

The Sentencing Project

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/on-the-chopping-block-2011-state-prison-closings/>

Policy Issue Resources

1705 DeSales St, NW
8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036
202.628.0871
(fax) 202.628.1091
staff@sentencingproject.org

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Declining prison populations in a number of states have resulted in excess prison capacity. During 2010, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported the first decline in the overall state prison population since 1977 and found 24 states had reduced prison populations during 2009.

In 2011, at least thirteen states have closed prison institutions or are contemplating doing so, potentially reducing prison capacity by over 15,500 beds. Since 2002, Michigan has led the nation in this regard. The state has closed 21 facilities, including prison camps, as a result of sentencing and parole reforms. Overall, the state has reduced capacity by over 12,000 beds for a total cost savings of \$339 million. Other states, including New Jersey and Kansas, have also closed prisons in recent years amid changes in sentencing policy and parole decision making that have resulted in a decline in state prison populations. Maryland also reduced prison capacity when it closed the Maryland House of Corrections in 2007 by transferring 850 prisoners to other prisons.

This report documents the growing trend of states to close prisons. To read the report, download the PDF below.

Increase in number of women incarcerated in the U.S. since 1980

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