

# Problematic For-Profit Prison System?

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## Question: Why For-Profit Prison Systems May Seem Like an Attractive Option

1) Private prisons provide a solution that offers both lower taxes and greater law enforcement to everyday citizens.

- Public demand is high for greater law enforcement/sentencing. However, this is accompanied by resentment for raising taxes. With public prisons, if people want greater enforcement/sentencing then they have to accept paying more taxes. With private prisons, the common folk can have both greater enforcement and lower taxes (Johnson, 1990).

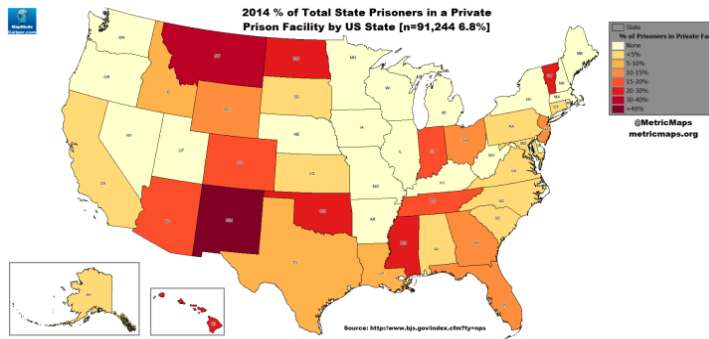
In 1992, there were 12,453 prisoners serving life without parole and by 2012, this number nearly quadrupled to 49,081 (ACLU).

2) Private prison creation can combat rural decline, or can it?

- Anne Bonds finds that the attractiveness of prison creation in rural communities is in large part due to the employment opportunities, job growth and increased tax revenues that rural communities expect from the prospective initiatives (Bonds, 2006).

Bonds finds the success of this economic revitalization to be somewhat debatable.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Community leaders consider private prison creation due its capabilities to revitalize the economic infrastructure of the area and the potential opportunity that it creates for both lower taxes and greater law enforcement.



## History of Private Prisons

Private prison systems are penal institutions that became increasingly prevalent in the 1980's during President Reagan's "War On Drugs" movement. This movement elevated incarceration rates by emphasizing longer sentencing as well as greater enforcement (Joy, 2018). Since this movement, the United States has become known as the world's largest jailer (Ruiz, 2012).

By 1990, there was a total of 67 private prisons in the United States and then between 1990 and 2005, there was a 1600% increase in the number of private prisons. This disproportionate increase in the sheer number of private prisons coupled with other incarceration trends/realities have created some particularly distasteful consequences for certain minority members (Joy, 2018). Furthermore, by money saving being the primary motive of these firms, low prisoner safety has been a concern for many critics.

Private companies became supportive of private prisons due to the opportunities that they had to profit from the cheap incarcerated labor force (Cooper, 2016). Heavy financing from these companies has led to the creation of more private prison institutions. However, many citizens have begun to reevaluate/reprioritize the ethical implications of these private prison systems and have questioned whether they should still exist.



## Key Terms

### Private Prison/For-Profit Prison

A private prison, or a for-profit prison, is a facility run by a private corporation whose services are contracted out by state governments or the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP).

### Incarceration

Incarceration is the state, or condition of being imprisoned/locked up.

## Concerning Implications of the Existing System. Why Does This Problem Even Matter?

### Prisoner Rehabilitation is Discouraged

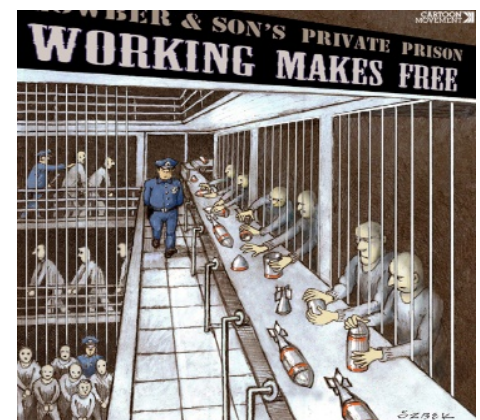
Many private prison institutions discourage rehabilitation. They want the flow of prisoners to be steady so that profits are persistent. Instead of creating programs that help people find success post-imprisonment, private penal systems just want these people to keep cycling through the process/system (Mulch, 2009).

