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Privatizing prisons: Assessing the claims

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Privatizing prisons: Assessing the claims

by

James Michael Roller

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: Political Science

Program of Study Committee:
Alex Tuckness, Major Professor
Kelly Shaw
Andrew Hochstetler

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2016

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my lovely wife Angela, AKA “Superstar”, and my two beautiful daughters Madison and Anneliese. For putting up with me being away and gone either for obligations committed to the Iowa Army National Guard, the Iowa Department of Corrections, and the time committed and dedicated toward my continuing education over the last few years. I sincerely appreciate you for always being there for me and the support you provided while I strived to achieve academic, military, and career progression. During my life, having you all alongside me and always waiting at the end of each of my journeys motivates me to succeed. I have been blessed to have you all in my life. I love you and thank you.

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NOMENCLATURE

ACA	American Corrections Association
AFSCME	American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
BJS	Bureau of Justice Statistics
BOP	Bureau of Prisons
CBC	Community Based Corrections
CCA	Corrections Corporation of America
CCRAA	College Cost Reduction and Access Act
DAS	Department of Administrative Services
DOC	Department of Corrections
DRAOR	Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender
ESP	Eastern State Penitentiary
FY	Fiscal Year
HMO	Health Maintenance Organization
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Services
IPERS	Iowa Public Employee Retirement System
ISP	Iowa State Penitentiary
NEO	New Employee Orientation
OJT	On-the-Job Training
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration
PREA	Prison Rape Elimination Act
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures

SOTP	Sex Offender Treatment Program
STP	Security Threat Groups
WCC	Wackenhut Corrections Corporation

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ABSTRACT

Private prison companies simply cannot prove that they are better than the public prison sector. This research was conducted to help determine why government agencies should take in consideration the advantages and disadvantages of contracting private companies to manage and/or provide facilities to incarcerate inmates. The research identifies that the private sector's promises of better recidivism rates, lower cost of operations, and staff's training, pay, and benefits equal to the public prison system are not significant enough to weigh in favor of contracting with the private companies. Statistical data, studies, peer reviewed sources, and journals regarding correctional centers being operated by either the public or private sector were reviewed and compared. The findings indicate inconclusive evidence regarding claims of private prisons being significantly more efficient and effective than local, state, and federally operated correctional centers.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many of our public institutions began to see major change and reform after the American Revolutionary War. Government, education, and medical institutions were revolutionized for the betterment of our modern western society through the principles of Enlightenment. Another public institution that developed from this time frame was the penal

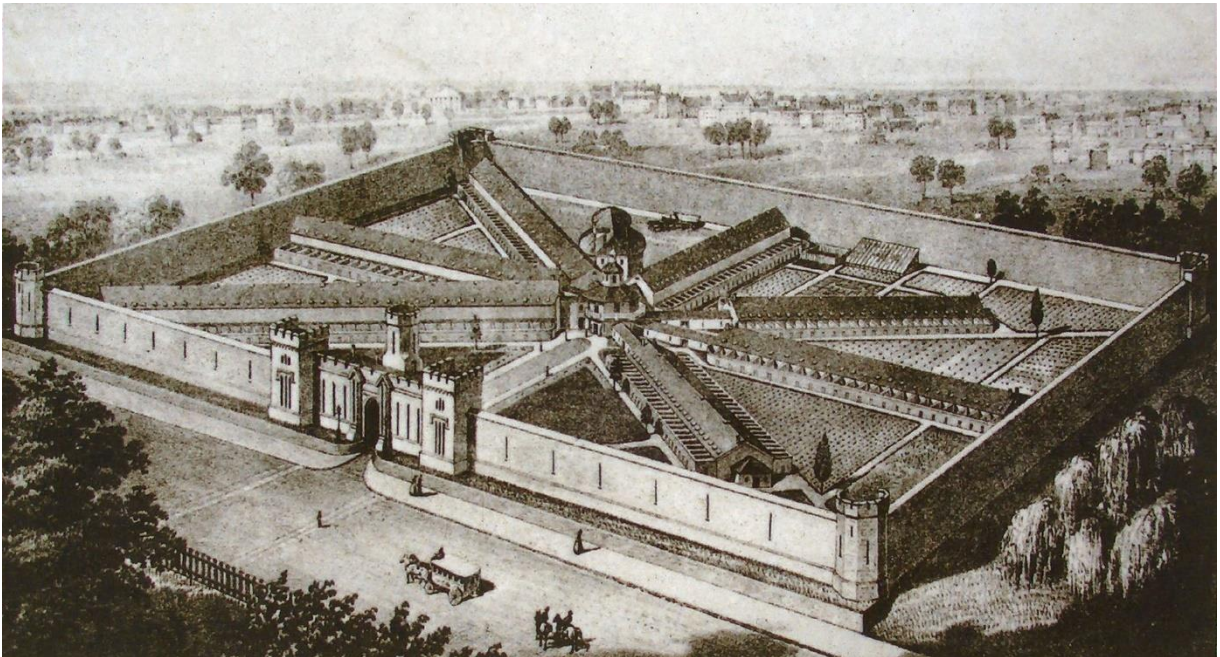


Figure 1. Early sketch of Eastern State Penitentiary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1855. (The State Penitentiary for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Lithograph by P.S: Duval and Co., 1855.)

system. As a result years later, the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was opened becoming the first modern prison in operation in 1829. It was believed that prisoners would be incarcerated and forced to keep silent and isolated so that they had time to think about the crime they had committed. The philosophy was to produce regret, guilt, and penitence in the criminal's heart and mind. Unlike many of the detention facilities that

2existed during this time where physical punishment and abuse by guards was common, the ESP's vision offered reform and changing criminal thinking. Today, the concept would be considered a "treatment" program such as Substance Abuse, Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP), and/or Thinking for a Change programs that currently are offered to offenders in American prisons, including Iowa, for self-development and a successful reentry into society. This rehabilitation mission distinguished it from predecessors.

Prison. The "Pen", the "Big House", "Sent up the river" are maybe some more familiar terms and phrases commonly associated with prison. People all have their own idea of prison. If an individual works, or has worked, in the Department of Corrections (state government) or Bureau of Prisons (federal government), or maybe if a person was or is incarcerated in a correctional facility, they realize that misperceptions of prison are built off of movies like "Escape from Alcatraz", "Shawshank Redemption", and "The Green Mile". MSNBC's documentary series "Lockup", and fictional TV series such as "Oz" and "Orange is the New Black", have left a glamorized and inaccurate impression on the general public's ideology of prison life. Usually, thoughts quickly swing to an unpleasant place where criminals go do "hard time" and they "throw away the key". Some think that prison is a place where people are sent to be punished and criminal behavior is corrected by solitary confinement, reading the Bible, or a prison guard's night stick. Images of murderers, rapists, tattooed gang members, "shanks" (homemade knives), striped black and white or orange



Figure 2. Iowa State Penitentiary.

jumpsuits for offender attire, guards, towers, capital punishment, riots, isolation, steel bars, restraints, and razor wire are some of the things that naturally form in people's minds when referencing what prison looks like. One thing which is certain is that the general public's collective perception of prison sees as being a bad place. People usually don't take in consideration if it is a public or private operated facility when assuming it is a dangerous place to work or reside in. But is there a difference between public and private prisons? Is one more dangerous than the other? Is one better than the other? Is there a level of efficiency and effectiveness that can be compared across the two approaches to staffing and managing these institutions?

Some of the ideas forming the general public about prison life is true. Some of it is not true. Much of it is embellished, glamorized, and/or exaggerated. But the fact is prison

serves several purposes, including keeping offenders from society so they don't break more laws, a place to go as punishment for crimes against society, a deterrence for the general population to not commit crime, and correcting behavior and thinking of offenders who are incarcerated so that they do not return to prison. A prison houses inmates and takes care of their needs. Correctional facilities are their own community within a secure perimeter. It is a highly structured community where prisoners are fed, exercised, showered, clothed, and provided with medical services. Prison professions can include a variety of careers including correctional officers, correctional counselors, psychologists, trades leaders, and registered nurses. A correctional officer provides security in housing units, towers, dining facility, or the "yard" (outside/inside recreation areas) and protects the public. Meanwhile, the correctional counselor is involved in the treatment portion in prisons which can include managing legal and personal issues. Like any job, a career in corrections has a common theme regardless of the local, state, and federal level. Staffing personnel and management organizations affect the environment and outcomes. The pay, benefits, and retirement usually attract potential candidates for staff and affect the retention rate of employees. There are quality leaders in prison administrations and the labor union, and there are some not so quality leaders. There is quality staff, and not so good staff. There is good training, and not so good training. There are positive outcomes encountered with the offender population in prison, and negative experiences. Some offenders discharge and never come back, and others return for another visit. All these different elements and outcomes exist in the corrections profession and the quality and quantity of them reflects the efficiency and effectiveness of facility operations.

Iowa State Penitentiary, which currently houses just over 700 offenders, is one of the nine prisons in Iowa which contributes its population to the over 8,000 offenders incarcerated in the IDOC, according to their website. Those 8,000 prisoners from Iowa are a small portion of the overall headcount incarcerated in America. The United States has the most number of prisons of any developed country in the world, the highest imprisonment rate, and the largest number of individuals incarcerated of any other nation at the end of 2014.

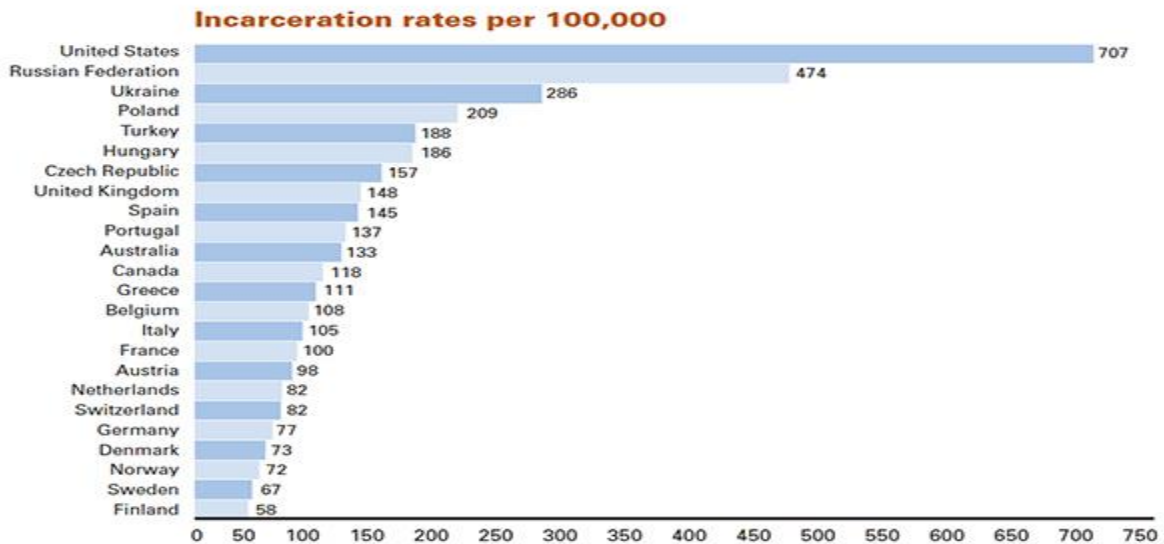


Figure 3. Chart comparing countries incarceration rates per 100,000 in 2014.

