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Ohio prison population dropping

Sentencing revision seen as successful

By ALAN JOHNSON

Ohio's revised criminal-sentencing laws are making a difference after six months, diverting hundreds of inmates away from state prisons to less-expensive community programs.

From Oct. 1, 2011, when the new laws took effect, through the end of March this year, 26 percent fewer inmates were imprisoned for child-support-only violations and 180 fewer inmates came to prison for nonviolent fourth- and fifth-degree felonies.

As a result, the prison population dropped to 49,846, the lowest since November 2008. The number of prisoners had peaked at 51,278.

The recidivism rate — the number of offenders who return to prison within three years after being released — is at an all-time low, 31.2 percent. That compares with a national average near 50 percent.

Article continued here: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/05/31/ohio-prison-population-dropping.html>

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