

# THE BUDGET FOR HUMANITY

## ADDRESSING CALIFORNIA'S PRISON AND BUDGET CRISES



**CALIFORNIANS UNITED FOR A RESPONSIBLE BUDGET**

**Second Edition, April 2012**

CURB is a statewide alliance of over 40 organizations working to curb prison spending by reducing the number of people in prison and the number of prisons in California.

## **Acknowledgements:**

Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) would like to acknowledge the many thousands of people imprisoned throughout the state of California: we stand in solidarity with you and your families and friends in the fight for your freedom. CURB would like to thank the over 40 member organizations whose long-time work and analysis created the content and demands of the Budget for Humanity. CURB would also like to thank all those who worked on the planning and development of this document, including Ritika Aggarwal, Lisa Marie Alatorre, Diana Block, Cynthia Chandler, Deb Reyes, Mary Sutton, Martha Wallner, Ari Wohlfeiler, and Pete Woiwode.

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**The first edition of the Budget for Humanity can be found at:**

*<http://curbprisonspending.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Budget-for-Humanity.pdf>*

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# INTRODUCTION

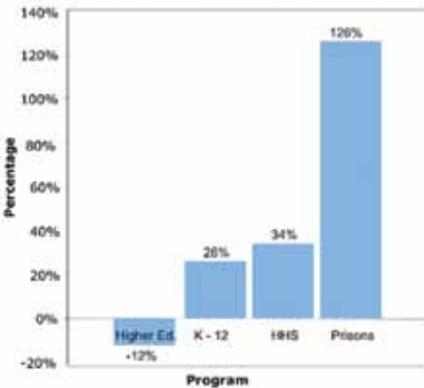
California's 30-year policy of prison expansion has left us with a bankrupt treasury, dangerously threadbare social services, and a still crowded, expensive, ineffective, and scandalous prison system. We have built 20 prisons in 30 years, imprisoning more people than all but ten countries, in deplorable conditions, with the highest recidivism rate in the country. Millions of California residents struggle for basic needs because of discrimination against former prisoners. Our prison system wastes California's resources and Californians' lives, and it is inextricably tied to our state's growing economic and social crises.

Each year we receive news of more cuts to education, basic social services and programs, and healthcare. Each January when the Governor releases the budget, we see the same pattern: these vital programs are quickly and routinely put on the chopping block, while spending on corrections is the last thing to be cut, if it is cut at all.

Instead of addressing the housing crisis in California, we are housing approximately 132,167 people in overcrowded prisons,<sup>1</sup> an additional 71,000 people in jails,<sup>2</sup> and approximately 10,000 people in out-of-state, private prisons, far from their families.<sup>3</sup> Instead of funding In Home Support Services<sup>4</sup> and community medical and mental healthcare, we are building prison hospitals. Instead of building community colleges, we are building county jails.

Building cages instead of classrooms and hiring guards instead of health care workers has dire impacts on our communities. It also goes against the economic and social priorities of California voters, not to mention the tens of millions of residents who don't vote out of hopelessness, or can't vote because they are in prison, have been in prison, or don't have the documents they need. Even a cursory glance at prison and jail demographics illustrates the striking rates at which California is locking up poor people and people of color; for example, African-Americans are 6.5 times as likely to be incarcerated as white people, and

Growth (decline) in General Funding Spending Per Capita on California's Four Largest Programs, 1984 - 2004



Source: Newfield, C. (2008). *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Data Source: State of California, Department of Finance tables, [http://lao.ca.gov/laoapp/LAOMenus/lao\\_menu-economics.aspx](http://lao.ca.gov/laoapp/LAOMenus/lao_menu-economics.aspx)

Latino people are nearly twice as likely.<sup>5</sup> These same communities suffer the highest rates of unemployment, poverty, health problems, inequitable access to stable housing, disenfranchisement, and lack of access to education.

Imprisonment and poverty are not separate issues; cuts and cages are intertwined problems. For three decades, we have tried and failed to build our way out of our social, economic and political problems. It is time to reverse this trend. Prisons should be cut from the budget first, not last.

