

In 2009, the Pew Center on the States released a **report** revealing that 1 in 13 adults were under some form of correctional supervision in Georgia. This means that over half-a-million Georgians were either in jail, in prison, on parole, or on probation that year. This percentage far surpassed the national average, which was still an astonishing 1 in 31 adults under correctional supervision.

Even more staggering, 2.6 million people have a criminal record on file with the Georgia Crime Information Center, while the state's total population is 10 million people. The collateral consequences associated with having a criminal record mean that as many as 1 in 4 Georgians likely face barriers to obtaining employment, housing, and even voting.

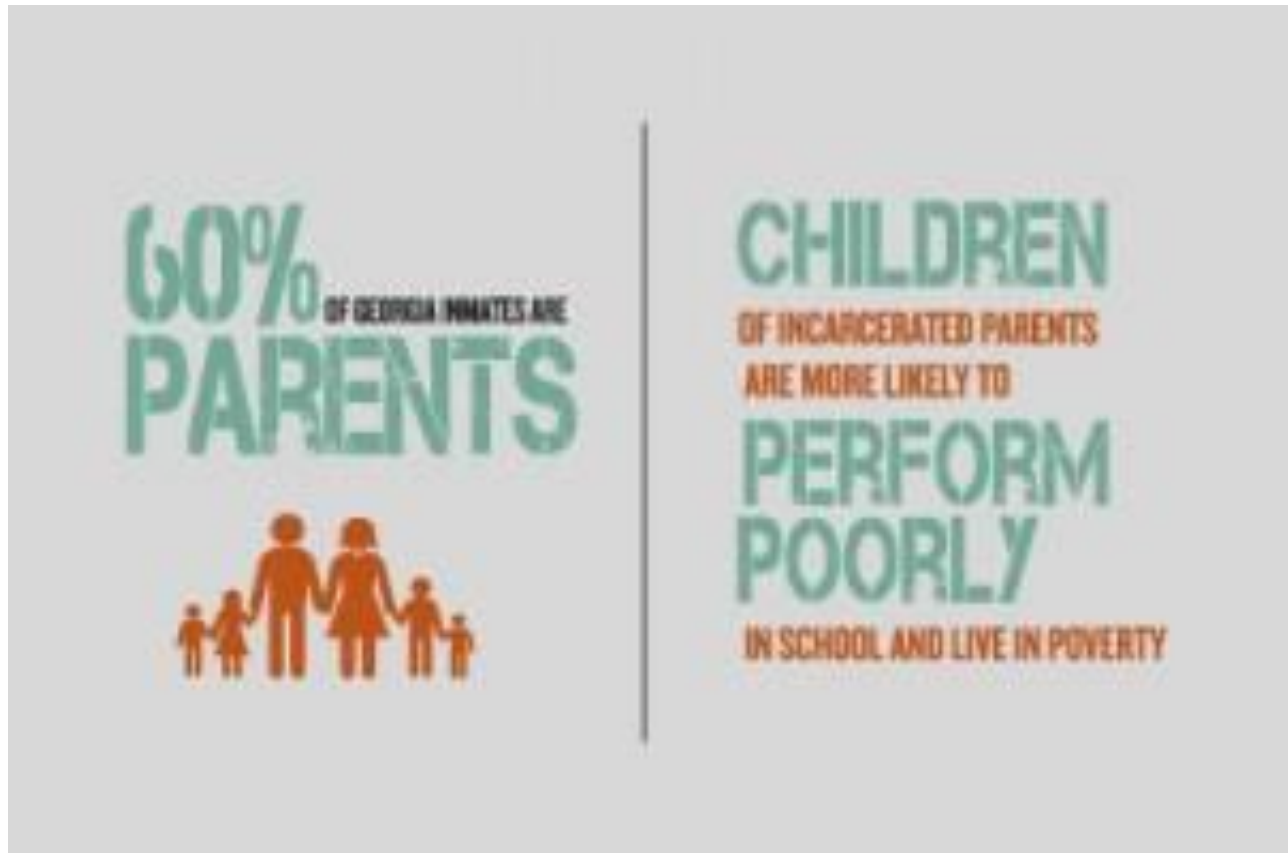
Currently, 53,000 people are incarcerated in Georgia, giving the state the fifth highest prison population in the nation. The incarcerated population more than doubled between 1990 and 2011, while the state's general population increased by only half that rate during the same time period.

Once a person enters the system, his or her likelihood of staying in it is fairly strong. The state releases 20,000 prisoners back into the community every year, and 2 out of 3 of those released are rearrested within three years. Nearly 1 in 3 are re-convicted within this time frame, resulting in re-incarceration.

While the state reports a recidivism rate of 30 percent over the past decade (determined by the number of offenders who are reconvicted within three years of release), the actual recidivism rate is closer to 50 percent – taking into account the number of people who commit a technical violation while on probation and parole, as well as the number of offenders who recidivate after the standard three-year time period.



Finally, a person cycling in and out of prison creates instability in the life of his or her family. Significantly, 60 percent of inmates in Georgia are parents, and a number of these parents have been incarcerated more than once. Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to perform poorly in school, to be exposed to their parent's substance abuse, to use drugs, to experience mental health issues, to experience domestic violence, and to live in poverty. Incarceration puts a tremendous strain on existing relationships, decreases the chances that partners will marry, transforms family roles, and often leads custodial parents to depend on public assistance. Families experience shame, anger, hurt, and despair at the incarceration of loved ones, creating inner turmoil that is often never addressed.



What Can Be Done?

Because of the enormous costs posed by incarceration and recidivism, it is essential for Georgia to promote solutions that will address underlying issues returning citizens face. This effort must take place at all points along the continuum, from the Governor's Office down to individuals in the community.

Several areas of reform that Georgia Center for Opportunity's Prisoner Reentry Working Group has addressed to improve reentry outcomes involve increasing employment opportunities ([read report](#)), restructuring debt, and developing the criminal justice and service provider workforce.

Reference: Michael Schulte | Sep 29, 2014 | Prisoner Reentry. The State of Corrections in Georgia