

Bent County Correctional Facility

1991: Bent County works with the State of Colorado to provide additional in-state prison beds.

1993: Bent County Correctional Facility opens.

1997: Facility expanded to meet the needs of the State. Bent County contracts with CCA to operate and expand the facility.

2008: Bent County & CCA respond to a State request for proposals to expand and provide over 1400 in-state beds.

2001-2011: Bent County suffers from 700+ lost jobs due to the Fort Lyon VA Hospital & Fort Lyon DOC closures. This represents nearly 30% decrease in available Bent County jobs from 2001 to present.

Demographics*	Bent County	Colorado
Population (2017)	5,866	5,609,445
Population Change (2010—2017)	-640	559,113
Median Household Income	\$32,500	\$65,458
% of Population living under Poverty Line	24.5%	11.5%
% of Children living under Poverty Line**	32%	13.4%

* Colorado State
Demography Office
Colorado Demographic
Profile for Bent County

** Bent County
Community Health
Assessment Report

COMMUNITY IMPACT:

2018 Property Taxes: \$1,074,286.90

- 25% of Bent County Tax Revenue
- Supports:

- Fire/Ambulance
- Cemetery
- School Districts/Library
- Water Conservancy

Annual Payroll: \$12,700,000.00

241 Jobs—16% of Total County Jobs

- County's Largest Employer

Annual Avg. Utilities: \$1,080,000.00

- Las Animas Municipal Utility's Largest Acct.
- 16.5% of Total Revenue

Local Contributions:

- Sponsorships
- Community Service
- Community Partnerships

Bent County has successfully contracted with the State of Colorado for over 27 years to provide medium security inmate beds to the Colorado Department of Corrections. Bent County and its partner, Core Civic, have continuously demonstrated excellence in implementing the following programs into their operations:

Education:

- Adult Basic Education
- General Equivalency Diploma
- English as a Second Language

Vocational Education:

- Braille
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
- Intro. To Computer Information

Behavioral Health:

- Strategies for Self Improvement and Change (SSC)
- SAMHSA Anger Management
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Groups

Reentry/Pre-Release:

- DOC Pre-Release
- Go Further
- Thinking for a Change
- 7 Habits on the Inside
- Parents on a Mission
- Inside Out Dads

Bent County Correctional Facility

Excellence in Operations

Accredited by the American Correctional Association since 1997

Core Civic Business of The Year Award 2019

Outstanding Professionalism in Partnership

with CDCC and CCA 2017 Out-of-State Transfers

CCA Exceptional Operational Audit Score 2010

CCA Remarkable Management of operating Expenses 2010

CCA Exceptional Operational Audit Score 2007

CCA Certificate of Excellence 2006

CCA Facility of the Year: Community Relations 1997



503 N Main, Suite 657, Pueblo, CO
81002 719-560-9897,
admin@action22.org
www.action22.org

February 7, 2020

Re: HB 1019 Devastating Impact on Southeastern Colorado

Dear Colorado Legislators:

The mission of Action 22 is to give a voice to Southern Colorado. On behalf of the Action22 Executive Board, please accept this letter as Action 22's statement that it is adamantly opposed to Sections 2 and Section 4 of HB20-1019. These provisions are the first step towards Colorado closing private prison facilities. The sponsor of the bill is on record stating they want to eliminate Colorado's use of private facilities with full knowledge that such action will have devastating impacts on the economy and the families that live in our communities.

Although the bill was modified on the House floor, the sponsor continues to say via social media and on the House floor that her intent with this bill is to close the private prisons. This "study" and the politicized provisions under Section 4 are not a study, but an attempt to achieve a pre-determined outcome of eliminating Colorado's use of private facilities. The Denver Metro Legislators are not looking out for Rural Colorado.

As you may be aware, Action 22 had a slightly different take as the bill moved through the House. However, after listening to the testimony on the House floor, it is clear the proposed in the bill is not unbiased but has the end goal of eliminating private prisons. This action would have a lasting, devastating impact to the citizens of Bent and Crowley Counties; an impact from which they may not recover. Closures of these facilities, or a move from private to public ownership would negatively impact a major portion of the Action 22 region.

