



April 9, 2013

Dear Legislator,

Enclosed with this letter is *Crisis in Conneaut: 18 Months in the Life of the Nation's First Prison Sold to a For-Profit Company*, which details the shocking timeline of events during the first year and a half that the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) has owned the Lake Erie Correctional Institution (LaECI). Serious trends include critical inspections by multiple state agencies; growing violence against staff and inmates; overcrowding; rampant contraband; and, an increasing drain on local law enforcement.

While no prison is free of problems, the sum of the many issues that have afflicted the LaECI facility indicates the need for drastic action and increased scrutiny from state officials. We urge elected officials to consider the following measures:

- Hold legislative hearings on the events at LaECI, with officials demonstrating concrete actions taken to stem the problems;
- Expand the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee's ability to conduct multiple unannounced inspections at prisons with demonstrated problems;
- Restore the maximum capacity levels of LaECI to pre-CCA ownership in order to correct severe overcrowding;
- Expressly require that privately owned and/or operated prisons and their employees are subject to Ohio's open records laws, just as state prisons;
- Enhance the state's requirement that the private prisons must demonstrate a five percent cost savings by levying fees when it is not met;
- Require that the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections utilize a single, publicly available formula to calculate cost savings that may not be altered for a period of five years; and,
- Reexamine the Ohio's contract with CCA to strengthen the right of the state to purchase back the facility if required changes are not made.

The safety of the staff, inmates, and community requires action. We look forward to working with you to ensure our prisons are run securely, humanely, and efficiently.

Sincerely,

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