

ORLEANS PARISH
MARCH-APRIL 2020 COVID-19 ARREST AND INMATE
POPULATION TRENDS

Metropolitan Crime Commission

May 12, 2020



The New Normal?

Lower Arrests Rates and Inmate Populations Holding Steady in Orleans Parish Amid COVID-19 Response

Arrests

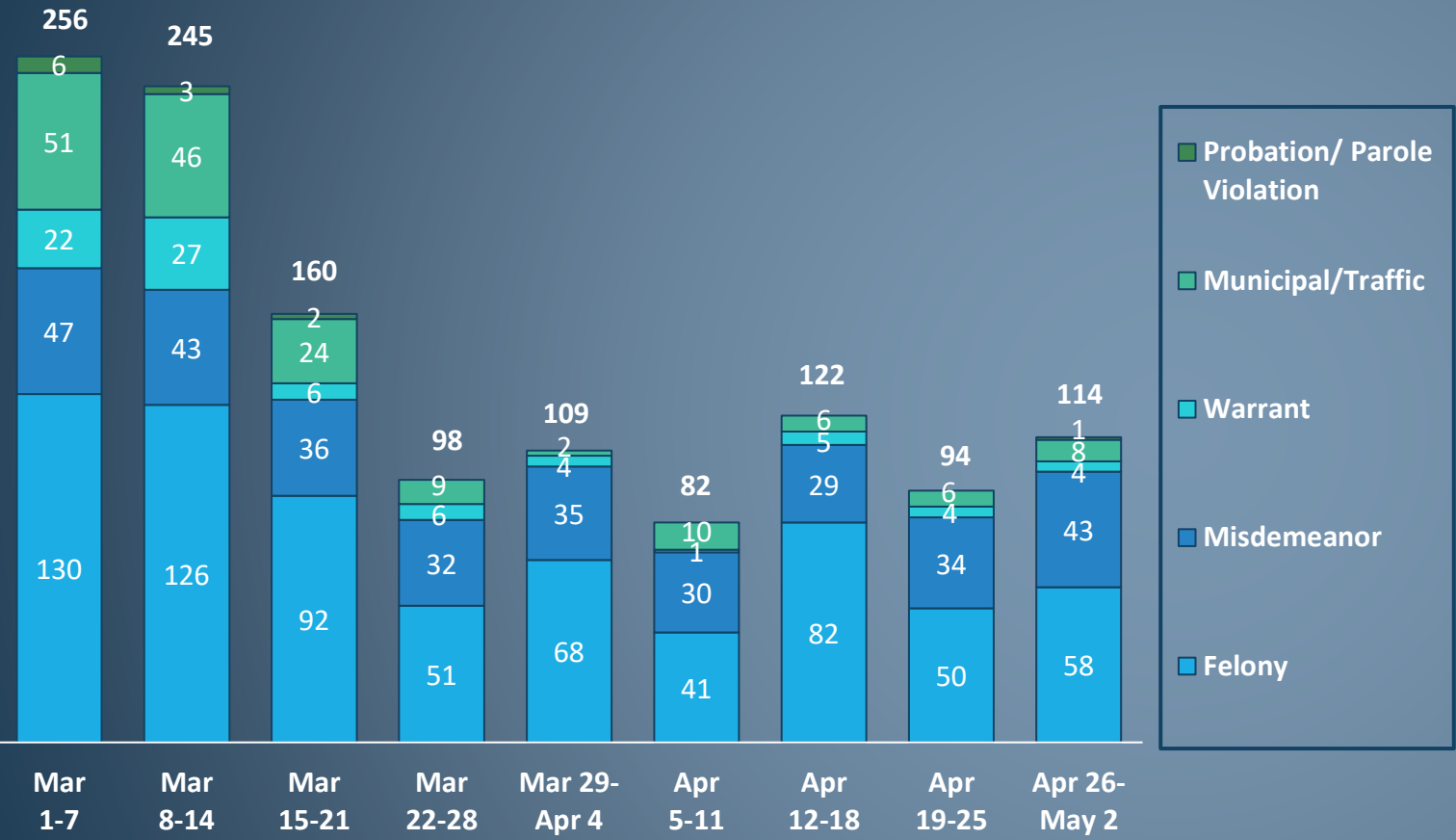
- 55% decline in total felony arrests and violent felony arrests since first week of March **(see Exhibit 1)**
 - As of May 2, violent felonies comprised 42% of all felony arrests **(Exhibit 2)**
 - 6% decline in property-related felony arrests
 - 80% decline in weapons felony arrests
 - 70% decline in drug felony arrests
- Violent misdemeanor arrests near pre-pandemic levels **(Exhibit 3)**
 - 100% of violent misdemeanor arrests between April 26-May 2 included at least one domestic violence charge **(Exhibit 3)**
 - **Officers are required by law to make arrests in domestic violence cases**