Thank you for considering the impact HB20-1019 would have and support us in our opposition of Sections 2 and 4.

Sincerely,

Sara Blackhurst
Executive Director, Action22
admin@action22.org



Las Animas School District RE-1

1021 Second Street
Las Animas, CO 81054
Elsie Goines- Superintendent

(719) 456-0161 Phone
(719) 456-1117 Fax
elsie.goines@la-schools.net

February 10, 2020

RE: HB20-1019 Prison Population Management

Dear Legislators,

I have been following the proposed legislation that has potential to drastically impact my school district in a very negative way. The two bills that are very concerning for my rural community is HB20 1019 and the Uniform Mill Levy. I have been informed that HB 1019 is making its way through the Colorado Legislature fairly quickly. This legislation proposes to elimination the use of private prisons in the State of Colorado. The economic impacts to rural communities in Colorado would be devastating if our private prisons were to close as a result of this legislation. Let me describe to you some of the direct and indirect impacts this would have on our school districts and communities.

As you are likely aware, CoreCivic operates two private correctional facilities in Southeast Colorado. One facility is located in Crowley County and the other in Bent County. These two facilities are some of the largest employers in our communities. Both counties are economically distressed and have some of the lowest property valuations in Colorado. Not only do these prison facilities pay above average for starting wages for their employees, but they also contribute dramatically to the tax base within these communities. The taxes paid to the communities for each facility dramatically impact each county's ability to provide services, any sizable reduction to their tax base would be crippling.

I have worked for LASD for seventeen years, with the last five years being Superintendent of Schools. I have witnessed the direct impact to our community and District when Fort Lyon closed. At that time, we lost 32 students in enrollment as those families relocated to other facilities across the state. The School District has never been able to recoup those children, and our student count now sits at 475 students K-12. We currently have 50 students that are directly connected to employees at Bent County Core Civic. The anticipated loss in pupil funding would be approximately \$450,000 and the loss of assessed evaluation taxes would be approximately \$300,000. LASD would anticipate a loss of \$750,000 which would be crippling.

This issue will not only affect these two counties, but the entire region. Many employees come from surrounding towns in Otero, Bent, Kiowa, Prowers, Fremont and Pueblo Counties. Local businesses have struggled as a direct result of industry closures in the past several years. A reduction of jobs at the private prison and the exodus of families from our communities would most certainly result in additional closed doors in Lower Arkansas Valley businesses.

Thank you for your time. As your decisions will have a lasting impact on small, high poverty communities in rural Colorado. I ask you to give careful consideration to your vote. If HB20-1019 becomes law, impacts to small communities will be dramatic and will continue to weaken the already fragile local economies in Southeast Colorado.

Sincerely,



A BETTER BRAND OF BANKING
SINCE 1925

FIRST NATIONAL BANK

• FOWLER • LA JUNTA • LAS ANIMAS •
• MONUMENT • ORDWAY • ROCKY FORD •

February 3, 2020

RE: Private Prison Closure

To Whom It May Concern,

Recently I was advised by our County Commissioners that the State of Colorado is looking at reducing or all together canceling contracts with private prisons. Regardless of an individual's political beliefs on this subject, the economic impacts to rural communities in Colorado would be devastating if private prisons were to have a large reduction in staff, or even close as a result of such actions. Let me describe to you some of the direct and indirect impacts this would have to communities in the Arkansas Valley.

As you are likely aware, Core Civic operates two private correctional facilities in Southeast Colorado. One facility is located in Crowley County and another is located 70 miles east in Bent County. These two facilities are some of the largest employers within their respective counties. Both counties are economically distressed and have some of the lowest property valuations in Colorado. Not only do these prison facilities pay above average for starting wages for their employees, but they also contribute dramatically to the tax base within these communities. The taxes paid to the communities for each facility are irreplaceable and would dramatically impact each counties ability to operate on their already tight budgets. Each county currently gets by on a minimal budget from year to year and any sizable reduction to their tax base would be crippling.