In May 2010, after decades of lawsuits, the Supreme Court ruled that medical and mental health conditions in California prisons constituted legal torture and the primary cause was overcrowding. In June 2011, 70 percent of Californians favored spending cuts in prisons and corrections.<sup>6</sup> Just a month later, prisoner hunger strikes that would include 12,000 people swept 13 prisons throughout the state, as people

in prison asserted they would rather starve themselves to death in dignity than continue to tolerate such inhumane conditions.

In 2011, Governor Brown responded to these overlapping economic, political, and prison crises by implementing public safety realignment, a plan to stop sending people who are imprisoned for “non-violent, non-serious, non-sex” convictions to state prison, and instead remand them to county supervision. The bill promised that counties could better care for such people by offering mental health, drug treatment, and other re-entry support. Instead of expanding or developing these services, however, many counties are scrambling to build new jails, following the same disastrous path as the state. Realignment in practice appears to be transferring overcrowding to county jails that often have worse conditions than the California prisons the Supreme Court deemed so inhumane.

For the last decade, poll after poll shows



Photo courtesy of Bill Hackwell

that Californians do not want more prisons or to continue the costly, harsh sentencing policies that keep prisons and jails filled to the point of being deadly. Most recently, a 2011 poll by Lake Research Partners found that over half of all Californians believe that prison sentences are too long, and that nearly two-thirds support reducing drug penalties.<sup>7</sup> Another recent poll by University of Southern California and the *LA Times* found that a majority of Californians favored shorter prison sentences as a way to reduce overcrowding instead of cutting education and other services to pay for more prison expansion.<sup>8</sup>

There are opportunities to lead California

down a radically different path, away from our past thirty years of failed public safety policies. Education, meaningful work, healthy food, well-kept housing, and mental and medical healthcare are the bedrock of thriving communities. We need to dedicate all of our resources to social and economic innovation that will build these foundations for all communities of California.

We cannot solve California's budget crisis or build strong, stable communities without stopping prison and jail expansion, reducing the number of people in prison, and using progressive revenue measures and the saved resources to stop cuts to education and our vanishing social safety net.

Image courtesy of Kevin Rashid Johnson



### **THE CRISIS INSIDE: PRISONERS DEMAND BASIC RIGHTS**

In 2011, people locked in the torturous Security Housing Unit of Pelican Bay State Prison began a hunger strike that quickly spread to at least a third of the state's prisons (as well as facilities holding California prisoners in other states) and involved the participation of at least 12,000 people behind bars. Highlighting the brutality of SHUs and solitary confinement, the prison system's Orwellian anti-gang policies, and the denial of basic human rights, prisoners made basic demands to improve their conditions. The suffering, struggle and demands of prisoners and their connection to the prison system as a whole were amplified by the tireless solidarity work of family and community members throughout California and across the world.

To learn more about this struggle, visit:  
<http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com>.

**WE RECOMMEND THAT THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IMMEDIATELY:**

**1. Stop All Prison and Jail Expansion** by cancelling AB 900 and providing financial incentives to counties who successfully implement alternatives to prison.<sup>9</sup>

**2. Reduce the Prison and Jail Population** by making common sense changes to sentencing and parole and expanding community-based alternatives to imprisonment.<sup>10</sup>

**3. Stop the Cuts and Invest in Our Future.** Cutting prison spending and increasing progressive revenue measures are the best way to pay for education, affordable housing, jobs, and mental and medical healthcare for everyone.



Image courtesy of Bec Young, <http://justseeds.org/criticalresistance/bec.html>

# STOP ALL PRISON AND JAIL EXPANSION

Californians desperately need a moratorium on prison and jail expansion. Using scant public resources to expand prisons and jails further drains our communities, leaving less money for schools, hospitals, libraries, healthcare, job training, and public transportation.

