

A Critical Look at Supermax Prisons

By Daniel P. Mears

Twenty years ago, supermax, maximum-security prisons were rare in America. Today, more than two-thirds of states have "supermax" facilities that collectively house more than 20,000 inmates (National Institute of Corrections, 1997; King, 1999; Briggs, Sundt and Castellano, 2003). Designed to hold the putatively most violent and disruptive inmates in single-cell confinement for 23 hours per day, often for an indefinite period of time, these facilities have been lightning rods for controversy (Henningsen, Johnson and Wells, 1999; Kurki and Morris, 2001; Toch, 2001; Haney, 2003; Pfeiffer, 2004). Economic considerations are one reason: Supermaxes typically cost two to three times more to build and operate than traditional maximum-security prisons (Lynch, 1994; Riveland, 1999; Kurki and Morris, 2001; Briggs et al., 2003; Pizarro and Stenius, 2004). Perhaps a bigger reason lies in the criticism by some that supermax confinement is unconstitutional and inhumane (Haney, 2003; Toch, 2003). Although proponents and opponents of supermax prisons debate such issues, a fundamental set of questions has gone largely unexamined: What exactly are the goals of supermax prisons? How, if at all, are these goals achieved? And what are their unintended impacts?

Many states point to their supermax prisons as places where they can house the so-called "worst of the worst" inmates (Riveland, 1999), yet fail to describe what exactly they expect to gain from doing so. In some cases, the reasons seem self-evident — a prison riot occurred or homicides and assaults dramatically increased, and so some type of drastic step was needed. But even in these cases, concentrating select inmates in one facility constitutes a strategy, not a goal. Of course, one might reasonably argue that the obvious goal is to increase inmate and officer safety. But is that really the goal? What about other possibilities such as increasing systemwide prison order or providing a retributive response to especially heinous behaviors?

Once all relevant goals have been identified, can it be assumed that supermax prisons can successfully achieve them, and, if so, how do they do it? For example, do they deter would-be disruptive offenders or do they simply incapacitate those who would otherwise commit violence or incite others to misbehave? Then there is the question of unintended impacts. Even if supermax prisons achieve some goal, such as systemwide safety, is the gain substantial enough to offset potentially harmful impacts such as increased mental illness among supermax inmates? And, not least of all, there is the bottom-line question: When the various impacts are tallied up — the good and bad of supermax prisons — is the sum result a clear-cut "two thumbs up"? If so, is the result cost-effective? And is it more so than other potential alternatives?

In response to such questions, The Urban Institute recently undertook an exploratory study of supermax prisons, the results of which are described below. The goal of the study was to create a foundation that would stimulate more informed and balanced research and policy discussions about supermax prisons.

How to Determine if Supermax Prisons Are Effective

Supermax prisons essentially constitute a policy aimed at achieving a set of goals. Therefore, as with attempts to evaluate any policy, a clear statement of these goals is essential (Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey, 1999). Knowing how goals are achieved also is essential, as it allows for determining whether the policy is likely responsible for changes in any observed outcomes, and modifying those features of the policy that might lead to even greater improvements in the outcomes. Similarly, to arrive at a fair and balanced assessment, all unintended impacts, both positive and negative, should be identified and measured. In turn, this information can be used to generate more realistic and appropriate assessments of the cost-effectiveness of the policy. At the same time, it can be helpful to know whether other options exist that might serve as effective alternatives to supermax prisons.

These observations formed the cornerstone of The Urban Institute's study. An initial review revealed that most extant documents, reports and studies provided idiosyncratic assessments that largely ignored the broader range of critical issues necessary for providing a fair and balanced evaluation of the effectiveness of supermax prisons. This review also confirmed what some researchers have emphasized (Ward and Werlich, 2003), namely that data relevant for evaluating supermax prisons are scarce and, in many instances, would be costly to collect.

