Overview of 2020-21 Proposed Corrections Budget

Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) is a statewide coalition of organizations working to reduce the number of people imprisoned in California and the number of prison and jail beds in the state.

Governor Newsom’s 2020-21 proposed budget for Corrections has increased to $13.4 billion, up from $12.8 billion last year (2019-20). This wasteful increase in the general fund includes a steady $1.5 billion for local community corrections, nearly $800 million for enhancing law enforcement activities and growth, and approximately $127 million to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), down about half from the amount allocated to the agency last year. The total state funding for Corrections has reached an all time high of $16.5 billion.

Since 2013, the state prison system has gone from 150% of design capacity to just below the court-ordered cap of 137.5%. Yet spending within the overall corrections budget has grown steadily every year, from $8.9 billion (2012-2013) to this coming year’s proposed $13.4 billion. In 2019, Governor Newsom announced his desire to close a CA prison during his term. With allocations to prison construction exceeding $100 million dollars and an ongoing $10.1 million to expand prisons under the guise of “educational rehabilitation and mentorship” for youth, there is no clear and serious plan to realize that goal. CURB is calling on Governor Newsom to create a 5 year plan to close 1-3 prisons in CA in response to failing infrastructure—not additional prison construction and renovation. This will require better implementation of existing sentencing reform and further, more aggressive sentencing reform, including repealing the 3-Strikes Law, ending sentencing enhancements that contribute to the extremely long sentences being served in California prisons, and an increase in state funding to build the capacity of community-based diversion programs that support alternatives to incarceration. Youth should be released to experience educational development in the community, not in new cages. CURB maintains its opposition to any and all forms of prison construction and urges the state to join Californians in setting forward a solid plan.

Due to prison realignment, shifting people from state prisons to local jails in 2011, extreme violence and harm to people in local county jails has been reported. Governor Newsom plans to implement county jail oversight, wasting hundreds of millions of dollars on County Probation Departments and providing technical assistance to counties through the BSCC. The effort to protect incarcerated people from the harms that are inherent in local jails and supervision is necessary, but the root causes of harm are not being addressed with county jail oversight and increasing funding to Probation supervision. The current budget also allocates $124.8 million to Probation to stabilize SB678 funding. Historically, at its worst this funding has been mismanaged by Probation and at its best has been funneled to community based organizations to support people coming out of incarceration. The administration needs to pair this with the implementation of pretrial release programs that preserve the presumption of innocence and that provide needs and strengths assessments for people rather than relying on racist risk assessment tools conducted by Probation Departments. To develop a community based system of care across California that prevents incarceration and provides care instead of cages, Governor Newsom must not rely on Probation Departments but instead allocate funds directly to community based organizations, that prioritizes capacity building and culturally humble service delivery practices for the most marginalized Californians.
Population Reduction: The average daily adult population of people in prison is now projected to be 124,655, a decrease of 1 percent from spring projections and a decrease of over 1,000 people from the 2019 Budget Act which estimated a daily population of 125,871. The average daily population of people paroled is now projected to be 50,453 in 2020-21, an increase of less than 1 percent from spring projections.

- **Implementation of Prop. 57:** Estimated to reduce the average daily adult prison population by approximately 8,600 in 2020-21, and by approximately 13,000 in 2022-23. The estimated impact of Proposition 57 has been incorporated into the population projections. Although, other sentencing reform that may also reduce prison population has not been included in these projections.

- **Prop 47 Savings:** An estimated net General Fund savings of $122.5 million, an increase of $44 million over the estimated savings in 2019-20. This increase is attributable primarily to increased savings resulting from the more individuals serving time in county jail and/or being placed on county Probation instead of being sent to state prison.

Construction and Facility Changes: The Administration is looking to ending most of its private prison contracts by prioritizing the facilities that house men, but does not have a plan to do the same for private prisons that house women. If the trends in population declines hold, the Administration will close a state-operated prison within the next five years. CURB is committed to encouraging further population reductions and pushing for more than one prison closure in the next 5 years.

- **Youth Offender Rehabilitative Communities:** The Budget includes $6.2 million General Fund in 2020-21, and $10.1 million ongoing, to establish programs that cage people under the age of 26 together at select adult prisons in “campus-style environments.” A model program will be established at Valley State Prison in Chowchilla. CURB maintains that the best learning environment for youth is in community, not inside cages.

