

TEXAS BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES

2014



**PAROLE
GUIDELINES
ANNUAL
REPORT**

FY 2014

In accordance with Section 508.1445, Government Code, the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles annually shall submit a report to the Criminal Justice Legislative Oversight Committee, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the presiding officers of the standing committees in the Senate and House of Representatives primarily responsible for criminal justice regarding the Board's application of the parole guidelines adopted under Section 508.144.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS	3
PAROLE GUIDELINES OVERVIEW	4
HISTORY OF TEXAS PAROLE GUIDELINES	5
COMPONENTS OF THE GUIDELINES	7
• Risk Assessment Instrument	7
- Static Factors	7
- Dynamic Factors	7
• Offense Severity Class	7
THE PAROLE GUIDELINES SCORE	8
ACTUAL APPROVAL RATES FY 2014	9
• Guidelines Level Statewide	10
• Guidelines Level by Voter, by Office	10 - 16
VARIATIONS BETWEEN ACTUAL PAROLE APPROVAL RATES AND RECOMMENDED PAROLE APPROVAL RATES	17

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles is to perform its duties as imposed by Article IV, Section 11, of the Texas Constitution and:

- Determine which prisoners are to be released on parole or discretionary mandatory supervision;
- Determine conditions of parole and mandatory supervision;
- Determine revocation of parole and mandatory supervision; and,
- Recommend the resolution of clemency matters to the Governor.

VISION STATEMENT

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, guided by sound application of the discretionary authority vested by the Constitution of the State of Texas, shall:

- Render just determination in regard to parole release and revocations, thereby maximizing the restoration of human potential while restraining the growth of prison and jail populations;
- Impose reasonable and prudent conditions of release consistent with the goal of structured reintegration of the offender into the community; and,
- Resolutely administer the clemency process with recommendation to the Governor fully commensurate with public safety and due consideration.

PAROLE GUIDELINES OVERVIEW

Parole Guidelines are tools to assist parole panel members in making discretionary parole release decisions. Guidelines provide a framework for more consistent voting across parole panels.

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles guidelines combine a research-based risk assessment of the offender with a measurement of the severity of the offense. The risk assessment measures the likelihood of an offender to have a successful parole. It uses both an offender's historical (Static) information and current (Dynamic) situation.

The assessed level of risk combines with the offense severity ranking to create a Parole Guidelines Score. The score ranges from one to seven – one indicates the poorest probability, and seven the greatest, for success on parole.

While the score provides a measurement for parole panel consideration, the guidelines do not produce a precise recommendation to either deny or grant parole.

Security Response Technologies, Inc., the consulting firm contracted to assist the Board in developing guidelines in 2001, stated, "to have a so called 'presumptive' grant rate for each case would neither be practical nor desirable for a system that is designed to provide guidance and not certainty to each reviewed case."

In addition to the Parole Guidelines, a parole panel will consider additional information in making parole decisions. Board members and parole commissioners also consider such information as plea bargains, victim statements, protests from trial officials (judges, district attorneys, sheriffs and police chiefs) and letters of support.

While the Board seeks to maximize the state's ability to restore human potential to society through the granting of parole, its first priority always is public safety.

HISTORY OF TEXAS PAROLE GUIDELINES

Prior to 1983, parole and executive clemency required positive actions by both the Board of Pardons and Paroles and the Governor before relief could be given to an offender. The 68th Legislature brought changes.

Article IV, Section 11 of the Texas Constitution was amended to remove the Governor from the parole process and make the Board of Pardons and Paroles the final parole authority in Texas. Senate Bill 396 designated the Board as a statutory agency with exclusive authority to approve parole. It also gave the Board authority to revoke paroles and issue warrants for the arrest of those who violate the conditions of parole.

At that time, the Board used Salient and Significant Factor Score sheets when making parole decisions. The Salient Factor score sought to classify parole candidates according to the likelihood for succeeding under parole supervision. The Significant Factor reflected the seriousness of the offense committed.

