



OFFICE OF THE STATE BUDGET FEBRUARY 7, 2008

Fiscal Year 2009 Corrections Efficiencies and Justice Policy Reforms

Background

From the end of 1996 through 2007, prison population for the State of Michigan has grown by 10,021 inmates—a 25% increase in this short time span. Michigan's state prison system continues to be out of step with its Midwestern neighbors. With a prison incarceration rate of 511 prisoners per 100,000 residents, Michigan's prison incarceration rate is 31% higher than the Midwest average, yet this has not translated into significantly lower crime rates.

In March 2007, Michigan reached the highest prison population it has ever recorded. Current projections, absent prison reforms, anticipate continued growth in prisoner population with the total population expanding by over 5,800 in the next five years. Unless action is taken, there is a possibility that the state will be forced to re-open currently off-line prison beds during 2008.

Proposal

A total of \$50 M in net general fund reductions is recommended in the fiscal year 2009 Department of Corrections Executive Budget. Included in the total is \$33 M in efficiencies in facility operations that can be achieved through reconfigurations that affect staffing patterns and security levels, transportation and food costs, training costs, prisoner health care, increased GPS tether utilization and other efficiencies. The balance of the recommended reduction, \$17 M net of significant local reinvestments, would need to be achieved through reforms that reduce the number of state prisoners.

Utilizing a Collaborative Process with the Legislature

The Governor anticipates that the recently commenced Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a workgroup between the administration and the legislature that is facilitated by the Council of State Governments, will result in realistic approaches to generate savings in the Corrections budget through operational efficiencies and justice policy reforms. The initiative has been utilized by a number of states to identify and adopt strategies to advance fiscally sound, data-driven policies in sentencing and corrections that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and control corrections costs.

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Recommended efficiencies and reforms include:

- Health care efficiencies, changes in facility staffing assignments, consolidation of certain prison operations, adjustments to prisoner housing, advanced approaches to prisoner classification, continued impact of the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative, and new parole guidelines.
- Reforms to justice policies that will result in reduction of admissions to prison so that additional efficiencies in prison operations can be achieved.
- Formation of a Justice Policy and Sentencing Commission to develop reforms to justice policies that can achieve significant budget reductions and savings in the department without jeopardizing public safety.

Through these changes, Michigan can begin immediately to more closely align its incarceration rate to that of our Midwestern neighbors, rather than being the most incarcerative state in the region and one of the highest in the country. This approach also continues to diligently review department operations to constantly seek the most effective advancements to corrections policy without jeopardizing public safety.