

## Overview

- Each year, New York's Parole Board determines to release or deny release to approximately 12,000 parole-eligible people incarcerated in New York's prisons.
- Based on our systemwide data review and inspection of specific prisons, and our surveys of and interviews with hundreds of parole-eligible incarcerated people, we have identified many areas in which **the parole system fails to deliver justice**, with devastating personal costs for individuals and families and at great expense to the state.
- This fact sheet present keys facts and issues related to the parole system and its outcomes.\*

## Key Findings

According to our recent analysis of approximately 32,600 parole review hearings conducted by New York's state Board of Parole between January 2015 and December 2018:

- **A significant portion of those eligible for parole are being denied** – some multiple times.
- Each parole denial results in up to two additional years in prison beyond the individual's minimum original sentence, extending the base term on incarceration. **People who are denied multiple times often spend many years, decades and sometimes the rest of their lives in prison.**
- The result of New York's parole system is that **tens of thousands of people who are potentially eligible for release remain in prison** – with devastating personal consequences and at great public expense – for reasons not linked to public safety or original sentence length.

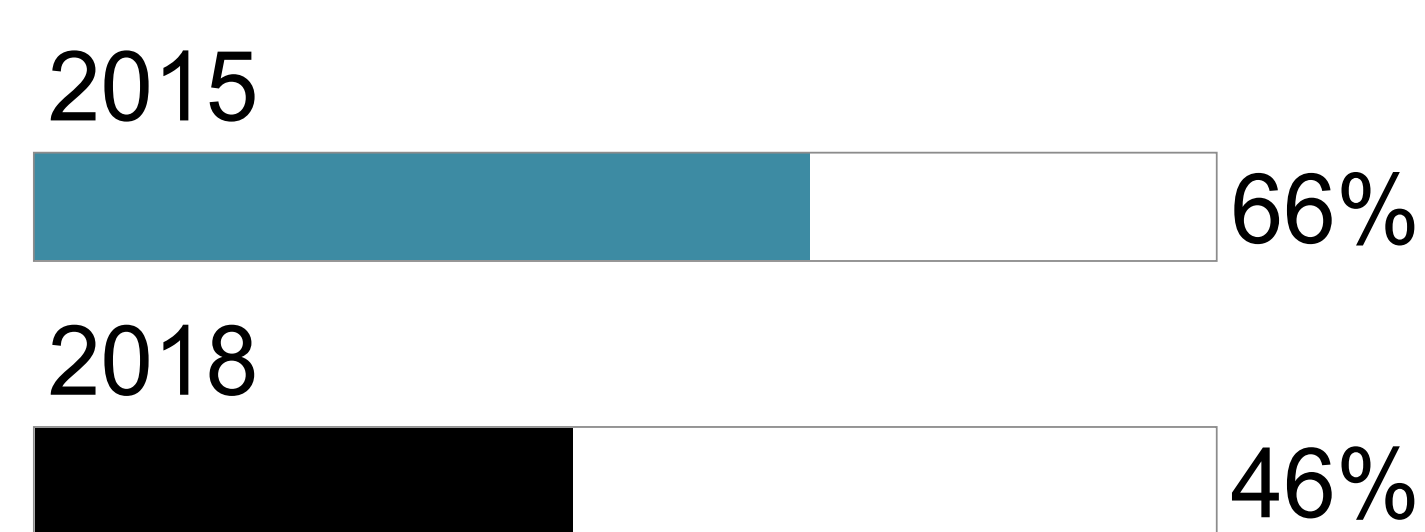
## Facts and Trends

The parole process plays a centrally important role in New York's correctional system: 41% of all people in New York's prisons are serving indeterminate sentences (meaning they are eligible for parole after serving a minimum sentence) and New York has the second highest population of individuals serving parole eligible life sentences of any state.\*\*

### DENIAL RATES ARE FALLING

- In 2015, a majority (65.7%) of individuals who went before the parole board for an initial hearing were denied.
- In the first ten months of 2018, denials at the first hearing fell to 45.9%.
- A similar trend occurred for reappearance hearings, in which an individual who has previously been denied parole appears again before the parole board. In 2015, 66.8% of re-appearance hearings resulted in denial of parole. This rate declined to 50% in 2018.

