

CCA and other private prison companies generate income through contracts that are based on per diem rates. That is, the more people they incarcerate for longer periods of time, the greater their revenue. This creates a disincentive for private prison companies to support criminal justice reform efforts, as more sensible sentencing policies and alternatives to incarceration reduce the number of people who are incarcerated and thus pose a threat to their corporate profit margins.

In fact, CCA has explicitly acknowledged this:

The demand for our facilities and services could be adversely affected by the relaxation of enforcement efforts, leniency in conviction or parole standards and sentencing practices or through the decriminalization of certain activities that are currently proscribed by our criminal laws. – CCA Annual Report, 2010

Our criminal justice system embodies several important principles that mirror the teachings of our faith communities: mercy, forgiveness, redemption and reconciliation. Such principles are largely absent from the private prison industry, which has a single overriding goal: generating profit. In short, we believe that privatizing prisons – and thus privatizing and commodifying people in prison – is morally wrong from a faith perspective. There is no place in a society that values justice and believes in personal redemption for private companies that profit by keeping people behind bars. We believe that privatized prisons are inherently wrong5(r)4(i)845 s0.0009 Tc -ro

CCA further cited “estimated” cost savings at Lake Erie, but since that prison was only recently acquired by the company, such savings (if any) have not been shown. In fact, a 2010 report by the State Auditor in Arizona concluded that private prisons actually cost more to operate in that state when all relevant factors were taken into consideration.

Regardless, as noted in the General Assembly’s 2003 resolution, “Even if for-profit private prisons could achieve significant cost savings to the taxpayer, which in fact they have not been able to do, they would still be morally unacceptable.” Something that is immoral is still wrong even if it saves money – which includes CCA’s offer of 250 million pieces of silver.

Based upon the forgoing we urge you to repudiate CCA’s offer to participate in its “corrections investment initiative,” and to reject prison privatization in your state. Thank you for your time and attention in this regard, and please feel free to contact us for additional information.

Respectfully,

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