

alternatives to private prisons

Iceland's recidivism rate is 2.7%.

Many advocates call for the abolition of private prisons, and investment in alternatives like community-based rehabilitation, education, and mental health services. This is very successful abroad. Norway's recidivism rate is 20%, compared to 76.6% in the U.S.

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HISTORY OF PRIVATE PRISONS

Private prisons in the U.S. date back to the 19th century, but their modern iteration began in the 1980s during the War on Drugs. Companies like Core Civic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America) and GEO Group emerged, capitalizing on skyrocketing incarceration rates. By 1984, the first modern private prison opened in Tennessee. Today there are hundreds of facilities in the U.S.

Source: Alexander Michelle, "The New Jim Crow"



Private Prisons are driven by profit, not rehabilitation. To maximize revenue, they cut costs on healthcare, staffing, and inmate programs. A 2016 report by the Department of Justice found more incidents of safety and security incidents.

CORECIVIC REPORTED \$1.9 billion in revenue in 2020.

SOURCE: U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.

Reports of abuse and neglect are common in private prisons. Inmates often face violence, inadequate healthcare, and unsanitary conditions. A 2020 report by the Marshall Project found that private prisons had higher rates of assaults and contraband than public ones. 21% of inmates report being assaulted by prison staff.

Conditions on the INSIDE

LOCKED IN: The truth about PRIVATE PRISONS in the United States

PROFIT OVER PEOPLE: HOW CORPORATIONS PROFIT FROM INCARCERATION.

The School-To-Prison Pipeline

Private prisons benefit from policies that push students, particularly Black and Latino youth, out of schools and into the criminal justice system. Zero-tolerance policies and the presence of police in schools contribute to this pipeline.

10% of students arrested in school are Black or Latino.

Mass imprisonment generates profits as it devours social wealth, and thus it tends to reproduce the very conditions that lead people to prison.

- Angela Y. Davis

"Are prisons obsolete?"

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How do Private Prisons WORK?

Private prisons are contracted by state and federal governments to house inmates. These contracts often include "lock up quotas," which guarantee a minimum number of prisoners or require taxpayers to pay for empty beds.

For example, Arizona's contract with CoreCivic requires the state to maintain a 90% occupancy rate.

2000, the number of people in private prison increased 5%.

IN 2020, PRIVATE PRISONS HELD 115,428 INMATES, ACCORDING TO THE BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS

HUMAN COST

BEHIND THE STATISTICS ARE REAL PEOPLE. FAMILIES ARE TORN APART AND INDIVIDUALS ARE SUBJECT TO DEHUMANIZING CONDITIONS, STORIES OF ABUSE, NEGLECT & DEATH HIGHLIGHT THE HUMAN COSTS.

In 2012, an uprising at a CoreCivic prison in Mississippi exposed severe understaffing and mismanagement.

TO ACTION!

CHECK OUT OPENSECRETS.ORG TO SEE IF YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS RECEIVE DONATIONS FROM THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX.

1. EDUCATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS. SENTENCING, RACE, PRISON POLICY, AND MORE.
2. SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE JUSTICE, ADVOCATE FOR POLICY CHANGES AT THE LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LEVELS.
3. ABOLISH PRIVATE PRISONS, AND MORE.
4. BOYCOTT COMPANIES WHO PROFIT FROM PRIVATE PRISONS.
5. PROTECT CORRECTIONS AT THE LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LEVELS.

RACIAL DISPARITIES IN PRISONS

The private prison industry disproportionately impacts communities of color. Black and Latino people are overrepresented in the prison population, and private prisons often exploit this disparity.

For example, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) contracts with private prison companies to detain immigrants, most of whom are people of color.

Private Prisons are a booming business in the United States, but at what cost? These for-profit institutions house nearly 8% of ALL incarcerated people in the States, generating billions in revenue while critics argue they prioritize profit over rehabilitation and public safety. This zine explores the history, impact, and controversies surrounding private prisons and shedding light on this.

LOBBYING

Private prison companies spend millions of dollars on lobbying and campaign donations to influence criminal justice policy. They have supported harsher sentencing laws and opposed immigration reform to ensure a steady flow of inmates.

In 2023-2024, they spent \$1.7 million directly to campaigns, mostly to Republicans.

IMMIGRATION DETENTION

PRIVATE PRISONS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN DETAINING IMMIGRANTS. COMPANIES LIKE GEO GROUP AND CORECIVIC OPERATE ICE DETENTION CENTERS WHERE CONDITIONS ARE OFTEN CRITICIZED AS INHUMAN. DETAINEES REPORT OVERCROWDING, POOR MEDICAL CARE, AND ABUSE. ICE FACILITIES WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR MORE THAN 245,000 COVID-19 CASES IN COMMUNITIES. LA SAULE CORRECTIONS HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF FORCED STERILIZATION OF DETAINEES.

2019, 70% of ICE DETAINEES WERE HELD IN PRIVATE PRISONS

WE DO THIS. 'TIL WE FREE US.

Just Mercy

Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California

CAPTIVE GENDERS

CHOKEHOLD: Policing Black Men

Bryan Stevenson

Erica Stanley

Paul Butler

THE NEW JIM CROW

ABOLITION DEMOCRACY

PRISON BY ANY OTHER NAME

ARE PRISONS OBSOLETE?

THE 1ST CIVIL RIGHT

How Liberals Built Prison America

Angela Davis

Angela Davis

Michelle Alexander

Naomi Murakawa

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