For this reason, the study strategically focused on readily available and accessible sources of information. Specifically, the research team collected and examined every known account of supermax prisons, including not only research studies but media and agency reports. The team also visited three states and conducted in-person interviews with members of state legislative criminal justice committees and with correctional department executives, wardens and officers. The researchers conducted telephone interviews with counterparts to these individuals in other states, interviewing a total of 60 people, including the site visit interviews. Finally, they conducted a national survey of state prison wardens to gauge their views about specific goals, impacts and issues that were identified from the review, site visits and interviews.¹ Wardens are uniquely situated to understand the uses and impacts of supermax prisons, and their responses to the survey provide an opportunity to gain "insider" information about the potential uses and effectiveness of supermax prisons.²

What Research and Practitioners Say About Supermax Prisons

One of the challenges of research on supermax prisons is the lack of agreement about the definition of a supermax (King, 1999; Riveland, 1999; Haney, 2003). In The Urban Institute survey, however, more than 95 percent of wardens agreed with a modified version³ of the definition of a supermax used by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) (1997) in its 1996 survey of state cor-

rectional systems.⁴ Based on respondents who self-identified as supermax wardens, 44 states (including Washington, D.C. and New York, which did not participate in the study but is reported to have supermaxes) had supermax prisons as of 2004, up from the 34 states that the 1996 survey identified.

Supermax Prison Goals and Whether These Goals Are Achieved. As Table 1 shows, when asked about different potential goals of supermax prisons — identified from the literature review and interviews — more than 90 percent of wardens said they agreed or strongly agreed that supermax prisons exist to increase safety, order and control throughout the prison system and to incapacitate violent and disruptive inmates. Approximately 80 percent believed that the goals of states with supermax prisons are to improve inmate behavior throughout the prison system and to decrease riots and the influence of gangs. Seventy-two percent believed that one goal of supermax prisons is to reduce prison escapes. Nearly one-half agreed that supermax prisons are used to punish inmates and reduce recidivism among violent and disruptive inmates. More than one-third of wardens agreed that supermax prisons serve to rehabilitate these inmates, and less than one-fourth said that they serve to deter crime in society.

Regional variation has been observed with respect to the emergence and number of supermax prisons (King, 1999). The survey of state prison wardens suggests that there is relatively little regional variation in views about some goals of supermax prisons and modest variation with respect to others.⁵ The five goals for which regional differences were most apparent included improving inmate behavior throughout the prison system, decreasing prison riots and the influence of gangs, reducing prison escapes and deterring crime in society. In general, wardens in the South and Northeast were more likely than wardens in the West and Midwest to agree that different outcomes were goals associated with supermax prisons. Wardens in the Midwest expressed some of the highest and lowest agreement about whether different outcomes were goals of supermax prisons. And wardens

in the Midwest typically were the least likely to agree that different outcomes were supermax goals.

As Figure 1 shows, the range of warden agreement regarding the effectiveness of supermaxes in achieving each goal was similarly distributed. Notably, substantial percentages of wardens, up to 76 percent in some cases, disagreed or strongly disagreed that supermaxes contributed to certain goals. For example, 20 percent of wardens disagreed that supermaxes reduce riots and 76 percent disagreed that supermaxes deter crime among would-be offenders in society.

Specific Impacts Associated With Supermax Prisons. The survey also asked wardens about whether a supermax had contributed to particular areas of impact in their state or whether, if their state did not have a supermax, having one would likely have an effect.⁶ Specifically, wardens were asked whether supermaxes contributed to an increase or a decrease in each of 20 possible areas of impact. In some cases, such as inmate recidivism, an increase would be a harmful outcome, while in others, such as level of prison order, an increase would be beneficial. For this reason, Figure 2 presents wardens' views about whether supermax prisons have beneficial or harmful outcomes, or have no effect at all.

As the figure shows, wardens largely agreed that supermax prisons have beneficial outcomes, especially in improving staff safety, prison order, inmate safety and local employment, and in reducing violence, fear of victimization and staff use-of-force incidents. For each of these areas of impact, 40 percent or more of wardens viewed supermax prisons as having a beneficial effect. There was substantially less agreement among wardens, ranging from 38 percent to 13 percent agreement, that supermax prisons have beneficial effects on such dimensions as inmate infractions (38 percent) and inmate recidivism after release to society (13 percent).

