

12 March 2020

C119158

Mike Lee  
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Tēnā Koe Mr Lee

Thank you for your email of 26 February 2020, requesting information about individuals serving prison sentences of three years or less. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested:

*the number of sentenced prisoners who are serving a term of less than 3 years, broken down by their most serious offence (ideally at the lowest level possible, e.g. ASOC Division, Sub-Division, and Group). I appreciate that the data changes daily so it's fine if the data is at any particular date in the past year, if that makes it easier.*

*The background of this request is to better understand the number of prisoners, and the mix of offences they committed, who will be newly entitled to vote if the 'Electoral (Registration of Sentenced Prisoners) Amendment Bill' passes this year prior to the general election.*

The Electoral (Disqualification of Sentenced Prisoners) Amendment Act 2010 removed the right of a person serving a term of imprisonment to register as an elector. As you are aware, proposed legislative changes under the Electoral Amendment Bill are currently before Parliament to restore voting rights to those prisoners serving a sentence of less than three years' imprisonment.

Prisoners on remand (but not sentenced) are currently able to vote, as are prisoners who have been released on parole. Prisoners regain the right to enrol to vote immediately on their release, even if this occurs before the end of their full sentence of imprisonment.

As you have mentioned, the prison population fluctuates on a daily basis due to arrests, releases and court decisions. The figures requested are provided in the table below, based on a snapshot of the prison population as at 30 November 2019.

Prisoners serving an imposed sentence of less than three years by most serious offence type, as at 30 November 2019										
Breaches	Burglary	Dishonesty	Drugs	Other	Property	Sexual	Traffic	Violence	Weapons	Total
44	371	200	164	149	31	115	167	673	71	1,985

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi nui



Rachel Leota  
National Commissioner