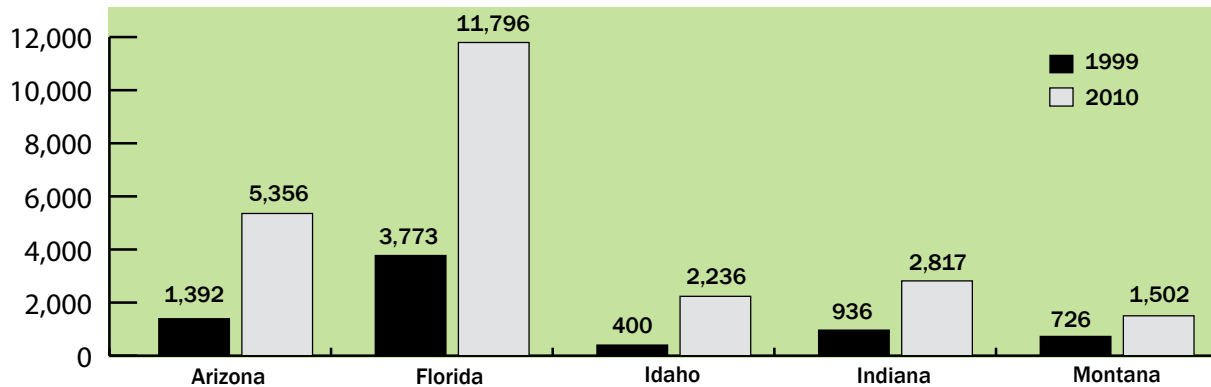




Private Prison Population Grows 80% in Past Decade

The use of private prisons in the U.S. has grown at an extraordinary rate, according to a new report from The Sentencing Project. The overall number of people held in private prisons grew 80% between 1999 and 2010 (from 71,208 to 128,195), a disproportionate increase compared to the 18% growth in the overall prison population. The portion of all prisoners held in private prisons increased 54% during this time, from 5.2% to 8.0%. In 2010, private prison contracts existed in 30 states. While some states decreased or eliminated private prison use between 1999 and 2010, others began or increased their use of them, and 5 states more than doubled the number of people in private prisons.¹ Arizona’s private prison population increased by 285% (from 1,392 to 5,356), Florida’s by 213% (from 3,773 to 11,796), Idaho’s by 459% (from 400 to 2,236), Indiana’s by 201% (from 936 to 2,817), and Montana’s by 107% (from 726 to 1,502). Authors note that private prison supporters’ claims of offering savings through efficiencies have been shown to be “mostly illusory,” and they cite evidence that private prisons sometimes offer fewer services and benefits² necessary for maintaining health and safety in the facilities. They assert that the private prison industry’s reliance on large prison populations for profits provides an inappropriate incentive to advocate public policies that will result in more incarceration without offering adequate public safety returns.

Number of People Held in Private Prisons in Five States, 1999 and 2010



Source:

Mason, C. (2012). *Too Good to Be True, Private Prisons in America*. Washington DC: The Sentencing Project.

Notes:

¹ Illinois did not utilize private prisons at all during this time.

² For staff, privately managed prisons offer less salary, benefits, and training than their peers in public facilities. For people incarcerated, privately managed prisons have been cited for offering inadequate healthcare services.

Prepared by the Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC. CHJ works to build, enhance, and sustain strong and vibrant communities by promoting policies and practices that stop the cycle of drugs and crime. We conduct research and evaluations, and offer policy analysis, trainings, and technical assistance in the fields of health and justice. For more information, visit us online at www.centerforhealthandjustice.org.

To receive Facts on Justice from CHJ, please send an email to research@tasc-il.org with “Join Facts on Justice” typed in the subject line, and your name, title, organization, and email address in the body of the message.

©2012 CHJ – Chicago, Illinois.