

# **Effect of Prison Length of Stay in Oregon**

**Testimony to the Senate and House Committees on  
Judiciary**

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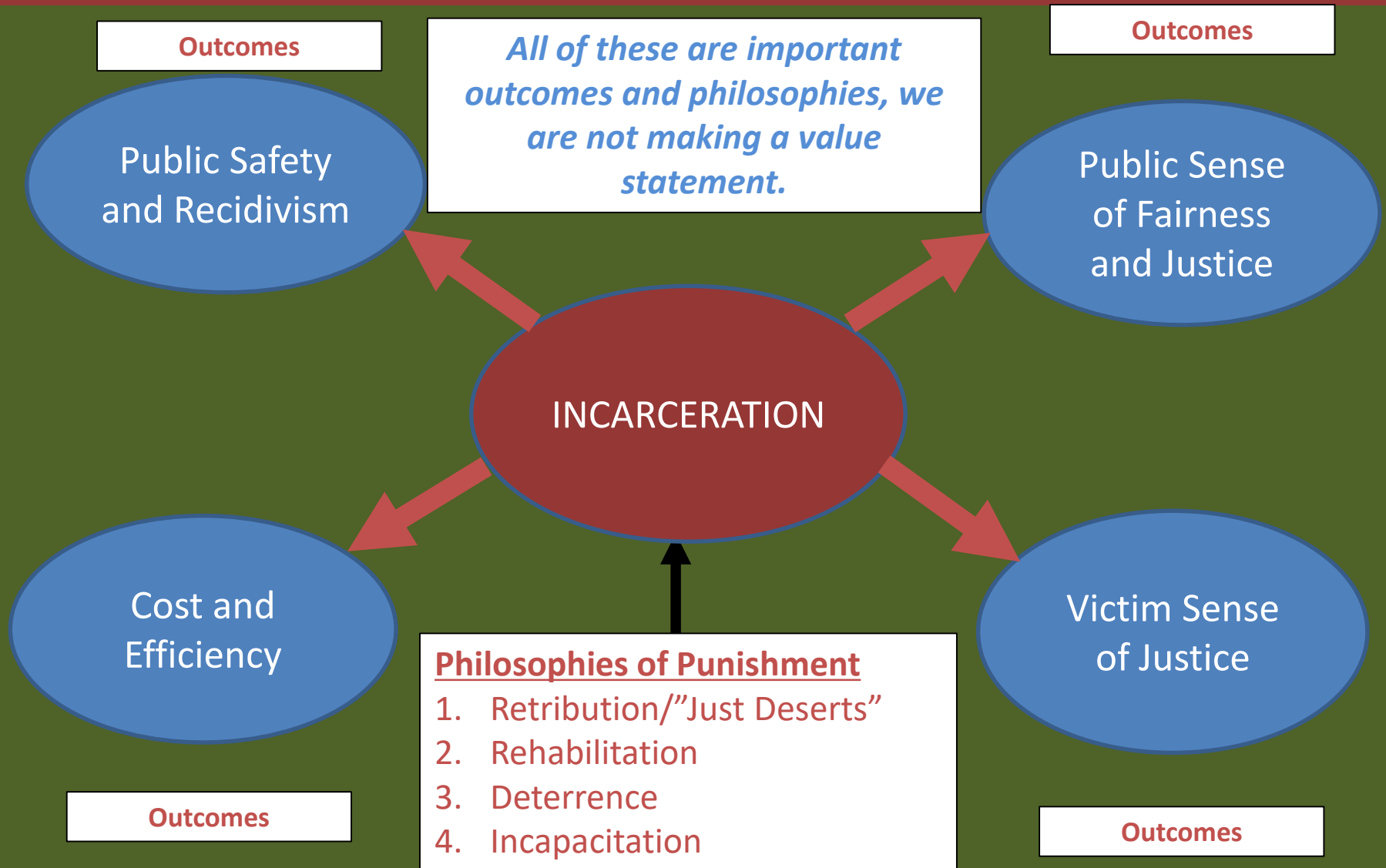
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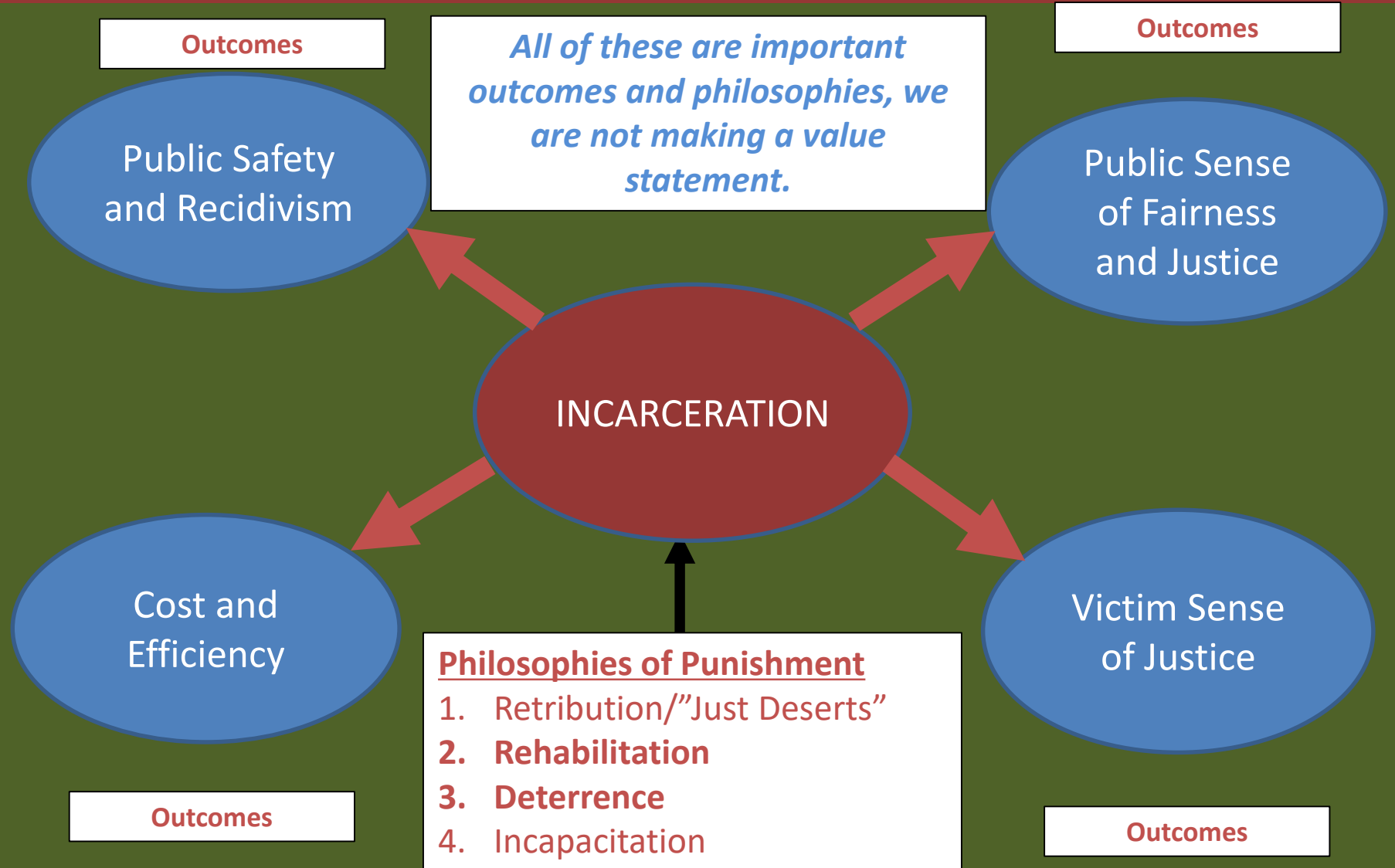
# Justice Reinvestment Trend