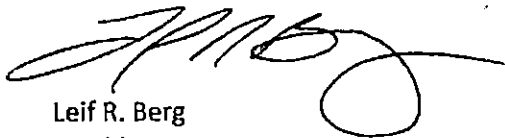
As a member of the Crowley County School Board for the last 11 years, I have witnessed the direct impact to our community when the private prison in Olney Springs endured cutbacks. Between 2011 and 2013, the private prison in saw a large reduction in inmates due to changes at the state level in its contract with private prisons. As a result, the prison was forced to reduce its staff substantially and the reductions had a direct impact on our community and our school district. During that time 67 children left our district, many as a result of families moving out of area to find jobs elsewhere after being laid off from the private prison. This reduction in student count cost our district approximately \$450,000 annually and was the cause of a 13% reduction in students during that timeframe. The School District has never been able to recoup those children, and our student count now sits at 452 students K-12. This reduction in students and funding forced Crowley County School District to cut 30 teaching, administration and maintenance positions from the district which totaled a third of the entire staff. These jobs have never been regained and many of those former staff members left the county in search of jobs elsewhere.

This domino effect not only affected Crowley County, but was felt throughout the Arkansas Valley since many employees come from surrounding towns in Otero, Bent, Kiowa and Pueblo counties. As a lifelong banker in this area, I have seen firsthand how many businesses struggled as a direct result of the

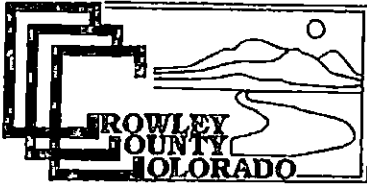
reduction of jobs at the private prison and the exodus of families from our communities. Multiple small businesses throughout the Arkansas Valley closed their doors, and never reopened. Although these numbers may not seem dramatic to front-range communities basking in the over-abundance of growth along the I-25 corridor, these numbers were devastating to small communities struggling to keep afloat. Every job is important and every business is valued in South East Colorado.

Please think long and hard about the effects you will have on small communities throughout the Arkansas Valley if the State of Colorado reduces or cancels its contract with Core Civic or other private prisons. Impacts to small communities will be dramatic and will continue to weaken the already fragile local economies in Southeast Colorado. Jobs in our communities will be lost and more people will leave the rural communities in search of jobs elsewhere. These prisons, and the jobs and tax base they bring to our communities are important factors to supporting our local communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Berg', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Leif R. Berg
President



BOARD OF
County Commissioners

CROWLEY COUNTY
603 MAIN ST. • SUITE 2
ORDWAY, COLORADO 81063

Phone (719) 267-5555 Ext. 3 • Fax (719) 267-3114

ROY ELLIOTT, DIST. 1

BLAINE ARBUTHNOT, DIST. 2

T.E. (Tobe) ALLUMBAUGH, DIST. 3

January 24, 2020

Dear Colorado Legislators,

This memo is being sent to you to provide information regarding private prisons in the State of Colorado. The first thing that needs to be understood is that all aspects of the private prison's operations are monitored by the Colorado Department of Corrections, using a very extensive oversight program through their Private Prison Monitoring Unit, to ensure all rules and regulations are followed.

~~The private prisons all tend to be located in rural hardship areas with high unemployment and low assessed valuations. In the mid 1990's the state was encouraging counties and cities to provide beds for prisoners due to budget constraints. Counties aggressively pursued attracting the industry to boost the local taxes and provide jobs for their county. The counties where prisons were located have provided a service to the state in costs savings along with boosting their own local economy. The cost savings between housing inmates in State vs Private facilities, and the goal of reducing the overall prison costs to the state poses the question, should the state use private prisons more in the future? The cost of housing an inmate in a private prison currently is \$57.94 per day, versus a state run facility at nearly double this amount without including any capital costs, and the state pays no sales or property tax. This savings provides funding for the state to focus on other areas such as health and human services, highway construction and repairs, education and a plethora of other programs.~~

