

The Sentencing Project

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/too-good-to-be-true-private-prisons-in-america/>

Campaign and Advocacy

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While both federal and state governments increasingly relied on privatization, the federal prison systems commitment to privatization grew much more dramatically. The number of federal prisoners held in private prisons rose from 3,828 to 33,830, an increase of 784 percent, while the number of state prisoners incarcerated privately grew by 40 percent, from 67,380 to 94,365. Today, 30 states maintain some level of privatization, with seven states housing more than a quarter of their prison populations privately.

This report details the history of the movement to privatize prisons in America and documents the increase in their use. It also examines the purported ability of private prisons to provide the same level of services as publicly operated facilities, but at a lower cost, as well as the lobbying and contribution activities of private prisons on the state and federal level.

To read the report, download the PDF below.

People in prison is serving a life sentence

Sentencing Policy

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