Inmate Population

- 23% fewer inmates in custody the week of April 26-May 2 compared to the first two weeks of March, prior to the stay-at-home order **(Exhibit 4)**
- Inmate population remained largely stable since April 5-11, ranging from 804-819 in custody each day **(Exhibit 4)**
 - Since April 5-11, 95% of the inmate population has been comprised of offenders held for felony charges (*i.e., felony pretrial inmates, felony warrants, Department of Corrections inmates, and probation/parole violators*; **Exhibit 4**)
- 140 inmates were being held on pending murder charges as of May 2, 2020 **(Exhibit 5)**

Weekly Arrests by Type from March 1st – May 2nd 2020

Exhibit 1. Weekly Orleans Parish Arrests by Type



Arrests from March 1 to May 2, 2020:

Overall, arrests decreased 55%, from 256 the week of March 1-7 to 114 the week of April 26-May 2.

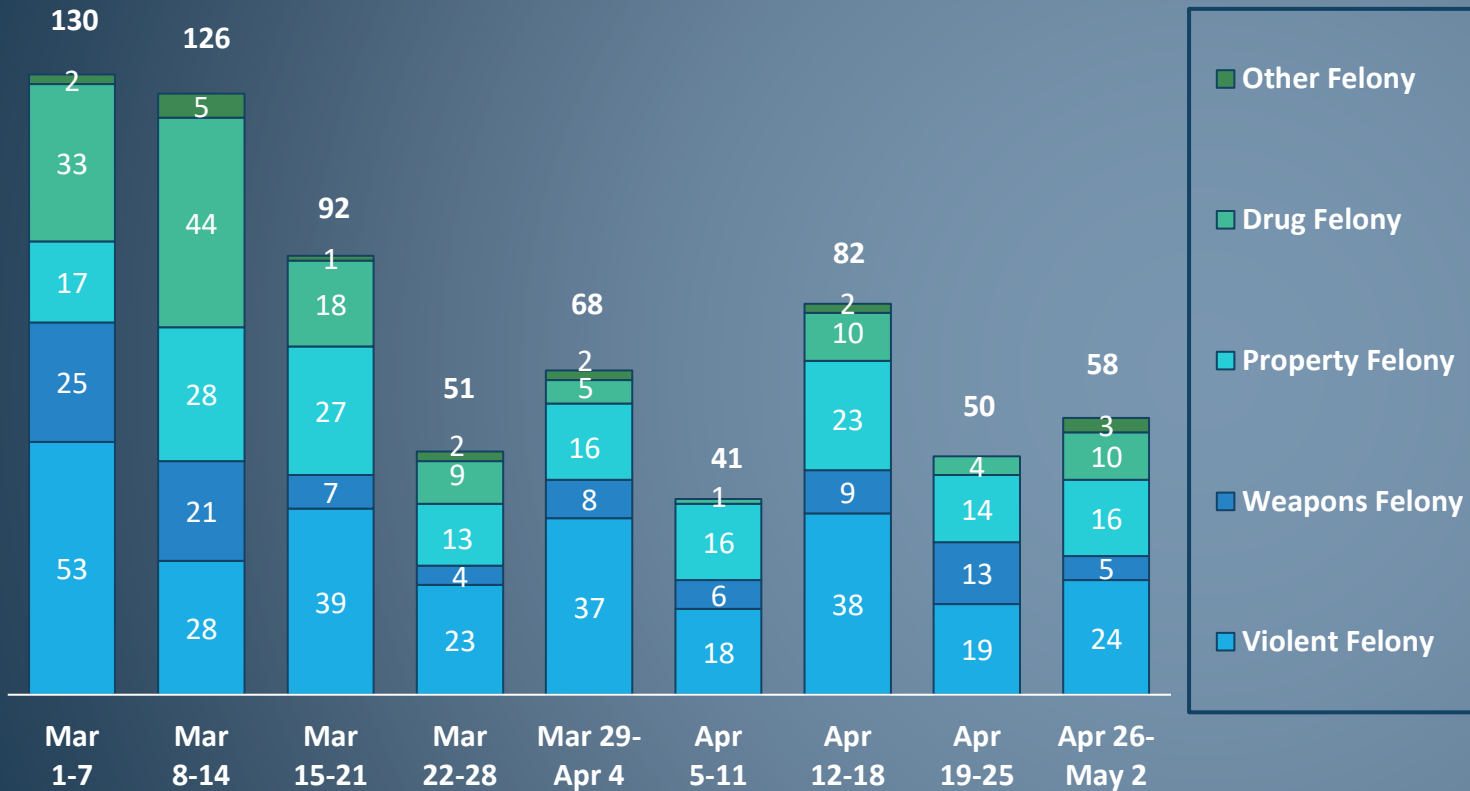
- Felony arrests dropped 55%
- Misdemeanor arrests returned to near pre-pandemic levels the week of April 26-May 2
- Warrant arrests dropped 82%
- Municipal and traffic arrests dropped 84%
- Probation/parole violation arrests dropped 83%
 - Since the week of March 15-21, there has been only one standalone probation/parole violation arrest

