

The Lowdown on California's Prison Crisis

By Amy E. Wong



I'm glad to say that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has taken his reelection in stride. One thing that he's set on doing this term is fixing California's prison system, which currently houses 173,000 inmates and requires an \$8 billion budget. This will be the first major prison system revamp since the 1970s.

State Senate Majority Leader Gloria Romero (D-Los Angeles) told *The New York Times*, "The governor is particularly looking at his legacy, and I do not believe he can have a positive one if he does not solve the prison crisis."

It's not going to be easy. It's not like making a Three-Strikes-And-You're-Out law. It's about figuring out what to do with the inmates that are already in the slammer. Currently, as the largest prison system in America, there are 16,000 inmates living in hallways and gyms. Overcrowding has caused a ton of problems, including increased inmate violence, recidivism, parole absconder, and insufficient medical care.

The bottom line: California's prison crisis stems from overpopulation.

What do people do when confronted with a population crisis?

- Relocate their problems elsewhere? Move California prisoners to Nevada, Oregon, and Arizona?
Highly doubtful.
- Create more regulations? Instead of three-strikes, you're out; how about five-strikes, you're out?
Nah, that'll just making the law more lax to crime.
- How about just getting rid of people?
Hmm...I think that could work!

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All right. I admit that it sounds morbid, but death is a key factor in controlling our population growth. People in China do it. (Yes, folks, I have family in China who have done it, so don't hate on me like some of you are hating on Rosie O'Donnell.) We control our population growth through wars, famine, and disease; so why can't California control its population through something like....let's say...the death penalty?

It seems that Schwarzenegger has got his eyes on the prize.

On Dec. 18, California's governor said, "I am committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure that the lethal injection process is constitutional so that the will of the people is followed and the death penalty is maintained in California. My administration will take immediate action to resolve court concerns which have cast legal doubt on California's procedure for carrying out the death penalty."

Last I heard, Schwarzenegger is actively working on ensuring that California's death penalty procedures are up-to-par. This means ensuring that there is proper screening and training for execution team members. It also entails that lethal drugs will have to be properly recorded, prepared, and administered. Presently, it's not. In fact, some critics have that California's death penalty is a cruel and unusual punishment. Yikes!

If you have any other suggestions to Gov. Schwarzenegger, give him a holler [here](#). I wonder if he'll take this as a legit suggestion: "Let's spread some good peace and tender lovin'." Happy holidays, all!