In 1983, the Board adopted the PABLO Scale to aid members in applying similar criteria to parole decisions. The scale calculated the risk of releasing an offender by evaluating the offender's rating on 20 variables, which included criminal history, juvenile history, substance abuse history, age at the time of the offense, education, etc.

In 1985, the Legislature mandated the Board incorporate Parole Guidelines, with minimum release criteria, into parole decision-making. Based on research, the guidelines were to consider the seriousness of the offense and the likelihood of a favorable parole outcome.

In 1987, the Board combined the PABLO Scale with Parole Guidelines that measured parole risks to set a parole risk score.

The risk factors consisted of nine variables shown to be associated with recidivism (number of prior convictions, number of prior incarcerations, age at first incarceration, commitment offense, number of prior parole or probation violations, history of alcohol/drug dependence, employment history, level of education and release plan).

The offender's most severe current offense was assigned one of four severity levels (highest, high, medium, and low). Time served was used to adjust the risk and offense severity score. Based on the score, the Board would set a tentative parole date that still could be overridden by the Board at its discretion. However, the reasons for overrides had to conform to a limited set of factors established by the Board.

In 1993, the 73rd Legislature directed the Criminal Justice Policy Council (CJPC) to report "at least annually to the Legislative Criminal Justice Board, the Texas Board of Criminal Justice and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles on the use of the Parole Guidelines by each member of the Board in making parole decisions."

After conducting a study of guideline usage, CJPC recommended in 1996 revised guidelines be developed to ensure the criteria reflect Board policy, are applied in a consistent manner to all candidates for parole (reliable), and are predictive of risk to public safety (valid).

(continued on Page 6)

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Reliability is a measure of the consistency of institutional parole officers in extracting and presenting the same data to the Board for consideration in parole decisions. Validity is a measure of risk factors to accurately predict whether a candidate is a good, moderate or poor risk to succeed on parole. Parole Guidelines accomplish these two objectives by developing scoring instruments that use well-defined measures of risk that correlate with post-release success.

In 1998, the Board applied to the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) for technical assistance in developing Parole Guidelines would provide both reliability and validity.

NIC agreed to an initial site visit and assessment. NIC reported, "...to simply update existing guidelines will not increase the viability or effectiveness of the Board's case decision making and would not bring Texas in line with new approaches that have been successful in other jurisdictions. A fundamental re-examination and redesign is required."

In 1999, the Board contracted with Security Response Technologies, Inc., an 18-month, three-phase project:

- Phase I - A comprehensive review of the Board's current practices as well as those of other states in using Parole Guidelines.
- Phase II - A validation test of existing guidelines, along with an evaluation of other selected factors to be used in assessing risk.
- Phase III - Training of Board members, parole commissioners and institutional parole officers in using the new guidelines.

In 2001, the Board began using the new Parole Guidelines to assist in making parole decisions.

In 2006, the Board requested a voting pattern analysis on DWI offender cases. Dr. James Austin, NIC consultant, presented a report based on data revalidating the Board's Parole Guidelines and risk analysis.

In 2009, the Board adopted his report, modifying and updating the Parole Guidelines. Additionally, Austin revised instructions for completing the risk assessment, created a new Supplemental DWI Risk Assessment Factors and Scale and trained staff.

In 2010, the Board selected MGT of America, Inc., to conduct research and provide recommendations for updating the Parole Guidelines.

The 18-month initiative researched data on domestic violence, gender (female) differences or security threat group considerations.

In 2012, the consultant recommended no changes in factors involving domestic violence and security threat groups. The major change was to separate risk scales by gender, which the Board adopted. The Board continues to assess and review the guidelines through its Parole Guidelines Committee, chaired by Board Member Juanita Gonzalez.