As the figure also shows, nontrivial percentages of wardens said they believe supermax prisons are actually harmful. The areas of highest concern center on a few

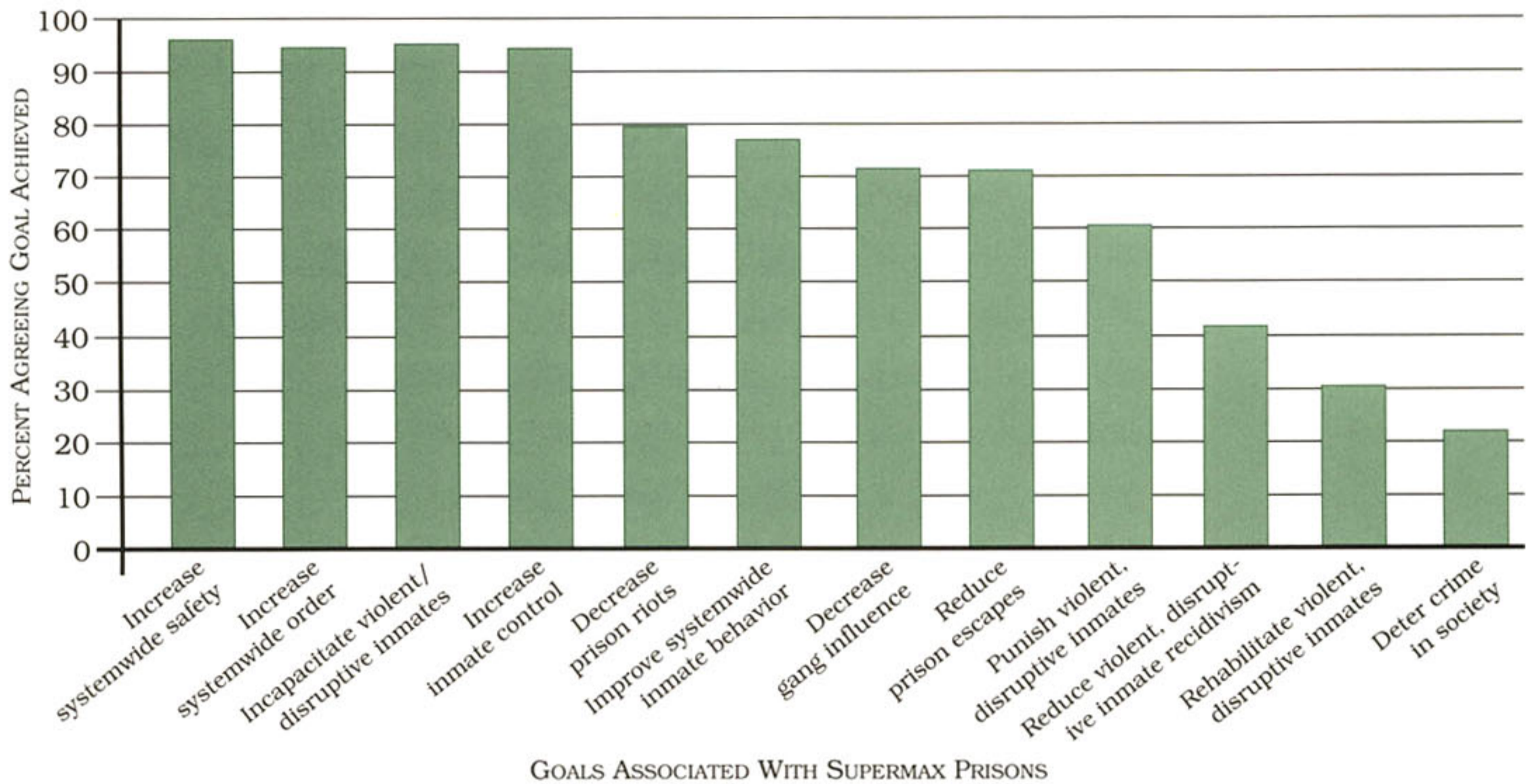
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Table 1. State Prison Wardens' Views About the Goals of Supermax Prisons, by Region