Denial rates for initial parole hearings

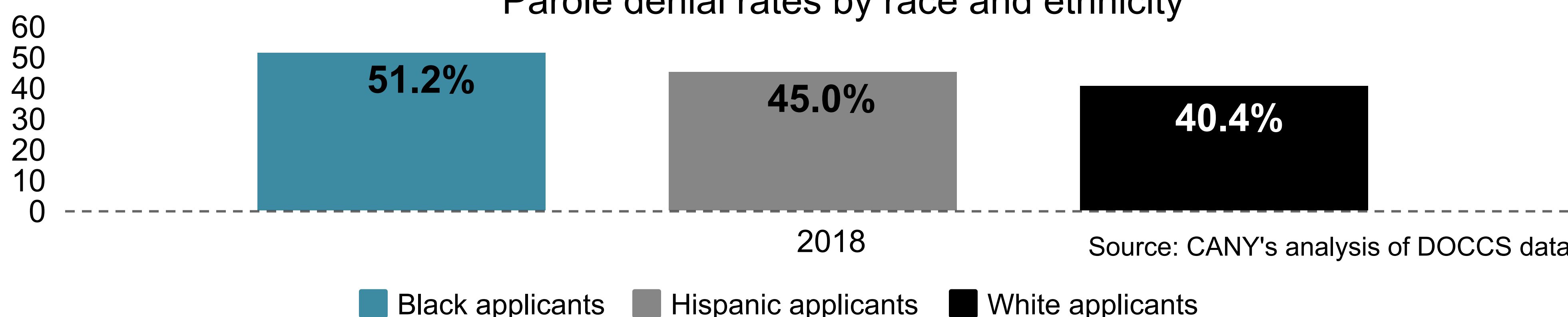


Source: CANY's analysis of DOCCS data

### RACIAL DISPARITIES PERSIST

- Despite declining rates of parole denials overall, in initial hearings in 2018, only 40.4% of white applicants were denied parole, while 51.2% of Black applicants and 45.0% of Hispanic applicants were denied parole. *Note that we use the race and ethnicity categories reported by DOCCS.*

Parole denial rates by race and ethnicity



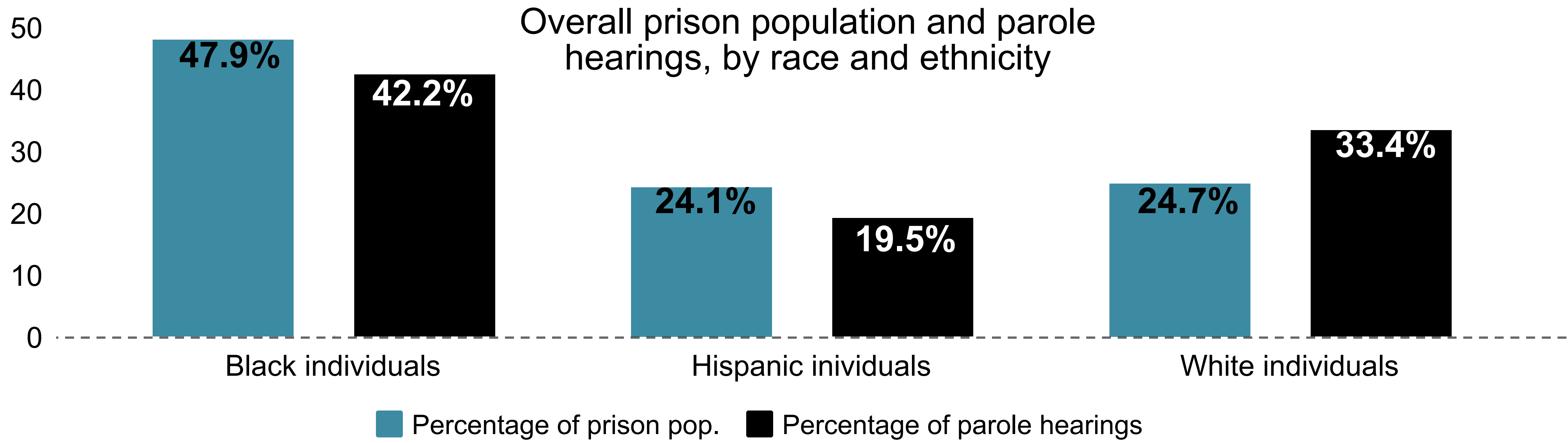
Source: CANY's analysis of DOCCS data

\*For information on additional issues with the Parole Board, see *New York State Parole Board: Failures in Staffing and Performance*, a recent report from the Parole Preparation Project and the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign



## DISPARITIES EXIST IN ACCESS TO RELEASE ON PAROLE

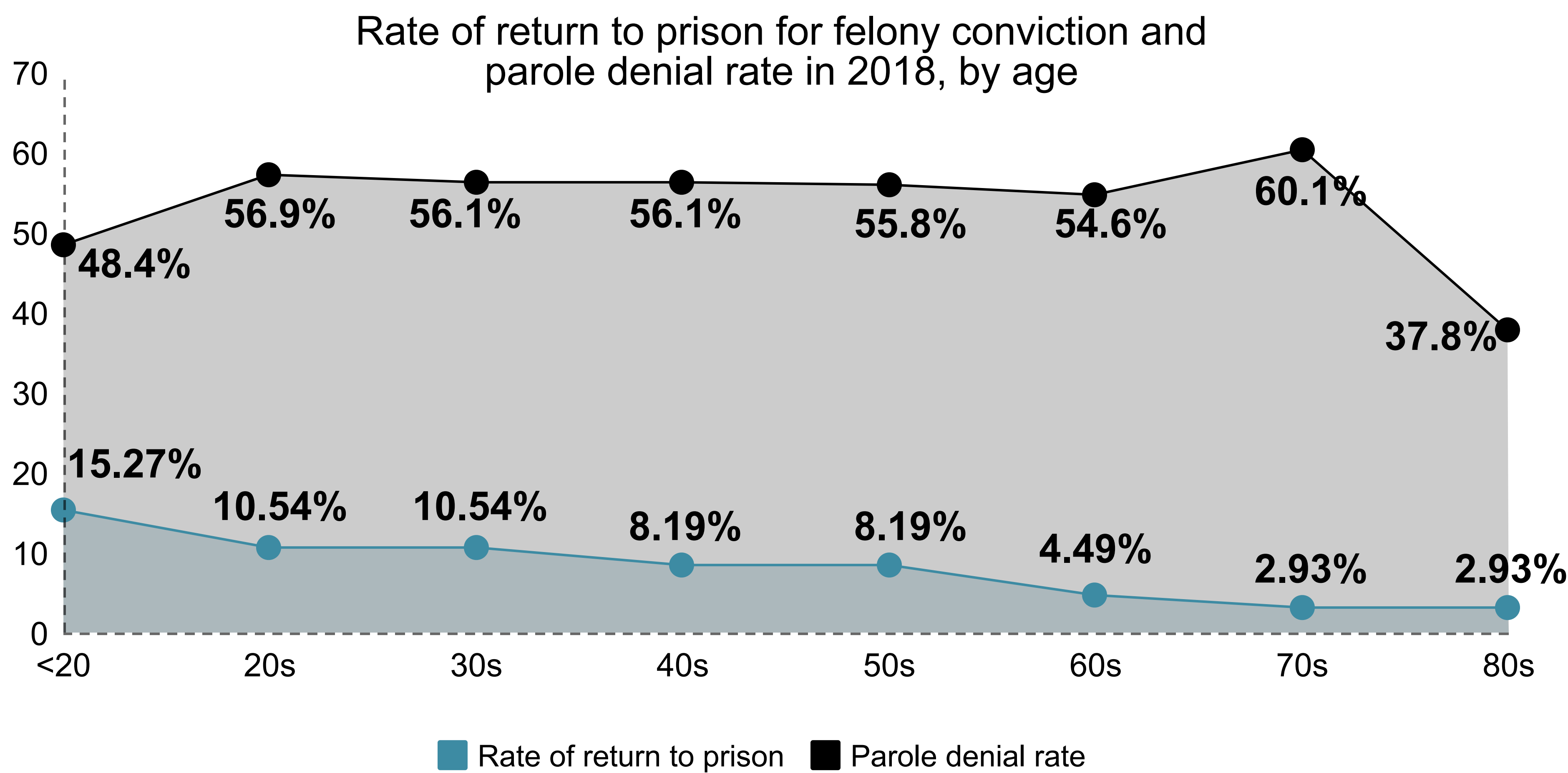
- The timing of an individual's initial parole hearing is determined by his or her original sentence length. However, how often and when an individual returns for additional parole hearings is determined by the Parole Board. The compound effect, in 2018, is that white applicants may have been offered more opportunities to make parole: more hearings were held for white applicants than for Black and Hispanic applicants relative to each group's population size within the prison population.



Source: CANY's analysis of DOCCS data

## PAROLE DENIAL DOES NOT CORRELATE TO AGE OR RISK

- Despite evidence showing very low rates of re-offending among older people, parole denials were highest for applicants in their 70s.



Sources: Parole denial data: CANY's analysis of DOCCS data  
Recidivism data: NYS DOCCS

## MANY ARE HELD WELL BEYOND MINIMUM SENTENCE

- To supplement administrative data kept by New York State, CANY regularly visits prisons across the state as well as surveys and interviews incarcerated individuals.
- We recently surveyed 409 individuals who had been denied parole at least once. Our analysis of their responses indicates that many are staying in prison well beyond their first parole eligibility date.
- Each parole denial can mean an additional two years in prison.

### Time in prison beyond minimum sentence, due to parole denials

