

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/news/its-time-prisons-dump-aramark>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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For about a year, food service in Ohio has been handled by a private company, Aramark Correctional Services. While privatization of public services is not ordinarily a civil liberties issue, it is when the switch affects peoples rights. Such is the case now.

If you dont know already, Aramarks involvement with Ohio prisons has been a disaster. In recent months, the company has been fined twice, for a total of \$270,000, for a variety of contract violations.

One would think Ohio learned its lesson about 15 years ago when it parted company with this same corporation after it failed to provide adequate food service at just one Ohio prison.

Or maybe state officials would think twice about using a private company that has had complaints and bad audits surface during the past several years from places such as Florida and Kentucky.

[Read our July 30 testimony](#) to the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee

Perhaps they should have even paused after the *other* failed experiment with prison privatization when our state sold an entire prison to a private corporation, Corrections Corporation of America, and assaults, drug use, and violence sky rocketed within the prison.

But, no. Ohio was more than happy to turn its responsibility over to an entity interested in only one thing profit. Given all the problems we know about privatization, news of unsanitary conditions, food shortages, unauthorized meal replacements, and numerous staff issues should come as no surprise. As the ACLU continuously warns, when the sole interest is dollars and cents, dont be surprised when corners are cut and obligations go unfulfilled.

Ohio is not the only state that should have buyers remorse. Michigan is also embroiled in controversy after reports of maggots in food, supply shortages, and staff fraternizing with prisoners and smuggling contraband into the facilities. These problems eerily mirror Ohios and show Aramarks incompetence is not isolated or a fluke.

Yesterday, the [ACLU of Ohio testified](#) before the Correctional Institution Inspections Committee, the state legislative body that provides prison oversight. We pointed out Aramarks past history and current problems. We asked how much evidence Ohio needs to dump Aramark a second time.

Unfortunately, the answer to that question seems to be more. The same state with a prison system bursting at the seams seems content with reserving second chances for the people who prepare the food but not those who unfortunately have to eat it.

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