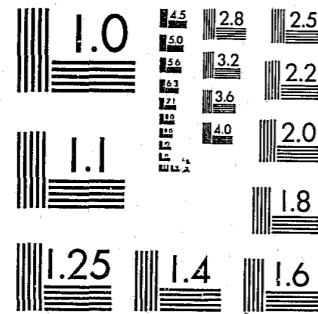


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JUN 29 1981

ACQUISITIONS

AN ANALYSIS OF  
PROPOSED PRISON CONSTRUCTION BUDGET

FOR 1981-83

Prepared by the Florida Clearinghouse on Criminal Justice  
March, 1981

INTRODUCTION

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Much attention has focused recently on Florida's correctional system. Increasing crime coupled with an exploding prison system has made corrections a major priority for the 1981 legislative session.

Faced with an annual budget request of \$250 million, correctional policy makers are asking themselves a number of important questions: Does Florida need more maximum security prisons? Do recent court orders mandate new construction and expansion of existing facilities? Do legislators have any choice but to approve the Governor's budget request for new prison construction? What are the alternatives to building more major prisons?

The following descriptions of the Florida prison population and existing facilities provide some perspective from which to evaluate the proposed budget for prison construction. This material documents the critical importance of funding community-based programs rather than major prison facilities.

All new state funds for corrections should be funneled into community-based corrections rather than traditional large institutions and programs.

Staff Report on Corrections, Parole and Probation, Florida Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, 1974.

Florida has not channeled all new funds into community-based corrections. In fact, the great majority of all new beds appropriated in the past three years have been in large institutions. There should be more alternatives to incarceration as Florida continues to have one of the highest per capita prison populations in the nation.

The Correctional Process, House Committee on Corrections, Parole and Probation, 1978.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR CONSTRUCTION

The proposed Fixed Capital Outlay Biennial Budget for prison construction submitted by the Governor's Office to the Legislature includes a request for \$53 million for some 1787 new prison beds, above and beyond the 1976 already appropriated and under construction (of which 1552 are scheduled for occupancy by 1982). Of this total of over 3700 new prison beds, only 96 or 2.6% are in community corrections centers. The remainder are in precisely the "traditional large institutions" that the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, in 1974, and the House Committee on Corrections, Parole and Probation, in 1978, sought to limit.

It should be noted that the cost per bed for "Institution B," a proposed 672-bed maximum security prison for South Florida, is \$37,696, whereas the proposed cost for expanding

Santa Fe Community Correctional Center is \$15,762 per bed. Operating costs are also lower in community-based facilities. The average per diem cost in a major prison is \$16.03, while the average per diem cost in community centers is \$13.49.

In its failure to heed the prudent and timely recommendations of two extensive legislative studies, the proposed construction budget for corrections is ignoring the bulk of conventional wisdom in this terribly critical area. That the prison experience debilitates rather than rehabilitates is a grim reality that few would dispute. At the same time, experience has demonstrated that a prisoner's ability to re-enter society successfully is enhanced by a gradual de-institutional transition in community centers before release.

In its call for expanding community corrections, the Senate Committee (1974) concluded:

*It is anticipated that the long-range effect of Florida's Community Correctional Center program will be an important reduction in the number of criminal repeaters re-cycled through the criminal justice system. (p. 359)*

#### CURRENT CLASSIFICATION LEVELS

Of the 20,895 people in Florida's prisons (as of March 2, 1981), 85% are in the state's 24 "major institutions." By contrast, only 9.2% are in community corrections centers and women's adjustment centers, 1.2% are in vocational centers, and 1.2% more are in probation and restitution centers. Prisoners are assigned to these major prisons not because of

the seriousness of their crimes or their dangerousness to society. Instead, they are assigned because there are no other options.

The addition of over 3500 beds, of which 98.9% are in major institutions, will obviously render this breakdown even more lopsided.

