

A REPORT ON THE DOC EXPENDITURES AND STAFFING LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

Prepared for:

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By

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A REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION'S
EXPENDITURES AND STAFFING LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

In response to a public records request, the Department of Correction (DOC) provided the information concerning the expended funds in Fiscal Year 2015 (July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015) as well as the data on the staffing levels of Full Time Employees (FTEs) for the same time period. The data for both categories is usually contained in the DOC's Annual Report. But, to date, the 2015 Annual Report is yet to be published.

In prior annual reports published by the DOC, the expended funds and percentages of the total amount spent were broken down into eight categories. For Fiscal Year 2015, those categories, in order from largest in dollars and percentages to the lowest, were:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount Spent</u>	<u>% of The Total</u>
Employee Expenses	\$ 408,395,603	71.5%
Inmate Health Costs	94,991,330	16.6%
Utilities	22,385,498	3.9%
Infrastructure	16,229,000	2.9%
Inmate Food Costs	15,222,670	2.7%
Inmate Program Costs	11,531,935	2.0%
Administrative Expenses	2,464,869	.4%
Legislative Earmarks	<u>000</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
Total Expenses	571,220,905	

Each year, DOC Full Time Employees are broken down into the same six categories. The numbers of FTEs and percentages of the total for these categories were:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of The Total</u>
Security	3,831	74.0%
Support Staff	500	9.7%
Corr. Program Officers (CPOs)	311	6.0%
Management	188	3.6%
Maintenance	180	3.5%
Captains	84	1.6%
Education	<u>83</u>	<u>1.6%</u>
Total	5,177	

Report on DOC Expenditures and Staffing - FY 2015 cont.

Three Year Comparison of DOC Expenditures

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>		<u>FY 2014</u>		<u>FY 2013</u>	
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>%</u>
Employees	408,395,603	71.5	399,144,646	71.0	377,516,880	69.1
Inmate Health	94,991,330	16.6	91,732,966	16.3	98,520,685	18.1
Utilities	22,385,498	3.9	24,392,157	4.3	24,151,243	4.4
Infrastructure	16,229,000	2.9	16,359,167	2.9	15,571,422	2.9
Inmate Food ¹	15,222,670	2.7	14,955,172	2.7	15,262,701	2.9
Inmate Programs	11,531,935	2.0	11,132,914	2.0	10,716,320	2.0
Administrative Exp.	2,464,869	.4	1,954,114	.4	2,158,161	.4
Legislative Earmarks	0		2,548,000	.5	2,050,000	.4
Totals	571,220,905		562,219,136		545,947,413	
Ave. Inmate Pop.	10,175		10,555		10,855	
Annual Cost / Inmate	\$56,139.64		\$53,265.66		\$50,294.55	

Total Expenses increased by \$25,273,493 (4.6%) from FY 2013 to FY 2015. The average number of prisoners, however, decreased by 680 or 6.3%. This resulted in the annual cost per prisoner to increase by \$5,845.09 or 11.6%.

Two categories of expenses increased each year in dollars spent - Employee Expenses increased \$30,878,723 (7.6%) from 2013 to 2015 and Inmate Program Expenses increased \$815,615 (7.6%) for the same time period. The percentage of the total budget for Inmate Programs remained constant at 2%. The percentage of the total expenditures for Employee Expenses, on the other hand, increased each year and culminated in 71.5% in 2015.

Inmate Health costs increased in 2015 from 2014, but was still \$3,529,355 below 2013. Given the decrease in the average number of prisoners from 2013 to 2015, this was to be expected. But, the average number of prisoners also decreased from 2014 to 2015 while the expenditures increased \$3,258,364. This restored nearly one-half of the decrease of \$6,787,719 from 2013 to 2014. The percentage of the total budget, however, increased by only .3% from 2014 to 2015, hardly restoring the 8.3% drop from 2013 to 2014.

¹ The average cost per meal served in 2013 was \$1.28. In 2014, the average cost per meal served was \$1.29. In 2015, the average cost per meal served was \$1.36. These figures were calculated by dividing the total expense for each year by 365, then by 3, and then by the Inmate Population figure.

Report on DOC Expenditures and Staffing - FY 2015 cont.

The two largest expense categories, Employee Expenses and Inmate Health costs, made up 88.1% of the total expenditures in 2015 and 87.2% in 2013. It is in comparing those two expense categories that one can account for the bulk of the increase in expenditures of \$25,273,493 from 2013 to 2015. Employee Expenses increased \$30,878,723 while Inmate Health costs decreased \$3,529,355 in that time period. The net change for the two categories equaled an increase of \$27,349,368. For the remaining Expense categories, the increase or decrease in amounts expended from 2013 to 2015 were Legislative Earmarks (-\$2,050,000), Utilities (-\$1,765,745), Inmate Programs (+\$815,615), Infrastructure (+\$657,578), Administrative Expenses (+\$306,708), and Inmate Food (-\$40,031).

The steady increases in dollars spent by the DOC in Employee Expenses for each year as compared to the significant decreases in 2014 and then modest increases in 2015 for Inmate Health, Food, and Program costs indicates the expense category the DOC deems most important. Should not the decrease in average prison populations from 2013 to 2015 have been translated into a decrease in the number of employees and, concomitantly, in the money expended on employees? Obviously, that was not the case. It is interesting to note that out of every dollar spent by the DOC in Fiscal Year 2015, 71¢ went to Employee Expenses, 21¢ to Inmate Food, Health, and Program costs, 4¢ to Utilities, and 3¢ to Infrastructure.