Approximately 4,575 correctional facilities (federal, state, local, and private) in the country (Lennard, 2012). 471 people per 100,000 residents of all ages and 612 people per 100,000 residents age 18 and over were imprisoned (BJS, 2015). State and federal correctional facilities held an estimated 1,561,500 prisoners in custody in 2014. Of that, 8% of the prison population was held by private ran prisons, and local jails held an additional 5% of prisoners. Below, Figure 4, shows us the percent of prisoners per state imprisoned in private prisons in the U.S.



Figure 4. Percent of prisoners that are incarcerated in private operated prisons in the U.S. (Congressional Research Service).

There is another side of corrections besides the public sector that exists in our country. The private prison system has taken a foothold alongside the government operated facilities in the United States. Historically, the local, state, and federal governments have contracted out to private businesses for certain necessary services in support of operations including security, dietary, medical care, educational training, rehabilitation, treatment, IT (informational technology), delivery, laundry, and janitorial. Privatization of prisons has become a growing industry in America that spawned in the 1980's due to the over population of prisons in the U.S., as a result from longer sentences from the War on Drugs. At yearend 2014, seven states housed more than 20% of their inmate population in private facilities.

Approximately 131,300 offenders were held by private facilities in 30 states and the federal system, or BOP. From 69,000 prisoners in 1999 to 131,000 in 2014, the size of the private prison population has grown 90% since 1999. The latest reason for the private boom has been a result of the growing area in immigration detention.

Private prisons are for-profit prisons that imprison convicted felons through both state and federal government contracts. There are three primary reasons for the use of contract private prisons and that is for the following: to generate cost savings, avoid large capital expenditures, and to relieve overcrowding. The private prison sector is paid a monthly rate or per diem for each offender incarcerated by a government agency. The private prison sector exists as a business and to make a profit. The CCA and the GEO Group, Inc. are two of the largest corporations among the private prison companies that are prominent in our country. These businesses own facilities that house inmates in their own prisons and also provide private management in local, state, and federal owned facilities. The private management in public institutions can be involved in the day-to-day operations, treatment plans, and/or rehabilitation programs.

Incorporated and founded in January of 1983, the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) that year in November entered the scene when they received a private contract with U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) facility in Texas. The CCA then later in January of 1984 assumed management of its first facility, Tall Trees, a 63-bed facility in Shelby County, Tennessee. Later that same year in April, the CCA open Houston Processing Center, located in Houston, Texas. It is the first detention facility

in the world that was designed by a corrections company. As of December 31, 2014, the CCA's nationwide system of corrections centers includes over 63 federal and local facilities which are located in 19 states in the U.S. and the District of Columbia with approximately a capacity of 84,500.

The GEO Group, Inc., introduced itself in 1984 initially as the Wackenhut Corrections Corporation (WCC). It later evolved into the GEO Group, Inc., in 1994 when it entered the international market. Currently, GEO operates 105 facilities throughout the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and areas of South America. The two major private prison companies do not label themselves as correctional facilities but as a real estate investment trust, or REIT. REITs are companies that own, and most of the time operate, an income-producing real estate. Both the CCA and GEO stocks are traded publicly, and REITs provide a way for investors to earn a share of the income. This reinforcing the fact that these companies primary purpose is to make a profit for shareholders. Both companies made over \$1.6 billion each in annual sales/revenue in 2014. The GEO and CCA also employ over 35,000 people combined in the United States and abroad.

Privatization of prisons has grown tremendously fast since the 1980's due to the inmate population in the United States rapidly growing. Local, state, and federal governments are giving the private prison industry power to operate, control, and maintain facilities to house offenders for a few reasons. First, one of the government objectives for contracting to privatized prisons is to help reduce the overcrowding in our current public prison system. There are approximately 1,561,500 prisoners in the United States, mostly all

federal and state correctional facilities are over capacity. Also, operational cost savings is another major reason why the public prison sector considers going into a partnership with the privatization concept. It is believed that the private sector has less “red tape” which can make funding allocations easier. The idea exists that private prisons can buy bulk products at the best prices, unlike with government ran facilities that are normally in strict contracts. There is the claim, too, that it is cheaper per year to house an inmate in private persons as opposed to a public institution. The public sector pays more than the private sector prison system, and is argued that the private prisons can hire and fire staff to reduce overtime costs. If money is the main focus of privatized prisons, where do the cuts come from? If the emphasis is building its value on the stock market, what areas take less emphasis or even neglect? Are the recidivism rates a reflection of cutting costs of inmate treatment and programming? What about staff’s training, pay and benefits? The major cost for any business is its employees. A closer look at these claims through the research of existing information and literature reviews pertaining to these subjects and compare. Research discussed will include data collected from several state, federal, and private prisons throughout the nation.

Research Question

The question discussed will be *“Is there convincing evidence that the private prison system provides higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness compared to the public sector regarding recidivism rates, cost of operations, and the pay, benefits, and training it offers to its employees?”* What strong evidence is given that convinces public departments in corrections to go private over public? Considering that the private prison sector’s main

objective is a for-profit business, the argument against privatization is that their intent cannot be in the best interest of its staff, offenders, or the community but only for the shareholders. It is argued that the private prison sector has a less secure environment with a higher rate of staff assaults and escapes. Also, it is implied that employee wages, benefits and inmate services are where cost cuts happen. It is also claimed that private prisons don't promote time cuts with the underlying intent to retain its inmate population. The longer an offender is locked up in a private prison the more monthly per diem a private facility gets paid. Yet, there are plenty of proponents to the privatization of prisons. Claims of cost savings are appealing enough to many local, state, and federal correctional facilities that they have opted the private route. Supporters of the public sector believe the government is obligated to provide treatment and rehabilitation with incentives, which include early release upon meeting a certain criteria and obligations. Proponents of the public prison sector, along with the public's presumption that public prisons are better, argue that the obligations and responsibilities required by government operated prisons are to maintain custody of inmates, protect and serve the public, and focus on a successful reentry for inmates back into society. Many people have higher expectations of public prisons to keep the recidivism rates down, maintain lower costs of operations, and take care of their employees better than private prisons. These are some of the exact expectations for private prisons contracted with government agencies. Yet, some of the general public's presumption is that the public sector is better and its interest, morally and ethically, is more for the betterment of the community remains a key factor supporting views against the privatization of prisons. One reason why people might have the presumption that public prisons are better is that their tax dollars fund the corrections department. People want to believe and trust that a public department service

funded by their tax money is required to provide a security blanket for them over education, public safety, fire department, roads, or corrections. Also, a reason why people might presume public prisons are better if they believe that the state government's main objective is protecting the public, providing adequate training, salary and benefits for employees, and ensuring inmates receive rehabilitation and treatment before released back into society.

Another reason why people may also have the presumption that public prisons are better than for-profit private prisons is if they believe that the private sector's primary focus is not the public's interest, but only for its selfish monetary gains. Certain risks should be considered when contracting with private prisons. Recidivism rates, quality of life, cost of operations, escape rates, percent of staff assaults, and employee pay, benefits, and training are areas of interest that should be closer researched prior to contracting with the private sector.

The question is does the privatization of prisons offer enough proof of significant levels of efficiency and effectiveness that exceeds those of the public prisons for governments to consider privatizing facilities? Key factors will be discussed to prove that the private prison sector does not provide enough proof of significant levels of efficiency and effectiveness that make them more favorable than public prisons. The public presumption that public prisons are better than private prisons might be overridden if there were strong evidence that private prison were better in terms of recidivism rates, cost of operations, and employee training, salary, and benefits. The public's presumption that public is better than private will not be evaluated. Evidence supporting private prisons being better in terms of recidivism rates, cost of operations, employee's pay and benefits, and the employee training will be evaluated. The results of the research should conclude with enough convincing

evidence for local, state, and federal departments to think hard before considering to choose to contract with private prisons.

Methodology

The methodology utilized to research the findings of recidivism rates, cost of operations, and employee pay, benefits, and training of public and private prisons will be an analysis of the literature and data pertaining to the topic discussed. Information from statistical data, studies, and journals will be researched and the findings compared to conclude with a better understanding of what evidence the private prison system has to prove that it is more efficient and effective than the public prison system regarding recidivism rates, cost of operations, and staff's pay, benefits, and training. Additionally, information derived from the Corrections Corporation of America, GEO Group, and Iowa Department of Corrections websites provided valuable data and literature to support the pros and cons of the public and private prison sectors.

CHAPTER II

RECIDIVISM RATES

When an individual has broken the law and gets caught, they sometimes go to jail. If the criminal offense is severe enough, they can be convicted of a felony by the court of law. That convicted felon can get fined and/or sentenced to prison by a judge. In the event that they go to prison for their punishment, the convicted felon is transported to a correctional facility, becomes a prisoner, and serves their length of time in prison that was handed down to them by the courts. They also lose many of their freedoms, rights and liberties that they once had as a civilian. While in prison, and when discharged, the convicted felon loses the right to vote, is not allowed to possess a firearm, is disqualified from jury service for seven years, and could lose a professional license or permit. While incarcerated, rehabilitation and treatment programs are offered, in some cases mandated for earlier release, to correct one's criminal thinking, decision making, and negative behavior patterns. Hopefully through rehabilitation and deterrence, the offender's judgment and reasoning change to avoid future criminal behavior in society. The goal and success of the correctional institution is to see the inmate leave prison and not return. The act of relapsing back to criminal acts that result in getting rearrested and/or returning to jail/prison is called recidivism. The recidivism rate is measured in all states, and the federal level, as evidence to determine the statistical success of the DOC and BOP's inmate programs/services offered in their correctional facilities.

