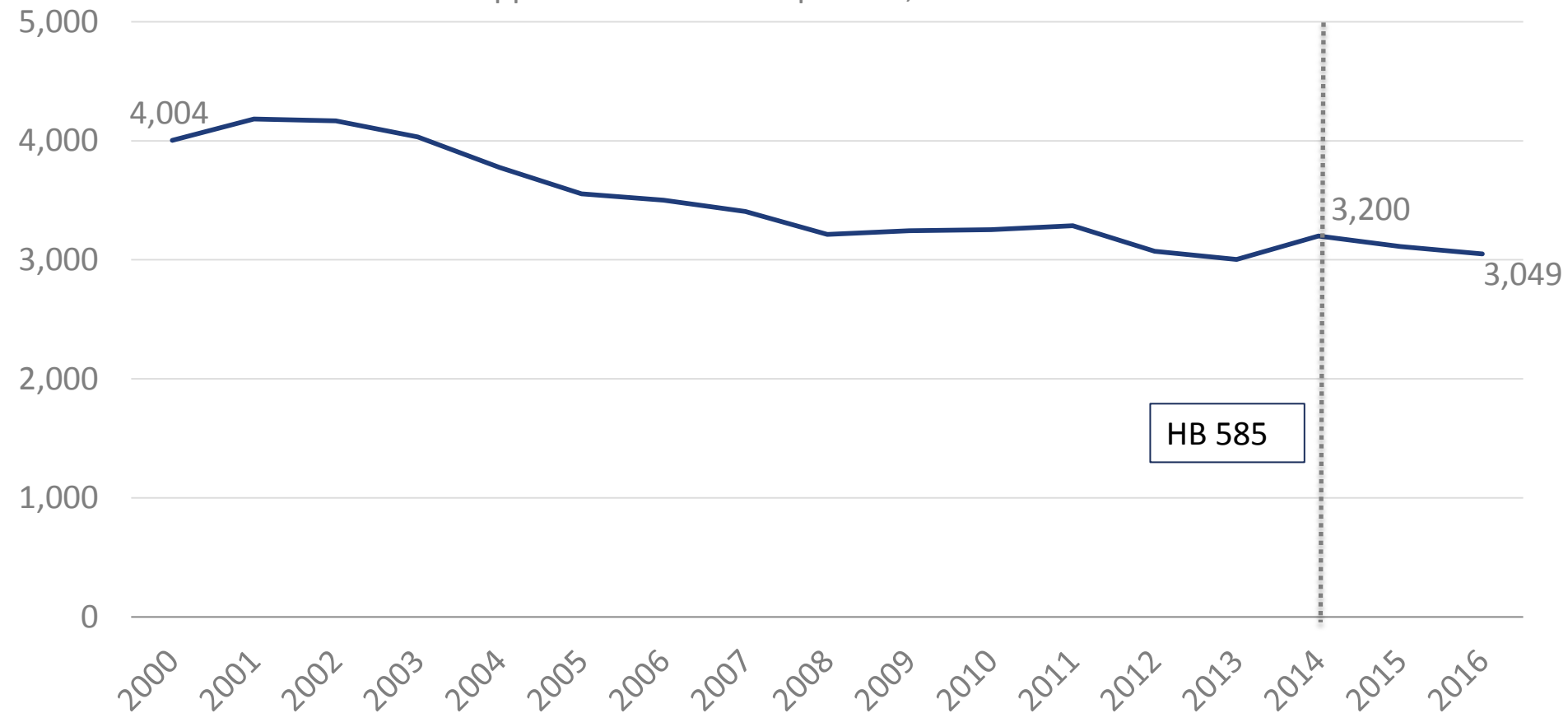
- Goal: Protect public safety
- Goal: Focus prison on serious offenders
- Goal: Strengthen supervision

## Part II: Current Challenges

## Part III: Summary

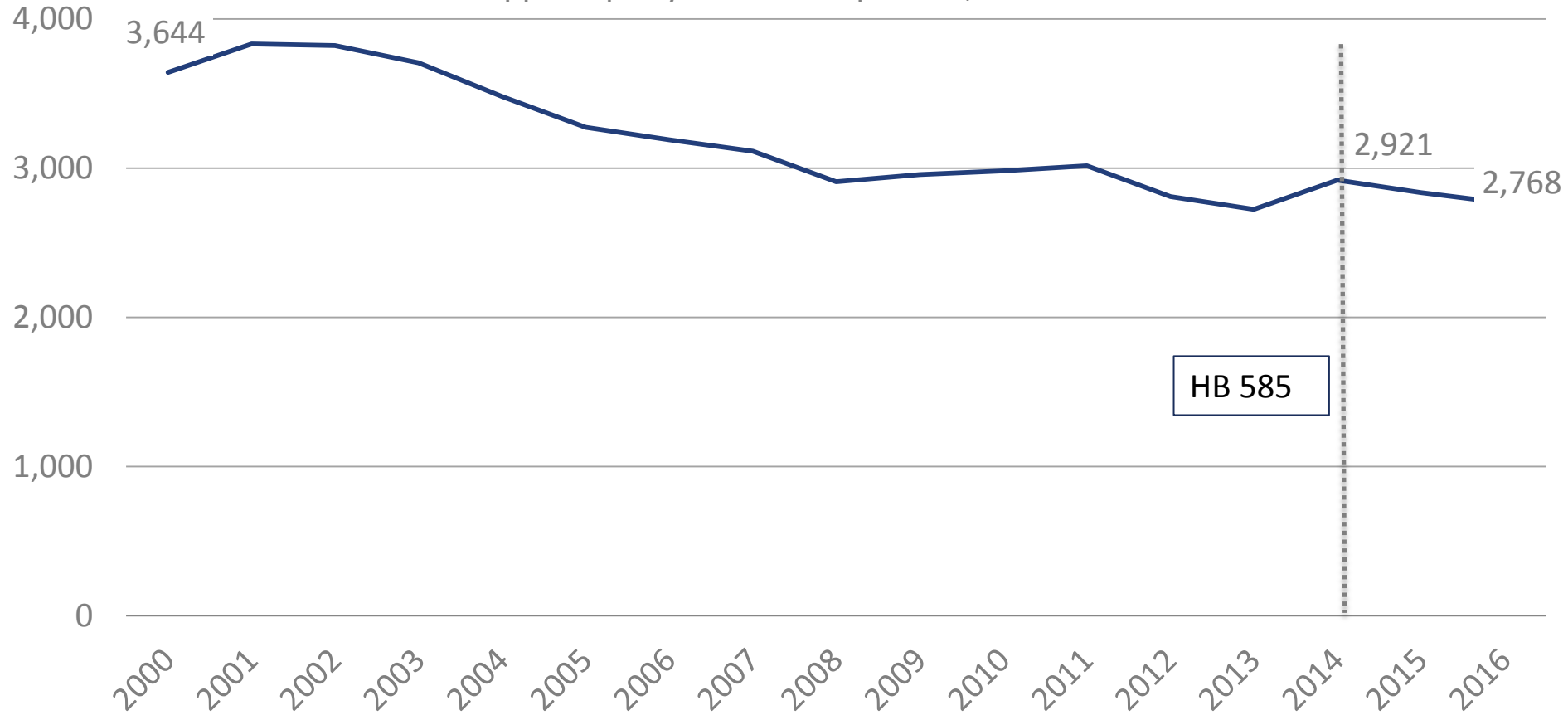
# Crime Rate Continued to Decline Post-Reform

Mississippi Index Crime Rate per 100,000 Residents

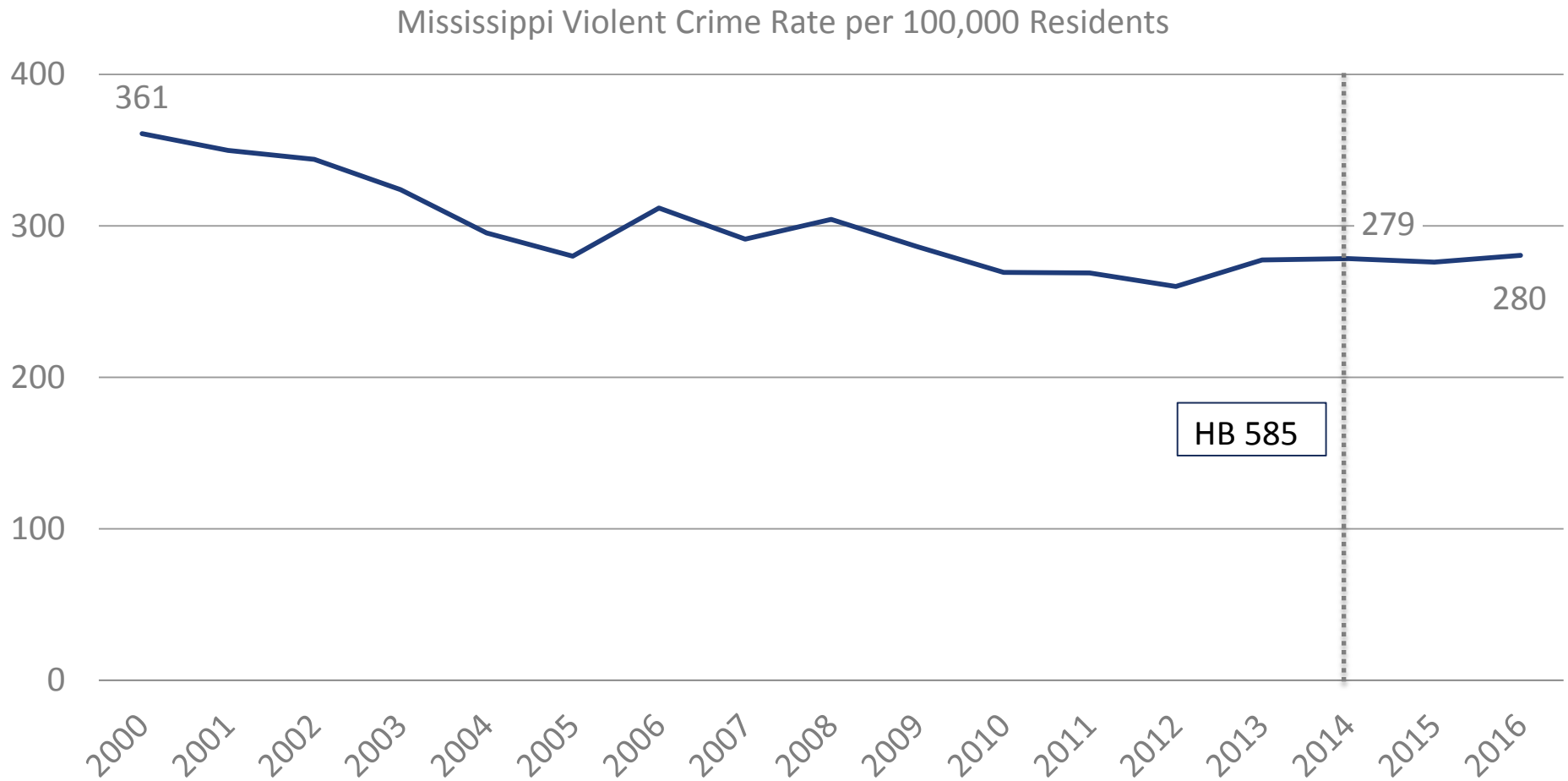


# Since Reform, Property Crime Rate Down 5%

Mississippi Property Crime Rate per 100,000 Residents



# Violent Crime Rate Flat Since Reform



# Takeaways: Protect Public Safety

- Since reform:
  - Overall crime rate has continued to decline
  - Property crimes decreased by 5 percent from 2014 to 2016
  - Violent crime remained stable, and at an historic low



