

Luis Gonzalez, T-67569
CSp 3C 02 202
PO Box 3471
Corcoran, CA 93212-3471

<<<Use Family Name & Address, not I/M's

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814-4991

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

We are member and supporters of California United for A Responsible Budget CURB a statewide coalition whose mission is to curb prison spending by reducing the number of people in prison and the number of prisons in the state. We are asking you to:

1. not appeal the anticipated final federal court ruling to reduce the number of people in prison;
2. cancel AB 900, what would be the world's largest prison construction project, and
3. re-invest the billions saved for quality housing, education and other support for California families.

After decades of litigation and court orders, in February 2009, a federal court tentatively ordered the only real solution to overcrowding: reducing the number of people in prison. We applaud the court's order. We know that there are many ways to reduce the number of people in prison including: changes to parole policies, earned credits, and three strikes, releasing the elderly, and expanding treatment options rather than prison for drug offenses.

The State argued that AB900, a 2007 massive prison expansion plan which would add up to 53,000 prison and jail beds and cost billions to build and operate, was the way to alleviate overcrowding. The Court rejected that position and pointed to our unprecedented budget crisis, stating "Even if it were possible for the construction and renovation projects to proceed despite this deficit, they would take many years to complete."

Instead of AB900, the Court endorsed recommendations already made by the Governor and an Expert Panel appointed by the Legislature that would reduce the prison population, noting the hundreds of millions of dollars these measures would save. We urge you to follow the Court's recommendations.

State across the country faced with shrinking budgets are cutting prison spending by reducing the number of people in prison and closing prisons. New York recently repealed portions of the Rockefeller Drug Laws and is moving to close 4 prisons. When Governor Reagan was governor, he ordered early releases to address overcrowding. A nationwide study by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency found that early release program did not jeopardize public safety.

As the Court noted, the Expert Panel has "recommended a combination of earned credits and parole reform that would reduce the prison population by about 40,000 prisoners." And the Court concluded "that on the basis of the evidence, a prison cap at 120% to 145% of capacity...could be achieved without and adverse effect on public safety."

California's prison budget has increased fivefold since 1994. Building more prison cells will add billions more, expanding a revolving door system that has a recidivism rate of nearly 70%. Governor release those prisoner's with low recidivism rate! Rather than using our limited resources to appeal, we urge you to seize this unique opportunity to reduce our \$13 billion prison budget by:

1. Not appealing the anticipated final ruling of the federal court to reduce the number of people in California's overcrowded prison and move immediately to reduce the number of people in prison;

2. Cancelling what the NEW YORK TIMES called the world's largest prison construction project, and

3. Reinvesting the billions saved in legal cost, in foregoing prison construction and in reduced numbers of people in prison into real public safety for our communities: quality housing, education, healthcare, and support for people coming home from prison, which have all been under attack in this current budget crisis.

Governor, California historically has had three fortune booms, the gold rush, the railroad lines and (now) the prison industry. It is time Governor, to **stop the warehousing of humans** (Californians) **to grow an economy!** Direct the gilymen to get some backbone and put the people of your state to work on productive and equitable employment.

Thank you!

Respectfully,
