

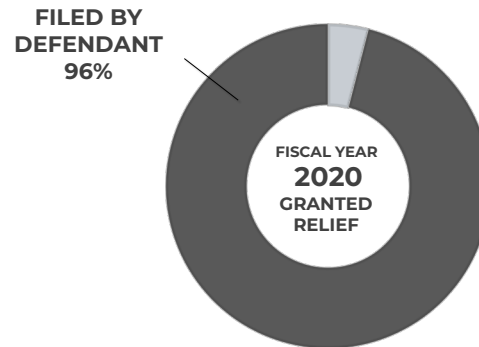
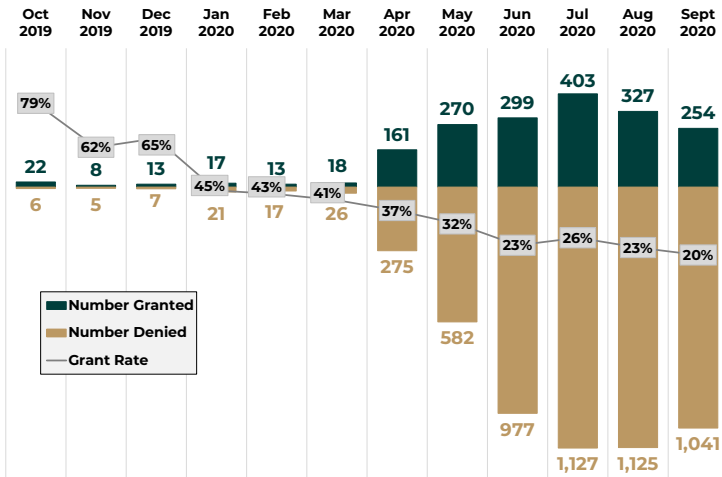


Federal Sentencing Snapshot: Compassionate Release Trends

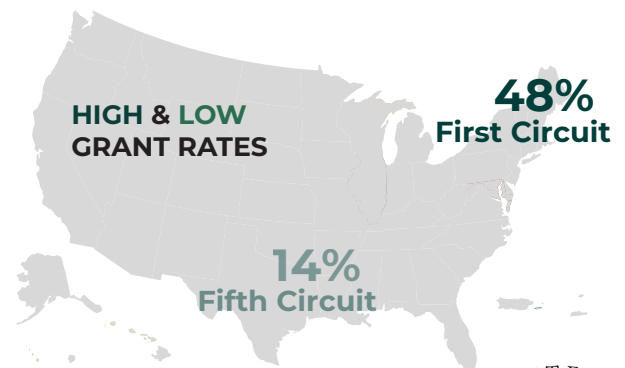
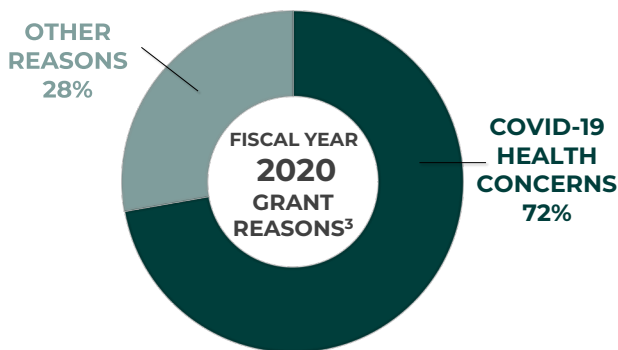
This fact sheet provides a snapshot of findings from the U.S. Sentencing Commission's report, *Compassionate Release: The Impact of the First Step Act and COVID-19 Pandemic*.

OVERVIEW

The number of offenders who sought compassionate release **dramatically increased** in fiscal year 2020. **The First Step Act**, which authorized the defendant to file a motion in federal court, helped facilitate a **substantial increase in grants** of compassionate release during the **COVID-19 pandemic**.



