

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

October 5, 2011 Response to Jeff On the Cost of Corrections

Thanks for your comment, Jeff. I would be interested in seeing the conceptual diagrams of the prison industrial complex. It would be great if you could find a way to post them as comments or, if you send me hard copies, I can submit them as blog postings. My address is on my profile page.

What is interesting about 7% of the state budget going to corrections is that there are only about 20,000 people imprisoned in a state with a population around 6 million. So .34% of the population is consuming 7% of the state's resources and not contributing anything. Even if you factor in all the people on probation and parole (another 60,000 or so) that's still only 1.3% of the population consuming 7% of the state's resources.

Crime has been steadily decreasing and, until Governor Walker was elected, so was the prison population. There are thousands of prisoners languishing in prisons who no longer pose a risk to anyone. Under Governor Walker, the chances of their release just got slimmer.

We can only hope Scott Walker gets recalled in January.