



Representing Wayne State Faculty and Academic Staff

# NEWSBRIEFS

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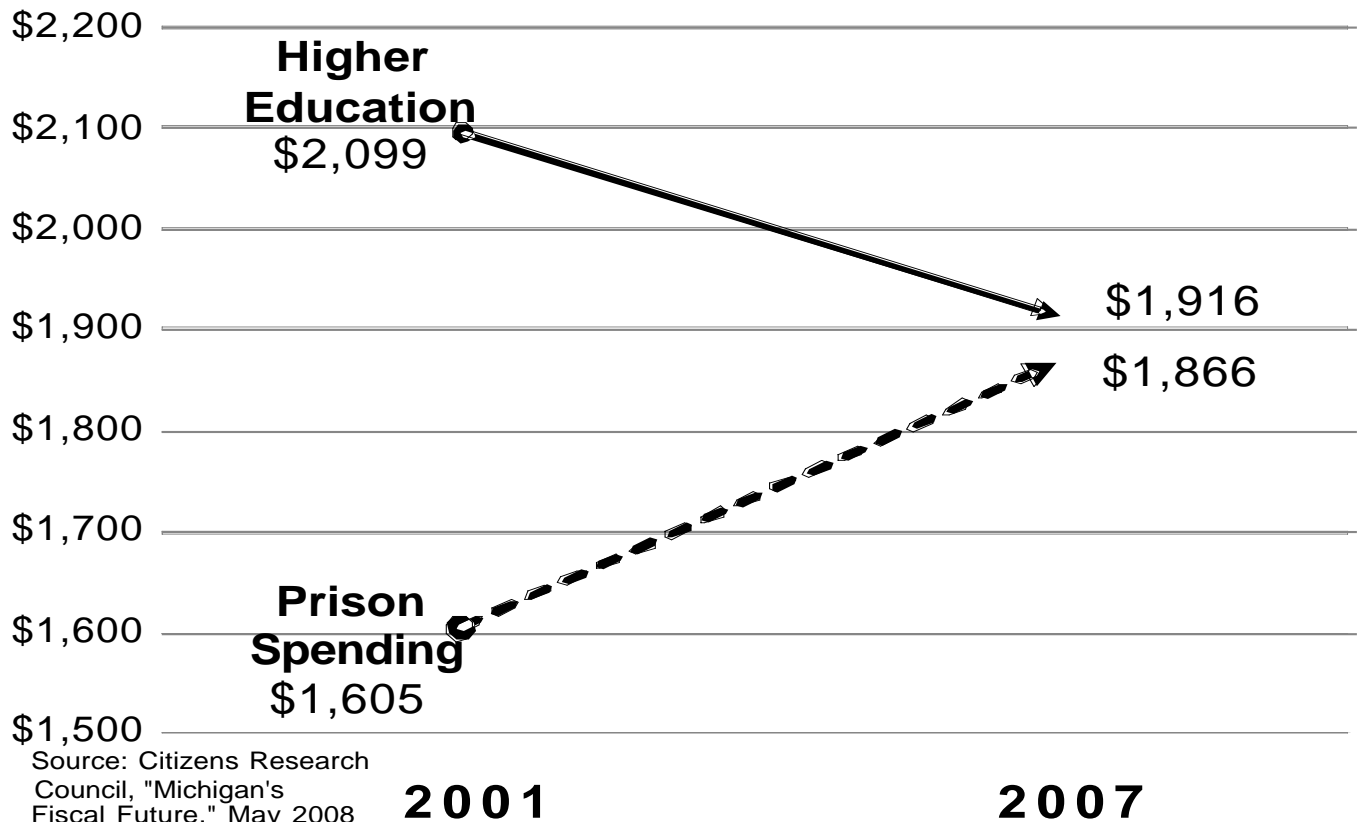
## Schools First, Not Prisons

**State Budget Starves Higher Education to Feed A Bloated Prison System**

*Join Us! We Need to Talk With Our Legislators*

**Inside: AAUP-AFT kicks off lobbying campaign at January 28 Orientation**

### State Spending (in millions):



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*Call for Volunteers to*  
**Talk to Lansing!**  
**“Schools First, Not Prisons”**

The Michigan state budget has been devastated by more than the current economic crisis. As we confront growing unemployment and falling tax revenues, we also have to rethink Michigan's budget priorities and the diminished resources we are wasting on our bloated prison system.

There is an obvious need for prisons to house convicted criminals and protect citizens from unacceptable risk. But no other state in the mid-west squanders anything like the resources we waste on our prisons. In the meantime, funding for Wayne State and other universities has declined sharply.

We will meet with our state legislators in their Detroit-area districts to urge them to make education Michigan's first priority, not prisons. We need volunteers to join us on these visits.

***Here's what we'll be telling our Lansing representatives:***

***1) The Growing Scale of Prison Spending***

- Michigan's inmate population has grown **six-fold** since 1973, from 8,000 to **50,000** prisoners.
- **511** people per 100,000 **Michigan** residents are incarcerated. The rate is far lower in surrounding states:

**176** in **Minnesota**, the lowest incarceration rate in the Great Lake States.

**428** in **Ohio**, the second highest rate after Michigan.

**348** on **average** for seven Great Lakes States, excluding Michigan.

- The Department of Corrections workforce has **tripled** since 1980, from 5,400 to 16,500, and now represents 31 percent of the state's direct employees (not counting Higher Ed.). **That's 1 in 3.**
- It costs \$32,000 a year in taxpayer money to maintain each prisoner.

***2) The Causes of Bloated Prison Spending:***

**It's not the crime rate:** From 1976 to 2006, Michigan's overall crime rate fell while the rate of violent crime held steady. Yet the prison population more than **quadrupled** in these same years.