# Goal: Focus Prison on Serious Offenders

## Part I: Performance Post-Reform

- Goal: Protect public safety
- Goal: Focus prison on serious offenders
- Goal: Strengthen supervision

## Part II: Current Challenges

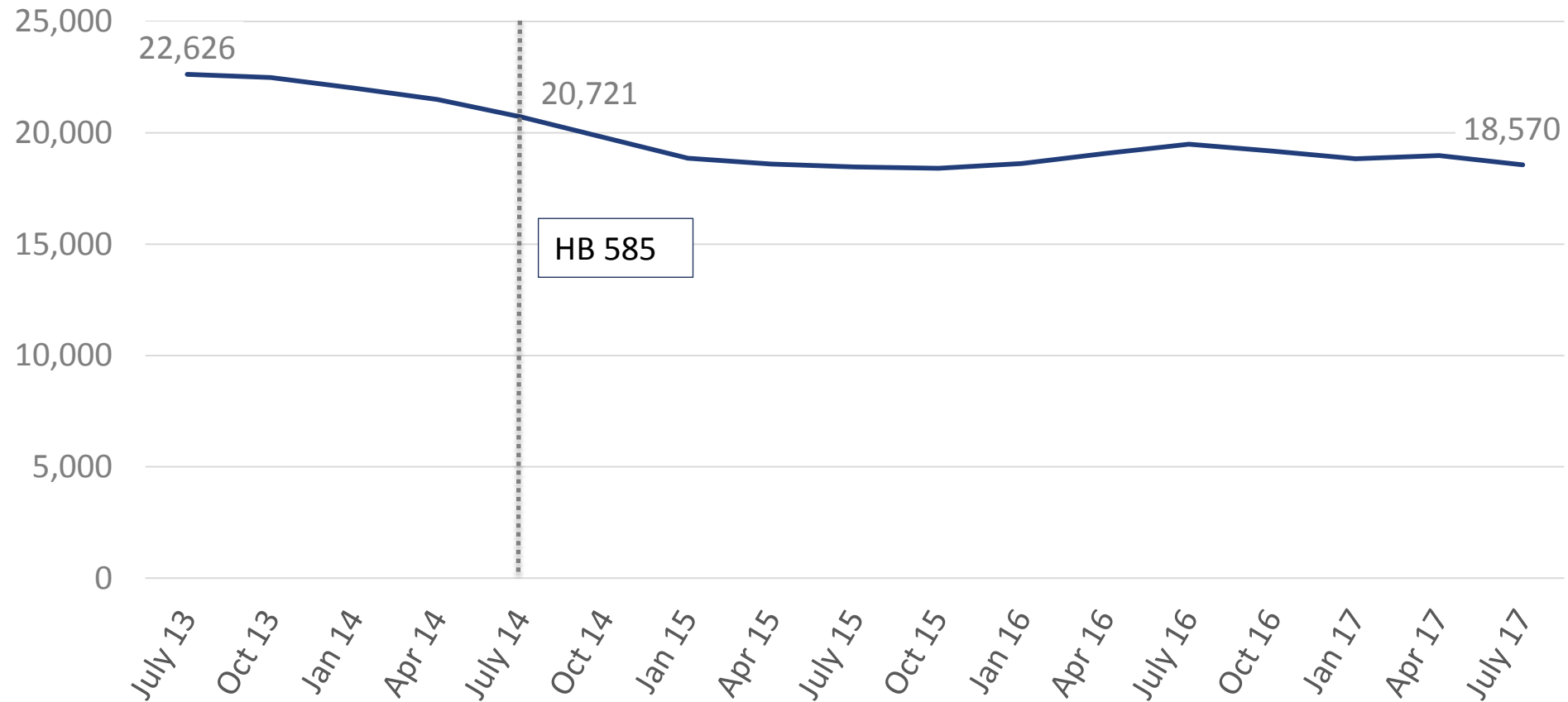
## Part III: Summary

# Policies: Focus Prison on Serious Offenders

- Expands eligibility for prison alternatives
- Reduces maximum sentences for certain non-violent drug and property offenses
- Extends parole eligibility to all non-violent offenders
- Implements “true minimums” to ensure that non-violent and violent offenders serve at least 25% and 50% of their sentences, respectively

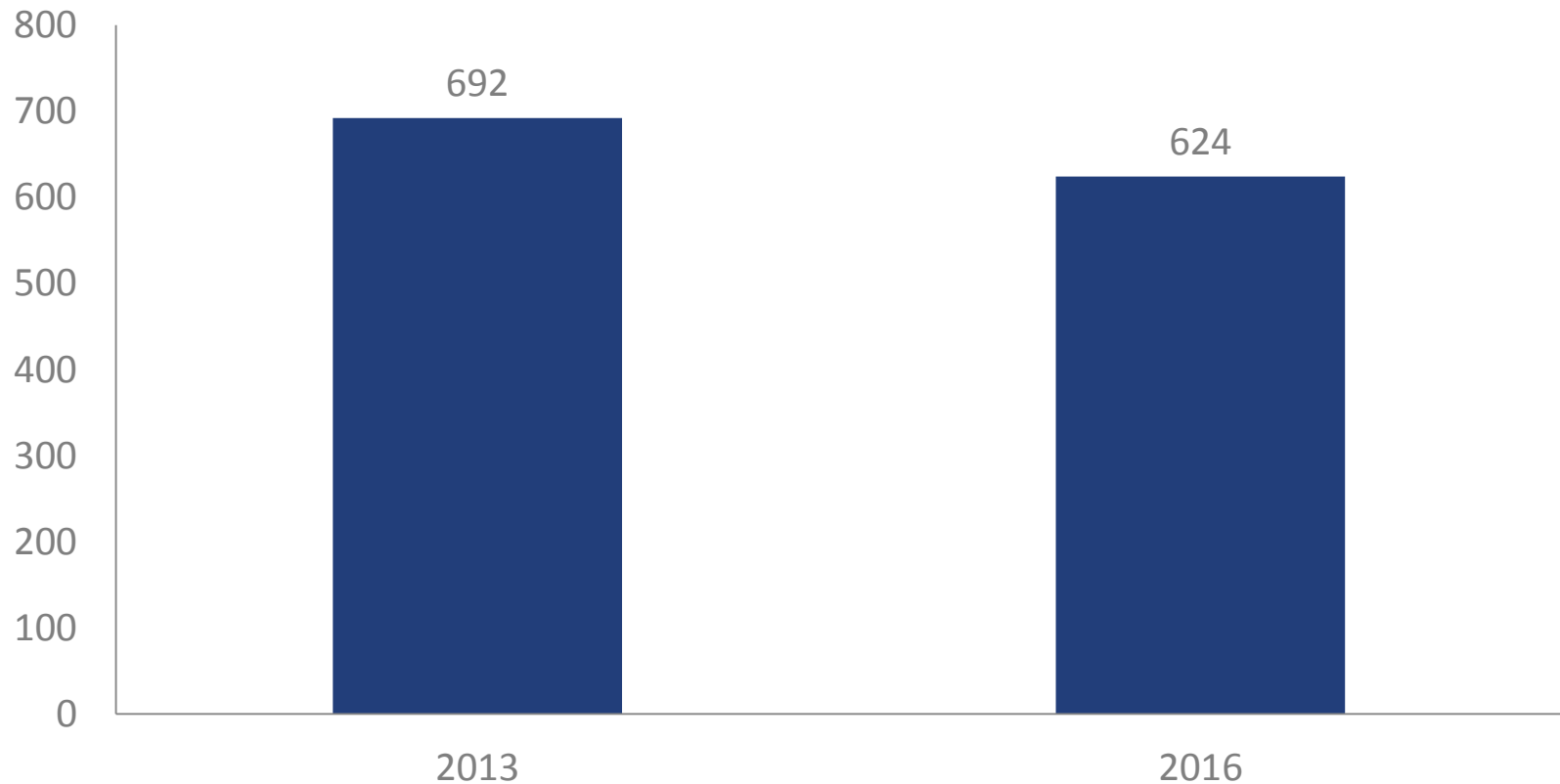
# Prison Population Declined 10% After Reform

