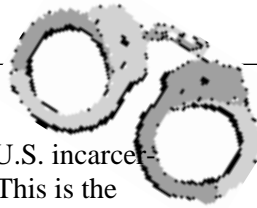


2,000,000 in 2000

On or about February 15, 2000 the U.S. incarcerated population will top 2 million. This is the culmination of the explosive expansion of the prison industry in the 1990s—a decade that saw the greatest prison population increase in recorded U.S. history. The prison population has almost doubled since 1990, when an estimated 1.1 million Americans were behind bars. The past decade's expansion dwarfed that of the 1980s by 61%, and is nearly 30 times the average prison population growth of any decade prior to the 1970s. This ever-expanding social project has done little, if anything, to improve public safety because nonviolent offenders accounted for 84% of the increases in state and federal prison admissions since 1980. The individual and societal costs of this project are manifold and complex, but its impact upon institutions of higher education is shockingly simple: **As public funding for prisons has increased dramatically, public funding for higher education has been cut. In states like New York, the ratio is almost dollar-for-dollar.**

Ask yourself: How is the prison boom affecting my educational opportunities?

*According to a recent survey, 92% percent of wardens believe that greater use should be made of alternatives to incarceration and that, on average, half of the offenders under their supervision could be released without endangering public safety. **Isn't it time you told congress that you would rather they fund your education instead of the misery of others?***



Isn't the prison population going up because of a crime epidemic?

Crime is a problem, but crime rates have actually been falling nationally since 1992 and have remained relatively stable. With less crime, one might assume that fewer people would be sentenced to prison. This trend, though, has been overridden by the increasing impact of lengthy mandatory sentencing policies. These include:

1) **Mandatory Minimums** – The mandatory minimum sentencing policies that now exist in every state have been used disproportionately for drug offenders, who now constitute one of every four inmates nationally. Research by the Department of Justice, the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and other agencies has documented that many of these offenders are low-level offenders whose continued incarceration is extremely costly and wasteful of prison space.

2) **“Three Strikes” Policies** – The federal government and nearly half the states have some type of “three strikes and you're out” law that requires sentences of life without parole or significant increase over the past sentencing patterns. California's law is by far the broadest such statute, with more than 40,000 offenders having been sentenced under its provisions since its enactment in 1994.

3) **“Truth in Sentencing”** – Spurred on by financial incentives in the 1994 federal crime bill, half the states have qualified for federal prison funding as a result of having changed their sentencing laws to require that certain offenders serve 85% of their prison sentence. In most cases, these changes will result in significant increases in time served in prison for these offenders, many of whom would have received lengthy prison terms under past practices. The result: **Those states that incarcerate their prisoners for less time have to pay more, therefore states have a financial incentive to keep prisoners locked up longer.**

The Real Costs

It costs about \$25,000 a year to house an inmate in federal prison, compared with only \$2,300 to supervise an offender under federal probation. This doesn't even consider indirect costs, such as welfare to families when the wage earner is in prison, loss of taxes; lost income to the community; loss to creditors; or the costs of readjustment once the prisoner is released.

·From 1973 to 1993, state corrections spending increased 1200%, while state expenditures for higher education increased only 419% (a third of the corrections spending increase). Throughout the 1980s, state spending for corrections *increased 95%*, while spending on higher education *decreased 6%*.

·Between 1990 and 1994, only seven states increased higher education spending as a proportion of total state spending, while thirty-six states increased the share of spending devoted to corrections programs.

·Between 1984 and 1997, the state of California constructed 21 prisons and only one state university.

·In Florida, the state spends more on 56,000 prisoners than on 203,000 university students

Education, Not Incarceration!

Students for Sensible Drug Policy opposes the prison-building frenzy that has swept so many of our generation into jails instead of classrooms. Visit our web site to learn how you can help!

www.ssdp.org

Resources

The Drug Reform Coordination Network
2000 P Street NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 293-8340
(202) 293-8344 (fax)
<http://www.stopthedrugwar.org>

Criminal Justice Policy Foundation
1225 Eye Street NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-312-2015
202-842-2620 (fax)
<http://www.cjpf.org>

The Justice Policy Institute
2208 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20020
202-678-9282
202-678-9321 (fax)
<http://www.cjcj.org/jpi/>

The November Coalition
795 South Cedar
Coleville, WA 99114
(509) 684-1550
<http://www.november.org>

SSDP's Mission

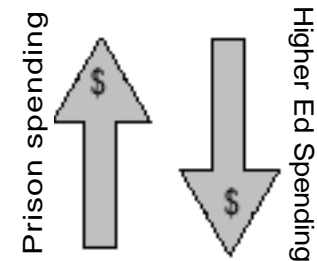
“As students and young citizens of this country, we believe that current U.S. policies concerning illicit drugs are harmful and ineffective. We are spending billions of dollars, giving up our Constitutional rights, and imprisoning hundreds of thousands of our citizens in a vain effort to stop drug use.”


“The U.S. needs to acknowledge the failure of prohibition and support a policy that aims to reduce the amount of damage done to individuals and society by drug abuse.”

“Students for Sensible Drug Policy is committed to providing education on the harms caused by the War on Drugs, working to involve youth in the political process, and promoting an open, honest and rational discussion of alternative solutions to our nation's drug problems.”

Contact SSDP:
2000 P Street NW Ste. 210
Washington, DC 20036
Tel. (202) 293-4414
Fax (202) 293-8344
E-mail ssdp@ssdp.org
Web www.ssdp.org

For the last 20 years, the government has been investing in our futures.



 **Students
for Sensible
Drug Policy**
www.ssdp.org