- Justice Reinvestment is an approach to spending resources more effectively with the goals of **reducing recidivism, stabilizing prison growth, protecting the public** and holding offenders accountable.

# Oregon Incarceration – A Balancing Act



# Our Study Focuses on Recidivism and Cost/Efficiency



# Caveats of Our Research

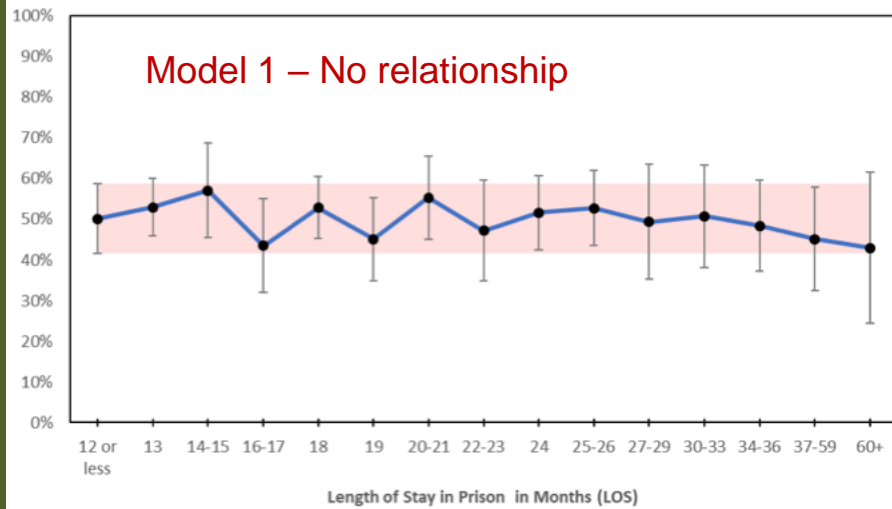
- Only focusing on the impact of length of stay (LOS) on recidivism (not examining public and victim's sense of fairness in sentencing)
- Focus only on **Justice Reinvestment Crimes** – principally property, driving, and drug crimes. Findings are not generalizable to all crimes.

## ***Key Research Questions***

1. What's the impact of LOS on recidivism?
2. Does LOS's impact on recidivism vary by JRI offense types (e.g. driving, possession, drug distribution/manufacturing, property offenses )?
3. What is the threshold in sentence length that maximizes public safety?

