

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1328

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP, OPERATION OR
Title: MANAGEMENT OF STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

Vote Date: 4/8/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/26/2025

File No.: 759

Disclaimer: *The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Privatization of prisons is an ongoing issue plaguing many communities across the country. In an effort to preemptively avoid this problem from coming to Connecticut, this bill prohibits the ownership or management of a prison by a private corporation or person.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Brian Anderson, Legislative Political Director, AFSCME Council 4: They testified in support of this bill. Prisons are sensitive and important enough that they should be run by the government, not a private corporation or person. There are many stories of corruption regarding prisons run by the private industry. Prisons that are privatized are found to have higher levels of assault on inmates and staff, higher levels of inmate murders, and are found to not save taxpayer money.

Anthony Dominguez, New Haven Resident: They testified in support of this bill. SB1328 would reinforce the integrity of the state regulated system and prevent abuses that have happened in the private prison institutions. Data shows that prisons run by private companies are fraught with problems, the very essence of this is due to the for-profit model. Prisons should be a place for recovery and healing, not a means for exploitation and bottom-line.

Shar Habibi, Research and Policy Director, In the Public Interest (ITPI): They testified in support of this bill. SB1328 will ensure that the state does not engage in the privatization of correctional facilities. There are negative impacts for prisoners and people working in the

prisons and community, without any promise of cost saving. Research shows that private prisons do not save money, have staffing problems, and are less safe than public prisons. In recent years, there are a number of horror stories coming out of private prisons. In response, many states do not use private prisons and between 2000 and 2016 eight states discontinued their use of private prisons.

Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO: They testified in support of this bill. Private prisons are operated with the primary goal of making money, which raises ethical concerns. Private companies will more often cut corners on safety, healthcare, and inmate welfare to make a profit. The state should focus on rehabilitation and education rather on mass incarceration. Private prisons also lack public oversight and transparency, which allows for corruption, mismanagement, and abuse of power.

Ella Suh, MPH Candidate, Yale School of Public Health, Emily Knox, Ph.D., Research and Policy Director, Connecticut Voices for Children: They testified in support of this bill. Privatizing prisons incentivizes profits, which is in conflict of the goals of justice, rehabilitation, and public oversight. GEO Group and CoreCivic are the two largest publicly traded companies running prisons and immigration facilities; they enable and actively encourage mass incarceration. Their executives have acknowledged that federal law enforcement policy changes are profitable aspects. These corporations do not set policy; however, their infrastructure makes incarceration feasible and profitable. This is Connecticut's opportunity to diminish the influence of private interests in state-owned and state-operated correctional facilities.

Cindy Prizio, Co-founder President, One Standard for Justice: They testified in support of this bill. Profit in Connecticut's prison system negatively impacts everything it touches. The focus of the state should be on an effective way to reduce crime, reduce use of incarceration, and create economic opportunities for disadvantaged communities.

Juan Russo, Graduate Student, University of Connecticut, School of Social Work: They testified in support of this bill. Privately run prisons undermine human rights. They profit from incarceration, which is immoral. Rehabilitation should be the goal and not making a profit. SB1328 reflects a commitment to justice, human dignity, and public accountability. It aligns our correctional system with its true purpose, which should be rehabilitation and public safety.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU-CT: They testified in support of this bill. Private companies that run prisons are for profit not for rehabilitation. Under the current federal administration, these companies see an opportunity for profits in the billions of dollars from locking up more and more people. SB1328 is vital in preventing the ability for the for-profit prison industry to operate in the state. Private, for-profit prisons are shielded from accountability, more than state-run facilities, which have widespread problems.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Bonnie Gray

Date: April 21, 2025