	South (%)	Northeast (%)	West (%)	Midwest (%)	Total (%)
Increase safety throughout prison system	99.1	97.7	97.7	97.5	98.4
Increase order throughout prison system	98.1	100.0	96.6	96.7	97.7
Increase control over prison system	97.5	100.0	98.9	95.9	97.6
Incapacitate violent/disruptive inmates	95.3	100.0	94.2	95.0	95.4
Improve inmate behavior in prison system	86.2	86.4	77.9	80.3	83.7
Decrease prison riots	86.1	81.4	79.3	75.2	82.4
Decrease influence of gangs in prisons	80.4	90.9	84.9	68.6	79.4
Reduce prison escapes	81.1	74.4	57.5	55.7	71.6
Punish violent and disruptive inmates	49.7	54.5	42.5	52.1	49.5
Reduce recidivism of violent/disruptive inmates	47.2	38.6	48.8	42.1	45.7
Rehabilitate violent/disruptive inmates	37.0	36.4	38.4	34.7	36.7
Deter crime in society	28.3	18.6	24.7	15.6	24.3

Note: Ns for each question ranged from 567 to 575. In the total sample (n=601), the distribution of wardens across regions was as follows: 45 in the Northeast, 130 in the Midwest, 335 in the South and 91 in the West.

Figure 1. Wardens' Views of the Effectiveness of Supermax Prisons in Achieving Diverse Goals



Note: Ns range from 370 to 459.

Supermax Prisons

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select areas of impact. For example, more than 30 percent of wardens reported that supermax prisons reduce inmate access to programs, and 20 percent reported that supermax prisons increase staff use-of-force incidents. In addition, inmate complaints against staff were believed to increase because of supermax prisons (18 percent), as were violent acts by inmates (14 percent), staff turnover (12 percent), and the rate of inmate mental illness (12 percent) and infractions (11 percent).

For 13 of the 20 impact areas, most wardens believed that supermax prisons have no impact. More than 70 percent of wardens indicated that supermax facilities had not affected inmate recidivism after release, staff disciplinary actions, inmate mental health, local business development, community residents' fear of crime, staff turnover and support for local politicians. More than 60 percent of wardens said they believe supermax prisons had not affected inmate complaints against staff, local government tax revenues and inmate perception of the legitimacy of the prison system. Finally, more than one-half of all wardens felt that local employment, inmate access to programs and inmate infractions had not changed as a result of having supermax prisons.

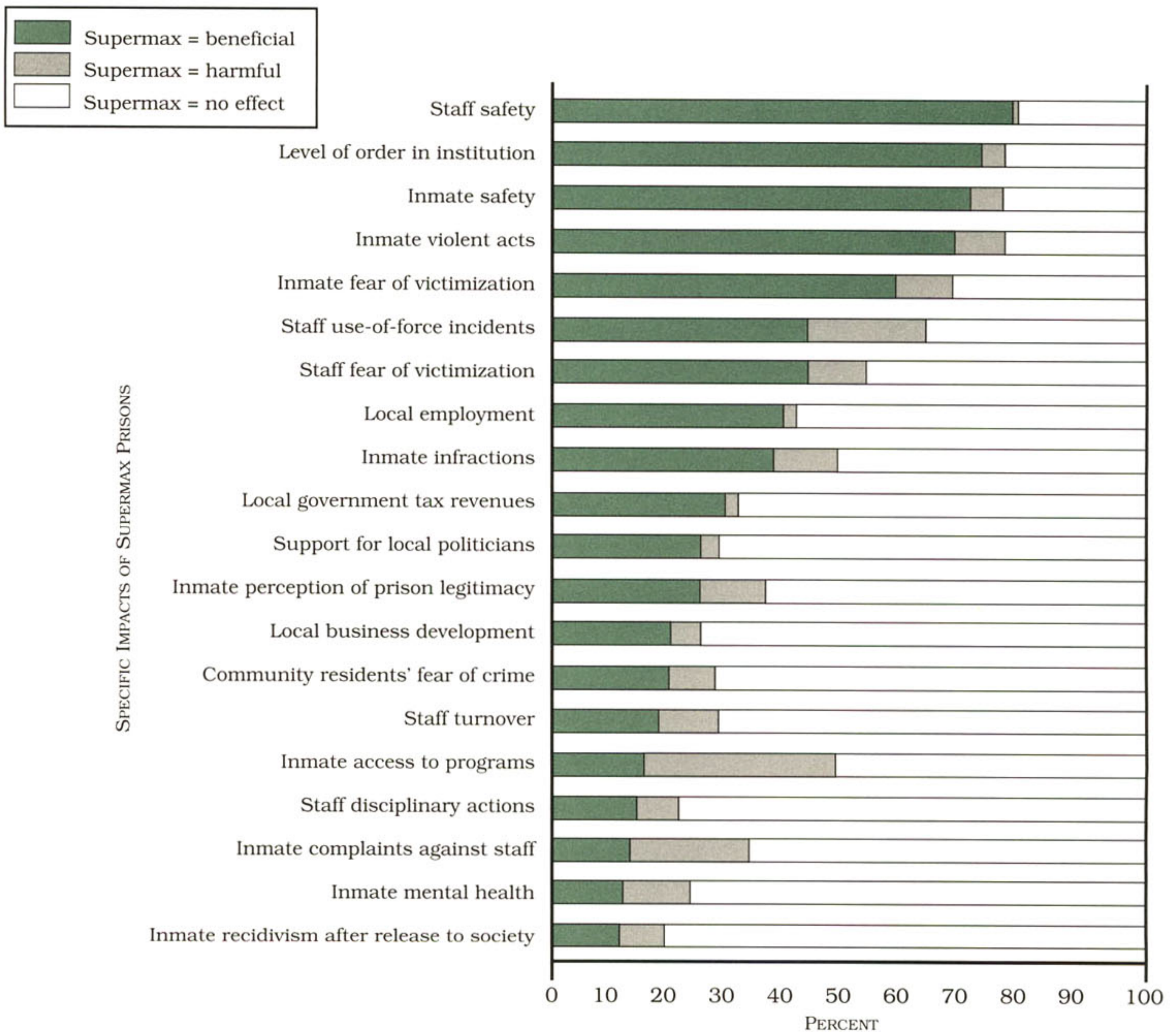
The survey also asked wardens about whether a supermax had contributed to specific impacts in their state or whether, if their state did not have a supermax, having one would likely contribute to the impacts. Out of the 20 items listed, only seven positive impacts were mentioned by a majority of respondents. More than 80 percent of wardens indicated that supermax prisons had increased staff safety and order within prison institutions, and three-fourths believed inmate safety had increased as

well. In addition, more than two-thirds of wardens felt that supermax prisons decreased the number of inmate violent acts, and nearly 60 percent believed supermaxes decreased inmate fear of victimization. Almost one-half of wardens believed that supermaxes decreased staff use-of-force incidents and staff fear of victimization.

For the other 13 areas, most wardens believed that supermax prisons have had no impact. More than 70 percent of wardens indicated that supermax facilities had not affected inmate recidivism after release, staff disciplinary actions, inmate mental health, local business development, community residents' fear of crime, staff turnover and support for local politicians. More than 60 percent of wardens said they believe supermax prisons had not affected inmate complaints against staff, local government tax revenues, and inmate perception of the legitimacy of the prison system. Finally, more than one-half of all wardens felt that local employment, inmate access to programs and inmate infractions had not changed as a result of having supermax prisons.

Types of Inmates in Supermax Prisons. When supermax wardens were asked to characterize the types of inmates who should be placed in their facilities, close to all (90 percent or more) listed inmates who assault staff or inmates, or those who instigate others. Nearly 80 percent said gang leaders and inmates who are escape risks should be in supermax housing. Supermax wardens also identified other inmates as well who should be placed in supermaxes, including drug dealers (56 percent), chronic rule violators (51 percent), gang members (47 percent), "high-profile" inmates (31 percent), inmates at risk of being attacked (24 percent), inmates incarcerated for a serious offense (19 percent) and inmates who have a serious mental illness (10 percent). Supermax wardens mentioned that other types of inmates should also be placed in supermax facilities, including inmates who are sexual

Figure 2. Wardens' Views of the Specific Impacts of Supermax Prisons



Note: Ns range from 580 to 592.

predators, terrorists or on death row, as well as those who kill others while in prison or make or possess weapons. The range of inmates suggests that states use quite different criteria in determining who is appropriate for supermax confinement. This variation in turn likely reflects the different goals states have for their supermax prisons.

Unintended Consequences of Supermax Prisons. Because supermax prisons may have unintended consequences, this study included questions about potential unintended positive and negative impacts, respectively. Many unintended positive impacts were mentioned. For example, supermax prisons were described as improving staff effectiveness by increasing the amount and quality of staff training, teamwork and professionalism, and as creating better staff working conditions, which, in turn, contributes to reduced staff burnout and turnover. Prison officials and wardens also noted that supermax prisons

increase inmate morale and perceptions among inmates that prison authority is legitimate. Supermax prisons also reportedly make it easier to deliver programming to general population inmates. Last but not least, respondents identified supermax effects that fell outside of the correctional system. They suggested, for example, that supermax prisons increase public perceptions of safety, enhance the correctional system's relationship with local communities, improve local economies, and, more generally, heighten the prestige of the correctional system among correctional agencies in other states. This view echoes what Briggs et al. (2003) observed: "For many within the prisons industry, the establishment of the supermax is viewed as the *sine qua non* of a progressive prison regime that is concerned with the safety needs of its inmates and staff."

Table 2. Wardens' Views of the Types of Inmates Who Should Be Placed in Supermax Prisons

	<u>Agree or Strongly Agree (%)</u>
INMATES WHO:	
Assault staff repeatedly or cause injury	99.5
Assault other inmates repeatedly or cause injury	99.3
Instigate other inmates to be violent	89.3
Are prison gang leaders	82.5
Are an escape risk	79.2
Are drug dealers while in prison	55.6
Are chronic rule violators	51.0
Are prison gang members	46.9
Are "high profile"	30.9
Are at risk of being attacked	23.6
Have been incarcerated for a serious offense	18.5
Have a serious mental illness	10.1

Note: Ns range from 577 to 600. Four percent of respondents also identified other types of inmates.

Respondents in this study also identified many negative, unintended impacts. They cited increases in staff abuse of authority, staff disciplinary actions and use-of-force incidents. Some wardens indicated that the presence of supermax prisons creates a false sense of security among staff, which in turn lulls them into greater complacency and less vigilance. They suggested that these prisons actually increase staff and inmate fear of victimization, and argued that supermax confinement constitutes cruel and unusual punishment, one reason being because some inmates, such as the mentally ill and nuisance inmates, are placed in them and receive little to no appropriate treatment or services. Prison officials, wardens and officers also highlighted systemwide effects, such as increased inmate violence and decreased perceptions among inmates that prison authority is legitimate. As with the positive, unintended effects, they identified negative effects external to the prison system, including concerns about increased recidivism and reentry failure among released supermax inmates, decreases in local business development and property values, and increases in the public's fear of crime. Some respondents emphasized that supermax prisons prompt increased litigation and court intervention, introducing additional costs and burdens to an already over-extended correctional system.

Alternatives to Supermax Prisons. The site visits and interviews served to identify some potential alternatives to supermax prisons, alternatives that then were included in the national survey of state prison wardens. Most wardens (88 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that at least one potentially effective alternative exists, and 76 percent agreed that at least two exist. Nearly one-half or more of all wardens agreed or strongly agreed that the following would serve as effective alternatives: better and enhanced staff training, using segregation cells in each facility within a prison system, providing targeted rehabilitative services and opportunities for spiritual development, and concentrating violent and disruptive inmates in a different type of (non-supermax) facility. And more than one-third

agreed that transfer-and-trade and other dispersion approaches would be effective. Other strategies mentioned by wardens included the use of incentives-based sanction systems that focus on inmate privileges, relying more on maximum-security prisons, and emphasizing a strict system of discipline and enforcement of rules.

Why Supermax Prisons Were Built. Analysis of the survey data, as well as the interviews and literature review, suggested that supermax prisons typically were built for a variety of reasons, most notably a series of prison control problems and prison violence. But other reasons were given as well, including the occurrence of a specific riot or a rash of homicides, increases in violent crime rates, and public and political interest in and support for "get tough" correctional policies.

General Conclusions and Additional Issues. The results of The Urban Institute's study, including analyses of the survey, site visit and interview data, point to a few broad-based conclusions. First, if the views of state prison wardens and practitioners are any gauge, supermax prisons hold considerable promise for improving many dimensions of correctional management, especially in the areas of creating greater order, safety and control. At the same time, wardens and practitioners, as well as policy-makers, disagree about a range of other goals associated with supermax prisons, and identify many unintended impacts that make it difficult to render a simple summary assessment about the effectiveness of supermax prisons. Any assessment is further complicated by the fact that in contrast to the rhetoric sometimes associated with supermax prisons, most particularly the notion that no other options to supermax prisons exist, respondents in this study identified a range of potentially effective alternatives to supermaxes.