The question is why do some states have higher recidivism rates than others? Do states with more or less privatized corrections have a higher or lower recidivism rates than

states that operate with less or no private prisons? Do the for-profit prisons put the same emphasis on rehabilitation and treatment as do the programs provided in the public sector prison system? Basically, we will review several studies conducted in a few states and statistical data to determine if states with a higher percent of private prisons have a higher recidivism rate than states with higher percent of public run facilities. Also, public and private facilities' rehabilitation and treatment programs will be discussed and reviewed to help determine if recidivism rates compared between the two entities are influenced from the availability and quality of such programs provided for offenders. Examples of these programs and services, which are offered in the Iowa DOC, include treatment for substance abuse, sex offenders, criminal thinking, anger management, alcohol abuse, and also workshops to learn skills that will help offenders become productive members of society upon reentry into our communities. It is hopeful they positively influence recidivism.



Figure 5. Illustration by J.D. Crowe depicting recidivism in the Department of Corrections.

Any study of recidivism is fraught with peril. There have been only a handful of studies conducted comparing recidivism rates in general between states with private prisons versus states without or comparing recidivism directly from private and public institutions. States measure recidivism differently and over longer or shorter periods of time. Recidivism rates are vastly different depending on the statistical data being utilized. For example, recidivism is variably measured when a released inmate re-enters the prison system, when an arrest is made, when a conviction is obtained, when a new crime was committed or when a technical violation was committed. Furthermore, states vary drastically on enforcement of technical violations.

Analysis is further complicated due to the limited study groups available and the types of prisons that private correctional firms typically operate. For example, as of 2008, only 8% of all U.S. prisoners were placed in privately operated prisons, which were also typically low-to-medium security prisons (Carson, 2014). A 2007 study conducted by M. Keith Chen found that recidivism rates were lower in general among low-to-medium security prisons than higher levels of security prisons (Chen, 2007). In this regard, one can conclude in terms of a direct comparison that private prisons have an unfair advantage over public institutions in that they operate types of prisons that are more conducive to lower recidivism rates.

Finally, direct comparison between private and public prison recidivism is hampered by the mobility of the individual prisoners themselves. In states that operate private prisons, many prisoners spent time in *both* private and public facilities. In these cases, the researcher

has to determine from which institution to classify the prisoner. To classify the prisoner solely from the release prison may distort the data. For example, if a prisoner spent five years in a public facility, was transferred to a private facility for the last three months, is released from the private facility and commits no crime in the next three years, which prison receives the credit for the prisoner's eventual changed societal behavior? Did the released prisoner not recidivate due to the treatment received from the prison in which he spent the most time or from the one in which he was released? A study conducted by William D. Bales et al in 2005 attempted to mitigate prison mobility by running six different regression models based upon time served in each prison system.

Advocates and opponents of lower private recidivism rates can point to data to augment their claims. A 2012 BJS study of private prison operations found that states vary greatly in the percentage of incarcerated persons in private v. public facilities. Thirty-one states had at least some prisoners housed in private facilities and these states varied from a high of 45.8% in private facilities to a half dozen states with less than 1%. There are large demographic differences between states that might confuse state to state comparisons.

Comparing this data with a 2011 Pew Center on the States study of state-by-state recidivism, one can extrapolate data comparing states with a high percentage of private prison inmates with the state's recidivism rate. Overall, the Pew Center study determined the recidivism rate among the 33 states that reported data from both a 1999-2002 and a 2004-2007 stood at 43.3% (Pew, 2011).

There were nine states that had a private prison population of more than 20% of the state's overall prison population, six of which reported data for the 2004-2007 study group (Alaska, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico and Oklahoma). These six states had a cumulative recidivism rate of 39.02%, more than four basis points below the national average. Fifteen states that had either no private prisons or a private prison population of less than 1% of the state's overall prison population also reported data to the Pew Center study for the years 2004-2007. These states had a cumulative recidivism rate slightly higher than the national average at 44.85%. So comparing the BJS report with the Pew Center study, one can observe that states with a high percentage of private prisoners (20% or more) had a recidivism rate 5.83% lower than states that had a low or no private prison population (less than 1%).

However, it should be noted that the overall lower private prison population makes a direct comparison statistically difficult. The six states with a high percentage of private prisoners released 35,730 prisoners during the time period with 13,942 of those recidivating within three years. The states with a lower private prison population released a much higher 135,142 during the same period with 60,605 recidivating within three years (Pew, 2011).

But opponents of the lower private prison recidivism rate theory can point to a different study to augment their position. A 2014 study conducted by the Council of State Governments Justice Center looked at states that had significantly lowered recidivism rates between from 2005 to 2012. Of the nine states that made the cut, seven had private prison populations of less than 1.6%. Only Georgia (9.7% private population) and Colorado (22.7%)

were the outliers. Overall, these nine states had a private prison population average of just 4.3%, about half of the national average. Of these nine, Colorado had the least change in its recidivism rate with a decline of 5.8% (CSGJC, 2014).

If one were to remove Colorado from the study group, the remaining eight states had a public prison population of 98.5% of total state prisoners and lowered their collective average recidivism rate by 10.21%. Unlike the Pew Center and BJS reports, this data would indicate that states with a lower percentage of private prison populations were more effective in reducing overall recidivism rates.

The most extensive study to make a direct private v. public prison recidivism rate comparison may be the 2005 Florida study by Bales et al. To compensate for prisoner mobility between systems, this group created six different models (Bales et al, 2005). In model A1, they observed inmates released directly from private facilities v. those released from public facilities. In model A2, they observed inmates released directly from private facilities v. those released from public facilities but had spent at least six months in the opposite facility from which they were released. In model B1, they compared inmate recidivism from those that had spent time only at private facilities v. those that had spent time only at public facilities. Models B2 and B3 were similar to model B1 with the caveat that an inmate had to have spent only 75% of time served or 12 months at one type of facility comparing that group to those who spent 75% of time served or 12 months at the other type. Finally, model C1 compared inmates that had spent at least 12 months at a private facility v. those that had spent less than 12 months at a private facility (Bales et al, 2005).

Though exhaustive, this study provided no definitive proof for either the advocates or opponents for the theory that private prisons produce lower recidivism rates. The 18-month recidivism rate among all six regression models was nearly identical with a range variance of 1.8%. Recidivism rates did begin to vary slightly in the longer time period models. For example, adult males from private facilities had slightly higher re-offense rates in four (A1, B1, B2, B3) of the regression models at the three year and five year studies with the remaining two models remaining virtually identical. However, it is important to note that none of variance rates were statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level (Bales et al, 2005).

According to a 2013 study on the effects of private prison confinement on offender recidivism conducted by Grant Duwe and Valerie Clark of the Minnesota prison system, they concluded that there have been only five significant studies comparing recidivism rates among private and public prisons. Other than a cost analysis on private vs. public recidivism conducted in Arizona, all of these studies – including Bales et al – were conducted in Florida and two of them utilized the same data sets (Duwe and Clark 2013).

Though the study conducted by Bales et al proved to be inconclusive, studies by Lanza-Kaduce et al (1999) and Lanza-Kaduce and Maggard two years later suggested that prisoners released from private facilities had a lower risk of recidivism than those released from public facilities. It should be noted, that the authors of these studies used a modest sample size of approximately 200 prisoners (Duwe and Clark, 2013).

Duwe and Clark used a much larger sample group of 1,766 prisoners who spent some time in a private prison operated by Corrections Corporation of America from a comparison group that spent all of its sentence time in public facilities. To compensate for the time an individual prisoner spent in the public vs. private facility, the authors created private prison time proportion. It should also be noted that the private prison excluded women and men over the age of 60, two groups that typically have lower recidivism rates regardless of the prison in which they confinement is served. The authors of this study, therefore, attempted to create a comparison group of 1,766 prisoners from the 7,769 who spent their entire confinement in state facilities (Duwe and Clark, 2013). Finally, Duwe and Clark measured recidivism in four categories: re-arrest, reconviction, new offense re-incarceration and technical violation revocation.

The recidivism rates were higher from the 1,766 that spent time in private facilities than the modified 1,766 public facility comparison group in all four categories with re-arrest and reconviction being the two categories with the highest disparity. Prisoners who spent time in private facilities were 12% more likely to face a re-arrest and 20% more likely to face a reconviction than the similar group who spent their entire time in a state facility. But muddying the waters of this study is the fact that the overall public comparison pool of 7,769 was significantly more likely to recidivate in all four categories than either of the smaller 1,766 private facility and similar prisoner type from the public facility groups. For example, the re-arrest rate among those that spent time in private facilities was 46.5% while the similar group from the public facility was re-arrested just 41.4% of the time. However, the overall public comparison pool had a re-arrest rate of 54.5% (Duwe and Clark, 2013). In all, the

Duwe and Clark study ran 20 Cox regression models, finding that private prisons had a higher recidivism risk in all 20 models, with eight significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Regardless of the significance of any one of the regression models, the authors of this study argue that the cost-benefit analysis of utilizing private prisons specifically to lower recidivism rates should not be a consideration of policy makers. They point out that the daily per diem rate of both the private facility and state facility was roughly the same at \$65 per day. To this end, the authors argue, the notion advocated by proponents of private facilities that even if recidivism rates are basically the same between private and public facilities, private facilities can do so at lower costs to the state is nullified.

Another approach to studying the impact of private vs. public recidivism rates may be to look at states who take a public facility only approach to determine if they are able to lower recidivism rates. A 2012 study determined that nine states had no prisoners in private facilities during the entirety of 1999-2010 (Mason, 2012), including Iowa.

In a 2014 report prepared by the Iowa Department of Corrections, findings indicated that the overall return to prison rate among Iowa prisoners declined five consecutive years from 2008-2013. From a 2008 high of 35.6% to a 2013 low of 30.3%, the overall recidivism rate dropped nearly 15 basis points (Prell, 2014). A key driver of the lower recidivism rate was the aging of the Iowa prison population. In 2007, just 2% of the prison population was 55 and older while 10% of the prison population was in the 45-54 age range. By 2013, these two demographics accounted for 21% of the prison population rather than 12% six years

earlier. This is important to note because recidivism rates are lower among those 45 and older (roughly 23%) than those 44 and younger (32%).

Prell did express concern in the 2014 report for Fiscal Year 2013 that Iowa's streak of lowering recidivism would end soon. The author pointed to the combination of factors of the unusual number of older prisoners being released back into the general population, a small percentage of higher recidivism risk sex offenders being released during the reporting period and a decrease in the proportion of offenders discharging their sentences as all contributing to the six year decline in overall recidivism rates. Concern was voiced that once these factors reached equilibrium, rates may continue to rise again (Prell, 2014).

