

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 10, 2022

The Honorable Doug Ducey  
Governor  
1700 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

I write to express my grave concerns over your recent increased budget request for the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR) despite the state having the lowest prison population in a decade and in addition to the many concerns that linger at ADCRR.

Not only do I believe it is irresponsible to increase ADCRR's budget while Arizona's public schools remain severely underfunded, but it is a further dereliction of responsibility to continue the presence of private prison companies in Arizona. As outlined in your request, ADCRR would receive at least \$1.5 billion in funding, making it the third largest budget in the State and the only agency without independent oversight. This comes during a time when the prison population of 33,855 individuals is closer to 2005 levels.<sup>1</sup> For your reference, funding levels in 2006 were approximately, \$697.6 million.<sup>2</sup> Your current budget request for ADCRR represents a 115% increase.

Regrettably, the main beneficiaries of this inflated budget will continue to be private prison companies. As recently reported, ADCRR awarded a contract to CoreCivic to transfer individuals from Florence to the La Palma Correctional Center in Eloy. Arizona taxpayers will pay CoreCivic \$85.12 per prisoner, per day for the five-year contract, a rate higher than under state-run facilities.<sup>3</sup> As you may be aware, in May 2021, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) released a report that identified multiple violations of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention standards that threatened "the health, safety, and rights of detainees" at La Palma.<sup>4</sup> The decision to award this contract to a privately-operated facility that has a history of mistreatment towards individuals endangers the wellbeing and public safety of inmates and should be immediately reconsidered.

A budget is a representation of our values and commitment to our constituencies. ADCRR's budget is overly bloated and has failed to properly provide rehabilitation services to individuals despite it being a major component of its statutory mandate. As outlined in two reports conducted by the Arizona Auditor General in September 2021, ADCRR failed to provide "cognitive restructuring and SA treatment programs to most inmates who needed them; therefore, these inmates could not achieve these programs' rehabilitative benefits."<sup>5</sup> Simply put,

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<sup>1</sup> [cagdec-21.pdf \(az.gov\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [FY 2006 Appropriations Report - Highlights of the FY 2006 Budget \(azleg.gov\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2022/01/06/arizona-transfer-2-706-prisoners-state-run-prison-private-facility/9121316002/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/news/press-releases/2021/05252021/dhs-oig-inspections-find-violations-detention-standards-pulaski-county-jail-ullin-il-and-la-palma-correctional>

<sup>5</sup> [Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry \(azauditor.gov\)](#)

we cannot expect a reduction in recidivism if these and other critical rehabilitative programs are not offered to inmates. I believe it would be in the best interest of all parties involved to allocate funds to staffing and maintaining rehabilitative programs that are proven to help.

Another major concern is the overall lack of transparency and accountability within ADCRR and its private prison affiliates. As previously noted, ADCRR is the only state agency without independent oversight and furthermore, there is no independent state oversight over private prison companies. The only current oversight is what's built into each individual contract, agreed to by ADCRR. No oversight means that Arizona taxpayers are left with no public information about how these contracts are performing or their cost. In addition, it is concerning that ADCRR refused to take action to mitigate any potential conflict of interest requirements under State laws. According to the Auditor General report, "The Department should develop and implement revisions to its conflict-of interest policy and procedures to help ensure compliance with State conflict-of-interest requirements and better align its policy and procedures with recommended practices, including (1) reminding Department employees at least annually to complete a new conflict-of-interest disclosure form when their circumstances change; (2) maintaining a special disclosure file of all required documentation, such as disclosures of substantial interest; and (3) documenting its process for remediating any disclosed conflicts of interests."

I am gravely concerned that your increased budget request for ADCRR does not represent the best interest of incarcerated individuals and Arizonan taxpayers. Removing profits from our prison system and ensuring individuals have access to rehabilitation programs, proper healthcare and safety will end misguided mass incarceration policies in our nation and allow us to focus on policies and opportunities to reduce recidivism and promote thriving communities in Arizona. Thank you for your full and fair consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress