

Human & Fiscal Costs of Prison

- The cost of imprisoning a woman in a federal prison is now estimated by corrections to average \$175,000 per year and can be higher than \$250,000 per year for women kept in the most isolated and segregated conditions of confinement, such as the segregated maximum security units in the prisons for women.
- In Canada, the incarceration rate of Aboriginal prisoners and women in prison continues to increase. Aboriginal people are incarcerated at a rate of 1024 per 100,000 prisoners in Canada, almost nine times the incarceration rate of non-Aboriginal people which is 117 per 100,000 people.¹
- As a result of the growing number of people awaiting trial in custody, the number of people on remand has outnumbered those serving sentences. In Ontario and Manitoba, the proportion of people on remand was over 60% in 2005/06.²
- For 2003/2004, 103 prisoners died in custody of the criminal justice system.³ While the suicide rate amongst the prisoner population continues to be higher than what is found in the community, more prisoner deaths result from acute or chronic health issues.⁴

The Costs of Incarceration

- CSC expenditures totaled \$2.8 billion in 2004/2005, up 2% in constant dollars from 2003/2004. Prisons accounted for the largest proportion (71%) of the expenditures, followed by community supervision services (14%), headquarters and central services (14%), and National Parole Board and provincial parole boards (2%). *This figure does not include policing or court costs which bring the total expenditures up to more than \$10 billion for the year.*⁵
- The use of segregation in prisons has increased in the past few years. In 1999/2000 there were 238 documented admissions into segregation, and in 2001/2002 there were 418 documented admissions, whereas in 2006/2007, the number rose to 453.⁶
- The cost of community-based options, such as probation, bail supervision and

¹ The Correctional Investigator Canada, *Annual Report of the Correctional Investigator of Canada 2005-2006* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2006) at 11.

² Statistics Canada, *Adult and Youth Correctional Services: Key Indicators* (The Daily: Wednesday, November 21, 2007) (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2007) at 2.

³ Statistics Canada, *Adult Correctional Services in Canada, 2003/2004* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2004) at 48.

⁴ Statistics Canada, *Adult Correctional Services in Canada, 2003/2004* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2004) at 48.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ The Correctional Investigator Canada, *Annual Report of the Correctional Investigator of Canada 2006-2007* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2007) at 37.

community supervision work orders, range from \$5 to \$25 per day.⁷

- The cost of incarcerating a prisoner in an Ontario provincial jail was \$141.78 per day in 2003-04.⁸
- Women with mental health issues, especially those who self-harm often have great difficulty adjusting to prison and are consequently more likely to be kept in the most isolated and segregated living conditions.⁹
- More than two thirds (71%) of the women imprisoned in isolated and segregated conditions and labeled as maximum security prisoners have histories of attempting suicide compared with 21% of men classified as maximum security prisoners.¹⁰
- In 2002-2003, when the number of women in federal custody was 376, Corrections logged 265 women admissions to administrative segregation, of which 83 were for a period of more than 10 days.¹¹
- According to the Ontario Parole and Earned Release Board, parole grants decreased from 3,833 in 1993-1994 to 361 in 2002-2003.¹² The decline of provincial parole in Ontario brings significant human, social, and economic costs considering the damaging effect of imprisonment on individuals, the lack of community support and supervision to assist community integration and minimize recidivism, and the expensive cost of keeping people in prisons.¹³
- Many women in prison are mothers, the majority of whom were sole-support parents before prison. When a mother is incarcerated, her children can also face emotional and psychological trauma from the separation. Too often they end up in child welfare systems that do not have adequate resources to fully address their needs,¹⁴ exacting further human, social and economic costs on the children and their communities.¹⁵

⁷ “Statistics for 2004/2005” Prison Justice (July 2007), online: Prison Justice <www.prisonjustice.ca>.

⁸ Statistics Canada, *Adult Correctional Services in Canada, 2003/04* (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2005) at 21.

⁹ Canadian Human Rights Commission, *Protecting Their Rights A Systematic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*. (Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2004).

¹⁰ K. Blanchette and L. Motiuk, *Maximum-Security Female and Male Federal Offenders[sic]: A Comparison*. (Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada, 1997).

¹¹ Canadian Human Rights Commission, *Protecting Their Rights A Systematic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*. (Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2004).

¹² The John Howard Society of Ontario, *Fact Sheet – Provincial Parole in Ontario: The Case for Renewal* (Toronto: John Howard Society, 2004).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Nekima Levy-Pounds, “From the Frying Pan into the Fire: How Poor Women of Color and Children are Affected by Sentencing Guidelines and Mandatory Minimums” (2007) 47 *Santa Clara Law Review*, p 288.

¹⁵ *Ibid* at 291.

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