# Possible Hypothetical Outcomes

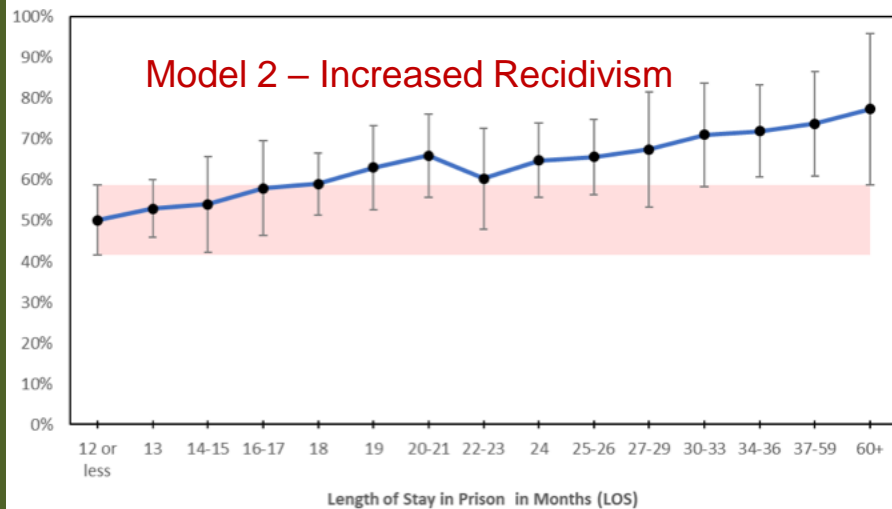
Model 1 – No relationship



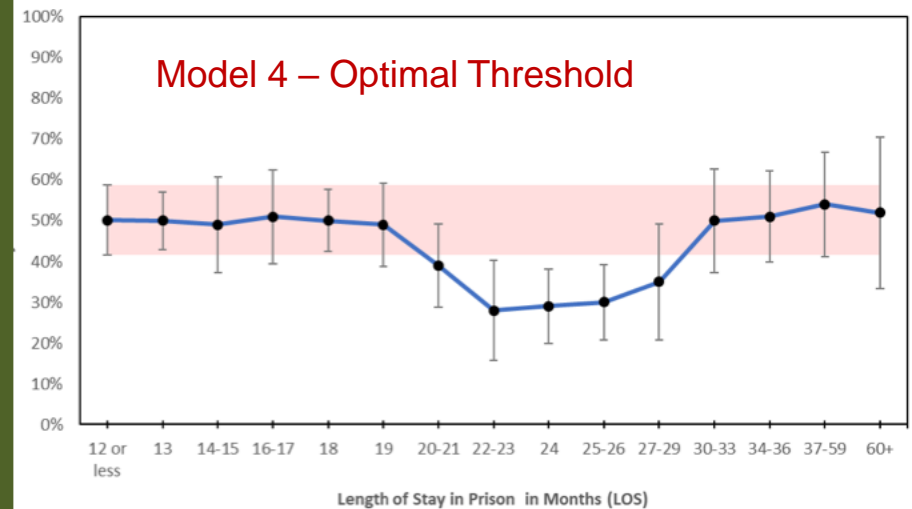
Model 3 – Decreased Recidivism



Model 2 – Increased Recidivism



Model 4 – Optimal Threshold



# How We Approached the Study

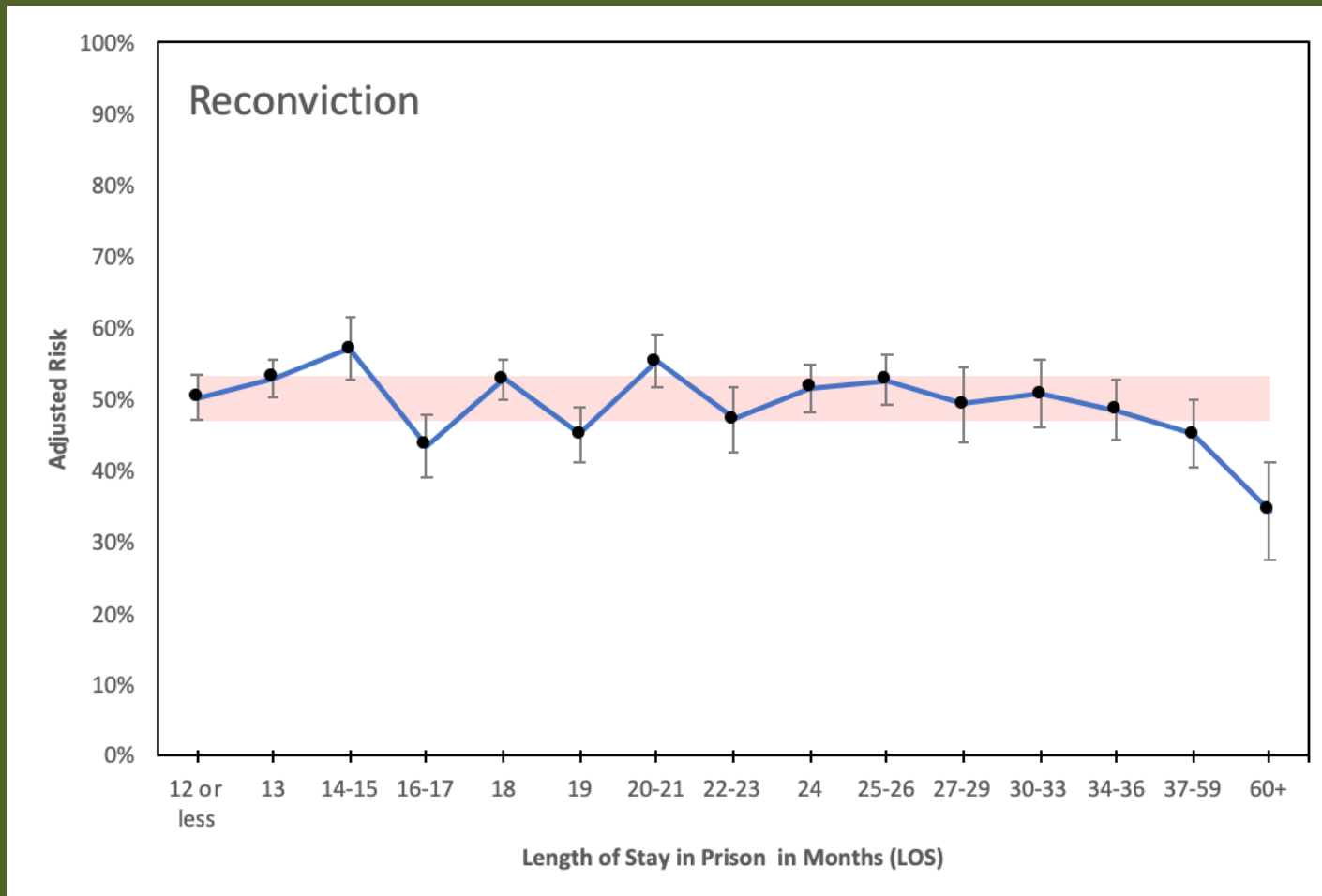
- Offenders released from prison in Oregon between 2011 and 2015 after serving time for one or more JRI offenses
  - This consisted of 12,824 individuals includes those released following the end of their sentence (73.2%), those released on short-term transitional leave (26.3%), and people released for other, less common reasons (.4%)
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- Recidivism = as defined by Oregon state statute:
    1. Rearrest within 3 years
    2. Reconviction within 3 years
    3. Reincarceration within 3 years
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- A Quasi-Experimental Design
  - Statistically similar groupings of inmates within 15 LOS groupings (e.g. inmates serving 13 months, inmates serving 14-15 months, etc.) were identified.
  - Inmates were matched using demographics, criminal history, behavioral characteristics, while also accounting for factors influencing recidivism.
  - LOS then become directly comparable and allow us to accurately conclude if different LOS impact recidivism.



