

# The Advocacy Foundation, Inc.

Preparing Individuals, Organizations and Communities to Achieve Their Full Potential



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## The Prison Industrial Complex

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The Economics of Prison Enterprise  
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Isaiah 42: 6-7; 22

God's Servant Will Set Everything Right (NIV)

<sup>6</sup>“I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, <sup>7</sup>to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

<sup>22</sup>But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say, “Send them back.

### The Economics of Prison Enterprise

As the prison population grows, a rising rate of incarceration feeds small and large businesses such as providers of furniture, transportation, food, clothes and medical services, construction and communication firms. Prison activists who buttress the notion of a prison industrial complex have argued that these parties have a great interest in the expansion of the prison system since their development and prosperity directly depends on the number of inmates.

The prison industrial complex has also been said to include private businesses that benefit from the exploitation of the prison labor. *Opponents*, using the term "prison industrial complex", have argued that the trend of "hiring out prisoners" is a continuation of the slavery tradition. Prisoners perform a great array of jobs and are exploited in the following ways: minimal payments, no insurances, no strikes, all workers are full-time and never arrive late.

Journalist Jonathan Kay in the *National Post* argues that the need to preserve the economic advantage of a full prison leads prison leaders to thwart any effort or reforms that might reduce recidivism and incarcerations.

[Moreover], in a study by Doug McDonald, Ph.D. and Scott Camp, Ph.D., known as the "Taft Studies", privatized prisons were compared side-to-side with the public prisons on economic, performance, and quality of life for the prisoners. They found that in a trade off for allowing prisons to be more cheaply run and operated, the degree of reform for the prisoners was going down. [And in addition], where there were more prisoners in a single prison, the day-to-day cost to hold [each] prisoner goes down.

In essence, having larger, privatized prisons makes it cheaper to incarcerate each individual. And the only known side-effect is added "free labor".

## The Prison Abolition Movement

In the US

The goal of Prison Abolition, simply put, is to end the prison industrial complex by eliminating prisons. Prison abolitionists aim to do this by changing the socio-economic conditions of the communities that are affected the most by the prison-industrial complex. They propose increasing funding of social programs in order to lower the rate of crimes, and therefore eventually end the need for police and prisons.

The movement gained momentum in 1997, when a group of prison abolition activists, scholars, and former prisoners collaborated to organize a three-day conference to examine the prison-industrial complex in the U.S. The conference, titled: "**Critical Resistance to the Prison-Industrial Complex**", was held in September 1998 at the University of California, Berkeley and was attended by over 3,500 people of diverse academic, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Two years after the conference, a political grassroots organization was founded bearing the same name with the mission to challenge and dismantle the prison-industrial complex.

### Critical Resistance

**Critical Resistance** is a national, member-based grassroots organization that works to build a mass movement to dismantle the prison-industrial complex. Critical Resistance's office is [located] in Oakland, California, and has three chapters: (1) Oakland, (2) Los Angeles, and (3) New Orleans.

The Mission of Critical Resistance is as follows:

*"Critical Resistance seeks to build an international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure".*

Their recent accomplishments include:

- Helped end California's prison building boom;
- Helped launch an amnesty campaign for people accused of looting post-Katrina in New Orleans; and
- 10th Anniversary "Conference" in Oakland in 2008.

\* excerpts from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

Always feel welcome to contact me directly with any questions, comments, or great ideas!

*Jack Johnson*

Founder & CEO

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Founder & CEO



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*Helping Individuals, Organizations & Communities  
Achieve Their Full Potential*

**Our Mission**

The Mission of The Advocacy Foundation  
is Threefold:

**To Rescue**

Young persons from the prison pipeline  
and help redirect and restore their lives;

**To Teach**

New and fledgling nonprofit organizations to become  
fundable, to thrive, and to maintain compliance;

**To Train**

Qualified Juvenile Justice Professionals with a passion  
for effective careers in the Juvenile Justice system.

PREPAR  
& COMMUN

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TENTIAL