

Should Florida Expand Privatization of Entire Correctional Facilities?

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Florida will need to construct an additional 9,260 prison beds before June 10, 2003. The Florida Legislature will determine if two new prisons are to be constructed and operated by the state or by the private sector. Florida statutes require documented cost savings for a continuation of privatization of prison facilities. Florida's five private adult prisons, housing five percent of the state's prison population (3,000 inmates), operate at an average monthly expense of 5.9 million dollars. Differences in public and private facilities hinder accurate costs comparisons. Preliminary comparisons of the costs of public facilities with private facilities in Florida have been the subject of controversy and have reached opposite conclusions. No conclusive research has been provided which demonstrates that privatization of correctional facilities reduces costs to the state.