



American Friends
Service Committee

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**Report Reveals Widespread Problems in Arizona's Private Prisons:
Cites Safety Issues, Lack of Accountability, and Cost**

Phoenix: A Quaker group that has been advocating against prison privatization in Arizona will release an extensive report reviewing the safety, quality, and cost of private prisons in Arizona—including 6 prisons operated by Corrections Corporation of America that do not contract with the state. The report is the first of its kind to be completed in Arizona, and reveals widespread and persistent problems in private facilities.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is holding a press conference on **Wednesday, February 15th, at 10:00 am on the lawn of the state capitol** to announce their findings and call on the state to cancel its plans to expand privatization. The group will also offer a **telephonic press conference at 11:30am for statewide and national media unable to travel to Phoenix.**

The report cites data showing that the private prisons under contract with the state cost more than equivalent units operated by the Department of Corrections. The group estimates that in 2009 and 2010, Arizona *overpaid* for these units by as much as \$7 million. If the state adds 2,000 medium-security private beds, Arizonans could be losing over \$10 million every year on private prisons.

The report also reveals that all private prisons in Arizona for which security assessment information was available had serious security flaws:

- The Arizona Auditor General found a total of 157 security failures in the 5 private prisons under contract with the Arizona Department of Corrections, including malfunctioning cameras, doors, and alarms; holes under fences; broken perimeter lights and cameras; and inefficient or outright inept security practices across the board by state and private corrections officers and managers.
- California's Inspector General found serious security flaws and improper treatment of California inmates held in three CCA prisons in Arizona. Inspectors found flaws with the incident alarm-response systems at the three prisons because there was no audible alarm, and two were found to have malfunctioning and out-of-focus security cameras.
- AFSC found evidence of at least 28 riots in private prisons since 2009. The number of riots is likely underreported. AFSC also found evidence of as many as 33 other serious disturbances involving groups of prisoners classified under "refusal to obey," "tampering with state property," and "obstructing an officer." Some of these incidents involved as many as 10, 20 and even 50 prisoners.
- There were at least 6 escapes from inside Arizona private prisons in the past 10 years



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Both press conferences will feature the following speakers:

1. **Caroline Isaacs**, Director of the Arizona American Friends Service Committee and the author of the report
2. **Dante Gordon**, formerly incarcerated at the Kingman prison, operated by Management and Training Corporation. Mr. Gordon was injured in a 2010 riot at Kingman during which the private prison guards stood by as a small group of African-American prisoners were assaulted by a mob of white inmates.
3. **Rep. Chad Campbell**, who has introduced 6 bills this session that would impose reporting, oversight, and accountability requirements on all private prisons operating in Arizona.
4. **King Downing**, national representative with the AFSC in Philadelphia. Mr. Downing will speak on why the findings of the Arizona AFSC report have national import and impact.

For statewide and national media who cannot attend the press conference on the Capitol Lawn, AFSC will offer a telephonic press conference at 11:30am. **Reporters who wish to participate are asked to please RSVP by Monday, 2/13 by sending an email to Caroline Isaacs at cisaacs@afsc.org.** All registered participants will then receive the call in number and access code. Phone lines must be reserved in advance, so please be sure to contact us if you wish to participate.

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The American Friends Service Committee is a non-profit organization that works for justice and human rights both nationally and internationally. The Arizona office, based in Tucson, advocates for criminal justice reform.