**Building new prisons has not ameliorated the crowding crisis, it has only spread terrible conditions throughout more buildings and more lives. The history of California has clearly shown us that expansion fails to improve conditions but succeeds in bankrupting social services and higher education.**

Expansion is a false solution to improving conditions inside.

Across the country, many states are exploring ways to close prisons. According to a recent report by *The Sentencing Project*, at

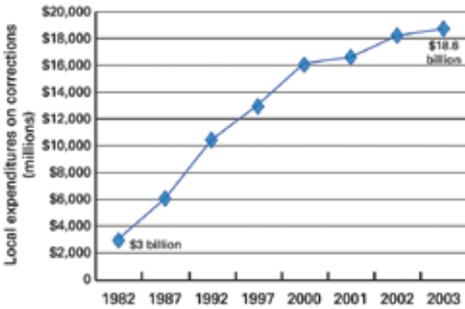
least 13 states closed prison institutions or strongly considered doing so in 2011. Michigan alone closed 21 facilities.<sup>11</sup> These states have shown that prison closures can be accomplished without negatively impacting public safety, and California needs to follow their example.

Since realignment began, California is downsizing the prison population by almost 1,000 people per week, and the Governor projects a further reduction of 30,985 in the 2012-13 budget year.<sup>12</sup> We don't need more prison cells, but the state is moving forward with AB 900, a bill that finances 53,000 prison and jail beds at an estimated cost of \$12 billion to taxpayers, after debt.<sup>13</sup> The bill was passed without public review in 2007 before realignment and before the economic crisis. It was a bad bill in 2007, and it would be a disaster to keep it on the books today.

## **CAGES ARE TOO COSTLY**

Prison and jail expansion comes at high costs to Californians. Some of the costs to people in prison and their communities include isolation, exacerbated mental and medical health problems, family separation, financial devastation, and other types of damaging instability. Once released, many former prisoners struggle to find employment or housing because of pervasive discrimination.

Local\* spending on corrections has increased over 519 percent since 1982.



\*Local spending includes counties and municipalities.

Source: Sabol, William J., Heather Couture, and Paige M. Harrison. 2007. *Prisoners in 2006*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics; Pastore, Ann L., and Kathleen Maguire, eds. *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics Online*, Table 6.61.2005. <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/pdf/t6612005.pdf>

While the staggering social costs of mass imprisonment target poor communities and communities of color, the fiscal impacts affect every Californian. In the first weeks of 2012, \$600 million in trigger cuts to education and health services went into effect just as 20 counties scrambled to apply for \$602 million in funding for jail expansion that will force further cuts to local services as counties pay for operation, maintenance costs, and debt for their new or expanded jails.<sup>14</sup> These are political decisions that will not secure a safer future for Californians.

2012 marks the start of the second phase of AB 900 funding. AB 900 offered a first phase of funds in 2009, totaling \$617 million and enabling the construction of almost 5,500 new jail beds.<sup>15</sup> In 2011, the state made it easier for counties to build jails by agreeing to cover 90 percent of expansion costs.<sup>16</sup> In total, AB 900 provides:

**\$1.2 BILLION FOR LOCAL JAIL BED EXPANSION.** 11 counties were approved for funding for jail construction through Phase 1;<sup>17</sup> 20 counties submitted applications for Phase II,<sup>18</sup> and 11 of those counties were recently approved. In L.A. County, where jail conditions are under federal investigation for widespread police brutality and medical neglect, the Sheriff has proposed spending \$1.4 billion to expand the largest jail system in the country.<sup>19</sup> Examples like this can be found around the state.

**\$2.6 BILLION FOR RE-ENTRY PRISONS.**<sup>20</sup>

Rather than build expensive re-entry prisons, California should invest in community-based re-entry support and services that will reunite families and reduce recidivism.

**\$1.1 BILLION TO CONSTRUCT NEW HEALTH CARE FACILITIES.**

Rather than pay enormous sums to imprison very ill people, we should release them to the community and use the saved funds to stop cuts to healthcare statewide.