Second, as The Urban Institute's study detailed, the logic underpinning supermax prisons has not been well developed. That in turn raises questions about whether these prisons can, in fact, be effective. Indeed, when one examines the logic associated with how supermax prisons

achieve certain goals, questions arise that suggest grounds for skepticism. To illustrate, some accounts suggest that supermax prisons produce systemwide order by deterring general population inmates from misconduct. According to some studies, that assumption is dubious and likely incorrect (Pizarro and Stenius, 2004). Moreover, the absence of well-developed instruments for identifying the most disruptive inmates suggests it may not be reasonable to assume that supermax prisons actually hold such inmates, which would potentially undermine any incapacitative effect that could contribute to systemwide order. Similar observations can be drawn about supermax prisons and other goals. For example, if supermax prisons are to prevent riots or reduce escapes, then presumably they must indefinitely house those inmates most prone to cause riots or to escape. Although some states may effectively identify such inmates, there is no empirical evidence that most can or do.

In addition, many respondents in the study raised concerns about the economic, political and human costs of supermax prisons. For example, they pointed to the opportunity costs associated with supermax prisons: by committing scarce resources to one costly correctional management strategy, opportunities are precluded for investing in a more diverse range of other strategies. They also emphasized that supermax confinement may aggravate or contribute to mental disorders, and generally precludes access to any kind of rehabilitative services. Also, many respondents, including those who participated in the survey, stated that the politicization of supermax prisons concerned them. For example, they noted that policy-makers sometimes seemed determined to invest in supermax prisons, even if they were not necessarily needed, to demonstrate to the public a commitment to being "tough on crime."

The Next Steps for Research and Policy

Supermax prisons are "here to stay" for the indefinite future, and many states are continuing to invest in them. Yet, as the findings and issues discussed above highlight, there is a pressing need for a more systematic approach to evaluating supermax prisons. Supermax prisons entail complex policy calculations that render simplistic assessments inappropriate. They also are intertwined with political and philosophical preferences. Consequently, any evaluation should attempt to overcome personal biases. At the minimum, against a diverse array of goals and unintended impacts, a corrective is needed to compensate for the risk that the relevance of narrowly focused studies will be over- or misgeneralized. Thus, a systematic approach should include, at a minimum, documenting the specific goals and logic of supermax prisons in particular states, their intended and unintended effects, barriers to these prisons operating effectively, and any political, economic and moral dimensions that may be relevant to assessing whether supermaxes in particular states not only are effective but merit support.

Conducting research about supermax prisons presents substantial challenges. But considerable advances could be made by relying on interviews with and surveys of supermax inmates and their counterparts in non-supermax confinement (Rhodes, 2004), as well as the use of official records, to determine how, if at all, inmate behavior — both inmates placed in supermax and those in the general prison population — changes before, during and after supermax confinement (Briggs et al., 2003; Ward

and Werlich, 2003). Perhaps one of the most critical questions that remains to be tackled is how the experience of supermax confinement affects the success of inmates when they are released to society. Are they less likely than their counterparts not placed in supermaxes to remain crime-free, obtain housing and employment, and stay drug-free? That case can be made (Haney, 2003), but to date the question remains largely unaddressed.

Not least of all, benefit-cost studies of supermax prisons are needed that take account of the goals and impacts articulated here. Such studies should develop a defensible basis for monetizing specific impacts (e.g., X number of reduced assaults on inmates and staff) and state clearly where certain questionable assumptions have been used (e.g., no harmful effects on inmates' mental health). To that end, The Urban Institute's recent policy brief on benefit-cost analysis and an accompanying "how to" benefit-cost analysis tool provide a foundation for such work (Lawrence and Mears, 2004). Until these types of studies are undertaken, it will be difficult to determine if supermaxes in general, or possibly supermaxes as they are run in certain states, achieve the various goals ascribed to them and do so in a cost-effective manner.