However, a research in brief conducted by the Iowa Department of Corrections saw the recidivism rate decline for a sixth consecutive year in 2014, dropping to 29.7%. The report further states that the six year decline in recidivism rates was significant at the 99% level (Iowa Department of Corrections, 2014).

Many factors affect a state's or individual prison's recidivism rates, be it private or public. Age of the prisoner, original crime committed, type of prison in which the inmate is incarcerated, length of prison term, ethnicities, employment market in the state the prisoner is released, enforcement of technical violations, length of parole to name just a few. To date, isolating the private v. public variable has been difficult. A refining of methodology is needed in further studies for researchers to make more definitive conclusions and policy makers to reach more informed decisions.

However, on a broad level, we can conclude that there is at least some evidence in the BJS and Pew Center reports that suggests states with a higher proportion of prisoners in private facilities have a slightly lower rate of recidivism. We can also conclude from the CSGJC study that in recent years, though, that states that have made the most progress in reducing recidivism rates are states with little to no private prisoners. Finally, we can conclude that in direct private v. public facilities comparison as in the Bales et al study, that there is no statistical significance in the difference between recidivism rates of either private or public institutions.

Until further and more refined studies can be conducted, the question is does it really matter? In response essays to the Bales et al study, Gerald G. Gaes and Charles W. Thomas came to different conclusions. Gaes argues that “we may eventually find that of all the causes of recidivism, what happens inside prison contributes only a small proportion to the outcome. However, from a public policy perspective, we should continue to hold prison officials accountable for that fraction . . .” (Gaes, 2005). He further argues that since lower recidivism was a promise and a premise for the use of private prison firms, even a negligible outcome should be considered in the use of private facilities in the future (Gaes, 2005).

Thomas, on the other hand, argues that recidivism rates of those released from private prisons compared to those released from public prisons are in many ways irrelevant in drawing conclusions about privatization. To be clear on Thomas’ position on the value of recidivism rates in evaluating private v. public institutions, it should be noted that he further

argues that recidivism rates are not an effective, even a “nonsensical” way, to evaluate correctional facilities in general – be it private or public – for precisely some of the reasons I have raised earlier, namely the multitude of variables that affect recidivism in which correctional facilities have little to no control (Thomas, 2005).

What can be said about recidivism rates definitively, in both private and public facilities, is that the longer a former inmate is able to adjust to a return to society without recidivating the more likely they will not return to prison at all. A 2014 U.S. Department of Justice report conducted by the BJS, found that nearly 20% of prisoners returned to prison within six months of release. From 6-to-18 months, another 20% of former prisoners returned to prison and from 18-to-36 months an additional 10% of former prisoners returned to prison. However, beginning at around 42 months, recidivism rates nearly flat-lined to less than 5% thereafter (Durose et al, 2014). Both prison officials and policy makers may be more effective in reducing recidivism rates by focusing policy decisions on the crucial three-year period from release from either type of prison more so than focusing on the relative benefits that private prisons may or may not have on reducing recidivism rates.

The research concludes that there is no significant proof that private prisons are more effective and efficient than public ran prisons in regards to recidivism rates. The evidence of recidivism rates being higher or lower in public or private prisons seems to be a tough debate. There seems to be no significant statistical data or literature that supports a higher level of performance resulting in lower recidivism rates when comparing the public and private sectors. There is no consistency for weighing in the favor of private prisons, or

public prisons for that matter, which would help governmental departments in corrections sway one way or another in deciding to privatize or remain public.

CHAPTER III

COST OF OPERATIONS COMPARISON

The argument of private versus public sector prisons is an ongoing argument. Which is better? Which is more cost effective? This chapter will look at the total costs and revenue of the Corrections Corporation of America, Geo Group, and the Iowa Department of Corrections to determine if the private sector is the better choice for agencies, as opposed to publicly operated. The discussion will also look at the effects of having a prison system that is for-profit versus a prison system operated by the state. Many argue that since private prisons are a business, they are not utilizing all the funds they make to better their facilities, employees, or the inmates in those facilities, but instead are just lining their investor's pockets, which is the main objective for any business.

Before the two main privately owned prisons and their profits are discussed, some statistics need to be reviewed. In 2006, only seven percent of the 1.5 million prisoners of the United States were held in privately owned prisons, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The argument of which is more cost effective is tricky. Private and public sector prison costs are much different because one is for-profit and the other is managed from a budget. The National Institute of Justice assembled researchers and prison officials to discuss the issue of which was more cost effective. The studies that followed are known as the Taft studies. According to an article by the National Institute of Justice, the following lessons were learned in this matter:

- Cost comparisons are deceptively complex, and great care should be taken when comparing the costs of privately and publicly operated prisons.
- Special care should be given to an analysis of overhead costs.
- A uniform method of comparing publicly and privately operated prisons on the basis of audits should be developed.
- Quantitative measures of prison performance, such as serious misconduct and drug use, should be incorporated in any analysis.
- Future analytical methods could allow simultaneous cost and quality comparisons.

The table below shows the average costs per inmate over a three year span of three different public ran prisons compared to the private prison known as Taft. The research shows that the private sector prison was cheaper per inmate to run than all three publicly operated prisons. The table show two different analysis. The Abt analysis shows much cheaper numbers, about a 14% change, while the BOP shows only a two percent difference. According to the article there were two primary reasons for the significant difference. The first was the way the inmate population was treated and the second was what was actually included in the overhead costs. “With respect to inmate populations, Taft had on average approximately 300 more inmates each year than the three publicly operated prisons throughout the study period. Therefore, the private service provider for Taft benefited from economies of scale that reduced average costs. To adjust for such economies of scale, the BOP researchers made adjustments to the expenditures.” So another question is raised, what should be included in the overhead costs? Prison costs comprise of two types of costs. Direct operations costs, such as staff salaries, inmate food, medical care, and other services and

indirect, or overhead costs, such as regional and central office supervision, computer services, planning, and budget development. The varying data regarding costs when comparing public and private prisons includes many factors that gives research a challenge when attempting to determine which sector is significantly more effective or efficient.

Average Per Diem Costs Per Inmate (in dollars) for FY 1999–2002								
	FY 1999		FY 2000		FY 2001		FY 2002	
	Abt	BOP	Abt	BOP	Abt	BOP	Abt	BOP
Publicly operated prison								
Elkton	\$39.72	\$35.24	\$39.77	\$34.84	\$44.75	\$36.79	\$46.38	\$40.71
Forrest City	39.46	35.29	39.84	35.28	41.65	37.36	43.61	38.87
Yazoo City	41.46	36.84	40.05	34.92	43.65	37.29	42.15	38.87
Privately operated prison								
Taft	33.82	34.42	33.25	33.21	36.88	37.04	38.37	38.62

Figure 6. Average Per Diem Costs Per Inmate FY 1999-2002; Taft Studies.

Corrections Corporation of America, or CCA is one of the largest private sector prisons in the US. CCA is federally funded and since it is a privately owned business, the public can purchase CCA stocks on the stock market. According to marketwatch.com, the stock is currently about \$31.78 a stock. Since shareholders can buy stocks from the CCA, there is an increased interest of how many prisoners are incarcerated in private sector prisons such as CCA and GEO Group, which we will talk about later. The more prisoners in a facility, the more money that company is going to make. Overcrowding in private sector prisons can make a better profit even with the added costs. But, private prisons are subject to the same laws and the government controls their contract. Another downfall of private sector

prisons is that they are indeed a business. They want to keep their costs down and maintain a profit. This leads to overcrowding and could possibly lead to other concerns such as facilities upkeep, employer benefits, and treatment of prisoners. According to an article in smartasset.com, the combined revenue of CCA and Geo Group was \$2.53 billion dollars in 2012.

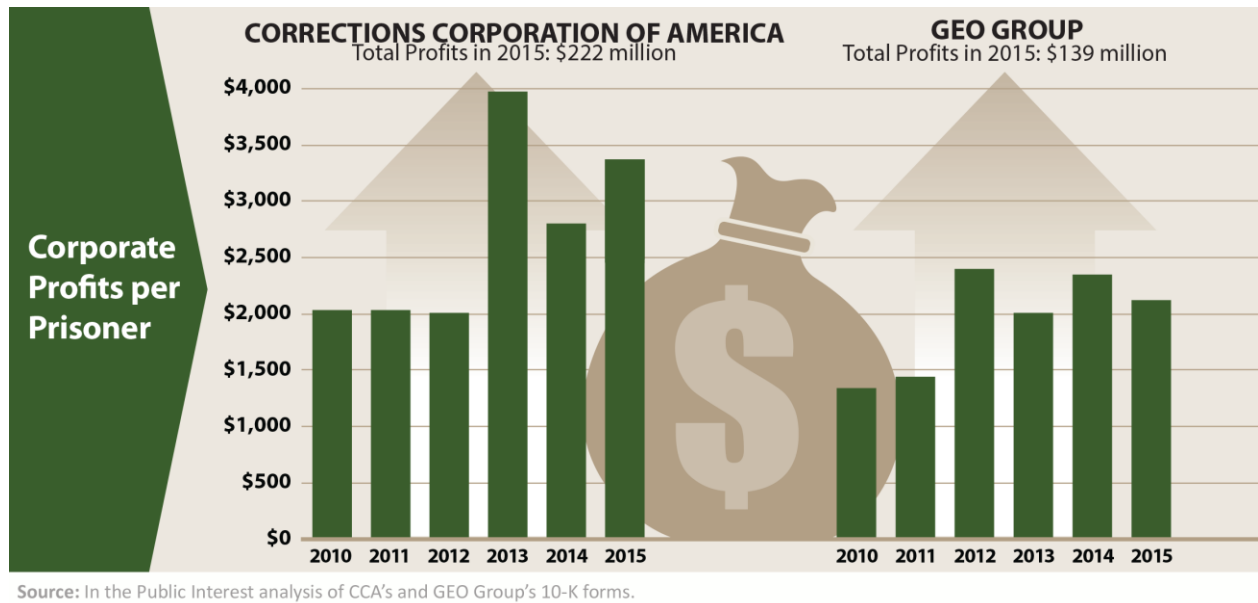


Figure 7. CCA and GEO Group Total Profits for 2010-2015 (Public Interest Group).