**\$2.4 BILLION TO CONSTRUCT INFILL BEDS AT EXISTING PRISONS** intended to replace so-called “temporary” housing in gymnasiums, day rooms, and other public spaces in prisons.<sup>21</sup>

**AT LEAST \$4.6 BILLION IN INTEREST.**<sup>22</sup> One of the many hidden costs of prison construction is years of unnecessarily high interest payments on Lease Revenue

Bonds, which add substantially to the state’s “Wall of Debt.”<sup>23</sup> Building today will lead to general fund cuts for years to come.

**AT LEAST \$1.6 BILLION PER YEAR IN OPERATING COSTS.**<sup>24</sup> This is likely a conservative number, given that the medical and mental health beds will have much higher than average operating costs.

**Canceling all jail and prison construction will prevent unnecessary spending and human suffering not only this year, but for decades to come.**



### **COUNTIES NEED BETTER OPTIONS**

Realignment will help reduce the prison population only if the state stops funding for jail expansion and creates meaningful financial incentives for counties to invest in community-based alternatives to imprisonment.

Unfortunately, the state of California is doing the opposite. Under AB 900, the only funding provided is for construction and the most funding is given to counties who have failed to keep their imprisonment rates down. This effectively penalizes counties with the best practices and lowest jail populations.

Expanding the number of jail cells will siphon money away from vital county services. State funding will help cover construction costs, but provides no funds to staff or operate new facilities. There will be increased debt payments due to new operating costs and the millions often required to upgrade needed infrastructure, ranging from new lights to road improvements. Building more cages will only exacerbate the budget crisis in municipalities. AB 900 is replicating the state’s bad budget choices at a county level.

# REDUCE THE PRISON AND JAIL POPULATION

California's prison, sentencing, and parole systems have been found to be inhumane, ineffective, and far too costly by dozens of criminal justice experts, government analysts, and community organizations.<sup>25</sup> Laws and policies that created California's prison disaster must be changed; without these reforms realignment will be a failure. We need sentencing laws, parole policies, alternatives to incarceration, re-entry support, and expanded "good-time" credits that turn us away from mass incarceration; and we still need well-funded programming for those who remain inside.

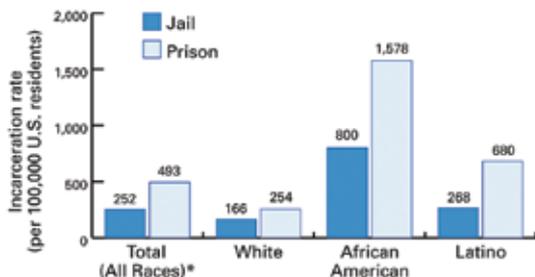
In 2011, the number of people in our state prisons dropped from 163,152 to 132,167 due to realignment, saving California an estimated \$453.3 million in 2011-12 and \$1.1 billion the next year.<sup>26</sup>

According to the *American Civil Liberties*

*Union*, recent reform efforts in several states have undermined the erroneous notion that mass incarceration is necessary to protect our public safety. States like New York, which depopulated its prisons by 20 percent from 1999 to 2009, and Texas, which has stabilized its prison population growth since 2007, are presently experiencing the lowest state crime rates in decades.<sup>27</sup>

California can't wait to follow suit. Based on proposals from the Legislative Analysts Office, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and policies in other states, CURB recommends several strategies for reducing the state prison population. These are just some of the dozens of evidence-based opportunities for safely reducing our prison population. For more recommendations, see CURB's *50 Ways to Reduce the Prison Population*.<sup>28</sup>

**Prison incarceration rates are more racially disparate than jail incarceration rates, but African Americans are still more than four times as likely as whites to be in jail.**



\*Jail total includes "other" category, prison total does not.

