

U.S. Releases Around 800,000 Prisoners Each Year, Most Return

PETERSBURG, Va., Jan. 30, 2012 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Most Americans don't consider prisons when lamenting scholarship reductions at their local college or higher taxes on gas when filling up at the pump. Maybe they should. According to Christopher Zoukis, author of the forthcoming "Education Behind Bars" (ISBN: 978-1934597774; Sunbury Press, December 2011), upwards of \$60 billion a year can be saved simply by educating prisoners.

According to the Journal of Correctional Education, the U.S. incarcerates over 2.3 million persons, a number equal to 5% of the world's population and 25% of the world's incarcerated population. Each of these 2.3 million prisoners costs American taxpayers \$32,000 to \$40,000 each year for food and housing. Of those 2.3 million, around 800,000 will be released each year and most, that is 70% to 85%, will return to prison within 5 years of release. The exception is prisoners who receive an education while in prison.

According to the Journal of Correctional Education, of prisoners with an AA degree, only 13.7% will return to prison, of those with a Bachelor's degree 5.6%, and those with a Master's degree 0%. The Institute for Higher Education Policy calculates the cost of educating one prisoner to be \$2,000 to \$3,782 per year, much lower than the \$40,000 per year outlay for incarceration.

While educating prisoners is an odd concept to champion, the fact that the U.S. spends \$30.1 billion each year to build more prisons should give all Americans pause. This is money siphoned off from local community colleges, state universities, defense, and much needed public work projects, not to mention every American's wallet.

With the January 2012 publication of "Education Behind Bars," a comprehensive resource delineating the financial and social benefits of [educating prisoners](#) will finally be available.

For [prison education](#) news as it breaks and an ongoing dialogue about the merits of educating prisoners, head over to <http://PrisonEducation.com> or email Christopher Zoukis directly at ChrisZoukis@gmail.com.

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