Prison Population, by Quarter



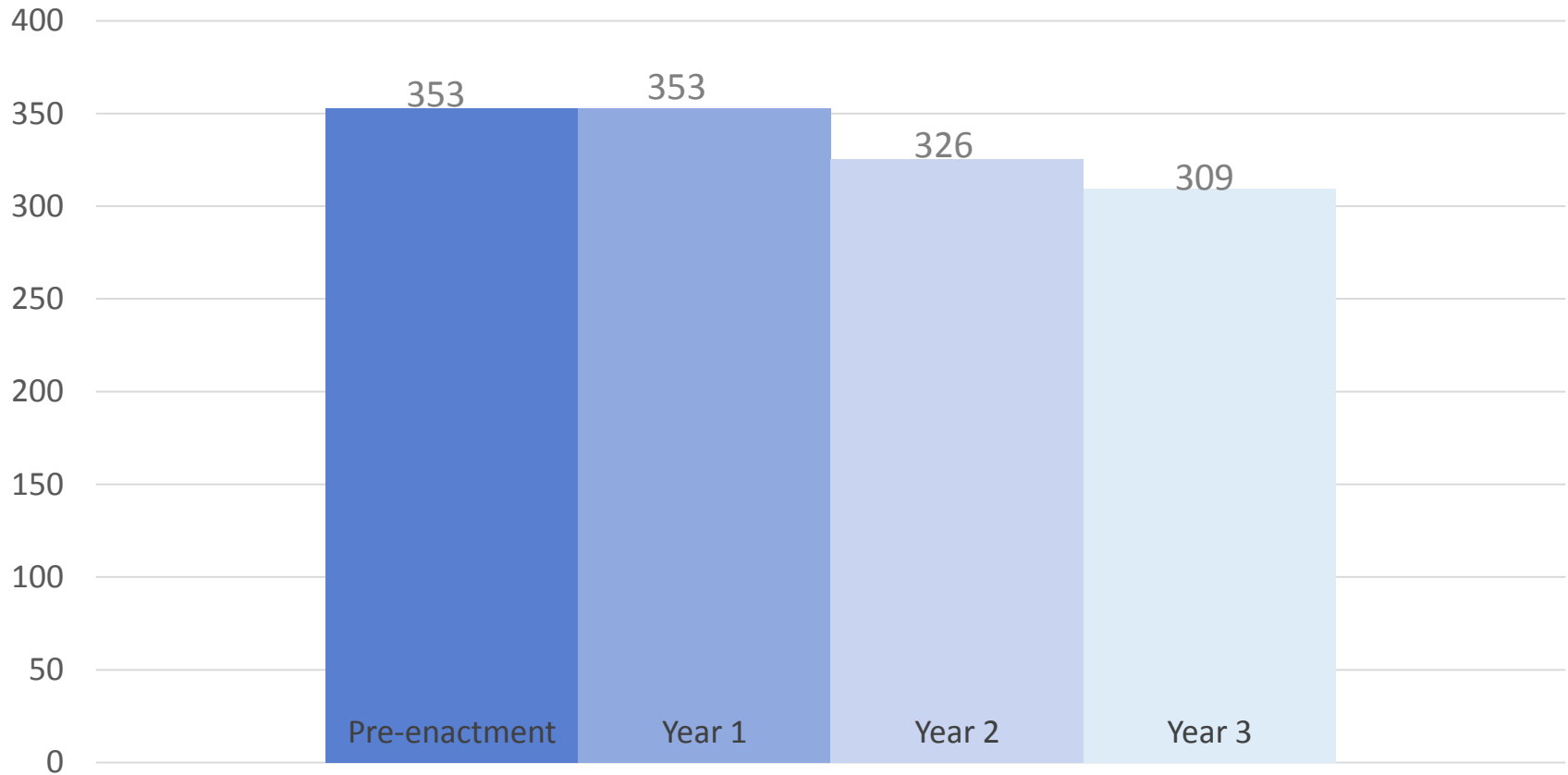
# Imprisonment Rate Declined 10% After Reform

Mississippi Imprisonment Rate per 100,000 Residents



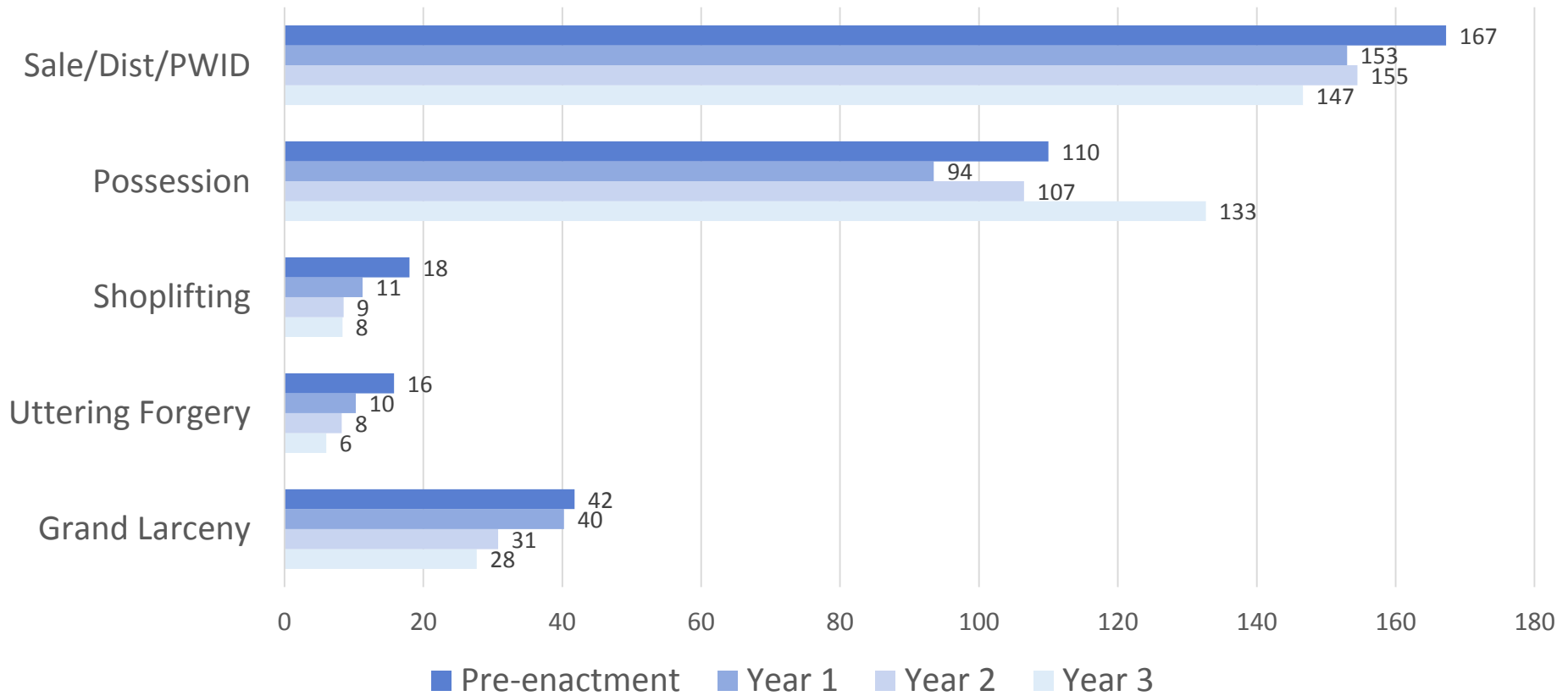
# Since Reform, Fewer People Entering Prison for Targeted Non-Violent Crimes