Source: Harrison, Paige M., and Allen J. Beck. 2006. *Prison and jail inmates at midyear 2005*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics; Harrison, Paige M., and Allen J. Beck. 2006. *Prisoners in 2005*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

## STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE STATE PRISON POPULATION:

**PAROLE ELIGIBLE LIFERS.** The Board of Parole Hearings currently denies parole to more than 80 percent of parole-eligible life prisoners.<sup>29</sup> There are nearly 10,000 people in California serving life sentences who are eligible for parole.<sup>30</sup>

**END LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE FOR JUVENILES.** Alaska, Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Montana, New Mexico, and Oregon prohibit Juvenile Life Without Parole.<sup>31</sup> Over 250 youth are serving this sentence in California; each new youth sentenced to life without parole will cost the state an estimated \$2 to \$2.5 million.<sup>32</sup>

**ELIMINATE SENTENCES OF LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE.** California has more than 3,000 people serving life without parole.<sup>33</sup> On average, it costs \$1 million for each person who spends at least 40 years incarcerated.<sup>34</sup>

**EXPAND MEDICAL PAROLE AND UTILIZE COMPASSIONATE RELEASE.** In 2010, the health care costs of 1,300 people in prison exceeded \$100,000 per year each. People released on medical parole would be able to enroll in federal health programs, which they are not allowed to do in prison.<sup>35</sup>

### IMPLEMENT AND EXPAND THE ALTERNATIVE CUSTODY PROGRAM.

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation estimates that about half of California's female prison population—approximately 5,000—meet the basic criteria for the program but only twenty people were released in 2011.<sup>36</sup> The barriers to qualifying should be removed, and the program should be expanded to include people incarcerated in men's prisons. Efforts should be made to ensure that Alternative Custody does not rely on local lock-up facilities, instead of true alternatives to custody as is the program's intent.



*Image courtesy of Melanie Cervantes,  
<http://justseeds.org/criticalresistance/melanie.html>*

### **ELIMINATE THE THREE STRIKES LAW.**

California should look to states like South Carolina and Texas and eliminate Three Strikes and other habitual offender laws that allow for automatic sentence enhancements based on prior convictions. The current cost of housing strikers is approximately \$1.5 billion annually.<sup>37</sup> Imprisoning a person for 25 years in California costs taxpayers, on average, around \$1.1 million. A life sentence could reach \$1.8 million, without adding the higher medical costs of aging.<sup>38</sup>

### **AMEND THE THREE STRIKES**

**LAW** so that the second and third strike must also be classified as “serious or violent.” The 42,000 people now in prison under three strikes will cost the state a total of \$19.2 billion. 53 percent of those people are serving a sentence for a non-serious, non-violent crime.<sup>39</sup>

**RELEASE OR DISCHARGE ALL PEOPLE WHO ARE TERMINALLY ILL AND PERMANENTLY MEDICALLY INCAPACITATED.** Releasing the 1,500 sickest prisoners would save the state an estimated \$500 million.<sup>40</sup>

**CREATE PAROLE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ELDERLY.** Fifteen states and the District of Columbia define processes for releasing

older prisoners, with ages covered ranging from 45 to 70 years old.<sup>41</sup> Implementing the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) recommendation to release all nonviolent prisoners over 55 on parole would save the state more than \$9 million dollars in a single year.<sup>42</sup> 90 percent of California prison healthcare costs come from older prisoners.<sup>43</sup> This population has the lowest recidivism rate of any segment of the prison population.<sup>44</sup>



Image courtesy of Mary Sutton

### **MANDATE ALTERNATIVES TO PRISON**

such as drug treatment, restitution, or community-based service for people serving a sentence for possession of a controlled substance, petty theft with a prior or receiving stolen property.

### **DECRIMINALIZE DRUG POSSESSION.**

Reduce penalties for drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor. States such as South Carolina, Kentucky, and Ohio have reclassified some low-level drug felonies to misdemeanors.<sup>45</sup>

**RECLASSIFY LOW-LEVEL FELONIES TO MISDEMEANORS.** South Carolina, Kentucky, and Ohio have reclassified

low-level felonies, such as nonviolent low-level theft, into misdemeanors with no prison time.<sup>46</sup>

**EXPAND GOOD TIME CREDITS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN PRISON,** including those in the SHU, for completing treatment, educational, and vocational programs.