In the fiscal year of 2014, the CCA had a total revenue of \$1.65 billion according to the 2014 annual report. According to an article in capitalandmain.com, the CCA made an average profit of \$3,356 for every person incarcerated in their facilities. But what are their expenses? The expenses are broken up into different categories. The first category is the general and administrative expense which totaled \$106.4 million in 2014. This expense includes corporate management salaries and benefits, professional fees, and other administrative expenses. The second category is depreciation and amortization for the new Arizona facility, which Arizona has the option to buy out anytime during the contract of

twenty years. This was an expense of \$113.9 million dollars. The third category is the net interest expense of \$43.1 million. This is just the expense on outstanding loans the company has during the year. The final category is the income tax expense which totaled to about \$6.9 million. The total operating expenses for the 2014 fiscal year were \$1.16 billion. Operating expenses consist of those expenses incurred in the operation and management of correctional and detention facilities.

The Geo Group is also a private sector prison that is more international than the CCA. According to the Geo Group 2014 annual report, U.S. corrections and detentions make up 65% of their profits which comes to \$1.3 billion alone. In 2014 Geo Group had a total revenue of \$1.7 billion and total operating expense of \$1.25 billion. In 2014, their net income was \$143.9 million. In 2015, it was reported that they made about \$2,135 for every individual incarcerated in their facilities a day. The operating expenses include the U.S. corrections and detentions, GEO Care, international services, and facility design and construction. Of the operating expenses, 55.1% was labor and like expenses alone.

Since the Geo Group is publicly traded, individuals may also buy stock from the company. According to marketwatch.com, one Geo Group stock is worth about \$32.87. In 2014, shareholders of Geo Group stock had over \$3 million in total assets. This means that the shareholders have a huge interest in how many inmates are in the private sector prisons, because more inmates equals more money coming in.

COMPARISON OF FIVE-YEAR CUMULATIVE TOTAL RETURN

Comparison of Five-Year Cumulative Total Return* The GEO Group, Inc., the Russell 2000, the S&P 500 Commercial Services and Supplies, and the MSCI U.S. REIT Index*. (Performance through December 31, 2014)

*Total return assumes reinvestment of dividends.

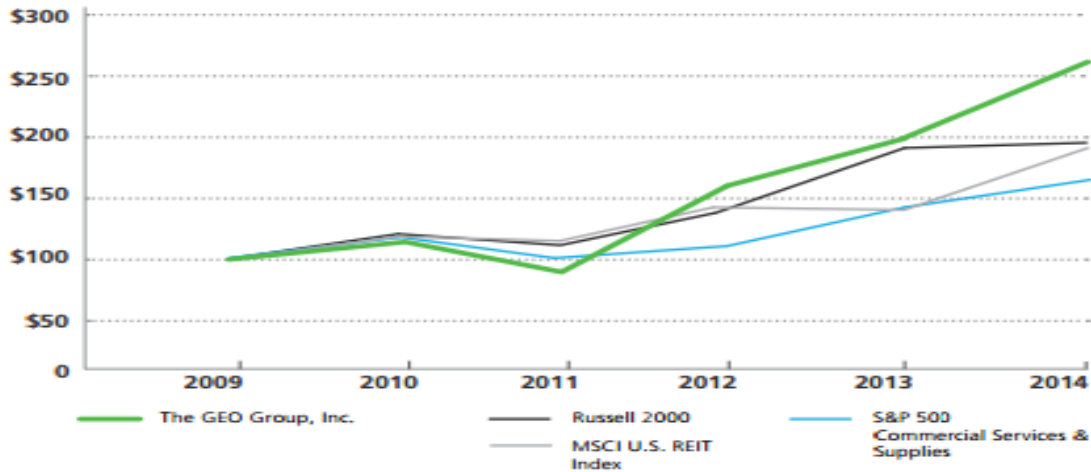


Figure 8. GEO Group, Inc. 2009-2014 Comparison Chart.

According to the Iowa Department of Corrections annual report for the fiscal year of 2014, the Department of Corrections received \$378,695,471 in general fund appropriations for the fiscal year of 2015. Increasing the budget from the 2014 year by \$4,107,547. The increased budget will be used to help fund the reception center at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women at Mitchellville, replace expired funds for the drug courts in the First and Sixth CBC District Departments and help fund the Second, Fifth, and Seventh CBC District Departments. The new budget also includes a decrease of \$641,000 for the elimination of the one-time costs of renovating in Fort Madison and Ottumwa facilities in 2014. In 2014, the Iowa Department of corrections had a total expenses ending balance of \$388,261,938 which was 100.23% of the expected total expenses for that year for both the Community Based Corrections and the Institutions, the Institutions making up a majority of the expenses. The total salaries for the institutions came to a total of \$220,418,747 alone. Food for the prisoners had a total expense of \$11,064,407 and the total utilities were

\$10,021,606. The average stay in an Iowa Prison in the fiscal year of 2014 was 19.5 months with the average costs per day of \$93.22. Which means that to house one inmate in a state prison, it costs on average of \$93.22, that total is up from the 2011 cost, according to an article in radioiowa.com, of \$81.17. The Iowa Department of Corrections used all of their budget allotted in the 2014 fiscal year. Public prisons are state operated and do not make a profit. Unlike private sector prisons, public sector prisons only get what they need to keep their facilities open. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Iowa spent \$80 million less than the national average in the fiscal year 2013.

Wisconsin Spends More on Corrections than Neighboring States

Spending on corrections by state and local governments per state resident in fiscal year 2013.

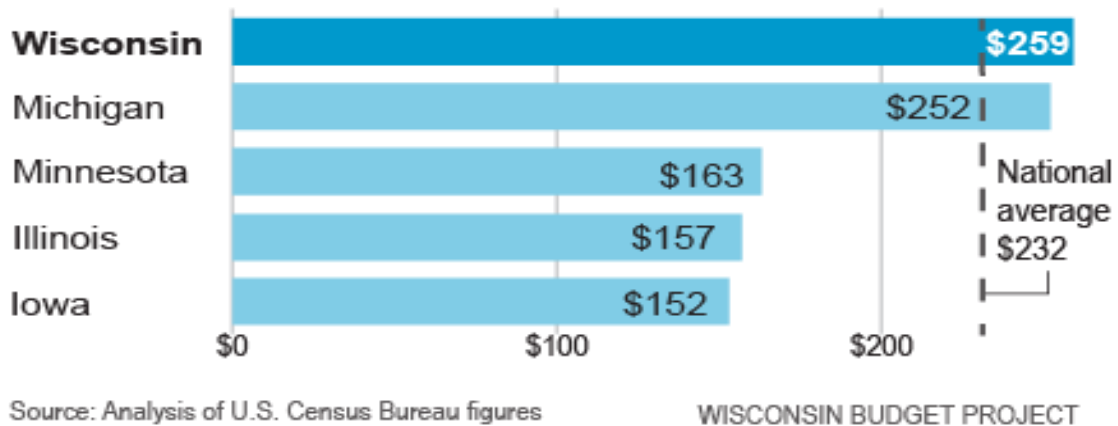


Figure 9. Iowa Corrections FY2013 Comparison Chart (Analysis of US Census Bureau).

In conclusion, there is no significant proof of higher levels of performance in cost of operations when comparing public and private prisons. There are many different variables

when comparing the public and private systems. Inmate populations vary in many different ways that make comparative data analysis difficult. And, facility layout can differ tremendously when comparing public and private prisons. Some correctional facilities vary in size and energy efficiency. Also, one sector is for-profit, one is not. As discussed, the private companies reviewed made over a billion dollars in revenue. If the comparison was about profits then the private sector has proven successful in this category. The question is which sector has lower cost of operations? Though the private sector is primarily in the business to make money, evidence of their alleged lower costs of operations are still not impressive enough that local, state, and federal correctional departments should be in favor of privatization. Further research data is needed to determine if private prisons are more cost efficient and effective compared to public prisons.

CHAPTER IV

EMPLOYEE TRAINING, SALARY, AND BENEFITS

When comparing the private and government sector of the prison system, reviewing the cost of operations and recidivism rates gives us an idea of which sector is more effective and efficient. What we will look at in this last section which pertains to any public department or private sector business number one expense, their employees. Like any career, employee training, salary, and benefits gives us idea of the quality of staff that is hired and then trained to the correctional world's vision and liking. Quality training can provide the correction's workplace with tools and a better ability to provide and safe, secure, and humane environment for inmates, staff, and the public. Pay and benefits (medical and retirement, e.g.) usually attract potential recruits for prisons, and help retain staffing levels. Much of the argument is that when private prisons need to make cost cuts, quality and security are affected when employee training, pay and benefits are compromised. But this is true for the government operated prisons, too. Anytime you cut-back on staffing levels and inmate treatment programs, for example, the quality of the facility lowers. Both private and public operated prisons face budget issues and may assess them differently. But adhering to state and federal laws is something that the private and public sectors have to both do. All have to meet standards and regulations when, for example, either the Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration (OSHA) or the government conducts a Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). Shutting a facility down and/or hefty fines are ramifications of not meeting state and federal regulations. This is not an area that shortcuts can be made, unlike employee

training, salaries and benefits. We will review and compare some of the training, pay and benefits that take place and exist in private prisons and the Iowa Department of Corrections.

Training

Iowa DOC employs over 2,500 institutional staff that supervise approximately 8,000 offenders that are in the state's custody throughout nine facilities. Training equips the IDOC staff with the capabilities to protect the public and provide a safe, secure, and humane environment for offenders and staff to its highest potential. As stated on the Iowa Department of Corrections website, the training and professional development program's mission statement is as follows:

“To prepare and update institution and community correctional workers’ knowledge base, skills, and competencies; to enable them to perform their duties within the parameters of sound and effective correctional practices in order to protect the public, themselves, and their co-workers, while managing offenders in an environment that supports long term offender change”.



Figure 10. Correctional Officer Riot Training (Picture Ryan Osland).

Some of the guiding principles of the IDOC, to ensure high levels of training and standards, include the following: safety, victim reparation, reentry, collaboration, evidence-based practices, transparency, respect for others, staff recruitment/development, and fiscal responsibility. The IDOC database tracks its training that is conducted in the DOC's prisons, Central Office, and Community Based Corrections (CBC). The Training Year 2013/2014 database showed a total of 241,852.31 hours of training provided statewide. 137,615 hours were provided through eLearning and 104,237.31 of the hours were delivered in classroom and hands-on training. A further breakdown of the classroom training hours shows 65,667.06 hours were In-service and 38,570.25 hours were Pre-service. Collectively, across the board for the IDOC there was an average of 68.48 hours of training per employee for the fiscal year of 2013 (FY13). The IDOC offers its training through mandatory new employee orientation (NEO), Pre-service, In-service, eLearning, and additional voluntary professional development training offered by the department.

