

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES IN NY'S COMMUNITIES

Incarceration is an ineffective response to the social, economic and health problems which drive crime. Community-based alternative to incarceration programs like job training and drug treatment are more effective and less expensive than imprisonment.

Governor David Paterson supports prison closures:

"Sometimes I wonder what planet I'm living on when I'm in here defending closing prisons. You know when you close prisons? When there aren't enough prisoners to fill them up... isn't it wonderful, in this state, that we're talking about closing prisons?"
March 27, 2009

SAVE MONEY CUT CRIME BUILD COMMUNITIES

HOW CAN YOU HELP REDUCE INCARCERATION IN NY?

JOIN DROP THE ROCK!

Through education, organizing and advocacy, Drop the Rock aims to decrease the number of people who are incarcerated in NY and reduce the bed capacity of the state prison system. Our grassroots campaign promotes full repeal of the Rockefeller Drug Laws and constructive reforms to parole and work release policies, which cause the unnecessary imprisonment of thousands of people each year. In addition we strongly advocate for reinvestment in alternative, prevention, and in-prison rehabilitation programs to prepare people for successful reentry.

ATTEND our monthly coalition meetings and help organize events and actions.

SIGN the prison downsizing petition and collect signatures in your community.

ADVOCATE with Drop the Rock in Albany.

INVITE Drop the Rock to present at your organization.

CONTACT Contact Campaign Coordinator Caitlin Dunklee at 212-254-5700 or cdunklee@correctionalassociation.org for more information.



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Why is New York WASTING MILLIONS on over 6,300 EMPTY PRISON BEDS?

NEW YORK FACES A BUDGET DEFICIT
of \$8.2 billion this fiscal year.

Governor Paterson has proposed severe service reductions this year including a \$1.1 billion cut to education and a \$1 billion cut to healthcare.

REPEAL THE ROCKEFELLER DRUG LAWS

In 2009, after years of advocacy by a broad coalition of concerned individuals and organizations, New York reformed the notorious Rockefeller Drug Laws to give judges the discretion to divert some individuals with low-level drug offenses into alternative treatment and education programs. However, the mandatory sentencing provisions which remain on the books will still be the driving force behind NY's war on drugs and will cause the imprisonment of thousands of people each year for the possession and sale of relatively small amounts of drugs.

Although the majority of people who use and sell drugs in NY are white, 90% of people locked up under the Rockefeller Drug Laws are African American and Latino.

EXPAND WORK RELEASE

In 1994, over 27,000 state inmates participated in work release, a proven and cost beneficial program that aids incarcerated persons in their safe transition back to the community. Now, only about 2,500 are enrolled.

Incarceration costs \$55,000 per person annually in NY, while work release costs \$7,500.

REFORM PAROLE

In 2008 over 8,200 people were returned to state prison for technical parole violations - like missing a meeting with an officer or breaking curfew - not for committing new crimes. Most experts agree that about half these people could be safely and smartly handled by less expensive graduated responses, like increased supervision or enrollment in alternative to incarceration programs.

INCREASE PAROLE RELEASE EXPAND MERIT TIME

The state's Parole Board often denies individuals release due to the nature of their crime, no matter how positive their institutional record; and merit time, which allows people in prison to earn time off of their sentences for completing programs, is not available to persons convicted of violent offenses, no matter how long ago the crime. Combined, these two policies delay the release of thousands of people every year.

CLOSE EMPTY PRISONS

In the past 10 years New York's prison population has declined by 13,000 people and the state's crime rate has dropped by 28%.

NY's taxpayers are paying for over 6,300 empty prison beds, at a cost of more than \$140 million over a two year period.

WHY HAS NY CLOSED ONLY 2,250 PRISON BEDS?

Most of the people incarcerated in NY are from urban neighborhoods of color where economic resources and job opportunities are scarce. While people in prison cannot vote, the US Census Bureau counts them as residents of the communities where they are incarcerated, which unfairly displaces voting power. This practice also causes government aid to be rerouted from communities like East New York, the South Bronx, and Jamaica, to towns in upstate NY like Marcy, Albion, and Dannemora.

The correction officers' union and politicians from upstate areas reap economic and political benefits from incarceration, and are now the main obstacles to closing underutilized prisons.

NY can no longer use prisons as part of an economic stimulus plan.