Average Quarterly Admissions of Targeted Offenses, by Year

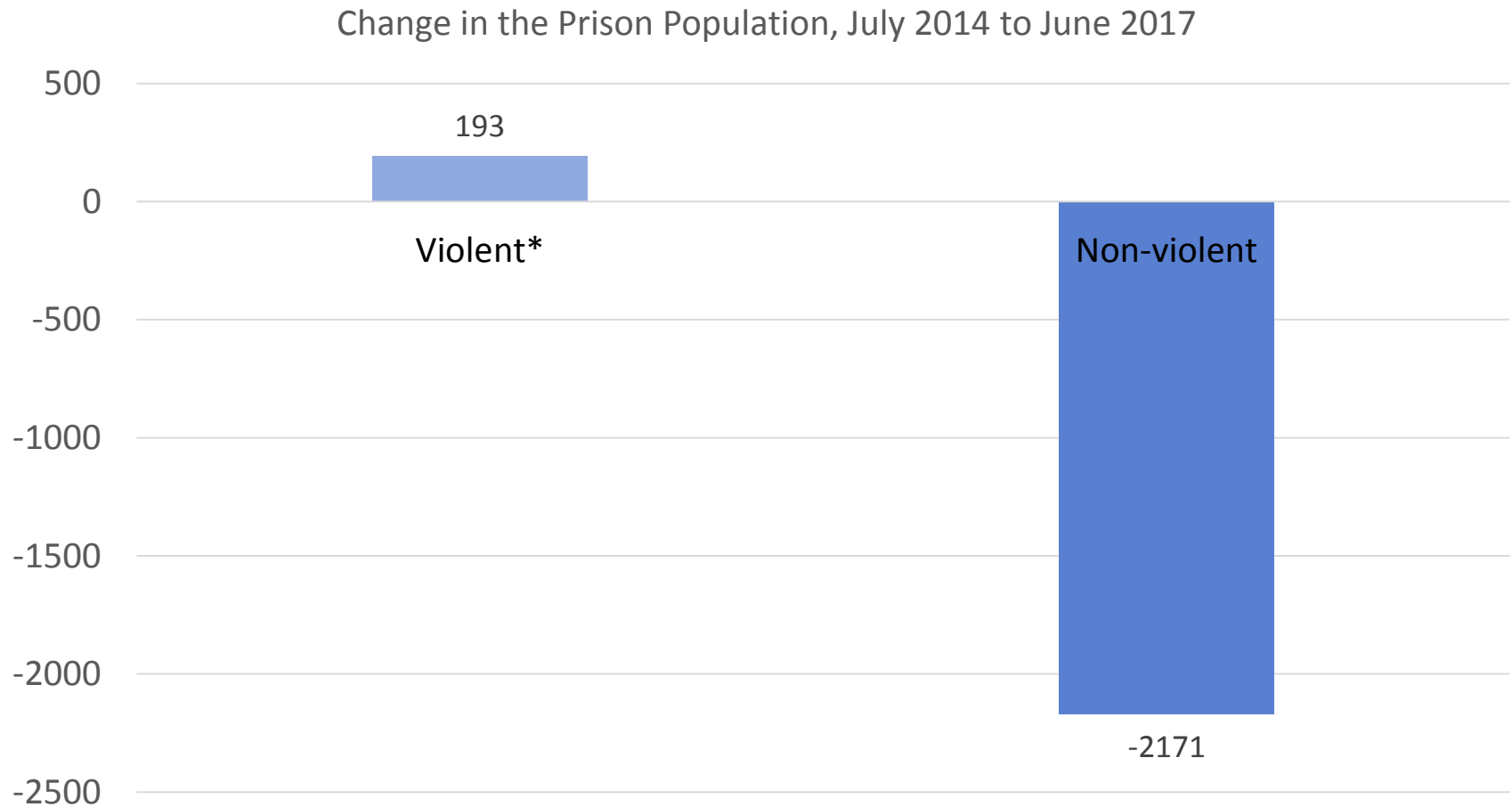


# Despite Overall Decrease, Growth in Admissions for Drug Possession Offenses

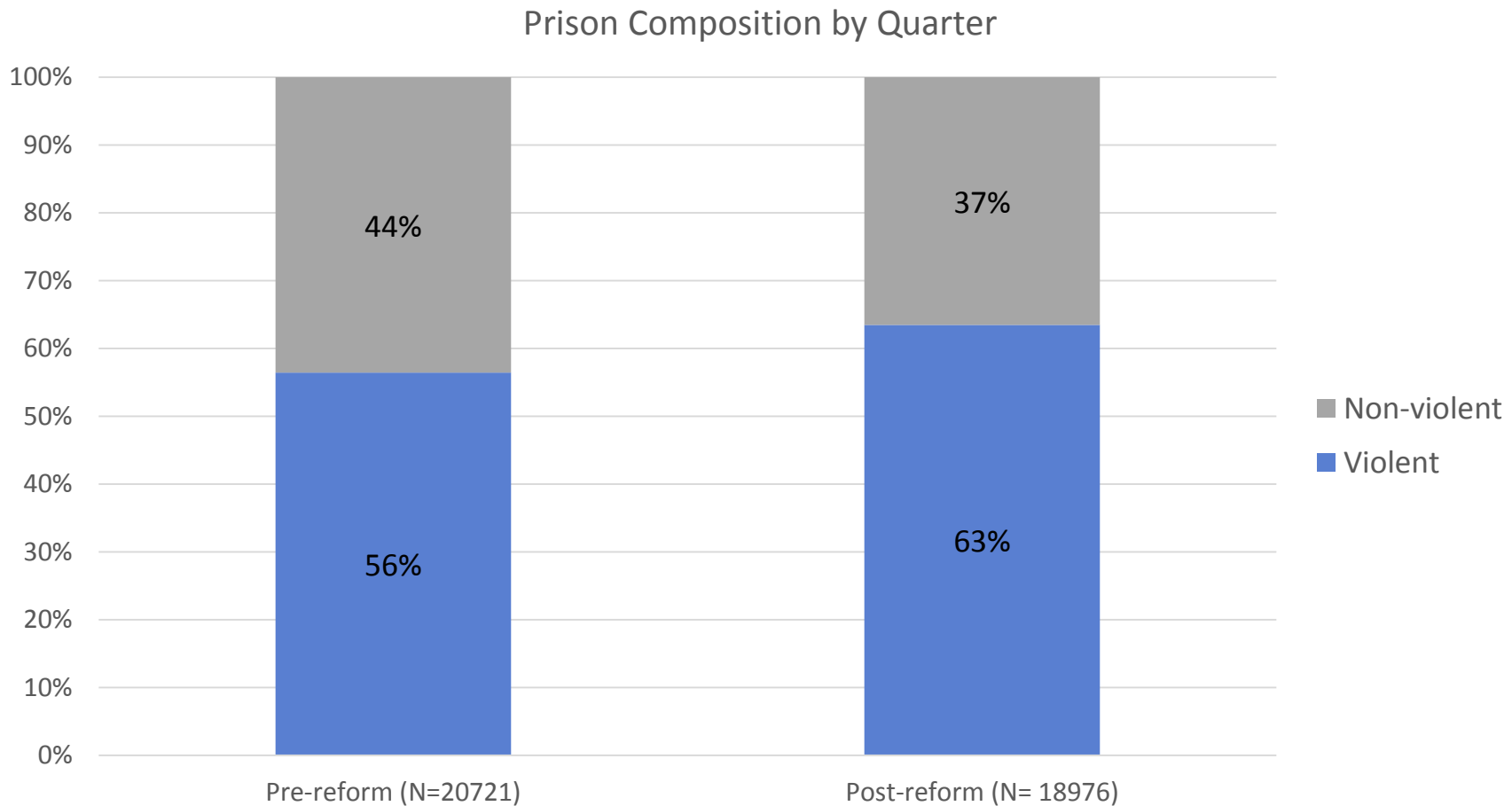
Average Quarterly Admissions by Offense, by Year



# Since Reform, Fewer Non-Violent Offenders Behind Bars



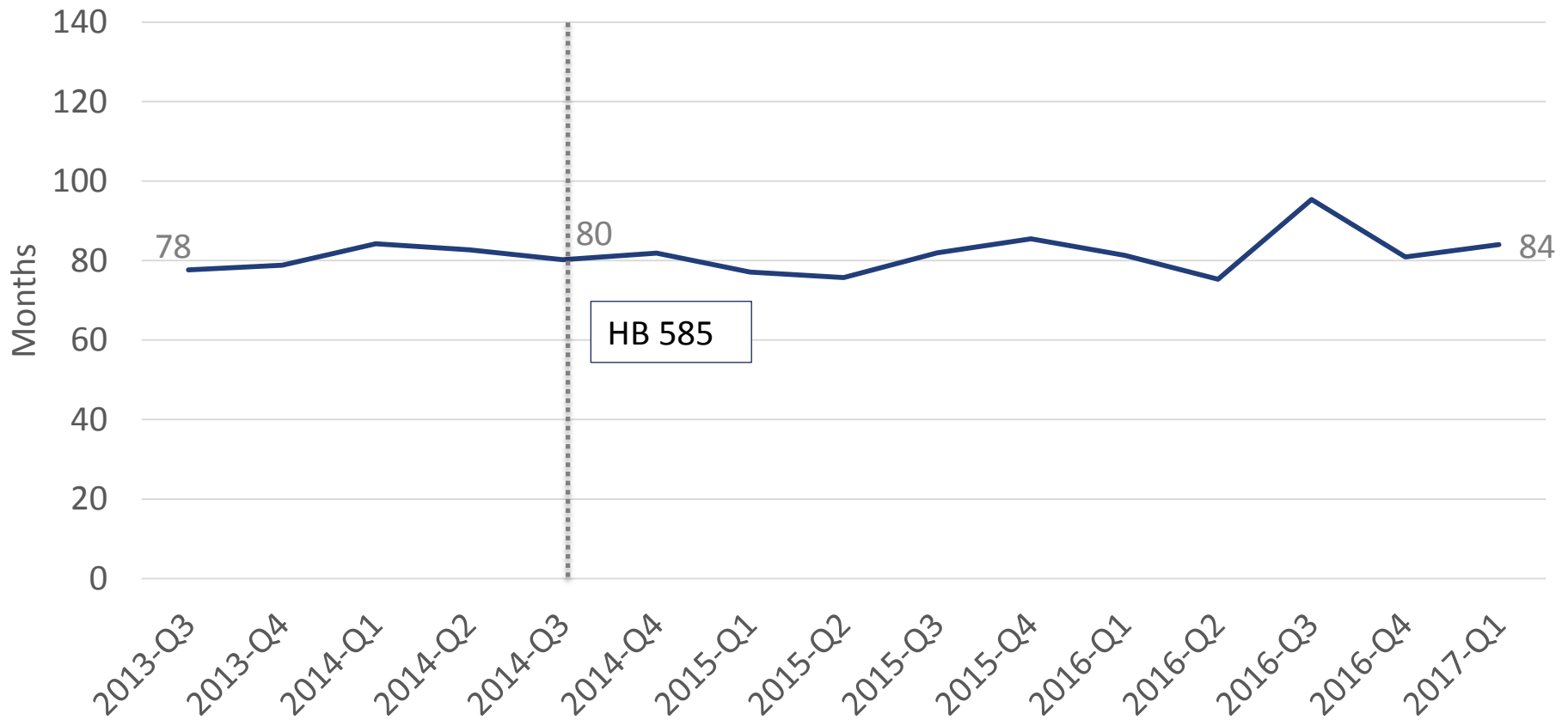
# Share of Prison Prioritized for Violent Offenders Increased by 13%





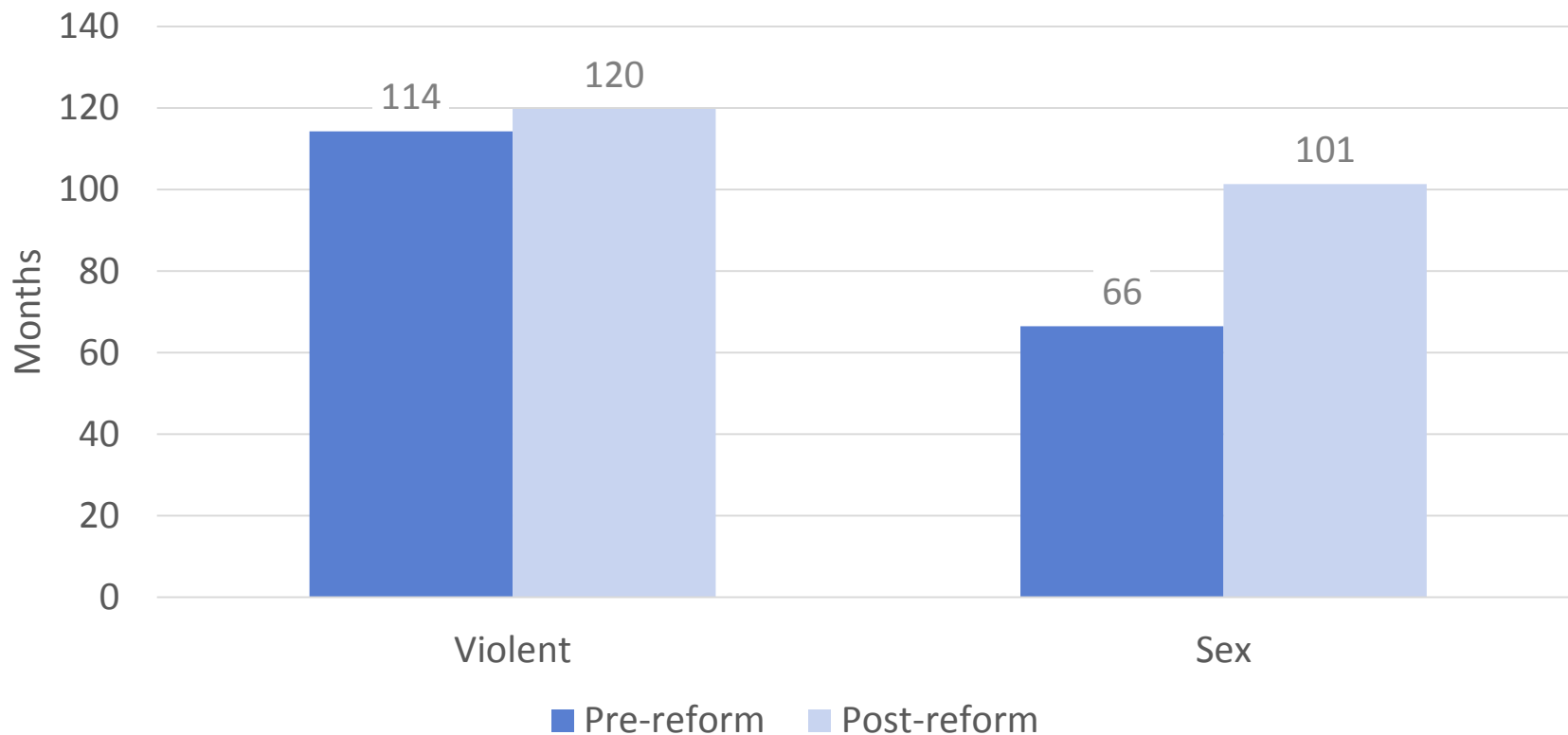
# Since Reform, Length of Stay Up Slightly