- **California Rehabilitation Center:** $6 million to rebuild and upgrade healthcare treatment areas at CRC. This is one of California's older prisons, which should be prioritized for closure, not upgraded.

- **Suicide Prevention and Intake Cell Retrofits:** $3.8 million to retrofit 64 intake cells across the state for segregated housing which are being used to isolate people experiencing mental health needs. A dangerous plan, which may exacerbate people’s mental health crisis.

- **Video Surveillance:** $21.6 million General Fund in 2020-21 and $2.1 million ongoing General Fund to expand video surveillance capabilities at Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility, Salinas Valley State Prison, and California Institution for Women which expands the tools and technology of the Prison Industrial Complex.

- **Roof replacement projects:** $78.2 million General Fund over two years for roof replacement projects, including design funding at Pelican Bay State Prison and California State Prison, Sacramento. To date, ten institutions have received one-time funding for major roof replacement and repair projects. With funding for these 2 prisons, 15 remaining institutions are scheduled for future roof replacement and repair projects over the next 6 years. CURB maintains that decarceration is the fiscal and moral solution to address crumbling prison infrastructure.

- **Juvenile Justice Reorganization:** The Budget transfers $264.3 million (including $258.9 million General Fund) and 1,303.9 positions from CDCR to reflect the transition of the Division of Juvenile Justice to the Department of Youth and Community Restoration (see the Health and Human Services chapter for additional information). While this is healthy shift, moving CDCR positions, that maintain a punishment lens, may compromise the purpose of this transition.

Additional Budget Changes:
- **Healthcare in Prison:** The budget includes billions of dollars to increase access to healthcare in prison including $3.6 billion General Fund for health care services programs, $9.9 million General Fund in 2020-21 and $11.8 million ongoing General Fund in 2021-22 for oversight, $1.5 million General Fund in 2020-21, increasing to $2.3 million ongoing General Fund by 2024-25, to establish dedicated funding for replacing and maintaining CDCR’s medical imaging equipment, $5.9 million General Fund in 2020-21, increasing to $8.4 million ongoing General Fund by 2024-25, to support expansion of telepsychiatry and another $1.4 million ongoing General Fund for contract psychiatry services.

- **Education in Prison:** The Budget includes $26.9 million General Fund in 2020-21, eventually declining to $18 million ongoing to provide increased access to modern technology for inmates participating in academic and vocational training to address this gap and better prepare people in prison for reentry. CDCR is also partnering with California State University system to establish bachelor’s degree programs at several prisons, including Valley State Prison in Chowchilla. The Budget includes $1.8 million General Fund in 2020-21, and $3.5 million ongoing for tuition, books, materials, training, and equipment for students participating in the program.

- **Expanding Visitation:** The Budget includes $4.6 million ongoing General Fund to add an additional visitation day at nine institutions.

- **Corrections Officers:** The Budget includes $21.4 million General Fund in 2020-21, declining to $19.8 million ongoing General Fund in 2023-24, to enhance staff development through new training for correctional officers and counselors. These new efforts will involve the repurposing of the former Northern California Women’s Facility into a new hands-on training facility. An additional $1.8 million ongoing General Fund to centralize the Department’s discrimination complaint process.

- **Local Corrections:** $60 million General Fund annually for three years and $30 million General Fund in 2023-24, to supervise and provide probation services for people with misdemeanors. Another $11 million ongoing General Fund, in addition to baseline funding of $113.8 million General Fund, for Probation Departments to connect people to services who come into contact with law enforcement.

- **Department Of Justice:** $1.1 billion, including $370.2 million General Fund to support the DOJ as well as more than $50 million more to support others specific services that the DOJ provides, including telecommunications, tax recovery and forensic services.

- **Public Defense:** $4 million General Fund in 2020-21 and $3.5 million annually thereafter to expand the State Public Defender’s Office’s mission to include improving the quality of indigent defense services provided by counties. Also, $10 million one-time General Fund for the Board of State and Community Corrections to administer a pilot program, in consultation with the Office of the State Public Defender, to supplement local funding for indigent criminal defense.

*For more information go to curbprisonspending.org or email amberrose@curbprisonspending.org.*