

For look at what makes the prisons- for-profit setup

[Business](#), [Industries](#)



For the longest time in America, prisons and jails were run by the government only.

Our taxpayer dollars were used to directly fund the correctional facilities that housed our inmates. This all changed around 1977 when the prison population grew out of control, forcing the government to enter into contracts with private prison companies. At first this seemed like a harmless way to deal with the situation, but it quickly turned into a nightmare scenario for many American civilians across the country. Today, private prisons are known for their many failures and scandals. These prisons are run by businessmen whose only goal is to maximize their profit, by getting as many inmates in their cells as possible.

Let's take a look at what makes the prisons-for-profit setup in our country so detrimental to our society, and how we can move away from this corrupt system of trading lives for dollars. The Problem with Private Prisons¹.

Money > Justice There are so many problems with private prisons that it's hard to know where to begin. Let's start with the most reprehensible consequence of private prisons, the prioritization of money over justice. In Pennsylvania, there was recently a case known as " Kids for Cash." This was an instance in which two judges were allegedly bribed millions of dollars to send just about every kid that came through their courtroom to a for-profit detention center. It didn't matter if the child was only charged with a minor crime or not.

The judges would send them straight to a detention center because they were paid to do so. Edward Kenzacoski committed suicide after being locked

up and missing his entire senior year of high school for a minor drug paraphernalia charge. This is the most extreme example of what happens when you allow people to profit off of the number of inmates they are housing.

The natural way for them to maximize their profits is to do anything they can to get more people sent to their correctional facilities. Private prison companies like CCA and GEO also currently spend millions of dollars lobbying for government officials so they can keep receiving huge contracts. They also lobby to keep drugs like marijuana illegal, so they can continue to benefit from the many related arrests made each year. Not only that, they foster an overall environment of mistrust and violence to make sure their recidivism rates stay nice and high. There have even been cases of prisons sending regular inmates to solitary confinement cells just so they could pack as many prisoners in as possible.

Many contracts also involve a quota that the prison has to fill, or else the government will have to pay a taxpayer fine. Private prisons are contracted to house inmates, so they have zero interest in rehabilitating them, despite what their public relations representatives say. The purpose of our justice system is not just to punish inmates, but to rehabilitate them and give them the tools they need to go back out into the world and succeed.

With private prison companies blatantly operating backward to this principle, it's absolutely absurd that they continue to receive contracts from our government. 2. Lack of Transparency Government run correctional facilities have certain transparency laws they have to abide by, so we can make sure

they aren't doing anything we wouldn't want them to. Private prisons do not have to abide by those same rules. Since they're in the private sector, they get treated just like any other private company would.

They aren't required to release their recidivism rates or the statistics on occurrences of violence within their facilities. If you want to know these stats, you have to use other methods to find them. Because we don't hold private prisons accountable enough, they have devolved into using tactics to keep inmates flowing in which are very morally corrupt. That might sound like an exaggeration, but it's not. For instance, they often house prisoners very far from their homes. This lack of contact with their families directly increases their likelihood to re-offend once they get out, as one study shows.

The levels of violence in private prisons are also significantly higher than they are in state-run facilities. It's been estimated there are 9 times as many lockdowns in private prisons, and you are far more likely to be assaulted by inmates and/or staff. The Solution to Private Prisons Under our current political administration, it's not looking like we'll be moving away from private prisons for a while. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has stated that we will support the private prisons industry rather than move away from it.

President Obama's decision to let government contracts with these prisons expire has also been reversed since President Trump has been in office. The only solution we have right now is to continue exposing private prison scandals and corruption in every form. You can contact your local senators to tell them you do not support the continued use of prisons-for-profit as well. Vote for candidates who are not being paid off by these corporations, and

when the next election comes around we can start heading back in the right direction.

The only reason we have a need for private prisons at all is that the prison population is too high. America has the most prisoners per capita in the world because far too many people are arrested and sent to jail for low-level offenses. If we want to lower our prison population, we need to ease up on locking people away for non-violent crimes, instead offering them rehabilitation. Non-profit prisons are one alternative that can help us ease out of these contracts with private corporations, with organizations like CURE leading the way in this area. Closing Thoughts” I done my time, but you put me out here and expect me to do right? If I aint got no help what am I supposed to do? I’m sick of being here, I’m ready to lay down and die!” ~ Jesse James Upchurch – A former inmate at a private prison found living homeless in the woods just a few miles away from the facility he was released from. The private prison industry is a multi-billion dollar industry getting rich off of its inmates, and profiting from injustice that it helps to propagate. If we want to change this wicked and corrupt system we’ll have to commit to easing our criminal laws a bit, while supporting politicians who are not being bribed by private prison corporations.

It will take some time, but with enough awareness and activism, we’ll soon be living in a country completely free from the scourge of private prisons. An America that prioritizes the rehabilitation of its inmates over lining the pockets of greedy corporations is one that we should all strive to create.