Average Time Served, Prison Releases, by Quarter



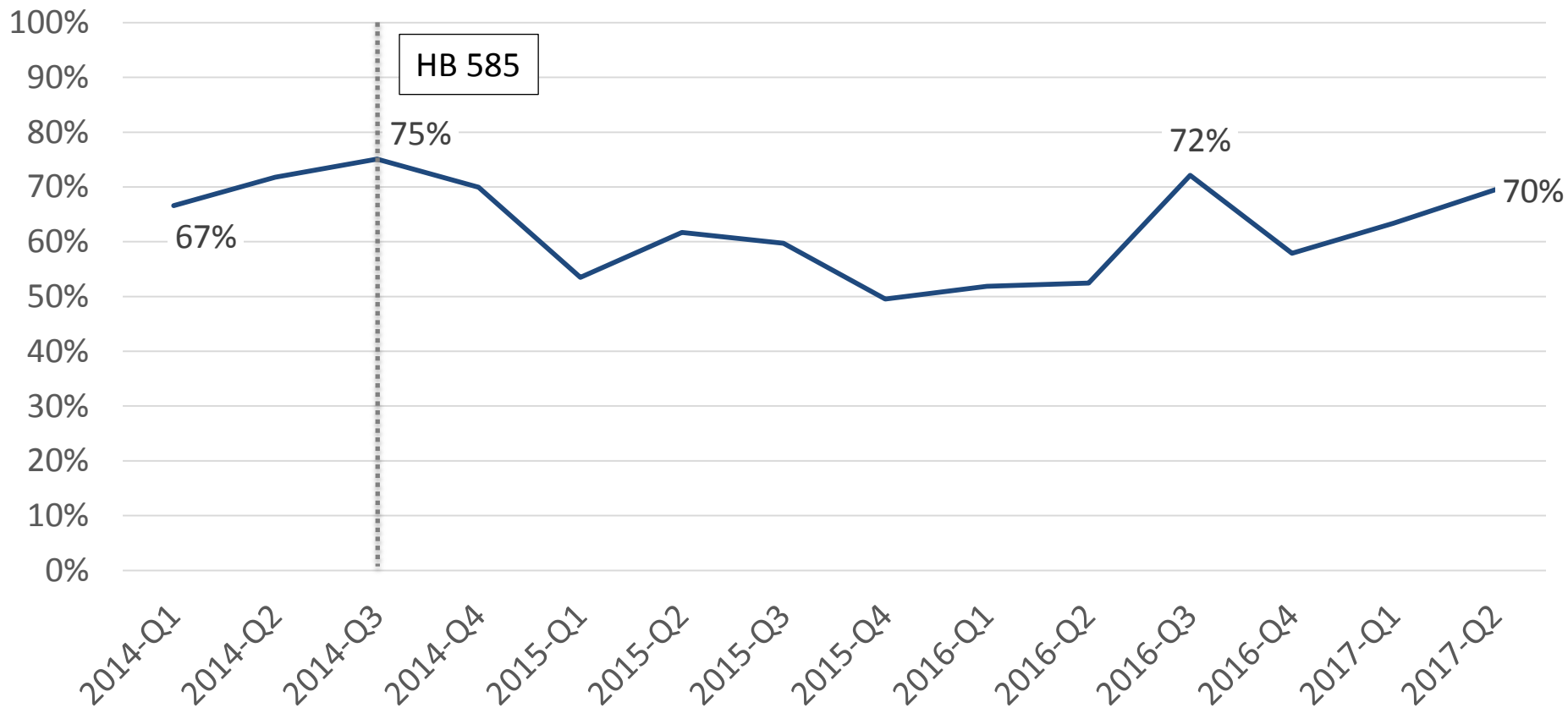
# Longer Lengths of Stay for Violent, Sex Offenders

Average Time Served for Prison Releases by Offense Type, by Quarter



# Post-Reform Parole Grant Rate Above 50%

Parole Grant Rate, by Quarter



# Takeaways: Focus Prison on Serious Offenders

- Since reform:
  - Prison population, imprisonment rate down 10%
  - Fewer people entering prison for targeted non-violent crimes
  - Share of prison prioritized for violent offenders increased by 13%
  - Length of stay up slightly, driven by longer prison stays for violent, sex offenders
  - Parole grant rate remains high

# Goal: Strengthen Supervision

## Part I: Performance Post-Reform

- Goal: Protect public safety
- Goal: Focus prison on serious offenders
- Goal: Strengthen supervision

## Part II: Current Challenges

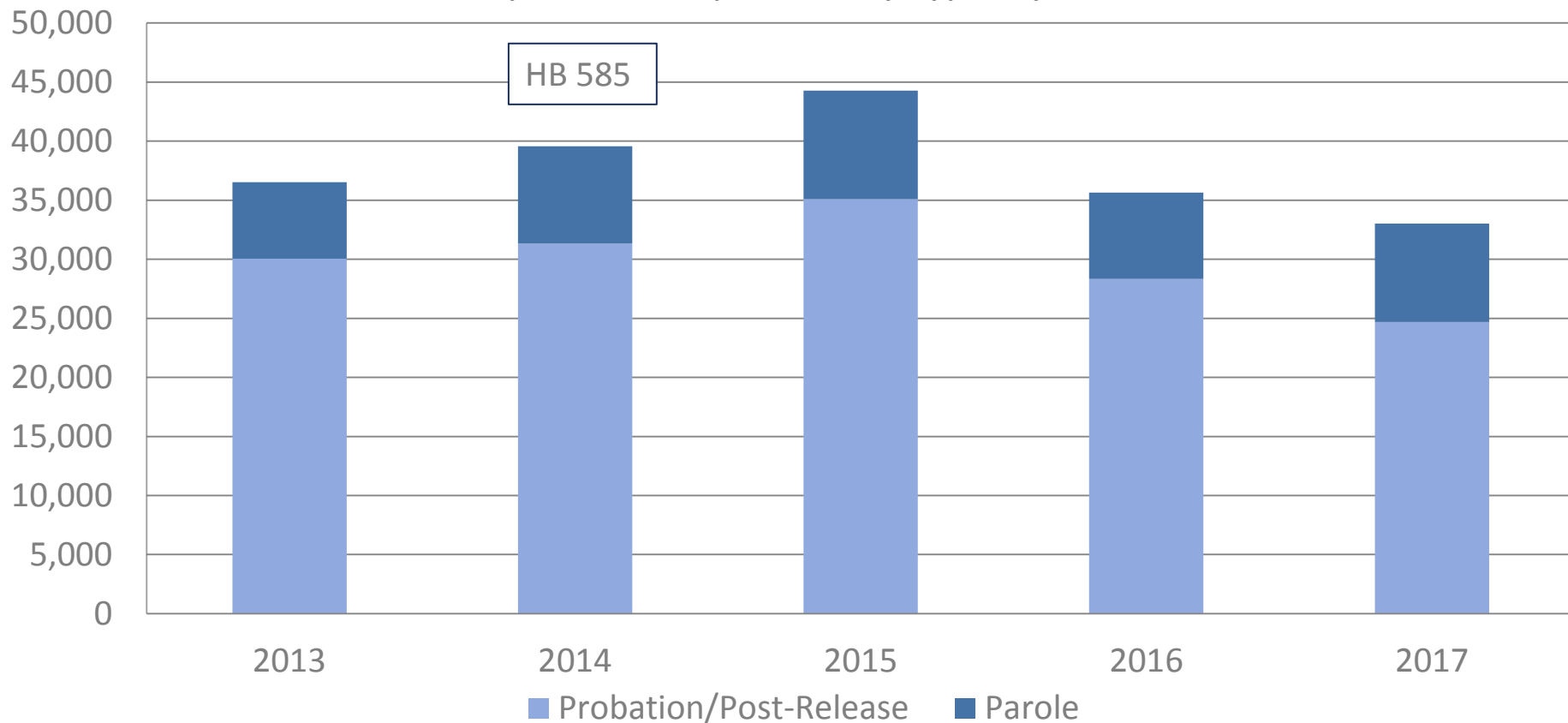
## Part III: Summary

# Policies: Strengthen Supervision

- Empowers supervision officers to respond to certain violations with immediate sanctions (i.e. to respond to a failed drug test, a supervision officer may implement a curfew or additional drug testing)
- Requires risk and needs assessment for all parole-eligible inmates and use of the results to determine the appropriate program and service plans