**PROVIDE EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING TO EVERY PERSON IN PRISON.** These basic services are critical to ensuring that people coming home have the skills to reintegrate successfully into society.

This list demonstrates the range of options we have at hand to resolve our prison and budget crises. These proposals are overlapping in both human and fiscal impact. For example, many third strikers are also over 55; many of the people who would benefit

from restored programming would also benefit from parole reform. By implementing one, some, or all of these reforms, California could reduce the prison population and save anywhere from several million to several billion dollars.

Reducing the prison population is critical to the health of those locked up and their loved ones, and the money saved through such measures should be re-invested in the basic services that help all communities thrive.



*Photo courtesy of Bill Hackwell*

## STRATEGIES TO REDUCE COUNTY JAIL POPULATIONS:

Many counties are housing thousands of Californians in jail conditions that mirror the horrendous prison conditions the Supreme Court deemed cruel and unusual punishment. A number of policies have reduced jail populations in county systems across the country, saving counties money, reducing crime, and reducing the multiple harms of mass incarceration.<sup>47</sup> We believe counties should:

### CHANGE PRE-TRIAL RELEASE POLICIES.

Prior to realignment almost three quarters of those held in California jails had not been convicted and sentenced and simply could not afford bail. Reduce bail and release more people on their own recognizance.

**CHANNEL SAVINGS** from reduced jail and prison populations into community services that increase community well-being and reduce crime.

### PROVIDE FUNDING FOR FRONT-END SERVICES

such as education, employment and housing. Jurisdictions that spend more money on education, employment, drug treatment, health care, childcare, vocational and parental training, transportation vouchers and affordable housing experience lower crime rates.

### SPEND COUNTY FUNDS ON COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

rather than incarcerating those with mental health or substance abuse problems.



**REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CRIMES** for which jail or prison time is the expected sentence. Establish alternatives to criminalization and incarceration such as restitution, restorative justice, and community service.

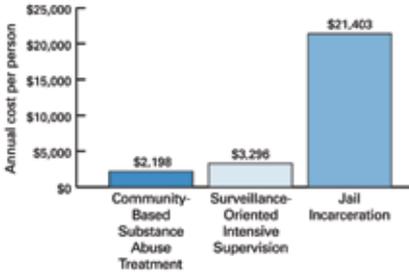
**DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION** such as community-based supervision. Community-based corrections would permit people to be removed from the jail, allowing them to continue to work, stay with their families, and be part of the community.

For updated information on how different counties are responding to realignment, see CURB's Realignment Report Card,<sup>48</sup> available at: <http://curbprisonspending.org/?p=790>



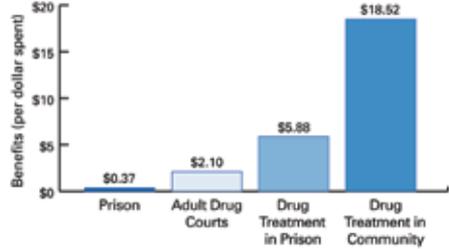
As the state takes its first and still tentative steps away from the disaster of mass incarceration, counties face two starkly different alternatives: to reproduce the state's humanitarian and budget crises by expanding their jail systems or to invest in community-based solutions that build lives, families and neighborhoods; that reduce crime and recidivism; and that create more vibrant, healthy, and prosperous communities.

Counties can save thousands of dollars by using community-based services over incarceration.



Sources: Aos, Steve, Polly Phipps, Robert Barnoski, and Roxanne Lieb. 2001. *The comparative costs and benefits of programs to reduce crime*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy; Corrections Yearbook, 2002. Data provided by Sandy Schilling, National Institute of Corrections, September 7, 2007.

Community-based drug treatment provides bigger returns than prison.



