



# Fact Sheet on AB900: California's Massive Prison Expansion Deal

May 2007

QUESTION	ANSWER
What is AB900?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AB 900 will build 53,000 new prison and jail beds at an astounding cost of \$15 billion to taxpayers solely for construction. This will be the largest single prison building project in the history of the world.</li> <li>• AB 900 was passed without a single public hearing, public participation, much less a public vote. In fact, legislators did not even have the bill language written up before they voted to approve AB900, a mere 24 hours after the deal was agreed to and made public.</li> </ul>
Isn't this a prison "reform" proposal? Will this reduce the number of people in California prisons?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. Prison expansion is not prison reform.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of cells will only increase the number of people in prison. History shows that new prisons never reduce the number of people in prison.</li> <li>• The Governor's own Commission concluded that the "key to reforming the system lies in reducing the numbers."</li> </ul>
What happened to parole reform and creating a Sentencing Commission?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governor's Jan. 2007 budget incorporated two policy proposals from <i>CURB's 50 Ways to Reduce the Number of People in Prison</i>. BUT, after the legislature agreed to AB900, the Governor dropped his proposals for parole reform and the creation of a Sentencing Commission. These minor changes to parole would have reduced the number of people on parole by 24,000 and saved \$56.7 million in 2007-08 and \$75.5 million in 2008-09.</li> </ul>

<p>Is this proposal something Californians want?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not according to the polls or California voters, and while the Governor said that “we must ask permission of the voters to build” that apparently doesn't apply to prisons which he will build without voter approval.</li> <li>• A recent poll found that only 3% of Californians believe prison construction should be a priority.</li> <li>• The last two times California voters were asked to approve prison construction bonds, they were overwhelmingly rejected.</li> </ul>
<p>Is this proposal something California can afford?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. California is facing multi-billion dollar budget deficits. The more money we put into our already \$9.9 billion prison budget, the less we will have to spend on health care, schools, social services and existing independent community programs.</li> <li>• AB900 will cost \$7.4 billion in construction costs <i>alone</i>. Using lease revenue bonds means that taxpayers actually will pay about double the amount borrowed or \$15 billion.</li> <li>• The \$15 billion price tag does not include operation costs, which will reach hundreds of millions of dollars yearly and impact general fund spending on schools and health care.</li> </ul>
<p>Are there alternatives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, there are literally dozens of ways we can reduce the number of people in prison and improve public safety. If California simply reduced the rate at which we send people to prison for violations of parole to the national average, we could reduce the number of people locked up in this state by 20,000.</li> <li>• California could fully fund Prop 36, treatment rather than prison, or adjust work-credit policies to allow for increased credits for participation in programming.</li> <li>• For more ways to reduce the number of people in prison see CURB's <i>50 Ways to Reduce the Number of People in Prison</i>.</li> </ul>

## **Is there something I can do right now to stop prison expansion in California?**

- Sign our petition at <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/caprisonexpansion/?e>
- Help us organize the public hearings that they should have had.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- CALL SENATOR DON PERATA NOW—**510-286-1333** —AND TELL HIM WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT HIS VOTE TO BUILD 53,000 NEW PRISON AND JAIL CELLS AND FAILURE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN PRISON AND ON PAROLE.

*Contact CURB at 510.444.0484 or [curb@riseup.net](mailto:curb@riseup.net)  
For more info go to [www.curbprisonspending.org](http://www.curbprisonspending.org)*