As members of the legislative branch of Colorado you deal with constant requests for new and/or enhanced programs to better serve the state. Future economic forecasts for the Country and the State stresses the importance of looking beyond the short term financial picture. Once a private prison closes, the cost to reopen the facility becomes extremely costly and detrimental for the company. This situation could leave Colorado looking for funding for corrections, and neglecting other important programs and services. It is always necessary to balance the needs of the state with funds available over an extended period of time. The process of lowering prison costs is lengthy. Knowing that we need to provide a safe, learning environment within the prisons of the state, we should use savings found in the use of private prisons towards programs for youth with the goal of lowering the need for prison beds.

We are frequently asked for information regarding the value of the facility to our county. Core Civic currently pays over fifty percent of all the property taxes in Crowley County. Core Civic employees 246 individuals, which is our largest employer, with thirty-five percent living within Crowley County and the remaining living in the communities of La Junta, Rocky Ford, Manzanola, Fowler, Pueblo, Swink and in some cases Canon City. With a population of 3200, Crowley County would be devastated by the loss of taxes and jobs. Further, the entire valley would be negatively affected. Using the population of southeastern Colorado, the loss of 437 jobs at the facilities located in the counties of Crowley and Bent, would equate to a loss of 28,000 jobs if the numbers were compared to the Denver Metro Area.

This Crowley County Correctional Facility spends over \$1,000,000.00 in our communities either at retail business or the utility companies that serve our county. With the old rule of thumb of money turning over seven times within a community before it leaves the area, one can clearly see the devastating results for Crowley County if the facility was to close.

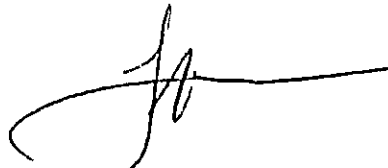
Due to Tabor, once tax revenue is lost it is nearly impossible to recover the tax base. The county, cities and school district would be faced with reducing staff up to forty percent to balance budgets, not a situation that either would be able to survive. Rural communities normally do not have the infrastructure to attract and support large businesses. The Private Prison industry works for these areas.

If at any time you need additional information or would want to visit with our board please let us know.

Best Regards,



Blaine Arbuthnot
Chairman



Tobe Allumbaugh



Roy Elloit

**Additional cost to the State if DOC eliminates private prisons
Oct. 30, 2019**

\$ 988,046,445 Total appropriations

FY2019 2010 Appropriations, State Long Bill

\$ (80,937,728) Paid to private Prison

Based on per diem paid to CCCF, total inmates X \$56.85

\$ 907,108,717 **Total for State run Facilities**

Total Appropriations less funding paid to Privates

\$ 56,465 Actual per inmate cost for State run Facilities

\$907,108,717 divided by 16,065 State Facility Inmates

\$ 1,127,547,711 If state would acquire all state and private inmates

Cost per State Inmate X 19,969 (total state and private inmates)

\$ (988,046,445) Original appropriations

FY2019 2010 Appropriations, State Long Bill

\$ 139,501,266 **Additional funds State would need to eliminate
the Private Prisons annually.**

\$1,127,547,711 - \$988,046,445 = \$139,501,266

Note: Over the past 20 years, the state has used private prisons. The approximate savings to the state to be used for other important programs is \$1.6 billion.

THIS SAVINGS IS A RESULT OF THE EXISTANCE OF PRIVATE PRISONS.

CROWLEY COUNTY-INFORMATION TO LEGISLATURES

1/24/2020

Explanation of Colorado Recidivism Rates.

Claims that recidivism in private prisons is worse compared to state run facilities is false. First, a study into this matter would be extremely difficult due to offenders moving throughout the two types of prisons. This is back by Colorado's own DOC employees. Pinning down which prison type is at fault for an offender's recidivism cannot be specifically identified. Secondly, if you look at all the states, there are states with a higher private population and maintain a lower recidivism rate than Colorado. Also states that have zero private population and have a higher recidivism rate than Colorado. In other states the scenarios are opposite. This goes to show that recidivism has no correlation to facility type, but more to effective programs offered by the prisons. Colorado is one state that the private prisons are directly regulated by the State. Therefore, if the recidivism rate is to be truly lowered in Colorado, an alternate route needs to be taken over eliminating private prisons.