- Michigan actually puts fewer people **in** prison than other Great Lakes states. The problem is that we take a lot longer letting them **out**.

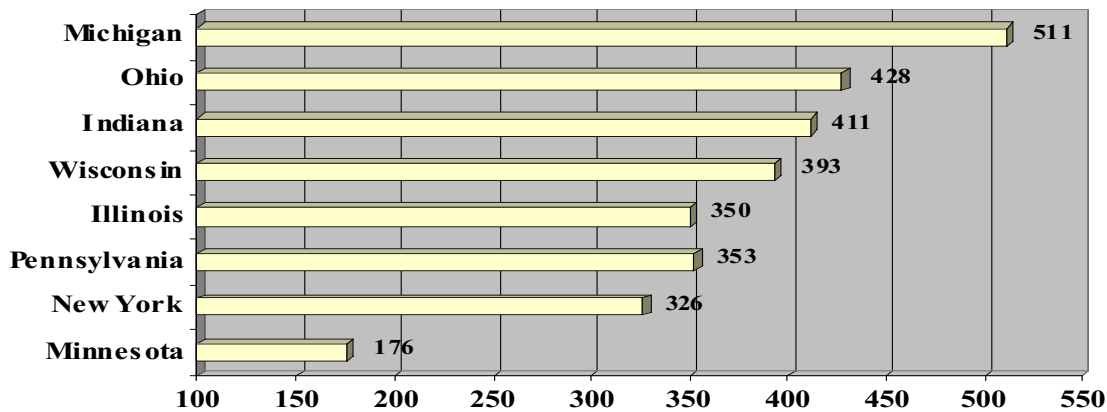
- **Parole denial** keeps non-violent and good-behavior prisoners in jail too long compared to other states. There is no

evidence that denying parole to people who have served their minimum sentence is a deterrent to crime, but it does pay **political dividends** for publicity-conscious appointees who want to appear "tough on crime."

- The percentage of inmates serving **beyond their parole eligibility** nearly **tripled** between 1991 and 2006, from 5,687 inmates to **15,959**. That's **one in three** prisoners.
- **Harsh sentencing** guidelines have also eliminated the practice of reducing a prisoner's minimum sentence for good behavior. As a result, the average prison stay is **1.2 years longer** than the national average. If we had held prisoners no longer than the national average since 1990, the prison population would have declined by 14,000 at a current **savings of \$400 million** a year.

Join Us on  
**January 28**  
**For Orientation**  
**& Lunch**  
 Noon, Reuther  
 Library,  
 5401 Cass  
 RSVP 577-1750, or  
 aaupaft@wayne.edu

## Inmates Per 100,000 Residents In the Eight Great Lakes States (2006)



Source: Citizens Research Council of Michigan, *Michigan's Fiscal Future*, Report 349, May 2008, p.98

### 3) *The Consequences for Higher Education:*

- While the state budget for **prisons** grew by \$261million between 2001 and 2007, the state budget for **higher education** fell by \$183 million.
- As state funding fell, university tuition in Michigan **rose by 9% a year** since 2001 to cover the decline in state funding. In 1996, a WSU undergraduate taking 31 credits paid **\$3,550 in tuition**; by the fall of 2008, the same number of credits cost an average of **\$8,085**.
- Michigan is now **below the national average** for the number of residents who have higher education degrees.

### 4) *The Alternatives for Michigan:*

- Bring Michigan's **parole and sentencing guidelines into alignment with those in surrounding states**. We can safely release prisoners who have served their minimum sentence, have a record of good behavior, and have family and community support for their re-entry. With the same

incarceration rate as surrounding states, the estimated **savings to the state budget range as high as \$500 million**.

### 5) *The Vital Role of Wayne State University in the State Economy*

Legislators in outlying districts often treat WSU as an inner-city school. Wayne State is, indeed, central to Detroit. But our 30,000 students and 8,000 employees are also voters in every community in southeast Michigan, and their work has a positive impact on the entire state economy.

- Wayne State generates an estimated **\$1 billion** in economic activity annually and is a primary source of Michigan's **Doctors, Judges, Nurses, Teachers, Engineers, Pharmacists, Psychologists, and Social Workers**. More than 75% of our **230,000 alumni** live and work in Michigan.
- Money invested in Wayne State **stays in Michigan**, unlike tax breaks to business which will be invested wherever business chooses, from Mexico to Alabama (or *maybe* Michigan).

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- Among the many centers of innovation at WSU that produce **patents and licensing agreements** for new products is the **Hybrid Electric Vehicle Technology Project**, the **Smart Sensors** and Integrated Microsystems Laboratory, the **Alternative Energy Technology Program**, and the National **Biofuels Energy Laboratory**. **Tech Town** currently hosts 35 enterprises specializing in biotechnology, medical research, alternative energy, information technology, engineering, and logistics.
- Wayne State's **School of Medicine** is another source of innovation that advances medical science and improves the quality of life. It is the **largest single-campus medical school** in the nation, with 1,000 medical students. In addition to being one of the top research facilities in the country, the teaching faculty provides more than **\$150 million** in uncompensated health care every year.

### Key Sources

*Michigan's Fiscal Future*, Citizens Research Council of Michigan, Report 349, May 2008.

*Growth in Michigan's Corrections Systems: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Citizens Research Council of Michigan, Report 350, June 2008.

*The Economic Benefits of Wayne State University*, Anderson Economic Group, 2004.

*Michigan's University Research Corridor*, Anderson Economic Group, 2008.

Citizens Alliance on Prisons and Public Spending,

<http://www.capps-mi.org/pen>  
Citizens Research Council of Michigan,  
<http://crcmich.org/>



**Wayne State University Chapter**

**American Association of University Professors-  
American Federation of Teachers  
Local 6075**

### Wayne State University Chapter

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