

#DoTheMath

December 18, 2014

What Is #DoTheMath?

Do the Math is a campaign from The California Endowment that challenges Californians to consider our state's spending priorities and whether they make us a healthier society. California does \$2 trillion in business every year, making this the 8th largest economy in the world.

How we choose to spend our public funds has a huge impact on millions of lives in California, and sets the tone for the rest of the country. We can't afford to make bad decisions.

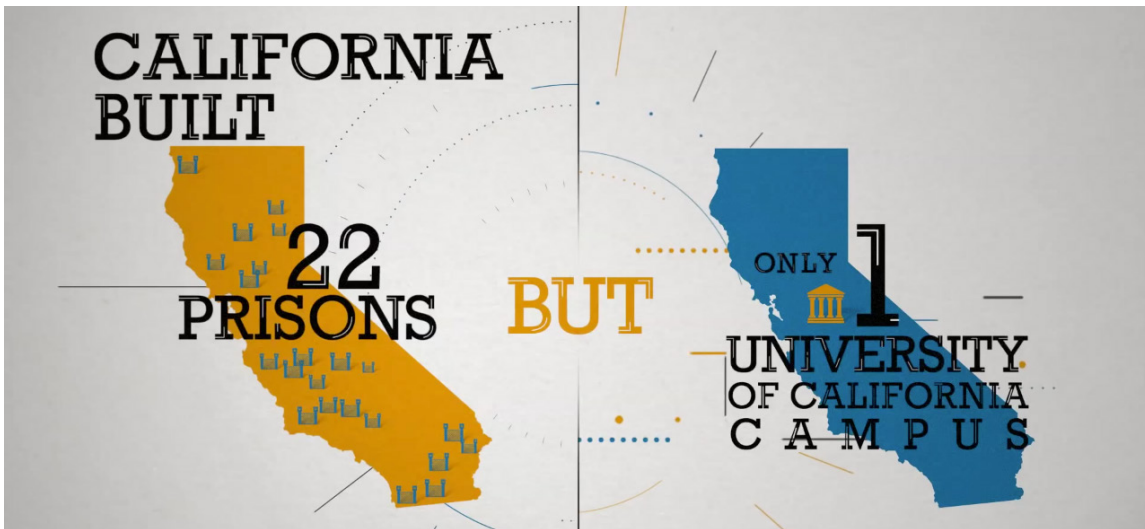
Our choices are actually pretty simple. Should we spend \$62,300 to lock up a nonviolent drug offender, or do we spend a fraction of that on rehab and counseling? The point of Do the Math is to show Californians what we're spending our money on, and ask them if we can do better.

We believe an informed public can and will make better decisions that benefit the health of everyone in California.



Schools vs. Prisons: The \$62,300 Question

The first issue we chose to focus on is the incredible spending disparity between education and incarceration. California has built 22 new prisons since 1980, and just one university campus in that time. It costs the state more than \$62,300 per year for each non-violent offender held in custody, and there are roughly 40,000 of them. At the same time, we spend only \$9,100 educating each public school student.

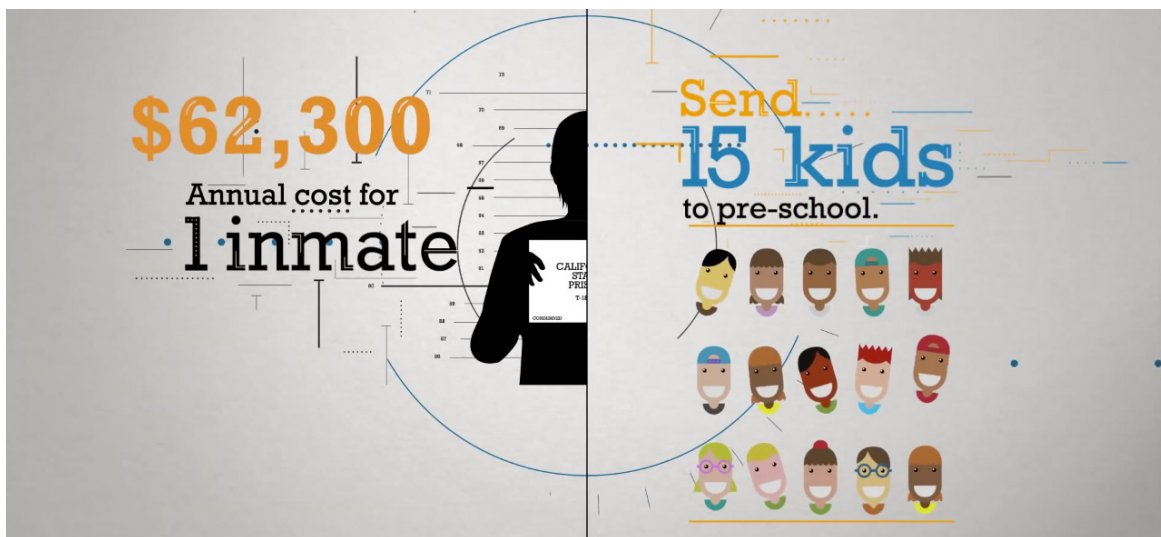


This isn't a random comparison. We know from years of study that money invested in education lowers the prison population. According to researchers at Northeastern University, high school and college dropouts between the ages of 16 and 24 are 63 times more likely to spend time in jail or prison.

