



## District of Columbia Sentencing Commission

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**SUBJECT: 15+ Year Sentences**

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This response evaluates sentencing trends for individuals who were sentenced between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2019, to a period of 15 years, or more. The data included in this analysis is examined based on the following sentence length categories: 15 to less than 20 years, 20 to less than 25 years, and 25+ years, as well as the following age categories: 16-17 (Juvenile), 18-24 (Youthful), and 25+ (Adult). Note that the age categories represent the individual's age at offense.

Between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2019 there were a total of 468 offenders sentenced, comprising 481 cases and 693 counts. Please be advised that there are data limitations and reliability issues surrounding the data for sentences that were imposed between 2010 and 2012<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, a subsequent analysis is included for sentences imposed between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2019. In this timeframe there were a total of 280 offenders sentenced, comprising 304 cases and 376 counts.

	2010-2019	2013-2019
<b>Total Offenders Sentenced</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>Total Cases Sentenced</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>Total Counts Sentenced</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>376</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission's data system (GRID) went live in 2013, which is when it actively began to consume live data on a nightly basis. Not all cases filed prior to 2013 may be available to the Commission electronically, nor have they been verified for data accuracy by the Commission given that the data was received retrospectively.

## I. Data Source

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This analysis utilizes sentencing data received from the D.C. Superior Court through the IJIS 12.1 data feed. This data represents the total number of individuals who were *sentenced* between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2019 to a period of 15 years, or more; an important distinction between the total number of individuals who are currently incarcerated and are serving a sentence of 15 years or more. The latter, referred to as incarceration data, is provided by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and will be used to address the second part of the data request that was submitted on behalf of the Office of the Attorney General.

It is important to acknowledge that the IJIS 12.1 and BOP data sets are each structured very differently, which limits the Commission's ability to match defendants that have been sentenced in D.C. Superior Court (IJIS 12.1 data) to those defendants who are currently incarcerated with the Bureau of Prisons (BOP data). Therefore, separate analyses were done for each data set, each of which report different findings.

Further, there is a strong likelihood of defendants being captured in both the IJIS 12.1 and BOP data sets. Due to the lack of reliable "matching" variables in each data set, the Commission cannot positively verify duplicate defendants. For this reason all analyses are performed independently for each data set, and discrepancies are expected between the findings reported of IJIS 12.1 data, and those of BOP data.

## II. Key Findings & Quick Reference Table

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- Sentences that were between 15 and 20 years, and sentences that were more than 25 years were imposed at the same rate, each representing about 39% of all sentences.
  - Sentence lengths of 20-25 years were imposed for only 21% of individuals.
- Less than 1% of all offenders received a Life sentence; there were a total of five (5) individuals who received a Life sentence
- Exactly half of the offenders (50%) were 25 or older (Adult) at the time of the offense, while Juveniles only represent 8% of offenders.
  - Youthful offenders represent 42% of the sentenced population
- The total number of offenders sentenced to a period of 15 years or more decreased significantly in 2015, though has been gradually increasing since.
- 88% of offenders sentenced were Black males. Females represented approximately 2% of this sentenced population.

The table below can be referenced to identify the total number of individuals sentenced, broken down by sentence length and age at offense. The percentages represent the proportion of offenders out of the total population sentenced (468).

	Juvenile		Youthful		Adult		Total	
15 to < 20 years	21	4.5%	71	15%	87	18.5%	<b>179</b>	<b>38%</b>
20 to < 25 years	5	1%	37	8%	56	12%	<b>98</b>	<b>21%</b>
25+ years	9	2%	87	18.5%	90	19%	<b>186</b>	<b>40%</b>
Life	-		3	<1%	2	<1%	<b>5</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>100%</b>

