



American Correctional Officer Intelligence Network

Serving America's Corrections Professionals

Know the Issues; Anticipate the Oppositions Position

Disclosure: everything begins and ends with this argument. There is no way to ascertain if the privateer's claims are accurate. They refuse to come out from behind the corporate veil and expose their total operations to the same extent that the public sector must. Demand legislative disclosure of their practices.

Cost effectiveness: every objective study to date shows little or no cost savings to the taxpayers; the GAO, Abt and Council of State Governors reports all refute the claims being made by the private prison industry. Per diems must be determined by reviewing actual expenses incurred and not be based on budget predictions.

Competition: with two corporations controlling over 2/3rds of the market there is no competition. The only competition is over developing political alliances.

Innovation: they claim to introduce innovation into Corrections but can not point to any instance where the public sector has adopted anyone of their practices. The opposite is true, the privateers have adopted the practices of the public sector.

Technology and Structural Advantages: When either the public or private sector build a new prison technological and structural advantages are available to both not just the private sector.

Market Restrictions: here maybe the one area where they may have an advantage. The purchasing of goods and services are less restrictive in the private sector, but that can be quickly remedied via the adoption of enabling legislation that would put the public sector on equal footing with the privateers in this area.

ACA accreditation: ACA standards are procedurally rather than performance based. ACA never fails a prison seeking accreditation, they advise and re-evaluate. They only monitor an accredited facility once every three years. Newer prisons designed to meet their "procedural" guidelines generally pass easily. Public facilities are older and do not lend themselves well to this method of evaluation.

Safety: There is no comparison here. Per capita the assault rates, that we know about – remember these companies only disclose what they want to – are much higher than in the public sector. The same is true of their escape rates and rates of unusual instances. The privateers routinely fail to notify local law enforcement of violence or escapes at their facilities, it's bad PR.

Staffing, Training & Experience: are the three areas from which they gain their profits. They reduce staff, decrease training, and pay lower wages and benefits increasing turnover rates. However they do have 33% more management personnel than the public sector while line staff are reduced by 14% and assault rates are 40% higher. If we aren't safe, neither is the public.