Three Year Comparison of DOC Staffing Levels of Full-Time Employees

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>%</u>
Security	3,831	74.0	3,918	73.8	3,850	73.6
Support Staff	500	9.7	490	9.2	484	9.3
Corr. Program Off.	311	6.0	317	6.0	325	6.2
Management	188	3.6	220	4.1	218	4.2
Maintenance	180	3.5	188	3.5	177	3.4
Captains	84	1.6	83	1.6	87	1.7
Education Staff	83	1.6	96	1.8	92	1.8
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Totals	5,177		5,311		5,233	
Ave. Population	10,175		10,555		10,855	
Ratio	1:1.96		1:1.98		1:2.07	

The total number of Full Time Employees (FTEs) did decrease from 2013 to 2015, a net decrease of 56 employees, albeit only .5%. With that .5% decrease in FTEs, the question remains, why did total Employee Expenses increase 7.6%?

Report on DOC Expenditures and Staffing - FY 2015 cont.

Management positions decreased by 30 or 13.9%. Education staff decreased by 9 positions or 9.9% and the number of Correction Program Officers decreased by 14 positions or 4.3%. Both of those categories involve FTEs who, at least theoretically, work directly with prisoners to provide assistance in rehabilitation. The only categories to increase in the number of FTEs from 2013 to 2015 were Support Staff (+16 or 3.3%) and Maintenance (+3 or 1.7%).

The decrease in educators and the increase in Maintenance staff highlights a continuing failure of the DOC to utilize existing skilled workers at minimal costs. For several years, the Lifers' Group Inc. has been urging the DOC to employ lifers and other skilled prisoners in meaningful positions in every institution. In the 1980's, lifers and other talented prisoners were employed to teach basic courses in schools, as well as to provide electrical, plumbing, painting, masonry, and carpentry services, under the supervision of master craftsmen. In addition to those services, lifers and long-term prisoners can be trained to work with elderly, infirm and end-of-life prisoners to assist those prisoners to adjust to daily living.

It is time to return to the 80's concept for two reasons. First, this would provide needed services at low cost, without reducing quality. Second, it would provide skills training to prisoners so that when those who will return to society do so, they will have employable skills which will assist them in becoming productive citizens. What is needed is the will to use this readily available skilled work force.

A ratio in which Massachusetts has been leading the nation for years is that of employees to prisoners. That position is not in jeopardy; in fact, it has been enhanced. In 2013, that ratio was 1 employee to every 2.07 prisoners. In 2014, that ratio decreased to 1:1.98 and in 2015, it decreased even further to 1:1.96. By comparison, state and federal ratios are at least 5 times higher.

Conclusion

The DOC budget continues to grow, even as the number of prisoners is decreasing. If those additional funds were spent on vocational, educational, or other programs geared to providing existing prisoners with employable skills and/or preparation for successful reentry back into society, then the welfare of society would be enhanced. Spending the increased funds on a shrinking number of employees does not increase society's welfare. It will be interesting to see the DOC's expense and staffing levels for Fiscal Year 2016 as the Bay State Correctional Center closed in July 2015, at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2016. The budget for the DOC in Fiscal Year 2016 was, interestingly, reported to have crossed the \$600 million barrier. If that proves true, then the closing of one institution would have had a minimal impact on both the DOC expenses and the major category of those expenses - employees.

Report on DOC Expenditures and Staffing - FY 2015 cont.

The DOC is failing to confront a major crisis looming on the near horizon. That is the rapid aging of the prison population. With no compassionate nor medical release programs in place, the present number of prison hospital and assisted living beds are already full. That, however, will not stop the number of prisoners who are in need of expensive medical care from continuing to rise.

On January 1, 2010, the number of prisoners aged 50 and older was 2,130, comprising 19% of the total prisoner population. ² On January 1, 2015, that number was 2,552, ³ an increase of 422 or 20%. The percentage of those age 50 and older of the total prisoner population had increased by 25%. Assuming that rate of increase continues and no measures are put in place to release elderly prisoners who pose no threat to society, the Lifers' Group Inc. estimates that on January 1, 2020, the number of prisoners age 50 and over will be 3,190 or 31% of the total prisoner population. The oldest prisoner on January 1, 2015 was 93. Those over 60 and over totaled 845, an increase of 29% from January 1, 2010.

Elderly prisoners age 50 and over are the fastest growing group of prisoners in the DOC. Several studies have shown that they are also the group of prisoners who are least likely to commit new crimes if released. In addition, estimates are that in terms of medical costs, elderly prisoners cost two to three times more than younger prisoners. ⁴ Prisons in MA are woefully underequipped to deal with the medical, psychiatric, physical, and emotional needs of elderly prisoners. If measures are not put in place to release non-threatening elderly prisoners to facilities or programs outside the DOC, then the DOC will have no other option than to undertake expensive building plans.

Perhaps those in the DOC and the correctional unions see ignoring this growing crisis as an opportunity to increase jobs and job security. If they do, then the taxpayers will pay an exorbitant price to address an issue that can and should cost little to offer safe and compassionate release to prisoners who cannot harm anyone. Prisoners confined to wheelchairs, have lost limbs, who are dying of cancer and respiratory illnesses, or have served their country honorably should not be left to die lying in their own filth, unable to feed themselves or to clean up after themselves. There certainly has to be a better way to meet the needs of all concerned than to pander to a myopic desire to create more jobs for the DOC.

² MA DOC Prison Population Trends 2009 at 18.

³ MA DOC Prison Population Trends 2014 at 19.

⁴ See Dirk Greineder. *MASS(incarceration) of the Elderly*. April 2016. This report can be accessed at www.realcostofprisons.org/writing

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