

March 2001

**The Effects of Parole on Recidivism: Juvenile Offenders Released
From Washington State Institutions, Preliminary Findings**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For a one-year period, the 1997 Legislature eliminated Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) parole for all but sex offenders and the highest-risk offenders leaving JRA institutions. Subsequently, the 1999 Legislature reinstated parole for all offenders leaving those institutions. In order to determine whether parole services influenced subsequent criminal conduct, the Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to compare outcomes of youth with and without parole. The Institute compared the recidivism rates of those juveniles released without parole in fiscal year 1999 to a similar group released with parole during the previous year.

After a 12-month follow-up, 32.7 percent of the parole group and 30.2 percent of the no-parole group had been reconvicted for new felonies. This difference was not statistically significant, thus indicating that parole had no influence on recidivism for these juvenile offenders. The study did not assess the influence of parole for released sex offenders, nor for those offenders identified in the high-risk category.