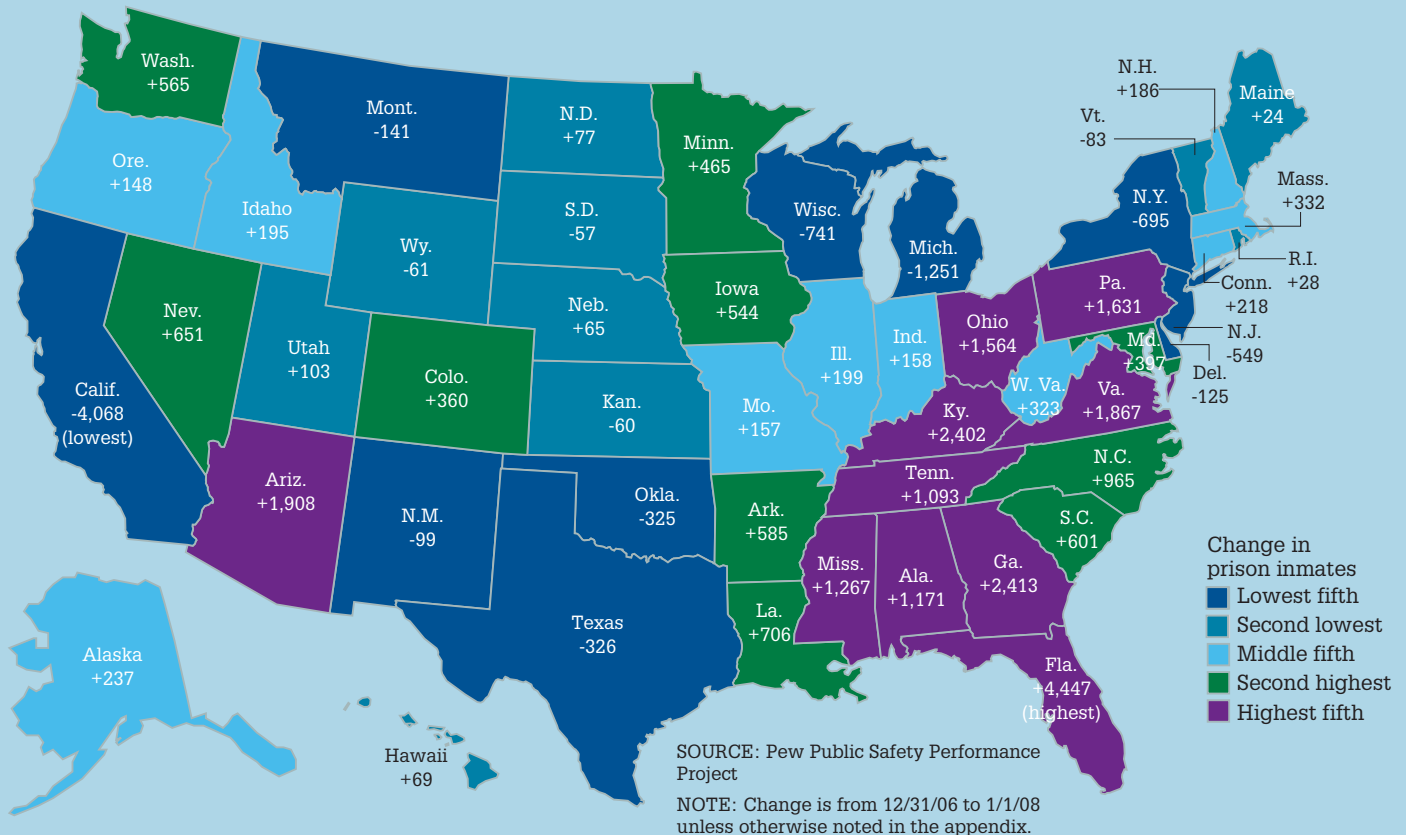


WIDE VARIANCE IN PRISON GROWTH

State prisoner change, 2007, by quintile



inmates to serve a certain proportion of their sentence, but beyond that, board discretion comes into play in deciding whether to grant or deny parole. Over the past year, under new appointees to the board, the parole grant rate declined and the prison population increased as more inmates stayed locked up for a longer time. The result of this and other policies was a 12 percent jump in the incarcerated population in 2007. Absent a change of direction, projections show the inmate count will continue to rise to nearly 31,000—an increase of 40 percent—over the next decade.

Out West, Nevada at the start of the 2007 legislative session also faced a rapidly expanding prison population, fueled by an unexpected jump in prison admissions from the Las Vegas area. New

forecasts warned that without intervention by the state, the population would continue its steep ascent, climbing from 13,000 prisoners to more than 18,000 over the next 10 years. The fiscal consequences were alarming. Among other things, the growth forced prisoners from Washington and Wyoming who were housed in Nevada back to those states. That meant both lost revenue and new appropriations from the state general fund. At the beginning of 2008, Nevada's jails and prisons held 13,552 inmates, a 5 percent jump over the number incarcerated in the Silver State at the end of 2006.