In January 2014, Dr. Austin presented a report based on data re-validation of the Board's parole guideline levels. Based on Dr. Austin's report and recommendations, in June 2014, the Chair requested technical assistance from the Bureau of Justice (BOJ) National Training and Technical Center. The BOJ awarded the Board a grant for technical assistance involving the Board's parole guidelines in October 2014. Dr. Austin began working with the Board in December 2014 to examine and suggest modifications as appropriate to the Board's estimated approval rates and parole guideline levels.

COMPONENTS OF THE GUIDELINES

The Parole Guidelines consist of two major components that interact to provide a single score.

The Risk Assessment Instrument weighs both static and dynamic factors associated with the offender's record.

The Offense Severity Class is the second component.

RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Static factors come from the offender's prior criminal record, which do not change over time.

Static factors include:

- Age at first commitment to a juvenile or adult correctional facility;
- Prior incarcerations;
- History of supervisory release revocations for felony offenses;
- Employment history; and
- The commitment offense.

Dynamic factors reflect characteristics the offender has demonstrated since being incarcerated, and can change over time.

Dynamic factors include:

- Current age;
- Whether the offender is a confirmed security threat group (gang) member;
- Education, vocational and certified on-the-job training programs completed during the present incarceration;
- Prison disciplinary conduct; and
- Current prison custody level.

An offender receives 0-10 points on static factors and 0-9 points on dynamic factors. A low score is associated with low risk. The higher the score, the greater the risk in granting parole.

The re-validation study completed in 2012 determined the need for a separate risk scale for males and females.

SCORE ASSIGNED RISK LEVEL

Based on total of static and dynamic factor points, risk level assigned to offender should be determined below:

Offense Severity Class	MALE (POINTS)	FEMALE (POINTS)
Low Risk	3 or less	3 or less
Moderate Risk	4-8	4-9
High Risk	9-15	10+
Highest Risk	16+	N/A

OFFENSE SEVERITY CLASS

The Board has assigned an offense severity ranking to each of the 2,623 felony offenses in the Statutory Codes.

Offense Severity classes range from Low, for non-violent crimes such as credit card abuse, to Highest, for capital murder.

For each assessment, the offender's most serious active offense is assigned an Offense Severity Class according to the established list.

The Board's Parole Guidelines Committee continually reviews current offenses for possible reranking and new offenses for appropriate ranking.

THE PAROLE GUIDELINES SCORE

The two components of the guidelines – Risk Assessment and Offense Severity – are merged into a matrix that creates the offender’s Parole Guidelines Score (at the intersection of risk level and offense severity in the diagrams below). Separate risk scales have been developed for male and female offenders.

Parole Guidelines Scores range from one, for an individual with the poorest probability for success, to seven for an offender with the greatest probability for successfully discharging their sentence on parole without returning to prison.

The guidelines are neither automatic nor presumptive of whether an offender will receive parole. Parole panel members retain the discretion to vote outside the guidelines when circumstances of an individual case merit doing so.

Offense Severity Class	MALE RISK LEVEL				FEMALE RISK LEVEL		
	Highest (16)	High (9-15)	Moderate (4-8)	Low (3 or less)	High (10+)	Moderate (4-9)	Low (3 or less)
Highest	1	2	2	3	2	2	3
High	2	3	4	4	3	4	4
Moderate	2	4	5	6	4	5	6
Low	3	4	6	7	4	6	7

