

Cost Benefits of Releasing *Excess* Prisoners in U.S.A and Texas

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“Castro’s Cuba is a tropical gulag.” – George W. Bush

“You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye.” – *Luke 6:42*

Cuba has a standing proposition of a prisoners exchange to free the “Miami 5”: Cuban agents in federal prisons here for spying on Cuban-American exile groups that, the Cuban government charges, have sprayed Cuban crops and civilian populations with CIA-supplied bacteriological weapons, and other terrorist acts against Cuba. Thus far Washington has ignored the proposed exchange.

In fact the case can be laid down for exchanging *all* the political prisoners in Cuba, for *all* the political prisoners held by the United States: in federal and state prisons as well as in “Gitmo” and the CIA’s “black spots” (secret prisons) overseas.

If Cuba can be labeled “a gulag,” then the U.S.A. is “twelve times worse than a gulag” as it holds twelve times more prisoners per 100,000 population than Cuba does. If the U.S.A. reduced its current 2.5 million prisoners (833 per 100,000) to 200,000 (70 per 100,000, like Cuba), it would save in direct revenues \$175 billion per year of the \$195 billion per year spent today.

Add to this the increased GNP production by the 2.3 million released workers. At \$88,000 average productivity¹ it’s \$229 billion/year more national wealth. If only 20% of it ends up as government revenues, the total benefit would be \$221 billion/year, which would benefit the American population as follows:²

	<u>\$ billion/year</u>
1. \$900: renewable energy devices for 20 million homes	18.0
2. \$1750/year: health insurance to 14 million children	24.5
3. \$3000/year: health insurance to 12 million adults	36.0
4. \$2000/year: day care for 3 million toddlers	6.0
5. \$4500/year: head start to 3 million children	13.5
6. \$8000/year: scholarships to 2.4 million college students	19.2
7. \$2500/year: scholarships to 7.8 million vocational-tech students	19.5
8. \$8300/year: crop insurance aid to 1 million small/medium farmers	8.3
9. \$5500: anti-foreclosure help to 2 million homeowners	11.0
10. \$330,000: kinder & elementary school teachers at \$60K/year	19.8
11. \$220,000: art, music, drama, sport teachers at \$65K/year	14.3
12. \$330,000: high school & vocational-tech teachers at \$74K/year	24.4

¹ \$13.6 trillion GNP divided by 154 million work force (2007).

² With compliments to Nigel Holmes, *The Nation*, 31 March 2008, pp. 24-25.

13. \$400,000 each medical/prosthetic/psych care, *plus* \$400,000 for lifetime disability pension (present worth) to 10,875 disabled U.S. GI veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars 8.7

Total \$221billion/year

Now for the “law’n order, lawn star State of Taxes” and its world record 1000 per 100,000 population incarceration rate – 14.3 times that of the “tropical gulag of bad red Cuba” – with 230,000 locked up workers disguised among “the various TDCJs.” If by some miracle Texans wake up one of these days, to the long lasting *deceit* that a bunch of demagogues have inflicted upon them, and decided to “get smart on crime,” rather than the *failed* “tough on crime” nonsense -- that only benefits a huddle of lawyers, prisoncrats, and their cronies – the state would save \$15.75 billion/year of the \$17.5 billion/year spent in 2006 in the “crimnal just us industry,” by reducing TDCJ population to 24,000 – 100 per 100,000 ration, still 30% higher than “evil communist Cuba’s”—the same size it had in 1984: when the Ruiz Court ruled it “grossly overcrowded.”

But allowing that, even if the hoe squad bosses alongside their chaps, spurs, horses and dogs were to be auctioned *pronto* at a firesale auction, only about 70% of that hellacious sum could be timely retrieved, the savings are reduced to some \$11.0 billion/year.

The productivity increase due to 206,000 released cons, plus that of 35,000 downsized prisoncrats – who, bottom line, now produce *nothing* – would be \$22.1 billion/year; if only 10% ends up in the state’s coffers, the total benefit adds up to \$13,234 million/year. Which would benefit Texas society thusly:

	<u>\$ million/year</u>
1. \$1750/year: health insurance to 800,000 children	1200
2. \$3000/year: health insurance to 400,000 adults	1200
3. \$800: renewable energy devices to 1 million homes	800
4. \$2000/year: day care to 250,000 toddlers	500
5. \$6000/year: scholarships to 200,000 university students ³	1200
6. \$2500/year: scholarships to 400,000 vocational-tech students	1000
7. \$4000/year: head start to 200,000 children	800
8. \$18,000/year: vo-tech scholarships to 35,000 downsized prisoncrats ⁴	630
9. \$6000/year: vo-tech scholarships to 206,000 ex-cons	1236
10. \$8300/year: crop insurance aid to 100,000 small/medium farmers	830
11. \$4600/year: insurance or anti-foreclosure help to 100,000 homeowners	460
12. \$20,000: kinder and elementary teachers at \$50K/year	430
13. \$8000: sports, music, arts, drama teachers at \$54K/year	430
14. \$10,000: high school teachers at \$64K/year	640
15. \$6000: “industrial grade” vo-tech teachers at \$72K/year	430

³ Returning Texas to a state proud of its excellent but cheap universities at \$120/semester full-time tuition. And \$10/semester for junior colleges.

⁴ “Salary While Learning” allowance – and no-interest home mortgage moratorium – for prisoncrats and ex-cons engaged in 18-month intensive vo-tech training.

16. \$400/year: “toll rebate” to 2.195 million “post-Perry” drivers⁵ 878
Total \$13, 234 million/year

No folks, the pigskin is inside your 20 yard line, the clock is running out, and punting ain't an option. If y'all choose to keep on being duped and taken as “tricks” by a bunch of con artists in drag as “law'n order officials,” then of course that's your prerogative. And your money. And the future of your children and grandchildren. And of *your* state. It's all up to you and when you get inside that booth – assuming Dubya's cronies at Diebold didn't rig it up – all rests between you and your conscience.

Like that great Texan in the sky, the beautiful and salty Molly Ivins would say: “Hey, guys: let's kick their sleazy butts out!” Or y'all may not have another chance.

And still, folks, I think we can scrape some \$10,000 to provide Dubya, Quail-hunting Dick, Condoleeza, Rumsfeld, Gonzo, Ashcroft, Wolfowitz, Karl Rove, and Rush Limbaugh *each* a one-way-only no-return-please plane ticket to gorgeous, downtown Baghdad: call it the “Chickenhawk Special.” Goodbye and good riddance.

⁵ Returning Texas to a state proud of its excellent and well-paved but *free* roads and freeways. Or perhaps a reduction in the state sales tax?