For criminal justice policy-makers and correctional executives, a range of policy implications can be identified. First, states should clarify the goals of existing or proposed supermax prisons and support efforts to assess their impacts. To this end, state correctional agencies might create task forces that systematically take stock of existing or proposed supermax prisons, and develop clear, empirically based accounts of why a supermax is needed and how it could, if maintained or built, achieve a given set of goals. Empirical research is critical because whether supermax prisons are effective may be largely a function of the specific goals associated with them in a specific state and a range of other factors, such as the types of inmates placed in supermax confinement, the types of inmates in general population facilities, and the quality of staffing and programming throughout the prison system and in supermax facilities.

Another policy implication entails taking steps to maximize the effectiveness of existing or proposed supermax prisons and to minimize negative, unintended consequences. For example, ensure that the "right" inmates (necessarily defined with respect to the specific goals of a supermax) are identified for supermax placement, using validated screening and assessment approaches. Also, rotate supermax staff and conduct ongoing staff trainings to limit the potential stress associated with working in a supermax setting and the need to take recourse in increasingly punitive sanctions that may have little or no effect on inmates who already have few privileges. These steps can help to avoid creating undue injury to inmates, such as the mentally ill, and unnecessary lawsuits.

Further, systematically take stock of whether there are other approaches — including staff training and professionalization, the use of segregation cells in each prison facility, strategically dispersing violent and disruptive inmates throughout the prison system, and providing rehabilitative services — that would be less costly and might work as well or better (Gendreau and Keyes, 2001; Briggs et al., 2003; Haney, 2003). Wardens and practitioners in this study, and some research (Gendreau and Keyes, 2001; Briggs et al., 2003; Haney, 2003), point to a range of less expensive possibilities. Given the costs of supermax prisons, such possibilities warrant closer scrutiny.

Finally, support benefit-cost studies, and take an active hand in shaping the perspective and assumptions used in the analyses. The results of a benefit-cost analysis can help inform discussions and debates, and can highlight whether certain assumptions, such as specific levels of increase in prison system safety and order, are realistic and sufficient to warrant the costs of building and supporting a supermax prison.

In Support of Further Research

Supermax prisons have been built to achieve many goals, and they may be successful. Unfortunately, there has been little theoretical or empirical foundation to date to support that assessment. In keeping with the few previous studies of supermax prisons, The Urban Institute's research suggests grounds for skepticism as well as concerns about the fiscal and human costs of these new forms of correctional housing. At the same time, it is clear that states and wardens believe supermax prisons can be effective correctional management tools, and this belief should not be lightly dismissed.

For these reasons, it is essential that policy-makers and correctional executives support research that can help determine whether supermax prisons are, or are likely to be, effective. Since the goals may vary by state, evaluations should be conducted on a state-by-state basis. Such research need not be extremely costly. Indeed, where funds are minimal, considerable advances can be made in efforts to clarify the goals and logic of supermax prisons and to improve appropriate supermax operations.

ENDNOTES

¹ The final sample was 601, representing 69 percent of the total that were distributed, excluding wardens from one state, New York, which refused to participate.

² Readers interested in a more in-depth discussion of the study's survey findings should consult the forthcoming (April 2006) article, "Wardens' Views on the Wisdom of Supermax Prisons" by Daniel P. Mears and Jennifer L. Castro in *Crime and Delinquency*.

³ The definition used in the survey was as follows: "A supermax is defined as a stand-alone unit or part of another facility and is designated for violent or disruptive inmates. It typically involves up to 23-hour per day, single-cell confinement for an indefinite period of time. Inmates in supermax housing have minimal contact with staff and other inmates."

⁴ In the NIC survey, "supermax" housing is defined as a free-standing facility, or a distinct unit within a facility that provides for the management and secure control of inmates who have been officially designated as exhibiting violent or serious and disruptive behavior while incarcerated. Such inmates have been determined to be a threat to safety and security in traditional high-security facilities, and their behavior can be controlled only by separation, restricted movement, and limited direct access to staff and other inmates.

⁵ States were coded into South, Northeast, Midwest and West using the categorizations in King, 1999, and Harrison and Beck, 2003.

⁶ The results did not vary substantially when comparisons were made between wardens from states with supermax prisons and wardens from states without such prisons.

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