ACTUAL APPROVAL RATES FY 2014

GUIDELINES LEVEL STATEWIDE

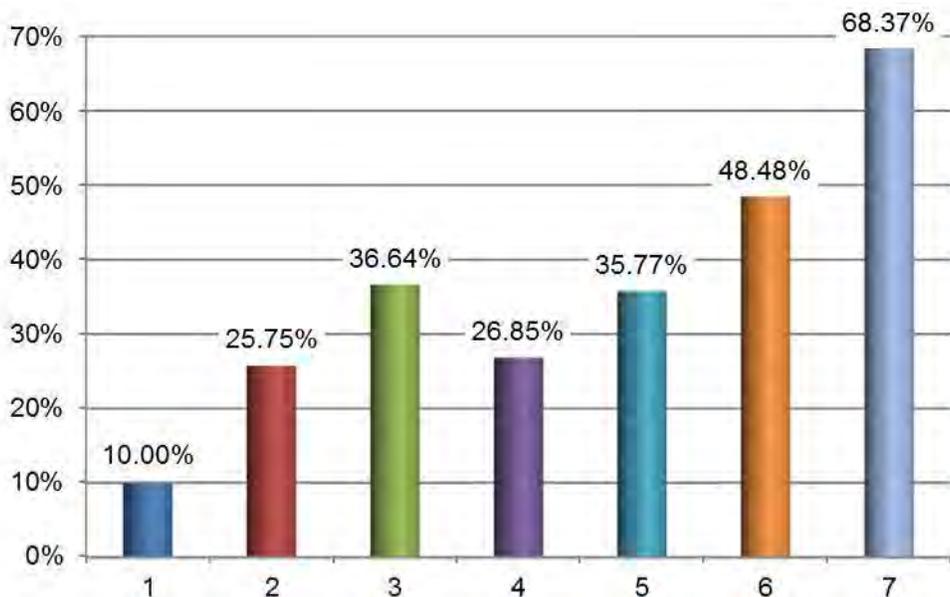
GUIDELINE LEVEL	CASES CONSIDERED	CASES APPROVED	APPROVAL RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	10	1	10.00%	0% - 5%
2	8,511	2,192	25.75%	6% - 15%
3	7,697	2,820	36.64%	16% - 25%
4	24,067	6,463	26.85%	26% - 35%
5	20,210	7,230	35.77%	36% - 50%
6	13,551	6,569	48.48%	51% - 75%
7	3,253	2,224	68.37%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	77,299	27,499	35.57%	

(Total Parole Considerations in FY 2014 were 77,301, with two MRIS cases considered and approved without a guidelines score).

Board Members and Parole Commissioners vote cases daily. A report is generated on a monthly basis, reflecting estimated approval rates by guideline level. It is important to note the panel members are unaware of the aggregate approval rates during the voting process, which means they are unable to determine if the vote is within the estimated approval rates by guideline level. The parole panel member provides approval and denial reasons for all votes.

A Notice of Parole Panel Action letter is generated with a detailed written statement explaining the denial reason(s) specific to each case. The institutional parole officer delivers a copy of the notice to the offender.

APPROVAL RATE BY GUIDELINE LEVEL



GUIDELINES LEVEL BY BOARD MEMBER/PAROLE COMMISSIONER GROUPED BY BOARD OFFICE

The Board annually reports Parole Guideline votes statewide and by individual Board Member and Parole Commissioner. The statutory requirements for this report pertaining to regional offices are displayed in the following charts grouped by Board office.

Vacancies and new parole panel voters are noted in footnotes. Occasionally a Board Member or Parole Commissioner is out of the office for an extended period of time and a panel member from another office will vote cases in their absence.

AMARILLO BOARD OFFICE

James LaFavers

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	1	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	1,498	589	39.32%	6% - 15%
3	2,027	1,217	60.04%	16% - 25%
4	3,635	1,535	42.23%	26% - 35%
5	2,183	800	36.65%	36% - 50%
6	1,434	652	45.47%	51% - 75%
7	322	212	65.84%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	11,100	5,005	45.09%	

Charles Shipman

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	1	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	1,063	150	14.11%	6% - 15%
3	687	123	17.90%	16% - 25%
4	2,690	579	21.52%	26% - 35%
5	2,265	774	34.17%	36% - 50%
6	1,473	639	43.38%	51% - 75%
7	328	208	63.41%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	8,507	2,473	29.07%	