↑
Statewide school closure announced; city events cancelled

↑
City and statewide stay-at-home orders issued; bars/restaurants closed

Weekly Felony Arrests from March 1st – May 2nd 2020

Exhibit 2. Weekly Orleans Parish Felony Arrests



↑
Statewide school closure announced; city events cancelled

↑
City and statewide stay-at-home orders issued; bars/restaurants closed

Felony Arrests Since March 1, 2020:

Violent felonies continued to show considerable variability from week to week

- Overall, violent felony arrests declined 55% since the first week of March and comprised 42% of all felony arrests as of May 2, 2020
- Battery/assault charges represented a majority of violent felonies, averaging 65% of violent felony arrests
- Robbery charges were the second most common, comprising an average of 19% of violent felony arrests

Weapons felony arrests declined 80% and showed fewer weekly fluctuations than other types of felony charges

Property-related felonies declined 6% overall

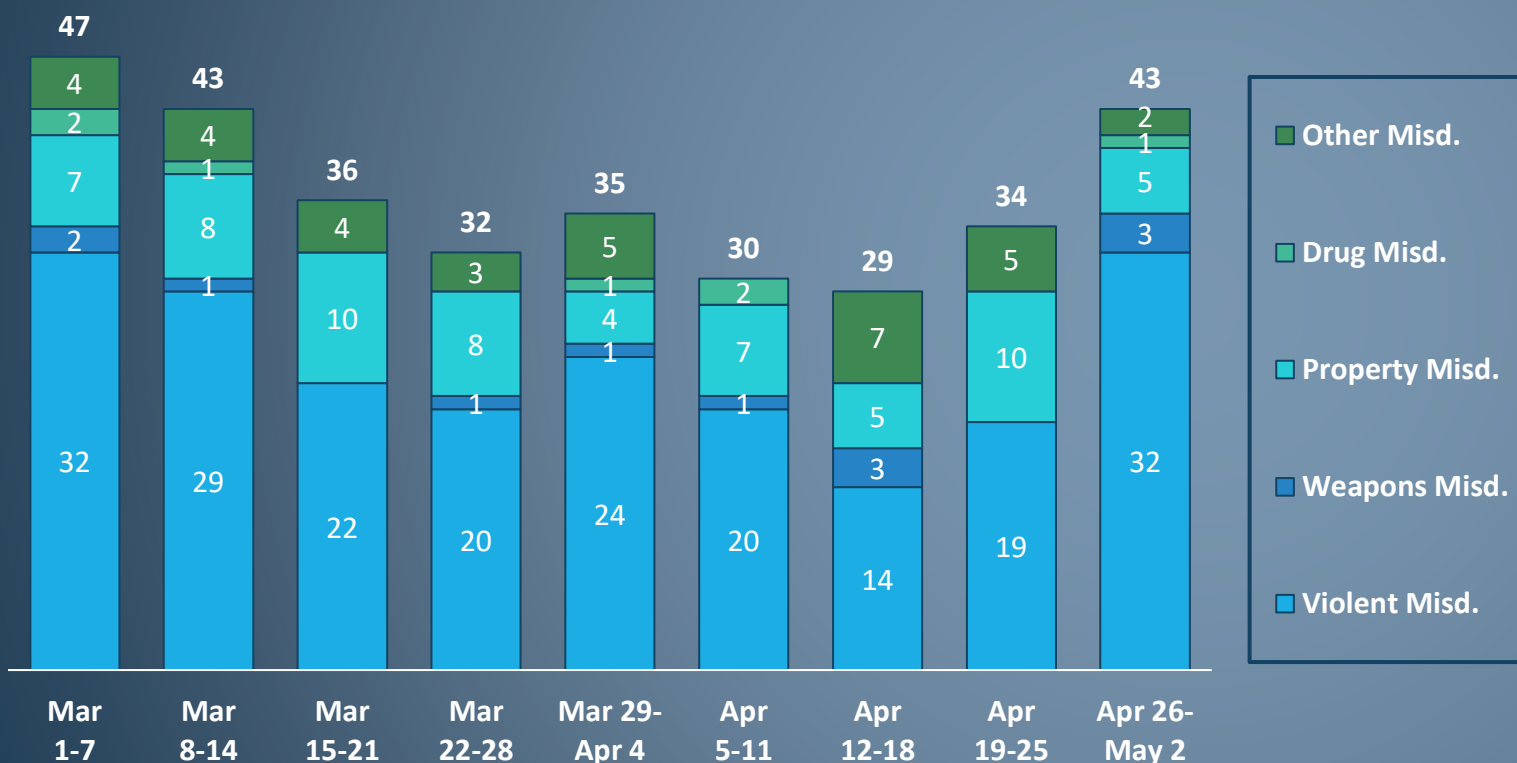
- Felony burglary arrests *increased* 50% since the first week of March
- Felony theft arrests decreased 33%
- Felony criminal damage arrests exhibited little change

