



PRISON TRANSPARENCY PROJECT REPORT:

*The Case for Government
Accountability and Systemic Reform*

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THE CASE FOR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND SYSTEMIC REFORM

Accountability for Results

- Recommendation: The government must be held accountable for the systems it creates and the outcomes they produce. This includes being transparent about the impact of its policies and taking responsibility for failures. Effective governance means being accountable not just for actions, but for results.

- Solution: Implement mechanisms for accountability that measure the effectiveness of policies in reducing recidivism, improving public safety, and treating citizens humanely. This includes regular audits, independent oversight, and public reporting on progress and outcomes.

Recidivism Reduction: A Humane Approach

- Recommendation: The government must prioritize the humane and effective reduction of recidivism as a central goal of the criminal justice system. High recidivism rates are a reflection of the failures of the current approaches. This requires a shift away from punitive measures and towards rehabilitation, education, and support services that address the underlying causes of criminal behavior which are data driven and backed by research.

- Evidence: Research consistently shows that rehabilitative approaches are more effective at reducing recidivism than punitive ones. Alternatives to Incarceration divert people away from incarceration and frequently lead to much better outcomes. Programs that focus on education, mental health treatment, and social reintegration lead to lower rates of reoffending and better outcomes for both individuals and society. Actual crime prevention isn't just more policing - it is understanding what human beings need to thrive, and designing a society around that understanding.

Polymathic Thinking in Governance

- Recommendation: Adopt Polymathic thinking in governance by encouraging collaboration across disciplines, integrating diverse perspectives, and addressing problems holistically between government agencies, which have historically operated mostly in isolation from other government entities. The left hand doesn't know or seem to care what the right hand of

government does; this approach isn't working. A more holistic and integrated approach can lead to more innovative and effective solutions to complex challenges like criminal justice reform.

- Solution: Create interdisciplinary task forces to address systemic issues, bringing together experts in law, psychology, sociology, economics, and other relevant fields. These task forces should be empowered to recommend and implement reforms that are informed by a broad understanding of the issues, with a primary mission of reducing human suffering and enhancing human thriving.

A Guiding Principle: The Care of Human Life and Happiness

- Quote: As Thomas Jefferson wisely stated, "The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government." This principle must guide our efforts to reform the criminal justice system and ensure that all government actions are aligned with the well-being and dignity of every citizen. Prison should be a place where we house people who are unsafe for the rest of society, not a place where we send poor, mentally ill, or drug addicted citizens who commit minor or victimless crimes, simply because they technically broke a law or because we have nowhere else to house them. The carceral environment should not be a place of punishment; it should exist to rehabilitate citizens effectively and humanely.

The Declaration of Independence says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

Consider this: Life is related to healthcare, liberty relates to freedom versus incarceration, and the pursuit of happiness relates to education. In America, healthcare, the prison industrial complex, and education are failing our citizens.

If the Founding Fathers like Thomas Jefferson who wrote the Declaration above knew that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness have been finalized and corrupted in modern America, that government would expand itself and consume citizens for their profit and power, they likely would be disappointed and perhaps even disgusted by the state of affairs in the country today.

When healthcare, incarceration, and education are only for the powerful and rich, and when poor and marginalized communities do not receive equal treatment by the very government we pay to serve and help us, something is wrong.

This report is part of a series produced by the Prison Transparency Project, aimed at uncovering and addressing issues within the prison system. For additional reports and recommendations, please visit our website at <https://prisontransparency.com>.