

Private Prison Reform in Oklahoma

Rather than rewarding rehabilitation and success, Oklahoma's guaranteed minimum occupancy payments to private prison operators incentivize cutting corners and warehousing inmates at the lowest possible cost.



2,390 INMATES

Private prison operators in Oklahoma hold **2,390 inmates**, or **10.3 percent of the state's prison population**,¹ in just one facility operated by The GEO Group.²

Sole Private Prison in Oklahoma:



■ **Lawton Correctional Facility** (Lawton)–
The GEO Group



The GEO Group has cornered the market with **anti-competitive laws** and **unaccountable contracts**, all while raking in **\$77 million** in state funds per year.³



Further, Oklahoma law dictates that any organization wanting to bid on **private prison management contracts** must have a “demonstrated history” of operational experience.

This means if a group of corrections professionals starts a new business to challenge the legacy operators, Oklahoma law forbids the state from even considering their proposal. This makes it effectively impossible for new operators to enter the market, stifling competition.

It's time to introduce accountability for private prisons through competition and contract reform.

THE SOLUTION

Performance-based contracts pay operators more if inmates recidivate less and become employed. Oklahoma should rebid all contracts to be based on performance, aligning contract incentives with the success of the state correctional system.

Oklahoma must also repeal the demonstrated history requirement and allow competitive start-ups to challenge legacy companies.

WHY IT MATTERS



Basing contract terms on **measurable outcomes** would refocus criminal justice on effective rehabilitation, which would set incarcerated individuals up for **success and improve community safety**.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Oklahoma's private prison operators need more competition and accountability to better serve the people of the Sooner State.

Oklahoma should:



- Repeal anti-competitive laws in private prison contracts and let the market work.
- Hold prisons accountable by introducing performance-based contracts that pay private prison operators based on the results they achieve.

SOURCES:

1. Oklahoma Department of Corrections. "Daily Statewide Population Report for 12/16/2024." <https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/doc/documents/population/count-sheet/2024/ICON%20COUNT%2012.16.2024.pdf>.
2. Dupuis, Jakob and Christopher Sharp. "Aligning Profit with Outcomes in Private Prison Procurement." Cicero Institute. 2024.
3. Oklahoma FY 2025 Executive Budget: Historical Data. <https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/omes/documents/bud25hd.pdf>.