Felony drug arrests showed a 70% decline overall since the first week of March.

- Felony drug distribution arrests declined 31%, from 13 March 1-7 to 9 April 26-May 2
- Felony drug possession arrests dropped 90%, from 20 March 1-7 to 2 April 26-May 2

Weekly Misdemeanor Arrests from March 1st – May 2nd 2020

Exhibit 3. Weekly Orleans Parish Misdemeanor Arrests



Misdemeanor Arrests Since March 1, 2020:

As of May 2, violent misdemeanor arrests, which were largely comprised of domestic violence offenses, had nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels

- 81% of violent misdemeanor arrests during the reporting period included at least one domestic violence charge
- **100% of violent misdemeanor arrests the week of April 26-May 2 included at least one domestic violence charge**
- Officers are *required by law* to make an arrest in all domestic violence cases

19% were property-related misdemeanors such as theft or criminal damage

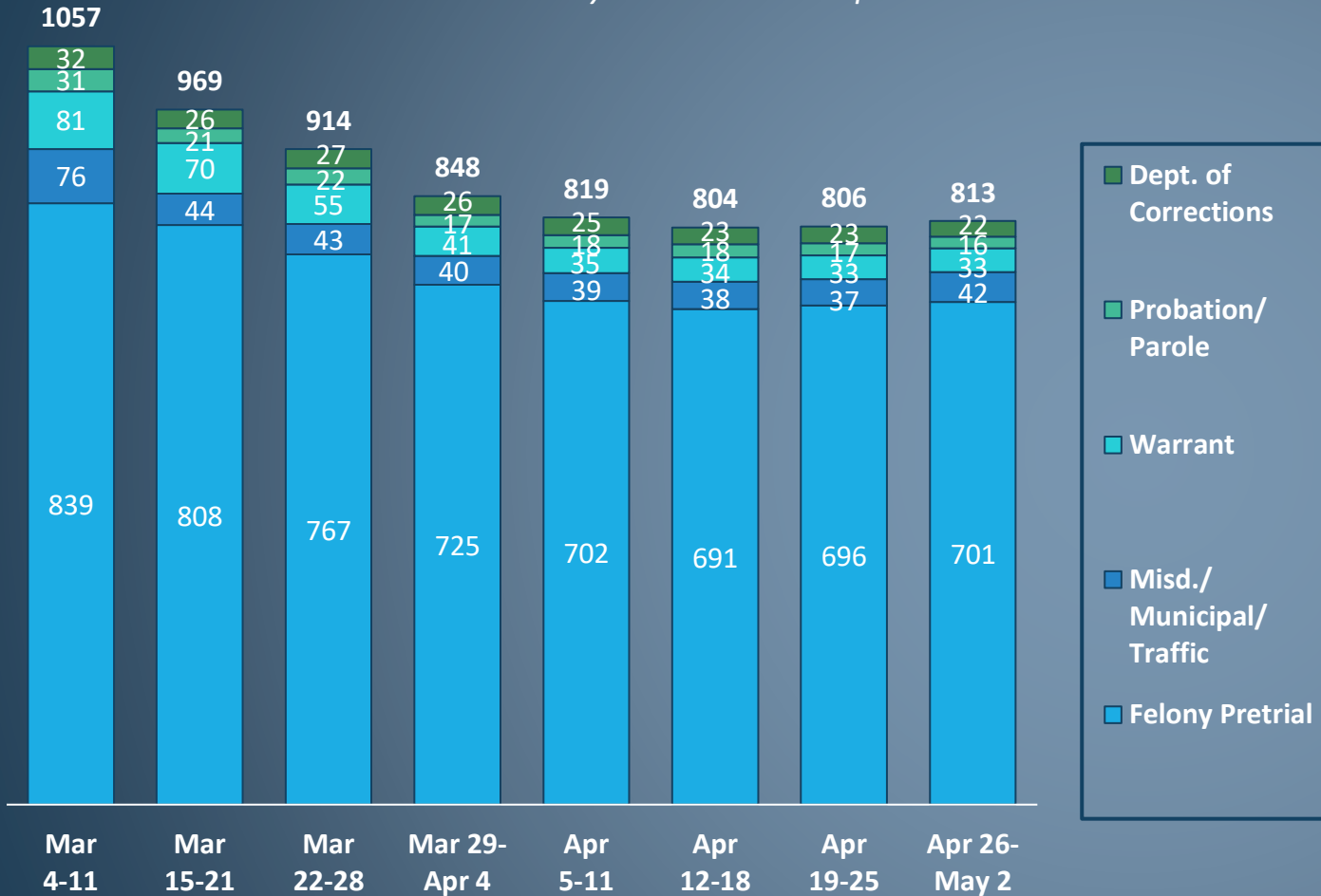
10% were “other” misdemeanors, most commonly for violation of protective orders- a domestic violence-related offense- or resisting an officer

↑
Statewide school closure announced; city events cancelled

↑
City and statewide stay-at-home orders issued; bars/ restaurants closed

Weekly OPSO Inmate Population from March 4th – May 2nd 2020

Exhibit 4. Weekly OPSO Inmate Population



↑
(March 13th)
Statewide school closure announced; city events cancelled

↑
City and statewide stay-at-home orders issued; bars/restaurants closed

There were 23% fewer inmates in custody the week of April 26-May 2 compared to the first two weeks of March, prior to the stay-at-home order

The jail population has been steady since the week of April 5-11 and ranged from 804-819

Since April 5-11, 95% of inmates were in custody for felonies, including inmates held for the Department of Corrections (DOC), probation/parole violations, warrants, and pending felony charges