Board of County Commissioners

Edward R Garcia, Chairman
Max Vezzani, Commissioner
Gerald Cisneros, Commissioner



Board of County Commissioners

January 15, 2020

Bent County Commissioners
725 Bent Avenue
P.O. Box 350
Las Animas, CO 81054

RE: Private Prison Impacts

Dear Commissioners:

I understand there will be legislation introduced that intends to close the remaining private prisons in the State. In the following paragraphs, I will try to cover the impacts that the closure of the Huerfano County Correctional Facility has had on Huerfano County.

The immediate impact is the loss of jobs. Our facility had between 200 and 250 full time employees. Although only about 1/3 of those employees were county residents, the others bought gas and groceries here in Walsenburg. The commonly used multiplier effect for economic development purposes is that money turns over in an economy between 3 and 7 times. So, the direct economic impact is the loss of jobs – say 200 jobs and \$30,000 per year = \$6,000,000. The multiplier effect means an economic impact of between \$18,000,000 and \$42,000,000.

The other direct impact is the per capita revenues. Immediately were the loss of Conservation Trust Funds because inmates are considered group housing. The Department of Human Services saw a drop in funding for services because of the population decrease as well. CTF dropped about 8% and I don't have specific numbers for Human Services.

Then you have to start looking at the indirect costs. First is housing values. With Huerfano, the prison was the second largest employer in the County and without those jobs, the bottom fell out of the housing market. Our prison closed in 2011 for the last time and in 2012 you could buy a house using a credit card - \$25,000 to \$40,000. With values that low, there is an unquantifiable amount of apathy that results in unkempt properties and neighborhoods begin to deteriorate into slums.

Sales at local stores begins to drop, or the sudden drop is so severe that stores close immediately. The providers of goods and services that catered to the prison frequently cannot survive on the remaining customers. After the prison closure here, we saw a 10% drop in sales tax and about an 8% drop in assessed value of the entire county.

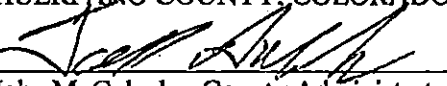
Perhaps the hardest impact to overcome is the cohesive sense of community that begins to wane with the increase in unemployment and the decline of pride in real properties. The residents begin to

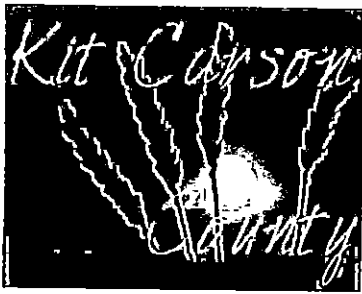
401 Main Street, Suite #201 Walsenburg, Co 81089
Office: 719-738-2370 Fax: 719-738-3996

feel abandoned by their leadership because they see the decline. The apathy starts to set in which opens the door for increases in criminal activity, addictive behavior and illegal drug use.

I believe that the private prisons came to the rural areas because the higher population areas didn't want the exposure to the potential of escapes. So, we accepted them into our communities and found a symbiotic relationship – it was good jobs for us and an inexpensive operating environment for the prisons. What isn't talked about is how the decisions are made in the metropolitan areas that impact the rural areas without consideration of the life-long impacts their decisions have. It would do my heart good to see the situation reversed – although, I know there would be much more compassion if that were the case.

