

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/news/maggots-incompetence-and-unsafe-conditions-its-time-ohio-ditch-prison-private-food-vendor>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

[Skip to main content](#)

Tell me if youve heard this one before: a private company comes in to Ohio prisons promising it can achieve huge cost savings by taking over for the wasteful government. Legislators sign on, and after the private company takes over, everything begins to fall apart.

It happened in the 1990s in Youngstown when they [privatized the federal prison](#).

It happened in 2012 in [Conneaut](#) when they privatized the state prison.

Now its happening again, but this time in every prison in the state.

Meet Aramark, the private company that receives \$110 million of taxpayer funding to provide food service to every prison in Ohio. Aramark is notorious around the nation because nearly every time they contract with a prison system, disaster soon follows. The pattern is repeating again in Ohio.

In 2013, the state contracted with Aramark to provide the prison food services over the protests of corrections officers and prisoner rights advocates. They noted Ohio had already tried a pilot program with Aramark in 2000, which was abandoned early because of constant budget overruns and unacceptable food conditions. Legislators didnt listen.

In April 2014, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction announced [they had fined Aramark](#) for over \$142,000 for contract violations, falling short on quality levels, and creating operational challenges in Ohio prisons. Once the state started hitting Aramark in the pocketbook, you might think theyd get their act together, but instead things have gotten worse.

On July 7, news broke that [maggot infestations](#) had been discovered at the Trumbull Correctional Institution and the Ohio Reformatory for Women on two separate occasions. ODRC officials claimed they would add extra food inspectors to try and stop the problem, but when you consider just how incompetent Aramark is, that just wont be enough to solve the problem.

Only a week early, on July 1, officials in Michigan announced nearly 30 prisoners became sick with food poisoning after maggots were found in food at [Parnell Correctional Institution in Jackson, MI](#). Its clear this is not an isolated incident. Aramark just cant be trusted with providing food service to our prisons.

Maggots in food is not only disgusting, its dangerous. Prisons are a delicate atmosphere where problems can quickly snowball and affect the safety of prisoners and employees. Any cost savings that might be eked out from using Aramark quickly disappear when assaults and healthcare costs go up because prisoners are upset and not receiving proper nutrition.

Its time the state admit this experiment is simply not working and end its contract with Aramark. We must demand better out of our state.

Stay informed

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