Marsha Moberley

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	0	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	967	217	22.44%	6% - 15%
3	694	212	30.55%	16% - 25%
4	2,568	699	27.22%	26% - 35%
5	2,182	867	39.73%	36% - 50%
6	1,360	699	51.40%	51% - 75%
7	322	244	75.78%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	8,093	2,938	36.30%	

ANGLETON BOARD OFFICE

Cynthia Tauss

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	3	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	1,264	492	38.92%	6% - 15%
3	1,947	888	45.61%	16% - 25%
4	3,165	1,319	41.67%	26% - 35%
5	1,777	763	42.94%	36% - 50%
6	1,347	645	47.88%	51% - 75%
7	337	145	43.03%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	9,840	4,252	43.21%	

Lynn Ruzicka

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	1	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	671	268	39.94%	6% - 15%
3	549	275	50.09%	16% - 25%
4	2,167	726	33.50%	26% - 35%
5	1,844	807	43.76%	36% - 50%
6	1,385	766	55.31%	51% - 75%
7	373	300	80.43%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	6,990	3,142	44.95%	

Fred Rangel

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	3	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	690	257	37.25%	6% - 15%
3	567	264	46.56%	16% - 25%
4	2,211	644	29.13%	26% - 35%
5	1,909	834	43.69%	36% - 50%
6	1,397	764	54.69%	51% - 75%
7	346	244	70.52%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	7,123	3,007	42.22%	

AUSTIN BOARD OFFICE

Troy Fox

Elvis Hightower

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE	LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	0	0	0.00%	0% - 5%	1	0	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	463	152	32.83%	6% - 15%	2	382	154	40.31%	6% - 15%
3	463	203	43.84%	16% - 25%	3	425	201	47.29%	16% - 25%
4	1,517	541	35.66%	26% - 35%	4	1,371	503	36.69%	26% - 35%
5	1,558	625	40.12%	36% - 50%	5	1,368	580	42.40%	36% - 50%
6	1,469	745	50.71%	51% - 75%	6	1,284	703	54.75%	51% - 75%
7	385	264	68.57%	76% - 100%	7	349	253	72.49%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	5,855	2,530	43.21%		TOTAL	5,179	2,394	46.23%	

(Troy Fox and Elvis Hightower moved from the Gatesville Board Office to the Austin Board Office April 1, 2014.)

THE CHAIR'S VOTES

Rissie Owens, Chair

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	0	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	318	312	98.11%	6% - 15%
3	935	923	98.72%	16% - 25%
4	800	787	98.38%	26% - 35%
5	6	4	66.67%	36% - 50%
6	8	7	87.50%	51% - 75%
7	3	3	100.00%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	2,070	2,036	98.36%	

GATESVILLE BOARD OFFICE

David Gutiérrez

Roel Tejada *

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE	LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	0	0	0.00%	0% - 5%	1	0	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	944	409	43.33%	6% - 15%	2	136	34	25.00%	6% - 15%
3	1,758	1,102	62.68%	16% - 25%	3	167	53	31.74%	16% - 25%
4	2,598	1,249	48.08%	26% - 35%	4	507	128	25.25%	26% - 35%
5	1,568	476	30.36%	36% - 50%	5	563	146	25.93%	36% - 50%
6	1,570	713	45.41%	51% - 75%	6	514	240	46.69%	51% - 75%
7	437	308	70.48%	76% - 100%	7	171	112	65.50%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	8,875	4,257	47.97%		TOTAL	2,058	713	34.65%	

(* Roel Tejada began serving as a Parole Commissioner April 1, 2014.)

Lee Ann Eck-Massingill **

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	0	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	148	24	16.22%	6% - 15%
3	176	40	22.73%	16% - 25%
4	549	119	21.68%	26% - 35%
5	582	157	26.98%	36% - 50%
6	522	234	44.83%	51% - 75%
7	165	115	69.70%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	2,142	689	32.17%	

(** Lee Ann Eck-Massingill began serving as a Parole Commissioner April 1, 2014.)

