

LIFERS' GROUP, INC.

"Recidivism Study"

2016

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On Saturday, November 19, 2016, members of The Lifers' Group, Inc. Board of Directors interviewed 115 random prisoners in the prison yard at MCI Norfolk and asked a pointed question;

"Have you been previously incarcerated in either state prison or county jail before this present incarceration? We are also considering Department of Youth Services (DYS) juvenile secure facility sentences."

Of the 115 prisoners interviewed 78 indicated that they had in fact done a previous prison/jail sentence. This affords us what we will call a "pure" recidivism rate of 67.8%.

Only 5 prisoners out of the 115 interviewed indicated that they had served a DYS secure facilities sentence. They were figured into our "pure" recidivism rate of 67.8%. If these five men were to be removed from the study our data would have been 110 prisoners interviewed with 73 indicating that they had been previously incarcerated in prison or jail. This would give us an associated recidivism rate of 66.2%. The average of the two rates, "pure" and "associated", would be 67.00%. We believe this accurately reflects the true, or "pure" recidivism rate in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Council on State Governments Justice Center has reported that the Massachusetts Department of Correction indicates they have reduced recidivism in the state over the past years and that the current rate is at 38%. We strongly dispute this figure.

Our study, which we characterize as a "pure" recidivism study, is in our opinion the most accurate in reflecting the true recidivism rate in Massachusetts. Using statistical and demographical manipulations the Department of Correction can offer inflated or deflated recidivism rates to suit their instant needs; higher rates to indicate a need to build more prisons or raise staffing rates, lower rates to display a job well done or departmental success. Their figures must always be called into question.

LIFERS' GROUP, INC.

December 2016

"Survey Results"

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On December 6, 2016, The Lifers' Group conducted a survey of its General Membership asking four (4) specific questions;

1. Have you been incarcerated, on a separate criminal case, previously? Include County Jail and/or State Prison sentences.
2. Were you an illegal drug user prior to this incarceration?
3. If you answered "YES" to Question 2 would you describe your drug use as; Infrequent, Moderate, or Heavy?
4. During the course of this incarceration how many close family members have passed away?

87 members responded to the survey and their answers are detailed as follows;

QUESTION #1: Of the 87 respondents 39 reported they had been previously incarcerated and 48 reported that they had not. As such the recidivism rate for this group is: %44.8.

In a previous study we found that the general population here at MCI Norfolk had a %67.00 recidivism rate. Thus the Lifers' Group recidivism rate is half that of the general population under our study parameters. We believe this is a very accurate reflection of recidivism at the facility.

QUESTION #2: Of the 87 respondents 47 reported that they had a history of illegal drug use prior to this incarceration. This is a %54.2 drug use rate. We believe drug users need "treatment", not punishment.

40 of the respondents reported that they did not use illegal drugs prior to incarceration. This is a %45.8 non-user rate.

QUESTION #3: Of the 47 respondents who stated they used illegal drugs prior to incarceration 4 said they were infrequent users, 19 said they were moderate users, and 24 said they were heavy drug users. Of the drug using respondents most %51 claimed to be heavy users.

QUESTION #4: Of the 87 respondents 53 (%60) reported that they had lost at least one (1) close family member while incarcerated. 18 reported that had lost at least five (5) (%20), and 14 reported they had lost over ten (10) family members (%16). Only two (2) of the respondents reported they had lost no close family members. That is %2.2 of those surveyed.

We believe that Lifers' Group General Members are the safest release demographic and have payed the biggest price as far as "punishment" is concerned, as reflected by these figures.

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L I F E R S '   G R O U P ,   I N C .

"QUESTIONNAIRE"

\* \* \* \* \*

1. Have you been incarcerated, on a seperate criminal case, previously?  
Include County Jail and/or State Prison sentences.

YES (   )

NO (   )

2. Were you an illegal drug user prior to this incarceration?

YES (   )

NO (   )

3. If you answered "YES" to Question 2 would you describe your drug  
use as;

INFREQUENT (   )

MODERATE (   )

HEAVY (   )

4. During the course of this incarceration how many close family members  
have passed away?

1 to 5 (   )

5 to 10 (   )

10 or More (   )

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Results to be revealed at a future Lifers' Group meeting