



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

## Criminal Justice Commission

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Craig Prins  
Executive Director

To: Senate Judiciary Committee 5/10/07

CC: House Judiciary Committee, Public Safety Ways and Means Committee,  
President Peter Courtney, Senator Brown, Senator Ferrioli,  
Speaker Jeff Merkley, Representative Dave Hunt, Representative Wayne Scott

Subject: Correction to Letter Dated 4/20/07

I need to make a correction to the letter I sent you on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007. My letter was in response to a letter Mr. Howard Rodstein sent you on April 9<sup>th</sup>. After I sent my letter I met with Mr. Rodstein and re-read both of our letters, and I feel compelled to correct a mistake I made based upon a misunderstanding.

I stated that Mr. Rodstein “grossly overstated” the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission’s estimate of the effect of incarceration on crime. Mr. Rodstein compared the prison capacity of Oregon in 1995 to the prison capacity of Oregon in 2005 and noted that in 2005 Oregon could house 5500 more inmates. Our study estimates the number of crimes avoided per year by housing each additional inmate. The number of crimes avoided by housing one additional inmate was 28 in 1995, but has fallen to 11 in 2005. Mr. Rodstein used the information in our report and correctly estimated that the average number of crimes avoided from 1995 to 2005 was 20 per inmate per year. He took this average from the past and multiplied it by the number of inmates added from 1995 to 2005, 5500, to estimate 110,000 crimes were avoided per year by increasing our prison capacity. This is true if one compares 1995 to 2005. I thought Mr. Rodstein was estimating the effect on crime of each additional year’s prison bed growth. I regret this misunderstanding and the confusion that it may have caused.

Mr. Rodstein’s letter used our report to estimate the past benefit of investing in prisons from 1995 to 2005. I was focused on the diminishing returns of current and future prison growth. Based upon this different focus, I mistakenly stated his estimate grossly overstated the impact of incarceration. I apologize for my mistake and any confusion it caused.

Sincerely,

Craig Prins  
Executive Director