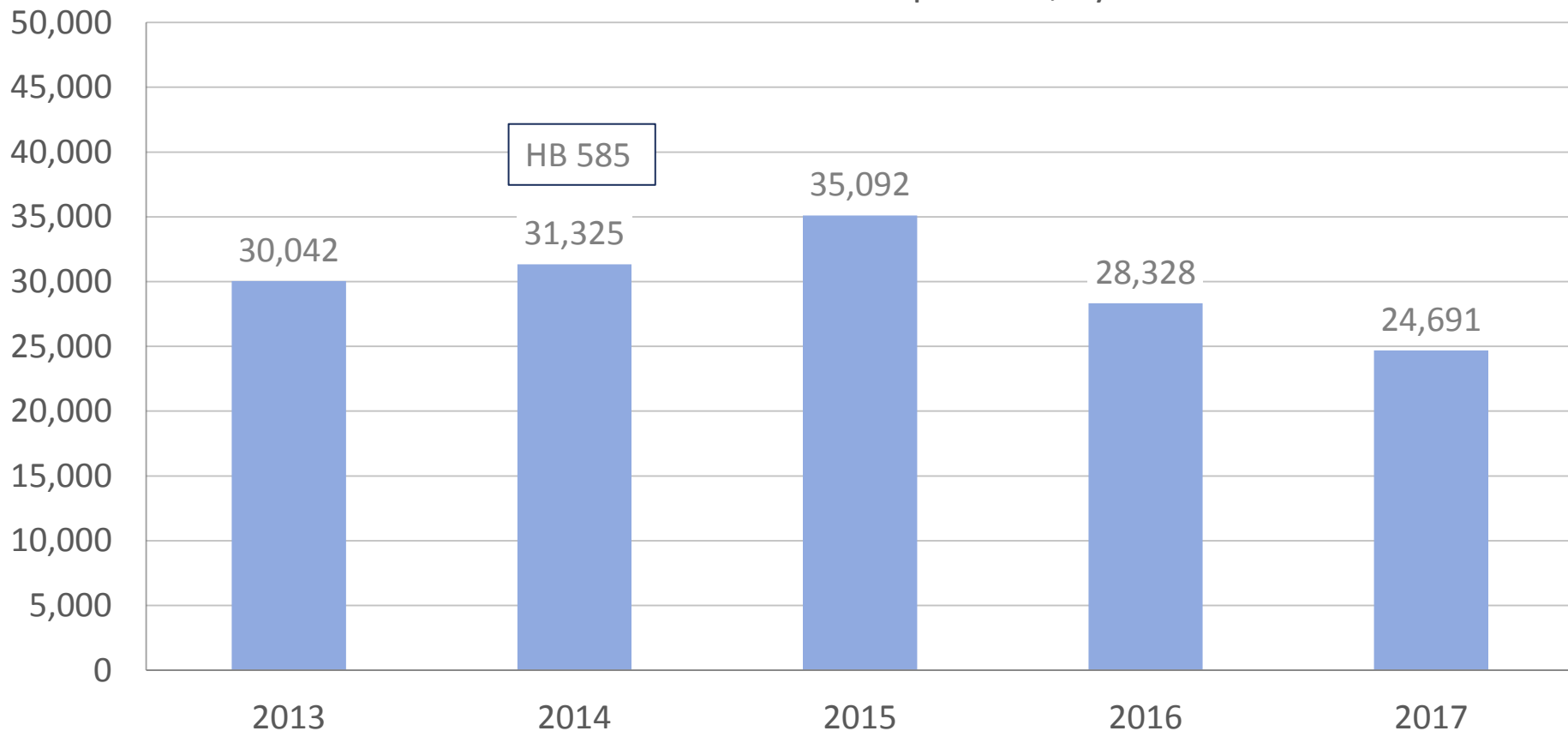
# After Initial Increase, Supervision Population Down Since Reform

Supervision Population by Type, by Year



# Decline Driven by Non-Parole Population; Down 21% Since Reform

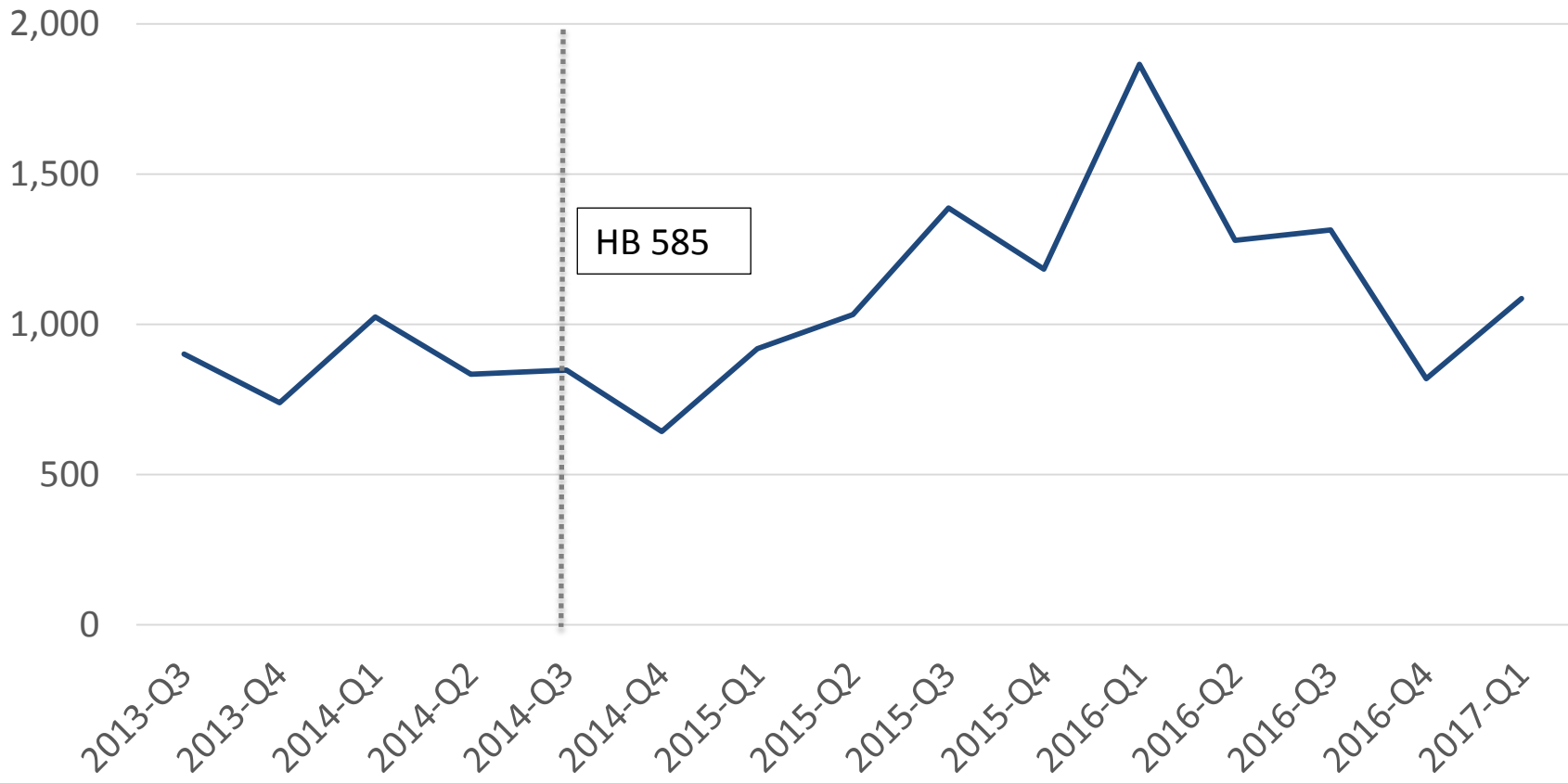
Probation and Post-Release Population, by Year





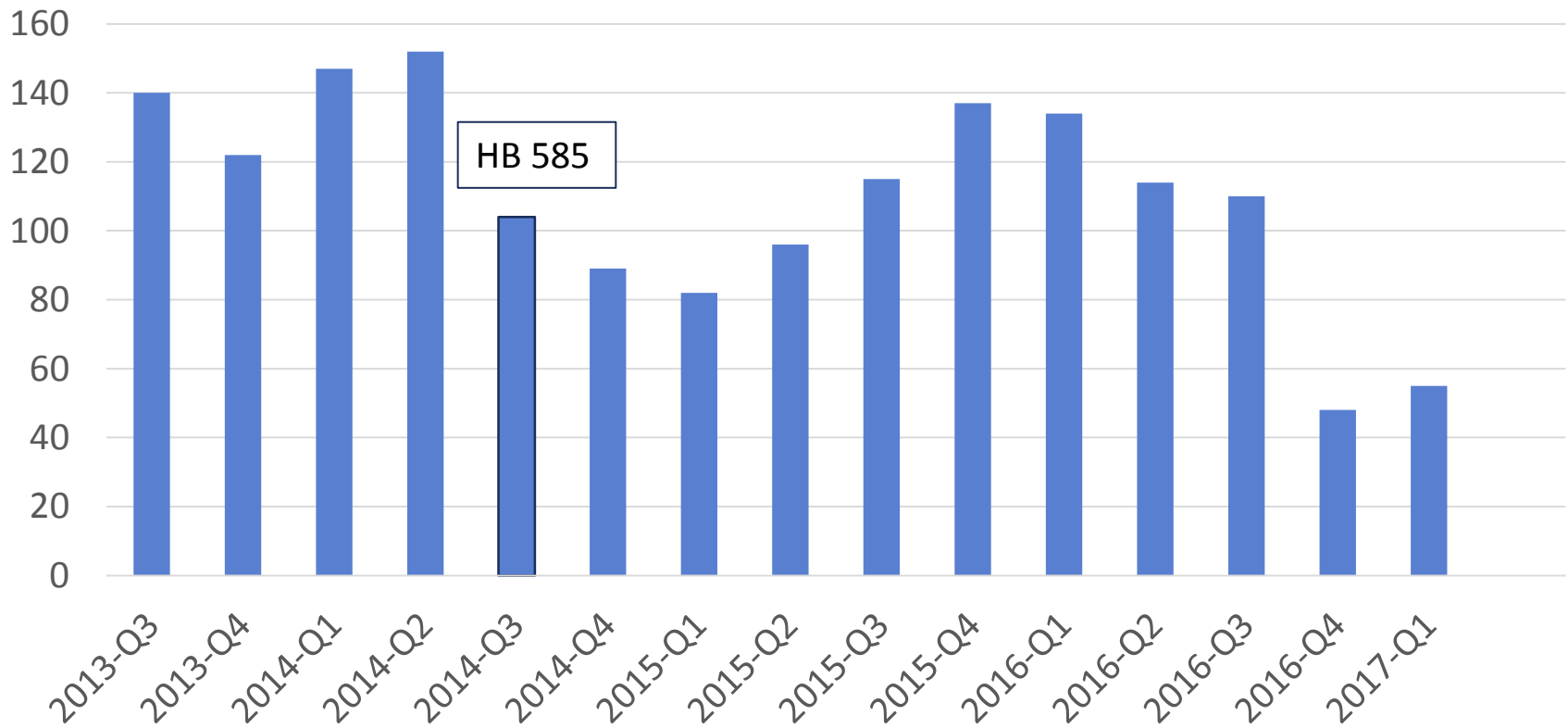
# Number of People Successfully Discharging from Probation is Up