Sincerely, on behalf of the
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF HUERFANO COUNTY, COLORADO

BY 
John M. Galusha, County Administrator



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

KIT CARSON COUNTY
PO BOX 160
BURLINGTON CO 80807-0160

PH: 719-346-8139 (304)
FX: 719-346-7242

Gary Koop,
District 1 Commissioner
Cory Wall,
District 2 Commissioner
Dave Hornung,
District 3 Commissioner

December 18, 2019

Colorado General Assembly
Joint Budget Committee
200 E 14th Ave #300
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Committee:

As Kit Carson County Commissioners, we are writing this letter of support for Bent and Crowley Counties which both have private prisons that are currently under question of closure with the 2020 proposed bill that the Department of Corrections recently presented you at their budget presentation meeting.

As evidenced by the loss of CCA in Kit Carson County in 2016, losing a private prison is economically devastating to a community. Kit Carson County has lost around \$200,000.00 in property tax revenue annually since the closure.

Aside from the property tax loss that Kit Carson County incurred with the closure, the county lost 75 families who were forced to move away. This loss impacted every business of our community. The City of Burlington was greatly affected by loss of income as were the schools. Businesses lost income and proposed businesses did not build, all due to this prison closure. There is no easy way to estimate how much revenue was lost in our area due to this closure, but every business felt the loss.

We urge you to consider the economic impact of closing the private prisons in Bent and Crowley Counties. There is no responsible way to end the practice of using private prisons. Instead, we urge you to study how to best utilize private prisons to aid these communities so they may continue to thrive.

Thank you for your consideration in the upcoming legislative season.

Kit Carson County Commissioners

Cory Wall, Chairman

David L. Hornung

Absent

Gary Koop

Susan Corliss,
Clerk & Recorder

Cure & Bain, P.C.,
County Attorney

Paula S. Weeks,
Administrator



September 9, 2019

Governor Jared Polis
State Capitol Building
Executive Chamber
200 East Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis,

I am writing on behalf of the Southeast Business Retention Expansion and Attraction (SEBREA) Board, which is made up of southeast Colorado's six county commissioners (Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers), the Presidents of Lamar Community College and Otero Junior College and the economic developers to lend our support of the Private Prisons (Bent and Crowley Counties) in our region of the state.

These private facilities have not only been beneficial to the region but have also played an important role in better managing inmate and correctional endeavors in the state. Private prisons have been good neighbors and have developed beneficial programs to ensure inmates serve their sentence in a safe environment as well as providing them with skills, which will help them as they transition back into society. Private prisons have also played an important role in holding down costs associated with correctional facilities. Saving money for capital construction and are more cost effective to run than state facilities. They also provide flexibility in terms of an ever-changing correctional population. The Private Prisons and their staff work closely with state prisons and other law enforcement throughout the state as well as the communities in which they are located.

We sincerely hope that you continue support for Private Prisons in that they not only offer employment to our region, but also offer the state a flexible and cost effective approach to managing the correctional population in the state and the budget that is associated with corrections.

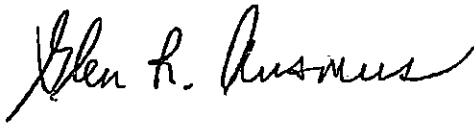
We as a board and region are available to discuss this matter in depth with you, your executive staff and members of the legislative body. Thank you for your consideration of this request and the position taken by our board.

Sincerely,

James T. Rizzuto
Chairman
SEBREA Board

CC: Senator Larry Crowder, State Rep. Kimi Lewis, State Rep. Bri Buentello, Joint Budget Committee Members

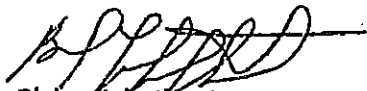
SEBREA 2019 Board of Directors:



Spike Ausmus
Baca County Commissioner



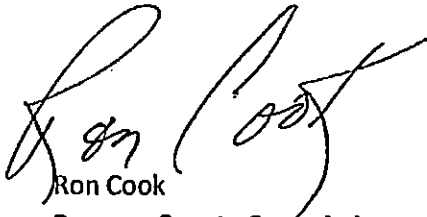
Chuck Netherton
Bent County Commissioner