HUNTSVILLE BOARD OFFICE

Roman Chavez

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	2	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	1,856	553	29.80%	6% - 15%
3	2,373	1,093	46.06%	16% - 25%
4	4,414	1,534	34.75%	26% - 35%
5	2,517	802	31.86%	36% - 50%
6	1,481	649	43.82%	51% - 75%
7	226	137	60.62%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	12,869	4,768	37.05%	

Tony Garcia

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	0	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	1,381	253	18.32%	6% - 15%
3	1,117	289	25.87%	16% - 25%
4	3,746	911	24.32%	26% - 35%
5	2,722	946	34.75%	36% - 50%
6	1,641	718	43.75%	51% - 75%
7	250	165	66.00%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	10,857	3,282	30.23%	

Pamela Freeman

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	1	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	1,128	199	17.64%	6% - 15%
3	974	242	24.85%	16% - 25%
4	3,179	698	21.96%	26% - 35%
5	2,348	825	35.14%	36% - 50%
6	1,340	575	42.91%	51% - 75%
7	237	127	53.59%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	9,207	2,666	28.96%	

PALESTINE BOARD OFFICE

Michelle Skyrme

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	1	1	100.00%	0% - 5%
2	1,510	533	35.30%	6% - 15%
3	1,952	1,146	58.71%	16% - 25%
4	3,896	1,235	31.70%	26% - 35%
5	2,601	727	27.95%	36% - 50%
6	1,626	707	43.48%	51% - 75%
7	429	237	55.24%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	12,015	4,586	38.17%	

Paul Kiel

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	2	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	955	220	23.04%	6% - 15%
3	675	197	29.19%	16% - 25%
4	2,960	658	22.23%	26% - 35%
5	2,625	871	33.18%	36% - 50%
6	1,546	769	49.74%	51% - 75%
7	453	363	80.13%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	9,216	3,078	33.40%	

James Hensarling

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	3	1	33.33%	0% - 5%
2	1,140	305	26.75%	6% - 15%
3	829	261	31.48%	16% - 25%
4	3,435	869	25.30%	26% - 35%
5	3,029	1,114	36.78%	36% - 50%
6	1,868	1,036	55.46%	51% - 75%
7	503	414	82.31%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	10,807	4,000	37.01%	

SAN ANTONIO BOARD OFFICE

Juanita González

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	2	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	1,403	550	39.20%	6% - 15%
3	1,956	1,110	56.75%	16% - 25%
4	3,576	1,440	40.27%	26% - 35%
5	2,606	1,010	38.76%	36% - 50%
6	1,564	755	48.27%	51% - 75%
7	403	216	53.60%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	11,510	5,081	44.14%	

Charles Speier

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	1	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	961	317	32.99%	6% - 15%
3	653	227	34.76%	16% - 25%
4	2,702	727	26.91%	26% - 35%
5	2,814	1,085	38.56%	36% - 50%
6	1,672	826	49.40%	51% - 75%
7	433	265	61.20%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	9,236	3,447	37.32%	

Anthony Ramirez

LEVEL	CON	APP	APP RATE	RECOMMENDED APPROVAL RATE
1	0	0	0.00%	0% - 5%
2	918	215	23.42%	6% - 15%
3	581	193	33.22%	16% - 25%
4	2,552	660	25.86%	26% - 35%
5	2,663	981	36.84%	36% - 50%
6	1,639	793	48.38%	51% - 75%
7	402	248	61.69%	76% - 100%
TOTAL	8,755	3,090	35.29%	

VARIATIONS BETWEEN ACTUAL PAROLE APPROVAL RATES AND RECOMMENDED PAROLE APPROVAL RATES

This report provides a comparison of Actual Parole Approval Rates for individual parole panel members, regional offices and the state as a whole to the range of Recommended Parole Approval Rates. The range of Recommended Parole Approval Rates utilized by the Board in this annual report was developed by a consultant to the Board in 2001. Parole guidelines are one of many tools utilized by a voter in making a discretionary release decision – therefore the Board realizes individual voter and aggregate release decisions may not fall within the Recommended Parole Approval range. The following explanation is provided for the variations that exist between the Actual Parole Approval Rates for individual parole panel members, regional offices and the state as a whole to the range of Recommended Parole Approval Rates.