### Implies and Perpetuates Racial Inequality to African Americans

This prison system itself is designed so that profits are maximized when there are large numbers of prisoners locked up. African Americans face higher incarceration rates due in large part to racial profiling practices and racially based sentencing so this group of citizens is especially prone to falling into this environment (Cooper, 2016).

### Disproportionately Comprised of Immigrant Detainee Population

Private prisons contain about 9 percent of the nation's total prison population. However, according to some, they take care of roughly 73 percent of the immigrant detainee populations (Haberman, 2018).





## Prisoner Violence Is More Prevalent in Private Prisons?

### THE REALITY IS THAT....

Corporations cut operating costs in private prisons by having fewer employees and spending less money to effectively train and pay them.

### FINDINGS THAT BACK THIS CLAIM....

The employees that private prisons hire earn an average of over \$5,000 less than government employed prison employees and on average, they receive 58 fewer hours of training (Joy, 2018).

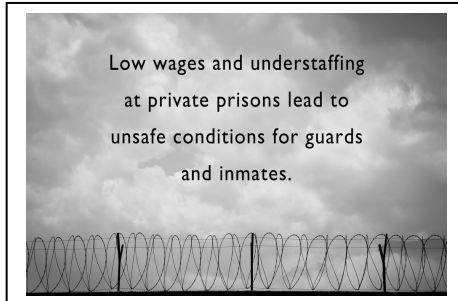
### EFFECTS OF THIS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO....

- 1) Higher employee turnover
- 2) Decreased/Lower Quality prison security

### COLLECTED DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

In 1997, a study funded by the USDOJ received feedback from sixty-five of the eighty private correctional facilities in operation within the United States. They compared this feedback to data that has been collected from public prison facilities to come to the conclusions shown in the table. **In private prisons, there is greater inmate-inmate violence as well as total violence (Austin, Coventry, 1999).**

Incidents in Private Facilities vs Incidents in Public Facilities	Public Number	Private Number	Public % Violation Per 1000 Inmates	Private % Violation Per 1000 Inmates
Total # of Incidents	46,365	2,357	45.3%	50.5%
Assaults on Inmates	25,948	1,617	25.4%	35.1%



## Solution: Termination of Private Prison System

### Who/What/When/Why/How?

The National Government needs to take a more visible stance against for-profit prisons by terminating them.

In order for this solution to effectively occur, the United States must decrease its incarceration rates by lowering enforcement and decreasing sentencing and or creating more public prisons for existing inmates to be moved into. I recommend the latter.

Utilizing incarcerated labor forces might be economically beneficial for some large corporations. However, the existing private prison system threatens ideas of justice and shows complete disregard for prisoner rehabilitation. Furthermore, these prison systems often fail to even promote a safe setting/certain security standard to their prison population and are additionally disproportionately comprised of/problematic for minority individuals.

### Why is the National Government Responsible for Bringing Change?

The existing system fails to consider the humanity principle, the idea that the state should not promote systems that are unjust (Dolovich, 2005).

Unjust practices of the for profit prison system are highlighted by how companies work to recycle people in the prison system for the sole purpose of profiting off them. Other present injustices include how the companies deny prisoners a quality setting by cutting funding, often leading to elevated rates of prison violence, and the idea that certain populations, minorities, are more subject to this prison setting in and of itself.

The National Government is the responsible for solving this issue because they have the ability to utilize the Necessary and Proper Clause.

This Clause gives Congress the powers to make laws which are "necessary and proper" to the progression of the nation. Furthermore, national government trumps state laws/lack of laws so if the National Government banned these penal institutions then the states would be required to comply.

## Citation Page

(Style APA)

### Citations for Information

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**Note:** I created the table found on the second page from information on previously cited Austin Coventry piece.