

Privatization Issues In The News

Criminal investigation into private prisons falls flat

In the June 2007 edition of *Roll Call*, I wrote about an investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement into a settlement with GEO Group and the Department of Management Services (June 2007, "Criminal Investigation Ongoing in Private Prison Settlement"). The investigation was called for by **Governor Crist** because of the seemingly low settlement DMS agreed to with the private prisons vendor GEO Group (10-cents-on-the-dollar).

This last May, FDLE released its findings into this settlement. While the investigation found no criminal wrongdoing and became more of a critical tome on a DMS Inspector General report (MDS OIG Internal Audit Report Number 2005-61), the investigation did reconfirm the horrible lack of oversight by the former Correctional Privatization Commission.

DOC calls for 10 percent cut to for-profits, DMS wants to transfer private prison oversight

Due to continued economic forecasts showing a decline in state income receipts, all state agencies were asked to provide a proposal to cut 10 percent from their budgets. The Department of Corrections proposed, among other cuts, to reduce the amount of money paid to CCA and GEO by ten percent in their contracts with the Department of Management Services, who oversee the private prisons.

This is a fairness issue: If the public side of corrections is asked to cut their expenses by ten percent, then it only makes sense to ask the profiteers to do the same.

On a related note, the Department of Management Services, which has oversight responsibility for private prisons, is proposing the transfer of private prison oversight to the Department of Corrections. This transfer would eliminate 13 positions and save an estimated \$1.79 million.

But, don't hold your breath. The private prison industry has for years fought the move to have DOC oversight. They

are afraid that someone with real correctional experience might do oversight and enforce contracts. I suspect they will circle their wagons and lobby hard against this proposal and contribute a little more money to a select number of legislators.

I'll let you know how this goes.

Private Corrections Institute attends ACA Congress

The Private Corrections Institute, a non-profit clearinghouse on the for-profit private corrections industry, recently participated in the American Correctional Association's 137th Congress in Kansas City. PCI set up a booth and handed out material on the private prison industry.

The ACA is the largest gathering of correctional professionals in one place in the world.

Employees and executives of vendors such as Corrections Corporation of America, GEO Group and Cornell came by a number of times to see what we were up to. We had lots of fun making them uncomfortable. They've had a free ride at the ACA for too long.

One time, as I was handing out material on the "horrors of prison privatization," a GEO representative told me to tell people about the good stuff on prison privatization.

I responded by saying, "Name two besides providing a profit to shareholders."

The GEO rep stood there for a second, turned on his heels and left.

PCI is the only national organization devoted to confront prison privatization head on. With help from the Florida PBA, Corrections USA and AFSCME, we've done a lot to suppress the growth in the industry. But this is not enough.

We need your help too. Please consider sending a contribution to PCI today. Make your check payable to PCI and mail to 1114 Brandt Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32308.

Thanks for your help and check out our website: www.PrivateCI.org



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Webpage

The Private Corrections Institute maintains an excellent webpage on the for-profit private prison industry. You can get recent news, lawsuits, reports, and links to other sites. Our "Hall of Shame" is a hit among activists.

The link is:

www.PrivateCI.org

Get aboard the PCI-Watch

If you are serious about fighting the for-profit private prison industry, then you need to sign-up for the PCI's Watch — the electronic private prison news service. Just send your request to kenk@PrivateCI.org and ask to be put on the list. Please be aware — this is not for the faint-at-heart. Sometimes there is a lot of reading but it is well worth it.



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