

WYOMING'S EXPONENTIAL GROWTH IN ELDERLY PRISONERS

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By Mark Corbett, Executive Director of Compassion Wyoming

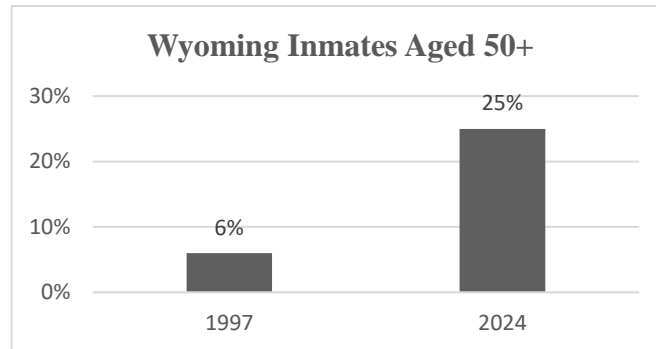


Figure A: 400% increase in inmates of Wyoming prisons aged 50 or older ⁱ

Life Sentences (Including Virtual Lifers) Wyoming Population: 40 Year Comparison

1984: 93 Lifers

2024: 525 Lifersⁱⁱ

(400% increase) ⁱⁱⁱ

1984 Wyo. Population: 504,000

2024 Wyo. Population: 586,000

(16% increase)

Compassion Wyoming's Recommendations

- A. Governor Gordon request his Board of Parole review the files of all 114 inmates who have served 20 years or longer for consideration of evaluation and sentence reduction or release.^{iv}
- B. Governor Gordon request his Board of Parole modify the inmate commutation policy to allow two-year intervals after serving ten years to apply for relief instead of the current 5-year intervals between requests.

While this may seem to add requests for the Board, it should be noted that the commutation policy allowed inmates annual commutation requests until 2014 ^v

Wyoming Constitution

In Wyoming where the constitution states that “*the penal code shall be framed on the humane principles of reformation and prevention.*” Nowhere does the Wyoming constitution offer retribution as a principle of punishment. vi

In Wyoming constitution, reformation is provided for first, and secondly prevention. The current policy of warehousing long term offenders is antithetical to the Wyoming Constitution’s directive: “*on the humane principles of reformation.*”

Report by Mark Corbett, Executive Director, Compassion Wyoming

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ⁱ The Criminal Justice Institute and Wyoming Department of Corrections, Stephanie Kiger, March 22, 2024.

ⁱⁱ The term lifers include inmates with Life without Parole, inmates with possibility of parole, and Virtual Lifers—which factor in the inmate’s age and his sentence. i.e. a 40-year-old inmate who has served 5 years on a seventy-year sentence will die in prison unless his sentence is modified.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cutting Life Short: A second look at life sentences in Wyoming” 2024 by Dan Fetsco

^{iv} Stephanie Kiger, WDOC Records and Communications Lead, January 9, 2024.

^v Bobbi Stecklein, Board of Parole. April 23, 2024

^{vi} Cutting Life Short: A second look at life sentences in Wyoming” 2024 by Dan Fetsco page 185