

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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April 2010

Fed Budget: More Policing, Prisons, Punishment

The federal so-called Department of Justice (DOJ) has proposed a \$1.5 billion budget increase in fiscal year (FY) 2011. This would go toward paying 2,880 new attorneys, agents, marshals, intelligence analysts and prison guards in the next fiscal year. It includes \$237 million to buy and renovate the Thomason Correctional Center in Illinois, supposedly to house Guantanamo Bay prisoners.

State, local and tribal law enforcement assistance would increase by \$722 million, to \$3.4 billion. Prisons, detention programs and judicial security programs would receive a \$527 million spending increase to \$9 billion. That includes funding for the Bureau of Prisons, the Office of the Federal Detention Trustee, the US Parole Commission and the US Marshals Service. There would be \$59 million to fill 1,200 vacant prison guard jobs, and another \$95 million to hire an additional 652 guards. The new guards would go to a new prison in Berlin NY and to the Thomason Correctional Center.

The budget also calls for more than \$1.1 billion for cybersecurity and other information technology projects. The FBI would get \$8.1 billion. The Drug Enforcement Administration, \$2.1 billion.

In contrast, spending would be reduced on juvenile justice programs, while allocating hundreds of millions to hire or retain police officers through the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants and Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).

All of this is despite the fact that research, as well as common sense and hard won life experience are clear. If those in power had any interest in increasing public safety, reducing prison populations and saving money, first steps would be to invest in community-based positive programs and policies to affect youth, as well as more community based substance abuse treatment and mental health treatment services. And then of course we need decent paying job

opportunities with futures.

There are nearly 100,000 youth currently locked up in juvenile detention and in "secure confinement" across the country. Youth who spend time incarcerated have decreased educational attainment and employment prospects. Cutting the amount of money spent on skill and opportunity building programs is likely to reduce public safety and increase the racial disparity among incarcerated youth, affecting both their families and their communities well-being.

In the proposed budget, there is \$500 million in Byrne law enforcement activity related grants, including many that are shown to increase prison populations. Research shows that localities that spend more on law enforcement have higher drug imprisonment rates than localities that spend less.

Under Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Funding, the Administration has requested \$690 million. This is despite the US Government Accountability Office report showing that between 1993 and 2000, the overall crime rate declined by 26%, of which only 1.3% was attributed to COPS.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) currently cages more than 200,000 people. The 2011 budget adds \$628 million over last year's, to lead to more imprisoned.

TOO LATE, TOO TOO BAD

Prison sentences in the US are eight times longer than those in Europe. California alone has 185,000 people in prison at a cost of \$32,000 each per year. In a talk given in California in February, US Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy criticized California's 3-strikes law which he said was sponsored by its guard's union, "and that is sick."

Ironically, much of the blame for that law lies with the Supreme Court which, in a 5 to 4 decision upholding it, Kennedy cast the deciding vote.

ESTADOS CON LA PENA DE MUERTE QUE OFRECEN LA VIDA SIN LIBERTAD CONDICIONAL

Arizona	Maryland	Carolina del S
Arkansas	Mississippi	Dakota del S
California	Missouri	Tennessee
Colorado	Montana	Texas
Connecticut	Nebraska	Utah
Delaware	Nevada	Virginia
Florida	N Hampshire	Washington
Georgia	N Mexico	Wyoming
Idaho	Carolina del N	
Illinois	Ohio	
Indiana	Oklahoma	Estatuto Federal
Kansas	Oregon	
Kentucky	Pennsylvania	Estatuto Militar

EL PABELLON DE LA MUERTE

California	678	Delaware	20
Florida	402	Virginia	18
Texas	358	Idaho	18
Pennsylvania	226	Indiana	17
Alabama	207	Illinois	15
Ohio	181	Connecticut	10
Carolina d N	167	Kansas	10
Arizona	129	Nebraska	10
Georgia	109	Utah	10
Tennessee	92	Washington	9
Oklahoma	86	Fuerzas Arma.	9
Louisiana	84	Maryland	5
Nevada	79	Colorado	3
Carolina del S	63	Dakota del Sur	3
Mississippi	61	Montana	2
Gob. Federal	55	Nuevo México	2
Missouri	52	Wyoming	1
Arkansas	42		
Kentucky	36		
Oregon	35		

This 2 page paper version of the CRP monthly newsletter will be included in all correspondence we sent out. Others who would like to receive it must send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope (up to 12 at one time) for every issue they would like to receive.

Please continue to send us address change updates and renewal requests in order to stay on our mailing list and to receive the year end holiday card/new calendar.

Many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making the newsletter available on-line at: <http://www.realcostofprisons.org/coalition.html>. Download it and mail it to comrades and loved ones inside!

Please remember: the ONLY address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504.

Our debt level is currently at just over \$9,000. Donations continue to be welcome. Thank you for your support!

VOICES IN SOLIDARITY

Alliance of Incarcerated Canadians (AICAP)

If you are a foreign National imprisoned in California, who has applied for a transfer with the BPT so that you can serve the remainder of your sentence in your country of origin and the BPT has denied your application due to your being a lifer without a date, contact: AICAP, Attn: VP of International Affairs, 2 Bloor St W #100, Toronto Ontario, Canada M4W 3E2. Postage: \$1 for up to 2 oz. You don't have to be a Canadian! AICAP needs copies of denials for their suit.

Democracy Restoration Act of 2009, HR 3335

Under HR 3335, anyone who is not incarcerated would be eligible to vote in federal elections, even if barred from voting in state elections. For more info: The Sentencing Project, 524 Tenth St NW Suite 1000, Washington DC 20004.

Potential New Documentary TV Series

Towers Productions, producers of *American Justice* and *Storm Stories*, is researching the world of prison-made art, looking for people who deal in, collect and perhaps commission prison-made items. We're looking for referrals to collectors, dealers and artist inmates (past and present). E-mail: robertkelder@gmail.com The company website is: <http://towersproductions.com>

VOICES FROM INSIDE

Plainfield IN February 3, 2010

The IDOC said it was giving us no lunch on weekends. We convicts wrote many letters to many organizations. Then all of a sudden, the meals went back to normal. I'm writing this so other prisoners will now we can accomplish a lot if we stick together.

Punta Gorda FL February 7, 2010

I am preparing a class action lawsuit against the FDOC for violating the civil rights of prisoners within their care, custody and control. The FDOC fails to follow their own policies and procedures concerning the inmate request/complaint process and subverts prisoners requests/complaint actions. The Prison Litigation Reform Act denies these same prisoners access to 42 U.S.C.A. section 1983. I must have affidavits from all prisons under FDOC authority. Lester L. Williams E20560, 2601 Blair Stone Rd, Tallahassee FL 32399.

Contact: Texas Prisoners' Freedom Agenda c/o Boston ABC, PO Box 230182, Boston MA 02123, for a unifying framework to advance