Number Successfully Completing Probation, by Quarter



# Since Reform, Fewer People on Supervision Committing New Crimes

Supervision Revocations (Parole/Post-release/Probation) for New Crimes by Quarter



# Takeaways: Strengthen Supervision

- Since reform:
  - Supervision population down, driven by 21% decrease in non-parole population
  - Number of probationers discharging successfully has increased by 10%
  - Fewer people on supervision committing new crimes

# Current Challenges

# Overview: Imprisonment Rate

## Part I: Performance Post-Reform

## Part II: Current Challenges

- Despite declines, Mississippi is the third-highest prisoner in the nation
- Technical revocations approaching pre-HB 585 levels

## Part III: Summary

# Despite Declines, Mississippi Remains Among Top Imprisoners Nationally

1. Louisiana
2. Oklahoma
3. ***Mississippi***
4. Arizona
5. Arkansas
6. Alabama
7. Texas
8. Missouri
9. Kentucky
10. Georgia

# Overview: Technical Revocations

## Part I: Performance Post-Reform

## Part II: Current Challenges

- Despite reform, Mississippi is the third-highest incarcerator in the nation
- Technical revocations approaching pre-HB 585 levels

## Part III: Summary

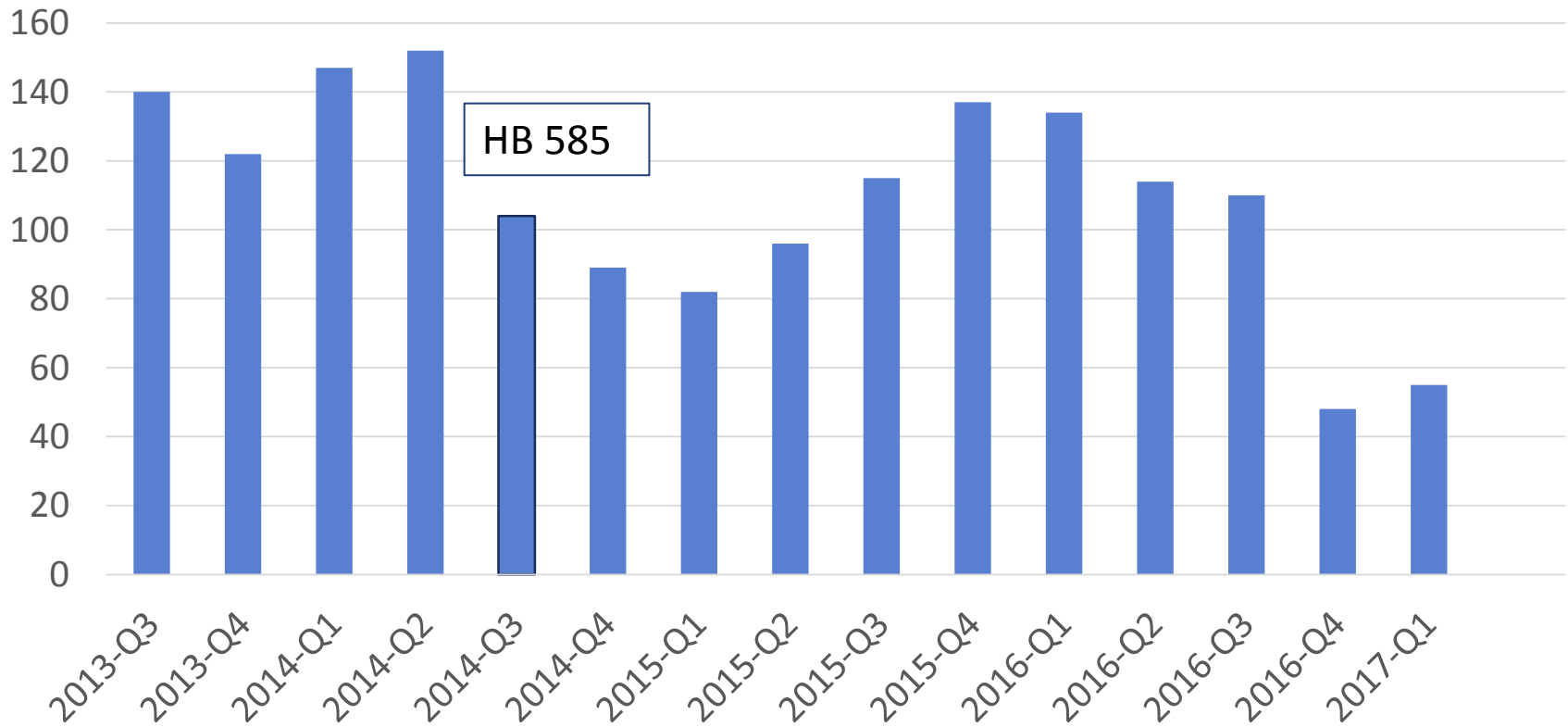
# Policy: Technical Revocations

- Limits maximum periods of incarceration for people on supervision who break the rules of supervision (also known as technical violations)
- Under the policy, people who are sentenced for a first or second violation can be sentenced to up to 90 and 120 days, respectively
- Creates specialized Technical Violator Centers for offenders whose community supervision has been revoked for technical violators



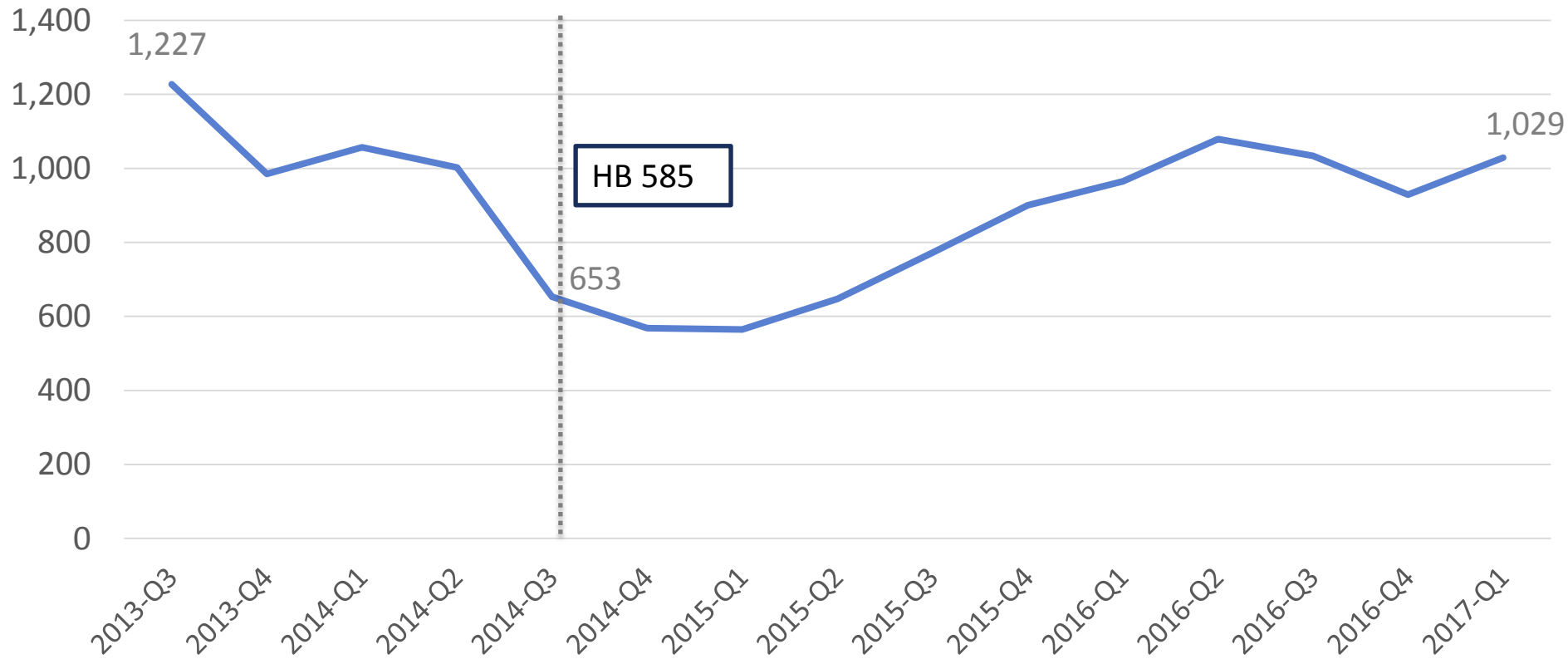
# Since Reform, Fewer People on Supervision Committing New Crimes

Supervision Revocations (Parole/Post-release/Probation) for New Crimes by Quarter