Blaine Arbutnot
Crowley County Commissioner



Donald Oswald
Kiowa County Commissioner



Ron Cook
Prowers County Commissioner



Keith Goodwin
Otero County Commissioner



Dr. Linda Lujan
President, Lamar Community College



Dr. Tim Alvarez
President, Otero Junior College



Danelle Berg
SEBREA Economic Development

**B AND B SELF STORAGE
WITH LOCATIONS IN LA JUNTA & ORDWAY**

17229 Hwy 96
Ordway, Colorado 81063
February 10, 2020

Honorable Members
Colorado State Legislature
State Capitol Building
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, Colorado 810203

Dear Sirs and Madame,

My wife and I have been in the storage business in the Lower Arkansas Valley for 25 years. We have worked other jobs to save money to invest in our business. Our customers live and work here in the Valley, and like us, their success is linked to the presence of three correctional facilities in our tri-county area.

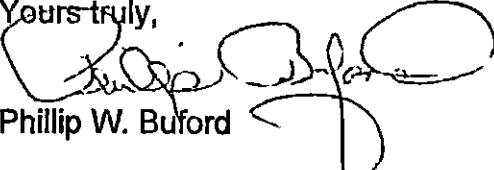
When we began our business in the mid 1990s, we did not have the luxury of choosing a Starbuck's franchise, a computer software support business, a business to support the rural broadband industry, or a business to support a manufacturing facility. Our prospects for success were limited by the lack of reliable infrastructure to recruit ANY ENTREPRENUER to this valley to open a business, to train staff, and grow his business to support the communities in our area. What we DID have were inmates, housed in prisons and managed by staffs of correctional officers, administrators, and maintenance people who live here and need a place to store their "stuff".

Development along the front range has been made possible by the diversion of resources, specifically water, from our communities to front range communities. Now the powerful in our State government look to take our inmates, and all the jobs associated with the prisons and then the jobs in the businesses that depend on those workers. The consequence will be two Colorados—the prosperous front range and glorious mountain communities and the dying rural eastern plains and western slope.

We challenge you to take a day's drive to the southeast corner of the state and then go west to the San Luis Valley. You could also travel to the northwest corner of the state and find the remains of small communities with no infrastructure, no outside investment, no state support of economic development, and no hope.

We are asking you to stop the ongoing assault on rural Colorado that will result if HB 20-1019 moves forward. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,


Phillip W. Buford



Keith Goodwin - Commissioner Dist. 1
John Hostetler - Commissioner Dist. 2
Jim Baldwin - Commissioner Dist. 3
Nathan Shultz - County Attorney
Amy White-Tanabe - County Administrator

Office of the Commissioners

February 11, 2020

Colorado Legislators:

This letter is to inform you that Otero County is not in favor of HB 20-1019. This bill is yet another attempt to penalize rural counties in Colorado with economic devastation in order to placate the Front Range and Metro populations in Colorado. Aside from agriculture, there is very little substantial business growth in or moving to the eastern plains. The private prisons have provided critical funds and jobs to Bent and Crowley counties. They *were* once good for the counties of Kit Carson and Huerfano before the State opted to shut them down which resulted in the loss of 322 jobs. These counties suffered tremendous financial loss when these prisons were shut down; it would be nothing short of a calamity for rural southern Colorado if this were to happen to Crowley and Bent counties as well.

Collectively Crowley and Bent counties house approximately 3,200 inmates, which is less than 20% of Colorado's total inmate population. The State's consideration for closing these facilities is in blatant disregard that housing inmates in these private prisons, instead of state-operated facilities, will save the Coloradan taxpayers approximately \$49,000,000 per year. These funds would objectively be better spent improving the lives of Coloradans with critical infrastructure upgrades.

We ask that you please remain logical when casting your vote and to keep the economy of rural Coloradans in mind and join Otero County and many other counties in the state and vote **NO** on HB-20-1019.

Best regards,



John Hostetler
Otero County Commissioner



Jim Baldwin
Otero County Commissioner

February 10, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

Recently I was asked to write a letter about my experience working for Core Civic at the Crowley County Correctional Facility (CCCF) in Olney Springs, CO. I worked at CCCF for 17 years and did many jobs over that time but was primarily a Corrections Officer. I appreciated the opportunity the facility gave me and other friends and family members. I learned many valuable job skills that I still use to this day with my current job.