Sources: Aos, Steve, Marna Miller, and Elizabeth Drake. 2006. *Evidence-based public policy options to reduce future prison construction, criminal justice costs, and crime rates*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov>; Aos, Steve. 2003. *The criminal justice system in Washington State: Incarceration rates, taxpayer costs, crime rates and prison economics*. Olympia: Washington State Institute of Public Policy.

## ENSURING CLOSED PRISONS STAY CLOSED

On the rare occasion that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation says a facility is “closed,” the empty prison is actually awaiting conversion into some other type of lock-up. For a prison closure to effectively reduce the number of people locked up it must be permanent. Privatizing institutions, transferring prisoners out of state, and converting facilities into different types of prisons or detention centers are not solutions. If closed prisons cannot be converted into community-strengthening institutions, they should be torn down immediately.

## STOP THE CUTS AND INVEST IN OUR FUTURE



Photo courtesy of Mary Sutton

In 2011, California faced a record deficit of over \$26 billion, and instead of enacting new laws or taxes to generate more revenue, politicians chose to drastically reduce social spending on basic needs. When legislators finally agreed on \$14 billion dollars in cuts and another \$12 billion in accounting gimmicks to pass a balanced budget, they passed the costs of a structurally flawed financial system onto us. Thousands of Californians lost good-paying government jobs and access to vital healthcare services, and had to push aside their dreams of attending community or state colleges. The ramifications will haunt us for decades:

- Both the California State Universities and University of California systems faced \$650 million in cuts,<sup>49</sup> raising the cost of attending public university in California by 21 percent.<sup>50</sup>
- Childcare services through the Department of Education were cut by 11 percent, causing 25,000 children to lose access to preschool and childcare.<sup>51</sup>
- Medi-Cal was slashed by \$1.7 billion. Since 2009, adults on Medi-Cal have lost access to dental and psychological services and faced new copayments for services. Cuts in 2011 also led to a rise in premiums —seniors now pay \$115.40 per month for Medicare services such as doctors' appointments and outpatient health services.<sup>52</sup>

Despite outcry from across the state and historic protests, the cuts kept coming. Halfway through the year, Governor Brown passed an additional \$1 billion in “trigger cuts” to K-12 and higher education, home care services, and childcare. Far from seeding California’s revival, the 2011 budget sold out California’s long-term economic well-being. There is no economic or political justification for the austerity measures we suffered and continue to face. With no signs of the recession

abating soon, cuts loom again in California’s future, unless we make our voices loud and clear. Our state has a budget that benefits corporations and the wealthiest Californians. It is time to reinvest in California’s future by building a Budget for Humanity.

Generating new revenue is critical to restoring California. There are many ways to bring in more money; here are some of the measures we support:

**1. REINSTATE PROPERTY TAX** by reforming or repealing Proposition 13<sup>53</sup>

**2. CLOSE CORPORATE TAX LOOPHOLES**, such as the loophole that allows commercial property to be taxed at less than market value<sup>54</sup>

**3. INSTATE AN OIL SEVERANCE TAX**<sup>55</sup>

**4. APPLY A FORECLOSURE TAX TO BANKS**<sup>56</sup>

**5. INCREASES TAXES ON THE WEALTHIEST 1 PERCENT**<sup>57</sup>

**6. DECRIMINALIZE AND TAX MARIJUANA**

**7. TAX FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS** (Tobin tax)

The future of California depends upon our willingness to make progressive revenue reforms and to redirect our tax dollars from prisons to community social services and education.

# ACHIEVING A BUDGET FOR HUMANITY

Our ideas are not new, or even controversial, but to achieve them we need people power. With your help, we can create a Budget for Humanity in three steps:

- 1. STOP ALL PRISON AND JAIL EXPANSION.**
- 2. REDUCE THE PRISON AND JAIL POPULATION.**
- 3. STOP THE CUTS AND INVEST IN OUR FUTURE.**



Californians want a Budget for Humanity, and Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) is working to realize this vision. We are a statewide alliance of over 40 organizations working to curb prison spending by reducing the number of people in prison and the number of prisons in California. Our membership spans the entire state and includes currently and formerly incarcerated people, family members with loved ones locked up, residents from prison towns, youth, organizations that provide services to people returning from prison, advocacy organizations, community-based groups, and other concerned individuals.