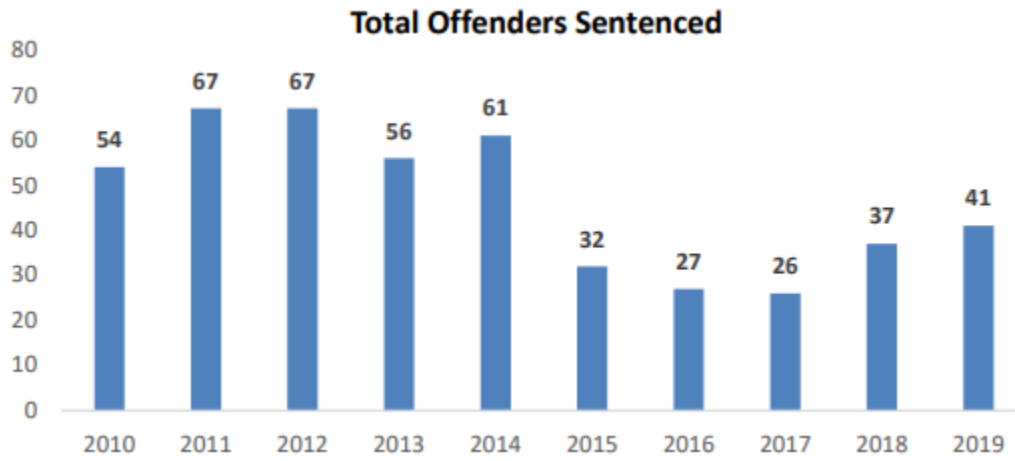
### III. Graphs and Tables

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#### A. Yearly Trends

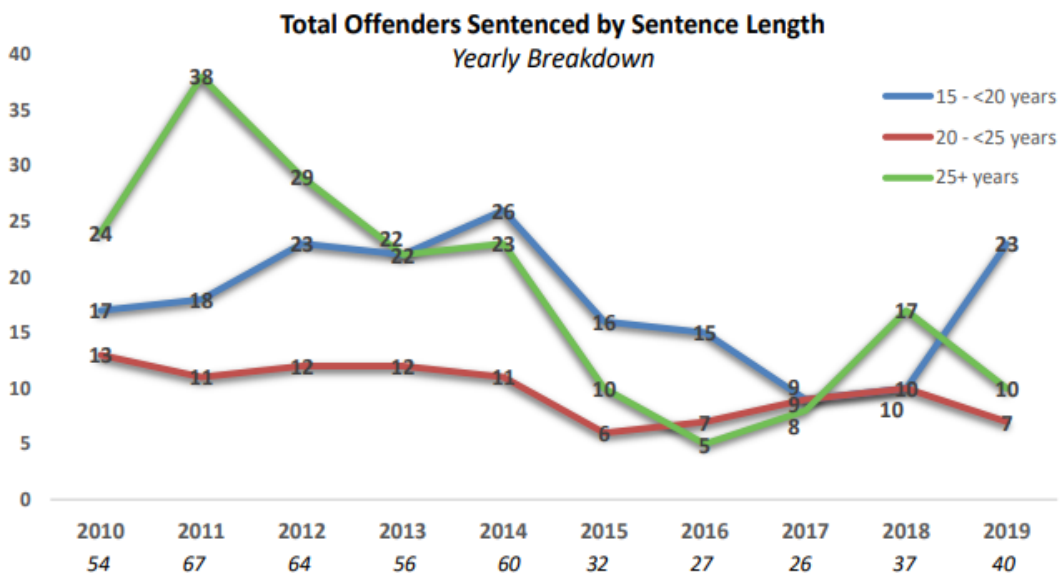
The graphs below display the yearly sentencing trends for the total number of offenders sentenced, based on 1) the sentence length, and 2) the offender's age group. Please note that the italicized numbers listed below each year represent the total number of offenders sentenced in that year.

