

LaToya McBean: (240) 462-5422, lmcbean@csg.org
Marshall Clement: (646) 383-5719, mclement@csg.org
April 16, 2007
Immediate Release

Nevada's Prison Population Will Increase 61% by 2017 if Current Policies Remain Unchanged, Independent Study Finds

Nevada's prison population has been among the fastest growing in the nation, and it is projected to grow faster still over the next 10 years. To keep pace with this projected growth, the state will need to construct and operate new prisons at a cost of \$1.9 billion by 2015. Or, the state could look to other strategies, which could be less expensive and have a greater impact on public safety, according to a report released by the Council of State Governments Justice Center.

"We cannot simply appropriate billions of dollars for more prisons without having good data and the latest research available to us. That is why we have requested that experts from the Council of State Governments Justice Center provide us with a comprehensive analysis of why our prison population is growing," said Senator Mark Amodei, President Pro Tempore and Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Highlights of the study include the following:

- Nevada's prison population is projected to increase 61 percent over the next 10 years, from 13,186 to 22,141.
- Spending on corrections in Nevada is outpacing the state's spending on education and human services.
- Approximately 46 percent of people sentenced to probation are subsequently incarcerated for violating the conditions of their supervision or for committing new crimes.
- Under current policies and existing trends, the state will need to construct an additional four new prisons, five new conservation camps, and nine housing units by 2015.
- Community-based treatment for substance abuse, mental illness, or co-occurring disorders, is often not accessible for people released from prison or on probation.

“What this report makes clear is that, if we decide to leave current policies in place, we are resigning ourselves to the high rates of failure among persons on probation. Doing nothing is also, in effect, a decision to appropriate nearly \$2 billion to build and operate new prisons. In short, maintaining the *status quo* isn’t good for public safety, and it’s also not good for the state budget,” said Chairman of the Assembly Select Committee on Corrections, Parole, and Probation David Parks.

Expert consultants and authors of the report are scheduled to testify on Tuesday, April 17 at hearings before the Senate Finance Committee, Senate Judiciary Committee, Assembly Ways and Means, and the Select Committee on Corrections, Parole, and Probation.

The Justice Center’s Justice Reinvestment Initiative receives funding support through the Bureau of Justice Assistance, a division of the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Public Safety Performance Project, an operating project of The Pew Charitable Trusts. Research and analysis described in the report has been funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. The Justice Center provides practical, nonpartisan advice and consensus-driven strategies, informed by available evidence, to increase public safety and strengthen communities.

###