Do the math: Should we be investing in education, or prison?

What Else Can You Get for \$62,300?

It's pretty amazing what the cost of incarceration can pay for. Instead of sending someone to jail, we could hire a school counselor or nurse, send 15 children to preschool or buy 2,500 soccer balls. \$62,300 would provide prenatal care for 195 pregnant women, or healthy school lunches for 21,000 kids. California could buy 12,460 copies of *Romeo and Juliet* with that money, send 211 children to space camp or pay the tuition of 11 deserving Cal State students.



People who commit crimes have to be held accountable, but money spent wisely can reduce crime in the first place while contributing to a healthier California.

Do the math: Would you rather rent a prison bed for a year, or buy lunch for 21,000 kids?

Where Do We Start?

Do the Math is about raising awareness and getting Californians thinking. The California Endowment has taken the message to communities up and down the state, using a variety of media.

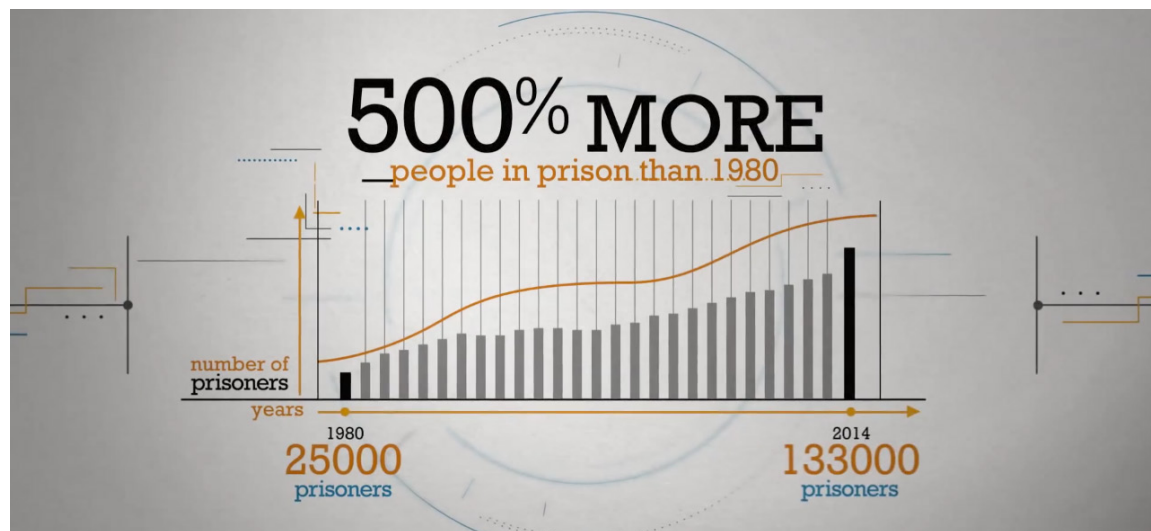
We created radio spots, billboards, buttons, posters, flyers, door hangers and postcards in both English and Spanish. A video animation played in theaters to an audience of nearly four million people. Our #SchoolsNotPrisons and #DoTheMath campaigns on social media have reached more people online than any other campaign in the Endowment's history. The 22 prisons/1 university graphic alone was shared 50,000 times.

And the California Endowment is not alone — partners in the community and government, including La Raza, the California Department of Education, Jay Z's Made in America music festival and celebrities like Guillermo Del Toro have been helping to spread the word.

More Math

We see this as a choice between incarceration and education. For decades, California has chosen incarceration, with terrible results. According to Californians for Safety and Justice:

- The state spends 1,500 percent more on corrections than it did in 1981.
- The prison population is 5.6 times higher than it was in 1962, with a similar crime rate.
- We spend \$10 billion a year on prisons.
- Jails and prisons have three times the number of mentally ill people than hospitals.
- Forty percent of criminal activity can be reduced with drug treatment.



California has been putting more money into punishment, and getting less and less in return. For every 100 people released from prison, 61 will be back in three years. The numbers just don't add up.

What is the California Endowment?

The California Endowment is a private foundation established in 1996. Its mission is to improve health care access to underserved communities and to promote the general well being of all Californians.

The Endowment recognizes that good health isn't just about doctors visits and individual health decisions, but the collective choices we make as a society. We believe building excellent schools instead of 22 more prisons will make California a healthier state for generations to come.



Success Stories

Californians are getting better information and starting to make a difference. In 2014, voters approved Prop. 47, which reduces the sentences for certain crimes and could release 10,000 nonviolent offenders from our overcrowded and costly prisons. That's \$623 million for space camp, or soccer balls or scholarships.

High school graduation rates increased in 2013, according to the California Department of Education. For the first time in the state's history, more than 80 percent of students graduated with their class.

Last year, California lawmakers agreed to increase spending on K-12 education, with extra funds for vulnerable populations, including low-income students. The funds won't restore budgets to what they were prior to the Great Recession, but it's a welcome start.

We've already talked about the extraordinary contribution made by the thousands of Californians who helped spread the word online and in person. With your help, The California Endowment is ready to take the next step. As James Baldwin said, "Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it." The information is there. The choices are simple. We just need to #DoTheMath.

