Prisons For Profit:
Presentation Outline
Prepared by the ACLU of Ohio
Summer 2016

This document includes presenter notes that correspond to the Power Point presentation. We recommend incorporating the use of the prison privatization conversation cards into the end of the presentation.
Prisons for Profit
Presenter Outline

• Open the program with a round of introductions and overview of the program.
  o Today we’ll be screening the ACLU of Ohio’s documentary, “Prisons for Profit.” This documentary examines the first 18 months after the Corrections Corporation of America purchased the Lake Erie Correctional Institution in 2011 from Ohio.

• Pose a question to the group to think about as they learn about prison privatization and watch the documentary, Prisons For Profit:
  o Should someone make a profit from individuals being kept in prison?

• Before showing the film, begin a conversation on the background of Ohio’s mass incarceration system and prison privatization. Note, depending on your screen/projector size, some charts may not be easily read.
  o The US is home to just 5% of the world’s population, but houses 25% of the world’s prison population, which equates to 2.3 million people.
• This slide shows what the U.S. incarceration rate looks like compared to other countries.
  o [Tip] Gauge audience reaction and ask people for comments.

• Discuss the reality of overcrowding and the impact it has on prison conditions.
  o In Ohio, we’re over 130% capacity. We have over 50,000 people housed in a system built for 38,000.
  o Prison crowding decreases safety and programming, and leads to poor conditions.

• Explain that the cost of incarceration exceeds Ohio’s prison budget so taxpayers are picking up the tab.
  o It costs $25,816 per year, per inmate.
  o The cost of incarceration takes vital resources away from other areas of the budget (like healthcare and rehabilitative programming).
• Define private prisons.
  o How many prisoners are in private prisons?
    ▪ 9% nationally
    ▪ 5% in Ohio

• Explain how a private prison sale works.
  Note, this is different than solely contracting out the management of the facility to a private company.

• Additional points:
  o Costs and Savings
    ▪ 2011 Dept. of Justice report – 20% projected savings found 1% actual savings.
    ▪ The risks likely outweigh any short term financial benefit.
  o Medical
    ▪ May be hesitant to send prisoners to hospitals because that increases costs.
Problems with Private Prisons

- Community Costs
- Undermines sentencing reform
- More prisoners = more $$$

Additional points:
- Empty beds = money out the window.
- Private prison operators hire lobbyists to advocate against criminal justice reform.
- Some studies have found that states with more private prisons have higher recidivism rates.

Problems with Private Prisons

- Staff
  - Low wage/benefits, non-union
    - CCA officers – Avg. salary = $32,000
    - CEO salary – $882,807 plus $2.5 million in other compensation.
  - 4x more turnover
- Transparency
  - Claim they are not subject to public records laws

Additional points:
- Staff
  - Cutting costs puts everyone at risk. Private prisons often hire lower skilled, lower wage, non-union staff. This results in 4x more turnover.
  - Average correctional officer salary in a public facility was $41,000 in 2012.

What’s happened since our report was released?

Ohio sold Lake Erie Correctional Institution to Corrections Corporation of America (CCA).
- CCA took over on January 01, 2012

Background: In 2011, the proposed budget included a plan to privatize five facilities. The ACLU of Ohio and other organizations lobbied against this, and one facility was sold.
Additional points:
- Suggestion: Look up the current trading price for CCA stock.
- Sued by the IRS multiple times for tens of millions in back taxes and other issues.

Additional points:
- Paying at a 90% capacity is common for private prison contracts.
- It’s all about making a profit. Even if there are empty beds, they want to get paid as if the facility is nearly full.

Show Prisons For Profit
- Ask for comments/ reactions after the film.
- Let the audience know that you will now present updates on where we stand now with prison privatization in Ohio.
• Additional points:
  o Prior to releasing the documentary, the ACLU of Ohio also released a timeline of the first 18 months that CCA had control of LaECI.
  o Highlight some of the most egregious issues.

• Additional points:
  o Sanitation
    ▪ Certain areas of the facility were without running water for some time. Prisoners were given bags for defecation and bottles for urination.
  o Medical
    ▪ In one year, there were two heroin overdoses, with one death.

• Additional points:
  o The Ohio Dept. of Rehabilitation and Corrections amended their contract with CCA.
  o We don’t know how difficult or easy it is to break this contract. Since LaECI is the first and only prison sold to a private prison operator, we are in uncharted territory.
• Additional points:
  o History of problems since it opened in the ‘90’s under CCA.
    ▪ In the first year, 20 prisoners were stabbed, two were murdered, and there were riots and escapes.
    ▪ It closed for a period and re-opened, still under CCA control.
  o In 2015, there were hunger strikes related to inadequate access to programming and medical care.

• Additional points:
  o In June 2015, the Ohio General Assembly allowed for the sale of a second prison in HB 238.
  o This was done in a legislative slight of hand and there was no opportunity for public testimony or comment.

• Additional points:
  o In the first 18 months that Aramark provided food, 135 staff members were fired.
    ▪ 53% for inappropriate relations; others were terminated for security and other violations such as smuggling contraband.
  o Since 2014, Aramark has been fined over $500,000.
Additional points:
  o Ohio would have saved $3 million with OSCEA’s bid.
  o 2016, CIIC (Correctional Institution Inspection Committee) report indicated that Ohio has saved money but food-related prisoner complaints are on the rise.

Bring the group full circle by posing the question from the beginning of the presentation to the group.
  o Should someone make a profit from individuals being kept in jail?

Use the companion conversation cards to foster a group discussion on prison privatization.
How Can You Get Involved?

• Visit acluohio.org/advocacy
  • Take Action Now
  • Sign Up For E-News

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  • Visit acluohio.org/membership

• For More Information:
  • Visit acluohio.org
  • Email: contact@acluohio.org