

We ask these questions:

Why keep prisoners incarcerated who are parole eligible and rehabilitated? Isn't that a gross misuse of taxpayer money? Does that not go against what the MBPP was created to do?

It is time to stop increasing the budget of the MoDOC at the cost of education and healthcare provided to the children, elderly and struggling citizens of our state. While the DOC budget increases by millions of dollars each year, education and healthcare budgets are cut drastically along with other programs that benefit our citizens.

It is true that most of those incarcerated did put themselves there. The moral dilemma here is that a **greater value is being placed on incarceration than on education and healthcare**. We already know that the undereducated make up the great majority of those incarcerated. Keeping prisoners longer than necessary presents the possibility of potential crimes from discouraged and angry prisoners once released. Here is where public safety and the best interests of society are being ignored.

The current 85% law impedes crime prevention efforts and compromises public safety. Once the offender has a parole date and reaches the lower level institutions, the waiting list for the reentry programs (educational/vocational) are so long that the offender often paroles before accessing these programs.

Additionally, the violent offender spends less time on parole than a non-violent offender. This compromises public safety even more than a violent offender serving a reduced sentence. These ex-offenders need supervision and support from parole officers to acclimate their return to society successfully.

What about jobs for former offenders? Parole costs taxpayers far less than incarceration. Some of the savings could be used to provide jobs and job training, thus turning idle prisoners into taxpaying workers.



P.O. Box 1245
Cape Girardeau MO 63702-1245

Taxpayer Sense

Excessive Educational & Health Care Cuts Deny Missourians Quality of Both



For more information on this subject go to:

Missouri CURE

Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants

Web: www.missouricure.org

e-mail: missouricure@hotmail.com

phone: 877-525-CURE (2873)

Sign our Petition supporting reform of the 85% mandatory minimum sentencing law that affects so many Missouri prisoners and their families: [http://](http://www.thepetitionsite.com/380/789/550/missouri-85-law-support-the-reduction-of-mandatory-mini/)

[www.thepetitionsite.com/380/789/550/
missouri-85-law-support-the-reduction-
of-mandatory-mini/](http://www.thepetitionsite.com/380/789/550/missouri-85-law-support-the-reduction-of-mandatory-mini/)

What You Need to Know

Children and the elderly in Missouri have suffered grave cuts in programs that benefit them. Educational programs are very much needed to mold our children to today's standards and provide them a quality education. Cuts to health care deprive the elderly and poor of this state the quality of life they deserve.

K-12 Education has been drastically cut during the past 4 years. More than 100 schools have closed, causing overcrowded classrooms. This is a huge problem, creating an almost impossible situation for rigorous teaching and student learning. In addition much needed teaching positions have been eliminated. This hinders learning opportunities for students who struggle in the classroom and need more help from highly qualified teachers. The closing of these schools has created unstable transportation and has likely created the need for the additional transportation budget of \$99.8 Million for the fiscal year.

Higher Education: Colleges have taken a big hit to state scholarships and funding to help pay for student courses. College is becoming unattainable for middle and lower income students. Some cuts to higher education are as follows:

- ◆ \$89 Million reduction for 4-year higher education institutions;
- ◆ \$16.9 Million reduction for community and technical colleges.

Missourians are being forced to incur more and more debt to obtain a quality education, which will take a substantial amount of time to pay off, thus hindering the growth of our economy.

Early Learning Education: Drastic cuts have also been applied to early learning programs, denying our youngest citizens needed education and placing further day care burdens on families with low budget incomes.

Taxpayer Sense

Health Care has received huge budget cuts, including care for the disabled. In 2012 a \$20 Million cut was applied to the blind pension. The disturbing truth behind these cuts is that a handicapped woman who can barely see inches in front of her face was told she was no longer "legally blind" and her blind pension was suspended. She cannot work due to her disability and is drawing Social Security. After paying for her medical expenses she has just over \$100 left to pay her monthly bills. This places a further burden on programs that provide housing and energy assistance for low income families. An additional \$2 Million reduction was also made in local public health agency grants.

Medicaid has received steady budget cuts. Most recently the Medicaid program budget was cut by \$191.7 Million, supposedly with no change in eligibility or covered services. Obviously something is being compromised here.

Missouri Department of Corrections

One program that seems to gain steady and additional revenue is the Missouri Department of Corrections (MoDOC). The problem is that the need for those budget gains results from the Missouri Board of Probation & Parole (MBPP) failing to parole prisoners who are parole-eligible. Thousands of prisoners have been eligible for parole in level 4 and 5 prisons for 5-10 or more years. They have often had only minor conduct violations or, in many cases, no disciplinary action on their records during this time.

Due to the MBPP inaction in this regard, substantial cuts are being made to education and healthcare, programs that are beneficial and greatly needed in society today. While the prison system is booming, cuts are being made that affect the quality of life for thousands of Missourians.

What Can Be Done?

If our state legislature would form a committee to investigate and review prisoner files, they may conclude that thousands of prisoners are being held in upper level prisons longer than necessary and are denied parole for other than legitimate reasons.

The DOC budget will increase approximately \$31 Million for the next fiscal year, while education and healthcare are cut \$299.6 Million.

In 2013 the DOC budget is just 6/10 of one percent less than that for higher education. The way things have gone the past 4 years, the DOC budget could easily surpass that of higher education by the year 2015.

Why is this happening? In short, education and healthcare are being needlessly cut because the DOC and the MBPP need to keep the prison beds filled to justify their jobs and additional budget gains, as well as to qualify for Federal Grant Funds that keep the rehabilitated behind bars (i.e. 85% offenders)

Missouri's law requiring prisoners to serve a mandatory 85% of their sentence was enacted in 1994 as part of the Truth-in-Sentencing push by the federal government. Federal funds awarded for this purpose led to Missouri's prison-building boom of the 1990s. Now the aging of the prisoner population is causing geriatric units to be established in Missouri prisons. This increases the cost for taxpayers.

Parole should be granted to those eligible prisoners who are being needlessly denied. Laws should be passed to allow earlier parole for prisoners with mandatory 85% sentences who have an excellent institutional adjustment and rehabilitative accomplishments. If these things were accomplished, the prison population could soon shrink by 4,000-plus prisoners, and 2-plus prisons could be closed. This would free up tens of millions of dollars to place back into education and healthcare, where it would not be wasted.

(over)