

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-15-359](#), a report to congressional requesters

## Why GAO Did This Study

USPC was established in 1976, in part to carry out a national parole policy that would govern the release of offenders to community supervision prior to completing their full custody sentences. USPC's budget is just over \$13 million for fiscal year 2015.

Over time, changes in laws have abolished parole and introduced supervised release—a new form of postincarceration supervision. As a result, USPC has been reauthorized and has authority to grant and revoke parole for eligible federal and D.C. offenders and to revoke supervised release for D.C. offenders violating the terms of their release. USPC's current authorization is set to expire in 2018.

This report addresses (1) changes in the number of offenders under USPC's jurisdiction from fiscal years 2002 through 2014 and (2) the organizational characteristics needed for an entity to feasibly assume jurisdiction of D.C. offenders from USPC, and the feasibility and implications of such a transfer.

GAO analyzed USPC data on federal and D.C. offenders from fiscal years 2002-2014—the most recent years for which reliable data were available—as well as DOJ reports on USPC and USPC policies, and determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for our purposes. GAO also discussed with USPC and some of its criminal justice partners the feasibility of transferring USPC's jurisdiction for D.C. offenders and any related challenges.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making any recommendations.

View [GAO-15-359](#). For more information, contact David C. Maurer at (202) 512-9627 or [MaurerD@gao.gov](mailto:MaurerD@gao.gov)

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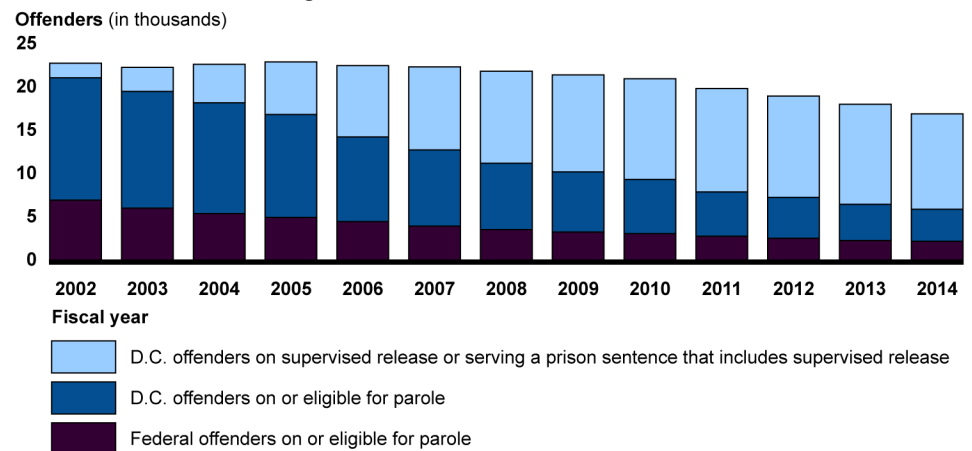
## U.S. PAROLE COMMISSION

### Number of Offenders under Its Jurisdiction Has Declined; Transferring Its Jurisdiction for D.C. Offenders Would Pose Challenges

#### What GAO Found

From fiscal years 2002 through 2014, the total number of offenders under the Department of Justice's (DOJ) U.S. Parole Commission's (USPC) jurisdiction declined 26 percent from about 23,000 to about 17,000. Specifically, following the abolition of parole, the number of offenders on or eligible for parole declined 67 percent among federal offenders, and 74 percent among D.C. offenders. However, following the introduction of supervised release, the number of D.C. offenders on supervised release or serving a prison sentence that includes supervised release increased 606 percent from fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2011, and then slightly declined through fiscal year 2014.

**Trends in the Number of Offenders under the U.S. Parole Commission's (USPC) Jurisdiction from Fiscal Years 2002 through 2014**



Source: GAO analysis of USPC data. | GAO-15-359

Transferring USPC's jurisdiction for D.C. offenders would require that an entity has three key organizational characteristics to assume this jurisdiction, and altering or establishing a new entity poses challenges. Based on our discussions with officials from USPC and other organizations, including those from the D.C. government, these three key organizational characteristics are:

- statutory authority for asserting jurisdiction over D.C. offenders;
- processes, procedures and personnel in place for handling parole and supervised release cases; and
- formal agreements with other criminal justice organizations for making parole and supervised release decisions.

We identified 17 criminal justice entities with the potential to assume USPC's jurisdiction for D.C. offenders; however none currently possesses the three key organizational characteristics. Thus, transferring jurisdiction is not feasible without altering an existing or establishing a new entity, and would pose challenges related to estimating costs and assessing impacts on decision making.