Figure 1

#### Florida Prison Population Data\*

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total Number of State Prisoners	20,895	100.0
In Major Prisons	17,801	85.1
In Community Corrections and "Women's Adjustment Centers"	1,939	9.2
In Road Prisons	714	3.4
In Vocational Centers	255	1.2
In Probation and Restitution Centers	241	1.2

\*Florida Department of Corrections, March 2, 1981

#### OFFENSE DATA

Of the 8292 persons admitted into Florida's state prison system during Fiscal Year (FY) 1978-79, 5799, or 69.9%, were convicted of non-violent crimes as their primary offense. Of the 19,995 "status population" under DOC custody as of June 30, 1979, 10,591, or 52.9%, were serving sentences for non-violent crimes as their primary offense. (Source: DOC Annual

Report, 1979). These figures do not include armed robbery, which accounts for an additional 10.6% of 1978-1979 admissions and 17.6% of the status population.

Figure 2

## Offense Data

	Admissions FY 78-9	% of Total Admissions	Status Pop. 6/30/79	% of Total Pop. 6/30/79
Auto Burglary or Unauthorized Use	273	3.29	411	2.06
Auto Theft	266	3.21	360	1.80
Burglary	2065	24.90	3648	18.24
Checks & Drafts, Worthless	425	5.13	674	3.37
Grand Larceny (\$50 or more)	733	8.84	1501	7.51
Narcotics (possession or sale)	821	9.90	1454	7.27
Unarmed Robbery	436	5.26	914	4.57
Resisting Officers	166	2.00	272	1.36
Stolen Property (Receiving/ Concealing)	136	1.64	299	1.50
Miscellaneous Non-Violent (Gambling, Illegal Possession of Firearms, Escape, Forgery, Fraud, Unclassified Offenses Against Government, Public Peace, Etc.)	478	5.76	1058	5.29
Subtotal	5799	69.93%	10,591	52.97%
Armed Robbery	879	10.60	3,517	17.59
TOTAL	6679	80.53%	14,108	70.56%

It is important to note that 77% of all new admissions during FY 1978-79 had no prior felony commitments.

THE PROBLEMS OF OVERCLASSIFICATION

Thus, we have a system in which well over half our prisoners are serving time for non-violent offenses, yet 85% are classified to major prisons rather than to work release centers, restitution centers, half-way houses, or community corrections centers. Appropriate classification alternatives simply do not exist for thousands upon thousands of non-dangerous offenders entering and already committed to the Florida correctional system.

Even at Florida State Prison (FSP), typically referred to as the "end of the road" intended to house "Florida's worst criminals," a large portion of the inmate population doesn't belong there. This condition was addressed by a four-member Advisory Commission, with over one hundred years of collective prison experience, appointed by the Court of the 8th Judicial Circuit to report on the causes of violence at FSP. The commission, consisting of a former State Corrections Director, a former Director of Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation Department, a former Director of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons for six years, and the Director of the University of Florida Criminal Justice Program, found that:

Transfer of inmates to less secure facilities is inordinately difficult and delayed so that many inmates are needlessly kept at Florida State Prison. Reportedly, as many as one-third of the population

are appropriate for less secure institutions.

*Report of Advisory Commission,  
September, 1980, p. 18.  
(emphasis added)*

In partial compliance with a court order that took into account the Advisory Commission recommendations, FSP has already transferred out over one hundred prisoners. Unfortunately, almost all of these have been transferred one mile down the road to Union Correctional Institution (Raiford), which is as overcrowded, violent, and "secure" as FSP.

The problem, again, is lack of system-wide classification alternatives other than hard-core, closed prisons, in which to place Florida's 10,000 - 15,000 non-dangerous prisoners and the 6,000 plus who will be entering prison this year.

Over 50% of Florida's prisoners are classified "close" (maximum security) by the Department of Corrections, typical of the "overclassification" syndrome that has characterized numerous state prison systems. For example, when experts, acting under a federal court order, assessed Alabama's prison population, they found that although 34% of the prisoners had been classified as needing "maximum security," only 3% needed such tight supervision. Conversely, although only 9% of the prisoners had been classified as good candidates for "community custody," the experts found that fully 34% of the state prisoners belonged to this minimum security category. (Report on Prison Classification Project to the Honorable Frank M. Johnson, July 1977, as quoted in Maryland Governor's Task Force "Report on Prison Overcrowding," 1977, p.46.)

The prison system, then currently has all of the maximum and medium security prisons that it needs. In fact, it has more than it needs. That is why so many short-term, non-dangerous offenders are languishing in maximum security prisons with little hope of transfer. This is also why so many prisoners are released from maximum security prisons without the benefit of a transition into the community through a graduated de-classification process.