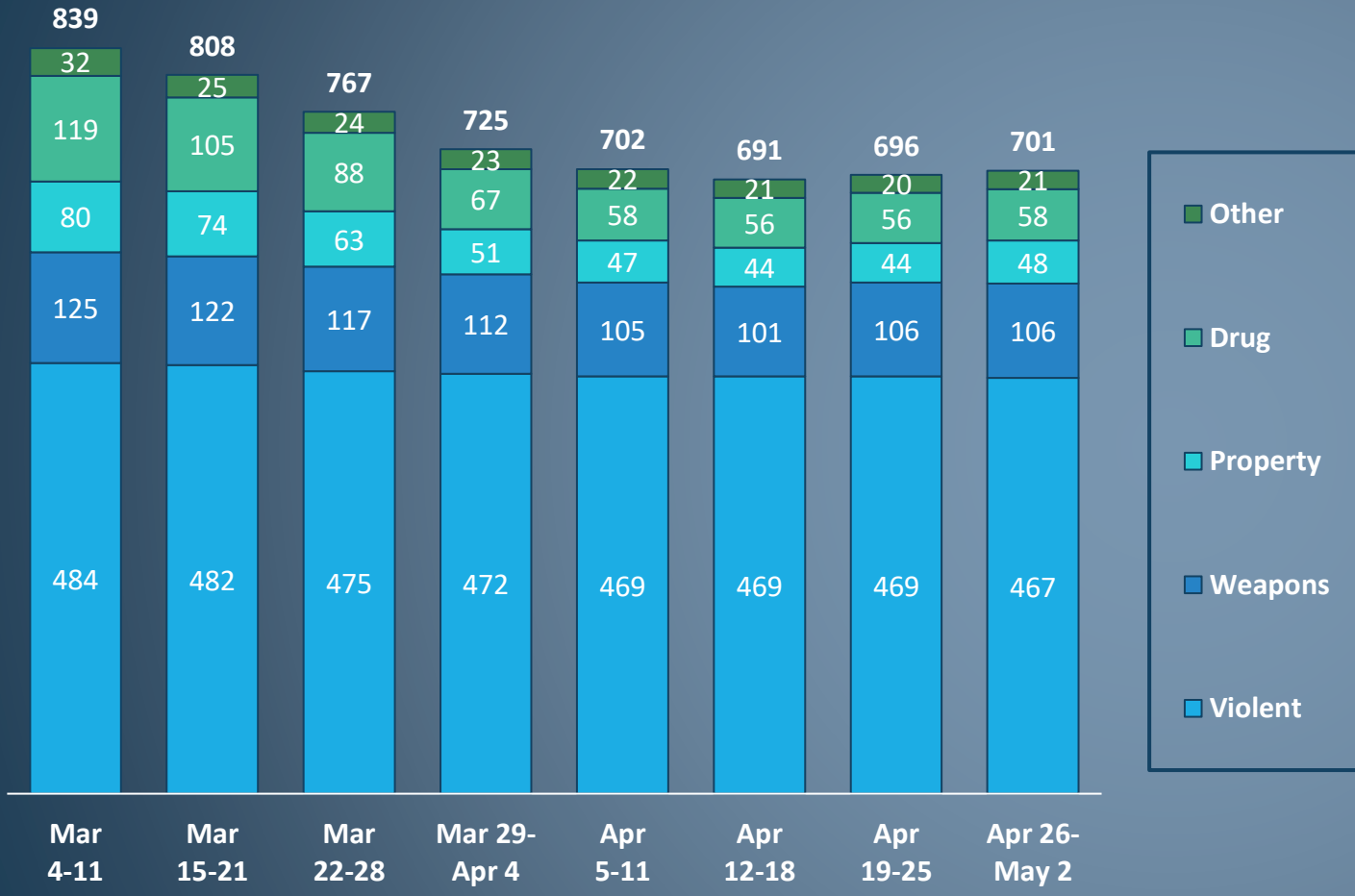
- 82% of DOC inmates were participating in the work release program

70% of misdemeanor inmates are held for violent offenses such as domestic assault

- Most days, there are no inmates held on municipal or traffic charges
- An average of one offender per day was held for misdemeanor drug possession

Weekly OPSO Felony Pretrial Inmate Population from March 4th – May 2nd 2020

Exhibit 5. Weekly OPSO Felony Pretrial Inmate Population



↑
(March 13th)
Statewide school
closure announced;
city events cancelled

↑
City and statewide
stay-at-home orders
issued; bars/
restaurants closed

From the beginning of March to the week of April 26-May 2:

There were 17% fewer felony pretrial inmates

Violent felony pretrial inmates had a small 3% decline

- Inmates held for murder rose from 132 to 140
- A consistent average of 65 inmates were held for rape
- An average of 105 inmates were in custody for robbery

Inmates held for weapons felonies accounted for 13% of the inmate population

Property felonies were the most serious charge for 6%-8% of inmates

- Burglary charges accounted for a 64% majority of inmates held for property felonies

Pretrial drug felony inmates went from making up 11% of the inmate population to 7% of the inmate population

- A 71% majority of inmates held for drug felonies were charged with distribution

Inmates held for "Other" crimes such as possession of child pornography and failure to register as a sex offender made up 3% of the inmate population