NEO training for Iowa DOC staff is usually conducted at the new employee's facility at which they were hired. This is a 3week long general orientation for new employees to familiarize them with district, office, or institutional operations, personnel issues, and the employee's duties. This includes learning how to conduct inmate count procedures, meeting with the prison Warden, facility standard operating procedures (SOP's), identification/time card badges are issued, tour of the facility, etc. NEO is where the new staff get certified in Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray, fire extinguisher, and firearms. On-the-job (OJT) training is an important piece of NEO training at facilities. OJT is where new employees are paired and mentored with experienced staff while supporting daily institutional operations. Here they learn the "in's and out's" of the job and are introduced to the inmate population, work posts (housing units, towers, et.), and fellow staff.

Pre-service, better referred to as "The Academy", for new employees is much more extensive than NEO training. This training is facilitated for 4 weeks at Central Office in downtown Des Moines, Iowa. Course work starts with a systemic overview of the Iowa Department of Corrections and the offender's pathway through the Iowa criminal system. This is where the mission statement for the IDOC is learned and how important the reentry of offenders back into our communities is impacted directly by the staff. The principles of the Colors Personality Assessment tool is also material covered to help understand different personalities to increase effectiveness when interacting with co-workers and offenders. New hire employees should be able to identify the four colors and a better understanding of personalities that are in their workplace. The standards of professional and ethical conduct

are highlighted as an IDOC staff member in Pre-service for new employees. During this coursework, teamwork is emphasized and how to identify and define sexual harassment, discriminatory harassment, and third party harassment. CPR and First Aid techniques are also learned through IDOC Pre-service training. The purpose of the Red Cross Certification for Adult CPR and First Aid program is to help participants recognize and respond appropriately to cardiac, breathing, and first aid emergencies. The basic legal principles that impact the field of corrections are also reviewed at the Academy for new hires. Constitutional issues, legal rights and responsibilities are subjects discussed in this section. Students will also be familiarized with security threat groups (STG) that thrive within the IDOC's prisons. They will be educated on the methods and criteria used in identifying and documenting offenders who are suspected or confirmed security threat group members in our system. Students will also be introduced with many of the stressors associated with working in the field of corrections and the negative consequences involved. Stress is defined and several methods of reducing stress are covered in this portion. An overview of how evidence based practices are utilized in the IDOC is discussed during Pre-Service training. This will help give new employees a better understanding of the social learning theory and criminogenic needs. Considering that human interaction with coworkers and inmates is a high percent of our job in corrections, a two part section on how to effectively communicate using techniques such as motivational interviewing and de-escalation strategies is trained in this program. Defusing or talking down a situation before it evolves into the use of force can improve the safety of correctional staff and inmates. Use of force is discussed to understand different levels of resistance and the justifiable levels of force to react with. Institutional policies and Iowa Code 704 are reviewed to get a better understanding on the critical subject

regarding use of force in the correctional workplace. A personal safety, or self-defense, class is given to participants in the Pre-service program. Situational awareness is a key topic of discussion, and a hands-on portion is conducted which includes strikes, blocks, pressure points, and take-down techniques. “Con Games” is another description of a course that educates new employees about the professional boundaries that needs to exist between inmates and staff. This program helps staff to learn how to maintain those boundaries, how to be aware of manipulation, and how not to become a victim. Victim services is discussed to explain victim’s rights and restorative justice in the IDOC. Programs for victims and the offender are a key topic in this course. A cultural competency and diversity class is facilitated to enhance employee’s skills when relating to inmate population the work place. New employees should be able to identify how personal values, beliefs, attitudes, and morals can impact interactions. Also, sexual misconduct and offender victimization is reviewed to give students proficient knowledge of the federal standards and departmental guidelines that promote, detect, prevent, report and communicate incidences involving sexual assault of inmates and the perpetrators. During this course, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) is learned and the responsibilities that staff have in enforcing the federal law. An overview of the Incident Command System is provided and how it is applied during emergencies situations and returning institutions back to normal operations. Chain of command, response teams, and assistance from local, state, and federal authorities are some of the subjects discussed during the Incident Command course. Mental health, suicide, and trauma are the key topics for a course that provides a thorough overview of mental illness in our society, and in corrections. Categories of mental illness and methods of treatment are subjects lectured in the classroom. Inmate, cell, and area searches are trained in a classroom

environment and then practiced with hands-on scenarios. The importance of contraband control and why quality searches is emphasized during this portion of the Pre-service training. A class on ICON, or the Iowa Corrections Offender Network, is another course that introduces new staff to the system that has evolved into a major part of correctional officer's daily tasks and duties. ICON provides staff with the ability to electronically document and manage offender activities in an intranet that has been created within the IDOC. Fundamental components and the skills necessary for report writing, which is also done on ICON, is a course given to provide staff with the tools to effectively document reports. Offender rules, regulations and Due Process are lectured in the classroom, and writing disciplinary reports exercises are conducted to practice the writing skills learned. Lastly, the use of restraints, cuffing techniques, and escorting is taught during Pre-service training for the IDOC. New staff should be able to demonstrate how to apply full restraints on subjects and recognize the potential of positional asphyxia.

In addition to NEO and Pre-service training for the IDOC, In-service and professional developmental courses are offered to staff. Much of the In-service training is mandatory for current employees. Mandatory In-service training includes annual and bi-annual certifications for firearms, personal safety, OC, fire extinguisher, and CPR, for example. CERT and K-9 units are required to pass a physical fitness test each year. Personal safety, OC/Chemical Agents, and firearms instructors are obligated to recertify to maintain instructorship. ELearning modules are computer based courses that staff must complete on a quarterly basis. IDOC eLearning consists of subjects including Use of Force policy, Incident Command System, sexual harassment, mental health, report writing, and cultural diversity to

keep staff updated and refreshed on the policies and standard operating procedures within the department. Also, mandatory attendance is required for staff to attend a one-time class called Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment. The purpose of the class is to educate corrections staff about the causes, identifying signs, cumulative effects, and sometimes lasting effects, of corrections fatigue and to provide tools to deviate off that negative path to end up with corrections fulfillment. Like NEO, In-service training is intended to maintain staff competency and proficiency at their job. The purpose is to provide corrections professionals the training to provide a more safe, secure, and humane environment staff, inmates and the public while operating facilities for the Iowa DOC.

The IDOC also gives staff the opportunity to attend courses for professional growth and development. Many of these offered courses are facilitated at Central Office in Des Moines, Iowa. For example, the Case Management course offered involves Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender (DRAOR) case plan training that focuses on appropriate scoring, identifying need, and utilizing actions and steps toward intervention. The fundamentals and a general understanding of Core Correctional Practices will be presented in this class. Staff can also pursue an instructorship where they go back to their facilities and conduct In-service training. The week long instructor's courses can include certifications in firearms, chemical agents, personal safety, CPR/AED/first aid, and Corrections Fatigue to Corrections Fulfillment. To help build sound supervisors, staff can attend a Foundational Leadership two-day course designed to provide the foundations of leadership that the IDOC is looking for. The course is based on the Leadership Challenge Model (Kouzes and Poser) and focuses on the key points of exemplary leadership. Also, if interested, each institution is in need of

PREA investigators in the event of an incident. The 40 hours course certifies and trains staff the proper procedures in handling delicate situations involving sexual misconduct and/or prison rape. With a few examples given, the IDOC gives state employees the opportunity to expand their knowledge base of corrections and promotes professional development. It is up to the staff member to take advantage of the additional training offered by the department.

It is suggested that private prisons save money or cut costs from keeping staff levels at or below minimum requirements, offer lower staff wages and benefits, facilitate less inmate services, and provide little staff training. Considering that the primary objective of for-profit prisons is to make money, it doesn't seem unreasonable that those type of cost savings would benefit the business's annual revenue. Claims of inadequate training in the private prison industry has always been in debate when comparing private versus public prison systems. Both larger private companies, CCA and GEO Group give little information about their specific type of training its employees get. But most importantly, both private prison companies do make reference to meeting American Corrections Association (ACA) standards. Founded in 1870, the ACA was developed primarily for professions in corrections field. The ACA created a declaration of principles and code of ethics that outlines the role of corrections. Local, state, federal, and private correctional departments have adopted ACA standards and implemented those standards in policies, procedures, and programs. Accreditation can be granted to an agency that meets the standards to all assessments of an ACA audit. An important part of ACA accreditation is that agencies have established a training and staff development program for all categories of personnel. This would include pre-service and in-service training with curriculums and timelines.

The GEO Group's website provides some literature explaining its commitment and training requirements. GEO states that their correctional officers training requirements exceeds the national standards, and is consistent with ACA standards and/or applicable state laws. GEO new employee training starts with approximately 40 hours of instruction that encompasses GEO operational procedures, policies and management philosophy. Also, another 120 hours of training covers inmate rights, legal issues, interpersonal skills, techniques of communication and supervision, and job specific duties related to the position hired for. Any GEO employees that will have direct contact with offenders will receive an additional 40 hours per year, and managers are obligated to get an extra 24 hours of training each year. Considering that the GEO Group has facilities outside our American borders, employees that work in South Africa and Australian are required to get 160 hours of training if they come into contact with inmates. Basically, it's the same for new employees that work in the United States. GEO workers that are hired in the United Kingdom are required to receive a minimum of 240 hours of training if they are to have a position that involves inmate contact. Also, GEO has a college accreditation training program to help educate its employees for personal growth and to produce higher trained staff, which in turn provides better services for the company. They mandate 272 hours training in addition to the ACA required training program courses. Some of the hours that the GEO Group mandate can be used as credit at some colleges.

The CCA discusses some of their training requirements and standards on their website. The company makes reference to attending sessions involving PREA, crime scene

investigation, and working with local law enforcement authorities training. It is also stated that three CCA facilities received a 100% CCA Quality Assurance audit on their facility training departments in 2009 and 2010, which must meet CCA and ACA standards. The training departments have over a hundred audit requirements that each facility must comply. Pre-service orientation, custody training, In-service training, chemical agents and firearms training, and Samberg Frontline Leadership participation are some of the areas of compliance. CCA also explains that their security staff receives a minimum of 200 hours of training for their first year employment, an additional minimum of 40 hours of training each year thereafter. It is claimed by the private company that training often exceeds those standards, depending on the contract the CCA has with the local, state, federal government.

To conclude the matter of which sector, private or public, provides their employees with a higher level of training results inconclusive if attempting to prove private is better than public. Both private, CCA and GEO, and public, Iowa DOC, seem to both provide their employees with sufficient amount of training, after further research of literature available. Meeting ACA standards and having to meet state and federal requirements for training supports private prison claims of quality training, but there is no significant proof suggesting that the CCA or GEO Group, Inc., has a higher grade of training than what the State of Iowa provides for its employees. Again, there is no significant proof of a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness in the private prisons and should be closer reviewed when local, state, and federal corrections question if privatization worth investing in.