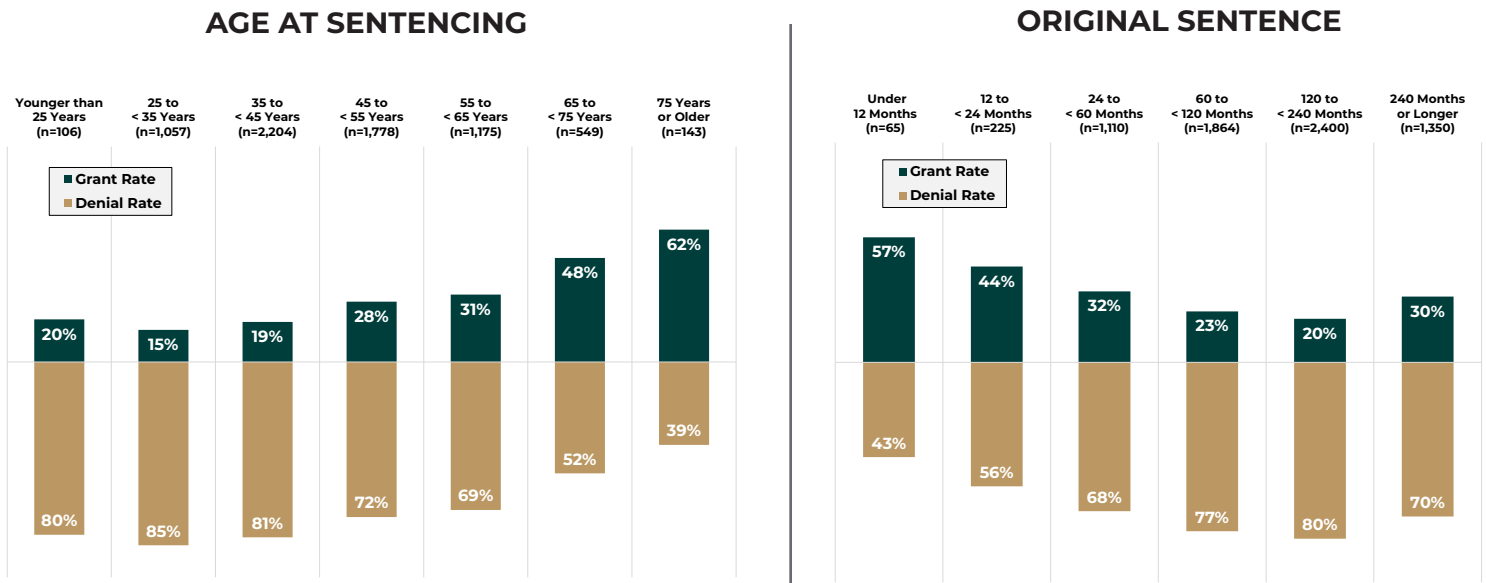
Overwhelmingly, courts cited grant reasons comparable to those listed by the Commission in its policy statement;¹ however, in the absence of recently amended federal sentencing guidelines,² application of compassionate release among those studied varied considerably across the country.



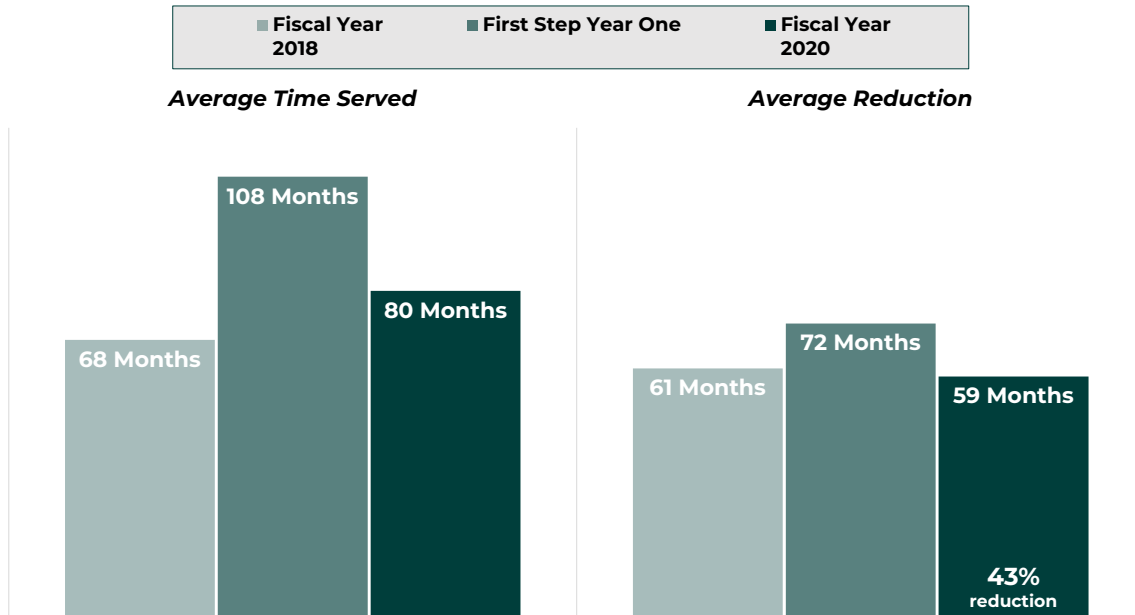
Read the Commission's full report:
<https://www.ussc.gov/topic/compassionate-release>



An offender's **age**, the length of original **sentence imposed**, and the amount of **time already served** by the offender emerged as the **central factors** that impacted the likelihood an offender would be granted relief.



When offenders were **granted relief** in fiscal year 2020, they received **substantial reductions** in sentence, both in months and as a percentage of their original sentence.



¹ Courts cited reasons specifically described in the Commission's compassionate release policy statement (USSG §1B1.13) or reasons comparable to the reasons specifically described in the policy statement.

² The Commission lost a voting quorum shortly after enactment of the First Step Act. As a result, §1B1.13 reflects the pre-First Step Act procedural requirement that the court may reduce a term of imprisonment only "upon motion of the Director of the Bureau of Prisons."

³ Courts often cited multiple reasons for granting relief. "COVID-19 health concerns" was at least one of the reasons cited by the court in 72% of granted cases.



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