##### 1) Total Offenders



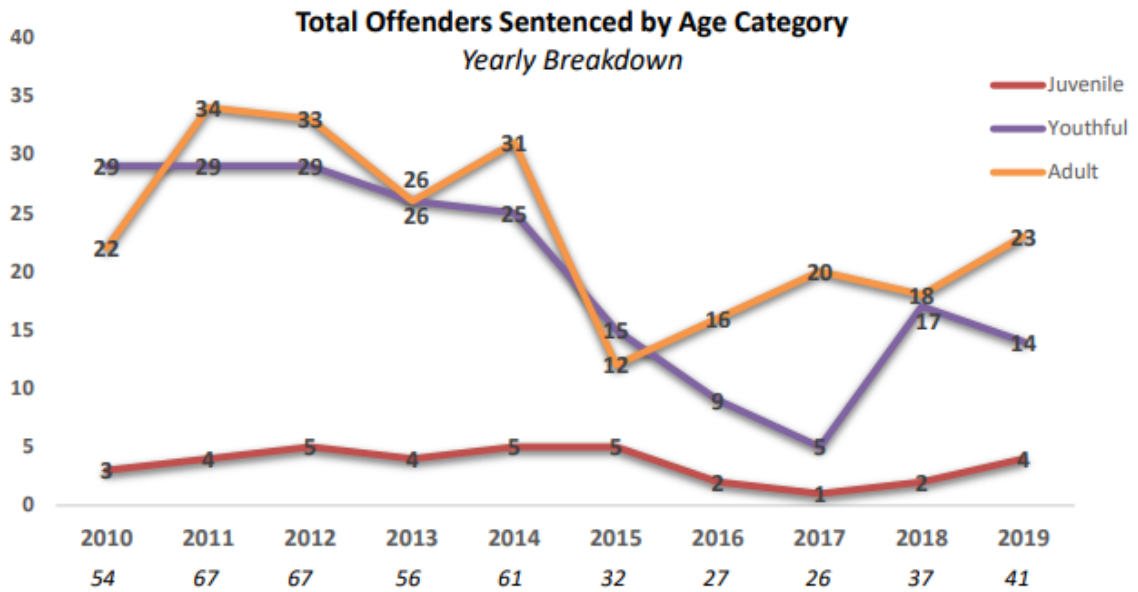
##### 2) Total Offenders by Sentence Length

The five individuals who received life sentences are not included in the below analysis.



### 3) Total Offenders x Age Category

In the chart below, “Juvenile” represents those aged 16-17 at the time of the offense, “Youthful” represents individuals those who were aged 18-24 at the time of the offense, and “Adult” are individuals who were 25 or older at the time of the offense.



### B. Sentence Length by Age at Offense – Yearly Trends

The table below (page 5) displays the total number of offenders sentenced each year broken down by sentence length, as well as the offender’s age at offense using the predetermined age categories: ages 16-17 (Juvenile), ages 18-24 (Youthful), and ages 25+ (Adult).

**Life sentences:** Life sentences are represented by an asterisk (\*) in the Sentence Year column next to the year in which they were imposed. For example: “2012\*\*\*” indicates that three individuals received a life sentence in 2012. Only a total of five (5) life sentences were imposed in this timeframe.

Sentence Year	Sentence Length		
	15 to < 20 Years	20 to < 25 Years	25+ Years
<b>2010</b> <i>54 Offenders</i>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>
	Juvenile (J): 1 Youthful (Y): 8 Adult (A): 8	J: 1 Y: 6 A: 6	J: 1 Y: 15 A: 8
<b>2011</b> <i>67 Offenders</i>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>38</b>
	J: 1 Y: 7 A: 10	J: 1 Y: 3 A: 7	J: 2 Y: 19 A: 17
<b>2012***</b> <i>67 Offenders</i>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>29</b>
	J: 3 Y: 9 A: 11	J: - Y: 6 A: 6	J: 2 Y: 11 A: 16
<b>2013</b> <i>56 Offenders</i>	<b>22</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>
	J: 2 Y: 11 A: 9	J: - Y: 7 A: 5	J: 2 Y: 8 A: 12
<b>2014*</b> <i>61 Offenders</i>	<b>26</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>
	J: 4 Y: 8 A: 14	J: 1 Y: 5 A: 5	J: - Y: 12 A: 11
<b>2015</b> <i>32 Offenders</i>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
	J: 2 Y: 8 A: 6	J: 2 Y: 2 A: 2	J: 1 Y: 5 A: 4
<b>2016</b> <i>27 Offenders</i>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>
	J: 2 Y: 4 A: 9	J: - Y: 2 A: 5	J: - Y: 3 A: 2
<b>2017</b> <i>26 Offenders</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>
	J: 1 Y: 2 A: 6	J: - Y: - A: 9	J: - Y: 3 A: 5
<b>2018</b> <i>37 Offenders</i>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>
	J: 2 Y: 6 A: 2	J: - Y: 5 A: 5	J: - Y: 6 A: 11
<b>2019*</b> <i>41 Offenders</i>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>
	J: 3 Y: 8 A: 12	J: - Y: 1 A: 6	J: 1 Y: 5 A: 4