



American Friends Service Committee, Arizona Program

2013 Annual Report



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Quaker values In action



Photo: Chris Summitt

Message from the Director:

A recent article in the *Arizona Republic* cited me as “an outspoken critic of Arizona’s prison system.” I couldn’t be more proud. AFSC speaks out. We tell the truth, even when the truth is unpopular or controversial.

In 2013, we spoke out about the immoral, costly, and harmful practice of detaining immigrants in for-profit detention centers. We raised our voices about the Department of Corrections’ plan to spend \$50 million on 500 new maximum security prison units, which hold prisoners in conditions of isolation and solitary confinement. We told the truth about the deteriorating quality of medical care in our state’s prisons, and the negligence of the for-profit contractor being paid millions to care for sick prisoners.

And we were heard, even at the state legislature. We passed legislation to conduct a statewide study of Mental Health Courts, which divert people with mental illnesses out of prisons and into treatment. The bill also calls for creation of statewide standards for these programs, which will help to ensure the growth and success of these courts around Arizona. We brought prosecutors, defense attorneys, treatment providers, and county administrators together to discuss the importance of deferred prosecution diversion programs, in which those who successfully complete treatment can have their charges dropped, preventing them from having a conviction on their record.

In 2014, we will raise the volume and add even more voices to the chorus calling for safe, just, and effective criminal justice policy in Arizona. Thank you for *your* voice and for your support for our work.

Caroline Isaacs, Program Director

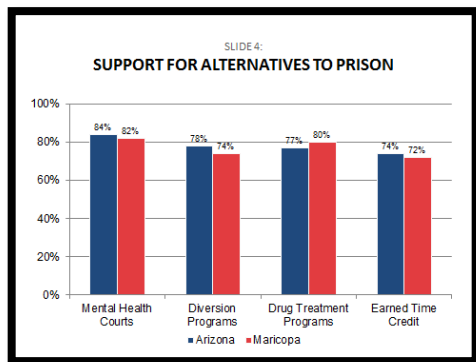
Reducing Prison Populations

In 2013, AFSCAZ commissioned the [first-ever public opinion poll on incarceration issues in Arizona](#).

600 likely voters, reflecting a representative sample of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, were asked their opinions regarding state budget spending on prisons, alternatives to incarceration, and privatization of prisons.



Legislative panel at Deferred Prosecution Roundtable (from left): Sen. Chester Crandell, Rep. Victoria Steele, AFSC Lobbyist Barry Aarons, House Speaker Rep. Andy Tobin, and Sen. David Bradley



The results were extremely encouraging: Voters support alternative ways of handling low-risk, non-violent offenders as a strategy for helping to reduce the state budget deficit. Three quarters of voters would rather have judges decide sentences for non-violent offenders than have mandatory sentences applied. And Fifty-five percent of Arizona voters and 53 percent of Maricopa County voters think it is a bad idea to privatize prisons.

Legislative Victory

AFSCAZ passed HB 2010 and secured full funding of \$90,000 from the appropriations process. The bill directs the Administrative Office of the Courts to conduct a survey of existing Mental Health Courts and draft statewide guidelines for these courts. Mental health courts divert individuals with serious mental illness into treatment programs instead of incarceration. By conducting the survey, the state will gather important information about the success of these programs, which we hope will help to encourage the expansion of such courts throughout the state, keeping greater numbers of mentally ill people out of prison.



Nicole Porter, Director of Advocacy at the Sentencing Project, was on hand for our protest of the 30th anniversary of Corrections Corporation of America—complete with a CCA birthday piñata!

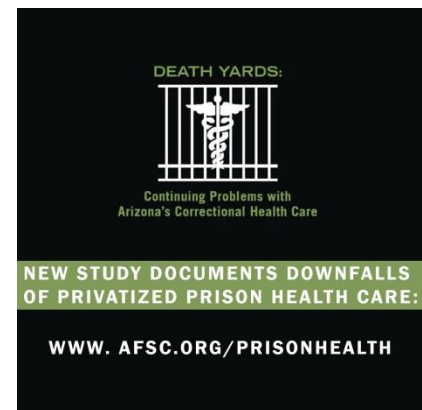
Opposing Prison Expansion and For-Profit Incarceration

In 2013, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) celebrated 30 years in the business of for-profit incarceration. To mark this inauspicious occasion, AFSCAZ participated in days of national action leading up to the

corporation's annual shareholder meeting in Nashville. Here in Tucson, we held a huge protest and press conference outside the Federal Courthouse, where hundreds of immigrants are criminally prosecuted every week and sent to for-profit detention centers run by CCA.

Death Yards Report

In November of 2013, AFSCAZ released [a scathing report](#) on the continued deterioration of medical and mental health care inside state prisons. The report documented fourteen individual case studies of prisoners experiencing medical neglect, delays and denials of care, and other unconstitutional conditions. The report further revealed that there had been 50 prisoner deaths in the state prison system in just the first 8 months of 2013.



The dangerous conditions documented in the report are due in part to the privatization of medical care. The current for-profit contractor, Corizon, is the nation's largest private prison medical company, operating in 29 states. The company has been sued over 600 times over the last five years. The report concludes that contracting out the medical care at ADC has resulted in more bureaucracy, less communication, and increased healthcare risks for prisoners.

Ending Long-Term Solitary Confinement

This year, Governor Brewer and the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) have doubled down on their commitment to long-term

solitary confinement by moving forward with plans to build 500 new maximum-security prisoner beds. At a moment when the Arizona prison population has been dropping for years, and at a cost of \$50 million dollars, there is no better example of Arizona's outdated addiction to incarceration. As Arizona further entrenches itself in reliance on unnecessary and expensive cages, the prisoner advocacy work of AFSCAZ has never been more critical.

Campaign: Arizona is Maxed Out!



In response, AFSCAZ partnered with the ACLU of Arizona for a combined statewide campaign aimed at halting the 500 bed construction. This ongoing Campaign that has toured across highlights the long-lasting impacts of prisoner isolation based on AFSCAZ's recently published report, [*Lifetime Lockdown: How Isolation Conditions Impact Prisoner Reentry*](#), and the horrifying conditions as detailed by ACLU's class action lawsuit. *Lifetime Lockdown* is based on collaborative research project with Dr. Brackette F. Williams, Senior

Soros Justice Fellow. Matthew Lowen, Associate Program Director, published [an opinion piece](#) in *The Arizona Republic* decrying the state's misplaced priorities on spending, treatment, and public safety.

AFSCAZ is currently compiling prisoner testimonies regarding their experiences in solitary confinement in Arizona. These collected testimonies are an effort to confront Arizona Department of Corrections Director Charles Ryan's publicly stated belief that "nowhere in Department of Corrections do we have solitary confinement." Arizona prisoners and AFSCAZ disagree wholeheartedly.