Salary

When comparing pay and benefits of State of Iowa employees and the CCA and GEO Group's employees, public and private sector's annual salaries should be reviewed and analyzed. CCA and GEO operate many of the private facilities in several different states that are seen in Figure 4 during the introductory chapter. State of Iowa employees' salaries are bargained and negotiated between the State and the union, or AFSCME (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees), and put into a contract. According to their website, the CCA claims when it is operating a facility for a state or local government, employee wages are determined by the local market wages. They also state that their salaries are comparable to the public corrections system. Federal wage guidelines are used for employees working in a facility that is contracted with the federal government.

New Mexico, Montana, Hawaii, Alaska, Idaho, and Vermont have 25% to nearly 50% of their inmates housed in private facilities. Figure 4, along with Figure 10 and Figure 11 (both below), can be compared to see if the public or private sector offers the better paying jobs for correctional officers existing in the country. Figure 10 below provides us a map of an overview of the average mean annual of income correctional officers by state for May 2015 (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Iowa's average salary a year for correctional workers ranges between \$40,570 to \$48,560. This pay is above the national average of \$36,000 per year for correctional officers, according to PayScale, Inc. This is higher than some states with higher percent of inmates in private operated prisons like New Mexico who averages \$25,620 to \$33,450 a year, and Montana with an annual average of \$33,710 to \$39,530. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Idaho's average income for

correctional officers was \$31,790, and Vermont's was \$37,140 during 2012. The Iowa correctional officer has a higher annual income until we compare with annual salaries from Alaska and Hawaii, who have a fair percent of inmates in private prisons in operation. As seen on Figure 10, both states' average annual income for correctional officers lies between \$49,830 to \$70,800. Other states with the same levels of annual incomes include New York, Nevada, Oregon, and Illinois but have all inmates in facilities that are strictly operated by the public sector.

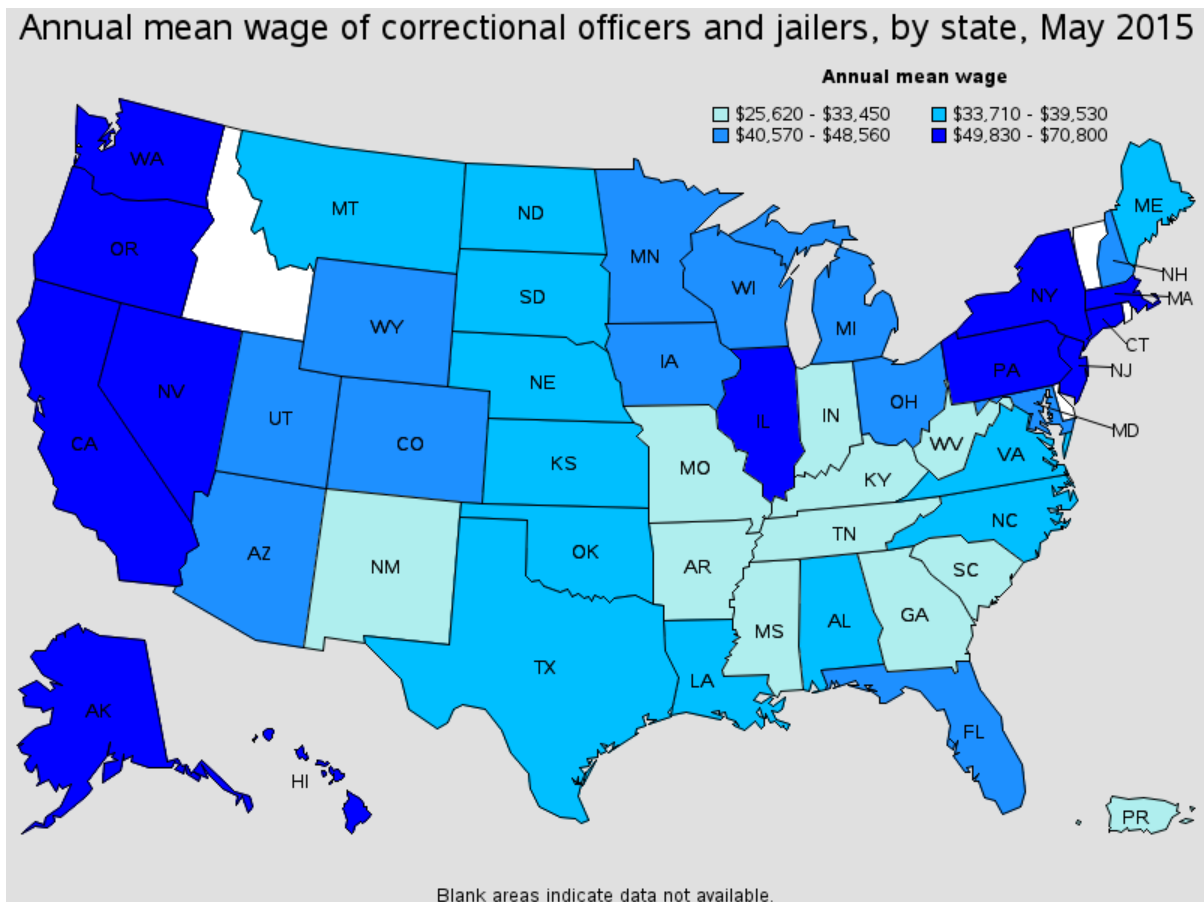


Figure 11. May 2015 Map of United States Comparing Annual Mean Wage of Correctional Officers and Jailer by State (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Our conclusion results in realizing that there are private prisons that offer higher wages than the Iowa public prison sector offers their correctional officers. Comparing Alaska and Hawaii to Iowa does validate that public prisons don't always pay higher salaries than the private industry. Cost of living must be taken into consideration when comparing different geographical locations throughout the nation. Although, the data proves most states with a higher percent of inmates incarcerated in private prisons do not pay more than the Iowa state employed correctional officer each year. Though, Figure 11 below provides us with a chart comparing the GEO Group, Inc. and CCA's average and maximum yearly salaries to the Department of Corrections. With other government departments compared on Figure 11, along with the national average yearly incomes being compared with Iowa to states with a higher volume of inmates in private prisons, and what the average annual income is for correctional officers, we can conclude that Iowa Department of Corrections pays its employees good compared to a majority of the states discussed with a higher percent of prisoners in private prisons operating in the U.S. But it does show that there are states that have a large percent of their inmates in private prisons that do pay more than the Iowa DOC. The evidence can't really prove that the private sector can or cannot promise a better annual income to their employees. When comparing annual incomes of employees between private and public prisons in the U.S., the cost of living is a variable that needs to be factored. For example, we can compare cost of living in Anchorage (population 291,470), Alaska, to Des Moines (population 204,362), Iowa. Since Alaska has a higher annual income for corrections workers than Iowa, the cost of living can be compared and should be taken into consideration. According to Sperling's Best Places, Anchorage is 54% more expensive to live in than Des Moines. Also, housing costs are 101.6% more in Anchorage than in Des

Moines. Another cost of living highlight comparison includes health related expenses in Anchorage, which are 48.9% more than Des Moines. Hence, Alaska pays its corrections professions a higher annual income but the cost of living is significantly more than Iowa's after comparing the two largest cities from each state. Annual incomes should not be a variable for local, state, and federal governments to compare when weighing in the factors to favor privatization unless a cost of living variable is included.

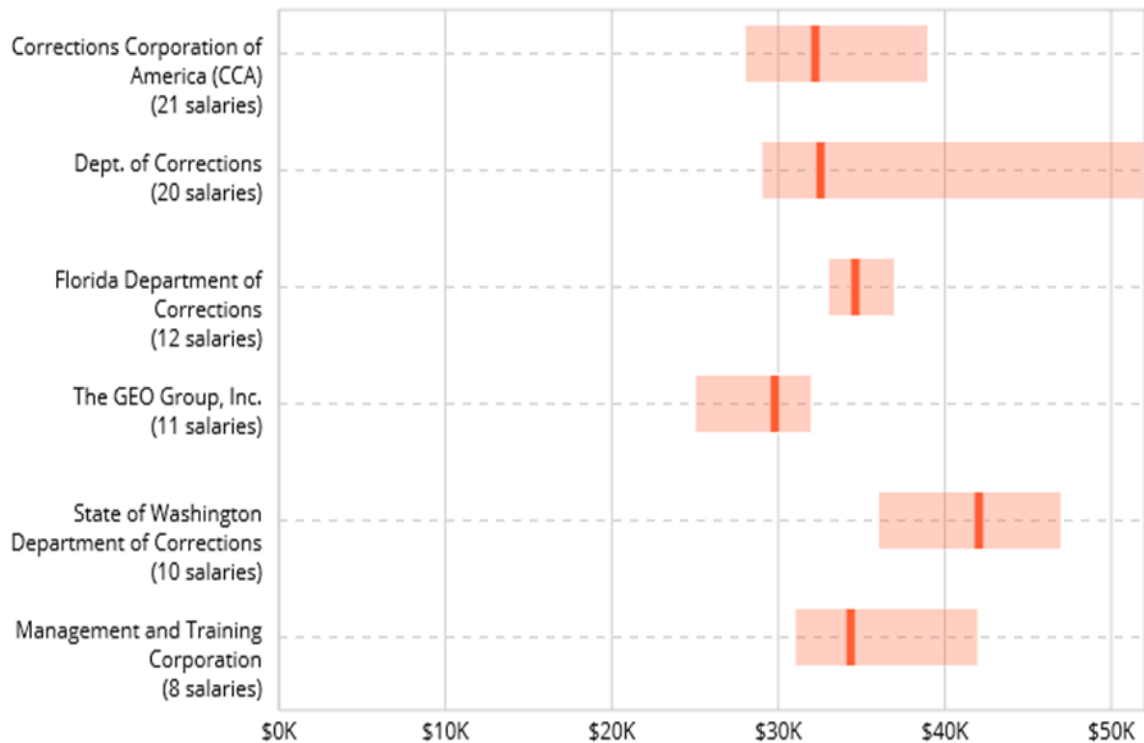


Figure 12. Chart Comparing the Annual Income of Private Companies and Public Departments for 2016.

