

# Human and Fiscal Costs of Prison

- The cost of imprisoning a woman in a federal prison is now estimated by corrections to average \$150,000 per year and can be as high as \$250,000 per year for women kept in the most isolated and segregated conditions of confinement, such as the segregated maximum security units in the prisons for women.
- The use of segregation in prisons has increased in the past few years. In 1999/2000 there were 238 documented admissions into segregation, and in 2001/2002 there were 418 documented admissions.
- The cost of community-based options, such as probation, bail supervision and community supervision work orders, range from \$5 to \$25 per day.
- The cost of incarcerating a prisoner in an Ontario provincial correctional institution was \$137.47 per day in 2001-2002.
- Women with mental health issues, especially those who self-harm often have great difficulty adjusting to prison and are consequently more likely to be kept in the most isolated and segregated living conditions.
- More than two thirds (71%) of the women imprisoned in isolated and segregated conditions and labeled as maximum security prisoners have histories of attempting suicide compared with 21% of men classified as maximum security prisoners.
- In 2002-2003, when the number of women in federal custody was 376, Corrections logged 265 women admissions to administrative segregation, of which 83 were for a period of more than 10 days.

- According to the Ontario Parole and Earned Release Board, parole grants have been decreased from 3,833 in 1993-1994 to 361 in 2002-2003.
- Considering parole as an essential strategy to reduce the risk of recidivism, the decline of provincial parole in Ontario brings significant human, social, and economic costs considering the damaging effect of imprisonment on individuals, the lack of utility to services and programs that actually prove declines in re-offending and the expensive cost of keeping people in prisons.

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## **References**

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