

Human and Fiscal Costs of Prison

- The cost of imprisoning a woman in a federal prison is estimated by Corrections to average \$175,000 per year and can be higher than \$250,000 per year for women kept in the most isolated and segregated conditions of confinement, such as the segregated maximum security units in the prisons for women.
- In Canada, the incarceration rate of Aboriginal prisoners and women in prison continues to increase. Aboriginal people are incarcerated at a rate of 1024 per 100,000 prisoners in Canada, almost nine times the incarceration rate of non-Aboriginal people which is 117 per 100,000 people.¹
- As a result of the growing number of people awaiting trial in custody, the number of people on remand has outnumbered those serving sentences. In Ontario and Manitoba, the proportion of people on remand was over 60% in 2005/06.²
- In 2008/2009, 13,500 people were held in remand on any given day, compared to 10,000 people serving a sentence. Although the number of people being held in sentenced custody is dropping, the number of adults being held in prison awaiting trial is steadily increasing.³
- For 2003/2004, 103 prisoners died in custody of the criminal justice system.³ While the suicide rate amongst the prisoner population continues to be higher than what is found in the community, more prisoner deaths result from acute or chronic health issues.⁴

The Costs of Incarceration

- Members of Parliament and Senators have a fiduciary responsibility to exercise due diligence and cost benefit analysis before they spend taxpayer dollars. By passing the current crime bills without any idea as to how much they will cost Canadians, they are abdicating their fiduciary responsibility and violating this relationship of trust by expecting taxpayers to write the government a blank cheque.
- Provinces are spending \$2.7 billion dollars, without receiving flack from the public, on replacing and expanding overcrowded and old prisons. This money will establish at least 5788 new beds, in at least 22 new provincial/territorial prisons. Part of the reason that this money is being used to build more and better prisons is due to the governmental push for more mandatory minimum sentences, the reduction of house arrest for serious offences, and the abolishment of the 2-for-1 sentencing credit for time served in pre-sentencing custody.⁵

¹ The Correctional Investigator Canada. *Annual Report of the Correctional Investigator of Canada 2005- 2006*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2006 at 11.

² Statistics Canada. *Adult and Youth Correctional Services: Key Indicators*. Ottawa: The Daily, Wednesday, November 21, 2007 at 2.

³ Ibid

⁴ Statistics Canada. *Adult Correctional Services in Canada, 2003/2004*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2004 at 48.

⁵ MacCharles, Tonda. *Provinces to spend \$2.7B on Prisons*. Toronto: Toronto Star, February 20, 2010. On line: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/768637--provinces-to-spend-2-7b-on-prisons>

- The cost of operating the new beds will total approximately \$300 million annually.⁶
- The Correctional Service of Canada expenditures totaled \$2.8 billion in 2004/2005, up 2% in constant dollars from 2003/2004. Prisons accounted for the largest proportion (71%) of the expenditures, followed by community supervision services (14%), headquarters and central services (14%), and National Parole Board and provincial parole boards (2%). *This figure does not include policing or court costs which bring the total expenditures up to more than \$10 billion for the year.*⁷
- The use of segregation in prisons has increased in the past few years. In 1999/2000 there were 238 documented admissions into segregation, and in 2001/2002 there were 418 documented admissions, whereas in 2006/2007, the number rose to 453.⁸
- The cost of community-based options such as probation, bail supervision and community supervision work orders range from \$5 to \$25 per day.⁹
- The cost of incarcerating a prisoner in an Ontario provincial jail was \$141.78 per day in 2003-04.¹⁰
- Women with mental health issues, especially those who self-harm often have great difficulty adjusting to prison and are consequently more likely to be kept in the most isolated and segregated living conditions.¹¹
- More than two thirds (71%) of the women imprisoned in isolated and segregated conditions and labeled as maximum security prisoners have histories of attempting suicide compared with 21% of men classified as maximum security prisoners.¹²
- In 2002-2003, when the number of women in federal custody was 376, Corrections logged 265 women admissions to administrative segregation, of which 83 were for a period of more than 10 days.¹³
- According to the Ontario Parole and Earned Release Board, parole grants decreased from 3,833 in 1993-1994 to 361 in 2002-2003. The decline of provincial parole in Ontario brings significant human, social, and economic costs considering the damaging effect of imprisonment on

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Statistics Canada. *Adult Correctional Services in Canada, 2003/2004*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2004 at 48.

⁸ The Correctional Investigator Canada. *Annual Report of the Correctional Investigator of Canada 2006- 2007*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2007 at 37.

⁹ "Statistics for 2004/2005." *Prison Justice*, July 2007. On line: www.prisonjustice.ca

¹⁰ Statistics Canada. *Adult Correctional Services in Canada, 2003/04*. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2005 at 21.

¹¹ Canadian Human Rights Commission. *Protecting Their Rights A Systematic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*. Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2004.

¹² Blanchette, K. and L. Motiuk, *Maximum-Security Female and Male Federal Offenders[sic]: A Comparison*. Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada, 1997.

¹³ Canadian Human Rights Commission. *Protecting Their Rights A Systematic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*. Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2004.

individuals, the lack of community support and supervision to assist community integration and minimize recidivism, and the expensive cost of keeping people in prisons.¹⁴

- Many women in prison are mothers, the majority of whom were sole-support parents before prison. When a mother is incarcerated, her children can also face emotional and psychological trauma from the separation. Too often they end up in child welfare systems that do not have adequate resources to fully address their needs,¹⁵ exacting further human, social and economic costs on the children and their communities.¹⁶

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¹⁴ The John Howard Society of Ontario. *Fact Sheet – Provincial Parole in Ontario: The Case for Renewal*. Toronto: John Howard Society, 2004.

¹⁵ Levy-Pounds, Nekima. "From the Frying Pan into the Fire: How Poor Women of Color and Children are Affected by Sentencing Guidelines and Mandatory Minimums." *Santa Clara Law Review*, 2007, v.47 at 288.

¹⁶ Ibid at 291.

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