Benefits

Possibly just as important, or maybe even more so, as salary and training that employers offer is the benefits package that comes along with a job in corrections. These include the on and off the job benefits for employees that are little to no expense. Prison system employers offer benefits to employees to attract and retain a quality workforce, compete with other benefits packages from other potential employers, promote a higher level of moral in the work place, and provide advancement while fellow workers resign, retire, or laterally move to other positions. There are mandatory and optional benefits that are offered to employees working for the prison system. Like every job in the marketplace, mandatory benefits required by federal law include Social Security, worker compensation, and unemployment compensation. Optional benefits programs can include health care insurance, life insurance, retirement/pension plans, and paid leave. Usually, the optional benefits programs and salaries are key points of interest when individuals are applying for any type of career. The public department, Iowa DOC, and private sector, CCA and Geo Group, optional benefits will be discussed and compared in this section.

Iowa Department of Corrections, which employs approximately 3,000 people, offers a wide range of fringe benefits to its current and potential employees, as provided at the Department of Administrative Service's (DAS) website. The State of Iowa bargains with the labor union, AFSCME, when determining optional benefit programs for state employees. Staff who are required to wear a uniform are supplied them, and appropriate attire for outside duties. This includes any personal protective equipment and/or safety equipment needed for specific jobs. Any personal property damaged on duty can be refunded for that loss up to a

certain amount. Each shift is provided one free mid-shift meal. Automatic payroll direct deposit to a financial institution of the employee's choice if offered. State employees are eligible to become a member of the Community Choice Credit Union. Payroll deductions can be made and low-interest loans are available after being a member for six months with Credit Union.

Health insurance, including Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Plan, is provided for all full-time State of Iowa employees. There are various plans and premiums available. A reduced rate for health care premiums are offered to married State of Iowa employees. Vacation hours earned are determined by the length of service. For example, 0-4 years of employment get 10 days per year of vacation while 25+ years receives 25 days per year. Sick leave hours are accumulated with no maximum based on sick leave balance and bargaining status. Upon retirement, employees can exchange a maximum of an accrued hourly rate of \$2,000 of sick leave hours toward payment of health insurance premiums. Employees who have a minimum balance of 240 hours have the option to convert sick leave hours to vacation hours, which can result in an additional 6 days a year if requirements are met. Sick leave can also be used to take care of ill or injured family members, funeral leave for family members, and pallbearer. There are nine state paid holidays each year. Considering prisons operate 24 hours a day, some staff are required to work these holidays depending on their scheduled days off. If employees work a state holiday they are paid double-time-and-a-half hourly wage, which can be converted vacation hours as an option. Single and family dental coverage is available, too. The State pays for the single plan, but family plans can be purchased. \$20,000 of free life insurance is provided

by the State of Iowa, and buying additional life insurance is an option. Also, the State provides disability insurance at no cost to employees after one month of employment. This benefit is based on the specific disability and length of service.

Employee Liability Protection is provided for staff while performing their duties unless they are purposely negligent or intentionally act in a wrongful manner. The liability protection includes legal representation and any financial damages they may be awarded. Also, the Employee Assistance Program gives counseling/evaluation to staff or family member that be interfering with job duties and work performance. Initial assessments are free and any ongoing services are generally offered at a reasonable rate.

The State of Iowa offers a couple loan forgiveness benefits that employees can take advantage of if they are eligible. The State of Iowa Nursing Education Loan Forgiveness Program repays the student loans of nursing professionals that agree to work for Iowa when they graduate. This loan forgiveness program helps the nursing shortage in the Iowa DOC. For serving full-time as a correctional officer, a borrower of a Federal Perkin's Loan is eligible for 100% of the loan cancelled. Also, the new College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) has created a recent loan forgiveness option for borrowers who hold public service jobs.

For retirement, State of Iowa employees are mandated to contribute a percent of their gross pay to the Iowa Public Employees Retirement System (IPERS). The State also makes a contribution into each employee's retirement program. If an individual leaves State of Iowa

employment the ex-employee can either keep their contributions in IPERS or withdraw them, but the State's portion is not refunded. Employees may retire with full benefits at the age of 55 years if they have 22 years of service. Upon retirement, employees are eligible to receive a monthly benefit based on the accumulated contributions paid by the employee and the State, or take a lump sum. IPERS has been credited for being one of the best retirement programs available in the State of Iowa. Alongside IPERS for financial preparation of retirement, deferred compensation is long-term savings program that is offered and not taxed until withdrawn. Employees can elect to defer different portions for a variety of savings program.

The CCA and the GEO Group, Inc., are two large private businesses that employ many people in our country, and abroad. Regardless of the private or public sector, salary and benefits are a competitive factor for any employer. According to the GEO Group, who employs approximately 19,000 employees around the globe, the company offers the following comprehensive benefits package which includes the following:

- Paid time off
- Paid holidays
- Medical PPO with Prescription Drug coverage
- HMO with Prescription Drug coverage (California, Colorado and Western Pennsylvania only)
- Dental
- Vision
- Basic, Additional, Spousal and Dependent Life

- Short and Long term disability
- Health and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts
- Employee Assistance Program
- 401(k) Retirement Plan
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Voluntary Whole Life Insurance
- Voluntary Accident Insurance
- Voluntary Critical Illness Insurance
- Legal and Identity Theft Protection Plans
- Employee Rewards and Recognition Programs
- Employee Discounts

The CCA employs approximately 17,000 professions in security, healthcare, maintenance, academic and vocational education, administration and management, and inmate programs. The private company only provides a few comments on what benefits are offered to their employees. But it does state that their employees enjoy “solid benefits” that includes comprehensive healthcare, paid time off, a 401(k) retirement saving plan, short-term and long-term disability, and flexible spending accounts.

As a result of the research, it is evident that Iowa DOC, our public example reviewed, does provide its employees with many quality benefits to its employees. Medical insurance and retirement are top of list of benefits for individuals seeking employment and retaining staff. Benefits offered to Iowa DOC employees is a competitive package when comparing to

the private industries, but the CCA and the GEO does seem to offer most of the same benefits. These benefits may or may not be at the same caliber that the State of Iowa, but the CCA and the GEO Group provide some evidence that healthcare insurance and retirement packages, for example, are offered for private sector employees. Comparing the research does prove that the private prison companies used to compare to the public corrections department utilized in this analysis does not show any significant higher quality range of benefits that it offers to its employees in the private sector. The comparison should be proof to local, state, and federal agencies that contracting with private companies does not mean the best of benefits for its employees.

Limitations of the Present Study and Possibilities for Future Research

It is without doubt the limited comparative analysis in this study gives the research question no solid answer favoring private or public prisons. First, recidivism rates are an important factor that would help compare public and private prisons would be which sector releases inmates who go out and reoffend. But, recidivism comparisons explained earlier in this research have not provided enough clarity to help determine a conclusion weighing either way. Also, recidivism's definition encompasses conviction, arrests, incarceration, revocation, parole violation, and suspension. There is much ambiguity in the comparative data that exists when determining which "recidivism" definition is being compared and analyzed, how long re-offenders were monitored, and variations (custody levels, mentally ill, medical issues, troublesome, etc.) of inmate populations. Secondly, the comparability of private and public sector costs is not clear and can be elusive. Differences in several characteristics of private and public facilities makes comparing costs equally near

impossible. These differences include inmate population levels and facility designs. Not to mention that private prisons make a profit, and government prisons do not, adds a twist when comparing costs. Lastly, comparing variations of employee wages, benefits, and training among private and public prisons proves unhelpful when attempting to determine effectiveness and efficiency differences between the two sectors. Federal, state (Iowa in this case), and local government jobs most generally have a standard wage and benefits table, and training requirements. The private sector did not provide standard for pay, benefits, and training for all facilities. This makes comparing data to determine which sector is better in regards to employee pay, benefits, and training a difficult task. Unfortunately, it leaves the research inconclusive in that section.

What may help with future research when asking if private prisons are significantly more efficient and effective than public prisons? What may help would be federal regulations setting specific standards for private and public prisons to conform to. Considering private prisons are contracted by government agencies, this should be a law that all facilities would have to abide by. The federal regulations that set those specific standards would apply to any jurisdiction whose policymakers are trying to decide whether or not, or what extent, the department of corrections should be privatized. Studies should be formed on representative samples of like or similar prisons with enough statistical controls set in place to measure any main differences. It would be beneficial for research if both sectors were required to conduct evaluations to measure performance on a common playing field. To prove something statistically requires a database. If a large database of public and private prisons existed then a measure of the relation between the mean value of one variable and

corresponding values of other variables can be controlled. This would help produce reliable comparative data for research. This may help clear the cloudy waters when comparing recidivism rates, costs, and employee pay, benefits, and training between the private and public prison sectors.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The debate of private prisons being better than public prisons goes unresolved. Finding solid and consistent information about recidivism rates, cost of operations, and employee's training, wages and benefits. Results of finding recidivism rates being higher or lower as a result of inmates being incarcerated and released from public or private correctional facility goes unfounded. According to the research, there is no solid proof that recidivism rates are directly affected by prisons that are operated by either the private sector or local, state and federal agencies. Also, comparing the cost of operations of public and private prisons delivers no evidence that either sector is more effective and efficient than the other. The obvious difference between private and public is that private prisons are a business, and the main objective of any business is to make money. The question of housing inmates for financial gain seems to be an issue of ethics. But, when budgets are involved and government agencies believe they can save money by contracting with private companies, ethics go out the window. Lastly, it is clear that both public and private prisons provide a variety of different levels of training, wages, and benefits for its employees. Wages and benefits vary state to state, and some type of training is provided for correctional officers during pre-service and in-service in the private and public sector.

In conclusion, there is no solid or clear answer of who is better when comparing the public or private prison system. There is no strong evidence supporting private prisons are

better in recidivism rates, cost of operation, and employee salary, benefits, and training to override the people's presumption that public prisons are better than private prisons. The findings in this research does not support private prisons being better than public prisons. Regarding the debatable question: "*Can the private sector provide enough convincing evidence that proves they are significantly more effective and efficient than public operated prisons?*" The answer would simply be no. Private prisons cannot produce enough strong evidence to support they are better than public prisons. Governments need to consider several factors when deciding to contract with private prison companies. The contribution that this research gives is if government's are trying to determine if they should contract with private prisons as opposed to remaining a public entity is that there is no way to compare equal quantitative and qualitative variables to find data that can compare the two sectors on an even playing field. The presumption formed by the general public that the public sector is better is not overridden due to the lack of evidence that privatization is better. Unfortunately, there is no reliable database, resource or standard for local, state, and federal correctional departments to utilize when looking for answers to help with the decision to contract with the private sector. This research identifies the inability to compare and measure equal variables between public and private prisons to determine which sector is better than the other.

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