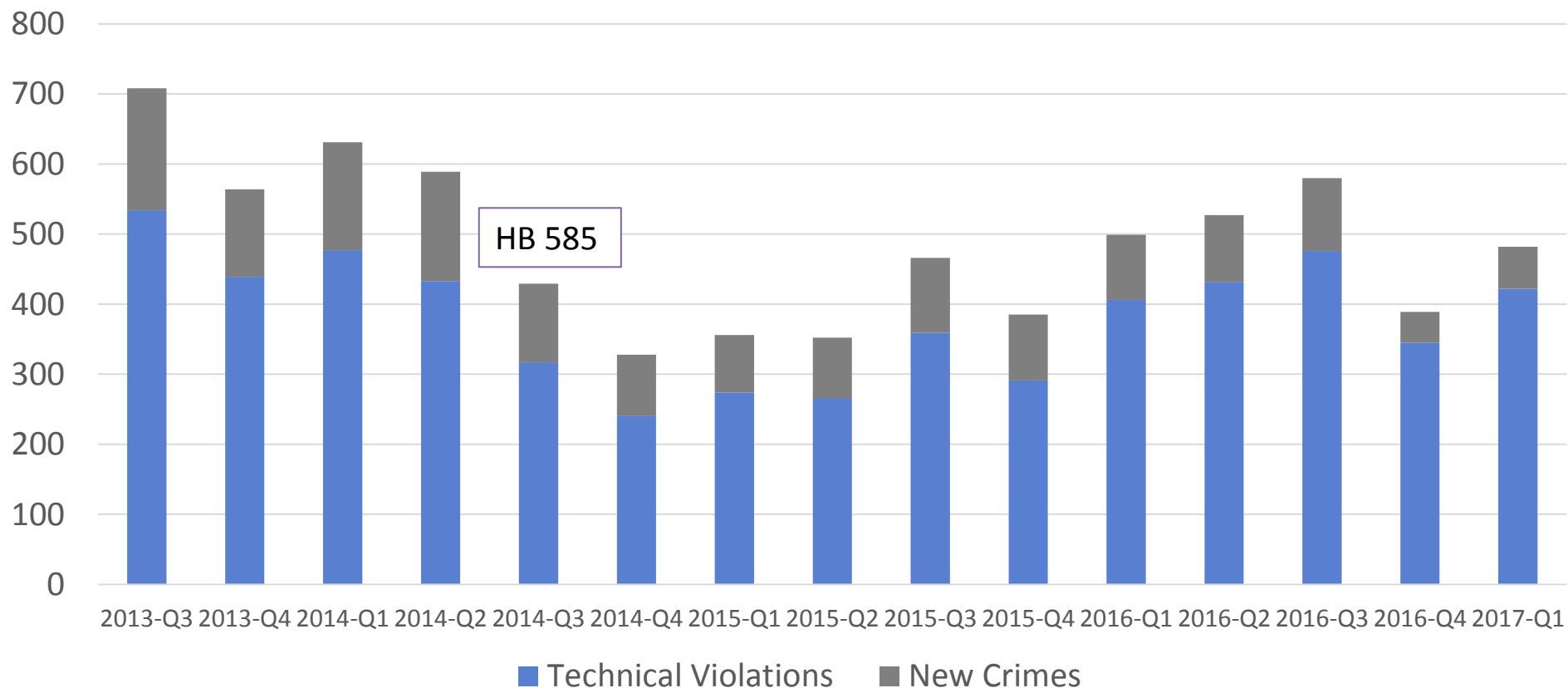
# Despite Decline in Revocations for New Crimes, Significant Increase in Revocations Overall

Revocation Admissions Per Quarter



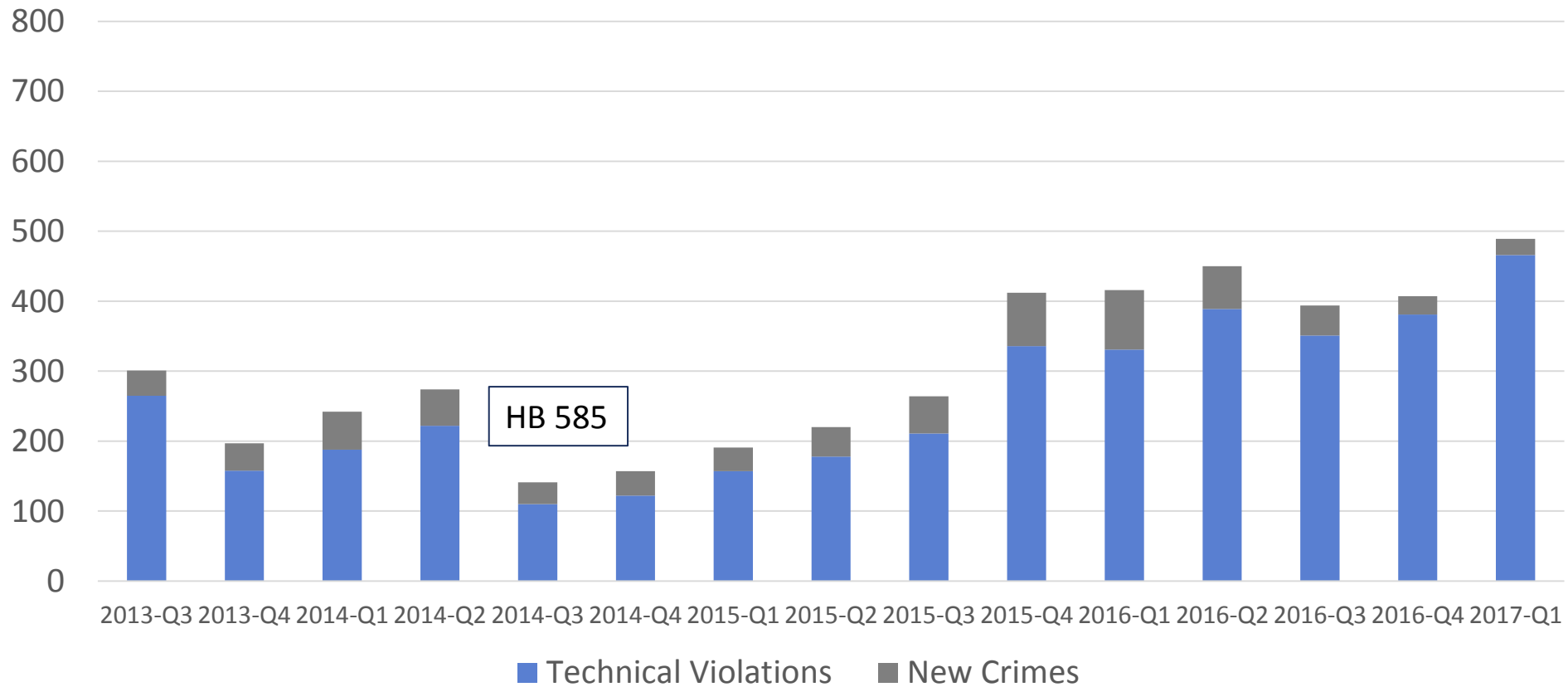
# Despite Reform, Technicals Continue to Comprise Bulk of Non-Parole Revocations

Probation/Post-Release Supervision Revocations by Quarter



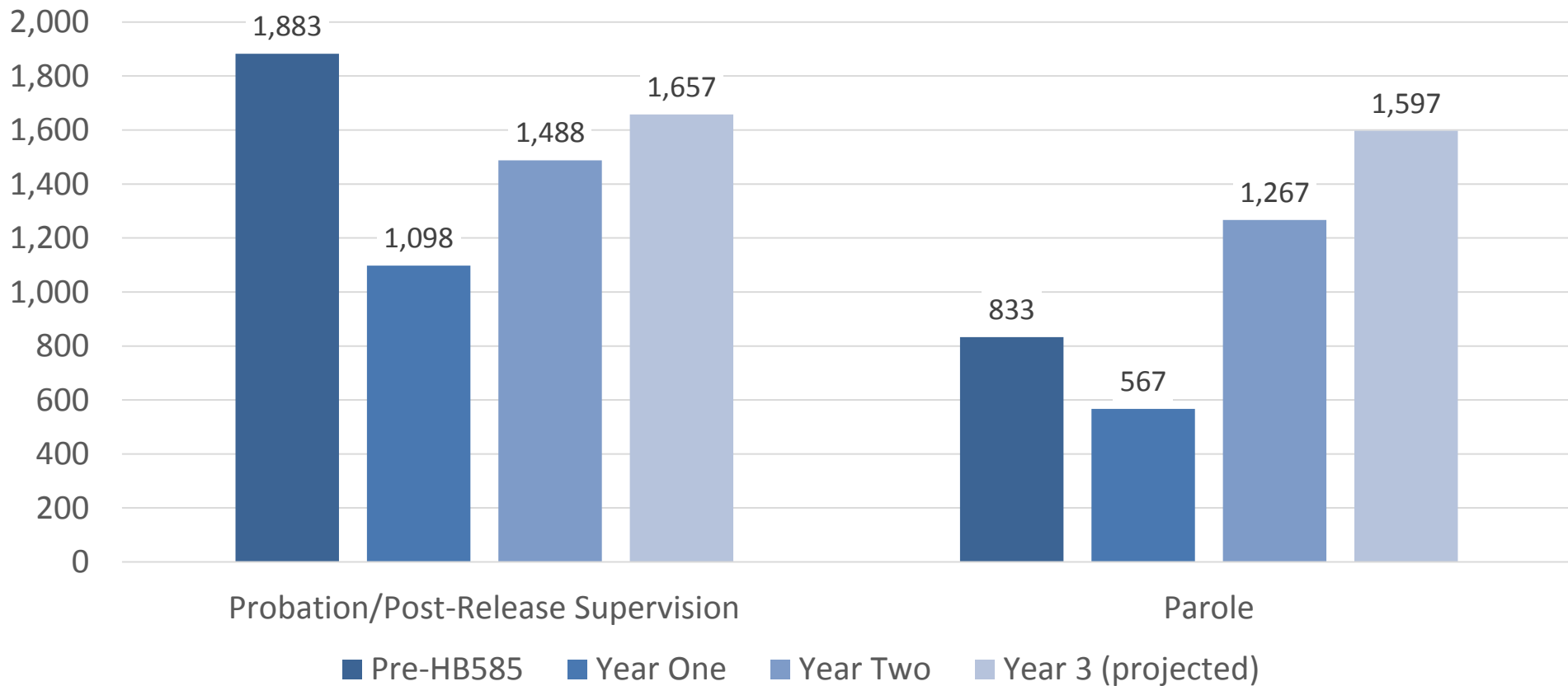
# For Parole, Overall Growth Driven by More Technical Revocations

Parole Revocations by Quarter



# After Initial Decline, Technical Revocations Have Increased

Revocations for a Technical Violation by Supervision Type, by Fiscal Year



# Overview

Part I: Performance Post-Reform

Part II: Current Challenges

Part III: Summary

# Successes

Since reform, crime and imprisonment are down:

- Three years later, overall crime rates have decreased
- Prison population, imprisonment rate are down 10%
- Fewer people on supervision are committing new crimes

# Challenges

But challenges remain:

- Despite reform, Mississippi is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest imprisoner in the nation
- Revocations to prison are approaching pre-HB 585 levels, driven by technicals