My brother, Phillip Encinias, still works at CCCF and started out 15 years ago as a Corrections Officer and then promoted to Sargent, then to Counselor and finally to Case Manager. I also have many friends still working at the facility who have been employed for many years by the company. Most of those friends started out in entry level positions and then promoted to higher level jobs after a few years of experience.

Many of the employees are similar to me in that they commute to work from other counties. I lived in Rocky Ford (Otero County) when I first started with CCCF. Eventually I married my husband who is from Crowley County and we moved to Crowley, CO. My brother still commutes from Rocky Ford to work at CCCF. I know many others who started out at CCCF and eventually went to work at Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility, also located in Crowley County. Starting out at CCCF was beneficial to those friends as they were able to get on the job training which allowed them to eventually get hired by the State. I believe this is also a benefit to AVCF as there is an available supply of trained Corrections Officers at CCCF, which is only five miles away. Many times it can be difficult to find trained employees in rural Colorado and this is a good connection between the two facilities.

CCCF is a large employer in the Arkansas Valley and typically offers higher than average starting pay along with benefits that most other small businesses can't afford to offer. Without these jobs, it would be difficult for many of the people I know to get their foot in the door as a Corrections Officer with the State.

My daughter is a student at Crowley County School District. If the prison were to close, she and her classmates would be greatly effected as CCCF pays a large amount of taxes which helps the local school district. Without these taxes our district, teachers and staff will all be effected tremendously.

My husband is a mechanic at a local car dealership. If CCCF were to close, his job would be effected negatively as people leaving the community would no longer use his services or buy cars from the dealership. Every small business will be effected similarly.

Please consider all of the negative impacts closing the private prisons will have in the Arkansas Valley. A closure will impact every town in the Valley and will cause many people to have to move from the area to find new jobs.

Sincerely,



Shirley (Encinias) Ragsdale
Crowley, CO

Mary Jean Berg, MD
Box 100
Ordway, Colorado 81063
February 11, 2020

Members of the Colorado Legislature
Colorado State Capitol Building
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to express my extreme disapproval of efforts by some Colorado legislators who support the withdrawal of funding and subsequent closure of private prisons in rural areas of Colorado.

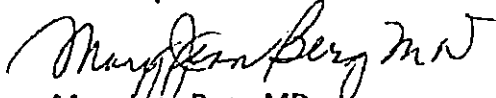
I moved from Denver to Ordway in 1981. I have practiced medicine in the Lower Arkansas Valley since then. I am a Colorado native. My family still farms in Weld County. I have watched with chagrin as the front range gobbles up water resources, human resources and fiscal resources to fuel growth and development while the prairie and western slope are left buried by the blowing sands of drought, poverty and despair.

I have worked for years to recruit providers to rural communities and to influence medical professionals to explore a wholesome rural lifestyle. The shortages we faced 40 years ago are as bad today as then. The promises from the front range of improved infrastructure, educational opportunities, and economic development have died on the vine. It took grit, hope, and incredible effort on the part of rural citizens to push the state to invest in rural Colorado as new prisons were needed to manage a growing prison population.

Prisons as an industry, were not high on the list of desirables for economic development, but we took a chance and we succeeded. We rural citizens needed something, maybe anything-- just to try to stabilize our communities, our schools, our small businesses and our medical care. This prison industry on the eastern plains is now the BACKBONE of our economies. We all depend on the tax base, the employees, and the dollars they spend locally. Our rural communities will not be sustained without this economic support.

It is unfortunate that some of the detractors of our private prisons have never spent any time here on the eastern prairie. You have absolutely no concept of the tenuous balance between stability and abject poverty that exists here. Worse is that you have no ideas about how to improve our fragile existence. "Rural" is an endangered commodity in the state of Colorado.

With hope for more careful consideration,


Mary Jean Berg, MD