

Advertisement

## IGZO: Vision for the Future

Higher Resolution, Lower Power Consumption, Higher Performance in touch sensitivity: IGZO's breakthrough technology and what it means.

[Read More...](#)

Presented by:  
**SHARP**

Dow Jones Reprints: This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, use the Order Reprints tool at the bottom of any article or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com)

[See a sample reprint in PDF format.](#)

[Order a reprint of this article now](#)

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

[WSJ.com](http://WSJ.com)

January 27, 2013, 12:50 p.m. ET

# NY expects further drop in prison inmates

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — New York officials expect the state's prisons to shed 1,000 more inmates over the next four years, noting the steady decline of commitments for drug offenses since 1999 and allowing it to save money by closing some of the institutions.

The inmate population has dropped below 55,000 after peaking in 1999 at 72,584 under Rockefeller-era drug laws. Several tough sentencing provisions, including 15 years to life for having 4 ounces of illegal narcotics, were softened or eliminated in 2009. Those laws were first enacted in 1973, pushed by then-Gov. Nelson Rockefeller to combat a drug and crime epidemic.

Cuomo administration officials put two prison closings in the proposed \$9.7 billion public safety budget for the upcoming fiscal year. It includes \$2.96 billion for prisons and parole, down 6 percent.

State officials now project the prisoner total to decline 4 percent more to 53,662 in four years. The state has been shutting minimum- and medium-security prisons and camps, including seven in 2011-12, and Gov. Andrew Cuomo proposes closing of two women's prisons in the coming year, Beacon in the Hudson Valley and Bayview in Manhattan.

Bayview has remained vacant since it was evacuated in last year's flooding from Superstorm Sandy, and the administration intends to sell it.

Authorities have also reported a nearly 20 percent drop in both violent crimes and serious property crimes statewide since 1999, despite some upticks last year.

"It's difficult to predict crime. It's not very difficult to predict prison," said Professor Shawn Bushway, a criminologist at the State University at Albany.

Prison population follows policy on incarceration, while crime depends on non-stable factors, such as social and economic pressures. Some people credit more effective policing and changes in the drug culture as components in New York's decline, he said.

New York's two trends represent an unusual situation, and most states' incarceration rates aren't declining, Bushway said. Most drug offenders are imprisoned for dealing, but that has done little to reduce the drug trade because someone else usually takes over a drug market.

While drug dealers, especially those at lower levels, and abusers do commit other crimes such as stealing for money, he said, they are typically low-level crimes and not major ones such as rape, murder, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and vehicle theft.

"There are larger things that drive the violence," Bushway said. "Sending these people to prison doesn't seem to have an impact on that one way or another."

Corrections data show a peak of 11,225 prison commitments for drug convictions in 1992, almost 45 percent of the total. That had risen from 470 in 1970 and declined to 3,193 last year, or 23 percent of all new prison commitments.

Tamar Kraft-Stolar, of the Correctional Association of New York, which advocates for prisoners and their families, said it supports inmate reductions from the Rockefeller drug law revisions and prison closures. The number of female inmates has declined to 2,300 from 3,700, partly the result of their earning merit time that reduces a sentence, and other early-release programs.

But the association is concerned about sharp reductions in prisoner work-release programs, which provide a way to build that merit time and learn skills. The lack of a work outlet and chances to reduce sentences also add stress to prisoners' families and strains on family ties. Skills learned in prisons and maintaining close family ties are critical factors in reducing recidivism.

Bayview has one of the most effective programs for helping prisoners successfully return home where they have family and other important support, Kraft-Stolar said. It is also the state's only women's prison in New York City, from which almost half its women inmates come.

Prisoners can lose direct contact with the families, who often live on low incomes, when they are incarcerated hundreds of miles away.

—Copyright 2013 Associated Press

Copyright 2012 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our [Subscriber Agreement](#) and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com)