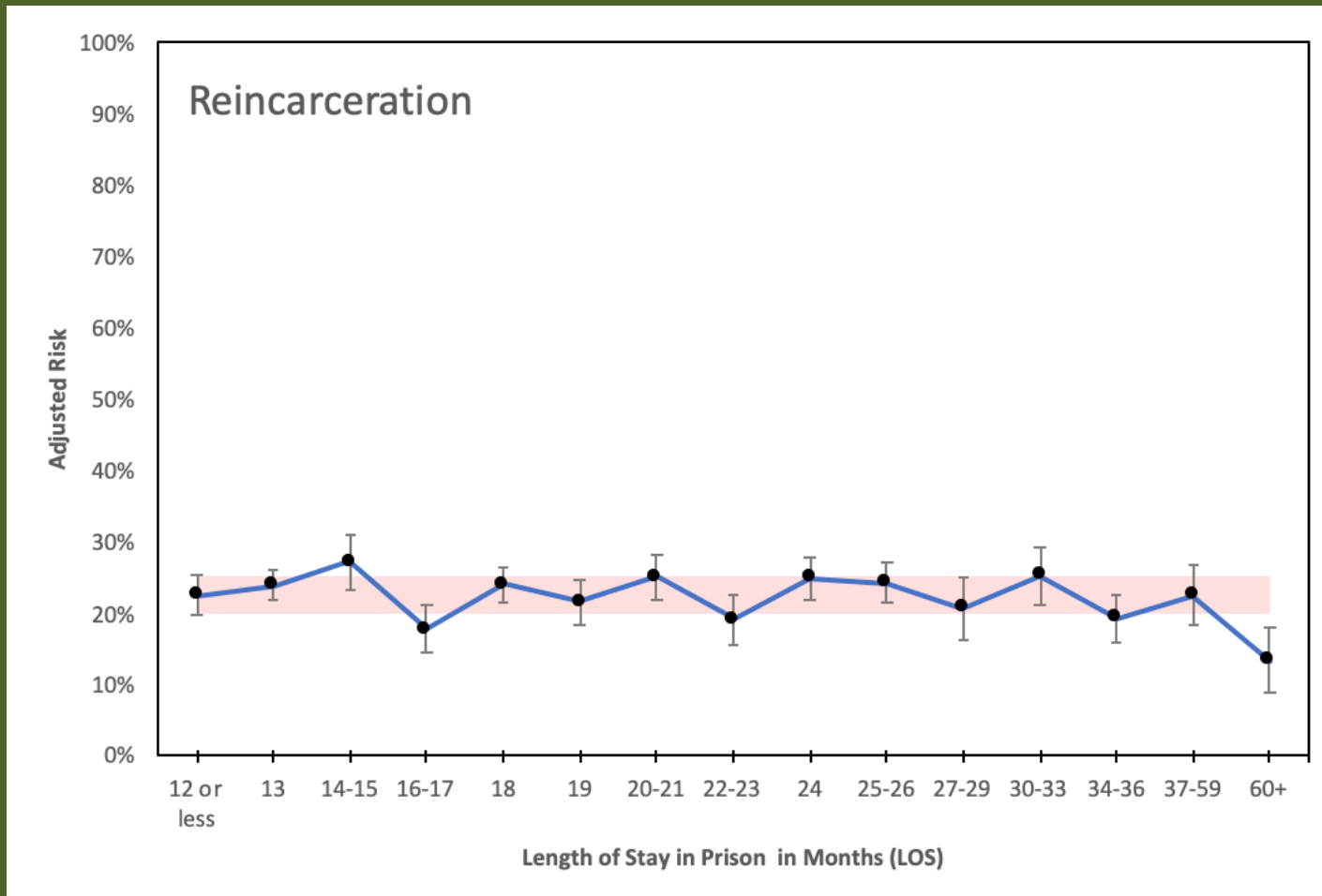
# Results Table

Did LOS Influence Recidivism for All of our Analysis?						
Crime Type (of inmate incarceration)		All JRI Offenses	Driving Offenses	Drug Possession	Drug Manu/Dist	Property Offenses
Reincarceration		X	X	X	X	X
Reconviction		X	In/Decrease	X	Decrease	X
Rearrest	Any Offense	Decrease	X	X	X	X
	JRI Offense	X	X	X	X	X
	Violent	X	X	Increase	X	X
	Property	X	X	X	X	X
	Driving	X	X	X	X	X
	Drug Manu	X	X	X	X	Increase
	Possession	Decrease	X	Decrease	X	X
Did LOS Influence the Time an Individual Could Remain in the Community Before Recidivating?						
Crime Type (of inmate incarceration)		All JRI Offenses	Driving Offenses	Drug Possession	Drug Manu/Dist	Property Offenses
Reincarceration		X	X	X	X	X
Reconviction		X	X	X	X	X
Rearrest	Any Offense	Increase	X	X	X	X
	JRI Offense	X	X	X	X	X
	Violent	X	X	X	X	X
	Property	X	X	X	X	X
	Driving	X	X	X	X	X
	Drug Manu	X	X	X	X	X
	Possession	X	X	X	X	X

# Sample Result Graph



# Sample Result Graph



# Why is 60+ Different?

- Only 2.9% of cases are in this group, as it is rare for a JRI offense to get a sentence this long.
- The individuals in this group are older and are more likely to “age-out” of criminal activity.
- The group represents a unique group of repeat property crime offenders.

# What We Found

- Overall, **longer prison stays have little to no effect** regardless of offense and recidivism type.
  - In 82 analyses out of 90 we found no effect of LOS on recidivism.
- The likelihood of recidivating remains stable and flat regardless of LOS for *almost all* models.
- Some LOS results in lower and some higher recidivism. However, rarely are there significant trends.
- Rarely is there a decline in recidivism for imprisoning longer than 24 months.
- It is not clear what LOS maximizes public safety because the likelihood of recidivating remains basically the same between LOS.
  - This also suggests that **more time-served does not reduce rearrest, reconviction, or reincarceration.**
  - **Shorter LOS is not likely to decrease public safety.**
- Rarely is there a benefit to imprisoning JRI offenders for more than 18 months.
- Across almost all cases, individuals **neither recidivate sooner nor later** based on their LOS.