As the House Committee on Corrections, Probation and Parole Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Management Oversight points out in its Final Report (October, 1980, p. 50):

*Direct release from maximum security facility to the freedom of the streets can be likened to the sudden decompression suffered by a diver heading to the surface too quickly. There is little or no time for adjustment to the new environment, thus increasing the possibility of recidivism.*

*Additionally, those who respond to Department rehabilitative programs are frustrated when their improved behavior does not result in the reward of a transfer to a less punitive institution. This frustration is communicated to others and negatively affects the entire population. Despondence, fear and depression are well known in maximum security institutions.*

*The current scheme of classification plays havoc in the total picture of the Department of Corrections. It leads to development of fear and survival techniques by the inmate and to unchallenged abuse of inmates by some custodial personnel.*

#### CONCLUSION

Over the past seven years, legislative corrections committees have consistently called for an expansion of community corrections within the state prison system. The extreme

imbalance in classification alternatives within Florida DOC has been well noted and the dangers of "overclassification," i.e. violence, debilitation and, ultimately, recidivism, are clear.

In spite of an abundance of major prison facilities, at the expense of community-based alternatives, some 1750 new hard prison cells are currently funded and/or under construction.

Now the people of Florida are being asked to sink \$53 million more into some 1750 more prison beds, of which 97% are in major prisons. The 1981 Legislature should not fund any more major prison construction. Instead, it should appropriate construction funds, if at all, only for community-based programs.

THE FLORIDA CLEARINGHOUSE  
on CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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FLORIDA PRISON EXPANSION

NEW PRISONS ALREADY FUNDED AND/OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Major Institutions:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Number of Beds</u>	<u>Type of Space</u>	<u>Scheduled Date On-Line</u>
Cross City C.I.	100	Dormitory	Late 1981
	112	Single-cell	Late 1981
	112	Single-cell	Late 1981
Tomoka C.I. (formerly Volusia C.I.)	200	Dormitory	6/1/81
	200	Dormitory	11/81
	224	Single-cell	Mid-1983
Polk C.I.	224	Single-cell	11/81
Baker C.I.	224	Single-cell	1/1/82
Hendry C.I.	224	Single-cell	4/15/82
	200	Dormitory	1984
Okaloosa C.I.	100	Dormitory	Early 1982

Community Correctional Centers:

Institution:

Ft. Myers C.C.C.	56		9/81
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TOTAL	1976		
% Major Institutions	97.2%		
% Community Corrections	2.8%		



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PROPOSED NEW CONSTRUCTION: 1981 CAPITAL OUTLAY BUDGET REQUEST

Major Institutions:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Number of Beds</u>	<u>Type of Space</u>	<u>Budget Request</u>
"Institution B" (to be located south of Seminole County)	672	Single-cell	\$25,331,000
South Florida Reception Center and C.I.	212 412	Reception Center Maximum Security	\$18,590,500
Volusia-Daytona C.I.	224	Single-cell	\$ 4,029,600
Hendry C.I.	200	Four Dormitories	\$ 1,451,500
Brevard C.I.	15	Disciplinary Confinement	\$ 538,400
Broward C.I.	10	Disciplinary Confinement	\$ 240,800

Community Correctional Centers:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Number of Beds</u>	<u>Type of Space</u>	<u>Budget Request</u>
Santa Fe C.C.C.	24	Addition	\$ 378,300

Acquisition/Replacement Leased Facilities:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Net Change/Capacity</u>	<u>Request</u>
Dade C.C.C.	Replace 82-bed leased ctr. with 100-bed DOC facility	+18	\$ 1,436,700
Jacksonville C.C.C.	Replace leased ctr.	-	\$ 1,402,800
Duval Women Adj. Ctr.	Acquire Leased Fac.	-	\$ 70,000

<b>TOTAL</b>	1787		\$53,469,600
% Major Institutions	97.6%		
% Community Corrections	2.4%		

<u>CUMULATIVE TOTALS</u>	<u>Major Institutions</u>	<u>Community Corrections</u>
Already Funded/Under Construction	1920	56
1981 Capital Outlay Request	1745	42
	3665 (97.4%)	96 (2.6%)

**END**