We work locally and statewide to reduce prison spending and the prison and jail population. We work with local residents across the state to ensure county governments do not replicate our state's bad budget choices by building or expanding jails. We advocate statewide and in the legislative process to end policies that increase incarceration rates, such as Life Without Parole for Juveniles. We are building a grassroots movement of Californians to enact a statewide ban on new prison and jail construction so we can redirect our tax dollars into social services and release our loved ones. We hope you will join us.

## **FIVE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO JOIN THE FIGHT:**

### **1. SIGN ON TO THE BUDGET FOR HUMANITY.**

Signed statements will be presented to local and state representatives.

Visit: <http://curbprisonspending.org/>

### **2. CONTACT A CURB REPRESENTATIVE TO GIVE A PRESENTATION**

at your organization, home, school, place of worship, or community center.

### **3. JOIN CALIFORNIANS UNITED FOR A RESPONSIBLE BUDGET.**

CURB seeks to curb prison spending by reducing the number of people in prison and the number of prisons in the state. We are always seeking new member organizations who are working on issues related to incarceration or who are otherwise concerned with our state budget priorities.

### **4. SUPPORT PEOPLE RETURNING HOME FROM PRISON.**

Support organizations that provide reentry services and efforts to change the policies that discriminate against people with felony convictions.

### **5. LEARN MORE!**

Find out what is happening in your community to stop the expansion of California's prisons and jails.



**For more information:  
contact CURB at 510-435-1176,  
email: [info@curbprisonspending.org](mailto:info@curbprisonspending.org),  
or visit our website at [www.curbprisonspending.org](http://www.curbprisonspending.org).**

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The work to stop the building of more and more cages, the work to stop putting more and more people in them, the work to get people out and back into their communities is only as strong as the work to regain and defend the human rights of formerly imprisoned people. You can't have one without the other, and fortunately, one makes the other stronger.

—Dorsey Nunn, *All of Us or None*

Right here in the Central Valley, our family members are experiencing some of the worst prison and jail conditions ever. People inside have been forced to launch hunger strikes to bring attention to the ongoing inhumane and brutal conditions of California's prisons. People who have loved ones that are locked up, especially those with children, are locked out of services and programs due to the extension of collateral punishment onto our families. Latino and African American families in this state have been destroyed, separated, and left destitute. Right now realignment funding in Fresno County is being used as a cash cow, with law enforcement taking 94.1% of our taxpayer money. A meager 5.9% is going into alternative services and programs. Realignment in Fresno County can be a successful repositioning of county resources if community programs and services are taken seriously. It's time to push for what we want, and fight back!

—Debbie Reyes, *California Prison Moratorium Project*

Communities and organizations working in California are forcing the Prison Industrial Complex to contend with what it does, with the ways it has fractured communities and people by removing and torturing them in an attempt to erase their existence. A campaign for a prison and jail moratorium continues the history of the struggle to stop the growth of the prison system. The Budget for Humanity presents the opportunity to unify those who fight the growth of imprisonment throughout the state and prevent any more of us from being devoured by this imprisoning beast.

—Woods Dewitt, *Critical Resistance*

Women, as the fastest growing sector of the prison population, are impacted in a particularly brutal way by California's prison crisis. They face severe overcrowding, deteriorating, inhumane health care conditions, sexual abuse, and lack of educational programming inside prison. Separation of mothers from their children tears apart the fabric of the community. Women in prisons and jails, former prisoners, and women in communities throughout the state have been at the forefront of the fight against the prison system. As a part of CURB, we are working to shift California's priorities away from locking people up and toward building quality education, meaningful work, and sustainable healthcare. Ending prison and jail expansion, reducing prison and jail populations, and investing in our communities makes California a healthier and safer place for women, for children, and for everyone who lives and works here.

—Diana Block, *California Coalition for Women Prisoners*



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