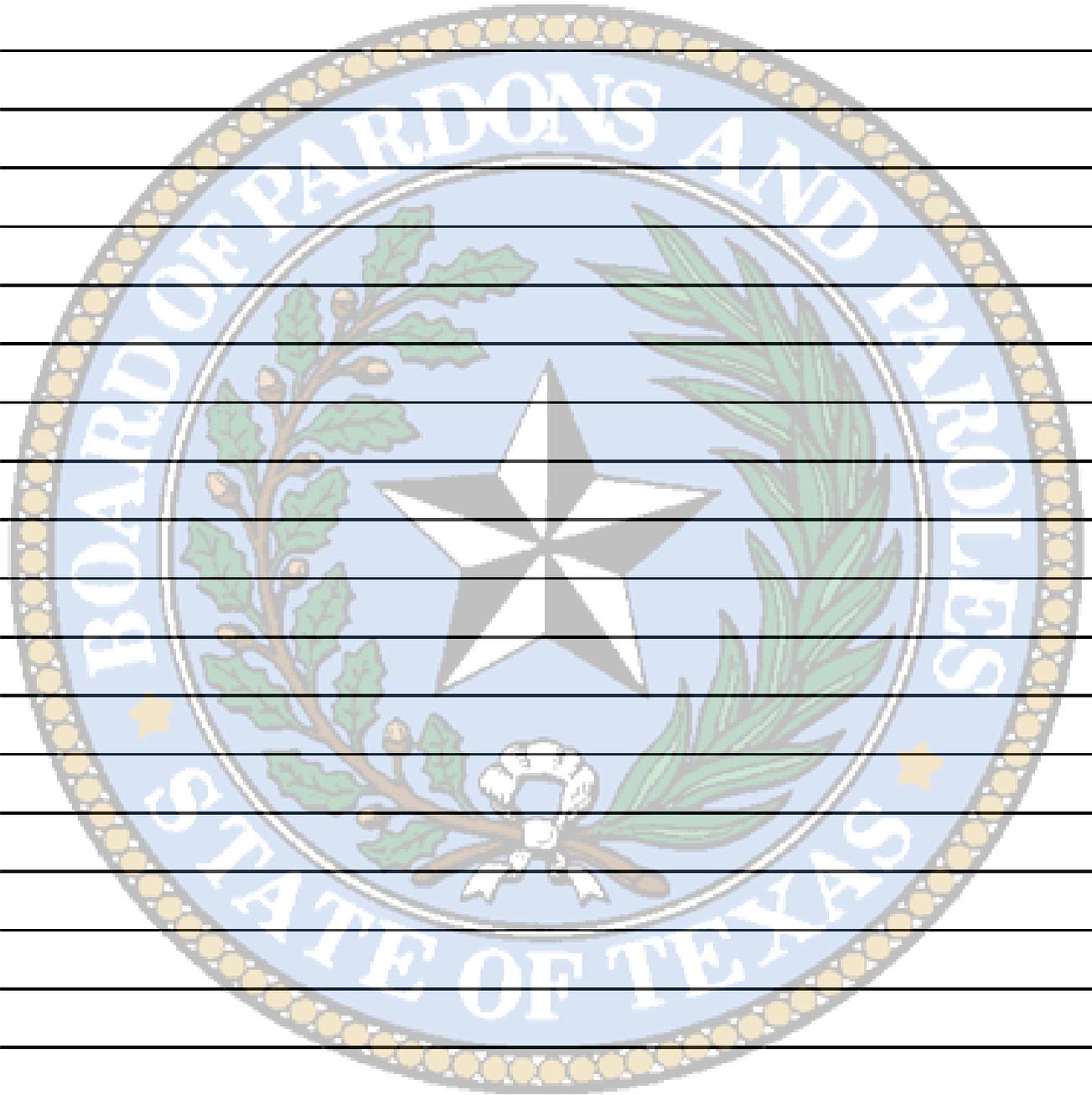
Offenders with Parole Guideline (PG) scores from 1-3 were approved at a higher approval rate than the recommended range of approval rates in part due to the fact many of these offenders have served a significant portion of their sentence, with the Board looking to utilize treatment programs and to provide a period of supervision as a means to increase the likelihood of a successful reintegration into society. Additionally, there was a small amount of offenders that had a PG score of 1 which makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions from the percentages for PG 1. Offenders with a PG score of 5 had an aggregate approval rate of 35.77 percent versus the recommended rate of 36-50 percent, which is less than one-half of one percent variation. Offenders with a PG score of 6 and 7 had a slightly lower aggregate approval rate than the recommended range of approval.

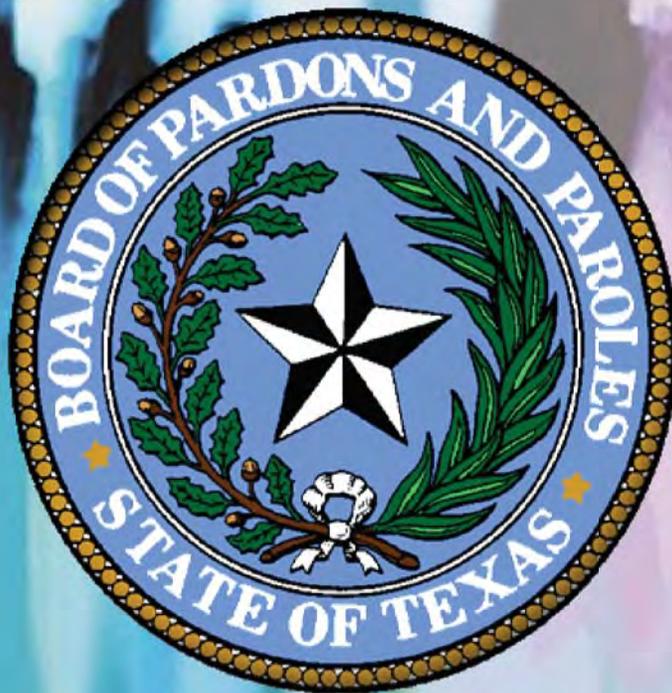
Of note, Board Members and Parole Commissioners vote cases on a daily basis; therefore, at the time of the parole panel member's vote, the current monthly aggregate total by approval rates are not available to them. Additionally, the Parole Guidelines are only one of the tools utilized by the parole panel members when making individual offender discretionary decisions. Other factors the panel members consider include: Information from victims and trial officials, the nature of the specific offense, support information and offenders with short sentences which limit the voting options for placement into a rehabilitative program. The Parole Guidelines were simply meant to be "criterion" and not a mandate which would remove the discretionary decision making authority provided to the Board.

The seven Board offices are primarily situated near high density prison populations. As such, certain units often house a specific type of offender. For example, the Gatesville area houses female offenders, thus the Gatesville Board office vote a higher percentage of female offenders than other Board offices – where other units may house less violent offenders, or offenders with shorter sentences. Such differences in unit populations impact the approval percentages of each Board office, so particular attention is warranted when comparing regional approval rates.

The Board is currently partnering with a consultant and the Bureau of Justice Assistance to evaluate the Parole Guidelines as well as the current recommended range of approval rates. A determination will be made if adjustments are required on the basis of new data and evidence-based practices that have emerged since the initial range of Recommended Parole Approval Rates were established. We anticipate this evaluation will be completed in 2015. Future actions the Board may take to modify the Parole Guidelines is dependent upon this evaluation and report.

NOTES





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